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**XXXIII CICLO**

**Colonial Built Remains in Douala (Cameroon): Approaches to  
the Enhancement of Dissonant Heritage**

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# *Dedication*

*To*

*My Late Father*

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## ACRONYMS

ADF: Archives Diplomatiques de France

AEF : Afrique Equatoriale Française

ALCAM : Assemblée Législative du Cameroun

ANOM: Archives Nationales d’Outre-Mer

ANY: Archives Nationales de Yaoundé

AOF : Afrique occidentale Française

ARCAM : Assemblée Représentative du Cameroun

ATCAM : Assemblée Territoriale du Cameroun

CFA : (Franc) des Colonies Françaisesd’Afrique/Cooperation Française en Afrique

CGT : Confédération Générale des Travailleurs

CIFOR : Center for International Forestry Research

FIDES: Fonds d’Investissements pour le Développement Economique et Social des Territoires d’Outre-Mer

ICOMOS : International Committee on Monuments and Sites

JEUCAFRA: Jeunesse Camerounaise-Française

KFDGV : Kamerunen Farbringen für Deutsch Gesinnung Verein

MCAAH: Mayor’s Commission on African and Asian Heritage

MDC: Mouvement Démocratique du Cameroun (Cameroon Democratic Movement)

NODYNA : Nouvelle Dynamique Nationaliste Africaine

ONU: Organisation des Nations Unies

PCM: Permanent Mandates Commission

PTK: Polizeitruppe Kamerun

RACAM : Rassemblement Camerounais

SDN: Société des Nations

UPC : Union des Populations du Cameroun

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## ABSTRACT

Douala is a Cameroonian city located on the banks of the Wouri River, that experienced various economic, social, and spatial evolution due to the succession of colonial systems: German protectorate from 1884 to 1916, Franco-British condominium from 1916 to 1919, Mandate then Trusteeship regimes under the French supervision from 1919 to 1960. These successive colonial systems have reshaped the urban space of Douala, through numerous projects and town planning initiatives. Some of these urban projects have been designed on the basis of massive expropriation of local populations, as well as urban segregation, for reasons of so-called hygiene. Urban construction and architectural forms in colonial Douala were conceived to impose Western hegemony. True support of power, colonial architecture in Douala reflects antagonistic urban initiatives, opposing the locals to the German and then French administration. Some of these buildings bear memories of forced labour, assassinations, racism, the imposition of cultural values, whips, and other inhuman and humiliating treatment that colonial administrators inflicted on local populations. On the other hand, within the former colonial powers in the postcolonial context, the imperial past in Cameroon is often equated with a glorious past of empire, which arouses nostalgia contrary to the difficult and painful tendencies of colonial memories in Africa. It is in this logic that the colonial past is subjected to selective oblivion, and idealisation aiming at its polishing. In this regard, the colonial buildings in Douala are the object of memory tensions that complexify their enhancement.

Colonial memory discrepancies can be explained by the dissonant heritage approach, theorised to highlight the tensions likely to affect the enhancement of historic sites in relation to atrocities. These are the sites of painful memories, with which various interest groups recognise linkages. The paradigm of Dissonant Heritage that emerged in the 1990s, inspired various other concepts in the study of heritage and heritage tourism, among which Difficult Heritage and Rejected Heritage. These evolving concepts recall the different possibilities to inspire from the Dissonant heritage, with a view to enhancing historical sites. In this logic, heritagisation models have emerged and inspired a specific heritage model applied to colonial built remains.

**Keywords: Dissonant Heritage, Colonial Architecture, Colonial Buildings, Colonial Memories, Colonial Built Remains.**

## **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**



## I- Presentation of the Topic

The preservation and the enhancement of the remains of colonial systems in Africa are at the centre of debate related to cultural and historical heritage. This debate encompasses the nature of colonial remains, as part of the rejection of colonization, that embedded the struggles for independence. Alain Sinou claims that in the early 1960s, the new African leaders considered the colonial built heritage as functional and used it for daily needs, disregarding its forms and scales : “ les nouveaux dirigeants des nations d’Afrique de l’Ouest ont d’abord un point de vue pragmatique et fonctionnel sur l’héritage bâti colonial, quelles qu’en soient ses formes et ses échelles<sup>1</sup>” (the new leaders of West African nations first have a pragmatic and functional point of view on the colonial built heritage, whatever its forms and scales). Adama Djigo describes this pragmatism as a “selective reappropriation<sup>2</sup>” of heritage in connection with national policies of identity building. It should be recalled that the preservation and the enhancement of cultural heritage are driven by many objectives, among which the reconstitution of a past (a civilization, an industrial activity among others), the reinforcement of local development through heritage tourism and nation-building, among others. Since the French Revolution, the massive destruction of the remains of the *Ancien Regime* raised concerns related to the preservation of the traces of past. These concerns have found a solution through museums. Regarding built remains such as royal palaces, their preservation is supported by cultural policies of monuments, aiming at the transmission of know-how, the celebration of the architectural beauty, and communication concerning the memory of the sites or the civilization they represent<sup>3</sup>.

Many researchers claim that the difficulties surrounding the enhancement of heritage or historical sites in Africa relate to the inefficiency of European heritagization approaches, inherited from the colonial past<sup>4</sup>. These approaches largely enshrine the collection of the world instead of the spirituality which is inscribed in the symbolism of their location. The collection of objects, moved and handled without prior rituals, for their preservation in permanent exhibitions, especially in museums whose locations respond mostly to economic logics rather

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<sup>1</sup> Alain Sinou, “Enjeux culturels et politiques de la mise en patrimoine des espaces coloniaux”, in *Autrepart*, No33, Vol.1, 2005, Pp.13-31.

<sup>2</sup> Adama Djigo, “Patrimoine culturel et identité nationale : construction historique d’une notion au Sénégal”, in *Journal des africanistes*, No85, Vol. 1-2, Pp.312-357.

<sup>3</sup> Andrea Merlotti, “Palais royaux et résidences royales. Un espace pour l’histoire : des nations à l’Europe”, in *Culture & Musées*, No33, 2019, Pp.190-194.

<sup>4</sup> Germain Loumpet, “Patrimoine culturel et stratégies identitaires au Cameroun, analyse d’un mécanisme intégratif transposé”, *Enjeux*, No15, avril-juin 2003, Pp.6-13.

than the sacred, participates in their desecration and hence their disinheritance<sup>5</sup>. This issue arises from a different angle, when it comes to colonial built heritage. Beyond the rationality of colonial architecture, perceived sometimes in contrast with the cultural base of vernacular architecture, it should be noted that the resurgence of painful memories of the colonial presence remains consubstantial to that architecture. Therefore, colonial built remains in general raise two major issues: the efficiency of European heritage approaches implemented in Africa on one hand, and the resurgence of painful memories of the colonial period on the other hand.

In the city of Douala, the understanding of the painful memories encompassing built remains of colonialism refers directly to some episodes of the colonial past. In fact, Cameroon in general is a country, that has experienced three European colonial systems. The colonial presence in Cameroon begins in 1884 when representatives of German multinationals (Woermann, Jantzen & Thormälen) signed commercial treaties with local kings in Douala. These German-Douala treaties intervene in line with the commercial relations established for centuries, between coastal population and European merchants<sup>6</sup>. These relations take advantage of the opening to the Atlantic Ocean offered by the Wouri estuary. In this trade, which concerned the exchange of raw materials collected in the hinterland against manufactured products from Western countries, the inhabitants of Douala imposed themselves as the only middlemen between locals and foreign merchants. Many families accumulated a relatively important wealth thanks to these commercial exchanges<sup>7</sup>. To preserve these interests, some of Douala chiefs, during the 19th century called for the British royal protection, without a positive reply. Meantime, because of many conflicts between European powers over the control of commercial positions in western Africa, Douala inhabitants feared heavy consequences on their economic interests. This explains their acceptance of the protection offered by German firms. On the other hand, for the Germans, the protectorate agreements, that was supposed to regulate trade relations between the parties, served as a pretext to impose a system of colonial domination. They imposed a model of the development of Cameroonian territory, considering only opportunities for the exploitation of natural resources and agricultural potential. The establishment of the public service was based on urban planning projects, that led in Douala to

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<sup>5</sup> Jean-Marie Datouand Djoussou, *Patrimoine et patrimonialisation au Cameroun : Les Diy-gid-biy des Monts Mandara septentrionaux pour étude de cas*, Ph.D Thesis, Université de Québec, 2014, p.131.

<sup>6</sup> Harry R. Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914: A Case Study in Modern Imperialism*, Greenwood Press Publisher, New-York, 1968.

<sup>7</sup> Ralph A. Austen, "Rising from, Remembering, and Forgetting Slavery: The Mandessi Bell Family of Douala", in Emanuel Tchumtchoua & Albert-François Dikoume (Eds.), *Douala, histoire et patrimoine*, Yaounde, Editions CLE, 2014, Pp.163-182.

massive expropriations, to the upheaval of the control of local chiefs over the port area, as well as the creation of an apartheid town, with a residential area for the European populations and an outskirt reserved to locals. These expropriations, coupled with mistreatments, led to tensions between the local population in Douala and the German representatives, marked by the assassination on August 1914 of Rudolph Duala Manga Bell, King of Bell Community.

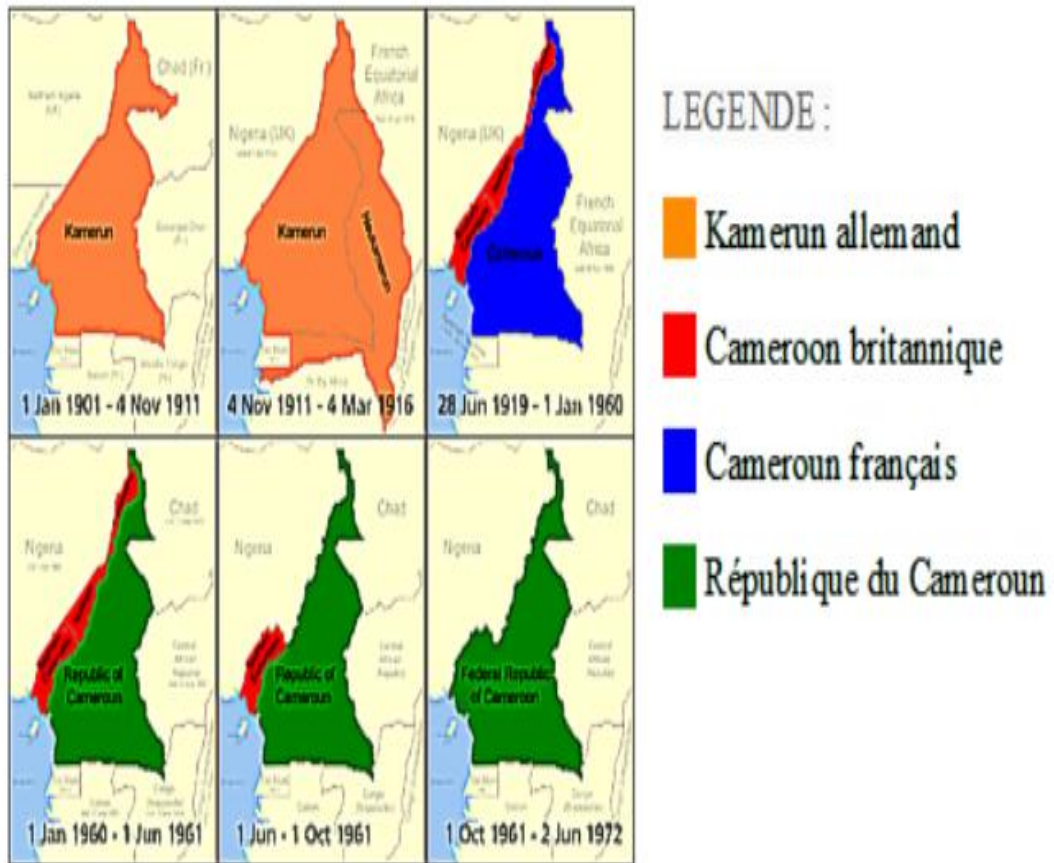
The First World War erupted in this context of conflicting relations between the Dualas and the Germans. The occupation of Cameroon by French and British troops, followed by the signing of the Simon Millner Declaration, dividing Cameroon between the two powers, placed the city of Douala under French colonial rule. Despite the adoption of international Mandate and Trusteeship regimes, the French administration of the territory was carried out in the logic of exploitation, cultural imposition, as well as the mistreatment experienced by the inhabitants of the African colonies. The bloody struggle for independence, impelled from the city of Douala, testifies to the rejection of colonial systems. Thus, from 1960, Cameroon's accession to independence opened a debate on the integration of colonial traces into the national cultural heritage.

This thesis, inspiring from the Dissonant Heritage<sup>8</sup> approach, examines the outlines of this debate, and the approaches to enhancing the built remains of colonialism. Its geographical scope is the city of Douala.

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<sup>8</sup> Dissonant heritage refers to historic sites bearing memory tensions. Some examples are sites of atrocities, large-scale crimes, wars among others. This concept will be presented and discussed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> part of this introduction and in the first chapter of the thesis.

**Figure 1 : Map of the territorial evolution of Cameroon from 1901 to 1972**



**Source :** [http://pedagogie.lyceesavioudouala.org/histoire-geographie/app\\_grande-guerre/pages/page\\_3a.htm](http://pedagogie.lyceesavioudouala.org/histoire-geographie/app_grande-guerre/pages/page_3a.htm), 15/12/2015.

## II- Geographical Scope: The City of Douala

The Geographical scope of this thesis is the city of Douala. In the administrative organization of the Cameroonian territory, Douala is the head city of the Littoral Region<sup>9</sup> (formerly known as province<sup>10</sup>). Douala also refers to the head city of the Wouri Division<sup>11</sup>, known as the principal economic city of Cameroon<sup>12</sup>, with a population of more than three million inhabitants<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Decree No2008/376 of November 12, 2008, for the Administrative Organisation of the Republic of Cameroon

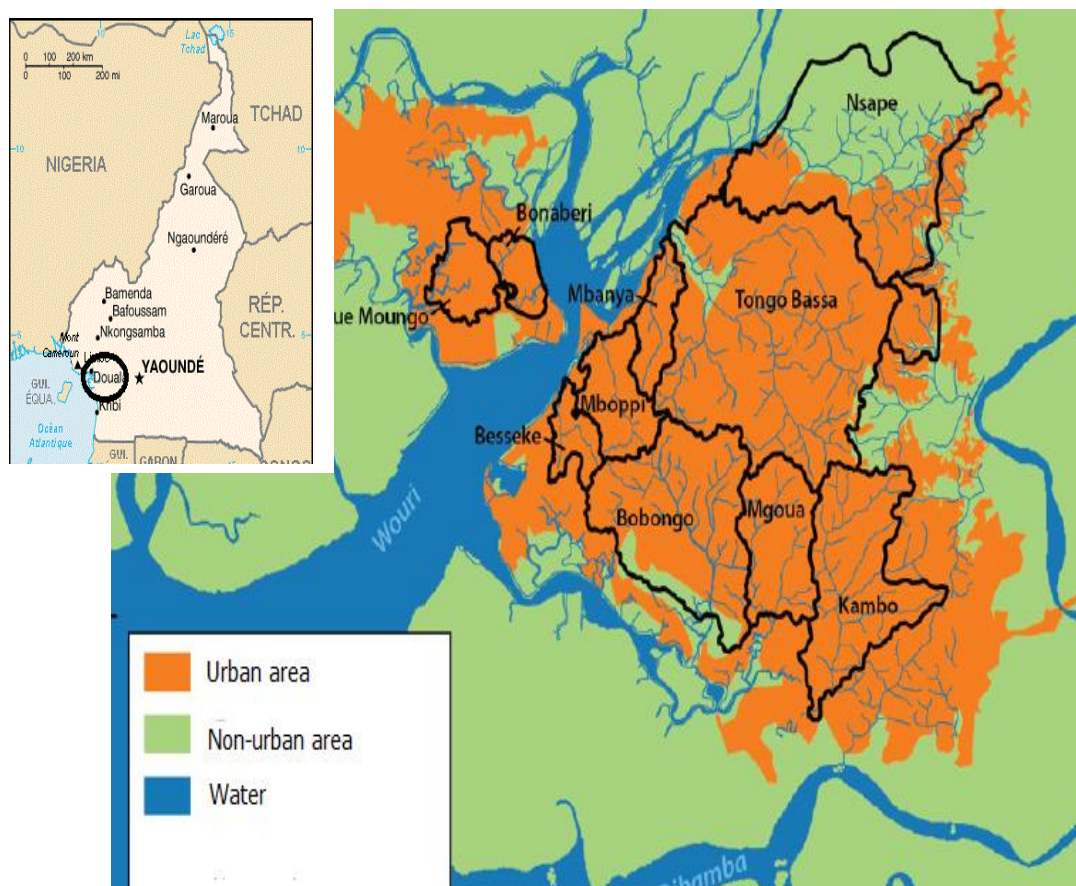
<sup>10</sup> Article 1 & 3 of the Decree No72/349 for the Administrative Organization of the United Republic of Cameroon.

<sup>11</sup> Article 09 of Decree No2008/376, *Cited*.

<sup>12</sup> Guy Mainet, "Douala, ville principale du Cameroun", [https://horizon.documentation.ird.fr/exl-doc/pleins\\_textes/divers10-11/04086.pdf](https://horizon.documentation.ird.fr/exl-doc/pleins_textes/divers10-11/04086.pdf), 12/12.2020.

<sup>13</sup> National Bureau of Census and Population Studies, *3è RGPH, Volume III-Tome 3. Projection Démographiques*. [www.bucrep.cm](http://www.bucrep.cm), 25/10/2020.

**Figure 2 : Map of the city of Douala**



**Source :** Laurent Bruckmann & al., “Geohistorical analysis of flood risk spatio-temporal evolution and its management in the urban area of Douala (Cameroon)”, in *Physio-Géo. Géographie physique et environnement*, Vol.13, 2019, Pp.91-113.

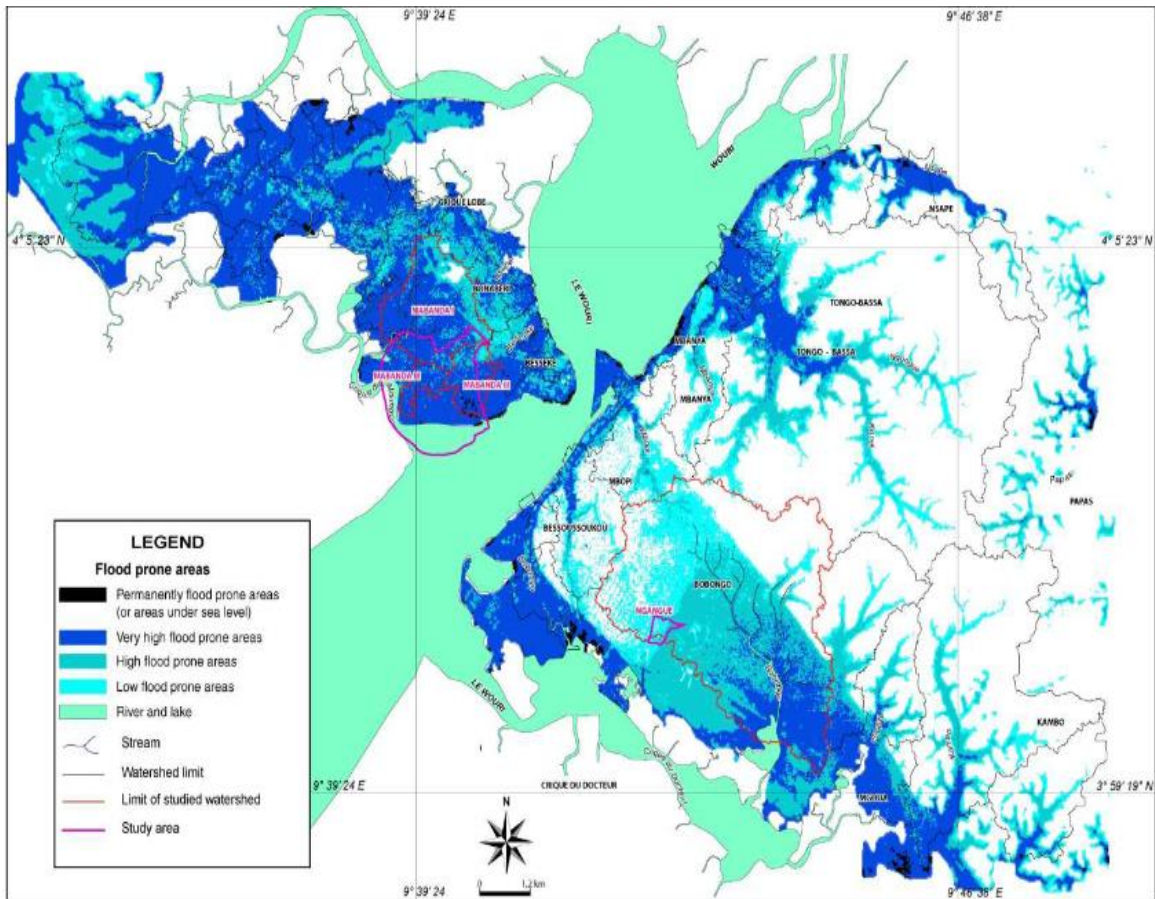
In terms of its geography, the city of Douala is located on both banks of the Wouri River<sup>14</sup>. It is characterized by high temperatures, and abundant rainfalls<sup>15</sup>. These geographical data explain its spatial evolution, as well as the aesthetic and technical character of its habitat. The primary cores of the city are found on plateaus (Joss plateau and Akwa plateau), which provide good ventilation and aeration to the houses. It is also a low-altitude area, crossed by several watercourses, which expose the city to flooding<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> For the sake of complete historical analysis, Bonaberi, known as *Hickory Town* in the XIXth Century, is integrated in this study, as part of the city of Douala.

<sup>15</sup> Chebo K. Asangwe, “The Douala Coastal Lagoon Complex, Cameroon: Environmental Issues”, in Anonym (no name), *Administering Marine Spaces: International Issues*, Copenhagen, The International Federation of Surveyors (FIG), 2006, Pp.134-147.

<sup>16</sup> Laurent Bruckmann & al., “Geohistorical analysis of flood risk spatio-temporal evolution and its management in the urban area of Douala (Cameroon)”, in *Physio-Géo. Géographie physique et environnement*, Vol.13, 2019, Pp.91-113.

**Figure 3 : Map of flood prone areas in Douala**



Source: Maurice Olivier Zogning Moffo, “Cartography of flood prone areas and assessment of flooding house in Douala (Cameroon), [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Emmanuel-Tonye/publication/273321869\\_CARTOGRAPHY\\_OF\\_FLOOD\\_PRONE\\_AREAS\\_AND\\_ASSESSMENT\\_OF\\_FLOODING\\_HOUSING\\_IN\\_DOUALA\\_CAMEROON/links/54fea0760cf2eaf210b36c1d/CARTOGRAPHY-OF-FLOOD-PRONE-AREAS-AND-ASSESSMENT-OF-FLOODING-HOUSING-IN-DOUALA-CAMEROON.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Emmanuel-Tonye/publication/273321869_CARTOGRAPHY_OF_FLOOD_PRONE_AREAS_AND_ASSESSMENT_OF_FLOODING_HOUSING_IN_DOUALA_CAMEROON/links/54fea0760cf2eaf210b36c1d/CARTOGRAPHY-OF-FLOOD-PRONE-AREAS-AND-ASSESSMENT-OF-FLOODING-HOUSING-IN-DOUALA-CAMEROON.pdf), 12/12/2020.

In the colonial history of Cameroon, Douala played an important role, beginning with the German presence. The evolution of this city is part of a process that confers to it, a key role in contacts between Cameroon and foreign merchants, first through pre-colonial trade. Taking advantage of the existence of warehouses of German multinationals in 1884, the German government established its headquarters to rule the country in Douala, precisely at the Joss Plateau. Also, from its physical aspects, the city acquired a relative importance thanks to the infrastructure built by the Germans, although conceived for their own needs and adapted to their

standards. This infrastructure also targeted the connection of Douala to the hinterland<sup>17</sup>, to overcome the dependence of movements on rivers and human carriage<sup>18</sup>.

It is relevant to mention that during the First World War, French and British troops entered Cameroon through Douala, where they established their headquarters<sup>19</sup>. From April 1916 to 1919, France and the UK ruled Cameroon in a system of condominium<sup>20</sup>. From 1919, the treaties of the League of Nations conferred a Mandate to both countries, with the objective of helping local population gain capabilities to self-administration<sup>21</sup>. To implement the terms of this international status, both colonial powers based on the Simon Millner Declaration, which divided the country into two separate parts. Therefore, Douala became part of the French Cameroon. In that part of the country, France implemented first a policy that continued its opposition to the German System. Some authors talked of “*Degermanisation*” to qualify that policy of colonial presence<sup>22</sup>. In fact, the first pattern of this policy consists in eradicating cultural presence of Germans through the ban of German language on the entire territory as well as the suppression of German urban traces in Douala. Also, the belongings of Germans, which were confiscated since 1916, were sold in auction from 1921 onwards. This has contributed in the devaluation and the destruction of some German built remains in Douala.

### III- Conceptual Delimitation

The delineation of the theoretical scope of this thesis could help understanding key words and concept such as *dissonant heritage* and *Colonial built remains*.

The *dissonant heritage* concept refers to a heritage approach conceptualized by Ashworth and Tunbridge in 1996<sup>23</sup>. These authors first underline the expanding meanings of the word

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<sup>17</sup> Carl René, *Kamerun und die Deutsche Tsadsee Eisenbahn*, Berlin, Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1905.

<sup>18</sup> Walter Gam Nkwi, “Rivers and Ports in Transport History of Cameroon, 1916-1961”, in *OGIRISI a New Journal of African Studies*, No13, Vol1, 2017, Pp.200-235.

<sup>19</sup> Philippe-Blaise Essomba, “La guerre des voies de communication au Cameroun, 1914-1916”, *Presses Universitaires de France*, No 248, 2012, Pp. 7-26.

<sup>20</sup> Some German documents recognize the end of the German protectorate in Cameroon from 1919, claiming that it is only with the treaties of the League of Nations that their country lost its colonies.

<sup>21</sup> There is a lack of analysis of the Mandate and Trusteeship Regimes of the International community. These regimes supposed that only colonial powers can confer capabilities to rule a country in former colonies. It seems to contain a hidden agenda of the winners, who wanted to enlarge their territory to the detriment of Germany. This could be explained by the assimilation of the Mandate Territories to their colonies in day-to-day management.

<sup>22</sup> Paul Zang Zang, “ La dégermanisation du Cameroun”, *Revue Electronique Internationale des Sciences du Langage*, No14, 2010, Pp.79-104.

<sup>23</sup> J.E. Tunbridge & G.J. Ashworth, *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict*, Chichester, John Wiley and Sons, 1996.

heritage itself, as generally referring to relics of the past, cultural and artistic productivity as well as selling goods or services with heritage components, just to name a few. This expansion of the meanings of heritage creates a confusion and divergent interpretation. Tourism industry, that serves as linkage between consumers and heritage sites, becomes stakeholder of the management of heritage sites. The tensions created by divergent interpretation are summarized in the concept of dissonance in heritage, most verifiable on sites linked to history of atrocities, wounded memories, wars, rejected political systems like communism and fascism. To better explain the dissonance in heritage, these authors applied it to Transatlantic Slavery Sites, where they mention divergent opinions of many interest groups especially the perpetrators, the victims, and the visitors depending on their origins.

In this regard, the concept of dissonant heritage appears as a neologism intended to qualify heritage sites around which various interpretations emerge. From this paradigm, other concept appeared, among which *Difficult Heritage*. This concept emerged to describe the embarrassment that characterizes the relationship between the local population and the remnants of the Nazi Party in Germany<sup>24</sup>. Indeed, beyond the preservation of buildings that served as premises for the Nazi Party, local population considered these historical remains as a heritage likely to make the apology of Nazism. At the same time, their abandonment raises issues or accusations of attempts to erase history of the atrocities of Nazi regime<sup>25</sup>. Thus, for Sharon Macdonald, the concept of Difficult Heritage is more accurate than that of dissonant heritage. Besides, it refers only to the relations between the local population and the historic site. This spectrum is therefore reduced and inoperative to be mobilized in the study of the enhancement of the vestiges of colonialism. However, both concepts refer to sites related to a painful story.

These are places of memory, testimony of a painful history for those who consider themselves as victims on one hand, and a normal or even glorious history for those who have derived any benefit from it, on the other hand. At the centre of the dissonant heritage is the concept of memory, formulated in the French literature as “Lieu de mémoire” and “Lieu-mémoire”. There is an abundant literature around the notions of memory and place of

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<sup>24</sup> Sharon Macdonald, *Difficult Heritage. Negotiating the Nazi Past in Nuremberg and Beyond*, Routledge, 2009, p.1.

<sup>25</sup> Sharon Macdonald, “Undesirable Heritage: Fascist Material Culture and Historical Consciousness in Nuremberg”, in *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, Vol.12, 2006, Pp.9-28.



memory<sup>26</sup>. Marie Claire Lavabre emphasizes that memory can be understood as the sum of past experiences, which forge an identity<sup>27</sup>. When the past experiences are common at a community level, historical memory is shared and turned into “collective memory”: “Dans son usage le plus courant, la mémoire collective renvoie à la mémoire partagée d’un événement passé vécu en commun par une collectivité, large ou étroite, nation, village ou famille par exemple<sup>28</sup>” (In its most common use, collective memory refers to the shared memory of a past event experienced in common by a community, large or narrow, nation, village or family for example). Collective memory suggests, on the other hand, a distinction between lived experience according to the community to which it belongs. Maurice Halbwachs suggests the influence of the social environment of belonging on the memory receptacle of past experiences. In this regard, he distinguishes internal memory from social memory<sup>29</sup>. Trying to classify the manifestations of memory in humanities, in relation to heritage, Dacia Viejo-Rose advances concepts such as: *mémoire trouée*, absent memory, *lieux de mémoire*, inherited memory, narrative memory, prosthetic memory, historic memory, memory boom, and post memory<sup>30</sup>. These concepts, which testify to the complexity of the notion of memory, underline its connection to heritage. As Anne Françoise Garçon emphasizes, the heritage enhancement process is generally motivated by safeguarding a memory of a site from threats of oblivion<sup>31</sup>. Historical site or heritage object is, therefore, the container of the memory.

Regarding the concept of colonial built heritage, it refers to tangible vestiges colonial systems, mainly, the architecture. The building is an architectural and engineering realization, which aims to create, develop, or improve a living space, a commercial or industrial framework, an infrastructure of an economic production, transport, and movement. It results from the modification of the natural landscape or environment, to meet needs for protection, production, accumulation of goods, movement, among others. In its various forms, it makes up the city,

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<sup>26</sup> The following noticeably short presentation does not aim at completely highlighting issues of memory, history, and heritage. It is a schematical summary of the concept of memory, to allow perceive the connection to the tensions that result around the management of dissonant heritage sites. Therefore, it could seem uncomplete to some extent.

<sup>27</sup> Marie-Claire Lavabre, “Usages du passé, usages de la mémoire”, in *Revue Française de science politique*, No3, 1994, Pp.480-493.

<sup>28</sup> Marie-Claire Lavabre, “Maurice Halbwachs et la sociologie de la mémoire”, in *Raison présente*, No128, 1998, pp.47-56.

<sup>29</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *La Mémoire collective*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1997, p.99.

<sup>30</sup> Dacia Viejo-Rose, “Cultural heritage and memory: untangling the ties that bind”, in *Culture & History Digital Journal*, No4 (2), 2015, <http://dx.doi.org/10.3989/chdj.2015.018>, 12/04/2020.

<sup>31</sup> Anne-Françoise Garçon, “Le patrimoine : antidote de la disparition ?”, *Historiens et Géographes*, No405, 2009, Pp.105-114.

constituting its layout and language<sup>32</sup>. In this regard, architecture is an element of urban identity, in the sense that it is the bearer of its history. It is an essential material for the study of its technical developments, its population, and its industrial fabric. In addition, the building also informs about the social traits of a city. In the colonial context, the imperial administration worked on the construction of residences, offices, roads, railways among others, with a view to providing cities with a minimum of infrastructure enabling them to govern<sup>33</sup>. In the sense of this research, colonial buildings include urban infrastructure, local administrative residences erected in Douala between 1884 and 1960. They also include intentional monuments erected during the colonial period, but also those that emerged later, to commemorate or celebrate an actor from the colonial past.

#### **IV- State of the art**

Colonial built remains are subject to progressive interest in research issues, as part of the colonial history and historical remains. The historiography surrounding colonial buildings in Douala followed a line of description, through photographic presentations and a call for their integration into national heritage. Whereas books presenting, with images, buildings inherited from colonial systems in Douala seek to raise awareness on their historical importance, the recent advocacy for their enhancement considers them as dissonant heritage.

In line with its importance in the African history, European colonization in Douala is a topic on which many books and papers have been published. Most of these papers explain the social, economic, and political evolution of the city. Regarding the built remains of the European colonization in Douala, some papers afford with an overview of the architecture, with a focus on its importance for the city, as a great part of its historical heritage. Wolfgang Lauber published in 1988, a collection of documented pictures of the German Architecture in Cameroon. This author tries an assessment of buildings inherited from the German protectorates in Cameroon, in view of drawing attention on their importance as historical remains<sup>34</sup>. In line with pictographic illustration, Jacques Soulillou highlights, with pictures collected from 1880 to 1960, different patterns of the colonial architecture in Douala<sup>35</sup>. Beyond the buildings, this

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<sup>32</sup> Deyan Sudjic, *The Language of Cities*, Penguin Books, 2017, 230p.

<sup>33</sup> Odile Goerg, "Domination coloniale, construction de la « ville » en Afrique et domination", in *Afrique & Histoire*, Vol.1, Pp. 15-45

<sup>34</sup> Wolfgang Lauber, *Deutsche Architektur in Kamerun: 1884-1914*, Karl Krämer Verlag, Stuttgart, 1988.

<sup>35</sup> Jacques Soulillou, *Douala, un siècle en images*, Paris, l'Harmattan, 2018 (new edition).

author illustrates the spatial evolution of the city during the colonial period, with different maps designed for urban planning projects. René Gouellain could be considered as one of the most prominent researchers that focused on the history of Douala. He presents the city as a result of two antagonistic initiatives: that of local population (Duala) and that of European settlers<sup>36</sup>. The external input to the construction and the development of the city began, according to this historian, with the slavery trade in which Duala families have been involved as *middlemen*<sup>37</sup>. Albert Wirtz describes that function of *Middlemen* in Douala as part of the current identity of its population, strongly connected to the river Wouri that serves as mean of transport and connection within commercial exchanges with foreign merchants<sup>38</sup>.

These buildings inherited from the colonial period have been approached as a heritage. In a master's degree thesis, Ndjock Nyobe Isidore Pascal approaches the French colonial buildings in Douala and Yaoundé as issues of history, memory, and heritage. Beyond questioning the relevance of colonial buildings in the Cameroonian cultural heritage, he correlates their enhancement with memories of the colonial past<sup>39</sup>. This impetus for heritage awareness around colonial remains is a personal advocacy of this author<sup>40</sup>. He considers the debate surrounding intentional colonial monuments in Douala as part of memory reconciliation process<sup>41</sup>. From this heritage perspectives, some authors present the enhancement of the built colonial heritage in Africa as late and insufficient process facing political challenges<sup>42</sup>, regardless of its potential for fostering local development<sup>43</sup>. These various papers thus reveal the hard past which explains the difficulty of turning the colonial built remains into heritage. Ambe J. Njoh and Liora Bigon analyzed deeply the meanings of the imperial architecture in Douala<sup>44</sup>. Especially, Ambe J.

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<sup>36</sup> René Gouellain, "Douala : Formation and Development of the City during the Colonial Period", *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, Vol 13, No51, 1973, Pp. 442-468.

<sup>37</sup> René Gouellain, *Douala: ville et histoire*, Institut d'Ethnologie, 1975, 411p.

<sup>38</sup> Albert Wirtz, "La 'rivière de Cameroun': commerce précolonial et contrôle de pouvoir en société lignagère", in *Revue Française d'Histoire d'Outre-Mer*, T.60, No219, 1973, Pp.172-195

<sup>39</sup> Ndjock Nyobe Isidore Pascal, *La question de l'heritage colonial bati de la France à Yaoundé et Douala (Cameroun)*, master's degree thesis, Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne/Università Degli Studi di Padova/Universidade de Evora, 2010.

<sup>40</sup> Ndjock Nyobe Isidore Pascal, *Plaidoyer pour le patrimoine : le legs colonial dans les villes du Cameroun : entre histoire et mémoire*, Yaounde, Editions de midi, 2020, 248p.

<sup>41</sup> Ndjock Nyobe Isidore Pascal, "L'héritage colonial à l'épreuve de la mémoire : Le cas du monument Leclerc à Douala", in Emmanuel Tchumtchoua & Albert-François Dikoume (eds.), *Douala, histoire et patrimoine*, Yaoundé, CLE Editions, 2014. Pp.295-316.

<sup>42</sup> Alain Sinou, "Cultural and Political Issues Surrounding the Designation of Colonial Features as Heritage Sites" *Autrepart No 33*, 2005.

<sup>43</sup> François Wassouni, "Patrimoine, tourisme et problématique du développement dans les régions septentrionales du Cameroun à l'heure de la décentralisation", IFRA Nigeria Working Papers Series, N° 54, 2015.

<sup>44</sup> Ambe J. Njoh & Liora Bigon, "Germany and the deployment of urban planning to create, reinforce and maintain power in colonial Cameroon", in *Habitat International*, No49, 2015, Pp.10-20.

Njoh claims that the buildings and the urban planning projects in Douala have been designed during colonial period for the main purpose of domination<sup>45</sup>. This explains dissonances related to their enhancement in postcolonial Cameroon, that have their roots in the process of colonial occupation of Cameroon, of which Douala is the gateway.

Regarding the colonial historiography in Cameroon, one of the approaches to underline could range in the ideology and principles of independence as an opposition to colonial system, with historians seeking to contribute to a new making of the society. In this regard, many papers approached colonial past as a period characterized by the destruction of cultural systems and values, economic enslavement, brutality, violation of human rights through forced labour and competition among European countries. Harry R. Rudin explains for example, the beginning of the European domination over Cameroon as a competition between Great Britain and Germany that has felt to turn into a military war<sup>46</sup>. Through the signature of Douala-German treaty in July 1884, according to Adamou Ndam Njoya, Cameroon entered in action on the international scene as to compete with other countries<sup>47</sup>. The formal presence of European countries in Cameroon led also to a competition for the occupation of lands, especially between France, Great Britain and Germany at the end of the First World War for the occupation<sup>48</sup> and the appropriation of German belongings<sup>49</sup>. The sense of these papers is to reject the colonial legacy that is perceived as bearing the traces of the cause of many social and economic problems in Africa. This approach continues to influence relations between communities and colonial past.

From a different point of view, colonial presence in Cameroon has also been approached as cultural domination, with a clearly expressed “*Civilizing mission*”. The entire colonial period is made of the imposition of new cultural values<sup>50</sup>: languages, political organization, and typically European cultural institutions like museum. This has gone from a racist background to finally target a long-term presence. This difficult relationship with the colonial past in Cameroon and Douala precisely, is much more complex in France and Germany. Guy Georgy,

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<sup>45</sup> Ambe J. Njoh, “Urban planning as a tool of power and social control in colonial Africa”, in *Planning Perspectives*, Vol. 24, No3, 2009, Pp.301-317.

<sup>46</sup> Harry R. Rudin, *Cited*.

<sup>47</sup> Adamou Ndam Njoya, *Le Cameroun dans les relations internationales*, Paris, Librairie générale de droit et de jurisprudence, 1976.

<sup>48</sup> Daniel Abwa, *Commissaires et Hauts Commissaires de France au Cameroun (1916-1960)*, Paris, Karthala, 2000.

<sup>49</sup> Philippe Blaise Essomba, *Le Cameroun : les rivalités d'intérêts franco-allemandes de 1919 à 1932*, Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 2004.

<sup>50</sup> H. Glenn Penny, *Objects of Culture: Ethnology and Ethnographic Museums in Imperial Germany*, University of North Carolina Press, 2002

a French diplomat who served in Cameroon, claims that France had no colonial project as such, but only adventures: “la France n’avait pas de dessein colonial. Elle n’avait que des aventures coloniales<sup>51</sup>”. In a tentative assessment of the French colonization, Bernard Lugan targets the deconstruction through so-claimed factual arguments, the “historic dis-information<sup>52</sup>” which, according to him, lead to national shame in France, in relation with the colonial past. Alain Ruscio supports this assertion and claims for a retrospective balanced consideration of the French colonialism in Africa<sup>53</sup>.

From this short analytical state of the art, it appears that memories of the colonial period in Cameroon are made of remembrance wars, forced labour and economic exploitation. These memories seem to be shaped by exaggerated discourses and opinions during decolonization process, that led to a rejection of colonial remains. This rejection of colonial heritage sites could be explained by the dissonant heritage.

## **V- Research question**

This Thesis analyses the enhancement of built remains of colonialism in Douala. It is structured around the following central question: To which extent the dissonant heritage approach could inspire an appropriate methodology for the enhancement of colonial architecture in Douala? Many minor issues underpin this central question. They relate especially to the explanation of memory tensions surrounding tangible remains of colonialism in Douala, the significance of these remains, considered as elements of the historical heritage of the city of Douala.

From an insight on the cultural heritage public policies in postcolonial Cameroon, it appears a focus on cultural authenticity. This excludes colonial remains, considered external, or even at odds with endogenous elements of cultural heritage. It is part of common evolution to many African countries, where post-independence nation-building politics emerged in opposition to colonial remains. In reverse, from the years 1984, Cameroon witnessed a change of discourse on cultural heritage. In media releases, politicians’ position themselves in favour of an unrestricted historical heritage, incorporating the vestiges of colonialism. The colonial past is even perceived as a period of cultural contact, which contributed to enrich Africa, beyond other

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<sup>51</sup> Olivier Colombani, *Mémoires coloniales : la fin de l’Empire français d’Afrique vue par les administrateurs coloniaux*, Paris, La Découverte, 1991, p.9.

<sup>52</sup> Bernard Lugan, *Afrique, bilan de la décolonisation*, Périn, 1996, p.18.

<sup>53</sup> Alain Ruscio, *Le credo de l’Homme Blanc : regards coloniaux français*, Editions complexe, 2002, p.20.

painful considerations. This seemed to target overcoming the fantasy of cultural authenticity as well as a reconciliation between European and African people, around the colonial past. However, this development comes up against popular protests linked to a too marked presence of figures of colonialism in the landscape of urban monuments in the city of Douala. Therefore, because of unconcealed memory tensions, projects to enhance the vestiges of colonialism, through the creation of intentional monuments, faced opposition from a fringe of the population of Douala.

Beyond addressing the issue of colonial built remains' integration into the historical urban heritage of Douala, this reflection touches on the question of the writing of colonial history by Africans, strongly impacted by the struggle for independence. Thus, the elements of colonial architecture can serve as sources of colonial history. The infrastructural imprint of colonialism bears witness to the contribution of colonial systems in physically shaping the city of Douala. Proving this multilevel importance of the colonial built remains in the history and historical heritage of the city of Douala is among the objectives underpinning this thesis.

## **VI- Objectives**

Three major objectives guide this research. First, the thesis demonstrates the historical meanings and significance of built remains inherited from colonial systems in Douala. The building, be it a house, a road or port infrastructure, is an architectural product, an expression of its designers' and builders' know-how. It is a result of the genius of construction techniques, including the extraction, production or transformation of the necessary materials. The architectural creation also reflects a part of the relationship between Man and his natural environment, which he tries to domesticate and transform to provide shelter, a safe space or protection against the weather or the attacks of animals. To this end, far from being strictly functional or anthropological, contrary to a certain perception of so-called vernacular architecture, architectural creation mixes function with aesthetics. Beyond transforming the living environment, architecture stimulates a landscape that marks the imprint of Man on his environment. From a mainly technical point of view, the study of the infrastructure erected by the colonial administrators provides information on the materials used, their provenance, their moulding to the local conditions for the implementation of infrastructure projects. The building is therefore, like other sources, a relevant material for the study of history. In this regard, this thesis demonstrates that the built remains of colonialism in Douala, by their form, their technical

quality, and their aesthetic aspect, constitute inseparable elements of the historical heritage of the city.

The second objective underlying the study is to highlight the various tensions around the colonial remains, whose lack of conciliation further complicates the prospects of their enhancement. These tensions result from memorial trends, divergent and even contradictory meanings, emerging from the interpretation of the colonial past. Inspired by the dissonant heritage approach, these tensions are highlighted based on the prior identification of the stakeholders and the study of the possible meanings for each of them.

The third objective of the thesis is to propose an appropriate methodology for the enhancement of the historical sites of colonialism. This proposal involves the assessment of the approaches mobilized as part of the dissonant legacies.

## **VII- Methodology**

This thesis is a result of a multidisciplinary approach, based on various information gathered from books, papers, university thesis, magazines, archives, and observation. During a stay in Cameroon, hosted by the Community Research and Development Centre (COREDEC), many days served for the observation of colonial buildings in Douala. The evolution of the city, the weak awareness of the importance of the historical buildings, together with many other challenges, did not ease physical identification of colonial architecture. The methodology of the observation is based on the industrial archaeology, defined as a specific sum of methods applied to the studies of industrial remains<sup>54</sup>. Industrial archaeology emerged in the 1960s<sup>55</sup>, from concerns around new territories of heritage, especially the remains of industries and industrial activities, including memories of workers, production systems, industrial buildings and products. For many researchers, heritage studies, largely focused on monuments up to recent years, did not develop suitable methods to the enhancement of this specific type of heritage. Industrial archaeology, therefore, comprises the observation of the sites, research in the archives of the enterprise, the study of machines, the reconstruction of workers memory and history, the anthropology of industrial products among others. Jacques Payen claims that:

“l’archéologie industrielle élargit la notion de patrimoine culturel, elle y introduit de nouveaux objets de curiosité et de contemplation non moins du reste que de recherche. Ces objets nouveaux s’insèrent

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<sup>54</sup> Marina Gasnier, “New ways for industrial archaeology”, in *Journal of the History of Technology*, No8, Vol.2, 2020, <http://journals.openedition.org/ephaistos/7997>, 14/04/2021.

<sup>55</sup> Serge Chassagne, “L’élargissement D’un Concept: De L’archéologie (Industrielle) Au Patrimoine (Industriel)”, in *Le Mouvement Social*, No. 199, 2002, Pp. 7–9.

dans la trame des monuments historiques traditionnels et l'archéologie industrielle cherche également, si c'est encore possible, à en assurer la sauvegarde et la réhabilitation<sup>56</sup> (industrial archaeology broadens the notion of cultural heritage, it introduces new objects of curiosity and contemplation, not less for the rest than for research. These new objects fit into the fabric of traditional historical monuments and industrial archaeology also seeks, if it is still possible, to ensure their safeguard and rehabilitation).

In the following definition by Denis Woronof, the industrial archaeology, appears clearly as a method for the study of heritage sites: "L'archéologie industrielle se définit d'abord par un site. Plus précisément, c'est l'étude d'une activité de fabrication dans un site. Il s'agit donc d'une démarche de terrain, attentive surtout aux relations entre un espace et un travail<sup>57</sup> " (Industrial archeology is first defined by a site. More precisely, it is the study of a manufacturing activity in a site. It is therefore a field approach, attentive above all to the relationship between a space and a work).

The industrial archaeology as method is applicable to the study of architectural colonial remains. Buildings are considered here not only as sites, but also as industrial products, the construction and use of which are an integral part of the memory of the places they occupy. On this basis, our approach consisted in collecting and analysing information from written, iconographic and oral sources.

As regards written sources, they are made up of primary sources and secondary sources. Among primary sources, various archives have been collected and interpreted, especially from the National Archives of Yaoundé (ANY), the Diplomatic Archives of France (ADF) and the Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer (ANOM). The diversity and relevance of these archives' sources reside in the coverage they offer of the entire relevant period of the colonial history of the city of Douala. Indeed, the archives of the German period were transferred to the national archives of Yaoundé. Although other archives, in particular German companies, could be of interest, their exclusion, due to the constraints linked to the Coronavirus pandemic, cannot be of notable impact on the quality of our resources. In addition, legislative texts were collected from the Ministry of Arts and Culture and completed the category of primary sources. Also, magazines, newspapers and online press publications provided first-hand information, particularly on perceptions of parts of the colonial history of the city of Douala.

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<sup>56</sup> Jacques Payen, "A propos de l'archéologie industrielle", in *Revue d'histoire des sciences*, Nos 35, Vol.2, 1982, Pp.158-162.

<sup>57</sup> Denis Woronof, "L'archéologie industrielle en France en France : un nouveau chantier", in *Histoire, économie & société*, No8, Vol.3, 1989, Pp.447-458.



Regarding secondary sources, a rich bibliography exists both online and in various libraries. This abundant literature consists of books, university papers, dissertations and thesis, conference proceedings, as well as unpublished documents. The documents consulted were selected based on their connection with the various themes underlying our reflection, considering publications in the fields of heritage science, history, history of technology, architecture, urban history, political science, and memory studies in relation with the colonial buildings in Douala. Many Libraries and research centres helped to collect these resources.

First, in Italy, the DAFIST library and the central library of the University of Genoa provided access to various historiographical and theoretical resources. The same applies to the biblioteca G. Manzini (in Genoa) and the library of the History Department of the University of Padua. The libraries of Paris have been the richest and most diversified in documentation on our subject. Bibliothèque Sainte Geneviève, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Bibliothèque du Centre Malher (University of Paris 1 Pantheon Sorbon), the Bibliothèque du Centre François Mitterrand and Bibliothèque de la Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine are among the visited libraries in Paris. In Cameroon, the library of the Center for Research and Community Development (COREDEC) and the *Fondation Paul Ango Ela* in Yaounde have been very useful for our topic. One of the difficulties encountered is linked to the abundance of documentation on colonial history, but a scarcity of information concerning colonial architecture in Douala.

To complete the written data thus collected, we had recourse to audio recordings, oral sources to be distinguished from the Oral Tradition. These are interviews and speeches, the analysis of which allowed us to build our thought by considering the various positions and opinions. Oral data is an important resource for the study of cultural heritage in Africa<sup>58</sup>. The narratives of various episodes of colonization help reconstitute historical facts. They are also important trends of colonial memories, as they could be affected by ideologies (anticolonialism for example) as well oblivion<sup>59</sup>. Storyteller benefit from freedom of narration, while the researcher must combine oral data with the constraints of scientific liability<sup>60</sup>. Iba Der Thiam defines a specific methodology for accurate use of oral History in Scientific research<sup>61</sup>. These

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<sup>58</sup> Jan Vansina, *De la tradition orale, essai de méthode historique*, Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, 1961, 179p.

<sup>59</sup> Jan Vansina, "Memory and Oral Tradition", in *The African Past Speaks*, edited By J. Miller, Folkestone, Eng, Dason, 1980, Pp. 262-269.

<sup>60</sup> Augusto Palombini, "Storytelling and telling history. Towards a grammar of narratives for Cultural Heritage dissemination in the Digital Era", in *Journal of Cultural Heritage*, Vol.24, 2017, Pp.134-139.

<sup>61</sup> Iba Der Thiam, "La tradition orale: source privilégiée de l'histoire africaine", <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/9783111557250-010/html>, 24/05/2021.

analyses call on the researcher to make careful use of oral sources. In this regard, we limited ourselves to interviews previously carried out for other research needs, especially by discriminating based on the quality of the respondents. Thus, interviews, speeches and other recordings on audio supports were analysed and confronted to other resources to build the reflection that structures this Thesis.

## **VIII- Presentation Plan**

The information collected was analysed and served to build the presentation plan below. The first chapter presents the concept of dissonant heritage as well as its application to the built remains of colonialism. It highlights the evolution of the concept in time and space, moving from the framework of the Transatlantic Slavery Trade, colonial (settlement) systems, the remains of the Holocaust to those of the wars in Central Europe, especially countries known as the Balkans. This Chapter also underlines the limits of the concept of dissonant heritage as well as its various applications to the enhancement of historical remains. It ends up with a proposed methodology for the heritagization of the built remains of colonialism, drawing inspiration from dissonant heritage approaches.

The second chapter briefly presents the colonial systems in Cameroon, with an emphasis on the city of Douala. At the core of this chapter is, debate surrounding the status of Cameroon, with regard to international regimes of the Mandate and Trusteeship that replaced the German protectorate. It presents elements that aim to help the understanding of colonial memory in Cameroon in general and in Douala in particular. Also, it presents in turn the German period, the transition to the Franco-British condominium, and finally the French administrative model of Cameroon. The evocation of the struggles for independence completes this short presentation of the colonial history of Cameroon.

Chapter three is devoted to the analysis of the urban footprint of colonial systems in the city of Douala. Starting from the architectural changes induced by urban planning projects imagined and implemented by successive colonial administrations, the chapter gives an interpretation of the built remains of colonialism, from a symbolic, historical, and anthropological point of view, among others. Furthermore, one of the underlying objectives of this chapter is to highlight the importance of the colonial architecture in the urban landscape, and consequently in the historical heritage of the city of Douala.

As for the fourth chapter, it is structured around the elements that explain the difficult appropriation in Douala, of the built remains of colonial systems. It demonstrates the apprehension by a fringe of African nationalists, of European colonial systems. It also reveals different levels of interpretation of the built remains of colonialism, ranging from claims of appropriation of urban public heritage connected to colonial history, to local competitive memories issued from ethnic instrumentation. Finally, this chapter highlights elitist initiatives to promote the urban colonial heritage in Douala, advocating the preservation of colonial memory or the rewriting of the colonial history.

Regarding the fifth chapter, it examines the question of the relations between the imperial powers and their respective colonial pasts in Cameroon. It highlights the divergent positions which animate internal opinions in Germany and France, in relation to the colonial past. These positions are dominated by attempts at erasure or selective oblivion based on a “national shame”, the propensities to idealize the colonial past as well as disempowerment of all accusations relating to the negative impact of colonial systems in Cameroon. These approaches to the colonial past reveal contradictions with the heavy tendencies of collective memories of colonialism in Cameroon.

## **Chapter I**

# **Dissonant Heritage: Methods and Approaches to the Enhancement of Historic sites**

This chapter aims at highlighting the meanings of dissonant heritage, its theoretical evolution, the approaches mobilized to the enhancement of dissonant heritage sites, and a prospective methodology to the heritagization of colonial historical sites in Africa, with a focus on the city of Douala. The paradigm of dissonant heritage appeared in Heritage and Tourism studies, to qualify specific historical sites. Various historic sites have been attracting heritage professionals who seek innovative and attractive new sites for brand's marketing as well as for an integrative approach to all kinds of memory sites. This falls in line with growing contributions of the heritage economy to the development of cities. Among these sites, those connected to hard or difficult memories are considered as the new horizons of heritage and heritage tourism, for the description of which the concepts of dark or thana tourism<sup>1</sup> have occurred. In this regard, what is the heuristic content of the dissonant heritage paradigm? How has this paradigm evolved in historiography and the current literature? To which extent this conceptual paradigm could suit to qualify the colonial built remains in Africa, especially in Douala?

## **I. Content and Experimentation of the Concept of Dissonant Heritage**

Dissonant heritage as a concept needs to be deeply explained, in its different meanings, how it inspired many other cases of heritage management as well as critical regards that highlight its theoretical limits.

### **A. Dissonant Heritage: Concept and its Limits**

In this subsection, the objective is to present how the concept of dissonant emerged and its meanings, notably the heritage of atrocities or heritage directly connected to hard, difficult, rejected, unwanted and wounded memories.

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<sup>1</sup> Dark tourism can be defined as touristic activities connected with historic sites of violence, disaster, atrocity, or tragedy. It is an evolving concept in tourism studies, as offering new places to visitors, with different experiences. For further details: Philip Stone & Richard Sharpley, "Consuming dark tourism: A Thanatological Perspective", in *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol.35, Issue 2, 2008, Pp. 574-595; Richard Sharpley & Philip R. Stone (Eds), *The Darker Side of Travel, the Theory and Practice of Dark Tourism*, Channel View Publications, 2009; Duncan Light, "Progress in dark tourism and thanatourism research: An uneasy relationship with heritage tourism", in *Tourism management*, Vol.61, 2017, Pp. 275-301; Natalija Minić, "Development of „Dark” Tourism in the Contemporary Society", in *Journal of Geographical Institute of "Jovan Cvijić" SASA*, No62, 2012, Pp.81-103.

## 1. From Expanding Meanings to Discrepancies in Heritage

The notion of "dissonant heritage" is developed in a book published in 1996 by Tunbridge<sup>2</sup> and Ashworth<sup>3</sup>. The co-authors were inspired by the observation of the existence of divergences in the perceptions and relations between various actors or interest groups and certain types of heritage sites<sup>4</sup>. In fact, the 1990s was a theoretical turning point in the social sciences. The end of the Cold War has led to a kind of obsolescence of the centrality of the state in theoretical approaches, in favor of approaches that involve other actors, previously considered peripheral<sup>5</sup>. In the field of heritage studies, this theoretical evolution is marked by the consideration of the role of various actors, including tourists, cultural promoters, and interest groups<sup>6</sup>. This evolution revealed that heritage, beyond its cultural and historical value, as well as its role in connecting people and building nation-states, has gained more functions to become not just "a relic of the past but an increasingly instrumental field in steering sustainable development and the well-being of communities, very often through tourism<sup>7</sup>".

This conceptual development has thus made it difficult to find a precise and simple definition of heritage, since it encompasses many aspects of the social, political and economic

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<sup>2</sup> John E. Tunbridge is a Professor Emeritus of the Carlton University, a graduate from Cambridge and Bristol University, respectively with a master's degree and a Ph.D. His research interests include tourist-historic cities, heritage tourism and the geography of heritage. He has been visiting Professor in many Universities in the UK and the University of Perth in Australia. He is also member of the Canadian Association of Geographers and the Institute of British Geographers.

<sup>3</sup> Gregory Ashworth is a Professor of Heritage Management and Urban Tourism at the University of Groningen (the Netherlands) since 1994. He is a graduate with a PhD from the University of London and a Master of Philosophy from the University of Reading. He published many papers and books in heritage and heritage tourism, some of them co-authored by J. E. Tunbridge.

<sup>4</sup> The pioneer book on the topic is published in 1996, followed by evolving historiography in heritage studies and heritage tourism studies. Refer to J. E. Tunbridge & G. J. Ashworth, *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict*, Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 1996.

<sup>5</sup> The transnationalism appeared as a paradigm widely used in social sciences. In considers, for example, in the studies of migrations, the connections developed between diasporas, non-state groups and international organisations. Migration specialists recognize an essential input in taking these actors to better analyse migration issues. Further details: Liza Mígge; "Transnationalism as a Research Paradigm and its Relevance for Integration", in Blanca Garcés-Mascareñas & Rinus Penninx (Eds), *Integration processes and policies in Europe: Contexts, Levels and Actors*, IMISCOE Research Series, 2016, Pp.129-125; Khagram and al., "Towards a Field of Transnational Studies and a Sociological Transnationalism Research Program", in *Hauser Center for Non-profit Organizations Working Paper* No. 24. , 2004, <https://ssrn.com/abstract=556993>, 17/04/2020.

<sup>6</sup> This epistemic evolution is in line with Marxism theory in History and democratic approaches to heritage, which target larger involvement of stakeholders for a better management of heritage sites. Regarding precisely democratic approach to heritage, the last section of this chapter will provide further details.

<sup>7</sup> Milena Dragicevic Sestic & Ljiljana Rogac Mijatovic, "Balkan Dissonant Heritage Narratives (and Their Attractiveness) for Tourism", *American Journal of Tourism Management*, No 3 (1B), 2014, Pp. 10-19.

lives of peoples. In a paper published in 2011, Cryton Zazu examines the conceptual difficulty of defining the notion of heritage, with several levels of understanding. At the level of an individual for example, heritage is often perceived as the sum of precious objects and value accumulated over time. It is sometimes a family treasure, in that it contains a legacy of parents or ancestors. At the national level however, “heritage is often perceived as a resource for promoting national sovereignty, unified identity and economic development<sup>8</sup>”. In current literature, in the face of difficulties in finding a consensual definition of the concept of heritage, authors have often decided to add adjectives to the concept, to refer it to the notion of cultural heritage, natural heritage, etc. Others have melted behind the dichotomy that often pits material heritage against intangible heritage. These difficulties reflect, in fact, a dissonant evolution, largely because of the different uses and functions of heritage sites.

With these developments of the functions attached to heritage as tourism motor, narratives play a key role in heritage consumption, connecting “consumers” to the product (heritage sites), and to its history. Narratives, be it factual or fiction, target objectives underpinning the enhancement of the heritage site, conceived on the basis of the historical elements. In the conception of these narratives, Milena Dragicevic and Ljiljana Rogac Mijatovic consider “very important to stress that the national narratives are constructed in ways that are silencing certain historical phenomena that are not compatible with the given ideological frame and selecting only the suitable ones<sup>9</sup>”. These narratives refer to and draw their source from the collective perceptions of the object or site of which they tell the story. This is partisan construction that contributes in the process of heritage commodification.

Affording further explanations, Tunbridge and Ashworth claim that the increasingly expanding meaning of heritage encompasses aspects such as commercial ones and consequently, leads to the obsolescence of some approaches to its enhancement and its management. For heritage managers, these expanding meanings constitute a challenge and a dilemma as to the philosophy or goals that support the preservation of heritage sites. For the public, the polysemy consubstantial with the word ‘heritage’ induces tensions in the interpretation of the historical sites. It is such contradictions that Ashworth and Tunbridge encapsulate in the following definition of ‘dissonance’: “These contested interpretations of

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<sup>8</sup> Cryton Zazu, “Heritage – A Conceptually Evolving and Dissonant Phenomenon: Implications for Heritage Management and Education Practices in Post-colonial Southern Africa”, in *Southern African Journal of Environmental Education*, Vol. 28, 2011, Pp. 135-143.

<sup>9</sup> Milena Dragicevic Sesic & Ljiljana Rogac Mijatovic, *cited*.

objects, places, events, persons or practices from the past create dissonance and challenge the dominant perception of heritage as connected to comfortable, harmonies and consensual views about the meaning of the past<sup>10</sup>”. Dissonance in heritage “refers to the discordance or lack of agreement and consistency to the meaning of heritage<sup>11</sup>” The idea underpinning the dissonance in heritage is that heritage is by nature, someone’s. Heritagization process means inheriting something by disinheriting someone else. It means a competition over either its belonging, or its meaning:

“The idea of dissonance provides such a structuring concept in two ways. First, it keeps at the forefront the ideas of discrepancy and incongruity. Dissonance in heritage involves a discordance or a lack of agreement or consistency, which in turn immediately prompts the question, ‘between what elements does dissonance occur?’ This in turn allows a new classification to be constructed based on the types of dissonance. Secondly, the implicit analogy with musical harmony and its classification of disharmonious combinations of sound can be extended by an analogy drawn from psychology, which makes use of the idea of cognitive dissonance, a state of psychic tension caused by the simultaneous holding of mutually inconsistent attitudes or the existence of consonance between attitudes and behavior (...)”<sup>12</sup>”.

This dissonance is likely to emerge at three major levels, or stages of the life of a heritage site, especially in its commodification, in its place products and its interpretation. Dissonance in commodification of heritage sites refers to tensions relating to the memory and the history of the site. Generally, In the process of designing a cultural site, the promoters are made to choose between emphasizing generalities or particularities, homogeneity or heterogeneity. The choice is in fact guided both by the market (the expectations of consumers) and by the objectives underpinning the enhancement of the site. For example, to promote a seductive mediation discourse, easy to understand for tourists, the promoters choose the generalities. On the other hand, if the site aims to reinforce the territorial or national identity, the particularities are highlighted for their suitability to better captivate and retain the attention of the public. In this same logic, the choice of homogeneity could better captivate many consumers but would be more inclined to disinherit lower or disadvantaged classes, who may claim connection to the site. Therefore, Tunbridge and Ashworth conclude that:

“tensions arise through a failure to appreciate the existence of a segmented market, failure to target its diverse segments, or more usually a failure of the targeting strategies themselves to penetrate their intended market. In heritage marketing, this results in conflicts between different consumers

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<sup>10</sup> Visnja Kusic, *Governing Heritage Dissonance: promises and realities of selected cultural policies*, European Cultural Foundation, 2013, p.50.

<sup>11</sup> Aaron Yankholmes and Bob Mckercher, “Rethinking slavery heritage tourism”, in *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, Vol. 10, No3, 2015, Pp.233-247.

<sup>12</sup> Milena Dragicevic Sestic & Ljiljana Rogac, *cited*.



of the same product or between the expectations of the consumer and the experience delivered by the producer<sup>13</sup>”.

Regarding dissonance implicit to place products, it highlights the importance of the location of the historic site. This importance is well defined in the French concept of "Lieu Mémoire<sup>14</sup>", thus establishing a direct and inseparable connection between the place of the event, memory and history, which constitute the various visible and invisible components of the heritage site. Tensions arise because of concurrent uses of the place products, which could also be assemblages of diverse elements, including non-heritage. Furthermore, they exist within nested spatial scales that raise questions of the use of the scale.

The third level of dissonance, which is implicit in the content of messages, underlines the value of the communications on the heritage site, which emerges in the commercial or marketing spots, conceived as notices of presentation of the heritage site. These messages may comprise contradictory transmission, a failure in transmission, an obsolete transmission or an undesirable transmission.

By highlighting differences of opinion and relationships with the same historic site, the authors point out the importance of memory in the enhancement and management of historic sites. Indeed, as Anne Françoise Garçon points out, memory is the raw material on which the heritage researcher relies to highlight historical importance of a site or object<sup>15</sup>. In its primary understanding, history, as a discipline of the social sciences, as conceived by Herodotus<sup>16</sup>, is an accumulation of testimonies and narratives of past events<sup>17</sup>. The narratives are influenced by the socio-temporal framework, in the same way as the historian who questions them. Although individual, the narratives fit into a collective framework, to form what Maurice Halbwachs designates as “collective memory”: “The lived experiences of an individual can be remembered only within the social and group context to which that individual belongs. As

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<sup>13</sup> J. E. Tunbridge & G. J. Ashworth, *cited*, p.23

<sup>14</sup> The French concept of *Lieu-mémoire* emerged with Pierre Nora, in series of books published between 1984-1993, to analyse significant material or intangible places of the national history of France. It refers to places connected with history and identity of a territory. Elena Pirazzoli presents the evolution of that concept from France to Germany and Italy. Elena Pirazzoli, “Internement, déportation et sauvetage : Les lieux de la Shoah en Italie” (translated from Italian by Lea Drouet, in *Revue d’Histoire de la Shoah*, No206, 2017, pp.107-127 ; Pierre Nora, *Les Lieux de mémoire : la République, les France*. 3 volumes, Paris, Gallimard, 1997, 4751p.

<sup>15</sup> Anne-Françoise Garçon, “Le Patrimoine, antidote de la disparition ?”, *Historiens & Géographes No 405*, 2009, Pp. 105-114.

<sup>16</sup> Jacques Le Goff, *Histoire et mémoire*, Gallimard Editions, 1988, p.20.

<sup>17</sup> This assertion is now out of date, due to the emergence of several historic schools. Historical science can thus be defined as the interpretation and reconstruction of facts, from documents and testimonies of various natures. It is a science of accumulation of data, explanation and interpretation of facts at the same time.

a result, the individual is able to remember or forget particular events of the past by relying on the framework of social memory<sup>18</sup>”. The concept of “collective memory” refers to the filtered sum of individual or collective experiences lived and transmitted within the framework of a social group<sup>19</sup>. This implies, when the same story is shared by several groups, that each group depending on its role, has its “collective memory”, which can diverge from that of the others. Thus, collective memories, sometimes competitive memories, around the same historic site, produce the elements of dissonance noted by Tunbridge and Ashworth.

With regard to the above-mentioned point, “dissonant heritage” as a concept “provides both a tool of description and a guide to planning interventions<sup>20</sup>”. It finds all its meaning in heritage site connected to atrocities.

## 2. The Paradigm of Dissonant Heritage in the Heritage of Atrocities

Tunbridge and Ashworth stress on the fact that the discrepancies highlighted above are more notorious in the cases of the enhancement and management of heritage sites connected to history of atrocities. They define atrocity as “acts of singular cruelty, wickedness or ruthlessness deliberately perpetrated by people against victims<sup>21</sup>”. In this definition of atrocity, not all acts of violence could make history sites become a site of dissonant heritage. In fact, Annett Neugebauer underlines some conditions to fulfil in order to range an act in the categories of atrocities. These conditions include:

- The existence of a human perpetrator and a human victim;
- The act should be mindful, deliberate and conceived against innocent victims;
- The unusual character of the act, with regard to its scale.

Also, Tunbridge and Ashworth create a difference between ordinary suffering and atrocities by categorizing the latter in two classes: the general categories of atrocities and special categories of atrocities; each of them encompassing the following elements.

**Figure 1 : categories of atrocities**

<b>General categories</b>	<b>Special categories</b>
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<sup>18</sup> Aaron Yankholmes and Bob Mckercher, *Cited*.

<sup>19</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *La mémoire collective*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1997, p. 98.

<sup>20</sup> J. E. Tunbridge & G. J. Ashworth, *Cited.*, p.21.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, p.20.

Natural and Accidental Disasters	Persecution and Judicial Process
Broad Group Atrocity	Massacre
War as atrocity: Atrocity in war	Genocide

**Source:** Annett Neugebauer, *Pro-active Dissonant Heritage Management: Reducing Discordances at Sites of Atrocity*, Saarbruck, VDM Verlag Dr Müller Aktiengesellschaft & Co, 2009, p.07.

This definition calls for the need to consider the existence and the involvement of various interest groups, among which victims, perpetrators of the incriminated acts, communities on the territory in which the site is located, tourism promoters among others, in the enhancement of dissonant heritage sites. Each of these stakeholders will be likely to promote his connection to the site during its enhancement and management. The examples that Tunbridge and Ashworth focus on to support this assertion, as mentioned above, are the Transatlantic Slavery Trade Sites, the concentration camps and the post-colonial heritage in Africa.

Regarding the Transatlantic Slavery Trade, it is recognized as a crime that hindered African development, with concrete effects on some regions<sup>22</sup>. From the 17<sup>th</sup> to the early beginnings of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many Africans have been deported from their continent to work in American colonies, without option of freedom. With the emergence of Human Rights, this human trade is banned. Nonetheless, the issue of the assessment of its consequences on Africa is still pending, because of the lack of information. Nevertheless, some authors, among whom Jean-Michel Deveau, evaluate the number of Africans deported, during the 18<sup>th</sup> century only, from ten to twenty million<sup>23</sup>. Beyond the numbers, the treatment of slaves constitutes another aspect of memories surrounding the transatlantic slavery trade. The treatment inflicted on the slaves during the journey and on the fields in South America is described as horrible. Many slaves passed away before reaching the American continent.

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<sup>22</sup> Among the most studied cases are some cities in Western Africa, where slavery ports are part of national monuments. Refer to the paper by Abdoulaye Bathily, “La Traite Atlantique des Esclaves et ses Effets économiques et sociaux en Afrique: le Cas du Galam, Royaume de l’Hinterland Sénégalais au dix-huitième Siècle”, in *The Journal of African History*, Vol.27, 1986, Pp 269 – 291 ; Nassirou Bako Arifari ; “La mémoire de la traite négrière dans le débat politique au Bénin dans les années 1990”, in *Journal des Africanistes*, No70, 2000, Pp. 221-231.

<sup>23</sup> Jean-Michel Deveau, “La traite négrière atlantique”, in *Dix-huitième siècle*, No33, 2001, Pp. 49-61. Precise data regarding are provided by Jean-Claude Nardin, “Encore des chiffres, la traite négrière pendant la première moitié du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle”, in *Outre-Mer. Revue d’histoire*, No 209, 1970, Pp. 421-446; Charles Becker, “A Note on the Figures of the French Atlantic Slave Trade in the 18th Century”, in *Cahiers d’Études Africaines*, Vol. 26, 1986, Pp. 633-679.

They seemed less important than goods, as their cost could be as low as just a piece of salt. Upon arrival, they are submitted to the *Black Code*, which better helps understand their condition *in situ*. The slave's way of life is severely codified, with punishments and death sentence in some cases. For example, "A fugitive slave in flight for one month will have his ears cut off and be branded on the shoulder, the second time on the other shoulder, for the third offence the punishment is death<sup>24</sup>". All these conditions constitute elements of atrocities as described above by Tunbridge and Ashworth.

In the 1990s, tourists and researchers' interests for sites connected to the history of the Transatlantic Slavery Trade were growing, contributing to shaping an "African memory of Slavery<sup>25</sup>". The Castle of Elmina in Ghana, built in 1482 by a Portuguese slave merchant, is among the most visited touristic sites connected to slave trade in the West African coasts and constitutes an example of local commitment to the preservation of historic sites in Africa<sup>26</sup>. For example, in 1993, 17091 tourists were registered on this site, dispatched in organized tourist groups and individual visitors from America, Europe and Africa. This increasing number of tourists attracted researchers to question the interpretation, the cultural mediation discourse and the political objective behind the preservation of this historical site. On one hand, Ghanaians, targeting the economic profit of the enhancement of the castle, expressed a will to make it more attractive, including its restoration. In their presentation of the castle, they focus on its long history, its different uses over the history of the country and its function as a site of memory. On the other hand, Black Americans want it to be preserved as authentic as possible, so that it reflects its role of cemetery of the slavery. Other tourists on their part, expect a presentation that connects them to their own history:

"Dutch tourists are interested in the two centuries of Dutch rule in Elmina Castle, the Dutch cemetery in the town, and the old Dutch colonial buildings. British tourists want to hear about colonial rule in the Gold Coast. Many Ashanti people have a special interest in the rooms where the Asantehene, their king Prempeh I, was imprisoned in Elmina Castle in 1896, after the defeat of the Ashanti forces by the British army. The king was later exiled to the Seychelles Islands and only returned to Ghana in 1924. He is important to all Ghanaians as a representation of resistance to British colonialism<sup>27</sup>".

The enhancement of Transatlantic Slavery Trade Sites involves among others the descendants of slaves, the descendants of enslavers and finally the communities in whose

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<sup>24</sup> William Renwick Riddell, "Le Code Noir", in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol.10, No.3, 1925, Pp. 321-329.

<sup>25</sup> Yogita Goya, "African Atrocity, American Humanity: Slavery and Its Transnational Afterlives", in *Research in African Literatures*, Vol. 45, No. 3, 2014, Pp. 48-71.

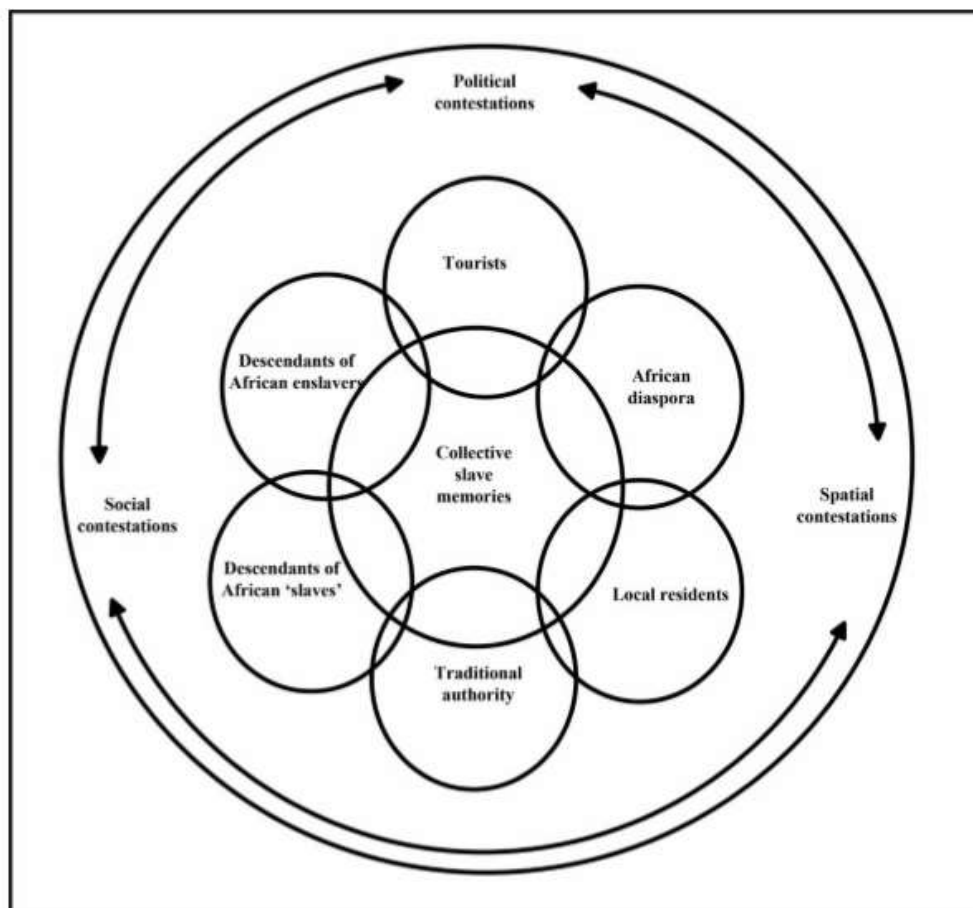
<sup>26</sup> Sandra Bruku, "Community Engagement in Historic Site Protection: Lessons from the Elmina Castle Project in Ghana", in *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites*, Volume 17, 2015, Pp.67-76.

<sup>27</sup> Edward M. Bruner, "Tourism in Ghana: The Representation of Slavery and the Return of the Black Diaspora", in *American Anthropologist*, No 98, 1996, Pp. 290-304.

territory the site in question is located. In the face of this multitude of interested actors, it is worth noting that each actor has a grid of interpretation that fits not only with the role of his ancestors in the history of the site, but also the philosophy which animates it in the interpretation of the latter. Therefore, while the descendants of slaves require to emphasize the hard memory of the slavery-related sites in the communication surrounding them, other actors would seem more inclined to focus on different considerations that could lead to forget the atrocities of the slavery trade.

The memory surrounding the sites of this human trade involves the merchants (Europeans and some African accomplices), the victims (African communities in general, slave descendants in America)<sup>28</sup> as represented in the figure below.

**Figure 2 : Conceptual Framework on Multiple Contested Collective Slave Memories**



**Source:** Aaron Yankholmes and Bob Mckercher, “Rethinking slavery heritage tourism”, in *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, Vol. 10, No3, 2015, Pp.233-247.

<sup>28</sup> Aaron Yankholmes and Bob Mckercher, *cited*.

This figure presents at least three levels or natures of tensions surrounding the management of Transatlantic Slavery Trade sites: Social contestations, spatial contestations, and political contestations. These tensions emerge from various actors: Traditional authorities, descendants of African slaves, residents, African diaspora, descendants of enslavers and tourists. Their connection to the site constitutes its collective memories.

In designing a project for their enhancement, local communities, which could be direct descendants of slaves or not, as well as tourist and cultural promoters should also be involved as interest groups. The core consideration of dissonant heritage approaches is therefore towards touristic enhancement of historical sites, which is a restrictive approach to heritage.

However, the concept of dissonant heritage seems superficial in its theoretical frame, and thus leaves researchers a wide spectrum of use, which sometimes distorts its specificity.

### **3. Theoretical Limits of the Concept of Dissonant Heritage**

The concept of Dissonant Heritage takes into consideration, all divergent opinions that could lead to tensions in the management of heritage sites. If the illustrative cases used by Tunbridge and Ashworth support these tensions, it remains that the concept itself finds its limits in the imprecisions of the constitutive elements of dissonance. Consequently, it extends to historical frameworks of latent dissonances like contested or rejected identities. It also denotes a reductionist vision of the functions of heritage, notably limited to tourism.

#### **a. Wide Theoretical Meanings**

In a nutshell, Dissonant Heritage refers to historical sites with hard memories of atrocities. This definition leaves a wide range of interpretations, with possibilities of applying the concept to various historical sites, assuring to take into consideration, opinions of all stakeholders.

Taking into consideration the opinions of various interest groups is also part of the findings by Bruce and Creighton, regarding European town walls and walled towns considered as dissonant heritage<sup>29</sup>. To better explain why they consider European town walls

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<sup>29</sup> David Bruce & Oliver Creighton, "Contested Identities: The Dissonant Heritage of European Town Walls and Walled Towns", *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, Vol. 12, NO 3, Pp. 234-254.

and walled towns as a dissonant heritage, they highlight the debate surrounding their preservation. On one hand, these historical relics recall difficult periods of the past and therefore represent a hard memory to some communities. They are relics of war periods that preceded the construction of the walls, the limited delineation of the city as well as they freeze the “footprints” of hard antique periods referring to spatial and social cohesion of the city. On the other hand, they symbolize “irreplaceable ‘timestones’ of history” that deserve to be treasured and preserved from any destruction. The same method seems to have guided Jelena Pavlicic in a paper applying dissonant heritage theory to Serbian monuments in Kosovo. After the independence of Kosovo, the process of construction of a national identity led to an alteration of meanings and significance of some historical monuments, especially those connected to Serbia. Although some of these monuments are on the World Heritage List, they seem to be neglected and then considered by UNESCO as a heritage in danger. In the meantime, others are suffering from an ideological interpretation<sup>30</sup>. For example, on the visitor’s brochure conceived and offered by local authorities of Prizren, many important elements of architectural heritage of the city have not been taken into consideration. The arguments of Magdalena Banaszekiewicz concerning the role of “crazy Tours” in shaping new meanings of communist heritage in Poland joint fundamental elements of the dissonant heritage approaches, that focus also on the use of heritage sites. She explains the emergence of “Crazy Tours” by the need for re-discovering the communist heritage and grey areas “on the tourist map of Central and Eastern Europe, which are often regarded as exotic and attractive by Western tourists<sup>31</sup>”.

From the paradigm of Dissonant Heritage, many other concepts emerged either to describe the reconciliation process with the past, or to highlight tensions around specific historical sites. One of these concepts is *Difficult Heritage*.

Difficult Heritage is a concept that appears in the studies of the preservation and the enhancement the remains of the Nazi regime in Germany, taking into consideration the controversies and concerns raised by these historical sites. This debate concerned, among others, the headquarters of the Hitler Party in Nuremberg. For Juan Carlos Barrientos, “the term is usually descriptive of the general compromise as well as a concrete responsibility by

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<sup>30</sup> Jelena Pavlicic, “Dissonant heritage and promotion of tourism in the case of Serbian medieval monuments in Kosovo”, *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, No 14, 2016, Pp. 1-17.

<sup>31</sup> Magdalena Banaszekiewicz, “A dissonant heritage site revisited-the case of Nowa Huta in Krakow”, *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, Vol. 15, No 02, 2017, Pp 185-197.

the state and the society in general towards creating a comprehensive understanding of this past to overcome it<sup>32</sup>". Sharon Macdonald can be considered as the author of the concept. She defines Difficult Heritage "as a past that is recognized as meaningful in the present but that is also contested and awkward for public reconciliation with a positive, self-affirming contemporary identity<sup>33</sup>". She claims that this concept is much more restricted than that of dissonant heritage. In this regard, she distinguishes the sites of perpetration of atrocious acts from related sites, the link of which remains established indirectly with the painful past. In this register are elements of the architectural heritage of the National Socialist Party. In particular, through the enhancement process of the buildings of this fascist party in Nuremberg, Sharon Macdonald highlights the efforts exerted in favour of the reconciliation with the Nazi past in Nuremberg. Beyond being historical remains, the architectural design of these grounds reflects the Nazi Ideology, in their conception and construction. This perception turned them into places of shame for public memories<sup>34</sup>. Nazi Party Rally Grounds have been protected under the Bavarian State Historic Preservation Law of 1973. This preservation dynamic, reflected in a significant evolution of the regulatory framework as well as construction and restoration initiatives, has not been positively received by the entire population of Nuremberg. Tourist promoters, for example, faced a dilemma, which is meaningful of the difficult of the Nazi past. "On the one hand, if they included the site in brochures, maps or tourist itineraries they looked at as though they were trying to hide or ignore the Nazi past. On the other hand, if they included it, they risked looking as though they were regarding it as just another heritage attraction – part of the 'local colour' available for tourist consumption. This could be accused of 'normalization'<sup>35</sup>". Long debate therefore, around the strategies of profanation adopted to cope with this dilemma. The same is true with subsequent preservation approaches, among which reconversion into shopping center. In this

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<sup>32</sup> Juan Carlos Barrientes, "Analysis of a Difficult Heritage from an Ideology of Violence. Case Study: The Nazi Party Rally Grounds in Nurember",

[https://www.academia.edu/38556444/Analysis\\_of\\_a\\_Difficult\\_Heritage\\_from\\_an\\_Ideology\\_of\\_Violence\\_Case\\_Study\\_the\\_Nazi\\_Party\\_Rally\\_Grounds\\_in\\_Nuremberg](https://www.academia.edu/38556444/Analysis_of_a_Difficult_Heritage_from_an_Ideology_of_Violence_Case_Study_the_Nazi_Party_Rally_Grounds_in_Nuremberg), 27/04.2021.

<sup>33</sup> Sharon Macdonald, *Difficult Heritage. Negotiating the Nazi Past in Nuremberg and Beyond*, Routledge, 2009, p.1.

<sup>34</sup> Refer to : William Logan & Keir Reeves (Eds), *Places of Pain and Shame. Dealing with "Difficult Heritage"*, Routledge, 2009, 304p.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p.87.



regard, it appears that “Difficult Heritage” is a concept that describes the feeling of responsibility towards atrocities committed in the past, which pervades people directly linked to that past. The concept refers to the process of negotiating or reconciling with this painful past, often nourished on the basis of a feeling of shame. However, the concept doesn’t appear as appropriate enough to describe the colonial built remains in Douala, due to the fact that these remains are not located on the territory of the perpetrators of colonial crimes. Nonetheless, the concept of difficult heritage is applied to some colonial remains, especially in South Korea<sup>36</sup>. This testifies of possible expansion of its meaning to different cases, which could confuse with dissonant heritage.

Beyond the concept of difficult heritage, current literature has been developing with some nearly similar concepts, for instance, “contested heritage”, “negative heritage” and “enemy’s heritage” which all remind the ambiguous nature of their meaning for communities. In the dissonance, the relevance of the rejection of the historical sites sometimes seems to impose itself in consideration to be driven for the heritage site. Findings related to the ongoing debate about the future of the fascism-related monuments in Italy show a key example of dissonance in heritage, with competing narratives about that issue:

“members from the German-speaking right call for the removal or veiling of the monuments; Italian right-wing politicians want to maintain the status quo of the monuments; and left-wing Italian and German politicians and academics propose a ‘critical transformation’ and ‘active historicization’ of the monuments<sup>37</sup>”.

Based on the debate surrounding the future of Nazi remains, Elena Pirazzoli further illustrates the emergence of concepts like “memorial<sup>38</sup>” instead of “monument” to designate some Second World War remains in Germany. This concept symbolizes both the importance of safeguarding atrocity sites and interpreting them differently from festive commemoration<sup>39</sup>. The relevance of this concept of memorial resides in the theoretical approach that the author highlighted as a response to difficulties in putting together conflicting opinions and perceptions of historical sites that deserve enhancement. It goes beyond heritage tourism that seems difficult to depart from dissonant heritage.

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<sup>36</sup> Hyun Kyung Lee, *‘Difficult Heritage’ in Nation Building. South Korea and Post-Conflict Japanese Colonial Occupation Architecture*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, 313p.

<sup>37</sup> Johanna Mitterhofer, “Competing Narratives on the Future of Contested Heritage: A Case Study of Fascist Monuments in Contemporary South Tyrol, Italy”, *heritage & society*, Vol. 6, No.1, 2013, Pp. 46–61.

<sup>38</sup> Elena Pirazzoli, *A partire da ciò che resta: forme memoriali dal 1945 alle macerie del muro di Berlino*, Diabasis, 2010, 253p.

<sup>39</sup> Sharon Macdonald, *Cited*, 2009, p.9.

Analyzing the painful memories around the architecture of the communist period in several European cities, many authors have postulated the concept of Dissonant Heritage. Laura Ingerpau recalls the challenges imposed within the communist system in Estonia, to explain dissonance in socialist architecture. The collectivization of the farms leads to loss of property and deportations of workers to the community farms, known as "kolkhozes"<sup>40</sup> or "sovhozes"<sup>41</sup>. It also implies a change in habits within the village communities, which perceived the imposed change as a trauma. This difficult acceptance of the collective farm system reappears during the debates on the conversion of buildings from the Soviet era<sup>42</sup>.

Extreme cases of dissonance found similar echo to Hila Zaban who analyses the preservation of what she called "the enemy's architecture". She focused on the Palestinian heritage in the city of Jerusalem controlled by Israel within an ongoing conflict<sup>43</sup>. In this context, the war against both parties include the rejection of the monuments representing the belonging of the territory to the enemy. History is therefore challenged by the political context.

It is therefore clear that dissonant heritage is a concept that applies to any historical sites with hard, rejected, contested, wounded memories, and provides the proofs of atrocities as defined earlier. On top of that the concept itself is a restrictive approach to heritage management.

### **b. Dissonant Heritage as a Restrictive Approach to Heritage Management**

In analysis, the concept of "dissonant heritage" is an outstanding approach as it questions the enhancement of historical sites, the philosophy behind this enhancement, and at the same time the model of consubstantial communication, consequently the final uses of the historic sites. Indeed, Tunbridge and Ashworth make a clear and "important distinction between past as 'what happened', history as 'selective attempt to describe the past' and heritage as a 'contemporary product shaped from history' which is created through the processes of

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<sup>40</sup> According to the Britannica online dictionary, this term is an abbreviation of the Russian word *kollektivnoye khozyaynstvo* that means "collective farms". <https://www.britannica.com/topic/kolkhoz>, 12/12/2019.

<sup>41</sup> Sovhozes or Sovkhozes are defined in the Britannica online dictionary, as state-operated agricultural estate in the communist system. It is the abbreviation of the Russian word *Sovetskoe Khozyaystvo*. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/sovkhoz>, 12/12/2019.

<sup>42</sup> Laura Ingerpau, "Socialist architecture as today's dissonant heritage: administrative buildings of collective farms in Estonia", in *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, Vol. 24, 2018, Pp. 954-968.

<sup>43</sup> Hila Zaban, "Preserving 'the Enemy's' architecture: preservation and gentrification in a formerly Palestinian Jerusalem neighbourhood", *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, Vol. 23, 2017, Pp. 961-976.

selection and interpretation<sup>44</sup>”. It underlines a method of heritagization of historic sites, by first highlighting the actors likely to be involved and interested in the functionality of the heritage. Indeed, the approach of the authors mentioned above shows that the very strategy of the enhancement of the historical remains is defined according to the interest group. Starting from the preliminary requirement of the study, for the sensitization and appropriation, the interest groups impose themselves as main actors of each of these declensions in the heritagization process.

The idea of Ashworth and Tunbridge is to give a guarantee of a better enhancement and the management of heritage sites, taking into consideration the purpose and the objective behind the project of enhancement. However, these authors seem to prioritize tourism as the ultimate possible utilization of heritage sites. Most papers on dissonant heritage link heritage to tourism, while heritage experts agree that tourism is not the main purpose of the enhancement of historical sites. Enhancing a historical site supposes above all, an awareness of the disappearance of the memory of the site. In fact, heritage is an antidote of disappearance<sup>45</sup>. It's about keeping an object, a site or a landscape, and passing on the story to future generations. As such, heritage can serve as an educational tool. It could also represent local or national identity. By following the logic of the interests of the actors likely to exploit the heritage, it would be important to also take into consideration the professionals of education. A multitude of opinions would then interfere in the process of the enhancement of heritage sites, as it appears from the above-mentioned theoretical evolution of the concept of dissonant in the current historiography. This explains difficulties in its implementation, for the preservation of colonial remains in some African countries.

## **B. Ununified Approaches to Dissonant Colonial Heritage in Africa**

Colonial remains in Africa have different conservation policies, making it difficult to define a single orientation. In this section, colonial remains will be subject to the criteria of the dissonant heritage, in order to determine whether this concept applies to them. Then, examples of conservation policies will be presented, to demonstrate the need to define a specific approach to colonial heritage enhancement.

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<sup>44</sup> Visnja Kistic, *Cited*.

<sup>45</sup> Anne-Françoise Garçon, *Cited*.

## 1. Approaching Colonial Legacies in Douala as Dissonant Heritage

To simplify the concept, dissonant heritage notes the differences of opinion and appreciation, the lack of agreement over the meaning, significance, and historical function of a site. These discrepancies appear on the one hand, in the process of creating heritage through the transformation of historic sites. On the other hand, discrepancies arise in the management, consumption, and marketing of heritage sites. The colonial built remains in Douala meet this definition of dissonant heritage<sup>46</sup>. In the commodification process, it should be noted that most of the buildings are abandoned or used as such for functional needs (premises of administrative services, hospitals, schools, etc.). Many have suffered deterioration linked to the lack of a conservation policy, or destroyed for new housing or urban purposes, without highlighting their historical value. An outstanding example is the German railways, including the Central Station (Mittlebahn)<sup>47</sup>, all traces of which can only be identified in archives. Another interesting case is that of the construction project in Douala, of a monument in honour of Ruben Um Nyobe, which faced strong protests from the populations neighbouring its site. These examples show two levels of dissonance: dissonance around colonial history in general, and dissonance around the memory of local actors of the struggle for independence. Then, the management of the colonial sites in Douala faces challenges, which raises dissonances in their acceptance. In the last thirty years, individuals claiming to be part of the civil society have launched an assault on certain colonial monuments, claiming their replacement by monuments that celebrate local actors of the history of Cameroon. Some authors perceived these destructions as a heritage process<sup>48</sup>.

In fact, Ashworth and Tunbridge highlighted dissonance in the commodification of heritage sites in post-colonial Africa. In many cases where dialectics of minority-majority heritage is expressive, historical sites of minority population might more likely comprise

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<sup>46</sup> Zourmba Ousmanou, "Meanings and significance of colonial architecture in Douala, Cameroon", in *WIT Transactions on The Built Environment*, Volume 191, WIT Press, 2019, Pp.57-65.

<sup>47</sup> Zourmba Ousmanou, *The conservation and the enhancement of the German protectorate's heritage in the city of Douala (Cameroon)*, Master's Degree Thesis, Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne/Università Degli Studi di Padova/Universidade de Evora, 2016-201, p.32.

<sup>48</sup> Isidore Pascal Ndjock Nyobe, "L'héritage colonial à l'épreuve de la mémoire : Le cas du monument Leclerc à Douala", in Emmanuel Tchumtchoua & Albert François Dikoume (Eds.), *Douala, histoire et patrimoine*, Yaoundé, CLE Editions, 2014, Pp.295-339.

dissonances, mostly if the past is made of minority domination. In countries where settlers constitute the majority of the population, colonial presence itself do not animate any more debates that could lead to its rejection. Therefore, thanks to identity blending, colonial heritage is less subject to dissonances in its interpretation<sup>49</sup>. This is the contrary of many sub-Saharan African countries, where European powers have not succeeded in transforming the social composition of the population, even into a balanced mixture of white-blacks. Furthermore, the decolonization process was imbedded into Marxism ideology, that is, within the context of the Cold War, a complete opposition to capitalist societies. This contributed in shaping consideration to the remains of a former occupier as an enemy's remain, be it soft or tangible. The mindset is that, as colonial system is rejected together with its patterns and traces, the preservation of its remains does not just recall hard histories but it is also assimilated to the continuation of the domination system. In this regard, the rejection is ideological and imbedded in principles, rather than based on the history.

In other cases, the brutal departure of colonial rulers from Sub-saharan Africa<sup>50</sup> lead to the resurgence of tribal competitions<sup>51</sup>. In these competitions, local groups that benefited from any form of colonial favor, become targets of other groups. This competition has made any attempt to promote the emergence of a form of national identity more sensitive. It has further complicated the general dynamics of preservation of historical heritage by complicating the process of selection and enhancement. It testifies to another level of dissonance, which lends itself to the power play of groups capable of imposing their vision. In fact, the nation-building process in post-Colonial Africa comprised issues of identity. In this context, the concern of the elites has been to promote each culture of their ethnic group, rather than to be interested in a process of selection of the national heritage, which may include external substrates, notably inherited from colonization. This gives heritage functionality, as a cornerstone of nation-

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<sup>49</sup> J. E. Tunbridge & G. J. Ashworth, *Cited.*, p.179.

<sup>50</sup> In the northern part of Cameroon, the arrival of European powers reduced ethnic conflicts. During struggle for independence, there were therefore fears of the resurgence of ethnic conflicts. Likewise, competitions between ethnic groups for power control, further complicated the relations with colonial remains. The Chapter 4 will provide a deep analysis of internal dynamics of colonial memories.

<sup>51</sup> Many historians in Africa claim that the colonial powers worked for the fragmentation of peoples, using ethnicity. This is true to a large extent in the precolonial city of Douala, where the stakes revolved around trade. However, in other parts of Cameroon, there were inter-community conflicts, which had nothing to do with European colonial occupation strategies. We believe that the resurgence of ethnic competition, especially around the control of state power in post-colonial Africa, can be explained by European strategies of control, but also by local opportunisms.

building. Heritage is thus a policy instrument, in which inadvertent choices might delegitimize political action.

To illustrate the dissonance in the colonial heritage in Africa, by the separation of the cities comprising a majority of local population and that conquered by the population of the settlers' origin, Tunbridge and Ashworth focused on the example of some South African cities. South Africa is indeed a country that has experienced a special form of colonization, with a real desire of settlers to settle permanently. The settlement process was reinforced by the creation of industries, ports and various commercial activities, which led to a remodelling of the urban landscape. Over time, with the white minority having taken over most of the land and resources, the country suffered racial segregation to the detriment of the coloured populace. Therefore, the South African example is different from the reality of the rest of the African continent, with a mix up of liberation and abolition of a political system. The city of Cape Town is the reflection of post-apartheid South African heritage, where the cohabitation of different cultural systems is re-emerging<sup>52</sup>. As the authors explain:

“Post-apartheid Cape Town faces a larger readjustment of its heritage symbolism. Many whites are becoming sensitized to its present extreme asymmetry. Different elements of the colored population may reassert their shared identification with the white heritage or turn away from it in favor of an apartheid-honed group identity, or of solidarity with the larger underclass<sup>53</sup>”.

From another perspective, in the context of decolonization, African historians did great efforts to oppose colonies to colonial empires, Africans' identity to the Western identity, African culture to the European domination. Most discourses on colonial systems highlight negative effects of the European colonial presence on various aspects of the living standards in Africa. In this line, Georges Ngango claims that cultural heritage is one of the sectors that experienced drastic negative effects of European colonial presence in Africa. He agrees with other authors on the fact that the entire colonial period is made of the imposition of new cultural values<sup>54</sup>: languages, political organization and typically European cultural institutions like museums... This has gone from a racist background to finally target a long-term presence in Africa. Worst is that the negative effects of this system could not be quantified as one could with economic, political, military presence effects. Also, cultural alienation is continuing to be maintained by former colonial rulers, through educational programs. According to him,

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<sup>52</sup> Carli Coetzee & Sarah Nuttall, *Negotiating the past: the making of memory in South Africa*, Cape Town, Oxford University press, 2005, 300p.

<sup>53</sup> J. E. Tunbridge & G. J. Ashworth, *Cited*, p.231.

<sup>54</sup> H. Glenn Penny, *Objects of Culture: Ethnology and Ethnographic Museums in Imperial Germany*, University of North Carolina Press, 2002.

cultural colonialism has affected not only African economic, political, literary and religious heritage. It has equally affected far beyond, up to the profound nature of the Africans, by destroying their essence<sup>55</sup> and their personality<sup>56</sup>. Colonial administration and its educational system implemented cultural policies targeting building generations of people reflecting themselves in the culture of the colonizer that they have not been able to completely assimilate. According to the author, cultural colonialism had more effects than any other, as indeed it is not taken into consideration into Post-colonial construction of state-nations. Post-colonial relations with former European masters continue to maintain that cultural domination. Education has continued with programs conceived in Europe, most of the University professors in Africa in the 1960s were Europeans, books and other materials focus on African history written by European researchers. Even attempts to reform University programs like those of the University of Dakar, faced opposition from France that instructed to maintain the programs of the University of Bordeaux. In this regard, Africans committed to culture should make it a priority to denounce falsification of the African history as part of their anticolonial commitment:

“Cette falsification de notre histoire, bref de tout notre patrimoine culturel, et humain, l'homme de culture africain se doit de la dénoncer comme manifestation perfide du colonialisme. Il se doit également de créer l'Histoire africaine conforme à la réalité historique et de ce fait capable de redonner à l'Africain la fierté et le goût de son passé<sup>57</sup>”.

(This falsification of our history, in short of all our cultural and human heritage, the man of African culture must denounce as a perfidious manifestation of colonialism. He must also create African history in accordance with historical reality and therefore capable of giving back to the African the pride and the taste of his past).

The Historian should, furthermore, help in retrieving authentic African culture that has been destroyed during the colonial presence. Therefore, the author raises the opposition to the enhancement and the preservation of any colonial cultural remains in Post-colonial Africa. In this context, cultural policy should focus on enhancing typical or local elements of cultural value, rather than preserving foreign domination symbols.

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<sup>55</sup> Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*, New York, Grove Press, 1965, 181p; Nelson Maldonado-Torres, *Outline of Ten Theses on Coloniality and Decoloniality*, Frantz Fanon Foundation, 2016, 37p.

<sup>56</sup> In order to push Cameroonians to adopt the German language, during the protectorate, the Germans used the argument of civilization, in particular emphasizing that a Cameroonian Germanized is more than a European. Following papers afford further elements on this issue: Paul Zang Zang, “La dégermanisation du Cameroun”, in *Revue Electronique Internationale des Sciences du Langage*, No14, 2010, Pp.79-104; Adalbert Owona, *La naissance du Cameroun*, Paris, Harmattan, 1996 ; Rudolf Strumpf, *La politique linguistique au Cameroun de 1884-1960*, Berne, Peter Lang, 1979.

<sup>57</sup> Georges Ngango, “Colonialisme culturel en Afrique”, in *Présence Africaine, Nouvelle série No47*, 1963, Pp. 199-205.

Another example is Kenya, that experienced a colonial system which from some points of view, portrayed elements of comparison with the colonial past of Cameroon. Nairobi, its capital, was one of the most important cities of the British colonies of East Africa. It thus concentrates the urban heritage of British colonialism. The post-independence management of this legacy testifies of the conflicting relations between local populations and the British past. In general, the essential features of the colonial city have been preserved, in particular its spatial organization, the layout of the streets, as well as some large buildings of the colonial era, located in the city centre, are preserved. However, elements of national or even nationalist heritage have been added to the city, including intentional monuments.

## **2. Some Examples of the Management of the Colonial Architecture in Africa: Reducing Dissonance and Building new Cultural Identities**

Beyond the debate surrounding the colonial legacy in general, urban construction in Africa has experienced a notable evolution thanks to the European presence. Indeed, by the introduction of a new architectural model for residences and administrative offices, by the establishment of transport infrastructure such as railways accompanied by maintenance spaces, by creating cutting-edge commercial spaces with the open-air markets that were most prevalent in Africa until the 19th Century, colonization created new cities as well as reinforced pre-colonial ones, as asserted by Odile Goerg:

“s’il est évident que la colonisation n’importe pas la ville en Afrique, on peut toutefois énoncer que la majorité des Africains accèdent à la ville via la ville coloniale et que, dans la dynamique de longue durée qui marque le continent, le moment colonial de la ville est un temps fort de l’urbanisation<sup>58</sup>”.

(While it is obvious that colonization does not matter the city in Africa, it can nevertheless be stated that the majority of Africans access the city via the colonial city and that, in the long-lasting dynamic which marks the continent, the moment colonial city is a highlight of urbanization).

This author recognizes the European inputs in shaping cities in Africa. However, the brutality and appetites for the space that presided over the planning of the colonial cities turned this dynamic, into one of the markers of hard colonial memories. Thus, the Namibian

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<sup>58</sup> Odile Goerg, “Domination coloniale, construction de la « ville » en Afrique et domination”, in *Afrique & Histoire*, Vol.1, Pp. 15-45



and Algerian examples of the enhancement of the colonial buildings can serve as an illustration of efforts for the conciliation of the dissonances.

### **a. Dissonance Reduction in Colonial Heritage in Namibia**

The preservation of colonial buildings in Namibia targets touristic objectives than any other functions attached to historical heritage<sup>59</sup>. The Namibian case in colonial studies in Africa is peculiar in that it recalls the massacre of indigenous peoples (Herero), which some have tried in vain to make it recognized as genocide. It is with a view to practicing animal husbandry that the Germans settled in the country in the middle of the Ninetieth century by buying vast lands from local populations. Initially, in the process of buying land, the Germans conflicted the natives as the latter refused giving up their land. The German project went as far as envisaging a white skinned people settlement, confining African populations to difficult areas, massacring them if necessary. In 1897, the Nama population, made up of more than 20,000 people, were forced back into tribal areas. From 1902, the Herero population begins suffering the same fate. Faced with this unfair situation and strong in their demographic weight (they were more than 80,000 people), the Herero decided to rebel from 1904, under the leadership of their Chief, Samuel Maharero. According to some authors, Germany opposed a military campaign, aiming at the extermination of Herero. Tens of thousands of them are murdered, while many prisoners have been forced to work on infrastructure projects, sometimes passing away because of hard conditions<sup>60</sup>.

Despite this painful episode, which has often been a subject of friction in the postcolonial relations between Germany and Namibia<sup>61</sup>, some remains of colonialism are well preserved in several cities<sup>62</sup>. One of the remarkable examples is that of the city of Lüderitz, which experienced an accidental rise due to the logistical needs of the German army during the war against the Herero. During this war, the slowness of the locomotives used, coupled by

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<sup>59</sup> The Namibian example of the preservation and the enhancement of colonial built remains has been presented in our Master Degree Thesis: Ousmanou Zourmba, *The preservation and the Enhancement of the German protectorate's heritage in the city of Douala (Cameroon)*, Master Thesis, Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne/Università Degli Studi di Padova/Universidade de Evora, 2016/2017, Pp.104-110.

<sup>60</sup> Joël Kotek, "Le génocide des Herero, symptôme d'un *Sonderweg* allemand?", in *Revue d'histoire de la Shoah*, No189, 2008, Pp. 177-197.

<sup>61</sup> Steffen Bruendel, "La Namibie et l'Allemagne, une relation postcoloniale", in *Allemagne d'aujourd'hui*, No217, 2016, Pp.166-181.

<sup>62</sup> For the inventory of monuments in Namibia, refer to: Vogt Andreas, *National Monuments in Namibia: An inventory of proclaimed national monuments in the Republic of Namibia*, Windhoek, Macmillan Education Namibia Publishers, 2004.

the sabotage of the Herero pushed Germany to modernize the railway lines. It is thanks to this modernization, which has led to an increase in economic activities, that a new railway station was inaugurated in 1914, built in the style of modern German architecture. This railway station is classified as a historical monument on December 13, 1976.

**Figure 3 : Main facade of the railway station of Lüderitz Building**



**Source:** [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File: Bahnhof\\_L%C3%BCderitz.jpg?uselang=fr](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File: Bahnhof_L%C3%BCderitz.jpg?uselang=fr), 13/04/2017.

Another outstanding example of a dissonant monument inherited from German colonization in Namibia is the Swakopmund Prison. Built between 1907 and 1909, the Swakopmund Prison building is a symbol of German architecture in Namibia. Different sources seem not to agree on the architect of the building, often attributing it to Otto Erti<sup>63</sup>, the renowned architect of the administrative buildings of Germany at the end of the 19th

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<sup>63</sup> Anonym, "Swakopmund prison Building", <http://www.namibian.org/travel/historical/swakop-prison.html>, 15/03/2017.

Century, sometimes to Heinrich Bause<sup>64</sup>. The building served as residence for the staff in charge of the management of the prison. The barracks of the prisoners are indeed located in another wing of the enclosure. Used until today for the same purposes, the building was listed as a monument on October 26, 1973 and was restored and extended between 1991 and 1992.

**Figure 4 : A view of the prison monument of Swakopmund**



**Source:** <http://www.namibia-accommodation.com/listing/swakopmund-architecture>, 15/03/2017.

These two Namibian examples of colonial relics show a model of reduction of memory dissonance. As a matter of fact, the Lüderitz station is a symbol of the war that Germany has waged against the Herero during the colonial period. This station helped the colonial power to import the logistics necessary for its army, allowing it to commit the massacres of Herero. Similarly, the heritage of Swakopmund prison recalls what some authors

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<sup>64</sup> Anonym, « About Swakopmund Architecture: Swakopmund Tourist Attractions », <http://www.namibia-accommodation.com/listing/swakopmund-architecture>, 15/03/2017.

have tried to describe as a concentration camp during the colonial occupation war<sup>65</sup>. This prison is one of those that have welcomed people arrested for their opposition to the seizure of their land. Nevertheless, it should be noted that its preservation is more oriented towards tourism than the highlighting of its difficult history.

## **b. The Algerian Approach to Colonial Buildings**

Algeria presents an interesting example of the preservation of the built heritage connected to one of the most painful colonial pasts in Africa. Algeria is a territory that was under the French rule from 1830 to 1962. It gained its independence after a particularly dreadful conflict with a heavy toll both on the French and on the Algerian sides. The peculiarity of the French colonial presence in Algeria was the clearly expressed desire for a long-term occupation of the territory, unlike some countries where the colonial project was mainly aimed at the exploitation of natural resources. From this desire for definite settlement results an architecture whose historical, memory and aesthetic importance is more than proven. This explains the vain determination with which France defended its Algerian presence from 1954 to 1962. The most minimalist assessment of this war reports at least 300,000 dead<sup>66</sup>. Also, in the course of the Algerian war of independence, the creation of several so-called liberation movements, with violent reactions from the French armies (including the hijack of a Moroccan aircraft carrying some Algerian independence movements' leaders) has left its mark on the relations between the Algerians and their colonial past.

In the vast sector of heritage management, it should be noted that the country inherits a regulatory framework from its colonial past, which it applied and adapted after independence. It particularly resisted taking into consideration, colonial architecture as part of the Algerian cultural heritage. Through the Algerian sites registered on the World Heritage List, it appears that the approach to heritage is guided by cultural authenticity at the antipode of colonization. This list indeed includes sites which date from the Ancient times (Tassili n'Ajjer), relate to Roman civilization (Djemila, Timgad and Tipassa) or to the religious identity of the territory

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<sup>65</sup> Casper W. Erichsen, “‘The angel of death has descended violently among them’. Concentration camps and prisoners-of-war in Namibia, 1904-08”, *African Studies Center*, Report 79, 2005, p.57.

<sup>66</sup> Julietta Cua, “La guerre d’Algérie (1954-1962)”, [https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/monde/afrique/la-guerre-d-algerie-1954-1962\\_492167.html](https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/monde/afrique/la-guerre-d-algerie-1954-1962_492167.html), 13/11/2019.

(The Kalaa of Beni Hammad). A site, namely, the *M'zab Valley*, celebrates the vernacular architecture known as the Ksour. In this regard, it could clearly be stated that the approach to cultural heritage in Post-independent Algeria looks less at history sites related to the French colonial presence in favor of the reconstruction or the reinforcement of the national identity. Some scholars still note in 2017 that the enhancement of French colonial remains is not the priority of the cultural heritage policy-makers: “il semblerait que le classement des bâtiments datant de l'époque française ne soit pas à l'ordre du jour de la direction de la culture<sup>67</sup>”. (it seems that the classification of buildings dating from the French era is not on the agenda of the direction of culture).

This approach could explain, for example, the absence of a protective policy for the town hall of Bône, which nevertheless has an interesting architecture and decoration. In an environment of weak heritage awareness, this colonial building undergoes unsuitable interventions, which contribute to its degradation. The town hall of Bône is built between 1884 and 1888, on 1140 square meters. Designed by the architect Denis Marius Toudoire<sup>68</sup>, it is of an atypical architectural style and forms a connection between the old town and the new town at the time of its construction. The idea of providing Bône with a town hall results from urban growth, thanks to the opening of a railway line<sup>69</sup>. Over time, the building is found in the city centre, not far from other cultural centers or places of memory, which should normally support the idea of its classification as a monument. In addition, the town hall of Bône contains facade and interior decorations, which reflect the artistic transfer during colonization. It should be noted that its roof was destroyed by fire during the Revolutionary War<sup>70</sup>. In the urban landscape of Bône, the town hall is part of an architectural evolution, which gives the

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<sup>67</sup> Sihem Khelifa-Rouaissi & Heddy Boulkroune, “The architectural heritage of the French colonial era to the prism of Algerian patrimonial policies: case of the town hall of Bône”, in *Rev. Sci. Techno., Synthèse 34*, 2017, Pp. 63-73.

<sup>68</sup> Marius Toudoire is French architect, born on November 15, 1852. He studied at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts of Paris. Some of his famous designs are the Gare de Lyon in Paris, the Gare de Toulouse Matabiau and the Gare de Bordeaux Saint-Jean.

<sup>69</sup> Lucette Travers, “Bône. La formation de la ville et les facteurs de son évolution”, in *Annales de Géographie*, No 364, 1958, Pp.498-520.

<sup>70</sup> Hanène Laouar, “L'hotel des villes”, <https://www.annaba-patrimoine.com/hotel-de-ville/>, 13/11/2019.

city a mosaic of architectural styles: Roman, Muslim Arab, neoclassical, neo-Moorish, art deco, mixture of styles, and modern colonial<sup>71</sup>.

**Figure 5 : An overview of the Bône Town Hall**



**Source:** [https://www.vitamedz.com/mairie-bone/Photos\\_20155\\_128927\\_23\\_1.html](https://www.vitamedz.com/mairie-bone/Photos_20155_128927_23_1.html), 13/11/2019.

Thus, notwithstanding its aesthetic and historical importance, this building, like many others from the colonial period, does not enjoy any recognition or protection as a monument. However, this is not a total lack of interest in the cultural heritage in Algeria. Some researchers believe that this is linked to difficult colonial memories:

“Les représentations mentales de la population algérienne peinent à dépasser le souvenir de leur vécu durant cette période qui reste encore vivace. Les rémanences du passé voilent notre jugement quant à l’attitude à adopter vis-à-vis des réalisations coloniales. Ainsi, l’héritage colonial peine à se transformer en patrimoine parce que sa reconnaissance en tant que tel est difficile. La difficulté à

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<sup>71</sup> Fatima Zohra Djouad & Sassia Spiga, “Architectural Production in Annaba: Between Left Behind Heritage And Desired Contemporaneit”, in *Rev. Sci. Techno., Synthèse* 36, 2018, Pp. 49-60.

s'identifier à ce patrimoine constitue l'obstacle majeur à sa reconnaissance et à la définition d'une politique de protection et de sauvegarde<sup>72</sup>.”

(The mental representations of the Algerian population struggle to go beyond the memory of their experiences during this period which is still alive. The remnants of the past cloud our judgment as to the attitude to adopt with regard to colonial achievements. Thus, the colonial heritage struggles to transform into heritage because its recognition as such is difficult. The difficulty in identifying with this heritage constitutes the major obstacle to its recognition).

In summary, Algeria has a discriminatory approach towards colonial remains, in the enhancement of its historical heritage. This discrimination is part of the strategy of asserting its identity in relation to its colonial past, with a view to escaping from a more significant and continuous cultural influence of France.

## **II. Prospective Models for the Enhancement of Colonial Built Remains in Africa**

The first fundamental idea that emerges from the concept of Dissonant Heritage, which at the same time constitutes a weakness, is that tensions are consubstantial with any heritage site. The concept points out the level or complexity of the said tensions, in a democratic environment subject to the ideas of the popular majority. Theorized in the 1990s, this concept, put back in its context, recalls the wind of democratization, with consequences on the epistemology of the social sciences, especially the obsolescence of purely state approaches. Brought back to the study of the heritage, the Dissonant Heritage concept seeks the conciliation of divergent opinions, and conflictual relations of the different interest groups with the historic site. A specific Dissonant Heritage Model should therefore be distinguished from conventional approaches to the heritagization of historical sites.

### **A. An overview of Conventional Heritage Model**

In general, the enhancement process of a heritage object or site depends on several parameters, including the nature of the site or object, its history, the memories that depend on it, the objectives assigned to it, and so on. Or similarly, as underlined above, the very concept of heritage, although having a consensual definition that promotes UNESCO, remains dependent on the sociological realities of each society that appropriates it. This complexity makes it difficult to adopt a universal heritagization approach. Nevertheless, authors agree to

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<sup>72</sup> Baba R. & al., “Advocate for the recognition of colonial heritage in Algeria: the case of Church of Saints Simon and Jude in Jijel”, <http://cicrp.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Ripam5.pdf>, 13/11/2019.

recognize some stages which are fundamental in this process, namely the study, the awareness and finally the design of the cultural product.

The reflections on heritage sites or objects require a multidisciplinary approach. It involves, among others, historians, anthropologists, architects, engineers, and many other specialists. The study is therefore carried out within various specialties, with varied methods. For example, when it comes to a production site, industrial archeology can help collect data from the industrial product to the machines. These data include archives, corporate memory, accounting data and so on. As defined by Patrick Dambron, only the temporality constitutes a break between industrial archeology and archeology<sup>73</sup>, which is also part of the field of disciplines that contribute to the knowledge of the heritage object. So-called classical archeology focuses on tangible objects, witnesses of an expression of civilizations, like tools, sarcophagi, ceramics and so on. Industrial archeology on its parts looks more at various elements, especially archives, oral sources, industrial products, observation of buildings, postcards, plans, construction site accounts, among others<sup>74</sup>. These last elements constitute for the professionals of the industrial heritage, the sources on which they base their interpretations<sup>75</sup>. Using a multidisciplinary approach, the industrial heritage specialist reconstructs missing factories by compiling and confronting various types of sources. It is this ability to reconstruct an object materially non-existent, as well as to trace a past clouded by time and sometimes the memory of the workers who gives to his work, the name of industrial archeology:

“L’archéologie industrielle est donc ce qui permet d’établir la connaissance la plus complète d’un objet industriel considéré comme remarquable et, à ce titre, digne d’intérêt. Elle requiert, dans le domaine plus récent de l’ère industrielle, le même esprit et une même démarche similaire aux recherches et aux fouilles des époques antiques. Seule la temporalité diffère, l’activité industrielle étant encore reliée au présent par un fil tenu<sup>76</sup>”.

(Industrial archeology is therefore what makes it possible to establish the most complete knowledge of an industrial object considered as remarkable and, as such, worthy of interest. It requires, in the more recent field of the industrial era, the same spirit and the same approach similar

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<sup>73</sup> Patrick Dambron, *Patrimoine Industriel & développement local*, Paris, Jean Delaville Editions, 2004, p.52

<sup>74</sup> William Crandall and al., “New Frontiers in Management Research: The Case for Industrial Archeology”, in *The Coastal Business Journal*, No1, Vol 2, Pp. 45-60, <https://www.mtu.edu/social-sciences/graduate/programs/pdfs/parnell-industrial-archeology.pdf>, 19/09/2019; Laurence F. Gross, “Industrial Archeology: An Aggressive Agenda”, in *The Journal of the Society for Industrial Archeology*, No1, Vol.27, 2007, Pp.37-40.

<sup>75</sup> Judith Alfrey & Tim Putnam, *The Industrial Heritage: Managing Resources and Uses*, Routledge, 2003, 240p.

<sup>76</sup> Patrick Dambron, *Cited.*, p.48.



to the research and excavations of ancient times. Only temporality differs, industrial activity still being linked to the present by a thread held).

Thus, archeology and industrial archeology are important methods of study that can reveal the heritage value of a site and provide elements of its understanding and appropriation.

Another disciplinary approach to heritage studies is the history of technologies<sup>77</sup>. The history of technologies is a fairly recent discipline in the vast field of historical sciences, which aims to study technical and technological developments and their interaction with human society. It focuses on the object, the material used for its manufacture, the operating chain as well as its appropriation by the man among others. This object may be large or modest that it would concentrate the same effort of analysis of the historian of the technologies.

Architects have a fundamental role to play in the study and design of projects to enhance a historic site. They allow a better understanding of the buildings, through their construction plans, and plan the interventions, whether it be reconversion or restoration. The same applies to engineers, whose technical competence is used in particular for the study of ancient structures. Art historians are interested in the aesthetic aspect, especially the architectural form itself, the walls, the wall paintings, roof paintings and other decorations, the specifics and generalities of which they study.

However, this need for a multidisciplinary approach does not result in a specific codified approach for the enhancement of heritage. In general, it is recognized that it would be necessary to go through the study of the object and the design of the interventions. Everything depends on the object of study, which may or may not be necessary, for example, an awareness campaign, prior consultations with the public or communities among others. In reverse, dissonant heritage sites may request specific models.

## **B. From Dissonant Heritage Models to Colonial Built Remains’ Specific Model**

Inspired by the precautions that Tunbridge and Ashworth prescribe in the process of enhancing historic sites, a constructive approach would help fill the void, particularly in terms

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<sup>77</sup> On the evolution of the history of technologies, refer to: Maurice Daumas, “L’histoire des techniques: son objet, ses limites, ses méthodes”, in *Revue d’histoire des sciences et de leurs applications*, Vol 22, No1, 1969, Pp. 5-32.

of procedures and steps to follow. Some authors suggest models for dissonant heritage. Most of these models link heritage to dark or Thana tourism<sup>78</sup> as to make it contribute to financial needs especially, hindering the core transmission of the past, which is inherent to any heritage site.

## **1. Insufficient Dissonant Heritage Models**

Dissonant heritage models exist, but unfortunately do not provide elements suitable to colonial remains. Two among various models inspire the proposal for colonial remains enhancement model. On one hand, the model suggested by Deepak Chhabra<sup>79</sup> and on the other hand, that of Annett Neugebauer<sup>80</sup>.

### **a. A Present-Centered Dissonant Heritage Model**

Deepak Chhabra bases her heritage model of sites with discrepancies, on their purpose, namely consumption. As noted earlier, “dissonant heritage” singularly links heritage to tourism, making mediators, tourist promoters as well as tourists themselves, parties interested in the heritage site as good. Inspired by the critical discourse analysis, he suggests an inclusive model, which considers not only the dominant opinions, by finding the right which allows to maintain the feeling of identity, belonging and attachment of each community group

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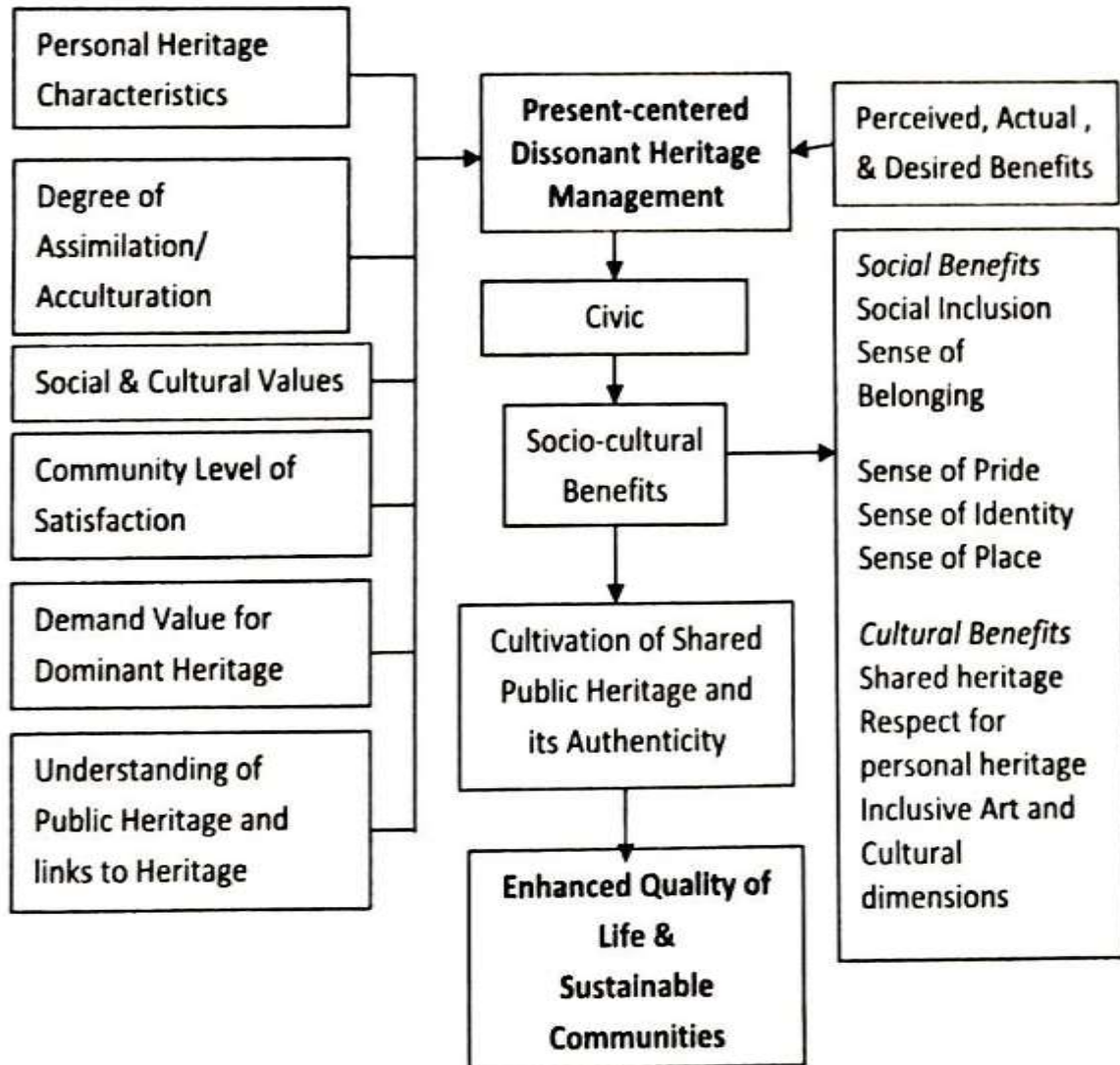
<sup>78</sup> These studies seek to understand the motivations of the visits to the memory sites of disaster or death, the scenography of the visits to the said sites, as well as the objectives which underpinning their enhancement. Following are some interesting papers: Rudi Hartman, “Dark tourism, thanatourism and dissonance in heritage tourism management: new directions in contemporary tourism research”, in *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, Vol 9, 2014, Pp.166-182; Stephanie Marie Yuill, *Dark tourism: understanding the visitor motivation at sites of death and disaster*, Master Degree Thesis, A&M Texas University, 2003; Philip R. Stone, “A dark tourism spectrum: Towards a typology of death and macabre related tourist sites, attractions and exhibitions”, in *Tourism: An International Interdisciplinary Journal*, Vol. 54 No. 2, 2006, Pp.145-160; Anna Farmaki, “Dark tourism revisited: a supply/demand conceptualisation”, in *International Journal of Culture Tourism and Hospitality Research*, No7, 2013, Pp. 281-292.

<sup>79</sup> Deepak Chhabra is an associate Professor at the University of Arizona (USA). Her research interests include socio-economic impacts of tourism, authenticity and authentication of heritage, spiritual tourism and smart/sustainable marketing of culture and heritage tourism.

<sup>80</sup> Annett Neugebauer is a German native, born in Rheinsberg/Brandenburg. She is a graduate with a Bachelor (hons) of Business Administration in Leisure and Tourism Management Degree from the University of Applied Sciences Stralsund (Germany).

interested at the local level<sup>81</sup>. The figure below summarizes the different aspects of his dissonant heritage model.

**Figure 6 : Present-centred dissonant heritage model**



**Source:** Deepak Chhabra, “A present-centred dissonant heritage management model”, in *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol.39, No 3, 2012, Pp.1701-1705

This model remains of a certain relevance, insofar as it brings the historic site back to its value and its function, namely, to serve the present. The author identifies the different groups of interest and the benefit that each of these groups could derive from the enhancement of the site, as well as the different levels of groups whose concern must be

<sup>81</sup> Deepak Chhabra, “A present-centered dissonant heritage management model”, in *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol.39, No 3, 2012, Pp.1701-1705.

integrated. Also, this model aims to be inclusive of the different levels of satisfaction at the end of the site enhancement process.

However, it is a proposition that contains disconcerting. The author does not go deep into the classic process of heritage enhancement and seems to want to consider the dissonant heritage as a type cut from other forms of heritage. The enhancement of the dissonant heritage is part of the classic models<sup>82</sup>, by putting an accent on particularities. In this logic, Chhabra's model ignores the relevance of the study, the accumulation of knowledge on the site, as well as the need, in some cases, for raising awareness. Furthermore, this model, inspired by the theoretical approach of the critical discourse analysis, is attached to the tourist function of the site, and infers other values, notably educational. The author clearly shows her desire to establish a pleasant relationship between host communities and visitors.

#### **b. Proactive Dissonant Heritage Management Model**

Having the ambition of a more inclusive approach, Annett Neugebauer proposes a model which includes the process of enhancement of the historic site and its final use as heritage. This model aims to contain and reduce the dissonance in the design and management of the historic site. The basic assumption that emerges is that, unlike the Chhabra model, taking into account memory dissonances cannot be effective when limited to the cultural mediation discourse. The reduction of dissonances in heritage requires therefore, a proactive approach, ranging from historical resources to the discourse of the cultural mediator, including the design of the cultural product.

In details, Annett Neugebauer's model proposal is based on the transformation of the historic resource into a heritage product. The author revisits some fundamental steps recognized by experts in the heritage enhancement process. Thus, the historical resource which refers to all the knowledge around the site is subjected to a rigorous analysis which leads to the conception of the cultural product as well as the elements of its interpretation for cultural mediators. "Before any planning takes place, the historic resource has to be selected

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<sup>82</sup> In general, heritage studies mobilize various approaches, ranging from history for the understanding of the object's past to forms, among others. The specialists usually focus on the presentation of the object and pay little attention to the enhancement process. This makes it difficult to find specific models that outline the steps to follow. However, prerequisites are recognized almost unanimously, including the study, the design and the management of the site.

and the overall mission statement, reflecting the aims of the organization and incorporating all stakeholders involved in the heritage production and management process have to be clearly defined<sup>83</sup>. Indeed, the author integrates the specificity of the elements aimed at reducing discrepancies, by assigning a vision or mission which must prevail in the analyses which should lead to the enhancement of the historic resource. Likewise, this model integrates the dissonances in cultural mediation around the heritage site. It suggests the involvement of various actors in the process: heritage institutions and the cultural heritage industries, which strengthens its applicability. In addition, the author proposes to integrate the commercial dimension to the process of enhancement of the historic site. The problem of resources for the management of cultural heritage very often impacts on the enhancement of historic sites. In this proposal, the author considers that two marketing approaches can be simultaneously integrated, with a view to providing the cultural site with sustainable resources. On the one hand, it is macrobusiness<sup>84</sup>, which integrates political, natural, socio-demographic, economic and technological factors, and on the other hand, based on consumers marketing intermediaries' competitors, suppliers, transportation system, public financial companies, marketing service agencies<sup>85</sup>. In order to apply these approaches, the author postulates that the analyses prior to the conception of the cultural product must provide for different scenarios of conflicts between the actors involved in its consumption, by projecting suitable solutions.

The figure below presents the model of pro-active dissonant heritage management in its different steps.

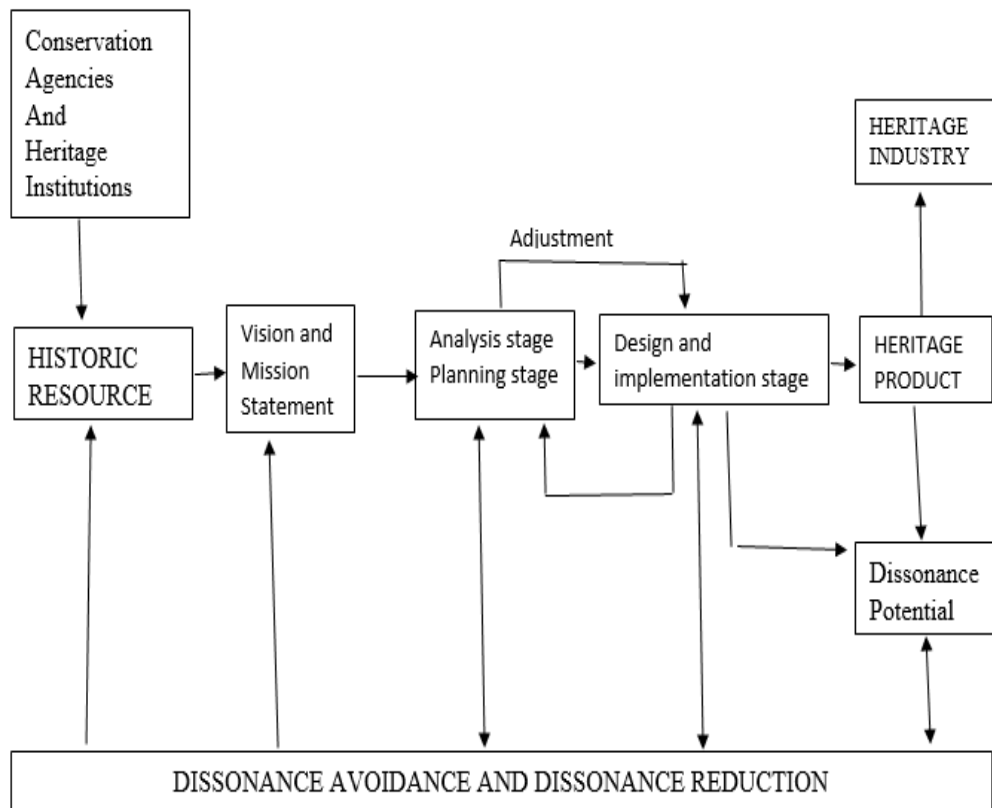
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<sup>83</sup> Annett Neugebauer, *Pro-active Dissonant Heritage Management: Reducing Discordances at Sites of Atrocity*, Saarbrücken, VDM Verlag Dr Müller Aktiengesellschaft & co. KG, 2009, p. 56.

<sup>84</sup> Macrobusiness in Heritage refers to elements of its surroundings, be it political or institutional, capable of affording financial sustainable means for the management of the site.

<sup>85</sup> Annett Neugebauer, *op.cit*, p. 58.

**Figure 7 : Model of Pro-active dissonant heritage Management**



**Source:** Annett Neugebauer, *Pro-active Dissonant Heritage Management: Reducing Discordances at Sites of Atrocity*, Saarbrücken, VDM Verlag Dr Müller Aktiengesellschaft & co. KG, 2009, p.56.

However, the insufficient democratic vision of cultural heritage weakens this proposal by the absence of an integrate approach. Indeed, the proposal focuses on institutional actors, thus leaving marginalized the populations organized in a community framework or not, and whose adhesion is essential for a successful promotion of the historic sites located on their territory. Among other criteria of democratic approach, which is essential to dissonant heritage, there is the absolute need of including the communities, organized into groups or

not, in designing the heritage. The Delhi Declaration<sup>86</sup> of the ICOMOS calls on state members of UNESCO to adopt democratic approaches in preserving heritage, to better offer possibilities of sustainability. The inclusion of communities or people in the study and implementation of heritage projects makes it possible to include all divergent opinions and discourse, and thus reduce dissonance. This method avoids rejections and disputes around heritage sites or projects, like the destruction of facilities for the construction of the Um Nyobe<sup>87</sup> monument as well as the destruction of the monument of General Leclerc in Douala<sup>88</sup>. In addition, this model seems to focus on the commercial dimension and the conflicts that are likely to arise from the interpretation of the historic site, without however including other prerequisites or specifics linked to the context. In Douala, the passions that surround the colonial heritage demand a work of reconciliation or raising awareness in order to accept the relics of this past as an integral part of the local historical heritage. This work cannot therefore be subjugated to the analysis of historical resources. It invites the researcher, beyond his commitment to impartiality, to advocate for heritage.

## **2. Colonial Built Remains Heritage Model (Proposal)<sup>89</sup>**

The two models presented above are relevant, but seem to be oriented towards market objectives, thus relegating other functions which are part of the cultural heritage. They can hardly be applied to colonial architecture in Douala. A more inclusive and adapted approach makes it possible to propose a model that comprises the study and accumulation of knowledge (a), the analysis of the historical material (b), the assignment of objectives to the heritage project (c), the design of the cultural product (d), and finally the management of the heritage resource(e).

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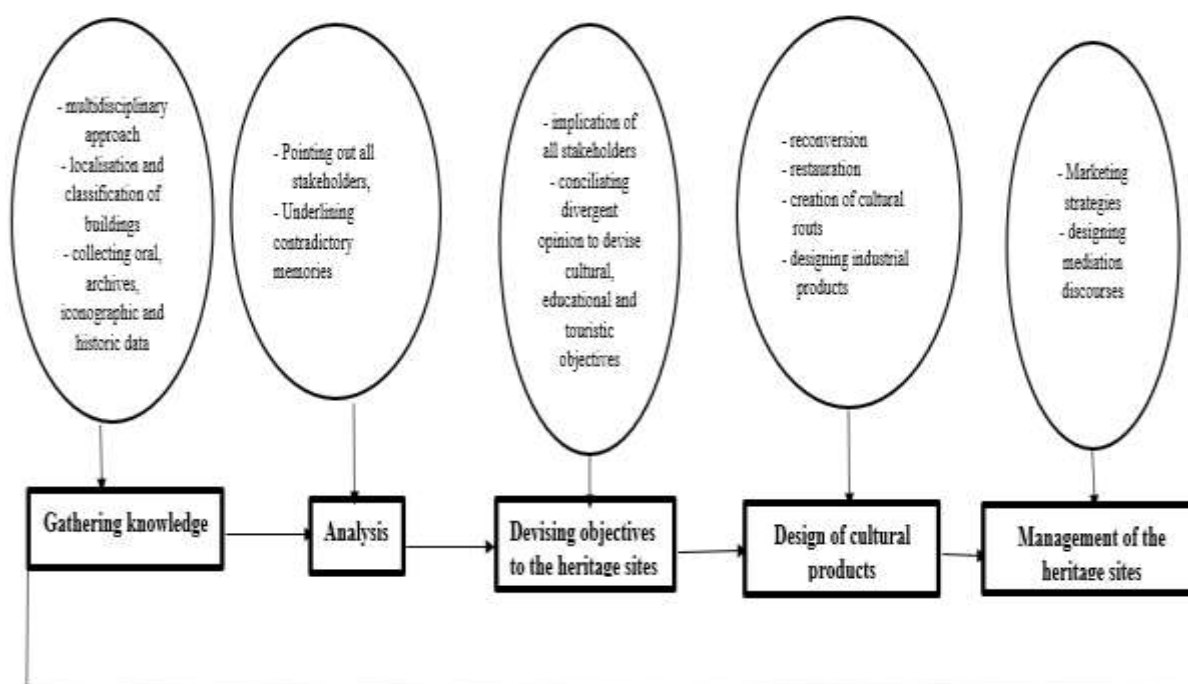
<sup>86</sup> ICOMOS, *Delhi Declaration on Heritage and Democracy*, 19<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, 11-15 December 2017, [https://www.icomos.org/images/DOCUMENTS/Charters/GA2017\\_Delhi-Declaration\\_20180117\\_EN.pdf](https://www.icomos.org/images/DOCUMENTS/Charters/GA2017_Delhi-Declaration_20180117_EN.pdf), 17/05/2019.

<sup>87</sup> Chapter 4 will develop in depth the case of this monument project, as an element of colonial memory in Douala.

<sup>88</sup> Regarding the Leclerc monument, the following paper analyses attempts to its destruction as a process of heritagization. Isidore Pascal Ndjock Nyobe, *Op., Cit.*

<sup>89</sup> Insofar as our approach is multidisciplinary, we offer a prospective model for the enhancement of colonial built remains, more as a student in cultural heritage. This departs from purely historical approaches which focus on understanding and reinterpreting the past.

**Figure 8 : Prospective Colonial Heritage Model (author)**



This figure contains different steps to follow, schematized to ease comprehension. Each step is made up of various interventions connected to each other. All these steps constitute a coherent process that could help successfully enhance colonial built remains, by reducing dissonances. Below is a short description of these steps.

### **a. Gathering Knowledge**

The preliminary study of historic sites seeks to accumulate the most complete knowledge possible. This knowledge cannot be complete and enough if it is limited to a single discipline. Research methods for this purpose, therefore, involves observation, gathering of oral data and documents of various natures, industrial archaeology among others. The study



of objects and sites related to colonial history exposes the researcher to ideological influences<sup>90</sup>. The dichotomy of pro and anti-colonial ideologies is felt in the writing of African history. Colonial ideology is reflected in most scientific productions from certain European circles in the 19th and 20th Centuries. Within these philanthropic circles, scientific productions have moved towards the justification of European colonialism in Africa, drawing arguments from denials of humanity, of history to profusely racial visions<sup>91</sup>. This literature is therefore likely to confuse the researcher, in his quest to reconstruct and interpret the facts around his site or object of study. The caution thus recommended also applies to pan-Africanist, anti-colonialist, and post-colonial historiography in Africa. Many African researchers, during the struggle for the liberation of the continent, have set out to build a reactionary history, sometimes not always based on facts. The objective was to contribute to the reinforcement of the anti-colonial movements in Africa. This resulted in what the Swiss sociologist Jean Ziegler designated by the term "haine de l'Occident<sup>92</sup>" (hatred of the West), to depict an ideological opposition to what relates to the colonial powers. Between these contradictory ideologies, only the impartiality and the whole posture of the researcher will allow him to carry out a neutral and fact-based work. However, these ideologies themselves constitute elements to be highlighted in the memory dynamics around the site and the object. In summary, data collection requires a broad involvement of communities, interest groups, civil society, individuals and so on.

#### **b. Analysis of Data Collected**

With regard to the analysis of the data collected, the researcher sets out to classify the information at this stage, while respecting the precautions noted earlier. Especially, beyond underlining the historical, anthropological, social or cultural value of the object or site studied, the researcher must work, in a colonial context, to identify the stakeholders whose

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<sup>90</sup> Robert J. C. Young, "Ideologies of the postcolonial", in *International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, Vol.1, 1998, Pp.4-8.

<sup>91</sup> Sven Lindqvist, *Exterminez toutes ces brutes. L'odyssée d'un homme au cœur de la nuit et les origines du génocide européen*, Stockholm, Albert Bonniers Förlag AB, 1992, translated from Swedish to French by Alain Ganedig.

<sup>92</sup> Jean Ziegler explains this hatred of the Third World towards the West, by the exploitation and the successive plunder of the latter. According to him, in the form of neo-colonialism, some Europeans continue to plunder the African continent. They also refuse steps to reconcile with the past, provoking rejection of poor people. The following work contains a display of facts and a coherent argument: Jean Ziegler, *La Haine de l'Occident*, Paris, Albin Michel, 2008.

collective memories deserve to be taken into account in order to reduce dissonances. The diagram drawn up by Aaron Yankholmes and Bob Mckercher within the framework of the enhancement of the sites of slavery, noted in the previous section of this chapter, could serve as a guide in the identification of the stakeholders. This step includes the specificities of the dissonant heritage in the process of enhancing historic sites. Possible oral testimonies can be used in raw, to serve in drawing the different versions of collective memories and relationships between communities and the past of the site. It is worthy to note that a heritage specialist is sometimes called to stand out from the classical historian, in the sense that he does not always sort the tales and stories around his object of study. He often considers them as raw and finished material to exhibit to the public. Thus, the analysis is a stage which draws and refines the historic resource with a view to assigning it heritage objectives.

### **c. Devising Objectives to Heritage Sites**

Assigning objectives to heritage enhancement is a way to reduce the memory dissonances around the site. In the examples presented in the previous section, each site is managed with a more or less precise vision, in particular awareness-raising (case of the Holocaust sites), national identity building (in the Balkans) and tourism promotion (colonial buildings in Namibia). This stage focuses on various memory contradictions identified, involving all the stakeholders. At this stage comes the democratic approach to heritage that is obtaining and taking into consideration, the opinion and adherence of the majority, for the appropriation of the final cultural product. In addition, notwithstanding the codification efforts of UNESCO, the concept of heritage is slow to reveal a single universal understanding<sup>93</sup>. In Africa, in terms of colonial heritage, it seems important to invent an enhancement approach which does not necessarily praise the architect (the colonizer) but which reflects both the creative genius and the sufferings of workers. This approach must avoid disturbing the memory wounds linked to the expropriations. Anyway, the success of the enhancement of colonial sites largely depends on the objectives assigned to it.

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<sup>93</sup> Jean-Marie Datouand Djoussou, *Patrimoine et patrimonialisation au Cameroun : Les diy-gid-biy des monts Mandaras septentrionaux pour étude de cas*, PhD Thesis in Ethnolgy and Heritage Studies, University of Laval, 2014, p.131.

#### **d. The Design of Cultural Products**

The design of the final cultural product must take place in the local context. In general, in terms of architectural remains, safeguarding and enhancement policies favor the conservation of the structure and artistic content, the highlighting of the architectural form in order to hold a presenting speech to the public. It is a question of preserving the achievements of a past, by raising the singular character of the real estate at the time of its construction. The design of the final cultural product should take the local context into consideration. In general, in terms of architectural remains, safeguarding and enhancement policies prioritize the restoration, the conservation of the structure and artistic content, the highlighting of the architectural form in order to hold a presenting speech to the public. However, the construction of intentional monuments, because of reflecting a socio-political will, requires, if necessary, a clear adhesion of the local community, in order to avoid violent oppositions such as those observed in Douala with regard to these types of colonial monuments. The same is true for tourism-derived products, such as 3D models, effigies and so on. The product design could also imagine tourist routes and circuits, each with a specific objective. For example, in the city of Douala, buildings and remains of the railway lines could serve as a tourist complex in order to present the introduction of the railway in Cameroon as well as its evolution during the period of the French mandate and the French trusteeship regime. Industrial remains, such as the water treatment plant, the port zone, the remains of German agro-industries, the remains of French cotton mills could help present the introduction of the European modernity in the production systems in Cameroon, as well as their cohort of forced labour. Another reconversion approach could tend towards the creation of complexes, sometimes by taking up the projects of the colonial powers which could not succeed for various reasons. These complexes could serve as centres of cultural exchange, documentation, cinemathèque or even a museum, with the aim of exhibiting precise and outstanding collections on colonial history. Therefore, the design of the cultural product depends on the objectives and will influence its management strategies.

#### **e. The Management of Heritage Sites**

Finally, the management of the cultural site is the place for the expression of dissonances. All the preceding stages remain within a working framework with a predominant

role for the researcher and all the stakeholders. Product management introduces a new category, namely consumers, made up of scientific circles, learners<sup>94</sup>, tourists, among others. The most important thing is to adopt a strategy that gives financial autonomy to the heritage resource. This financial autonomy cannot be possible without an effective financial strategy. Beyond the financial dimension, the attraction of tourists and finances goes through the adaptation of mediation speeches to the audience. The discourse on a colonial achievement could strike in Africa as in Europe. This is a subject whose sensitivity is found in the various reports established, depending on the roles and interests of each actor, including the tourist. In addition, immersion experiences can be offered to the public via documentary videos and the reconstitution of facts through images from archives. Thus, the cultural mediation discourse could vary, ranging from soft to hard, depending on the audience and the experiences sought.

These different stages apply to colonial remains but must be considered as evolving and capable of adaptation. The domain of the study of heritage obeys the social sciences, the universality of theories of which does not shield them from criticism or epistemic developments.

### **Conclusions**

The concept of dissonant heritage emerged to characterize sites with memory discrepancies. This concept highlights the importance of taking into account the opinions of all the interest groups in the enhancement of the historic site, beginning from the design of the preservation project. In this logic, implicitly, dissonant heritage invites to review both the enhancement process and the management of the cultural site. Colonial buildings are carriers of these contradictory memories. In this regard, their enhancement may well be inspired by the dissonant heritage, by defining a specific methodology. A synthetic presentation of the colonial history of Cameroon allows a better understanding of this postulate.

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<sup>94</sup> There is a concept of school culture developed by Jean Claude Forquin, which relates to the mobilization of cultural heritage for education. The application of this concept would give a new function to cultural heritage in Africa, whose school system is marked by the precariousness of quality history works. Jean-Claude Fourquin, "Ecole et culture", in *EPS et Société infos*, No 26, 2004, [http://epsetsociete.fr/IMG/pdf/forquin\\_1\\_.pdf](http://epsetsociete.fr/IMG/pdf/forquin_1_.pdf), 15/03/2017.

**Chapter II:**  
**Historical Background: A Focus on Colonial History of Cameroon**

The colonial history of Cameroon has at least a twofold meaning which gives it a certain peculiarity: first, a process of occupation which suggests, from the outset, more to the creation of economic ties with Germany than to a transfer of power. Secondly, the experience of three colonial systems<sup>1</sup> called appropriately as Protectorate<sup>2</sup>, Mandate, and Trusteeship<sup>3</sup>. In each of these three systems, one could also glimpse particularities, related especially to the fact that they were applied by three European powers; Germany, France and the United Kingdom. Each of these powers had its own understanding of its interests, its role and its ambitions. These three colonial systems recognized themselves in a common trait, that is the implementation of a form of colonization. They also seem to have adopted the same approach towards local populations, first building interested ties, then, a rejection that can be explained by the changes brought about by the colonial presence.

Pre-colonial Cameroon was indeed a territory that could be schematized from the point of view of its political, economic and social organization, without pretending to identify the complexity of social structures and thus, in depth, the history of the different ethnic groups that compose it. From the political point of view, to avoid the tendentious classifications of history written by some European researchers during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century<sup>4</sup>, although not belonging to a single unified political entity, the communities living on the present territory of Cameroon had a well-structured organization, with institutions of power, counter-power and justice, which maintained a strong social base. In North Cameroon, since the beginning of the 19th Century, the Fulani conquest doubled by a war of expansion of Islam, has devoted an expansion of chieftaincies, called *Lamido*, with a strong political, social, economic and

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<sup>1</sup> Marco Ramerini, “Le Cameroun pendant la Colonisation allemande et les Administrations de Tutelle française et britannique (1884-1961)”, <https://www.colonialvoyage.com/fr/le-cameroun-pendant-la-colonisation-allemande-et-les-administrations-de-tutelle-francaise-et-britannique-1884-1961/>, 12/11/2019.

<sup>2</sup> Henri Brunschwig, “Un récent bilan historique de la colonisation allemande au Cameroun et en Afrique orientale”, in *Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer*, No210, 1971, Pp. 116-124.

<sup>3</sup> There is a debate on the status of Cameroon between 1884 and 1960, Some authors claim that with regard to the process that led to the establishment of the German protectorate and subsequently to the Mandate and Trusteeship regimes, Cameroon has never been a colony (an example is: Adamou Ndam Njoya, *Le Cameroun dans les Relations Internationales*, Paris, Librairie Générale de Jurisprudence, 1976). Others, however, taking into account the modes of administration of the protectorate and the management of the Mandate and the Trusteeship, as well as the consequence of the presence of the European powers, claim that Cameroon has simply been assimilated to a colony. Therefore, they think it is appropriate to speak of colonization in the case of Cameroon. To facilitate the language and taking into consideration the latter position, we adopt the concept of colony in this thesis.

<sup>4</sup> In history textbooks written by European researchers, precolonial African communities are classified into two categories: so-called acephalic societies and lineage societies. This classification is thus by certain considerations developed in Europe, within the context of racism. They denote of a lack of knowledge of Africa whose communities, in many cases, had democratic institutions with strong organization.

religious organization<sup>5</sup>. It is an organization with both a religious and political leader and notabilities representing the nobility of the society<sup>6</sup>. Nevertheless, all the chiefdoms of North Cameroon were not only organizations under Moslem domination. Some communities continued to resist the Islamic onslaught until the advent of the German protectorate. Furthermore, the western part of Cameroon was dominated by kingdoms and chieftaincies, such as the Bamoun Kingdom<sup>7</sup> and others assimilated by aberration to the generic term *Bamileke*<sup>8</sup>, that take the name of Fon in areas later administered by the United Kingdom. In the Eastern part of Cameroon, the Gbaya community had its powerful organization<sup>9</sup>, which until now has not been sufficiently studied by historians and anthropologists. This community coexisted with others with much more refined and concept-based structures, visions that frame inviolable behaviors in society. This is the case of the Tikar and Fang groups among others, which populate also in the current Center and the South Regions of Cameroon. In the actual Littoral Region, the Duala gradually settled on the banks of the Wouri river and organized themselves into kingdoms much better known to Europeans in the 19th Century, thanks to the commercial relations<sup>10</sup>.

In economic terms, pre-colonial Cameroon lived an economy that can be described as artisanal, mostly based on livestock farming and fishing, which were among the most important activities. Besides these activities, the trade was also flourishing, with the existence of a connection between the southern part and the northern part of the country. In the southern part of Cameroon, in general, the point of convergence of commercial activities was around the Coastal zone, notably the actual localities of Limbe, Tiko, Douala and, to a lesser extent, Kribi. Douala, in particular, was an indoor collection center for Western merchants, especially for those involved in slaves' trade, from 1760 onwards<sup>11</sup>. It is in this context that the Germans, through trade agreements with some traditional leaders of Douala, imposed their

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<sup>5</sup> Philip Burnham, "L'ethnie, la religion et l'État : le rôle des Peuls dans la vie politique et sociale du Nord-Cameroun", in *Journal des Africanistes*, No 61, 1991, Pp. 73-102.

<sup>6</sup> Antoine Socpa, "L'hégémonie ethnique cyclique au nord Cameroun", in *Afrique et Développement*, Vol. XXIV, Nos 1 & 2, 1999, Pp. 57-81.

<sup>7</sup> Alexandre Loumpet-Galitzine, "La cartographie du Roi Njoya (Royaume Bamoun, Ouest Cameroun)", in *CFC*, No210, 2011, Pp.185-198.

<sup>8</sup> Jean-Pierre Warnier, "Histoire Du Peuplement Et Genèse Des Paysages Dans L'ouest Camerounais", in *The Journal of African History*, Vol.25, No4, 1984, Pp.395-410.

<sup>9</sup> Elisabeth Copet-Rougier, "Du Clan a La Chefferie Dans L'est Du Cameroun", in *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol.57, No.3, 1987, Pp.345-363.

<sup>10</sup> Albert Wirz, "La "Rivière du Cameroun" : commerce précolonial et contrôle de pouvoir en société lignagère", in *Revue française d'histoire d'Outre-mer*, T.60, No 219, 1973, Pp. 172-195.

<sup>11</sup> Ralph A. Austen, "Slavery and Slave Trade on the Atlantic Coast: the Duala of the Littoral", in *Paideuma*, No 41, 1995, Pp. 127-152.

presence, their power and their mode of socio-political organization in Cameroon. How could the changes imposed by the colonial systems in Cameroon be evaluated? In which forms have the different systems of European domination been expressed in the Cameroonian context? How do these different systems continue today to influence socioeconomic life, especially through the dynamics of collective memories that have impact on the enhancement of historical remains in the country?

Far from telling in an exhaustive way the colonial history of Cameroon, the present chapter sets itself the objective of illustrating the transformations induced by the European colonization in Cameroon, by considering in turns, the German protectorate (I) and the international regimes having underpinned the colonial Franco-British rule (II).

## **I. The German Protectorate in Kamerun (1884-1914)**

The German protectorate opens the door to a succession of colonial systems in Cameroon. It begins in July 12, 1884, with the signing of the so-called *German-Douala* treaties, which have finally been extended, if not imposed overall the current territory of Cameroon.

### **A. The Process of the Conclusion of the *German-Douala* Treaties and the Imposition of German Rule in Cameroon**

To better understand the period of the German protectorate, it seems necessary to highlight the process of the signing of commercial protectorate agreements. That process has gone from signing treaties, to the imposition of a central German power, in a context of tension with the United Kingdom and other Cameroonian traditional rulers.

#### **1. The Signing of the *German-Douala* Treaties**

For a good understanding of the process that led to the signing of protectorate agreements between the Hamburg business houses (Woermann and Jantzen & Thormalen), it seems necessary to briefly mention the development of trade on the Wouri River in the Nineteenth Century. For some centuries, people settled on the banks of the Wouri River, initially fishermen, who have turned into traders, maintaining a flourishing trade with European merchants. It is also the European merchants who have called the Wouri River, “Rio dos Camaroes”, which later becomes “River Cameroons”, from which the name “Cameroon” is derived for the whole territory. This trade was based on the exchange of



fabrics, rifles, wines etc., imported from Europe, against raw materials such as ivory, palm oil and especially slaves. The profit generated was so important that the *Duala*<sup>12</sup> constituted themselves as authorized intermediaries<sup>13</sup>, making a barrier to any direct contact between European merchants and populations of the interior of the country. But in the Nineteenth Century, wars of control of the West African coast broke out between European powers. The growing interest of French merchants for the Cameroonian coast, added to the German breakthrough had led to tensions between European powers<sup>14</sup>. This poses a threat not only to their commercial profits, but also to the stability of their chieftaincies. To preserve their trade interests, within the context of the progressive ban on slavery trade, the Duala Chiefs took steps to obtain greater protection from the Queen of England. The reason was that the British were Cameroon's main trading partners at that time<sup>15</sup>. The British Consul had even instituted in Douala, courts of equity, which were involved in the resolution of some commercial disputes. Therefore, as follows is formulated one of their multiple requests, sent to London the 07 of August 1879:

“Dearest Madam,

We your servants have join together and thoughts its better to write you a nice loving letter which will tell you about ail our wishes. We wish to have your laws in our towns. We want to have every fashion altered, also we will do according to your consuls word. Plenty wars here in our country. Plenty murder and plenty idol worshippers. Perhaps these Unes of our writing will look to you as an idle taie. We have spoken to the English Consul plenty times about having an English government here. We never have answer from you, so we wish to write ourselves. When we heard about Calabar River, how they have ail English laws in their towns, and how they have put away ail their superstitions, oh we shall be very glad to be like Calabar now<sup>16</sup> “.

The idea of these traditional rulers in Douala was not necessarily to become full subjects or vassals of the Queen of England, but more to be governed by a system in place that would guarantee their participation and a certain economic evolution for their communities. Nevertheless, this call for the extension of rules, in a context where England

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<sup>12</sup> There is a necessary difference to keep in mind between *Duala* and Douala. While the later refers to the city, *Duala* is the name of some of its inhabitant.

<sup>13</sup> The Mandesi Bell family is an example of the figures that have benefited most from the commercial relations with the Europeans in Douala. For more details, refer to: Ralph A. Austin & Yvette Laure Djachechi, “Rising from, Remembering, and Forgetting Slavery: The Mandesi Bell Family of Douala”, in Emmanuel Tchumtchoua & Albert François Dikoume (Eds), *Douala, histoire & patrimoine*, Clé Editions, Yaoundé, 2014, pp. 163-182.

<sup>14</sup> Bouba Mamoudou & Alain Roger Pegha, “From ‘Rio ds Camaroes’ to the Rise of Cameroon: The Role of Douala in the Birth Process of the State of Cameroon”, in *Danubius*, No 31, 2013, Pp. 265-279.

<sup>15</sup> René Gouellain, “Douala : Formation and Developement of the City during the Colonial Period”, *Cahiers d’Etudes Africaines*, Vol 13, No51, 1973, Pp. 442-468.

<sup>16</sup> Parliamentary Papers (P.P.), 1884-85, vol. LV, Africa No. 1, doc. n° 1, refered to by Albert Wirz, “La ‘Rivière de Cameroun’: commerce pré-colonial et contrôle de pouvoir en société lignagère “, in *Revue française d’histoire d’Outre-mer*, T. 60, No 219, 1973, Pp. 172-195.

was working on the abolition of the Transatlantic Slavery Trade, received hesitation from the Great Britain, as Duala Kings had slavery among their main sources of income. As a result, to the numerous calls for the annexation of their territories, the Queen of England remained silent, contenting herself with maintaining her commercial positions and at the same time discarding a solid presence of any other European power.

In the meantime, Germany, which had hitherto been more interested in building and consolidating as continental European power, was also nourishing commercial ambitions in Africa in the 19th Century, driven in part by the business community<sup>17</sup>. Conscious of their late installation of counters and control of the West African coast, German leaders gave assurance to England that German merchants had no intention of establishing themselves durably in Africa. At the time of sending Gustav Nachtigal on a mission to Cameroon, Chancellor Bismarck informed the United Kingdom that the purpose of the trip was to collect and complete information about German trade in West Africa. The British Consul proposed to offer his protection to the German envoy<sup>18</sup>. This mission followed, indeed, a recommendation of the Senate of Bremen, formulated on July 9, 1883, namely “the conclusion of the trade treaties with leaders of the African communities, with a view to the extension of the German market.” Similarly, the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce, headed by Woermann, was putting pressure on the Chancellor to set up German trading posts, particularly in Biafra Bay (now Cameroon). It should be noted that in 1868, a warehouse of the Woermann House already existed in Douala. From 1875, the Jantzen & Thormahlen House in turn, took an active part in the ivory and palm oil trade in Cameroon. Thus, in the early 1880s, Germany had commercial bases which it undertook to consolidate by the signing of the protectorate treaties.

The conclusion of the commercial agreements between the German firms and the Duala Chiefs was negotiated in the greatest secrecy, not to arouse the suspicions of the British administration. On April 17, 1884, Gustav Nachtigal was appointed Special Envoy of the German Chancellor for Africa and sent on a mission to gather information on German trade in West Africa. To prepare for this mission, German merchants were instructed to quietly take steps with the Duala Chiefs, aiming at concluding trade agreements<sup>19</sup>. When Nachtigal arrived

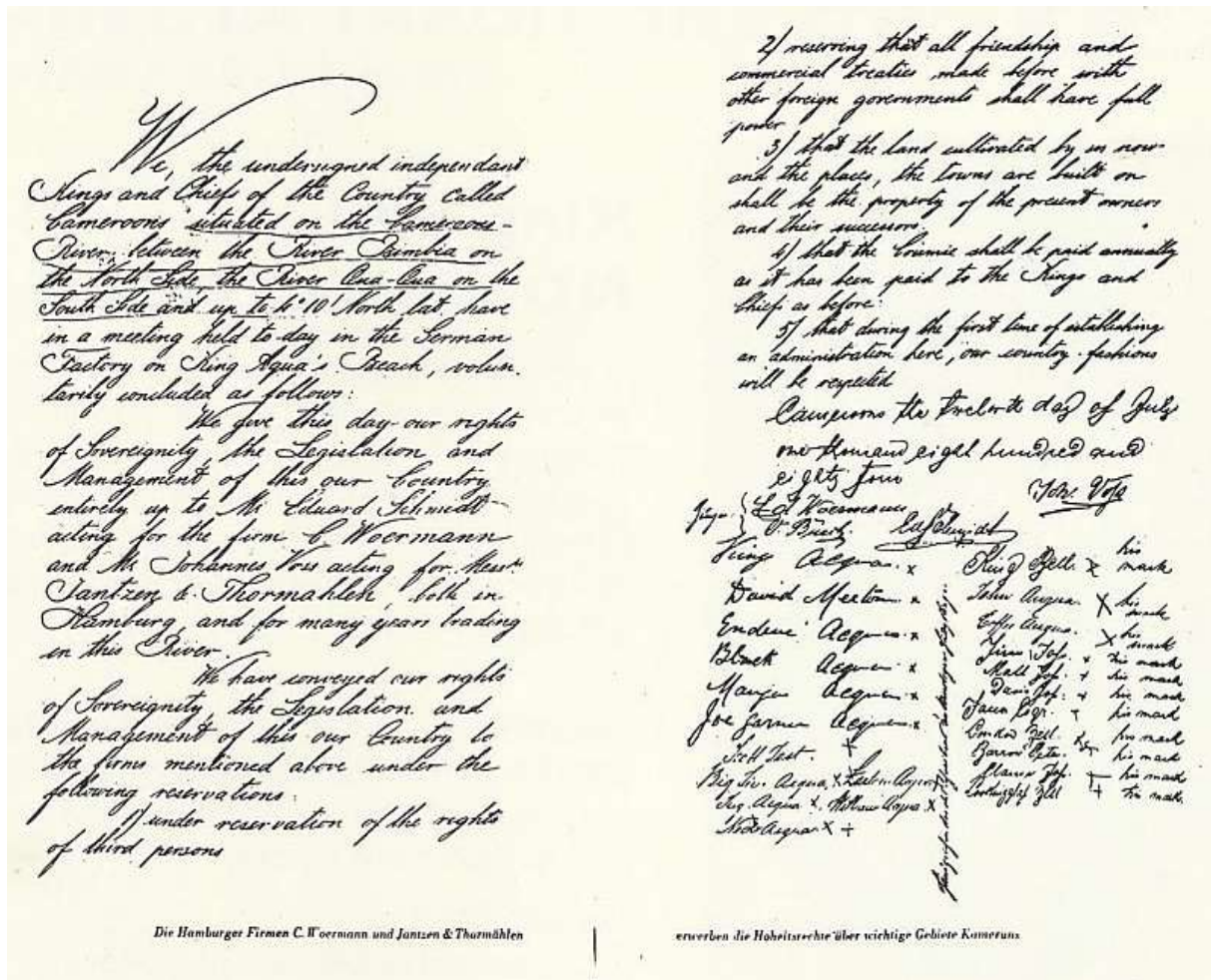
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<sup>17</sup> John Scott Keltie, *The partition of Africa*, Cambridge University Press, 2014, p.68.

<sup>18</sup> Harry R. Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914: A Case Study in Modern Imperialism*, Greenwood Press Publishers, New-York, 1968, p.30.

<sup>19</sup> David Mokam, “Le coup allemand de 1884 et ses conséquences”, in Stefanie Michels & Albert-Pascal Temgoua (eds), *The Politics of Colonial Memories in Germany and Cameroon*, proceedings of a conference in Yaounde, 2003, Lit Verlag, Münster, 2005, Pp. 81-99.

in Cameroon on July 11, 1884, he was welcomed in the Woermann warehouse on the bank of the Wouri River<sup>20</sup>. On July 12, 1884, the Kings Bell and Akwa signed, in his presence, the protectorate treaties<sup>21</sup> with representatives of the German firms Woermann, and Jantzen and Thormalen, whose terms were as follows:



<sup>20</sup> Adalbert Owona, "La naissance du Cameroun (1884-1914)", in *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, No49, 1973, Pp.16-36.

<sup>21</sup> There is a theoretical debate, on the quality or not of the signatories to engage territories, but also on the validity of said treaties in international law. Our aim is not to focus on this debate, but to take treaties as historical acts that have conditioned the evolution of Cameroon. For further details, refer to: Rodrigue Ngando Sandjé, "Le traité germano-Douala du 12 juillet 1884 : étude contemporaine sur la formation des contrats dans l'ordre juridique intemporel", in *Revue Québécoise de droit international*, Vol. 29, No 1, 2016, pp. 131-159.

Madiba Essiben provides a French translation of this treaty, highlighting the key points of the commitment they contain:

“Nous soussignés, rois et chefs du territoire nommé Cameroun, situé le long du fleuve Cameroun, entre les fleuves Bimbia au nord et Kwakwa au sud, et jusqu’au 4° 10’, degré de longitude nord, avons aujourd’hui au cours d’une assemblée tenue en la factorerie allemande sur le rivage du roi Akwa, volontairement décidé que : Nous abandonnons totalement aujourd’hui nos droits concernant la souveraineté, la législation et l’administration de notre territoire à MM. Edouard Schmidt, agissant pour le compte de la firme C. Woermann, et Johannes Voss, agissant pour le compte de la firme Jantzen et Thormählen, tous deux à Hambourg, et commerçant depuis des années dans ces fleuves. Nous avons transféré nos droits de souveraineté, de législation et d’administration de notre territoire aux firmes susmentionnés avec les réserves suivantes :

1. Le territoire ne peut être cédé à une tierce personne.
2. Tous les traités d’amitié et de commerce qui ont été conclus avec d’autres Gouvernements étrangers doivent rester pleinement valables.
3. Les terrains cultivés par nous, et les emplacements sur lesquels se trouvent des villages, doivent rester la propriété des possesseurs actuels et de leurs descendants.
4. Les péages [impôt versé par les commerçants aux monarques locaux pour l’exploitation des terres] doivent être payés annuellement, comme par le passé, aux rois et aux chefs.
5. Pendant les premiers temps de l’établissement d’une administration ici, nos coutumes locales et nos usages doivent être respectés<sup>22</sup>”.

Two days later, during a solemn ceremony, the German flag rose on the Cameroonian territory, thus consecrating the colonial domination of Germany. From then on, the question arose as to how, from a trade agreement, one passed in two days, to a colonial domination<sup>23</sup>.

## **2. The Transition to a German Colonial System in Cameroon**

Several questions about the colonization of Cameroon were raised, particularly concerning the German-Douala treaties, their validity in international law, the mechanism that led to the transfer of jurisdiction of commercial companies to the German Government. In fact, this is an approach advocated on the German side at the time of the discussions leading

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<sup>22</sup> Jean René Brutsch, “Les traités camerounais : recueillis, traduits et commentés”, in *Etudes Camerounaises* No 9, 1955, Pp. 47-48.

<sup>23</sup> Madiba Essiben, “Le traité du 12 juillet 1884 comme source de l’antagonisme germano-douala à la veille de la première guerre mondiale”, in Stefanie Michels & Albert-Pascal Temgoua (Eds), *La politique de la mémoire coloniale en Allemagne et au Cameroun-The politics of colonial memory in Germany and Cameroon*, LIT VERLAG Münster, 2005, Pp. 15-23.

to the decision to seek territorial possessions in Africa. Germany has therefore voluntarily put forward commercial objectives to satisfy its ambitions<sup>24</sup>. In this logic, it should be noted that on July 13, 1884, a memorandum was signed between Gustav Nachtigal and the firms Woermann and Jantzen & Thormalen, to transfer the benefit of the agreement that bound them to Chiefs Akwa and Bell. This transfer took place without the prior notice of all parties to the agreement. The Germans justified it with sovereignty reasons, by indicating that it was operated at the request of Cameroonians<sup>25</sup>, notwithstanding opposition of some local Chiefs<sup>26</sup> even to the signing of any kind of agreement with them, as highlights Prince Koum'a Ndoumbe III<sup>27</sup>. To rule the territory under the control of the German power, Gustav Nachtigal proposed the appointment of a High Representative of the Kaiser in Cameroon. A certain Büchner, Commander of Vessel is chosen for that purpose. However, he lacked authority in the face of the British Consul Hewett, who continued to exercise his grip on the Court of Equity<sup>28</sup> in Douala<sup>29</sup>. From November 1884, a conference was held in Berlin, during which rules of the partition of Africa were issued by participating colonial powers<sup>30</sup>. One of the statements that came out of this conference was that any power having a position could extend it until finding marks of the presence of another power<sup>31</sup>.

Beyond this essentially international situation, the signature of the German-Douala treaties was perceived by the United Kingdom as a betrayal on the part of Germany. The British Consul arrived in Douala the day after July 12 and found that the German flag was already floating on the Joss Plateau. As a result, the British took steps to push local chiefs to renounce to the clauses of the agreement already signed, as well as to conclude, in turn, new

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<sup>24</sup> Ralph A. Austen, "Mythic Transformation and Historical Continuity: the Duala of Cameroon and German Colonialism, 1884-1914", in Ian Fowler, David Zeitlyn (Eds), *African Crossroads: Intersections between History and Anthropology in Cameroon*, Berghahn Books, 1996, Pp. 63-81.

<sup>25</sup> David Simo, "Colonization and Modernization: The Legal Foundation of the Colonial Enterprises; A Case Study of German Colonization in Cameroon", in Eric Anes et al., *Germany's Colonial Pasts*, University of Nebraska Press, 2005, Pp.97-111.

<sup>26</sup> Cyrus C. Adams, "The African Colonies of Germany and the War", in *Geographical Review*, No06, Vol.1, 1916, Pp.452-454.

<sup>27</sup> Prince Kum'a Ndoumbe III, "12 juillet 1884-12 juillet 2004 Il y a 120 ans, le sort de tout le Cameroun basculait de manière durable sous la domination étrangère", [http://www.africavenir.org/fileadmin/\\_migrated/content\\_uploads/Ndumbe12juillet1884\\_08.pdf](http://www.africavenir.org/fileadmin/_migrated/content_uploads/Ndumbe12juillet1884_08.pdf), 12/12/2019.

<sup>28</sup> Ralph A. Austen, *Cited*, 1995 ; Georges Balandier, "Economy, Power and Society among the Ancient Duala", in *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, No59, Vol.15, 1975, Pp.361-380.

<sup>29</sup> René Gouellain, *Douala: Ville et Histoire*, Institut d'ethnologie, Musée de l'Homme, 1975, p.124.

<sup>30</sup> Edith P. Parker, "The Partition of Africa-A Seventh-Grade Geography Unit", in *The Elementary School Journal*, Vol. 20, No. 3, 1918, Pp.188-202.

<sup>31</sup> George Shepperson, "The Centennial of the West African Conference of Berlin, 1884-1885", in *Phylon (1960-)*, Vol.46, No1, 1985, Pp. 37-48.

treaties with the United Kingdom. In the British proposals to the local Chiefs, however, they made the mistake of including territorial dispossession, leading to the failure of negotiations. They then launch what Harry R. Rudin calls "anti-german Campaign<sup>32</sup>", that was close to turning into an open conflict between both countries. These tensions pushed Germany to decide to militarize its territory and to mark its presence by means of an administrative system. But local Chiefs, among whom the most emblematic is the king of Hikory town (currently known as Bonaberi city), recalled that they have not signed any commitment with the imperial power. This opened confrontations between the German army and the Cameroonian resistants. In this logic, the epics of the wars of resistance to German colonization pointed to bloody battles. In the capture of Banyo in 1902 for example, it took the Germans, a crossing of troops from Tibati in the North, and Bamenda in the North-West Region. In a cunning attempt, Lieutenant Nolte had assembled the notables at the chieftaincy, posting men ready to intervene around the Lamidat<sup>33</sup> siege. His first act was to arrest the older brother of Lamido Oumarou, named Yerima Issa, chief of the war operations against the occupiers. In a surge of pride, the Lamido stabbed Lieutenant Nolte and ordered hostilities whose balance sheet reports at least 300 dead<sup>34</sup>. A similar story is also told about the pacification of Bitutuk (a village in the current Littoral region), where fighting had raged between armed occupiers and locals armed with traditional defense equipment, before signing a peace pact with the "enemy"<sup>35</sup>. In Tibati, the oral testimonies state that the clash between the German army, composed of about 700 men, led by Captain Adolf Von Kampfz, took place while the Lamido<sup>36</sup> was in territorial conquest to extend his sovereignty over non-Muslim people. It was with cannons and other modern guns that the imperial power managed

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<sup>32</sup> Harry R. Rudin, *cited.*, p.48.

<sup>33</sup> Lamidat is the name of the headquarters of a chieftaincy, in the Northern Cameroon. This name is typical of the Fulani, Pular or Peuhl culture.

<sup>34</sup> Hurault Jean, "Une phase de la conquête allemande du Cameroun : l'occupation de Banyo (1902) ", in *Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer, tome 61, n°225*, 1974. Pp. 579-593.

<sup>35</sup> Isaac Bazié, *Violences postcoloniales : représentations littéraires et perceptions médiatiques*, LIT Verlag Münster, 2011, p. 52.

<sup>36</sup> Lamido is the name of traditional rulers in the Northern part of Cameroon. They are administrative, legal and religious leaders in their functions. They are also considered as auxiliaries of the Government, as they help in the implementation of some decisions. Further details: Quentin Gausset, "Historical Account or Discourse on Identity? A Reexamination of Fulbe Hegemony and Autochthonous Submission in Banyo", in *History in Africa*, Vol;25, 1998, pp. 93-110; Daniel Abwa, *Le Lamidat de Ngaoundéré de 1915 à 1945*, Master's Degree Thesis in History, University of Yaounde, 1980; Thierno Mouctar Bah & Taguem Fah Gilbert L., "Les élites musulmanes et la politique au Cameroun sous administration française:1945-1960", [https://horizon.documentation.ird.fr/exl-doc/pleins\\_textes/pleins\\_textes\\_6/colloques2/40378.pdf](https://horizon.documentation.ird.fr/exl-doc/pleins_textes/pleins_textes_6/colloques2/40378.pdf), 12/03/2020; Devon Golaszewski, *A Question of Fulbe Power: Social Change, the State and Ethnic Relations in Northern Cameroon*, B. A. in History Thesis, Wesleyan University, 2008.

to subdue local resistance<sup>37</sup>. It's the same with the conquest of Mayo Rey, where local resistance only served to worsen the record of victims<sup>38</sup>.

This approach of violence continued in the management of the protectorate, through the adoption of a very repressive administrative system, during the entire period of the German colonial presence. To summarize,

“The protectorate was internationally recognized in 1884-1885, and became a colony in 1911. Border agreements were concluded with Britain and France, and a further expansion of 107,000 square miles to the South and East was agreed with France in 1911. (As was normal in such cases, the lines on the map enclosed huge areas that were still unexplored.)<sup>39</sup>”.

The following subsection explains shows a violent German ruling system in Cameroon.

## **B. The Ruling of “Kamerun” under German Protectorate**

Germany's ruling of the protectorate was an important marker of collective memories. To point out the influence of German imperialism in the collective memories in Cameroon, it seems necessary to evoke the administrative organization of the territory (1) and the implementation of exploitation projects by the German representatives (2).

### **1. Administrative and Territorial Organization of German Cameroon**

The administrative organization and the territorial evolution of Cameroon under German protectorate are part of the dynamics of the German colonial project. As early as 1884, despite the decision of Chancellor Bismarck to create favourable conditions for the strengthening of trade and the acquisition of territories in Africa, there was some hesitation as to the effectiveness of setting up an administrative system in Cameroon<sup>40</sup>. This is explained in particular by the international situation of the time, made of anti-black racism as asserted by

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<sup>37</sup> Martin Zacharie Njeuma, “The Usmanuya System, Radicalism and the Establishment of German Colonial Rule in Northern Cameroon, 1890-1907”, in *Paideuma: Mitteilungen zur Kulturkunde*, No40, 1994, Pp. 111-128.

<sup>38</sup> Albert-Pascal Temgoua, “Souvenirs de l'époque coloniale allemande au Cameroun : témoignages des Camerounais”, in Stefanie Michels & Albert-Pascal Temgoua (eds), *cit.*, pp. 25-35.

<sup>39</sup> Alejandro de Quesada & Chris Dale, *Imperial German Colonial and Overseas Troops 1885-1918*, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013, p. 07.

<sup>40</sup> Ousmanou Zourmba, *The preservation and the Enhancement of the German protectorate's heritage in the city of Douala (Cameroon)*, Master Thesis, Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne/Università Degli Studi di Padova/Universidad de Evora, 2016/2017, p.50.

thesis of Levy-Bruhl<sup>41</sup>, as well as a colonial perception limited to the remote exploitation of economic resources<sup>42</sup>. This hesitation was such that some explorers suggested never to undertake actions tending towards mixture of the German peoples with the local populations in Africa, in order to avoid any confusion and to maintain a certain racial superiority<sup>43</sup>. In this context, it had been perceived as necessary to abstain from teaching the German language to the local populations, rather to continue to use the pidgin in the administration<sup>44</sup>. For the workforce, beyond linguistic difficulties, the fair number of inhabitants of the territory pushed the Germans to consider bringing in Chinese workers.

The conclusions of the Berlin Conference held from November 1884 to February 1885<sup>45</sup>, coupled with British pressure mentioned earlier in this chapter, pushed Germany to reconsider its strategy of colonial occupation. One of the most difficult tasks was linked to the demarcation of the protectorate's borders, which could only be done in concert with the other European powers with bases at the back of the Gulf of Guinea. Adalbert Owona explains in detail the steps taken in this direction. According to him, from 1885, Germany activated its diplomacy and weaved an alliance with France on the question of the colonization of Africa<sup>46</sup>. This alliance made it possible to fix the eastern and southern frontier of the German protectorate, notably through an agreement signed on December 24, 1885. Another treaty signed on February 4, 1894, completed on August 18, 1908, provisionally established, the perimeter of sovereignty of each of the powers. The most difficult and complex proceedings, however, concerned the Kamerun's western border, with British possession based in Nigeria. Through exchanges of notes, the negotiations with the United Kingdom resulted in the conclusion of several agreements: May 3, 1885, July 27, 1886, August 2, 1886, April 14,

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<sup>41</sup> Nicolas Journet, "De la mentalité primitive à la pensée sauvage. Lucien Lévy-Bruhl (1857-1939)", in *La culture*, 2002, Pp.159-166.

<sup>42</sup> Siegfried Passarge, *Adamawa: Rapport de l'expédition du Comité allemand pour le Cameroun au cours des années 1893-1894*, Paris, Karthala, 2010, p.551.

<sup>43</sup> François Haas, "German science and black racism-roots of the Nazi Holocaust", in *The FASEB Journal*, Vol.22, 2008, Pp.332-337.

<sup>44</sup> Chapter 5 will provide further development on this issue.

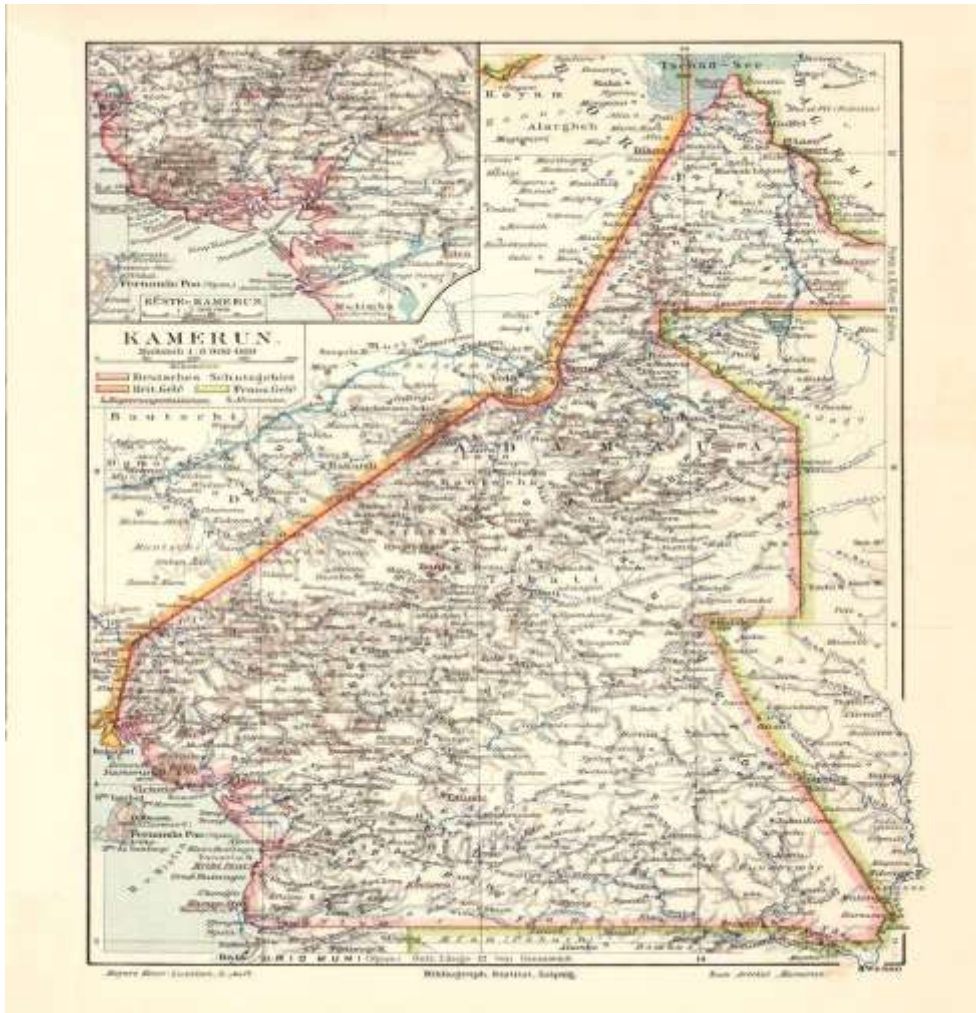
<sup>45</sup> There is a wide range of analysis on this conference and its impact on Africa. Some authors consider the conclusion of that conference as a step towards free trade in the world. Others seem to question the legal basis of decisions taken about Africa, without representatives of all the African communities. Following are interesting papers in this issue: Matthew Craven, "Between law and history: the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 and the logic of free trade", in *London Review of International Law*, Vol.3, Issue 1, 2015, Pp.31-59; Juhani Koponen, "The Partition of Africa: A Scramble for a Mirage?", in *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, No2, 1993, Pp.117-135; Ieuan Griffiths, "The Scramble for Africa: Inherited Boundaries", in *The Geographical Journal*, No2, Vol.152, 1986, Pp.204-216.

<sup>46</sup> Adalbert Owona, *cited*.



1893 and November 15, 1893<sup>47</sup>. These different agreements gave a first form to Cameroon: "The territory thus delimited took the name of" Kamerun ". In round figures, it covered 500 000 km<sup>2</sup><sup>48</sup>.

**Figure 1: Map of Cameroon in the Early Beginnings of 1900s**



**Source:** <https://deutsche-schutzgebiete.de/wordpress/projekte/kolonien/kamerun/>, accessed on December 24, 2018.

It should be mentioned that from 1911, the southern borders widened, thanks to the treaty of 04 November, extending the Kamerun Basin Sangha (part of the Central African Republic and Congo), as well as a departure from the current territory from Gabon<sup>49</sup>. This

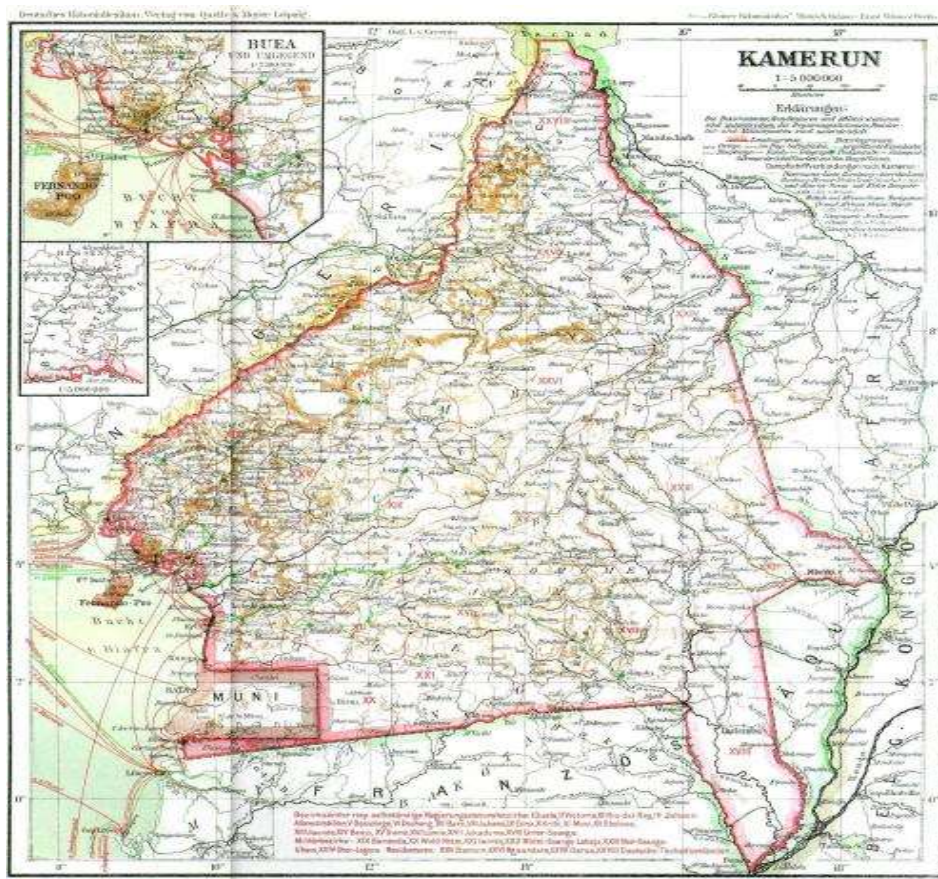
<sup>47</sup> Anonym, "Kamerun als Deutsche Kolonie", <http://www.afrika-online.com/kamerun/geschichte/kamerunalsdeutschekolonie/index.html>, accessed on December, 24, 2018,

<sup>48</sup> Adalbert Owona, *cit.*

<sup>49</sup> Anonym, "Convention Between France and Germany to Define Accurately The Boundary Lines Between the Colonies of the Kamerun and of the French Congo and to Establish the Line of Demarcation of the Respective Zones of Influence of the Two Countries About the Region of Lake Tchad", in *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Supplement: Official Documents, 1912, Pp. 95-100.

development constitutes, from the territorial point of view, the golden age of Cameroon; the Germans themselves having renamed it "Neu Kamerun". Its extent is encrypted at 750 000 km<sup>2</sup>.

**Figure 2: Map of the “Neu-Kamerun”, 1912**



**Source :** Tiffany Ambre Etame, “La colonisation allemande au Kamerun”, [http://pedagogie.lyceesavioudouala.org/histoire-geographie/app\\_grande-guerre/pages/page\\_2a1.htm](http://pedagogie.lyceesavioudouala.org/histoire-geographie/app_grande-guerre/pages/page_2a1.htm), 24/12/2018

Representatives of Germany, known as governors ruled the territory, successively as follows<sup>50</sup>.

- 1885 – 1891 : Julius Freiherr von Soden (1846 – 1921)

<sup>50</sup> For further details on German Governors in Kamerun: Bucher Gruppe, *Gouverneur (Kamerun): Julius von Soden, Jesko von Puttkamer, Otto Gleim, Eugen von Zimmerer, Karl Ebermaier, Theodor Seitz, Liste der Gouverneure der deutschen Kolonie Kamerun*, General Books LLC, 2010, 28p.

- 1891 – 1895 : Eugen von Zimmerer (1843 – 1918)
- 1895 – 1906 : Jesko von Puttkamer (1855 – 1917)
- 1907 – 1910 : Dr. Theodor Seitz (1863 – 1949)
- 1910 – 1911 : Dr. Otto Gleim (1866 – 1929)
- 1912 – 1916 : Dr. Karl Ebermaier (1862 – 1943)

The first ever Governor, Julius Von Soden, relying on the positions of German firms, set up the capital of the protectorate in Douala and undertook to organize the territory under the German model. The Governor had expanded powers and is assisted by a Secretary General who replaces him in case of absence. Officials in charge of each technical sector acted as his advisers (Post and Telegraphs, Public Works, Public Service of Maritime and Fluvial Navigation, Customs, Police, Cadastre, School and Missions, Army among others). In this regard, the composition of the German public service in Cameroon seems to have been tailored for an efficient implementation of land development projects.

## 2. The Land Development Projects

The achievement of land development projects in Cameroon under the German protectorate has also been an important marker of collective memories. The primary philosophy<sup>51</sup> and objective of Germany in their territorial conquest in Africa was to create conditions favorable to its economic development<sup>52</sup>. This is particularly to find outlets to sell the surplus of its industrial production, but also new sources of supply of raw materials to feed the industry and meet the needs of its population, as it is the case of other European colonial powers. The famous French soldier and politician Jules Ferry sums up this interconnection between economy and European expansionism enough, when he declares that “the colonial policy is born from industrial policy”: “la politique coloniale est fille de la politique industrielle”. To take advantage of natural resources of Cameroon, Siegfried Passarge, concluding an expedition in the country, suggested three main areas, namely: trade, agriculture, and livestock.<sup>53</sup>

The commercial development of German Cameroon has encountered some challenges, notably the lack of communication infrastructure. Harry R. Rudin pointed out that trade with

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<sup>51</sup> Woodruff D. Smith, “The Ideology of German Colonialism, 1840-1906”, in *The Journal of Modern History*, No04, Vol.46, 1974, Pp. 641-662.

<sup>52</sup> Richard V. Pierard, “A case study in German economic imperialism: The colonial economic committee, 1896–1914”, in *Scandinavian Economic History Review*, No 16, Vol. 2, 1968, Pp.155-167.

<sup>53</sup> Siegfried Passarge, *Cited*, p. 551.

Europeans was limited to the port of Douala<sup>54</sup>, where only local communities had direct contact with Western merchants<sup>55</sup>. They had partners or correspondents, who crisscrossed the interior of the country and brought back the raw materials. The means of transport used were essentially river transport, animal, and human portage. The Germans became aware of this reality during the explorations and conquests for territorial occupation. This trading system limited any quantitative increase, due to the slowness and impossibility of transporting large volumes of goods. The suitable solution found by the German business community was the introduction of the railways in Cameroon<sup>56</sup>. The German businessmen joined in a trade union movement founded in 1902, which obtained, thanks to its connections to the German Parliament, territorial concessions necessary for the construction of the railways. The work proper was launched from 1905, leaving from Douala in two directions: the northern railway line (Nordbahn) and that of the center (Mittlebahn). The northern line, starting from the right bank of the Wouri River, saw the inauguration of its first section of approximately 170 km in 1911<sup>57</sup>. With a budget of 17 million Marks, this line pierced both the dense forest and the mountains, which mainly characterized this region. Similarly, the central railway line opened to traffic after 1910. These two lines, built in Southern Cameroon, pierced the forest ecosystem. One of the first difficulties was linked to the layout of the railway, the projection of which ran up against the impermeability of the vegetation. The latter, made up of large trees, is completed by the weaving of lianas constituting a block closed to any human breakthrough. It was necessary above all to release these elements of the ecosystem, before facing the need to flatten the spaces to lay the railways. In places, as shown in Figure 3 in the appendix below, the routes had to be modified due to the constraints of the natural environment. More to that, the work equipment was essentially human; the difficulties of transporting large machines did not allow the use of advanced technology on construction sites. This explains the number of years that the construction works of the railway took in Cameroon during the German period. The hard work has marked collective memories alongside the railway lines. The figure below illustrates adequately the difficulties faced by Cameroonian workers.

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<sup>54</sup> The structure of the pre-colonial port of Douala responded to this situation, even preventing European ships from docking on the bank of the Wouri river. They were marching in the middle of the river to wait for canoes to come and supply them. On this subject, see Chapter 3, dedicated to town planning in Douala.

<sup>55</sup> This assertion is debatable insofar as the Empire of Kanem Bornou, located on the current territory of the Far North of Cameroon maintained a flourishing trade with the North of Africa and part of Asia. This trans-Saharan trade was a form of foreign trade, which did not exclude Europe.

<sup>56</sup> Carl René, *Kamerun un di Deutsche Tsadsee Eisenbahn*, Berlin, Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1950.

<sup>57</sup> Rose Angeline Abissi, *Le chemin de fer du Nord et la ville de Nkongsambe : croissance et déclin*, Master's Degree Thesis, the University of Yaounde 1, 1996, p. 27.

**Figure 3: Failed Track Laying of the Northern Line Railroad**



**Source :** Rose Angeline Abissi, *Le chemin de fer du Nord et la ville de Nkongsamba : croissance et déclin (1911-1991)*, Master's Degree Thesis ( Maitrise), University of Yaounde 1, 1996, p.30.

In the construction of railways, Germans built bridge and opened roads in the Cameroonian virgin forest. The following picture is an outstanding example of infrastructures, built by Germany to ease transport in Cameroon.

**Figure 4: German Iron-bridge on the Sanaga River**



**Source:** <https://www.radiomuseum.org/museum/cam/pont-allemand-d-edea-bruecke-von-edea-edea/.html>, 19/12/2019

In the agricultural domain, the fertility of the Cameroonian soil, as well as the diversity of its climate were mobilized by the Germans, with a view to experimenting very profitable agriculture. In this logic, the agricultural sector was among the sectors which had attracted mainly private German investors. Until recently, Cameroon's history textbooks teach that the Germans introduced the cash crop in Cameroon<sup>58</sup>. Indeed, from 1885, commercial companies undertook to acquire agricultural land, creating the *Kamerun Land und Plantagen Gesellschaft*. From these first acquisitions, Germany set up a real agricultural laboratory. In January 1897, the *Westafrikanische Pflanzung Victoria* company was born, with a capital of 2,500,000 marks, for an exploitation which extended to 10,000 ha. From 1913 we note the existence of palm groves, fields of coffee and cocoa, belonging to Germans, practically spread throughout the present south of Cameroon<sup>59</sup>.

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<sup>58</sup> Some authors believe that the cash crop was imposed by the Germans to meet the needs of their industries. For further details, refer to: Carole Sandrine Tagne Kommegne, *L'imposition des cultures de rente dans le processus de formation de l'Etat au Cameroun (1884-1914)*, Master's Degree Thesis, University of Yaoundé II, 2007.

<sup>59</sup> Marc Michel, « Les plantations allemandes du Mont Cameroun », *Revue d'Histoire d'Outre-mer*, No207, 1970, Pp.183-213.

In total, German companies in Cameroon massively recruited local manpower. About 20,000 people were dedicated to porting, handling, various maintenance works in the farms<sup>60</sup>. It should be noted that beyond the paid employees, Germany practiced forced labour. To finance and realize the infrastructural projects, the local populations were to present each month a card mentioning that they have worked at least 20 hours of free labour on public worksites, or in a company belonging to a German native. Any breach of this rule subjected the culprit to 25 public lashes. The use of public lashes under German protectorate, regulated in administrative decisions and circulars, reached a pick, to the extent of being given the name of “colonie aux 25 coups<sup>61</sup>” (colony of 25 strokes of can) to Cameroon among Western African colonies. It was used to punish any misbehaviour or for forced labour. These punishments as well as forced labour are anchored in collective memories as one of the key elements of the remembrance of German colonization in Cameroon.

Furthermore, in Douala and Yaounde, the Germans undertook urbanization plans, leading to massive land expropriations of the populations. These expropriations were a painful moment for the population due to the outcome of the protests they initiated, notably the death sentence for Duala Manga Bell<sup>62</sup>, Martin Paul Samba<sup>63</sup> and Charles Atangana, considered as heroes of the contestation of the German protectorate’s regime in Cameroon<sup>64</sup>.

Nevertheless, from this very synthetic summary of the German protectorate, appears a dichotomy of memory representations. On the one hand, some Cameroonians, certainly in the minority, think that Germany had put Cameroon on the path of economic development<sup>65</sup>, with the construction of infrastructures still in use and solid till today. On the other hand, the animosity and brutality which characterized the contact between the German administrators

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Joseph Gomsu, *Colonisation et organisation sociale : les chefs traditionnels du Sud-Cameroun pendant la période coloniale allemande (1884-1914)*, 3rd Cycle Doctorate Thesis, Université Paul Verlaine – Metz, 1982, p.287.

<sup>62</sup> About Duala Manga Bell and the resistance to land expropriation in Douala, we will come back to this in detail in the chapter devoted to the history of urban planning in Douala.

<sup>63</sup> Martin Paul Samba is one of the many Cameroonians who served the German army. Born around 1875, he passed through German military academies, then became an officer of the German army in Cameroon. From 1912, he began to rebel against the degrading treatment inflicted by the German administration on the populations of his hometown, Ebolowa. He then got closer to Duala Manga Bell who, for his part, organized the Bells' protest their eviction from the Joss plateau. Martin Paul Samba then tried to organize a revolt, then was captured and sentenced to death by the Germans. He was shot on August 14, 1914, the same day as Duala Manga Bell

<sup>64</sup> There is still a debate on the status of hero, granted to these three people murdered by the Germans. Some Cameroonian authors believe that they are not real heroes, but rather opportunists, arguing that they served the Germans and that their overthrow of colonialism was aimed only at selfish interests.

<sup>65</sup> Ambe J. Njoh, “The impact of colonial heritage on development in Sub-Saharan Africa”, in *Social Indicators*, No52, 2000, Pp.161-178.

and the Cameroonian people left painful traces<sup>66</sup>. The First World War begins in this context where, Cameroon experiences a form of bloody contestation of the German colonial system.

## II. International Regimes of “Colonial” Domination in Cameroon (1914-1960)

When World War I broke out, the German administration in Cameroon, because of their brutality, land expropriations, forced labour among others, were the subject of a challenge by the local populations. Presumably informed of this situation, the Allied powers, France and the United Kingdom deployed their troops present on the territories around Cameroon, in pursuit of the German Army<sup>67</sup>. These troops benefited from large support of the populations of Douala, who showed them the ways to hunt for the Germans<sup>68</sup>. For the British, the objective, beyond the war in Europe and the entanglement of Germany wherever it was possible, was to recover a territory that would have been stolen from them by the Germans in 1884, in the case of Cameroon. The French had the plan to recover the territories acquired by Germany in 1911, geographically enlarging Cameroon<sup>69</sup>. Thus, from 1914, the cities of Douala and Edéa were occupied by the Allied Powers<sup>70</sup>. From then on, the Germans moved the capital to Yaoundé, where they found support from the local populations, partly due to the marriage alliances between Germans and Cameroonians which had been formed for years. This marked the beginning of a political change, which will consecrate successively the application of the international Mandate and Trusteeship regimes.

However, these regimes, for France especially, constituted international forms used as an instrument of domination. This confirms that legal instruments are tools of power. Indeed, the French system of administration, as Pierre François Gonidec points out, is designed vertically:

“L'ordre français est un ordre imposé d'en haut. Il est envisagé dans une perspective verticale et non dans une perspective horizontale entre collectivités égales, selon la juste observation de Paul

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<sup>66</sup> Prince Kouma Ndoumbe III, “Comment par les institutions européennes l’extraversion et la domination durables ont été instaurées chez nous”, [http://www.africavenir.org/fileadmin/\\_migrated/content\\_uploads/NdumbeExtraversion\\_08.pdf](http://www.africavenir.org/fileadmin/_migrated/content_uploads/NdumbeExtraversion_08.pdf), 12/12/2019.

<sup>67</sup> Philippe-Blaise Essomba, “La guerre des voies de communication au Cameroun, 1914-1916”, in *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, No248, 2012, Pp.7-26.

<sup>68</sup> G. M. Wrigley, “The Military Campaigns against Germany’s African Colonies”, in *Geographical Review*, No1, Vol.5, 1918, Pp.44-65; Cyrus C. Adams, *Cited*.

<sup>69</sup> ANOM 26/165, *Correspondance avec l’autorité militaire, octobre 1914-juin 1916*.

<sup>70</sup> Marc Michel, “Le Cameroun allemande aurait-il pu rester unifier ? Français et Britanniques dans la conquête du Cameroun (1914-1916)”, in *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, No 168, 1992, Pp. 13-29.



Mus dans son livre remarquable consacré à l'Union française<sup>71</sup>". (The French order is an order imposed from the top. It is considered from a vertical perspective and not from a horizontal perspective between equal communities, according to the just observation of Paul Mus in his remarkable book devoted to the French Union).

This became clearer in the exchanges which followed the occupation of the country from 1914, as well as in the correspondence between France and Great Britain, with a view to determining the mode of administration of Cameroon.

## **A. From Condominium to the Mandate of the League of Nations (1914-1945)**

After having successfully occupied Cameroon during the First World War, France and the United Kingdom faced a legal difficulty linked to the administration of Cameroon. This difficulty resulted from the differences in colonial models as well as the administrative systems of both countries. The attempt to resolve that issue has gone from a condominium system to the separate application of the League of Nations Mandate.

### **1. The British-French Condominium (1914-1916)**

Schematically, the condominium can be defined as the joint exercise of a right of sovereignty by two powers over a territory. On September 14, 1914, Franco-British forces seized Douala and agreed to administer Cameroon<sup>72</sup>. At the start of the expedition, the allied troops, made up of 3,000 British soldiers from Freetown and 2,000 soldiers from French Equatorial Africa, had only received instructions to act mainly in Douala, Buea and Victoria. The main mission given to the Commander of the French troops was to cut off the telegraph relays, in order to disrupt the enemy by cutting the flow of information from Berlin. In a letter addressed to the Minister of the Colonies, on October 6, 1915, the Governor General of French Equatorial Africa took up enormous challenges for the administration of the vast territory of Cameroon, partly due to the unpreparedness of the allied powers for this effect<sup>73</sup>. In the context of war, the Allied powers first set out to establish their sovereignty over the territory, then proceeded to the establishment of a highly militarized administration.

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<sup>71</sup> Pierre François Gonidec, "De la dépendance à l'autonomie : l'Etat sous tutelle du Cameroun", in *Annuaire français de droit international*, Vol.3, 1957, Pp.597-626.

<sup>72</sup> Lovett Elango, "The anglopho-French condominium" in Cameroon, 1914-1916. The myth and the reality", in *The international Journal of African historical studies*, vol.18, no 4, 1985, Pp.657-673.

<sup>73</sup> ANOM, 21/187, *Condominium du Cameroun. Lettre au Ministre 06.8.15.*

This short period, often overlooked or forgotten in the history of Cameroon, is one that had given a meaning to its future institutional evolution. From this precise moment, Cameroon became a condominium until March 4, 1916 date during which the French and the British began the negotiations of two Declarations to divide the territory into two distinct parts. These Declarations are adopted and entered into force of law in France on July 10, 1919. While the French took 4/5 of the territory, the English contented themselves with 1/5th, an area of 53,000 km<sup>2</sup>, located to the west. From April 7, 1916, the French President appointed a Commissioner in Cameroon to rule the territory<sup>74</sup>.

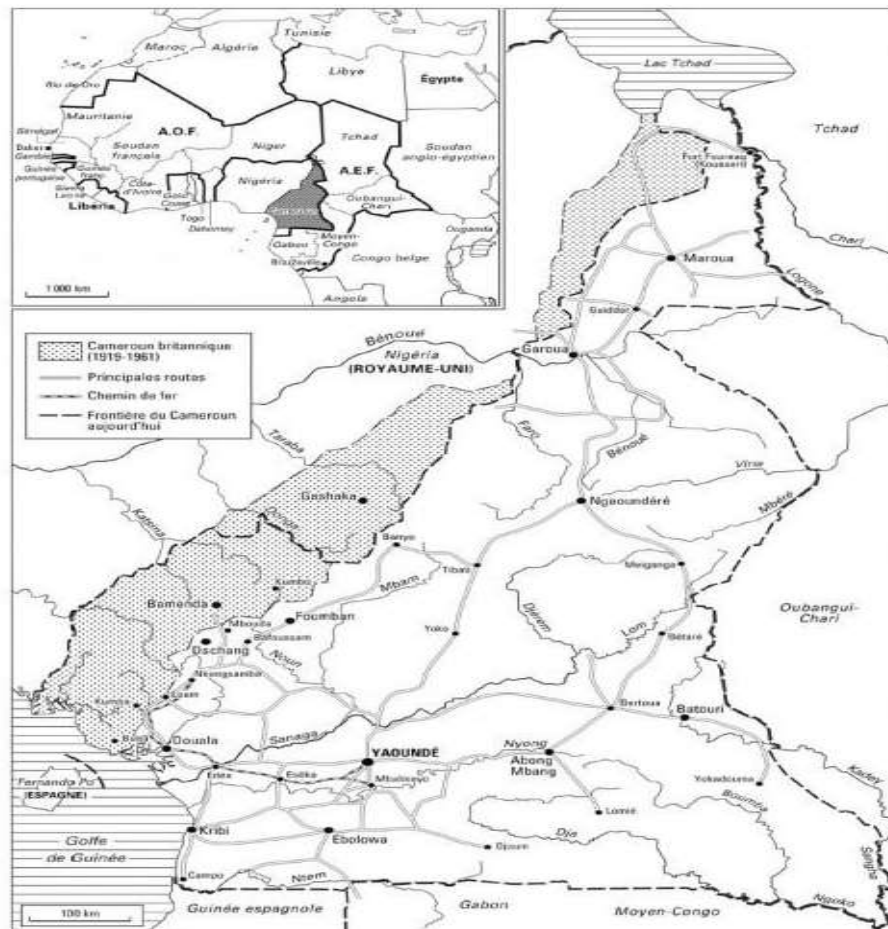
The British-French condominium system in Cameroon had gray areas that deserve a piece of history. It is known that in 1914, Allied troops invaded the city of Douala, making Cameroon a theatre of military operations. Hostilities continued until 1916 and to a certain extent, Germany considered that it only lost Cameroon after the Treaties of Versailles. Historiography and archives do not provide enough information on the management of Cameroon during this period. One of the first action of France in Douala was the creation of a court mainly responsible for the administration of German property. These assets were sequestrated, and then liquidated in auction. Also, the correspondence between France and the United Kingdom focused on the future of German properties, the partition of Cameroon and the status of the territory. The archives of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs contained several notes and correspondences from the Ministry of the Colonies on Cameroon during this period. The involvement of the Ministry of the Colonies showed a deliberate desire to consider Cameroon as a French colony<sup>75</sup>.

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<sup>74</sup> ADF, "1918-1940 : Afrique, questions générales", 95, p.16

<sup>75</sup> Further details in fifth chapter of this Thesis.

**Figure 5: Map of the partition of Cameroon between France and the UK.**



**Source :** Steve Herve Simo Moubi, *Cameroon: Le combat pour l'indépendance sous l'emprise d'une France coloniale*, Master's Thesis, Università di Pisa, 2014-2015, p.17.

This modesty in the British pretension in the occupation of the conquered Cameroon testifies a focus on the coastal part of the country, the ruling of which is connected to Nigeria<sup>76</sup>. The dividing agreement thus established is finalized in 1919 by the Simon Milner Declaration<sup>77</sup>, which recommended the adoption of a border between the two separate parts of Cameroon.

This evolution led Cameroon into the facto colonial domination, in the sense that the two powers, France and the United Kingdom, would not have needed to divide the territory

<sup>76</sup> Roger Louis Wm, "Great Britain and the African Peace Settlement of 1919", in *The American Historical Review*, Vol.71, No3, 1966, Pp. 875-892.

<sup>77</sup> Simon Milner Declaration is an agreement signed on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1919, between Simon Milner, British Secretary of State for the Colonies and Henry Simon, French Minister for the Colonies. This Declaration, supported by maps and figures, indicate the frontier-line between British and French Cameroon. It is available on the following website: <https://jusmundi.com/en/document/treaty/en-milner-simon-declaration-1919-milner-simon-declaration-1919-thursday-10th-july-1919>, 12/12/2019.

for its administration, if their ambition were not to assimilate the country to colonial possessions. It was indeed an unprecedented experience, as each country has its own model and interests. It is therefore curious to note that the Treaty of Peace of Versailles claimed an international status on the basis of a bilateral declaration between two powers. Nonetheless, the World War I shifted Cameroon theoretically from colonial domination to the control of the international community, largely dominated by colonial ideologies towards Africa.

## **2. The Content of the Mandate of the League of Nations (1922-1945)**

The end of the World War I opened the debate between victorious powers on how to preserve peace in the future relations among States. The colonial question was thus tackled, as a source of tension, which deserved better regulation. In this vein the concern was to make Germany responsible for the war, and therefore to make it incapable of harming other countries in the future. From these concerns among many others resulted the birth of an international organization, the League of Nations, whose main mission was to serve as a policeman of international peace<sup>78</sup>, as claims Ludovic Toumés: “La Société des Nations ayant été la première tentative dans l’histoire de l’humanité pour réguler les relations internationales et coordonner la coopération dans de multiples domaines<sup>79</sup>”. This author means that the League of Nations had been the first ever international organization created with the objectives of coordinating the international cooperation in various domains. During the peace negotiations to end the World War I, some political leaders exerted pressure to clearly determine the status of some territories, among which the former possessions of Germany. Among these leaders, there was the role of the American President Woodrow Wilson, who announced on January 18, 1918, the "Fourteen points" which should preside over the conclusion of peace in the world. Among these, points 5 and 14 directly concerned the subsequent evolution of Cameroon. Another element, and not the least important, is that some Cameroonians exerted pressure at the Versailles Peace Conference to indicate the direction in which they wished their future to be considered. Consequently, by a petition addressed to "the high conference" on August 18, 1919, the Duala chiefs and notables claimed autonomy or at least, the possibility of proceeding to the choice of the representative whom to entrust their

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<sup>78</sup> Jean Jacques Renoliet, *L’Unesco oubliée : la société des nations et la coopération intellectuelle, 1919-1945*, Publication de la Sorbonne, 1999, 352p. ; Philippe Blaise Essomba, *Le Cameroun : les rivalités d’intérêt franco-allemandes de 1919 à 1932*. Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, 2004, 187p.

<sup>79</sup> Ludovic Tournés, *Les États-Unis et la Société des Nations (1914-1946). Le système international face à l’émergence d’une superpuissance*, Peter Lang, 2016, p.3.

country Cameroon. All these pressures succeeded to include the Mandate Regime in the founding text of the League of Nations. Susan Peterson suggests that the Mandate system was subject to debate not because it altered governance, rather, because it placed the imperial power under international scrutiny<sup>80</sup>.

As regard to Cameroon, this regime, precisely the Mandate “B”<sup>81</sup> had been applicable as from January 1922, thanks to an agreement binding France, the UK and the League of Nations. Consequently, the territory under the mandate of the League of Nations entrusted to the British Empire became British Cameroon and the British hasten to attach it to the administration of their Nigerian colony. The peculiarity of the Type B Mandate is that it opens the territory to all members of the League of Nations. Their citizens could settle freely, just as they can carry out economic activities there without any discriminatory treatment<sup>82</sup>.

It should be recalled that a territory under international mandate is, in fact, a territory administered by another provisionally under the control of an international body which, here, is the League of Nations. Thus, a mandatory State administers and reports annually to the Permanent Mandates Commission which is the body within the League of Nations in charge of mandates. The terms or mandate missions are clearly expressed in articles 22 and 23 of the Covenant of the League of Nations. In a nutshell, their mission was to promote the well-being of the populations to get them to administer themselves. The Treaty gave an explicit idea in the following words:

“Other peoples, especially those of Central Africa, are at such a stage that the Mandatory must be responsible for the administration of the territory under conditions which will guarantee freedom of conscience and religion, subject only to the maintenance of public order and morals, the prohibition of abuses such as the slave trade, the arms traffic and the liquor traffic, and the prevention of the establishment of fortifications or military and naval bases and of military training of the natives for other than police purposes and the defence of territory, and will also secure equal opportunities for the trade and commerce of other Members of the League<sup>83</sup>”.

A clear interpretation of this legal provision easily suggests that the mission of the mandate was, primarily, to ensure the well-being and human development of the population entrusted to it. That said, mandatory powers accepted to have duties in Cameroon and had to

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<sup>80</sup> Further development in: Susan Peterson, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire*, Oxford University Press, 2015, 592p.

<sup>81</sup> The "B" mandates are made up of the German colonies in Africa requiring longer guardianship because the populations are considered incapable of governing themselves, hence the need for an agent who must prepare them to enjoy their independence. These are East-African countries formerly under German rules, Cameroon and Togo.

<sup>82</sup> Robert Capot-Rey, “Les territoires africains places sous mandat”, in *Annales de géographie*, No269, Vol.47, 1938, Pp.547-552.

<sup>83</sup> Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, [https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/leagcov.asp#art23](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp#art23), 12/10/2019.

address for all practical purposes, the annual reports to the Permanent Commission Mandates (PCM). This report is discussed by the state-members of the League of Nations, which in fact, exert control on how the two powers rule the Cameroonian territory. Also, the mandate is without interest, that means, mandatory powers should not claim for any benefits from their role in the mandated territories. It was temporary and aimed to help local populations gain capacities to self-management<sup>84</sup>.

Notwithstanding the provisions of the agreements regulating the actions of the mandatory powers on the territory of Cameroon, divergent interpretation led to the application of colonial rules. In fact, France for example applied the policy of assimilation, in view of the implementation of the “mission civilisatrice”, that consisted in replacing local culture with the French one. To this end, the French rulers imposed all kinds of laws on people, and those who contravened them were arrested, beaten, and kept in prison without trial. Cameroonians were not allowed to organize trade unions without the authorization of the French High Commissioner. Also, the *Code de l'indigenat*, that defines general rules applied in French colonies, was introduced in Cameroon. There is in many respects, a complete contradiction with the rules of the League of Nations because, the well-being so much criticized is routed and Cameroon was totally dependent of France.

While France had practiced direct rule, Great Britain has opted for indirect rule<sup>85</sup>. Formalized by Lord Lugard in his famous book, the Dual Mandate in British Tropical indirect rule which consisted in leaving to native authorities the care of administering their populations according to their traditions on condition that this does not conflict with the principles of British civilization. This simply means that these native authorities took care to administer the local populations according to their customs except when these were in contradiction with the British laws. The British authorities set the main directions and left them to the native authorities. Furthermore, the British authorities kept control of trade, the exploitation of economic and mineral resources, among others.

Moreover, it is not an exaggeration to say that for France and Great Britain, the mandate missions previously defined in the status of the League of Nations constituted a simple style clause, because none of these two mandatory powers totally complied with the legal

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<sup>84</sup> An analysis of the spirit of this provision suggests that Africa was not administered before the invasion of European powers. Indeed, it seems degrading to judge people who have asked nothing of people, that they do not have the capacity to administer themselves. Undoubtedly the colonial powers have weighed with all their weight in order to adopt such a retrograde vision of Africa within the League of Nations.

<sup>85</sup> Pierre François Gonidec, *Cited*.

provisions. The appropriation they made of it did not allow the PCM of the League of Nations carry out freely its activities. France had done everything to ensure that the Cameroonian people embrace French culture to the chagrin of Cameroonian customs. Well-being had become ill-being insofar as local populations had no choice but to respect what is imposed on them as a line to follow. They were subjected to forced labour, physical abuse, all-out arrests. The British, on their part, did not adopt a uniform policy. They administered Cameroon as an integral part of their colonial empires until 1945 when they shifted their mandate to a trusteeship.

## **B. From the Trusteeship Regime to Independence (1945-1960)**

The end of the League of Nations did not endorse the independence of the Territories under the Mandate regime, the management of which was entrusted to few countries. On the contrary, its lethargy and the emptiness it left during the Second World War had given way to a chain of events, as far as Cameroon is concerned, close to outright assimilation to the French colonies. Thus, notwithstanding the creation of a so-called trusteeship regime by the United Nations, it took a fierce struggle to acquire Independence, even if at the end, the latter seems in the eyes of some observers, misguided in that it should be called neo-colonialism.

### **1. The Trusteeship International Regime**

The outbreak of the Second World War reflected the weakness of an international community, united within the League of Nations, whose members did not hesitate to betray the contractual obligations which it enacted. The replacement of the League of Nations by the United Nations (UN) thus reflected a new desire to find a framework for an efficient regulation of the international relations.

The fate of the Territories under the Mandate Regime of the League of Nations was a subject of debate in the search for ways out or resolution of the Second World War. Thus, it is the Charter of the United Nations itself which dealt with the status of these territories. These territories, included in the terminology of the territories not yet autonomous, were considered first, as under the protection of the UN, which delegated their management, via the system of Trusteeship, to selected powers. In the meantime, the Organization allowed them the latitude to conclude trusteeship agreements, without a framework of the powers which will be devoted

to them later<sup>86</sup>. Charmian Edwards Toussaint highlights positions of various countries discussed during the peace negotiations, especially regarding the scope of the Trusteeship, the compulsory character of its legal provisions among others<sup>87</sup>. What stands out clearly, from Article 75 of the Charter of the United Nations, is that the territories under trusteeship fall under the authority of the Organization. The Charter also established a mechanism for monitoring the exercise of the trusteeship, through the General Assembly but also its special Council. This principal organ of the United Nations Organization has, by Article 87 of the Charter, a broad mission of monitoring on the ground, receiving and recording complaints and petitions from the populations concerned, as well as examining reports of the supervisory power on the evolution of the Territory. Thus, trust territories were in theory, subtracted from a certain form or ambition of submission to the tutelary authority.

For the case of Cameroon, formerly under French Mandate, it is the agreement of September 13, 1946 between France and the UN which established the terms of the Trusteeship. By this agreement, France committed to:

“le Gouvernement français s’engage, en tant qu’autorité chargée de l’administration de ce Territoire aux termes de l’Article 81 de la Charte des Nations Unies, à y exercer les devoirs de tutelle définis par ladite Charte, à y rechercher les fins essentielles du Régime de tutelle énoncées à l’article 76, et à prêter toute son assistance à l’Assemblée générale et au Conseil de tutelle dans l’exercice de leurs fonctions telles qu’elles sont fixées par les Articles 87 et 88<sup>88</sup>”.

(The French Government undertakes, as the authority responsible for the administration of this Territory under the terms of Article 81 of the Charter of the United Nations, to exercise there the duties of trusteeship defined by the said Charter, to seek the essential purposes of the Trusteeship Regime set out in Article 76, and to render all its assistance to the General Assembly and to the Trusteeship Council in the exercise of their functions as determined by Articles 87).

The terminology used in this article remains consistent with the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations. In addition, by this agreement, France undertook to do everything possible for a social, economic, and political development of the Cameroonian territory placed under its administration, with a view to full international sovereignty. In the meantime, the agreement itself contains vicious provisions which, failing to escape members of the United Nations at the time of its acceptance, would have been imposed to them. These are the provisions that implicitly authorized to administer the territory as an integral part of French territory, to establish military bases there, as well as to integrate it into a customs union. These provisions reflect a French logic that had been fundamentally opposed, since the institution of

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<sup>86</sup> Chapters XI and XII of the United Nations Charter.

<sup>87</sup> Charmian Edwards Toussaint, *The Trusteeship System of the United Nations*, Praeger, 1956, 288p.

<sup>88</sup> Article 2 of the Trusteeship agreement between France and the United Nations Organization, for the administration of Cameroon.



the League's Mandate, to any constraint in the management of the territory, economically, politically and culturally.

Thus, for General De Gaulle's France, Cameroon, whether it is called Trust Territory or not, is an extension of France, which can only be managed on the model of other colonies. The Indigenous Code, racial segregation including the separation of urban space, forced labour, the imposition of taxes, the imposition of French culture, etc., continued, notwithstanding the opposition of some Cameroonians, from the moment of the conclusion of the trusteeship agreements. The bloody struggle for independence testifies of the vicious character of trusteeship system in Cameroon.

## **2. From the struggle for Independence to the Postcolonial Trauma**

The struggle for autonomy in Cameroon began under the German protectorate<sup>89</sup>, particularly in the face of land expropriations induced by urban projects in the city of Douala, but also when some have thought that the German-Douala treaties were signed for a period of twenty years. Also, the movements of resistance to the system of administration set up by France within the framework of the Mandate regime and the pro-German<sup>90</sup> movements had led to independence claims.

### **a. A Bloody Struggle for Independence**

When the Second World War broke out, some Cameroonians hoped, at best of regaining their autonomy, otherwise to resume with the German Empire for the most nostalgic of the period of the German protectorate. Some, especially those who found themselves in the current Equatorial Guinea and who were numbered around 60,000, helped by some Germans present on the territory, maintained the idea that Hitler would send troops to Cameroon to reconquer the territory.

The Armistice signed between France and Germany in June 1940 had an impact on Cameroon, with the proclamations of independence. The first proclamation of independence

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<sup>89</sup> Some authors claim that the opposition of some local chiefs to the signing of protectorate treaties with German firms constituted the beginnings of Cameroonian resistance to European colonialism. Further details in: Mbapndah and al., "German Colonialism and the Cameroonian Chieftaincy Institution, 1884-1916: The Politics of Convenience, Tyranny and Hegemony", in *Lagos Historical Review*, 2009, Vol. 9, pp.1-21.

<sup>90</sup> The Germanophile movements designate, in the history of Cameroon in the XX<sup>th</sup> century, open expressions and claims of a return to the German system, in opposition to the French presence. These movements are based on the German protectorate, on the family and economic ties that were forged during the protectorate. They formed incubators for independence movements. The second part of this thesis will provide ample information.

dates from July 15, 1940. Indeed, some French citizens in Yaoundé, rejecting the capitulation proposed and obtained from the High Commissioner of France in Cameroon, the unilateral proclamation of the independence of the territory, and thus a total rupture with the Vichy Government. In this approach, the French High Commissioner proclaimed himself head of Cameroon and undertook to manage the country, by paying the salaries of civil servants. On analysis, this proclamation of the independence of Cameroon revealed an opportunism of French administrators, which had nothing to do with the aspirations of local populations for autonomy. The second proclamation of independence is the accidental work of the Free France of General De Gaulle. When Commander Philippe de Hauteclocque, who became Colonel by force of circumstances and known as Leclerc, arrived in Douala on August 26, 1940, he organized the resistance by first cutting Cameroon from France of Marechal Petain. Leaflets were posted overnight in the streets of Douala, which notably mentioned that the territory is free from any external domination: “le Cameroun reprend son indépendance économique et politique<sup>91</sup>”. In fact, it was only a strategy to get Cameroon to rally to the resistance led by Free France. After the Armistice and its corollary of capitulation of Metropolitan France, General De Gaulle built his entire strategy based on the concept of the French Empire. For him, if the Metropolis is under siege, the territorial extensions of France must be mobilized for its liberation. Thus, Cameroon, by what the territory represented for Germany, by its geostrategic position and especially its resources, must constitute the pillar of the mobilization of war efforts overseas. In this logic, the Cameroonian territory was the very first of the French Colonial Empire where General De Gaulle set foot and therefore mobilized men. Also, French and natives loyal to Free France have undertaken to collect funds, with a view of buying a war helicopter to strengthen the arsenal of the army of Free France. In this same strategy, proclamations of autonomy only made sense in relation to Vichy's France, as evidenced by the evolution of the territory, until the Brazzaville Conference and then the creation of the United Nations.

It is difficult nowadays to obtain clear statistical data on the number of Cameroonian soldiers enlisted in General De Gaulle's army during the World War II. This difficulty is even worse regarding their employment and their effective role on the various war fronts. What

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<sup>91</sup> Enoh Meyomesse, *Histoire du Cameroun de 1940 à nos jours : Tome 1, de la 1<sup>ère</sup> proclamation de l'indépendance à Yaoundé le 15 juillet 1940 par Robert Coron et d'autres colons au discours d'Um Nyobe à l'ONU le 17 décembre 1952*, Yaoundé, Edk books, 2016, p.69.

seems real is that all of the so-called "tirailleurs" were considered in France to be of Senegalese origin.

Regarding their recruitment, notwithstanding the existence of colonial armies, comprising natives at lower stage of the hierarchy, in Cameroon, the absence of such an army gave way to the recruitment of volunteers but also the forced recruitment of combatants. Enoh Meyomesse points out that in fact the truth of the enrolment of the so-called "tirailleurs" in Cameroon is similar to the enslavement process:

“les recrutements étaient plus forcés que volontaires. Il était, dans certains cas, organisé des rafles à l’issue desquelles tous les hommes valides, de préférence les jeunes, étaient enrôlés d’office, dans ce qui allait devenir par la suite « *Les Forces Françaises Libres* », EFL. Dans d’autres, les troupes coloniales se postaient par exemple à la sortie des messes, le dimanche, et capturaient littéralement tous les hommes valides. Enfin des rafles étaient organisées dans des marchés périodiques<sup>92</sup> ”.  
(recruitments were more forced than voluntary. It was, in some cases, organized roundups at the end of which all able-bodied men, preferably young people, were automatically enlisted, in what would later become "The Free French Forces", EFL. In other cases, the colonial troops stationed themselves, for example, at the end of masses on Sundays, and literally captured all able-bodied men. Finally, raids were organized in periodic markets).

The choice was made, in some cases, on people with a robust, hard-working appearance and from a reputed warrior ethnic group, exactly like during the transatlantic or trans-Saharan slavery trade. The picture below affords with a view on some Cameroonian enrolled in Douala, as soldiers and deported to France to fight German Soldiers, in 1941.

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<sup>92</sup> Enoh Meyomesse, *Cited.*, p. 82.

**Figure 6: Cameroonian Soldiers Enrolled in the French Army. Douala, 1941.**



**Source:** [http://etudescameroun.canalblog.com/albums/le\\_cameroun\\_colonial/photos/82951329-le\\_depart\\_des\\_tirailleurs\\_camerounais\\_a\\_dla\\_en\\_1941.html](http://etudescameroun.canalblog.com/albums/le_cameroun_colonial/photos/82951329-le_depart_des_tirailleurs_camerounais_a_dla_en_1941.html), 13/02/2019.

Nevertheless, Cameroon's participation in the Second World War, alongside the forces of Free France was a stimulating factor for the independence movements. On the one hand, for the Cameroonians who fought on various fronts, the mystification of the "White Man" no longer existed. On the other hand, in his drive to rebuild a country that has suffered the siege of Germany, General De Gaulle developed a myriad of speeches with the aim of regaining the sovereignty of France over its colonies<sup>93</sup>, particularly through the establishment of the *Union Française* (French Union), making Cameroon a French territory in the same way as the other colonies. This contempt for the status of the country has comforted some Cameroonians to the idea of undertaking political actions for their self-determination. The approach started mainly from the trade union movements, especially the Cameroon-France Youth League, JEUCAFRA (Jeunesse Camerounaise-Française), a pro-French movement which emerged in

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<sup>93</sup> Steve Herve Simo Moubi, *Cameroon : le combat pour l'indépendance sous l'emprise d'une France coloniale*, Université de Pise, Mémoire de Master en Etudes Internationales, 2014-2015, p.31.

the 1930s. This movement nonetheless constituted a framework for learning union action, then political action, for some Cameroonian anti-colonialists, who enjoyed strong support from the French Communist Party. In 1945, facing a demand for a salary increase, France reacted by aviation and machine-gunned unionists, with the complicity of the Catholic Church, which excommunicated the leaders of the claim<sup>94</sup>. At this time, in places of worship, blacks and whites had separate benches, while missionaries, businessmen and colonial administrators easily resorted to forced labour.

Perceiving an irreversible evolution towards the awakening of consciences, France developed a strategy to maintain its territorial possessions, including the territories under trusteeship, within what it calls the French Union, which is nothing but a colonial empire. This strategy was notably achieved through the creation of representative assemblies, an integral part of the French political macrocosm. Later, Cameroonian elected officials used the platform that their membership of these Assemblies gave them, as well as the opportunity to forge political alliances, to give a major boost to the political struggle for independence. It should be remembered that at the end of the 1930s, Mandessi Bell and Moumé Etia, two Cameroonians living in France, created the Cameroonian Union, which flooded the League of Nations with independentist petitions and claims. In 1945, the same Moumé Etia created, this time on Cameroonian territory, the Democratic Movement of Cameroon (MDC), with the project, "to unify the popular masses of Cameroon and France". Due to its misunderstood objectives, the MDC had not been successful and had given way to the Rassemblement Camerounais, Charter of Indigenous Populations of Cameroon (RACAM), born on May 06, 1947. The movement had set clear and turned objectives towards the admittedly progressive independence of Cameroon:

“1- D'affirmer la volonté de participer à l'œuvre d'émancipation du Cameroun dans le cadre des lois internationales.

2- D'être l'unique trait d'union entre le territoire et ses représentants aux Assemblées métropolitaines et locales.

3- De travailler, par tous les moyens et dans tous les domaines au relèvement politique, économique, moral et social des autochtones<sup>95</sup>”.

(1- To affirm the will to participate in the work of emancipation of Cameroon within the framework of international laws.

2- To be the only link between the territory and its representatives in metropolitan and local assemblies.

3- To work, by all means and in all fields, for the political, economic, moral and social

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<sup>94</sup> Manuel Domergue, “Cameroun : une guerre oubliée remonte à la surface”, *Les Temps Modernes*, Nos 693-694, 2017, Pp. 160-173.

<sup>95</sup> Enoh Meyomessé, *Cited.*, p.120.

recovery of the natives).

For reasons that remain to be searched by historians, RACAM had not really registered with the ranks of political parties that efficiently contributed to the liberation of Cameroon from French colonialism. It was finally banned by the French administration, thus leading to its disappearance<sup>96</sup>.

Of all the political parties, the *Union des Populations du Cameroun* (UPC) was the one whose action was the subject of controversy, and fits in the cases, in the memorial representations of the war or independence struggle in Cameroon. However, its basic texts were drafted in Paris, with the support of Parliamentarians of the French Communist Party and activists of the Confédération Générale des Travailleurs (CGT), who put forward the idea of a more detailed political party in Cameroon.

Charles Assale was responsible for bringing the status drawn up in Paris, with a tacit mandate to work for the creation of the political party in question. On April 10, 1948, the latter held a conclave in a bistro in Douala and had the UPC status shared and adopted. Then on April 12, the said status were submitted at the Town Hall of Douala. Not without difficulties, the birth of this party marking the beginning of a fight which will degenerate into an open conflict, leading Cameroon to a bloody independence.

From its birth, the UPC was based on sacred concepts, which will constitute the essence of its discourse and its fight. These concepts that Achille Mbembe replaces in their political, spatial, and temporal contexts, include independence, unification, and non-integration into the French Union<sup>97</sup>, by refusing any concession on these points<sup>98</sup>. The goal set by the political movements was to :

“grouper et unir tous les habitants du Territoire en vue de permettre l’accession des peuples du Cameroun à la formation d’une fédération par la réalisation d’un programme politique de démocratisation rapide, d’émancipation des populations exploitées par les trusts coloniaux et d’élévation de leur standard de vie<sup>99</sup>”.

(group and unite all the inhabitants of the Territory in order to allow the accession of the peoples of Cameroon to the formation of a federation by carrying out a political program of rapid democratization, emancipation of the populations exploited by colonial trusts and of " raising their standard of living).

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<sup>96</sup> Pierre François Gonnidec, De la dépendance à l’autonomie : l’Etat sous tutelle du Cameroun », *Annuaire Français de Droit International*, Vol.3, 1957, Pp. 597-626.

<sup>97</sup> Achille Mbembe, “La palabre de l’indépendance : les ordres du discours nationaliste au Cameroun (1948-1958)”, in *Revue française de science politique*, No 3, 1985, Pp 459-487.

<sup>98</sup> Jean-François Bayart, “L’Union des Populations du Cameroun et la décolonisation de l’Afrique ‘française’”, in *Cahiers d’études africaines*, Vol.18, No71, 1978, Pp. 447-457.

<sup>99</sup> Thomas Deltombe & al, *Kamerun ! Une guerre cachée aux origines de la Françafrique 1948-1971*, Paris, La Découverte, 2019, p.99.

To achieve its objectives, the party had acquired a solid structure, both functional and territorial. Beyond its territorial structure, the UPC had a political bureau and specialized bodies, involving all the segments of the population, comprising women and young people<sup>100</sup>. In addition, in its early days, the UPC, through its iconic leader, Ruben Um Nyobe, adopted a discourse and a course of action based on non-violence, mobilizing the arguments of law, especially international law. Thus, the mode of petitions, both towards the French metropolis as the UN, was adopted, in order to make known the positions and claims of the party. Um Nyobe stressed on every occasion, not to confuse the French people with the colonialists. He rejected any use of violence, and had the meetings of the UPC ended, until 1953, by the national anthems of Cameroon and France. But, before the UN authorities, he did not hesitate to recall the status of Cameroon and to request the end of the French presence as well as the reunification of Cameroon. Between 1948 and 1953, the UN Trusteeship Council received thousands of petitions, exposing the abuses of the French administration. To crown it all, the UN accepts two resolutions urging France to work for the autonomy of the territory and invited the UPC to its General Assembly in 1953. Um Nyobe claimed convincingly there, setting a deadline for the regime's supervision as well as the constitution of a Cameroonian Federation. Internally, the party multiplied rallies and meetings on both sides of the territory, with the ambition to undermine the French and British colonial presence<sup>101</sup>. In May 1955, events took a violent turn. In fact, between the French administration and the UPC, the showdown was such that each party only sought the click to seek to end the other. The strategy of the French High Commissioner, aimed at supervising Cameroonian cadres, hostile to the UPC, to prove by all means that the party's requests were not in line with the aspiration of the Cameroonians, pushed Um Nyobe and his comrades to launch words of boycott and strike. At the time of inaugurating the bridge over the Wouri, which France presented as a sign of the evolution of Cameroon as an integral part of the French Union, the UPC not only boycotted the ceremony but organized a counter meeting in the New Bell district, its stronghold in Douala. A week earlier, UPC activists had, according to the official version, violently opposed the launch of the Front National, a pro-French political party that the administration wanted to use to divide Cameroonian nationalists. The army set off in pursuit

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<sup>100</sup> The following thesis describes in details the organization of the UPC: Mintoogue Joseph Yves, *L'« indigène » comme acteur politique : Militantisme et formes de participation politiques dans l'Union des Populations du Cameroun (UPC). 1948-1958.*, Master Thesis, Université de Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne, 2010-2011.

<sup>101</sup> Joseph Takougang, "The « Union des populations du Cameroun » and its Southern Cameroons connection", in *Outre-Mer. Revue d'Histoire*, No310, 1996, Pp.7-24.

of the UPC militants, helped by Cameroonians favourable to France. Much more than the only city of Douala, it was the littoral zone of Cameroon which was ablazed, due to the violent actions of the militants of that political party. Official notes revealed the sacking of prisons, clashes with sticks with the police, and in general a very tense situation which extended to the Mungo. On May 25, 1955, a revolt at the New Bell Prison was quelled in blood by the colonial army. On May 26 in Yaoundé, the Central Police Station was ransacked by an angry crowd. From May 27, Abel Kingué, part of the UPC from the Mungo, organized a protest in three sections, each armed with machetes, axes, bows and batons<sup>102</sup>. In Bafoussam and Bafang, French supporters launched hostilities, by setting fire to the UPC headquarters, and by ransacking the houses and property of the militants of this party. To legitimize the repression, on July 13, 1955, the President of the French Council signed a decree prohibiting the Cameroonian political movement. At the same time, the Court of Yaoundé pronounced the seizure of its goods. Between May 22 and July 13, 1955, the toll showed nearly eight hundred UPC activists arrested. Consequently, banished from the political scene, fearing for their lives, the leaders of the Union of the Populations of Cameroon were forced to hide into the forests, and organize themselves in the forests of the Littoral and West of Cameroon<sup>103</sup>. They targeted symbols of the French presence and France supports in Cameroon.

The history of the UPC militants' rebellion was a hidden history<sup>104</sup>, with divergent interpretations, depending on positions and opinions. For many historians, like Achille Mbembe and Thomas Deltombe, this war was a difficult moment for the colonial presence, which did not skimp on the means mobilized to continue the stranglehold on the country. It lasted until 1971, with the capture of the last ramparts and leaders of the rebellion. Hidden in the forests of Cameroon, UPC activists felt that the dynamics of independence imposed on France by the evolution of Cameroon did not reflect the expectations of local populations. It was ratified through the construction of networks of alliance and obedience which guaranteed France a stranglehold on the country's resources. Thus, the establishment of the Representative Assemblies, Territorial Assemblies were only frameworks of selection and dubbing of the docile leaders and favourable to the French interests. In the same logic, for the UPC, the constitution of the first ever Cameroonian Government in 1957, was totally under

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<sup>102</sup> Thomas Deltombe et al ; *op.cit.*, p.223.

<sup>103</sup> Marc Michel, "Une décolonisation confisquée ? Perspective sur la décolonisation du Cameroun sous tutelle de la France 1955-1960", in *Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer*, Vol. 86, No 324-325, Pp.229-250.

<sup>104</sup> Augustin Mensah, "Cameroun-la guerre d'indépendance : une histoire toujours taboue", <https://survie.org/billets-d-afrique/2011/206-octobre-2011/article/cameroun-la-guerre-d-independance>, 12/06.2019.



the control of the colonial power. The UPC perceived the members of the said government as people who did not support Cameroonian nationalism and therefore cannot liberate the country from French colonial domination. This explains the continuation of the military struggle, after the proclamation of the independence of the French Cameroun, on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1960.

In the forest, the UPC militants organized guerrilla camps, each gathering around 400 combatants, thus founding a liberation army of Kamerun<sup>105</sup>, which had only a minimal impact on the objectives set by the leaders of the independence movement<sup>106</sup>. At the beginning of the military struggle, the combatants were equipped with machetes, cudgels, hunting rifles and so on. Their mode of operation consisted of surprising the representatives of the police, of France and of the public administration in general. In 1957 alone, 59 attacks were carried out in the Sanaga Maritime<sup>107</sup>. Manuel Domergue explains that :

“l’armée française (y) a mené, entre 1955 et 1971, de vastes opérations de « guerre révolutionnaire », multipliant regroupements de population, tortures, exécutions extrajudiciaires, bombardements, ratissages. L’objectif était d’annihiler la résistance de l’Union des populations du Cameroun, parti indépendantiste mené par Ruben Um Nyobe, et de maintenir la mainmise coloniale puis néo-coloniale de la France<sup>108</sup>”.

(The French army (there) carried out, between 1955 and 1971, vast operations of "revolutionary war", multiplying regroupings of population, tortures, extrajudicial executions, bombardments, sweeps. The objective was to annihilate the resistance of the Union of the populations of Cameroon, an independentist party led by Ruben Um Nyobe, and to maintain the colonial and then neo-colonial control of France).

Also, within the army and later in the Cameroonian defence and security forces, it is recognized that military operations have taken place in certain parts of Cameroon to combat the UPC guerrilla. But, no official figure of the victims was put forward, favouring estimates of all kinds. The Archives of this war are classified to date as "secret defence" in France. Dissonant voices, without providing irrefutable evidence pointed to entire villages razed:

“Entre février et mars 1960 cent cinquante-six villages bamilékes sont incendiés et rasés. Un bilan méticuleux des destructions de biens publics sera opéré : 116 classes, 3 hôpitaux, 46 dispensaires, 12 stations agricoles, 40 ponts seront détruits. Personne n’a recensé les logements privés détruits ni

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<sup>105</sup> It should be noted that the militants of the UPC have a preference to write the name of Cameroon in its German terminology, in order to give a figure to one of the causes which they defend, namely the reunification of the two Cameroon and thus the return to greatness of the country under German protectorate.

<sup>106</sup> André-Hubert Onana Mfège, “L’armée de libération nationale Kamerunaise et sa stratégie 1959-1970”, in *Outre-mers*, Nos348-349, T.2, 2005, Pp.255-269.

<sup>107</sup> Georges Dougueli, Cameroun : le 13 septembre 1958, l’indépendantiste Ruben Um Nyobé trouvait la mort dans le maquis”, <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/mag/267949/politique/repression-militants-de-lupc-cameroun-lhistoire-a-vif/>, 26/05/2019.

<sup>108</sup> Manuel Domergue, *Cited.*

les récoltes incendiées. Personne n'a pu dénombrer les dizaines de milliers de civils qui ont été massacrés. On ne saura jamais<sup>109</sup> ”.

(Between February and March 1960, one hundred and fifty six Bamileke villages were set on fire and razed to the ground. A meticulous assessment of the destruction of public property will be carried out: 116 classes, 3 hospitals, 46 dispensaries, 12 agricultural stations, 40 bridges will be destroyed. No one has recorded the destroyed private homes or the burnt crops. No one was able to count the tens of thousands of civilians who were massacred. We will never know).

Nevertheless, illustrious figures of the anti-colonial struggle in Cameroon paid the price of their lives there. This is the case of Ruben Um Nyobe, killed by the French army on September 11, 1958. His body was exposed for a few days like a war trophy in his village, to remove the doubt and to dissuade other militants from joining the guerrilla.

## **b. A Misunderstood War of Liberation after the Independence**

The independence, on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1960, of French Cameroon, did not satisfy some UPC militants' claims for total cut off with former colonial powers. First, they noted that the Federation was not effective, as French and British Cameroon did not experience the same fate. The second and more controversial arguments was that the independence was given by France, just to figure out a fake freedom, as that power negotiated with the leaders of the newly independent French Cameroon, to obtain a total control over the natural resources, the army, the currency and the governmental body. For these reasons and many others, through controversial, they continued the struggle for independence, after the proclamation of the end of colonial systems in Cameroon. The following narration by the first ever Prime Minister in Cameroon described the French vision of independence in Africa:

“J'affirme sans crainte d'être contredit, que Mr. Jacquet me dit textuellement en février 1958 que le gouvernement français envisageait de donner une certaine indépendance au Cameroun à la condition que ce territoire accepte d'entrer dans l'Union française. Au mois de septembre, 1958, je rencontrais le même Jacquet (...) à l'Assemblée nationale française. J'étais accompagné de mon collègue Germain Tsalla. Devant nous, Mr. Jacquet répéta textuellement à trois reprises qu'on donnerait au Cameroun une indépendance fictive afin de faciliter la procédure de levée de tutelle, et que le Cameroun rentrerait ensuite dans la Communauté francoafricaine<sup>110</sup>”.

(I affirm without fear of being contradicted that Mr. Jacquet told me verbatim in February 1958 that the French government was considering giving Cameroon some independence on the condition that this territory accepts to join the French Union. In September 1958, I met the same Jacquet (...) at the French National Assembly. I was accompanied by my colleague Germain Tsalla. In front of us, Mr. Jacquet repeated verbatim three times that Cameroon would be given fictitious independence in order to facilitate the procedure for lifting the trusteeship, and that Cameroon would then join the Franco-African Community.)

In this context, the newly independent country engaged in a war against its own citizens,

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<sup>109</sup> Anonym, “02 mars 1960 : massacres au Cameroun, génocide perpétré en pays bamiléké par une campagne militaire française”, <https://rebellyon.info/2-mars-1960-massacres-au-Cameroun>, 12/07/2019.

<sup>110</sup> Atangana Martin René, “ Les relations financières entre le Cameroun et la France et l'image de la France au Cameroun (1946-1956)”, In *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps*, N°32-33, 1993, Pp. 47-52.

who carried out terrorist attacks against the French interests and the representatives of the Government. In this bloody war, Cameroon called for and obtained the support of the French army, that helped, after many years, to definitely erase the UPC militants armed branch. On November 3, 1960, Félix Roland Moumié demised in Geneva, from where he led his fight against independent Cameroon. On March 10, 1966, Ossendé Afana, a young UPC activist who sought to organize an armed front, was found dead. In 1970, Ernest Ouandié, who had been in charge of the UPC since the passing of Félix Roland Moumié, surrendered to the Cameroonian administration. He was sentenced to death, then, shot in Bafoussam on January 15, 1971.

The continuation of the armed struggle for the liberation after the independence divided Cameroonians and constituted another element supporting discrepancies when it comes to colonial memories in Cameroon. Descendants of UPC supporters continue to claim that their real nationalist as their parents sacrificed their lives for the total liberation of the country. On the other hands, most of the Cameroonians who supported the first ever independent Government of the country, blamed the action of the UPC militants after 1960. In this regard, who could be considered as the hero of the independence of Cameroon?

## **Conclusions**

The history of the 77 years of European colonial presence in Cameroon is strewn with ephemeral ruptures, which did not change the ambition that animated the sharing of Africa during the Berlin conference from November 1884 to February 1885. Notwithstanding a particular status the Cameroonian territory has been divided, then, subjected to systems of domination whose inheritance deeply touched the local communities. The Mandate and the Trusteeship regimes constituted for France, only a lexical specificity in its colonial empire. The colonial administration murdered, abused, exploited, and subjugated the peoples, to the point of wanting to make them valets for life. Independence acquired by hard struggle was diverted to preserve the interests of the colonial powers, by the repression of the most fervent claimants of autonomy and the positioning of the those more open to postcolonial cooperation. It is precisely this form of cooperation, sometimes referred to as neo-colonialism that is the subject of fantasy and dissonance in the collective memories of colonization, besides remembering of numerous episodes of pacification and the resistance to colonial systems.

Post-colonial Cameroon, from the point of view of colonial memories, is divided between those who suffered the throes of armed struggle, and those who were convinced of the need to fight the militants of the UPC, a political party banned from political activities few years before the proclamation of the independence of Cameroon under United Nations Trusteeship. This dissonance is also reflected in the history of the construction of the city of Douala, which includes traces of the country's colonial evolution.

**Chapter III:**  
**Insight on the Colonial Architecture in Douala**

According to Lynn Schler<sup>1</sup>, René Gouellain<sup>2</sup>, Wolfgang Lauber<sup>3</sup> and Harry R. Rudin<sup>4</sup>, the history of Douala can constitute an introduction to the colonial history of Cameroon. In that history, the city of Douala played a significant role, as the main entrance of Europeans, as well as it was the epicentre of the struggle for decolonization. This role is based on the geostrategic position of the city, in Western Coasts of Africa, precisely the Gulf of Guinea. Indeed, Douala<sup>5</sup> has undergone an evolution of its name, including until the early 1900s, all of Cameroon today<sup>6</sup>. From 1901, when the German Governor, Jesko Von Puttkamer<sup>7</sup>, decided to transfer the protectorate capital to Buea, he gave the name of the people to the city, and the name Kamerun to the whole country<sup>8</sup>.

Beyond toponymy and semantic issues, the historicity of the city of Douala shows two antagonistic initiatives. Firstly, that of Europeans, whose different projects have given its current spatiality to the city. Secondly, that of the Duala people, who opposed resistance to the spatial reorganization by colonial administrators. Some authors, among them René Gouellain note that the colonial work of construction and deconstruction of the city is defined first of all by the introduction of urban planning, but also by discrimination and the reconciliation of

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<sup>1</sup> Lynn Schler, "Ambiguous Spaces: The Struggle over African Identity and Urban communities in Colonial Douala 1914-45", in *The Journal of African History*, Vol.44, No1, 2003, Pp.51-72.

<sup>2</sup> René Gouellain, *Douala: Ville et histoire*, Paris, Institut d'Ethnologie, 1975, 411p.

<sup>3</sup> Wolfgang Lauber, *Deutsche Architektur in Kamerun: 1884-1914*, Karl Krämer Verlag, Stuttgart, 1988. In this book, to present the German architecture in Cameroon, the author highlighted more examples in Douala than in any other Cameroonian city.

<sup>4</sup> Harry R. Rudin focusses an important part of his book (Harry R. Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914: A Case Study in Modern Imperialism*, Greenwood Press Publishers, New-York, 1968), on the role of the city of the Douala in the establishment of colonial rule in Cameroon. From this perspective, the author claims a presentation of the whole German colonial system in Cameroon.

<sup>5</sup> A strict difference should be established between "Douala" and "Duala". While the first refers to the city, the later is the name of the ethnic group considered as the main occupants of the city. This semiotic exists in many parts of Cameroon, especially in the West Region, where the names of some clan groups have been adopted as names of their city. It is also the case of the city of Guider in the North Cameroon, that is a deformation of "Guidar", the name of the local majority group.

<sup>6</sup>It should be remembered that around the Fifteenth Century, the Portuguese had called the river Wouri, *Rio dos Camaroes*, because of its abundance in shrimps. The British merchants have at once copied this name, to designate Douala by the term " river Cameroon ", which was glued to both the precolonial city and the river Wouri. This reality was also appropriated by the Germans after the signing of the German Douala treaties of 1884, by designating the city, *Kamerunstadt*. In the meantime, the populations of this city were commonly known as Duala.

<sup>7</sup> For more details on his duties in Cameroon: Jesko Albert Eugen Von Puttkamer, *Gouverneursjahre in Kamerun*, G. Strike, 1912, 331p; Charles D. DeLorme Jr., David Kamerschen and John Mukum Mbaku, "Land And Labor Problems In The German Colony Of Kamerun, 1884-19", in *Journal of Third World Studies*, Vol.5, No1, 1988, Pp.146-159.

<sup>8</sup> "Douala" is just a French and British semantics of the name "Duala". Another version of the toponymy of the city is with reference to the deformation of the name of a local Chief, Do'o La Makongo, an ancestor of the line of Kings of Bell. More details in: Anonym (no name), "Les chefferies traditionnelles", <https://www.douala.cm/article/296-les-chefferies-traditionnelles>, 12/10/2019.

tensions, in order to contain the contradictory realities of the social space. In this regard, René Gouellain raises the problem of a possible contribution of rejected colonial systems to the making of the city:

“ Comment d’un apport colonial qu’il faut concevoir en tant que rapport de force, peut naître une unité qui serait admise sans restriction par les deux partenaires en présence ? Pour les colonisateurs, elle est leur création sans partage – pour reprendre une expression de l’époque – pour les colonisés, elle est ce domaine bâti de leurs mains, qu’ils auront à investir totalement. Ainsi, Douala, une en tant que réalité urbaine, éclate en tant que réalité coloniale<sup>9</sup>.”

(How from a colonial contribution that must be conceived as a balance of power, can a unity be born, which would be admitted without restriction by the two partners involved? For the colonizers, it is their undivided creation - to use an expression of the time - for the colonized, it is this area built by their hands, which they will have to invest completely. Thus, Douala, as an urban reality, bursts as a colonial reality).

This issue raises the question of the relevance of the colonial contribution to urban construction/deconstruction in Douala<sup>10</sup>. While the Europeans thought they were contributing to giving western modernity to the city<sup>11</sup>, for the local populations, such an intervention rather involved the destruction of their urban environment. The confrontation that followed the various colonial urban plans, the opposition that characterized the evolution of the New-Bell district, are testimonies of this dichotomy in the perceptions of the city. In this regard, this Chapter aims at highlighting the dynamics of the urban construction in Douala, from a colonial point of view and local contribution. This construction went through imperial urban plans that shaped the spatial organization of the city, with specific architectural forms.

## **I- The Colonial Transformation of the City of Douala**

The importance of colonial built remains in the city of Douala depends, in general, on their role in the making of the city, and in its transformation from an African port to a city with spatial development perspectives on the model of some European cities.

### **A- The Urban Spheres of Douala Before 1884**

The objective of the presentation of the Pre-colonial city of Douala is to better help understand its transformation, thanks to urban colonial plans. Therefore, this section focuses

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<sup>9</sup> René Gouellain, “Douala : Formation and Development of the City during the Colonial Period”, *Cahiers d’Etudes Africaines*, Vol 13, No51, 1973, Pp. 442-468.

<sup>10</sup> Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch claims that the European approach to the city excludes Africa from urban civilization. According to her, the conception of the city in Western scientific circles in the Twentieth Century was based on a Eurocentric vision, which does not take into consideration the realities of socio-spatial organizations elsewhere, especially in Africa. Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, “De la ville en Afrique noire”, in *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, No5, 2006, Pp.1087-1119 ; Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, “Villes coloniales et histoire des Africains”, in *Vingtième siècle. Revue d’histoire*, No20, 1988, Pp.49-73.

<sup>11</sup> Joseph Pascal Mbaha, “Caractérisation de l’urbanisation dans les zones littorales des pays tropicaux: exemple du Wouri”, in *Revue Espace Géographique et Société Marocaine*, No33-34, 2020, Pp.215-226.

on the geographical framework and spatial distribution of the pre-colonial city, as well as the importance of commercial exchanges and the pre-colonial architecture.

## 1- Geographical Position

The city of Douala has emerged and developed around the estuary of Wouri, which for centuries has been its heartland<sup>12</sup>. To focus on its recent history from the Nineteenth to the Twentieth Century, as mentioned earlier, the city known as ‘Douala’ borrows its name from the designation of the majority rulers of the people on the banks of the Wouri<sup>13</sup>. The Dualas belong to the large Bantu group, forest people subdivided into several family groups or clans. The history of Bantu migrations announces several hypotheses that have defined the socio-spatial configuration of present-day Cameroon. During occupation conflicts, the Dualas were pushed back to the edge of Wouri, where they in turn pushed the Bassa to the forest. So they settled, via clan groups around the river, on both sides of the banks<sup>14</sup>: on the left bank, Bell, Akwa and Deido, while on the right bank, we find other *sawa* group whose city is known as Bonaberi.

Pre-colonial Douala, as it appears in 1884 upon the arrival of the Germans, is a small town divided into three main districts: Joss, Akwa and Deido, within a system of quarter-village (“quartier-village”) where only natives of the same origin are found in a quarter<sup>15</sup>. In addition to these three neighborhoods is Hikori Town, the current district of Bonaberi<sup>16</sup>. At the head of each of these quarters, there was a Chief, in charge of organizing the society<sup>17</sup>, that have already adopted the British name of ‘king<sup>18</sup>’. The following map presents the spatial distribution of the settlement in Douala in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

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<sup>12</sup> René Gouellain, 1973, *Cited*.

<sup>13</sup> For further details on the contribution the river Wouri to the evolution of the city of Douala: Albert Wirtz, “La ‘rivière de Cameroun’: commerce précolonial et contrôle de pouvoir en société lignagère”, in *Revue Française d’Histoire d’Outre-Mer*, T.60, No219, 1973, Pp.172-195.

<sup>14</sup> Nsegbe Antoine de Padoue & al., “Douala : une ville d’occupation et d’immigration”, Emmanuel Tchumtchoua & Albert François Dikoume (Eds.), *Douala, histoire et patrimoine*, Yaoundé, CLE Editions, 2014, Pp. 21-39.

<sup>15</sup> Maïa Ghattas, “An Art of Resistance ? Margins of Freedom and (Uses of) Memories in Douala”, in *L’espace Politique*, No35, 2018, <http://journals.openedition.org/espacepolitique/5170>, 20/05/2019.

<sup>16</sup> Karin Möller, “Die Funktionale Gliederung einer Hafenstadt mit überregionaler Bedeutung: Douala”, *Africa Spectrum*, Vol. 6, No 2, 1971, Pp. 77-83.

<sup>17</sup> Ralph A. Austen, “Slavery and Slave Trade on the Atlantic Coast: the Douala of the Littoral”, in *Paideuma*, No 41, 1995, Pp. 127-152.

<sup>18</sup> Philippe Haeringer, “Land Holding and Urbanisation Policies in Douala”, *Cahiers d’Etudes Africaines*, Vol. 13, 1973, Pp.469-496.



**Figure 1: Map of the occupation of Pre-colonial Douala**



**Source:** Rene Gouellain, “Douala: formation et développement de la ville pendant la colonisation”, in *Cahiers d’Etudes Africaines*, No 51, 1973, Pp. 442-468.

This map of the settlement in Douala in the Nineteenth Century shows a concentration of the population around the river Wouri. This population is organized into clan groups, whose chiefs provide oversight for social, legal and security structuring. It excludes immigrant populations, which were certainly not numerous, but were of various origins, largely slaves torn from neighbours, in the framework of raids and the pawning system, as part of commercial exchanges.

## **2- A city Centred on Commercial Exchanges**

Pre-colonial Douala was a city essentially based on trade. For centuries, commercial exchanges concerned natural products like palm oil and ivories that inhabitants used to exchanging with European wines, rifles, clothes, and other less valued products. Then this trade was later extended to human trading, which was more fruitful for both the Duala merchants and the Europeans. Intensive Slave Trade began in Douala in the 1760s<sup>19</sup>. In this trade of goods

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<sup>19</sup> The case of the Mandesi Bell family is illustrative of the importance of trade in building the financial elite in Douala. For further details: Ralph A. Austen & Yvette Djachechi, “Rising from, Remembering, and Forgetting

and slaves, the Duala served as intermediaries between the populations of the hinterland and the European human merchants. In this context, trade routes have been established, connecting the coastal city to the other parts of Cameroon. In this commercial system, beyond the capture of slave-tappers, human goods also came from commercial pawnings. The river Wouri offers possibility of navigation for about 150 kilometers inland. Ralph A. Austin claims further that:

“The wouri estuary where the Duala had established themselves sometimes in about the Sixteenth Century was the best situated point of the Cameroon coast for carrying on oceanic trade with Europeans. The region imported the usual array of Asian-European consumer wares, utensils, weapons, and semi-processed metals. It exported in return its own assortment of local primary goods: ivory remained prominent from the Seventeenth Century; slaves became important only briefly in the late 1700s to the 1820s; palm oil and kernels dominated during most of the Nineteenth Century<sup>20</sup>”.

The control of the profit, for which the Duala middlemen endeavored to limit the access of the inland population to the port, led to conflicts. In the early 1800s, they succeeded to extend their commercial influence zone. The *Bells* especially pushed Abo people past Mungo where they acquired plantation<sup>21</sup>, and established direct connection with Balong and Bakundu oil suppliers. In the same line, the Deidos tried to control Yabassi, the farthest navigable point of the river Wouri, through an alliance with the *Bodiman* who were controlling that portion of the river. The Akwas failed to take over the control of the Kwa kwa people to connect the river Wouri to the river Sanaga.

The control of this trade was operated by a strict division of the port area, thus conferring a monopoly position to the Heads of cantons<sup>22</sup>. Each canton had its port, from which goods are transported via canoes to moored boats in the heart of the Wouri River. This strict division offered Duala Chiefs, beyond the monopoly of trade with external partners, related jobs of transporters, handlers, and paddlers whom they controlled at their ease.

The following picture by Jacques Soulillou shows the division of the pre-colonial port of Douala, as well as the rudimentary character of its infrastructure.

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Slavery: The Mandesi Bell Family in Douala”, in Emmanuel Tchumtchoua & Albert François Dikoume (Eds.), *Douala, histoire et patrimoine*, Yaoundé, CLE Editions, 2014, pp. 163-182.

<sup>20</sup> Ralph A. Austen, “The metamorphoses of middlemen: the Duala, European and the Cameroon hinterland, ca.1800-ca 1960”, in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol.16, No1, 1983, Pp.01-24.

<sup>21</sup> Ralph A. Austin & Yvette Laure Djachechi, *Cited*.

<sup>22</sup> Jacques Soulillou, *Douala: un siècle en images*, Paris, Harmattan, 1989, p.20.

**Figure 2 : Pre-colonial organisation of the port of Douala**



Source : Jacques Soulillou, *Douala: un siècle en images*, Paris, Harmattan, 1989, p.20.

### **3- Architectural Aspects of the Pre-colonial City (1950-1900)**

In general, evoking Pre-colonial architecture in Africa leads to think of Vernacular Architecture<sup>23</sup>, which often refers to the so-called traditional habitat, whose design brings together the environment<sup>24</sup>, the socio-anthropological framework and the form<sup>25</sup>. According to Melchisedek Chetima, naturalist approach to architectural forms explains the Vernacular Architecture through the availability of building materials<sup>26</sup>, the knowledge and the constraints of the climate<sup>27</sup>. The core idea makes architecture part of social dynamics and community

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<sup>23</sup> The naturalist approach to architecture was developed to explain the intrinsic correlation between the forms of the habitat and the constraints of the natural environment. It has, however, been used to support racist thesis of Western superiority. Indeed, authors like Julius Glück (Julius Glück, “Afrikanische Architektur”, *Tribus*, Vol.6, 1959, Pp.65-82) consider the pygmy habitat as at the stage of pre-architecture. There is thus a pejorative acceptance of the Vernacular Architecture, considered at the primary stage of the architectural evolution.

<sup>24</sup> Rémy Dzou-Tsanga, “Architecture and Technical Identities in Cameroon”, in *Journal of the history of technology*, Vol.2, 2016, Pp. 36-48.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Melchisedek Chetima, “La culture matérielle de la maison dans la pensée anthropologique: parcours théorique d’un concept transdisciplinaire”, in *International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies*, Vol.2, 2016, Pp.465-493.

<sup>27</sup> Melchisedek Chetima, *Discours sur la maison et dynamiques identitaires chez les Podokwo, Muketele et Mura (monts Mandara du Cameroun). Une approche à l’ethnicité et au statut social*, PhD Thesis, University of Quebec, 2015, p.22.

identity: “L’architecture raconte le dynamisme, les identités. Le génie d’un pays. Elle communique une idée, des symboles typiques. Des éléments abstraits et caractéristiques d’une civilisation. Elle est le témoin des prouesses d’un peuple<sup>28</sup>”. To define the Vernacular Architecture, Amos Rapoport postulates that each built-environment is designed according to decisions and choices made within a cultural frame. “(...) all man-made environments are designed in the sense that they embody human decisions and choices and modify the world in some purposeful way<sup>29</sup>”. These choices for form are made in accordance with the cultural and environmental framework that conditions the material. In this logic, Vernacular Architecture is a component of Folk Architecture, which the author defined as “(...) buildings and settlements with no designer, or artist, or architect (...)”<sup>30</sup>. This architectural form without architects<sup>31</sup> is also referred to as Primitive Architecture, to underline the lack of theoretical complex design system, but not the know-how of builders. Vernacular Architecture is therefore apprehended until a recent period, as creative crafts devoid of comprehensive scientific processes. Creative crafts are considered as non-scientific, rather artistic, in the hierarchy of knowledge established by some historians of technologies<sup>32</sup>. Applied to Africa, this thought seems to target the extension of the hegemonic ideas of certain circles in some developed countries, which consider Africa, continent of oral and written culture, at the pre-technological stage.

Beyond these theoretical debates, local architecture in Douala in the 19th Century did not really obey essentially the traditional design. It is therefore not essentially vernacular and contains borrowing elements, thanks to contacts with British merchants and Missionaries. The

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<sup>28</sup> Paap Seen, “Les villas de Kër Goorgi”, in *Les Chroniques de Paap Seen*, <https://www.seneplus.com/opinions/les-villas-de-ker-goorgi>, 14/06/2020.

<sup>29</sup> Amos Rapoport, “Vernacular architecture and the cultural determinants of form”, in Anthony D. King (ed), *Buildings and Society: Essays on the social development of the built environment*, London, Routledge, 2004, Pp.158-168.

<sup>30</sup> Amos Rapoport, *House form and culture*, Printice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.Toronto, Printice-Hall of Canada, 1969b, p. 2.

<sup>31</sup> A recent book by John May and Anthony Reid suggests some methods of building without architects, providing samples and information on the material to use. John May & Anthony Reid, *Architettura senza architetti : Guida alle costruzioni spontanee di tutto il mondo*, Milan, RCS Libri Spa, 2014.

<sup>32</sup> As part of the history of technologies course, taught between September and December 2016, to Masters in History students at the University of Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne, Professor Anne Françoise Garçon establishes a hierarchy of technical knowledges as follows: art or craft for oral societies, the technology which calls for the profile of engineer, and design which refers to soft skills capable to conceive the assembly of a technical knowledge into a commercial object. According to this hierarchy, societies based on orality do not have the ability to develop and memorize complex scientific formulas that allow technical creations. The debate relates to the codification of action knowledge.

architectural borrowing concerns both the form and building material. The very rare pictures below afford comprehensive elements of the quality of the habitat in pre-colonial Douala.

**Figure 3 : Typical Form of Local Housing in Douala in the early 19th Century**



Source:[https://bundesbildarchiv.init-ag.de/device\\_barch/dev1/2019/10-16/7b/c0/file77k3x8d0axh1eg2tf3fa.jpg](https://bundesbildarchiv.init-ag.de/device_barch/dev1/2019/10-16/7b/c0/file77k3x8d0axh1eg2tf3fa.jpg), 28/11/2019

This picture is one of the very rare and oldest that can be found in the German federal archives, which presents the forms of local housing in Douala in the Nineteenth Century. It also shows the organization of the urban environment in Douala on that period. This organization is described in a work published by the French colonial administration in 1952, as an integral part of the habitat in the forest zone of Cameroon. The constraints of the environment led to the creation of camps of modest size. In the family unit, the habitat includes the hut of the master or head of the family, the passage huts where visitors and friends are accommodated, a kitchen and the food drying area<sup>33</sup>. This last need explains the spacing that is observed between the different boxes, which are not glued to each other, as highlights the following photo.

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<sup>33</sup> Jean Pierre Beguin & al., *L'habitat au Cameroun : présentation des principaux types d'habitat. Essai d'adaptation au problème actuel*, Paris, Editions de l'Unions Française, 1952, p.105.

**Figure 4 : A Overview on the King Bell's Palace in Douala, ca 1900**



Source: <https://dailyretrocmr.wordpress.com/2015/01/12/12-janvier-1914-expropriation-des-populations-de-la-ville-de-douala-par-les-allemands/>, 17/05/2018

Taken around 1900, this picture offers a look on the King Bell's Palace in Douala, which is at the bottom of the image. It is a photo representative of the local habitat in Douala, in the sense that it does not focus on the elements of colonial architecture.

**Figure 5 : View of the Joss Plateau, in Douala, Around 1900 (the Palace in the Foreground is that of King Bell)**



**Source:**[http://pedagogie.lyceesavioudouala.org/histoire-geographie/app\\_grande-guerre/pages/page\\_3b.htm](http://pedagogie.lyceesavioudouala.org/histoire-geographie/app_grande-guerre/pages/page_3b.htm), 17/05.2018

This third image offers a panoramic view of the Joss Plateau in Douala, on the banks of the Wouri River. It shows a good plan of the palace of King Bell as well as a building of the Woermann Company.

The first thing to note in this built environment is the existence of roads, wide enough in the 19th Century to accommodate vehicles. These roads help align houses and contribute to shape an urban landscape that contrasts with popular beliefs about the development of cities in Africa. Apart from the Royal Palace, in general, the houses are rectangular, with sloping roofs. Some have windows, balconies or terraces. They are built of clay, bricks or straws made from lianas and tree leaves. The structure of the house is supported by wood, also used for the frame. This architecture borrows from the forms of Western architecture, that could be explained by the relations established in the 19th century with British merchants, or trips made to other African cities such as Calabar, which experienced a significant evolution of its habitat at that time<sup>34</sup>.

The general form of this habitat responds to the constraints of the human and climatic environment. In social terms, the Douala having been established as intermediaries in foreign trade, the rectangular shape of the houses offers more space for the storage of products from the hinterland. Also, the clean spaces around the houses would be used for drying agricultural products and seafood (fish and shrimp among others). As for the use of clay, lianas and tree leaves for the walls and roofs of houses, it responds to the availability of building material and the need for ventilation in an environment characterized by hot weather and heavy rain<sup>35</sup>, where around 200 days of rain per year could be registered, as well as 5000 millimetres of rainfalls<sup>36</sup>. From this point of view, the shape of the houses in Douala at the end of the 19th Century meets the conceptual definition of Vernacular Architecture by Amos Rapoport.

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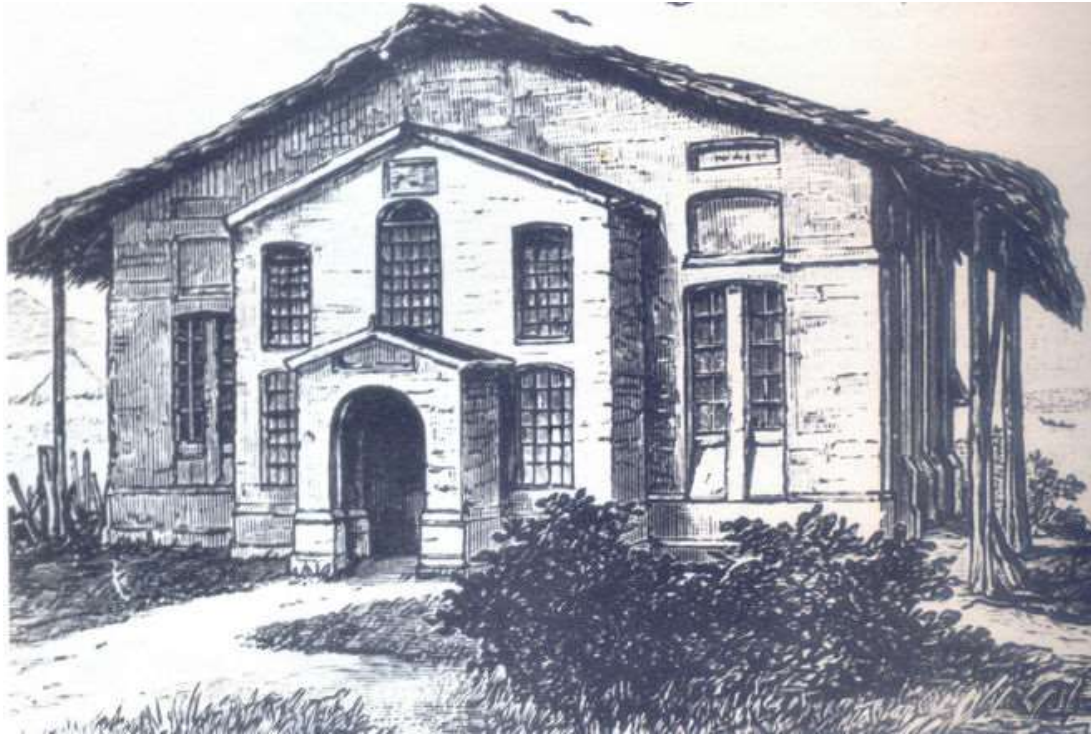
<sup>34</sup> David Northrup, "Nineteenth-Century Patterns of Slavery and Economic Growth in Southeastern Nigeria", in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol.12, No.1, 1979, Pp.1-16; Edem Ephraim E. & al., "A Highlight of Architectural Heritage of Colonial Urbanization in Nigeria: Lagos, Port Harcourt, Calabar, Enugu and Kaduna", in *AARCHES Journal*, Vol.11, No1., 2012, Pp.1-24.

<sup>35</sup> Laurent Bruckmann & al., "*Geohistorical analysis of flood risk spatio-temporal evolution and its management in the urban area of Douala (Cameroon)*", in *Varia*, Vol. 13, 2019, Pp. 91-113; Marcel Leroux, "*Températures marines et précipitations sur les littoraux de l'Afrique Tropicale* ", in *Norois*, No116, 1982, Pp. 479-497.

<sup>36</sup> A. Kemajou & L. Mba, "Matériaux de construction et confort thermique en zone chaude Application au cas des régions climatiques camerounaises", in *Revue des Energies Renouvelables*, No2, Vol. 14, 2011, Pp.239-248.

However, the architectural form itself presents elements of borrowing from European architecture. There existed in 1884 in Douala, buildings whose shape is clearly modelled on the European architectural model<sup>37</sup>. One example is the missionaries' temple, built in the 1840s.

**Figure 6 : First Bethel Missionaries' Cathedral, built in Douala in 1860**



**Source :** Jacques Soulillou, *Douala: un siècle en images*, Paris, l'Harmattan, 1989, p.17.

This picture of the first ever Christian church in Cameroon is found in the archives of Doual'art<sup>38</sup>, a private enterprise committed to the enhancement of historical heritage and contemporary art in the city of Douala, and in the book by Jacques Soulillou. The building is made of bricks and a roof with local material. It is a key example of difficulties to apply an imported architectural form without its coherent building material. The technical knowledge is in fact based on material, most often drawn from the natural or modified environment, in order to meet human needs. In Douala especially, construction techniques in the beginning of the Nineteenth Century drew on lianas and tree leaves, and to a lesser extent, used bamboo. This material made up the structure of the houses as well as the roof and largely responded to the premises. Therefore, this temple, which was replaced a few years after its construction, represents one of the first mud brick buildings in Douala. Indeed, beyond the propagation of

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<sup>37</sup> From the alignment of the windows, the marked character of the angles and a desire to give height, the shape of this building has similarities with classical architecture in Europe. The facade thus attempts to reproduce a certain form of the cathedrals of modest dimensions in Europe.

<sup>38</sup> The next chapter will provide further information on Doual'art and its contribution in the preservation of colonial buildings in Douala.



the Christian faith, the missionaries undertook to initiate the Cameroonian faithful to new crafts notably carpentry, masonry, printing, building, and painting<sup>39</sup>.

It should be noted that the first Palace of the Bell Kings was built by the Germans after 1884, based on mainly imported material, as a prize for signing the Protectorate Agreements. Thus, Pre-colonial Douala was a booming city, with its social, spatial, and economic organization. This city will be subjected to imperial projects, the primary objective of which breaks down from an idealistic or philanthropic urban construction.

## **B. The Colonial Urban Transformation of the City of Douala (1884-1960)**

To set up the necessary infrastructures for the administrative management and the exploitation of the territory, the German and French administrators have embarked on urban planning projects in the city of Douala. The four urban plans<sup>40</sup> concocted from the 19th Century do not actually aim at modernizing the city. Rather, they are tailored to the taste and appetite of the colonial powers. They are often conceived against the interests of the local population, who at a time were explicitly banned from the so-called European town in Douala. They constituted also, instruments of spatial control for colonial domination<sup>41</sup>. These different urban plans, with hidden objectives<sup>42</sup>, give the city of Douala two opposed dynamics of urban construction. On the one hand, a local dynamic, which has its roots in the emergence of the Pre-colonial city and on the other hand, an external dynamic which is the subject of conflict, protest and political assassinations which will remain anchored in the collective memories today. The history of the construction of the colonial city of Douala is a history of social disruptions returning directly to the construction of the colonial presence, which remains rejected within the anti-imperialist currents.

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<sup>39</sup> Hervé Brice Ngembou, “Une histoire des monuments de la ville de Douala”, in Emmanuel Tchumtchoua & Albert François Dikoume (Eds.), *cited*, Pp. 357-380.

<sup>40</sup> Many academic papers mention four town-plans adopted for Douala by the Germans. However, due to the loss of archives during the World War I, it has not been possible to find details of all the plans.

<sup>41</sup> Ambe J. Njoh & Liora Bigon, “Germany and the deployment of urban planning to create, reinforce and maintain power in colonial Cameroon”, in *Habitat International*, No49, 2015, Pp.10-20.

<sup>42</sup> Ambe J. Njoh, “Development implications of colonial lands and human settlement schemes in Cameroon”, in *Habitat International*, No26, 2002, Pp.399-415.

## **1- From Bell Quarter surroundings to the *Gross-Duala*: The Enlargement of the City During the German Protectorate**

When the Germans arrived in Douala for the signing of the trade treaties, they were welcomed in the warehouse of the Woermann Firm. The agreements signed in July 1884 concerned only trade. Initially, the Germans did not plan to settle permanently in Cameroon. Following assertions of racist philosophers, some of whom consider Africans in a primitive or pre-logic stage of human civilizations<sup>43</sup>, they foresaw to maintain a distance with the colonies and focus on the economic exploitation. Few months later, the pressure of the German commercial circles helping, with a threat of implantation in Cameroon by Britain, the German Government decided to establish an administration in Douala, which became the political capital of the entire protectorate. It should also be stressed that the Berlin Conference from November 1884 to February 1885 enshrines the rules for the establishment of European powers in Africa, in particular the freedom of annexation of the interior of the territory from a position already acquired. Therefore, from 1885, to administer the territory, the German Government undertakes initiatives whose consequences are felt on the organization of the city of Douala until today. In general, many urban plans have been adopted to redefine, extend, and organize that city.

### **a. Setting up the Bases of the Colonial Administration**

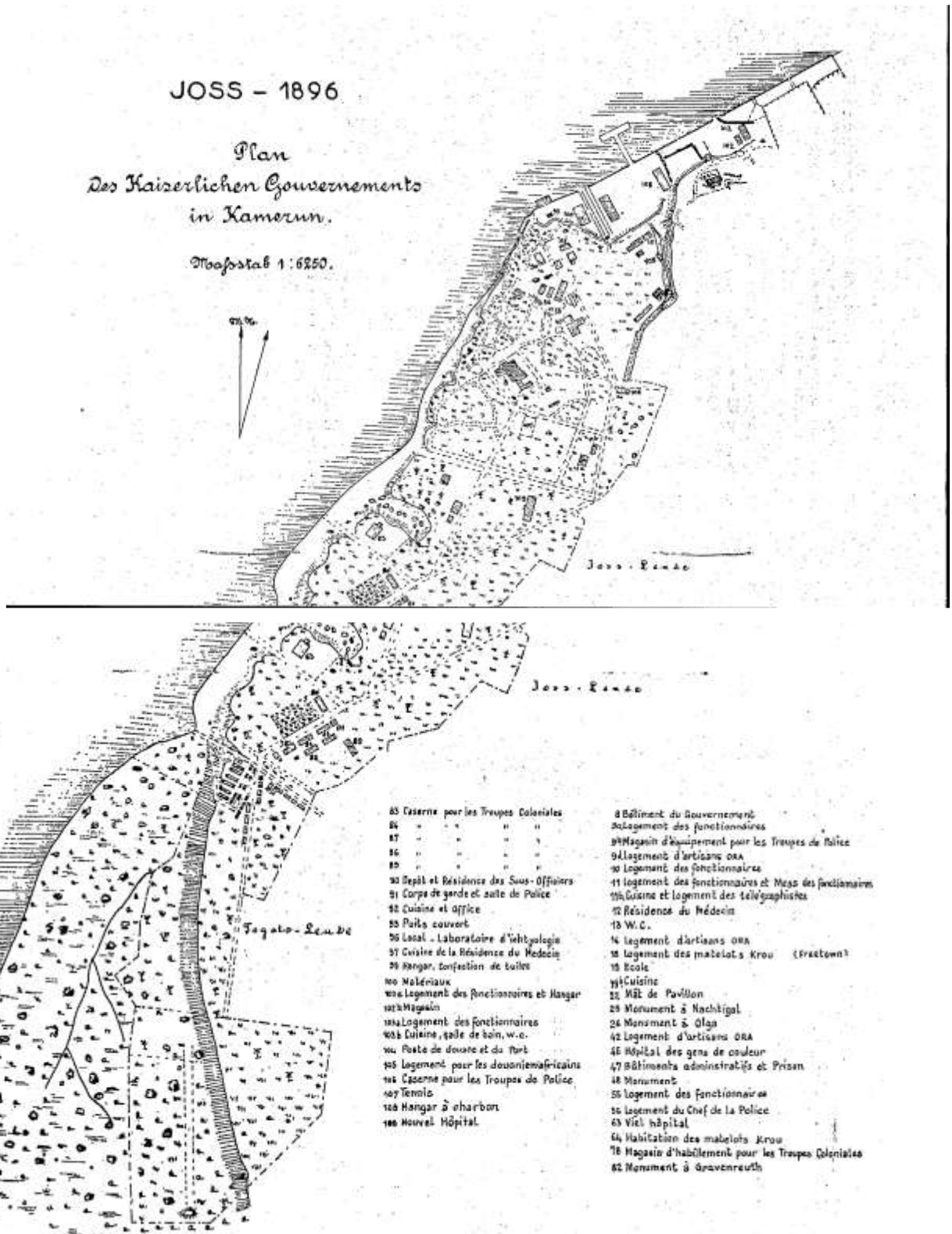
The first ever urban plan applied to the city of Douala is dated 1890. In fact, Julius Von Soden, the German Governor realized how difficult it was, to administer the territory without minimal basis, like infrastructure, local public service among others. During the pacification of the hinterland, Military Posts emerged all over the country. Douala became therefore, the main city of the protectorate, comprising the most important number of Germans living in the country. However, the major challenge of the living environment was related to hygiene, which requires, beyond sanitation measures, a spatial reorganization of the entire city<sup>44</sup>. This first ever experimental plan, shaped the city with functional and spatial organization, defining limits of the port, the administrative offices and space dedicated to medical and military infrastructures. Below is the plan as drawn by the German Colonial Administration.

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<sup>43</sup> Nicolas Journet, “De la mentalité primitive à la pensée sauvage. Lucien Lévy-Bruhl (1857-1939)”, in *La culture*, 2002, Pp.159-166 ; Dominique Merllié, “Durkheim, Lévy-Bruhl et la “pensée primitive” : quel différend”, in *L’année Sociologique*, No2, Vol.62, 2012, Pp.429-446.

<sup>44</sup> Jean Baptiste Nzogué, “L’hygiène urbaine à Douala à l’époque coloniale (1884-1960) : enjeux et paradoxes d’une acculturation”, in Emmanuel Tchumtchoua & Albert François Dikoume (Edts), *Cited*, Pp. 75-97.

Figure 7: Schematical City Plan of Douala in the 1890s



**Source** :Rene Gouellain, “Douala: formation et développement de la ville pendant la colonisation”, in *Cahiers d’Etudes Africaines*, No 51, 1973, Pp. 442-468

With the above plan, it is obvious to note the construction of the headquarters of the civil and police administration, as well as the Nachtigal hospital. The plan also devotes a good concentration to the port area, with the elimination of the divisions mentioned above and the construction of a first wharf for docking boats.

The growing German interest in Douala in general induced the revision of the planning of the port. According to different sources, the first major modification occurred in 1881<sup>45</sup>, with the installation of the Woermann factories. This Multinational decided to develop the port as to make it possible to accommodate its ships at the dock and no longer in the river. This was possible with the consent of the heads of Communities in Douala. In fact, the use of manpower for the transportation of good imposes constraints in terms of time and volume of goods. The spatial reorganization of the port offered another overview. The German administration foresaw to make of the city, the departure of connections to many parts of Africa, up to the Eastern Coasts. Therefore, beyond modern docks, other infrastructures emerged around the port, turning it into a commercial and transport main place in Douala.

**Figure 8 : Douala Shipyard during the German Colonial Period**



**Source :** <https://deutsche-schutzgebiete.de/wordpress/projekte/kolonien/kamerun/>, 06/05/2018.

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<sup>45</sup> <http://www.douala-guide.com/articles.php?id=98>, accessed on May 18, 2018.

Notwithstanding the German investments to improve the capacity of the port, in 1914, the traffic was limited to 100.000 tons.

Indeed, the plan itself betrayed the commercial ambitions of Germany; whose satisfaction passes through the control of the port space. It should also be noted that with the implementation of this urban plan, kings Akwa and Bell lost substantially their control over the port. Some families were forced to the concession of their lands, marking the beginning of land expropriation. Through an agreement signed on June 21, 1892 between two local chiefs and the German Governor, Bojongo and Bonendale families have been relocated to the actual Bali quarter of Douala<sup>46</sup>. This enabled to shape the city, as presented below in the book by René Gouellain:

“ sur la partie “urbanisée” de Joss, l’on relève le bâtiment du Gouvernement, édifié au bord du Plateau, faisant face à la mer et entouré d’un vaste parc, le bâtiment “administratif” avec sa prison, et le poste de douane sur le port ; sept casernes dont cinq réservées aux troupes coloniales, et deux à la police ; trois hôpitaux : l’ancien, le nouveau et celui réservé aux “gens de couleur”, et un laboratoire d’ichtyologie ; quatre hangars ou magasins et un atelier destiné à la fabrication des tuiles ; dix maisons de fonctionnaires comportant plusieurs logements chacune ; trois maisons pour l’habitat des artisans, trois maisons pour les Africains, dont deux pour les matelots “kru” et une pour les douaniers<sup>47</sup>”.

(on the “urbanized” part of Joss, there is the Government building, built on the edge of the Plateau, facing the sea and surrounded by a vast park, the “administrative” building with its prison, and the customs post at the port; seven barracks, five of which were reserved for the colonial troops, and two for the police; three hospitals: the old, the new and the one reserved for "colored people", and an ichthyology laboratory; four hangars or stores and a workshop for the manufacture of tiles; ten civil servants' houses with several lodgings each; three houses for the habitat of the craftsmen, three houses for the Africans, including two for the sailors “ kru ” and one for the customs officers).

This schematic presentation shows that the construction of the city was designed to the detriment of the local population, to satisfy only the comfort of the settlers. It is indeed the tacit application of a system of segregation, focusing on the position of domination that constitutes the topography of the Joss plateau in relation to the rest of the city. This part of Douala thus began to concentrate most of the powers of the German administration. The establishment of the prison<sup>48</sup>, as a symbol of the mental and physical control of the populations, betrays the German ambition to use the Joss plateau for their colonial purpose. It largely explains discrepancies surrounding German urban plans in Douala.

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<sup>46</sup>Anonym, “Commémoration de Rudolf Douala Manga Bell. QUI ÉTAIT RUDOLF DOUALA MANGA BELL”, Canton Deido, facebook group, <https://www.facebook.com/639475016239749/posts/1117724748414771/>, 12/12/2019.

<sup>47</sup> René Gouellain, 1975, *Cited*, p. 125.

<sup>48</sup> Dior Konaté, “Penal Architecture: An Essay on Prison Designs in Colonial Senegal”, in Fassil Demissie (Ed.), *Colonial Architecture and Urbanism in Africa: Intertwined and Contested Histories*, Farnham, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2012, Pp.175-200.

Beyond these constructions, the city was afforded with social infrastructures, especially a tennis court, water supplies and monuments. This plan is reinforced few years later, and under the pressure of commercial circles in Germany, the creation of railways in Cameroon is foreseen, which requires a new spatial reconfiguration of the city. Between 1901 and 1902, the German Governor decided to transfer the Protectorate capital to Buea, for the protection of the interests of the multinationals having invested in agriculture, as well as for climatic and hygienic reasons. The former capital previously called 'Kamerun', becomes Douala, and retains an important status of an Administrative District, whose directors will each print his mark in the urban construction and planning. Thus, Von Brautisch, appointed head of the *Bezirke Douala* on February 22, 1899, initiated the transformation of the city by the development of urban roads, the extension of the port area once more, the construction of evacuation channels, sewage, and dikes and so many more projects.

This urban plan comes in a context marked by the promotion of good relations with the traditional authorities in Douala. He made certain important modifications towards the organization of the city but limited itself to the construction of an essential base for administration and commerce. It is the plan known as *Gross Duala* which will lastingly mark the spatial organization of the city.

#### **b. The *Gross Duala* Town Plan: Disruptions, Tensions, and Conflicts in the Making of the city of Douala**

The urban plan that deeply marked the city of Douala is the so-called *Gross Duala*, adopted in 1906 and whose implementation was met with the constraints of the World War I. This plan is conceived for the construction of two towns, separated by a one-kilometer-wide free zone. On the one hand, on the Joss plateau (surroundings of the port) and a part of Akwa is located the European city with 900 hectares for around 300 to 400 Europeans, and on the other hand, the so-called African city in the outskirts of Douala. The European town is separated from the local population, under disguised reasons of hygiene<sup>49</sup>. Ambe J. Njoh claims that "for instance, under the guise of protecting public health<sup>50</sup>, colonial planners used their institutional authority and technical expertise to craft land use plans designed to facilitate attainment of the social goal of maintaining racial segregation in the colonies<sup>51</sup>".

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<sup>49</sup> Jean Baptiste Nzogue, "L'hygiène urbaine à Douala à l'époque coloniale (1884-1960) : enjeux et paradoxes d'une acculturation", in Emmanuel Tchumtchoua & Albert François Dikoume (Eds), *Cited*, Pp. 75-97.

<sup>50</sup> Emmanuel Kolokou, "DUALA MANGA BELL, Nationaliste camerounais", Interview on CRTV, 12/05/2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9-2PnWVA5P0>, 12/09/2019.

<sup>51</sup> Ambe J. Njoh, "Urban planning as a tool of power and social control in colonial Africa", in *Planning Perspectives*, Vol. 24, No3, 2009, Pp.301-317.

The plan also includes various amenities in the two parts of the city. On the one hand, the European city included all the necessary infrastructure, with well-marked streets and other equipments that suit European comfort, as narrates Amba J. Njoh:

“The physical and spatial structure of the colonial towns, especially the European districts were developed to do more than achieve the widely acknowledged objective of ensuring the comfort of Europeans in the colonial territories. Housing units in these districts were aesthetically more appealing, a lot larger, contained far more amenities, and boasted significantly larger surrounding spaces for gardens and other activities, than was typical of comparable residential facilities in Europe at the time<sup>52</sup>”.

The entire public service, both central and decentralized, was housed in this space. It was prohibited access to the local populations, apart from the domestic workers and some subordinates of the administration such as interpreters, security workers or employees of commercial companies among others, who must present authorizations. One could say that the Germans imposed visa to locals to access some parts of their own city.

On the other hand, the local residents' part of the city is located at the outskirts of the main Douala, on a piece of land without any plan of occupation or roads. New-Bell as a quarter of Douala is given to the Bell canton as compensation, leaving the population to share and trace the housing plans.

For the implementation of this plan, the German administration carried out a major expropriation operation of the populations who occupied the Joss and Akwa districts<sup>53</sup>. It is a forced dispossession, supported with a symbolic compensation of one Pfennig<sup>54</sup> per family and a poor cost of the building where it existed. Some documents mention the cost of 40 pfennig per square meter as compensation<sup>55</sup>. For companies that were mostly German, the compensation consisted of payments of 40 Pfennigs per square meter in addition to the cost of reconstruction. Whatever the amount advanced under financial compensation, various testimonies emphasize the opposition of the targeted populations.

The map below shows the spatial redistribution of the city, contained in the development plan known as the Gross Duala.

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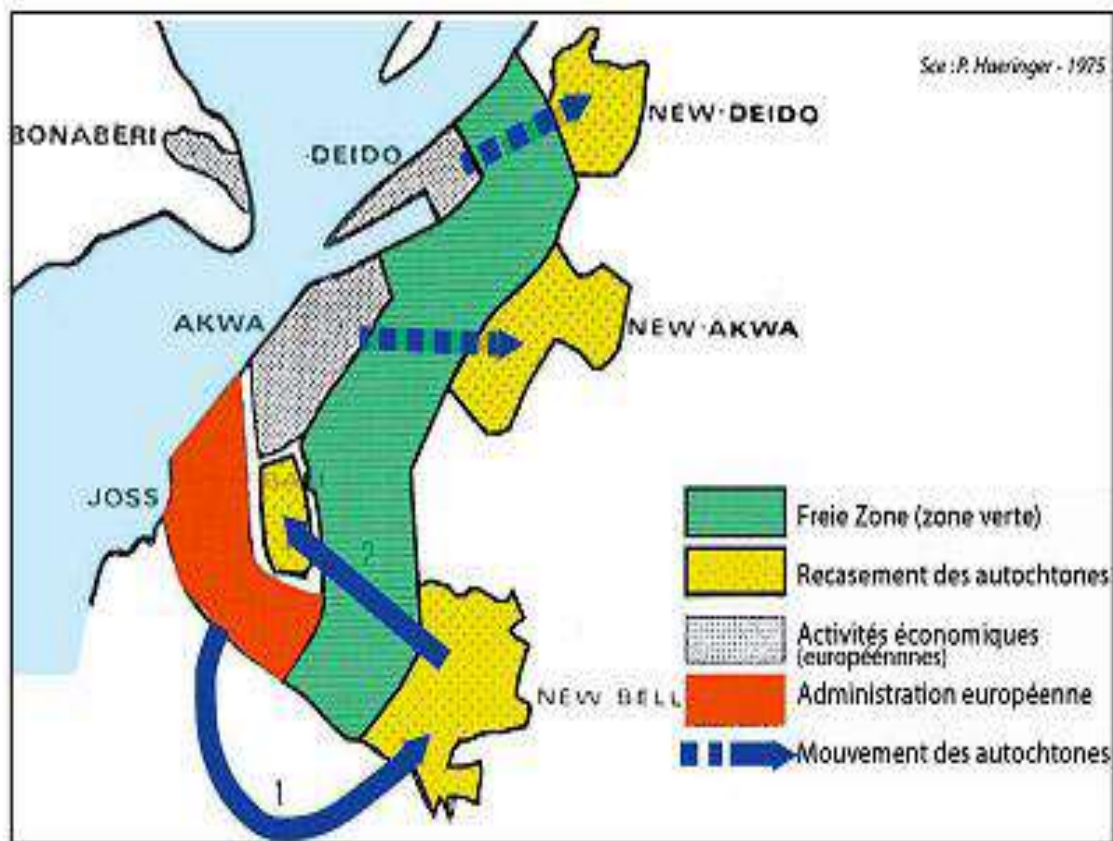
<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Lynn Schler, “Land Holding and Urbanisation Policies in Douala”, in *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, Vol.13, No51, 1973, Pp.469-496.

<sup>54</sup> Pfennig is the German (Prussian) currency in 1910s.

<sup>55</sup> Benjamin Michelon, “Histoire de la Planification urbaine à Douala : dépasser les vestiges de l'urbanisme colonial pour répondre aux enjeux d'un urbanisme contemporain”, in Emmanuel Tchumtchoua & Albert François Dikoume (Edts), *Cited*, Pp. 41-73.

**Map 9 : Presentation of the *Gross Duala plan***



**Source :** Noubouwo Antoine, *Développement urbain et stratégie d'acteurs dans les quartiers précaires de Douala au Cameroun*, PhD Thesis, Université du Québec, 2014, p.76.

Of all the imperial urban plans in Douala, Gross Duala has left a lasting mark on the city. The spatial and sociological distribution of the current city has its roots there. The social ruptures that its implementation implied, pushed the populations of the Bell canton, to rebel and oppose violently to the Germans. The local populations perceived their distance from the port area as an economic and cultural dispossession. For centuries, their income has been derived from maritime trade. Through cultural activities, they defined themselves as a 'water people'<sup>56</sup>. This explains the vehemence of the Duala peoples' protest against the Germans from 1910. The King Duala Manga Bell, hitherto a true ally of the German administration, led the protest, after recommendation issued from traditional rulers' meetings. He studied in Germany and had strong academic and political connections in Hamburg and Berlin, among them lawyers who supported him in drafting petitions. Married to a British Lady from Dayas Family,

<sup>56</sup> Ousmanou Zourmba, *The preservation and the Enhancement of the German protectorate's heritage in the city of Douala (Cameroon)*, Master Thesis, Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne/Università Degli Studi di Padova/Universidad de Evora, 2016/2017, p.82.



he is sometimes presented as German-Cameroonian<sup>57</sup>. At the outset, King Rudolf Duala Manga Bell first put forward legal arguments. Through several petitions sent to the German parliament, the Reichstag, he stressed that the protectorate treaties left land management to local populations. In this regard, he claimed that any expropriation is a violation of the said agreements, which he requests scrupulous respect by the German administration in his city<sup>58</sup>. Secondly, he points out that segregation between natives and Europeans could lead to shortage of manpower. Furthermore, pointing out the example of the town of Lagos in Nigeria, he suggests that the cohabitation is possible without any sanitary problems for Europeans. With these arguments, between the 18<sup>th</sup> March 1912 and the 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1913, he addresses 11 petitions to the Reichstag (The German Parliament) and the local administration<sup>59</sup>. The German response consisted in the dismissal of the King Bell in August 1913, then his sentence to death and assassination one year later. This marks a profound rupture between the Duala population and the German administration. Most of Cameroonians recognized him as a martyr and nationalist hero<sup>60</sup>. Some claimed for the return of his belongings exposed in German museums as well as compensations for torture, forced labour and the assassination of many other Cameroonians<sup>61</sup>.

This confrontation results, beyond the control of space and the economy, from a cultural shock around the concept of city. For the African, it is a living environment, in symbiosis with the natural environment. Firstly, for the European, on the other hand, the city is a creation that meets the aspirations of its population. It is in this sense that Deyan Sudjic claims that a city is a “wealth-creating machine that can, at the minimum, make the poor not quite as poor as they were<sup>62</sup>”. Therefore, one can conclude that the African approach of the city is focused on human,

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<sup>57</sup> Peter Heller & Sylvie Banuls, “Manga Bell - Eine deutsch-afrikanische Familiengeschichte (Dokumentarfilm, 1997)”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=78AUjAjlprw>, 12/05/2018.

<sup>58</sup> Madiba Essiben, “Le traité du 12 juillet 1884 comme source de l’antagonisme germano-douala à la veille de la première guerre mondiale”, in Stefanie Michels & Albert-Pascal Temgoua (Eds), *La politique de la mémoire coloniale en Allemagne et au Cameroun-The politics of colonial memory in Germany and Cameroon*, LIT VERLAG Münster, 2005, Pp. 15-23.

<sup>59</sup> Joseph Gomsu, *Colonisation et organisation sociale : les chefs traditionnels du Sud-Cameroun pendant la période coloniale allemande (1884-1914)*, 3rd Cycle Doctorate Thesis, Université Paul Verlaine – Metz, 1982, p.285.

<sup>60</sup> Adalbert Owona, *La naissance du Cameroun, 1884-1914*, Paris, Harmattan, 1996, p.121; Shiny Iris, “Rudolf Duala Manga Bell: martyr and hero of Cameroon/King of Duala People”, <https://afroculture.net/rudolf-duala-manga-bell-martyr-and-hero-of-cameroon-king-of-duala-people/>, 12/12/2019.

<sup>61</sup> Prince Kouma Ndoumbe III, “Hommage à Duala Manga Bell, à Ngoso Din et aux vaillants patriotes : allocution prononcée lors de la commémoration des 120 ans de la signature des traités du 12 juillet 1884 et des 90 ans de la pendaison du Roi Rudolf Duala Manga Bell et Ngoso Din le samedi 07 aout à Douala”, in *Le Messager*, No1700, 20/08/2004, Pp.12-13.

<sup>62</sup> Deyan Sudjic, *The Language of Cities*, Penguin Books, 2017, p.1.

whereas western conception targets more the economic construction. Secondly, it appears that, the Duala were not passive. They defended their right to participate in the making of their city in view of preserving their cultural background.

The town plan “Gross-Duala” foresaw the gentrification of the heart-town of Douala and gave birth to several other neighbourhoods, which is similar to many other cities in colonial Africa<sup>63</sup>. One of the most emblematic is the district of New-Bell<sup>64</sup>, created by the Germans to recapture the Bells, non-natives, and other African inhabitants of Douala, evacuated from the Joss district. The history of this district testifies of the sociological break that the colonial plans induced in the city. New-Bell was given as a relocation land to the Bells, thus happened to be a concentration of immigrants from both inside and outside, mainly Hausa and workers from Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Dahomey and Togo, among others. Senegalese and Guinean workers have added themselves during the French period. Among these workers, some came as employees of trading houses and administration, while others were slaves. New-Bell offered other opportunities to those who did not fit into the colonial economy and administration, including artisans, small traders, prostitutes, and alcohol brewers and so on. In the same way, the district solved the growing needs of the city in the informal sector with jobs such as tailor, shiner, photographer, transporter, butcher, jeweller just to name few of them. Despite this functional aspect found in most modern cities with a long history, New-Bell as imagined by the Germans is a neighbourhood for Africans with little infrastructure. “Thus, make-shift housing was provided a minimal infrastructure of roads was built, facilitating the flow of workers to colonial enterprises. A native prison was also built in New-Bell, to replace one located near the Europeans’ quarters<sup>65</sup>”.

The subsequent development of the New-Bell district is reminiscent of spontaneous housing, in the absence of an urban plan. Later, from 1925, in a semblance of an urban plan, the administration fixed the borders of the city of Douala, comprising only the districts of Joss,

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<sup>63</sup> James R. Brennan, “Between Segregation and Gentrification: Africans, Indians, and the struggle for housing in Dar es Salaam, 1920-1950”, [https://eprints.soas.ac.uk/3175/1/Brennan\\_chapter.pdf](https://eprints.soas.ac.uk/3175/1/Brennan_chapter.pdf), 12/06/2020; Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City*, Routledge, 1996; D. Asher Ghertner, “Why gentrification theory fails in ‘much of the world’”, in *City. Analysis of Urban Change, Theory, Action*, Vol.4, 2015, Pp. 552-563.

<sup>64</sup> Guy Mainet, “L’occupation sociale de l’espace urbain à Douala, Cameroun, l’exemple de « beaux quartiers » (Douala Examples)”, in *Bulletin de l’Association de Géographes Français*, No449, 1978, Pp.37-40.

<sup>65</sup> Lynn Schler, “Ambiguous Spaces: The Struggle over African Identities and Urban Communities in Colonial Douala, 1914-1945”, in *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 44, No1, 2003, Pp.51-72.

Akwa, Bali and Deido<sup>66</sup>. Therefore, New-Bell was not considered as part of the urban sphere and thus excluded from the municipality of Douala.

In the first years of the French Mandate, the main shapes of the *Gross Duala* plan have been respected and still resist in the evolution of the city. In general, this plan crystallizes the break between Duala communities and the Germans. The death sentence followed by the public assassination of King Rudolf Duala Manga Bell is nowadays considered as a tangible proof of the violence which characterized the German presence in Douala<sup>67</sup>. Thus, urban construction in Douala is the main source of rejection and painful memories of the period of the German protectorate in Cameroon. This reality resisted to the French Mandate, marked by a will for a shift in the relationships between France and locals.

## **2- French Colonial Urban Plans in Douala: Cleaning the German Presence and Achieving an “architectonique de la colonie intéressée”**

In general, the French colonial presence in Cameroon was motivated, beyond geostrategic reasons, by the capture of natural resources. When the Allied troops occupied the city of Douala during the First World War, a great debate resurged in France on the future of Cameroon<sup>68</sup>. The ministry for the colonies vehemently defended and obtained the integration of the management of the Cameroonian territory into French Equatorial Africa<sup>69</sup>. For France, the application of international mandate or trusteeship regimes only took a legal form, which in no way should prevent it from carrying out its imperial project<sup>70</sup>. Urban planning in Douala as conceived by France had a double or even triple objective. On the one hand, the French presence in Douala faced what must be called an advanced Germanization of the city. Street names, public spaces and buildings only reflected German culture. An Association known as JEUCAFRA (Jeunesse Camerounaise Française) emerged in 1930s, not only to politically

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<sup>66</sup> Antoine de Padoue Nsegbe & Al., *Cited*.

<sup>67</sup> Rudolf Duala Manga Bell was sentenced to death, then executed, under German law at that time. The fact that in the memories of some Cameroonians and historians, consider his death as an assassination testifies to a criminalization of the act, as well as to the rejection of the legitimacy of the application of German laws in Cameroon. Moreover, this rejection concerns the reason for which he, the King of the Bells, was sentenced to death, namely the defence of his territory and the interests of his population. Other stories surrounding his memory link the defeat of Germany during the First World War in Cameroon, to a sortilege from Duala Manga before his passing.

<sup>68</sup> Daniel Abwa, *Commissaires et Hauts Commissaires de la France au Cameroun (1916-1960)*, Presses Universitaires de Yaoundé, 1998.

<sup>69</sup> ADF, *1918-1940. Afrique-Questions Générales*, 97, Pp.100-131.

<sup>70</sup> The Chapter V will further discuss this issue.

reinforce the French presence but also to promote the French culture in Cameroon<sup>71</sup>. The urban landscape, in that context was that of an enemy, which must be domesticated and transformed to mark a special imprint of the war trophy that the city represented. On the other hand, town planning projects, especially in the aftermath of the 2nd World War, were geared towards better exploitation of natural resources. This resulted in the creation of the Investment Fund for the Economic and Social Development of Overseas Territories, FIDES (Fonds d'Investissements pour le Développement Economique et Social des Territoires d'Outre-Mer), which financed infrastructural projects in the colonies. The third element that explains the colonial commitment to the urbanization of Douala was linked to responding to the accusations of independence movements before the UN Trusteeship Council, relating to the poor administration and extreme exploitation of Cameroon.

In the 1920s, France adopted an urban development plan of Douala town, preserving the last German master plan mentioned earlier. The separation of the European city has been maintained, alongside the development of the railway. In addition, France invested more in urban sanitation, in particular by draining ponds, maintaining sewers and water pipes, among others. The plan also limited to the urban perimeter, excluded the disputed quarter of New-Bell, considered as a non-urban area, as mentioned earlier. In the imagination of the French administration, the exclusion of New-Bell aimed at making it an exclusive property of the Bell community, expropriated from the Joss plateau by the Germans and who were waiting for compensation. This opened a conflict with other residents of Douala, pushing the Bells to occupy the Bali district, closer to their favourite area that they lost. France endorses this occupation, by granting well-plots. Thus, between 1931 and 1933, 341 plots of land were allocated to the Bell populations, in strict application of the town planning rule. They used the funds collected as compensation to build quality houses, thus enriching the urban landscape. In addition, by the occupation of the Bali district, the populations are gradually nibbling on the Frei Zone and are approaching the European city, whose erasure will be envisaged by France after the World War II<sup>72</sup>.

“L’architectonique de la colonie intéressée” is a concept that underlays urban projects in Douala from 1945<sup>73</sup>. The concept is presented during a conference held in Douala on the topic

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<sup>71</sup> Félix Nicodème Bikoï, “L’aventure ambiguë d’un pays bilingue. Le cas du Cameroun”, in *Documents pour l’histoire du français langue étrangère ou seconde*, Nos 40-41, 2008, Pp. 231-240 ; Emmanuel Tchumtchoua, *De la JEUCAFRA à l’UPC : l’éclosion du nationalisme Camerounais*, Yaounde, CLE Editions, 2006, 241p.

<sup>72</sup> Lynn Schler, 1973, *cited*.

<sup>73</sup> ANOM, *Procès Verbal de la Commission d’examen des plans d’urbanisme du Cameroun*, 04/05/1945, FM2TP/246.

of the planning of the city. Paul Biau, Chief architects committed by French administration for the purpose explains some key points of that concept: the preservation of the monuments of the city, the preservation of green spaces, the enlargement of roads, and the functional partition of the city. These different points of urban planning do not precisely define the concept, the meaning of which assumes the philosophy of European colonization in Africa. In this logic, urban planning is part of the optimization of the interests of European power. The French Colonial Administration set itself the ambition to make Douala a beautiful colonial city. To achieve this, French architects tackle local buildings, which they consider anarchic, on the pretext that they contribute to worsen the urban landscape with chaotic views of some parts of the city. They introduce the building permit, which must be obtained by presenting construction plans drawn up by architects. In the 1940s, however, Douala had mostly French architects. Thus, this urban plan includes an ambition of spatial control, which extends to the habitat, as claims Clemence Chapus: “l’encadrement voir le contrôle de la population peut aussi passer via l’urbanisme<sup>74</sup>” (the supervision or the control of the population can also go through town planning).

The principles enacted by Paul Biau in his 1945 conference were not immediately transformed into a detailed urban plan for the city of Douala. It is more of a master plan, which contains developments and adjustments to be made to urban roads, sanitation, and water supply, among others. Moreover, these principles were difficult to apply to New-Bell, which has transformed over time, into a rebellious neighbourhood vis-à-vis the colonial administration. It is indeed, from 1946 that this district was reintegrated into the urban perimeter of Douala. The implementation of road and water supply plans comes up against the serious problem of the legal status of the land, occupied without any real control rule<sup>75</sup>.

In 1950, Henri Jean Calsat<sup>76</sup> defined an ambitious development plan for the city. Its great innovation was the abolition of the buffer zone created by Germany and which had been largely occupied gradually from 1920. This plan endows the city of Douala with essential

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<sup>74</sup> Clemence Chapus, *Les projets d’urbanisme à Douala entre 1944 et 1960*, Master 1 Thesis, Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne, 2014 /2015, p.47.

<sup>75</sup> Lynn Schler, *cited*.

<sup>76</sup> Jean-Henri Calsat is a French urban planner, graduate from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and the Ecole des Travaux Publics, the Institut d’urbanisme de l’Université de Paris, the Ecole d’archivage des Chartes and the l’Ecole du Louvre. He assumed duties as Chief Architect of Historic monuments and National palaces in France. His institutional biography is detailed on the following links: [https://agorha.inha.fr/inhaprod/ark:/54721/00285154,12/07/2019](https://agorha.inha.fr/inhaprod/ark:/54721/00285154,12/07/2019;);

<https://www.unige.ch/archives/architecture/fonds/archivesdiverses/calsat/expocalsat/biographie/>, 12/07/2019;

infrastructure, in particular the bridge over the Wouri inaugurated in 1955<sup>77</sup>, the strengthening of the port and the railways:

“\* L'accélération de la modernisation du port de Douala en 1953;

\* La construction des ateliers et dépôts des chemins de fer dans la vallée de Mboppi ;

\* La construction en 1951 du pont sur le Wouri : ce pont, d'une longueur de 1,8 kilomètres, a pour objectif de lier la rive droite avec les superficies agricoles riches du Cameroun. Les travaux débutent en 1951, le pont est inauguré en 1955 ;

\*L'organisation des zones d'activités secondaires avec le renforcement du commerce dans la zone de New Bell<sup>78</sup> ”

Funding for these urban plans comes from the exploitation of natural resources, trade and increased taxes. Various measures have been decreed by the French Administration, with a view of collecting the taxes and charges arbitrarily imposed on the population. As early as 1920, accountants were paid emoluments, in order to encourage them to a stricter and wider collection of the said taxes<sup>79</sup>. The importance of these taxes is explained, beyond the collection on the assets of nationals<sup>80</sup>, by the massive presence of immigrants, exercising in trade, especially in the city of Douala<sup>81</sup>. These taxes varied and comprised poll, medical assistance, use of bikes, civil status, fest or ceremony, animal and wives' taxes<sup>82</sup>. Regarding the trade, the statutes of Mandate and Trusteeship served as open-door policy in Cameroon to the entire international community, therefore attracting traders, fishermen and craftsmen from several countries, notably Greeks, Senegalese, Guineans among others. To raise the infrastructure, in a state of disrepair due to lack of investment during the World War II, FIDES was set up, one of the philosophies of which is at the heart of the action of the current French Development Agency. FIDES financed projects in Cameroon in the form of a loan with an interest rate of 02%. In fact, the French administration drew from Cameroon's natural resources and sold them

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<sup>77</sup> Lourdes Diaz Olvera & al., “ Quand tout ne tient qu'à un pont ! Réfection d'ouvrage et dysfonctionnements urbains à Douala ”, in *Belgeo*, Nos 1-2, 2010, Pp. 183-196.

<sup>78</sup> Benjamin Michelon, *Cited*.

<sup>79</sup> Arrêté fixant l'encaisse maximum des agences spéciales du Cameroun, Douala, November 12, 1920, in *Journal Officiel des territoires occupés de l'ancien Cameroun*, No52, December 1st, 1920, Pp169-170.

<sup>80</sup> One of the forms of resistance to the collection of taxes and the imposition of a colonial or Fulani power within the Guiziga community, in the Far North of Cameroon, is analysed as the source of the development of the culture of theft. Issa Saïbou et Hamadou Adama, “Vol et relations entre Peuls et Guiziga dans la plaine du Diamaré (Nord-Cameroun)”, in *Varia*, No166, 2002, Pp. 359-372.

<sup>81</sup> Cyrille Aymard Bekono, “European Immigration in Africa under the Open Door Policy of International Mandate and Trusteeship Territories: The Case of French Cameroon (1919-1960)”, in *Mobilités et migrations européennes en (post) colonies*, No 221-222, 2016, Pp. 343-366.

<sup>82</sup> Steve Herve Simo Moubi, *Cameroun: le combat pour l'indépendance sous l'emprise d'une France coloniale*”, Master's Thesis, Università di Pisa, 2014-2015, p.22.

on its territory. The returns are made available to FIDES, which invests them in the same territory of origin with an interest rate.

The collection of taxes and duties, as well as the exploitation of natural resources, using forced labour, punishment, and the harsh reality of portage, formed the foundations of resistance to colonization and claims for independence. As an instrument of power, tax in the colonial and postcolonial context is part of the balance of power between the administration and the population<sup>83</sup>. The weight of the violence that resulted reflects the difficult relationships with the different urban plans in Douala, most often designed to the taste and interest of the imperial powers, which are also reflected in the forms of colonial architecture. In this regard, the French urban plans in Douala aimed at the “degermanisation” and the control of the urban space. From the economic point of view, these plans supported the introduction and the collection of taxes, as well the use of the forced labour, imposed to those were not willing or not able to pay taxes. It focused on the German urban plan, based on the gentrification of the city.

## **II- Forms and Meanings of the Imperial Architecture in Douala**

In General, the diversity of colonial systems, the constraints of the natural environment and know-how, the absence in various cases of legal construction frameworks, did not allow the emergence of a unique architectural style in colonial Africa. Also, the forms of colonial architecture have not been the subject of an in-depth study. This is explained in relation to the vestiges of colonialism, and also by the difficult of access to some resources, made secret or destroyed during episodes of conquest or wars of independence. Some studies fairly evoke different styles to describe that architecture, among which styles are: Classic, gothic, modernist<sup>84</sup> and art-deco<sup>85</sup>. Colonial architecture in Douala is on the forefront of this concern, due to the lack of communication (transport) and sufficient or existent training in architecture. Some of the buildings resulted from experimentations, in a space considered without any construction plan. Some examples of architects who engaged in experimental buildings in

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<sup>83</sup> Yves Alexandre Chouala, “L’économie fiscale des transitions africaines : éléments pour une sociologie des luttes sociopolitiques autour de l’impôt”, in *Polis/R.C.S.P./C.P.S.R.*, No 1 & 2, Vol.16, 2009, Pp.09-40.

<sup>84</sup>Mauro F. Guillén, *The Taylorized Beauty of the Mechanical: Scientific Management and the Rise of Modernist Architecture*, Princeton University Press, 2006; Niki Amiri, “Modernism and postmodernism in architecture, an emphasis on the characteristics, similarities and differences”, in *The Turkish Online Journal of Design*, Special Edition, 2016, Pp.1626-1634.

<sup>85</sup> Thierry Bangui, “L’architecture coloniale du centre-ville de Bangui (Rép. Centrafricaine) : essai sur un patrimoine urbain en décadence”, in *Les Cahiers d’Outre-mer*, No261, 2013, Pp.105-122.

colonies are Ernst May<sup>86</sup> in Uganda and Kenya, and Arturo Mezzedimi<sup>87</sup> in Ethiopia for the Italian architecture.

Given the aforementioned difficulties, this section will evoke few details of colonial architectural forms but will focus more on presenting in summary the historical value and importance of some buildings, the choice of which is based on the availability of data. These meanings could be classified within historic evolution, from the German to the French period, each containing power or imperial architecture with different political functions.

### **A- The German Architecture: An Expression of Urban Domination on the Local Architecture**

German architecture in Douala evolved from forms close to local constructions, in prefabricated materials to the introduction of architectural forms of the imperial power.

#### **1. A Locally Inspired Architecture**

German construction projects in the XIXth Century in Douala faced the challenge of the local know-how and the availability of materials. To overcome these challenges, the German Government invested in prefabricated buildings, especially made in Hamburg, and transported in Douala by ships. This type of building is made of German metal and woods.

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<sup>86</sup> Kai K. Gutschow, “*Das Neue Afrika: Ernst May’s 1947 Kampala Plan as Cultural Programme*”, in Fasil Demissie (Ed.), *Colonial Architecture and Urbanism in Africa: Intertwined and Contested Histories*, Farnham, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2012, Pp.373-406.

<sup>87</sup> Jacopo Galli, “Aspirations and Contradictions in Shaping a Cosmopolitan Africa: Arturo Mezzedimi in Imperial Ethiopia”, in *ABE Journal*, No9-10, 2016, <http://journals.openedition.org/abe/3159>, 12/01/2020.



**Figure 10 : Prefabricated House Presented at the Berlin Exhibition in 1896 and Reassembled in Douala**



**Source** : Jacques Soullillou (Ed.), *Rives coloniales: architectures, de Saint-Louis à Doula*, Paris, Editions de l'ORSTOM, 1993, p.296.

This is a picture of the two storey *Palaver Haus* in Douala, made of metal and wood and which is completely detachable. It rests on 75cm-high-metal pillars which support a platform on which rises a vacuum facilitating ventilation. Jacques Soullilou describes it as an adapted building to its natural environment:

“les marches des escaliers ne reposent pas directement sur le sol de façon à faciliter le nettoyage; à mi-hauteur des piliers se trouvent des espèces d’assiettes destinées en théorie à arrêter les insectes et rongeurs mais, étant donné la pluviométrie importante, on s’aperçut qu’elles se remplissaient souvent d’eau et constituaient autant de réservoirs à moustiques<sup>88</sup>”.

(The steps of the stairs do not rest directly on the ground in order to facilitate cleaning; halfway up the pillars are species of plates intended in theory to stop insects and rodents but, given the high rainfall, we noticed that they often filled with water and constituted as many reservoirs for mosquitoes).

The following picture highlights the general use of this type of architecture in Douala between 1884 and 1900.

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<sup>88</sup> Jacques Soullillou (Ed.), *Rives coloniales: architectures, de Saint-Louis à Doula*, Paris, Editions de l'ORSTOM, 1993, p.297.

**Figure 11 : Panoramic View of a Residential Quarter of the German Officials in Douala Around 1900**



Source :Jacques Soullillou (Ed.), *Rives coloniales: architectures, de Saint-Louis à Doula*, Paris, Editions de l'ORSTOM, 1993, p.297.

This photo shows that apart from the material and the size, the architectural form is modelled on the pre-colonial style of the XIXth Century in Douala. The roofs are pitched in a not steep, rectangular shape. This architecture fits into the local landscape. In fact, until the end of the 19th Century, the Germans favoured good relations with the Duala Chiefs and did not plan as such to spread an imperial logic in all directions. Also, environmental constraints imposed the height of the buildings, conceived with aeration, as it is the case of other types of architecture that symbolize the German power.

## **2. An Architecture of Power**

The architecture of power refers to a type of construction, with an excessive appearance, in relation with its human environment<sup>89</sup>. Indeed, architecture is an instrument which serves social and political objectives. The shapes of houses, their topographical situation, the redistribution of their plan are codes which translate the relationships between groups or between individuals. Chetima Melchisedek points out that :

“l’architecture est analysée comme une *technologie politique* qui lie les questions de gouvernement, c’est-à-dire les questions de contrôle et du pouvoir sur les individus, par le biais de la canalisation de leur vie quotidienne. (...) l’architecture en tant qu’institution contribue avec succès au maintien

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<sup>89</sup> Ousmanou Zourmba, “Meanings and significance of colonial architecture in Douala”, in *WIT Transactions on the Built Environment*, No191, 2019, Pp. 57-65.

du pouvoir d'un groupe sur un autre, et fonctionne comme un mécanisme de codage de leurs rapports réciproques à un niveau qui inclut le déplacement du corps dans l'espace, ainsi que sa surveillance<sup>90</sup>.

(Architecture is analyzed as a political technology that links issues of government, ie issues of control and power over individuals, through the channeling of their daily lives. (...) Architecture as an institution successfully contributes to the maintenance of the power of one group over another, and functions as a mechanism for coding their reciprocal relationships at a level that includes the displacement of the body in space, as well as its control).

In the same line, Maurice Amutabi suggests, describing power architecture in Kenyan urban space, that:

“the power that colonial buildings exhibited was unmistakable. There is no doubt that Africans admired the architectural wonders of the colonial buildings, but they had adverse effects on them. The buildings fascinated them but also frightened them for they were different and unique. The concern for security of the colonial compounds also was the paramount, and this appeared to tell the Africans that it would not be easy to eliminate white rule<sup>91</sup>”.

Precisely regarding the German colonial architecture in Cameroon, Ambe J. Njoh assigns to it the objectives of influence and domination:

“The imposing structures went a good way to impress upon the ‘natives’ that colonial authorities controlled an inordinate amount of resources, which could be tapped for use in neutralizing any challenge to colonial rule. Therefore, the size and scale of structures such as buildings cannot be divorced from discourses on domination and intimidation. Dovey bolsters this assertion by observing that exaggerated physical scale dominates by belittling ‘the human subject as it signifies the power necessary to its production’. As architectural symbols of power, grandiose colonial administrative structures that dramatize the contrast between indigenous and colonial architecture constituted what Cooper would characterize as ‘a domineering and inviolable image of the imperial nation ... [and] a visible expression of the universality of Western concepts of beauty and order’<sup>92</sup>”.

These assertions highlight at least three arguments that attest to an architecture of domination. First, the topographical position. A high-rise building conveys the message of population control, in that it offers a panoramic view on the city. Secondly, disproportionate structures and shapes compared to their surroundings remind the owner's power and suggest his superiority. Thirdly, the use of buildings also signals domination, as evidenced by police or military buildings, as well as prisons, among others. Most of the German buildings that suit this description were designed for the public services, among which the building of the Head of the Government, the German Postal Services' Office, the German Police and the Military Headquarters.

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<sup>90</sup> Melchisedek Chetima, *Cited*, Pp.36-37.

<sup>91</sup> Maurice Amutabi, “Buildings as Symbols and Metaphors of Colonial Hegemony: Interrogating Colonial Buildings and Architecture in Kenya's Urban Spaces”, in Fassil Demissie (Ed.), *Colonial Architecture and Urbanism in Africa. Intertwined and Contested Histories*, Farnham, Ashgate Publishing, 2012, Pp.325-343.

<sup>92</sup> Ambe J. Njoh, “Urban planning as a tool of power and social control in colonial Africa”, in *Planning Perspectives*, Vol. 24, No3, 2009, Pp.301-317.

### a) The Overlooking Office of the German Government

The First Government Headquarters was built in 1891, on a double storey structure. This building is one of the oldest German built remains in Douala which is still in use. It is constructed with materials imported from Hamburg, a mixture of bricks and cement, and a metal-sheet roof<sup>93</sup>. Hervé – Brice Ngembou better highlights its structure:

"L'édifice reposait sur un socle d'un mètre de haut, les murs étaient en briques, les planchers en planches 'Metlasch' importés. Les plafonds étaient en tôle ondulée posée sur des solives métalliques et recouverte d'une couche de ciment. Le toit enfin était en bois recouvert de carton bitumé. L'aile principale comportait onze pièces<sup>94</sup>". (The building rested on a base one meter high, the walls were brick, the floors in imported "Metlasch" planks. The ceilings were of corrugated iron laid on metal joists and covered with a layer of cement. Finally, the roof was made of wood covered with roofing felt. The main wing consisted of eleven parts). At the early beginning of the condominium in 1914, this building served as British intelligences' Office<sup>95</sup>, the continued to be used as civil service office.

**Figure 12 : Former Office of the German Head of Government in Douala**



<sup>93</sup> Jonas Houvounsadi, Marc Pabois, Communauté urbaine de Douala, *Douala capitale économique: l'architecture*, Lieux Dits, 2011., p.14.

<sup>94</sup> Hervé Brice Ngembou, *Cited*.

<sup>95</sup> ANOM 21/187, *Condominium du Cameroun. Lettre au Ministre 6.8.15*.

**Source:**

[https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fichier:Ancienne\\_r%C3%A9sidence\\_du\\_chef\\_de\\_circonscription\\_%C3%A0\\_Douala.JPG](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fichier:Ancienne_r%C3%A9sidence_du_chef_de_circonscription_%C3%A0_Douala.JPG), 12/05/2018

**b) The Building of the German Police (*Polizeitruppe*)**

The building of the former German Police is one of colonial remains with a rich history, and a hard and educative side. The *Polizeitruppe* in fact, inaugurated the military colonial presence of Germany in Cameroon. Along with the decision of making Cameroon a colony, Von Gravenreuth created the *Polizeitruppe* Kamerun in 1889. In 1893, The German Governor reinforced the troop with 370 slaves bought from Dahomey (Western Africa). The condition for these slaves to acquire their freedom was to achieve five years' service for the benefit of the German colonial master<sup>96</sup>. But things went wrong with these foreign Police troops, because of cruel treatments. A mutiny led to the death of their commander and the destruction of their headquarter in Douala. No picture of that first building has ever been found. The building currently in use by the Merchant Navy replaced the first ever building. It is built in bricks, respecting the German royal architecture.

**Figure 13 : Former Building of the *Polizeitruppe* Kamerun, Douala**



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<sup>96</sup> Alejandro de Quesada & Chris DALE, *Imperial German Colonial and Overseas Troops 1885-1918*, Osprey Publishing, 2014, p.8.

Source:

[https://www.know.cf/enciclopedia/FR/Ancien\\_commissariat\\_de\\_police\\_de\\_Douala](https://www.know.cf/enciclopedia/FR/Ancien_commissariat_de_police_de_Douala),  
26/03/2018

Police troops at their highest number reached 1650 local staff, led by 30 German Officers. To link this historical site to its use, elements used by the police at that period could be underlined as follows: Policemen used to have a uniform and guns with specific designs. Although there is no description of the uniform, some details regarding the types of guns have been provided. Among these guns, swords have been used by the *Polizeitruppe*. These swords could be recognized based on some visual elements, especially the inscription PTK for *Polizeitruppe Kamerun*<sup>97</sup>. Compared to the sword used in Togo, another protectorate of Germany in Western Africa, they seem of fair qualities. This police station was at the heart of the arrest and then the hanging of King Rudolf Duala Manga Bell. It is a unique place of memory in the history of the German protectorate in Douala<sup>98</sup>, and symbolizes the cruelty of German power in its colonies or protectorates.

### c) The Europeans' Hospital

In terms of proportions and architectural innovation, the Europeans' Hospital in Douala is a famous example, mentioned in almost all the papers related to the German colonial architecture in Cameroon.

**Figure 14 : Initial Structure of the Europeans' Hospital in Douala**



<sup>97</sup> <https://www.seitengewehr.de/ptk.pdf>, 01/06/2018.

<sup>98</sup> Ousmanou Zourmba, *Cited*, 2017, p.35.

**Source :** Jacques Soulillou, *Douala: un siècle en images*, Paris, Harmattan, 2018, p.32.

**Figure 15 : Current Front View of the Former Europeans' Hospital,**



**Source:** Author, Douala, 16/08/2016

This building was constructed in 1896, on the initiative of Dr Albert Plehn. Named "Gustav Nachtigal" at its inauguration, it has 16 rooms and measures 42 meters<sup>99</sup>. It experienced modification, in the respect of its initial architecture, both during the German and French period. This building is rich of history, as it is a key example of the racial segregation introduced in Cameroon by Germans. As a hospital, it was reserved to the white peoples, and strictly forbidden to natives. This champion of racial segregation thus symbolizes the contempt and dehumanization of the Black Man by the colonists, on his own territory. It is part of the strategy of mental alienation of local populations, by spreading the myth of racial superiority.

#### **d) The Army (*Schutztruppe*) Headquarters**

The *Schutztruppe* building continues the history of the German military presence in Cameroon. The *Schutztruppe* itself was created on June 10, 1895, few years after the revolt of the foreign contingent of the Police<sup>100</sup>. Following the same model of recruiting foreign troops, Germans foresaw the possibility of bringing Sudanese to work in the army in Kamerun. At its early beginnings, *Schutztruppe* had 10 companies with 150 men each. At its highest level in terms of numbers, it counted 185 Germans and specialist officers for 1650 Cameroonian

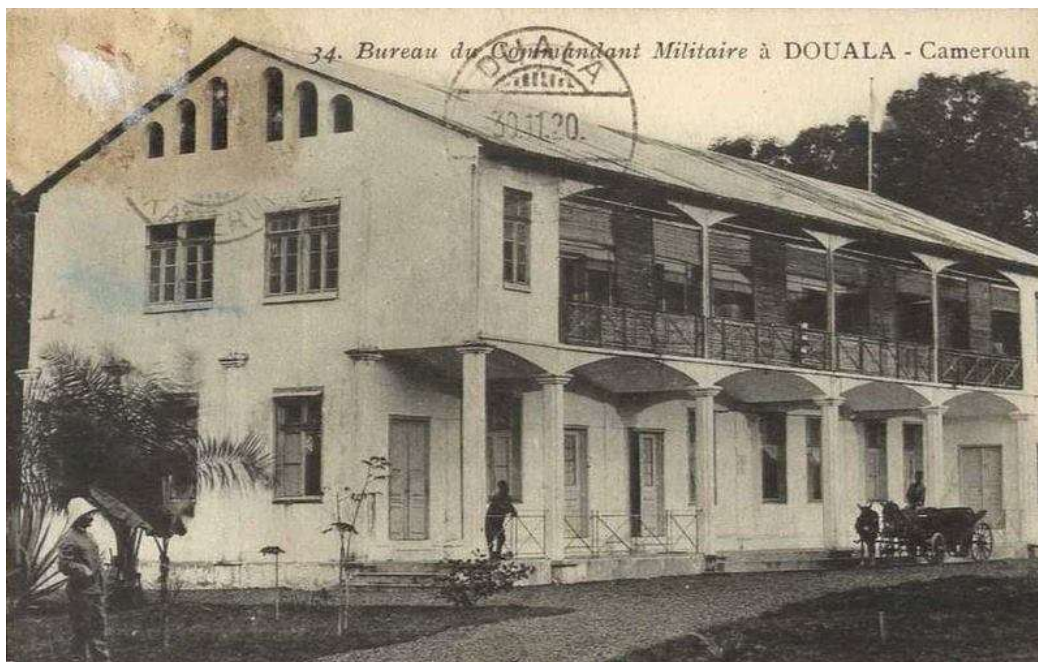
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<sup>99</sup> Ousmanou Zourmba, *cited*, p.34.

<sup>100</sup> Alejandro d Quesada & Chris Dale, *Cited*, p.35.

soldiers divided into 49 garrisons, forming all 12 companies<sup>101</sup>. These numbers were reinforced by those of the police during the First World War. The offices of the Commander of the *Schutztruppe* were in Douala. The building continues seemingly to serve as the head of the local Commander of the Gendarmerie Legion. It is an example of the appropriation, at least in its functionality, of a vestige of colonialism, notwithstanding discordant considerations on the memory of places. In fact, the Cameroonian postcolonial administration seemed more to consider the strategic position of the building as well as its shape and structure, which meet the needs of command, to use it for military purposes, as was the case during the colonial period.

**Figure 16 : Building of the Commander of the *Schutztruppe* in Douala**



Source: [http://www.cameroun24.net/photo-cameroun-Douala\\_en\\_1903-81.html](http://www.cameroun24.net/photo-cameroun-Douala_en_1903-81.html),  
16/12/2016

This building contains soldiers' apartments, offices, and a prison. It was the headquarters of the Cameroonian army during the German period, where all military decisions have been taken<sup>102</sup>. As military building, it is rich of memories and history with regard to the German protectorate.

#### **e) The Head Branch of the Woerman Company**

With the signature of protectorate treaties from July 12, 1884, the Germans strengthened their presence by military conquests and in the context of rivalry with the United Kingdom,

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.



multiplied the establishment of their commercial houses. In this policy and commercial orientation, the initial warehouse of the Woermann Firm has been expanded by the construction of an agro industrial complex to which is added a residence to house the employees. This residence is known as the “Maison des Célibataires<sup>103</sup>”, located right next to the headquarters of the Multinational.

**Figure 17 : Building of the Woermann Linie**



Source: [www.doualart.org](http://www.doualart.org), 15/12/2015

An analysis of the shapes of these buildings shows that they have a similarity. They all have at least two floors, large window openings, and balconies. This architectural form allows the German administrators to have a view on the rest of the city and the port turning them into a kind of sentinels and watch for control of the population. Moreover, in relative terms, they are impressive in size for the population and thus inspire respect and fear towards the occupants. They are therefore tools of colonial domination.

The exuberance of the headquarters of the Woermann Linie attests more to this assertion. This building was constructed in the late 1920s by the Woermann Company from Hamburg, while Germany had lost its territorial possession, followed by the confiscation by France, of German properties in Cameroon. The objective supporting the size of this building, beyond

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<sup>103</sup> This concept means that house is reserved to small-size family, especially non-married workers.

commercial ambitions, is a demonstration of German capacity, to attract once again the sympathy of the population of Douala. The pro-German campaign of the 1930s, known as the Germanophile Movements<sup>104</sup> attests to this thesis of demonstrating power through architecture.

This brief look at German architecture in Douala shows that construction projects were in straight line with the policy of colonial occupation. It is in conformity with the evolution of the relations between the imperial administration and the populations. These relations went from a period of collaboration, during which the buildings were not aimed at impressing or expanding the influence of Germany, to a period of pacification, marked by an imperial architecture.

## **B- The French Architecture in Douala: Experimentation and Building France in the Colony**

Like German buildings, French architecture in Douala was conceived as a suppository of colonialism. It is an imperial architecture, through which France has sought to give itself better visibility compared to Germany. Beyond this imperial approach through architecture, the construction of certain infrastructures after the Second World War aimed at a better exploitation of natural resources as well as the promotion of colonial vision.

### **1. An Architecture of ‘Degermanisation’**

Paul Zang Zang stresses on the fact that when France takes possession of Cameroon, it invested in a process of *Degermanisation*, which consists in erasing the tangible and intangible traces of Germany, to mark its presence<sup>105</sup>. The strategy used included the confiscation of the Germans’ properties and the strict control by violence of the population to impose French culture. Concerning properties belonging to the Germans, strict rules for their liquidation were applied, excluding German natives from any possibility to acquire them<sup>106</sup>. In this same logic, France engaged in construction sites of imposing buildings to shade the buildings bequeathed by the Germans. Among these buildings are the Chamber of Commerce, the Courthouse, the residence of the Head of Douala District and the Laquintinie Hospital. For Sandrine Dole<sup>107</sup>, these buildings have in common the influence of the Decorative Art architectural style.

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<sup>104</sup> Léonard I. Sah, “Activités allemandes et germanophiles au Cameroun (1936-1939)”, in *Revue française d’histoire d’Outre-mer*, No255, 1982, Pp.129-144.

<sup>105</sup> Paul Zang Zang, “La Dégermanisation du Cameroun”, in *Revue Electronique des Sciences du Langage*, No14, 2010, Pp.79-104.

<sup>106</sup> The 5<sup>th</sup> Chapter will discuss in detail, the concept of De-Germanization in Douala.

<sup>107</sup> Sandrine Dole is a French designer, involved in the “Arches de mémoire” project in Douala, as part of the leading team of Doual’art, a contemporary art gallery very committed to the preservation of historical heritage in Douala. The next chapter will further present the contribution of Doual’art to heritage awareness. Further information on Sandrine Dole: <http://sandrinedole.free.fr/> and <http://doulart.org/arches-de-la-memoire/>.

Nonetheless, it is important to stress that the *Degermanisation* was mental, cultural and also through architecture. From the architectural point of view, France invested in the construction of more futurist and relatively over-sized buildings.

**a. The Chamber of Commerce**

The Chamber of Commerce is one of the very first imposing buildings constructed by France in Douala. Its size matches the French economic ambitions in Cameroon.

**Figure 18 : The Chamber of Commerce in Douala**



**Source : Christer Sopteuku Ngonou, <https://www.google.com>, 2017.**

The following passage by Doual'art highlights its historical importance :

“A l’entrée de la concession, la plaque frappée de la Croix de Lorraine rappelle que ce site est marqué par une étape décisive dans l’odyssée du Général de Gaulle : c’est là qu’il appelle à la mobilisation pour la France Libre, contre les partisans du régime collaborationniste de Vichy. Il reviendra dans ce même lieu en 1941 pour saluer la contribution camerounaise à l’effort de guerre allié, et prendre également date sur les engagements de la Conférence d’août 1944 à Brazzaville, qui pose les bases de la réforme du système honni de l’Indigénat<sup>108</sup>.”

(At the entrance to the concession, the plaque bearing the Cross of Lorraine reminds us that this site is marked by a decisive stage in General de Gaulle's odyssey: it is there that he calls for mobilization for Free France , against the partisans of the collaborationist regime of Vichy. He will return to this same place in 1941 to salute the Cameroonian contribution to the Allied war effort, and also take a date on the commitments of the August 1944 Conference in Brazzaville, which lays the foundations for the reform of the hated system of the ‘*Indigenat*’).

<sup>108</sup> Anonym, “Chambre de commerce”, <http://doualart.org/portfolio/chambre-de-commerce/>, 12/08/2019.

Built in 1927 and 1928, it is in the Decorative Art style<sup>109</sup>, and has a shape like other French buildings of the same period among which the Courthouse.

#### **b. The Courthouse**

**Figure 19 : Initial Building of the Courthouse in Douala**



**Source:**<http://doulart.org/portfolio/le-palais-de-justice/>, 18/08/2019

This building housed the very first court under French law in Douala, within the mandate regime. It was constructed between 1930 and 1931. It symbolizes the imposition of a judicial system, external to its geographical and cultural framework. Since the middle of the 19th Century, the British had instituted a Court of Equity in Douala, with a view of settling commercial disputes<sup>110</sup>. Also, the Germans opted for the preservation of the judicial instances directed by Local Chiefs, who drew prestige and benefits from it. This explains local opposition to the French judicial system, based on the so-called *Code de l'Indigénat*.

Regarding its shape, the Courthouse in Douala is a two-storey type, comprising monumental, vertical, and horizontal lines. The large windows provide good ventilation and meet climatic requirements. The roof is terrace type, adding a touch of beauty to the facade.

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<sup>109</sup> The Choice of the Decorative Art in the architecture in Cameroon is meaningful of the intention of France. After the World War I, this artistic style has been perceived as an elective art. Therefore, there should be an intention to influence local populations, through the introduction of this artistic in Cameroon.

<sup>110</sup> Anonym, "Douala Attractions and its surrounding areas", <https://discover-cameroon.com/en/douala/>, 12/09/2019.

### c. The Residence of the District Head

The former residence of the District Head occupies the site of the Court of Races, created by the Germans to replace the Court of Equity. In the administrative organization of Cameroon under the French Mandate, Douala was a District Head town. This induces the existence of offices and residences of officials. The residence of the District Chief, the current building housing the local Court, is one of these buildings.

**Figure 20: The Residence of the Head of the Douala District**



**Source:** <http://doulart.org/portfolio/ancienne-residence-du-chef-de-circonscription/>, 22/08/2019

Constructed in 1930 still in the Decorative Art style, this building was renowned for its beauty and aesthetic appearance: “Le bâtiment se rattache au style ‘art deco’ par ses volumes, sa tour d’angle et son ornementation végétale et géométrique en façade<sup>111</sup>”. This building offers a structure that facilitates visual control of the city as mentioned earlier. Located on the heights of the Joss plateau, it allows, from the large balcony on the 1st floor, to have a panoramic look over the rest of the city and the port. This allows the French administration to maintain public order more easily by means of anticipation. Therefore, this building reflects the French imperial architecture, as it is the case of the Laquintinie Hospital.

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<sup>111</sup>Jonas Houvounsadi, Marc Pabois, Communauté urbaine de Douala, *cited.*, p.16.

#### **d. The Laquintinie Hospital**

The Laquintinie Hospital is reminiscent of the racial segregation introduced in Douala by the Germans. Indeed, at the inauguration of the Europeans' hospital mentioned earlier, an indigenous dispensary was created, with rudimentary equipment, reserved for local populations<sup>112</sup>. The French administrations maintained this separation of health facilities and decided to build a more equipped dispensary in Akwa. The construction works were launched in 1931, on a site which extends over 9 hectares<sup>113</sup>. This dispensary was subjected to the regime of *indéginat*. From 1950, it was renamed "Laquintinie", to honour the memory of the French military health specialist, Dr Jean Auguste Laquintinie, who worked there twice, before being killed in 1941 in the 1st regiment of Cameroonian tirailleurs embarked for the liberation of France<sup>114</sup>.

From an architectural point of view, the Laquintinie Hospital has undergone an evolution which respects the initial form. The first buildings were massive in shape, with large windows. "Ce sont des bâtisses de forme massive avec un toit en terrasse et de larges fenêtres sur les flancs pour faciliter la ventilation<sup>115</sup>". From 1950, buildings with pitched roofs, sheet metal or tiles reinforced the hosting capacities of the hospital. The most recent buildings are of two- storey type, with large balconies and windows.

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<sup>112</sup> Anonym, "Hôpital Laquintinie", <http://doulart.org/portfolio/hopital-laquintinie/>, 28/08/2019.

<sup>113</sup> Anonym, "General presentation of the Laquintinie Hospital of Douala", <https://www.hopitalaquintinie.cm/general-presentation-of-the-laquintinie-hospital-of-douala.html>, 28/08.2019.

<sup>114</sup> Anonym, "Hopital Laquintinie", <https://www.douala.cm/service/226-hopital-laquintinie>, 28/08/2019.

<sup>115</sup> Hervé Brice Ngembou, *cieted*

**Figure 21 : A View of the Initial Architectural Form of the Laquintinie Hospital**



**Source:**<https://www.hopitalaquintinie.cm/lhopital-laquintinie-de-douala-en-images-photo3.html>, 27/08/2019.

**Figure 22 : An Overview of the current Architecture of the Laquintinie Hospital**



**Source:** <https://www.hopitalaquintinie.cm/index-en.html>, 27/08/2019.

This hospital is designed to be a reference centre for the treatment of diseases affecting local populations. For example, faced with the spread of sexually transmitted diseases in the 1930s, a specific pavilion project was initiated there, which could not be carried out for various reasons<sup>116</sup>. Beyond providing care to the local population who earlier faced pandemics like the *Trypanosoma*<sup>117</sup>, this hospital was built in the vision of imperial architecture, and above all to attract a useful sympathy of local populations, that could help better control Cameroon, in the context of the emergence of Germanophile movements. There were also hidden ambitions behind medical commitment in Africa, during the colonial period, comprising experiments<sup>118</sup>. Thus, the Laquintinie hospital is part of the architecture aimed at *degermanising* Douala.

## **2. Setting Infrastructures to Ease the Economic Exploitation**

Although the construction of infrastructure was presented as the achievement of what the colonial powers called "civilizing mission"<sup>119</sup>, it should be noted that the main objective is to facilitate the economic exploitation of the colonies. In the city of Douala, this is justified among other things by the focus of the French administration on the construction of communication infrastructure and market structures. Thus, the relevant examples include the open-air market of the Besseke Valley, the railways, and the connection of the banks of the river *Wouri* through a bridge inaugurated in 1955.

### **a. The Former Besseke Market**

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<sup>116</sup> Alioum Idrissou & al., "Acteurs et structures de prise en charge de la co-infection tuberculose/VIH, Approches historique et anthropologique", in Fred Eboko, Claude Abé & Christian Lurent (Eds), *Accès décentralisé au traitement du VIH/sida : évaluation de l'expérience camerounaise*, Paris, Anrs, 2010, Pp.167-178.

<sup>117</sup> Guillaume Lachenal, "Médecine, comparaisons et échanges inter-impériaux dans le mandat Camerounais : une histoire croisée franco-allemande de la mission Jamot", in *CBMH/BCHM*, No2, Vol. 30, 2013, pp.23-45.

<sup>118</sup> Guillaume Lachenal, "Le médecin qui voulut être roi. Médecine coloniale et utopie au Cameroun", in *Anales HSS*, No1, 2010, Pp.121-156.

<sup>119</sup> The 4<sup>th</sup> Chapter will further evoke this concept, which affects colonial memories in former colonial powers and former colonies.



**Figure 23: Halles Model Market at the Besseke Valley, 1937**



**Source :** Anonym, *Entre infrastructures et stratégie métropolitaine, quelle place pour le projet urbain ?*, Document de contexte, 2<sup>ème</sup> Atelier International de Maitrised'œuvre urbaine de Douala, 04-18 november 2016, p.36.

This market was conceived on the model of *Les Halles* in Paris, with open hangars offering a roof for the protection against the rain. The fact remains that the absence of studies on colonial economic structures does not ease detailed description, in particular the distribution of space. It could nevertheless be noted that this is not a gratuitous act. Indeed, the creation of markets was a colonial strategy for tax collection as well as the control of the local agricultural production. Recalling the existence of this market thus has a historical significance, linked to the role of Douala as the main commercial city in Cameroon since at least the 19th Century.

### **b. The Railways Heritage**

The introduction of the railways in Cameroon has been one of the most important infrastructural investment during the colonial period. This was a German initiative in the 1900s, aimed at opening up the port of Douala, as well as establishing a direct relationship between German merchants, entrepreneurs, and local populations. The project itself was the subject of intense debate in Germany, as well as a major lobbying of the business community<sup>120</sup>. In the absence of a bridge over the Wouri, the project was designed from each of the banks of the river: The *Nordbahn line* aiming to connect Douala to the Lake-Chad with a significant traffic

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<sup>120</sup> Carl René, *Kamerun und die Deutsche Tsadsee Eisenbahn*, Berlin, Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1905.

between 1911 and 1913<sup>121</sup>, the *Mittlebahn line*, the objective of which is to connect Douala to Eastern Africa.

Opened to traffic in 1911, the *Nordbahn* line is the first railway line operational in Cameroon, with a distance of 172 kilometres. It has also experienced a large traffic of people and property. It provided the current city of Bonaberi, with the most significant colonial traces, made up of the railways line and the station. Photographic archives help understand partially the kind of goods concerned by this traffic on this line, especially agricultural products for which the cost of transport is subject to public decrees. The photography below asserts of the importance of this means of transport for the movement of people and goods in Cameroon around the 1910s, in the absence of other modern transport possibilities.

**Figure 24 : Nordbahn railway Station, Douala**



**Source** :[http://pedagogie.lyceesavioudouala.org/histoire-geographie/app\\_grande-guerre/images/3\\_photos\\_apres\\_guerre/douala\\_environs/1917\\_01\\_10\\_bonaberi\\_gare\\_cf\\_nord.jpg](http://pedagogie.lyceesavioudouala.org/histoire-geographie/app_grande-guerre/images/3_photos_apres_guerre/douala_environs/1917_01_10_bonaberi_gare_cf_nord.jpg), 12/12/2016.

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<sup>121</sup> Rose Angeline Abissi, *Le Chemin de fer du Nord et la ville de Nkongsamba : croissance et déclin (1911-1991)*, Master's thesis, University of Yaoundé 1, 1996, p.34.

Nowadays, both stations have been destroyed, which raises a great concern for the preservation and the enhancement of the railways' heritage in Douala, as well as it is the case of the *Mittlebahn line*.

Regarding the *Mittlebahn* line, the construction work began in 1908 and stopped at Eseka, because of the First World War which has resulted to a change of the political status of Cameroon<sup>122</sup>. As far as the city of Douala is concerned, the importance of this line is that it was designed to serve as a means of urban transport. It has also involved major investments in the development of the station, locomotive maintenance hangars and residences for railway executives and employees. The first ever Central Station was built in the Besseke Valley, a buffer zone in the urban plan of the Germans, with an imposing architecture for its context, in order to create a certain attractiveness.

**Figure 25 : Front View of the *Mittlebahn* Station, Douala, December 27<sup>th</sup>, 1916**



**Source:** <http://pedagogie.lyceesavioudouala.org>, accessed 12/12/2016

This station has a widespread form in German architecture of the 19th Century. It was replaced by the following building, more modern and attractive in its form, in the French ambition to give the image of a better management of the city.

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<sup>122</sup> Ambe J. Njoh, "Colonial spatial development policies, economic instability and urban public transportation in Cameroon", *Cities* No 14, vol. 3, 1997, pp. 133-143.

**Figure 26 : The Last Rail Station at Besseke (Douala), Destroyed in the 1980s**



**Source:** <https://mystory-societes.jimdo.com/camrail/gare-douala-bessengue/>, 15/12/2017

At the location of this station is now a wide avenue crossing the city from north to east. Nothing indicates that a station existed there. In fact, in the 1930s, France moved the railway station in the New-Bell District<sup>123</sup>. The former and first ever train station in Douala has been destroyed during the year 2005-2007, for the construction of the road<sup>124</sup>.

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<sup>123</sup> Ousmanou Zourmba, « Mittlebahn Railway (Douala/Republic of Cameroon), <http://railwayheritagewor.wixsite.com/world/single-post/2017/02/23/Mitlebahn-Railway-DoualaRepublic-of-Cameroon>, 23/02/2016.

<sup>124</sup> Jonas Houvounsadi & al., *Douala capitale économique : l'architecture*, Lieux dits, 2011, p.13.

**Figure 27 : Remains of the French Station on the *Mittlebahn* Line**



**Source:** Author, May 16, 2018.

This station is nowadays part of a local market, hard to reach and to recognize. The building, in ruins, however retains its structure, with the large openings serving as counters for the purchase of tickets. It is recognizable through its clock, which remains intact on its facade. Inside, the various compartments serve as shops and warehouses for small businesses. It was necessary to go there at a specific time, on a market closing day in order to be able to access it and calmly observe the building.

In the same line, railway lines properly have been submerged by the city, the extension of which leads to the relocation of the Central Railway Station at Bessingue, its actual location.

### **3. The Specificities of the Religious Colonial Architecture in Douala**

Beyond the public administration's buildings, sanitary, railways buildings and official residences, the beauty of the French architecture is also reflected in the Saint Pierre and Paul Cathedral. The Christian Church in its various obedience was at the forefront of the European colonization, in particular through preaching<sup>125</sup>. Its architecture is an integral part of the

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<sup>125</sup> There is a debate regarding the use of the Christianity to help implement colonial rule in Africa. Some Historians refer to a true or fake speech of the King of Belgium, Leopold II, to Missionaries, on their way to Africa, to stress that the Christianity is just secular arm of colonial European systems. More details in: Kalala Ngalamulume, "Léopold II et les missionnaires. Les circulations contemporaines d'un faux", in *Politique Africaine*, No102, 2006, Pp.128-133. On the christianism and the colonization in Africa: Gerrit Jan Van Butselaar, *Africains, Missionnaires et colonialistes. Les origines de l'Eglise Presbytérienne du Mozambique (Mission Suisse), 1880-1896*, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1984, 237p. ; Bernard Salvaing, "Missions chrétiennes, christianisme et

constructions which aimed at reinforcing the influence of the colonial powers. It should be noted that this Cathedral is one of the few colonial buildings with frescoes.

Although its current configuration does not date from the German protectorate, the St. Pierre and Paul Cathedral symbolizes the introduction of Catholicism in Cameroon<sup>126</sup>. Indeed, following the baptism in Germany of a Cameroonian Andreas Kwa Mbangue<sup>127</sup>, in January 6, 1889, Pope Leo XIII created in March 1890, the Apostolic Prefecture of Cameroon that he entrusted to the Pallotins. The latter formed a delegation of eight missionaries led by Reverend Father Vieter; which delegation arrived and celebrated the first Catholic worship on the Cameroonian territory in late October 1890 in the premises of the Woermann Firm. These missionaries had to face the hostility of the Protestant missionaries supported by the German Governor Von Puttkamer<sup>128</sup>. To prevent the adherence of the populations, the missionaries made believe that the Catholic priests dressed in robes were agents of infertility; that customs and Duala traditions refuted. Nevertheless, the Pallotin missionaries managed to build a temple in Bonadibong and spread to other cities, including Mouanko and Edea.

**Figure 28 :Pallotins Church in Douala**



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pouvoirs en Afrique noire de la fin du XVIIIe siècle aux années 1960 : permanences et évolutions”, in *Outre-Mers. Revue d’histoire*, No350-351, Pp.295-333.

<sup>126</sup> The introduction of the Christianity in Cameroon is dated in the 1840s, by a British native, Alfred Saker. More details in Philippe Laburthe Tolra, “ ‘Christianisme et ouverture au monde’. Le cas du Cameroun (1845-1915) ”, in *Revue française d’histoire d’Outre-mer*, No279, Vol.75, 1988, Pp. 207-221.

<sup>127</sup> Jean Paul Messina, *Des témoins Camerounais de l’évangile : Andréas Kwa Mbangue, Pius Otou, Joseph Zoa*, Paris, Karthala, 1998, p.10.

<sup>128</sup> Kenneth J. Orosz, *Religious Conflict and the Evolution of Language Policy in German and French Cameroon, 1885-1939*, Bern, Peter Lang, 2008, p.06.

**Source:** <http://www.doualart.org/spip.php?article73>, accessed on 12/12/2016

In 1932, the French Spiritans who replaced the Pallotins, modified the Cathedral of Bonadibong to build the one known today as the St. Pierre and Paul Cathedral.

**Figure 29 : Main Façade of the St Peter and Paul Cathedral, Douala**



**Source:** [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cath%C3%A9drale\\_Saint\\_Pierre\\_et\\_Paul\\_de\\_Douala1.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cath%C3%A9drale_Saint_Pierre_et_Paul_de_Douala1.jpg), 14/05/2019.

It is an imposing building in the form of the European architectural model of the Middle Age and the early Renaissance. "The columns that support the arches are typically cylindrical and topped with capitals often carved with representations of animals or plants or symbols more or less geometric<sup>129</sup>". According to the promoters of the Gallery of Contemporary Art, Doual'art, "It also has neo-Romanesque architectural elements, including its porch. Two twin bell towers framing the central façade<sup>130</sup>". The monumental size<sup>131</sup> of this Cathedral meets the objectives assigned to imperial architecture, as well as the use of buildings in the process of *degermanisation* of the city of Douala. Historically, beyond the controversial role of facilitator for the establishment of colonialism, the Christian Church played an important role in the introduction of the European educational system in Cameroon. Paul Zang Zang claims that denominational education has been subject to control by the German administration, with a

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<sup>129</sup> Hervé Brice Ngembou, *cited*.

<sup>130</sup> Regarding Doual'art, the main private organization working to protect the cultural heritage of the city of Douala, see <http://www.doualart.org>. Synthetic descriptions of several old buildings are provided on this website

<sup>131</sup> Jonas Houvounsadi & al., *cited*, p.29.

view to limiting the level of education<sup>132</sup> and paradoxically spreading the knowledge of the German language. During the Mandate, France recovered the collaboration between the administration and the missionaries and used it in the establishment of its political system in Cameroon<sup>133</sup>. Christian religion emerged, for example, as the engine of the expansion of the French language in many regions of Cameroon<sup>134</sup>.

### **Conclusions**

The colonial systems were a turning point in the social, political, and spatial transformation in Douala. From the occupation of the city from which the rest of Cameroon was conquered, the Germans set out to reshape the city to their tastes and for their own interests. The French, on their part, used urban plans and architectural models to impose their organizational model. The various colonial infrastructural projects endowed the city with visible vestiges, and for some, with traces which are part of the historicity of Douala. The examples mentioned in this chapter are only representative of the built traces of colonialism, which cannot be entirely presented due to the evolution of the city.

By adding elements of the industrial heritage like; the water treatment complex, the Nassif factories, the airport terminal site, the entire railway, the business premises in Akwa, the diversity of colonial buildings offers various enhancement possibilities. This enhancement can in particular take the form of a cultural landscape with a historic centre, thematic tourist circuits or routes, peculiar objects for exhibition, or thematic archives. In addition, contrary to common practices in Western countries, where artistic paints are part of architectural achievements, the technical and environmental constraints, as well as the experimentation that guided the construction in the context<sup>135</sup>, did not allow such possibility. The process of any enhancement initiative is therefore endorsed to dissonant memories of colonialism.

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<sup>132</sup> In the imaginary of the Germans at the beginning of the Protectorate rule, too advanced schooling would awaken Cameroonians. They will subsequently turn away from manual labour and refuse to be enslaved by the Europeans. Thus, it was essentially necessary to provide basic knowledge that could only help them understand the instructions that the German supervisors will give them on construction sites. More details in Rudolf Strumpf, *La politique linguistique au Cameroun de 1884 à 1960*, Bern, Peter Lang, 1979, p.57, cited by Paul Zang Zang, *Cited*.

<sup>133</sup> Louis Ngongo, *Histoire des forces religieuses au Cameroun : de la Première Guerre mondiale à l'indépendance (1916-1955)*, Paris, Karthala, 1982, p.16.

<sup>134</sup> Michel Narcisse Ntedondjeu, "Langue française et pratiques d'évangélisation à l'Ouest-Cameroun : contacts et transferts (inter)culturels", in *Revue Roumaine d'Etudes Francophones*, No 04, 2012, Pp.277-296.

<sup>135</sup> Ousmanou Zourmba, 2019, *Cited*.



## **Chapter IV**

### **Colonial Memories in Douala: Tensions and Dissensions Around the Enhancement of Imperial Built Remains**

The existence or weakness of a public policy for the conservation and enhancement of buildings inherited from the colonial era in Cameroon depends on internal memory dynamics<sup>1</sup>. These public policies are also influenced by outward cultural promotion orientations of the colonial powers concerned by these buildings. This is possible by means of financial support afforded within public development aid policies. In general, researchers admit that historic buildings are an integral part of the cultural or historical heritage of a city or country<sup>2</sup>. Indeed, like other art or technical objects, architecture is a work that embodies the artistic, technical and technological know-how of a community. It constitutes an artistic, technical and technological reflection of a community<sup>3</sup>. More than an art, a technical knowledge, architecture takes, under certain conditions, ethnological dimensions through the links that the building carries with the individual, his community as well as his natural environment<sup>4</sup>. Regarding colonial architecture, there is a debate around its meaning as historical or cultural heritage. This debate questions its local anchorage<sup>5</sup>, notwithstanding the universal character of artistic, technical and technological knowledge.

Substrate of the past, that it symbolizes<sup>6</sup>, cultural heritage refers to “une manière de revendiquer une filiation, ou, en d’autres termes, de ‘fabriquer des pères’ (...), auxquels on s’identifie” (a way of claiming a filiation, or, in other words, of 'making fathers' (...), with which we identify)<sup>7</sup>. Based on the interpretation of elements of memory and history, cultural heritage covers various aspects of human life and inventions<sup>8</sup>. In this regard, cultural heritage is also referred to as technical heritage, science heritage, tangible heritage, intangible heritage. The architectural heritage is at the heart of these different variations, being at the edge of technique, art and ethnology. Therefore, the conservation of historical buildings constitutes the centrepiece of the history of monuments. However, the enhancement of the architectural

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<sup>1</sup> Jean Davallon, “Le patrimoine : une ‘filiation inversée’ ?”, in *Espace Temps*, Nos74-75, 2000, Pp.6-16.

<sup>2</sup> Luc Noppen (Dir.), *Architecture, forme urbaine et identité collective*, Quebec, Les Editions du Septentrion, 1995 ; Carmen Popescu, “A Patrimony of Identity : Ties Between Architecture and Nationalisms”, in *Etudes Balkaniques. Cahiers Pierre Belon*, No12, 2005, Pp.135-171.

<sup>3</sup> Rémy Dzou-Tsanga, “Architecture et identités techniques au Cameroun”, in *Revue d’histoire des techniques*, Vol.2, 2016, Pp.36-48.

<sup>4</sup> C. Moley, “Ethnologie et architecture. Processus d’évolution de l’habitat rural en Pays-de-Caux”, in *Etudes Normandes*, No32, Vol.2, 1983, Pp.5-25.

<sup>5</sup> Lazare Eloundou, “Le patrimoine architectural moderne en contexte africain”, <https://books.openedition.org/inha/902?mobile=1%3Fformat%3Dcitation&lang=en>, 15/03/22020.

<sup>6</sup> Anne Françoise Garçon, “Le patrimoine : antidote de la disparition ?”, in *Historiens et Géographes*, No405, 2009, Pp.105-114.

<sup>7</sup> Abdel Amajid Arrif, “Le paradoxe de la construction du fait patrimonial en contexte colonial. Le cas du Maroc”, in *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée*, Nos73-74, 1994, Pp.153-166.

<sup>8</sup> Jean-Louis Tornatore, “l’esprit du patrimoine”, in *Terrain*, n° 55, Pp. 106-127.

heritage, far from being limited to the restitution of ways of thinking in architecture, draws on few concepts, namely architectural beauty, architectural genius and to a certain extent, the memory of the use of the building<sup>9</sup>. This enhancement raises the question of the architectural style, which may seem outdated or even be part of a contested political framework<sup>10</sup>. Therefore, it is necessary to underline that “heritage in many languages has an overwhelmingly positive connotation,<sup>11</sup>” which can be limited to the celebration of the designer or engineer. In this logic, the preservation and enhancement of colonial buildings raise some questions connected to the relevance of their heritage value, the perception of their designer, considered as a former oppressor<sup>12</sup>. Finally, it refers to the relevance of the Western model of architectural heritage, particularly its capacity to reflect the African vision of cultural heritage.

At the centre of these questions is the issue of the relationship between the local community in Douala and the built remains of colonialism. These relationships follow the patterns of the Ideology of the decolonization process, the impact of which is felt on the dynamics of the construction of a collective memory of colonialism (I). Furthermore, the issue highlights the complexity around the enhancement of colonial architecture in Douala (II).

## **I. The Influence of the Struggle for Independence in the Construction of a Collective Memory around the Built Remains of Colonialism in Douala**

To liberate Africa from European colonial systems, several emancipation movements have emerged on the continent. In Cameroon, from the point of view of the nationalists<sup>13</sup> who

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<sup>9</sup> Livio de Luca, “Relevé et multi-représentations du patrimoine architectural : Méthodes, formalismes et outils pour l’observation dimensionnée d’édifices”, in *MIA journal*, No1, 2006, Pp. 1-12.

<sup>10</sup> Theodore Prudon, “Preservation, design and modern architecture: the challenges ahead”, *Journal of Architectural Conservation*, Vol.23, 2017, Pp.27-35.

<sup>11</sup> Sharon Macdonald, *Difficult Heritage. Negotiating the Nazi Past in Nuremberg and Beyond*, Routledge, 2009, p.9.

<sup>12</sup> This debate on the preservation of artistic creation from an “enemy” on the European continent resurged after the First World War. Indeed, the Germans, in response to accusations following the bombing of sites such as Reims Cathedral, created a service for the protection of works of art within the army. This service is perceived in Germany as the protector of artistic creations, while in other countries such as France or Belgium, it is considered as a legitimization of the stealing of cultural objects. More details in: Christina Kott, *Préserver l’art de l’ennemi ? Le patrimoine artistique en Belgique et en France occupées, 1914-1918*, Bruxelles, Peter Lang, 2006, 441p.

<sup>13</sup> The pro French had a different vision, which consisted in maintaining the stranglehold of France on Cameroon, by granting a theoretical rather than real independence. A section of the Cameroonian elite, in the 1950s, was recruited in this current, via taking positions complacent towards France. More details in: Taguem Fah Gilbert Lamblin, *Les élites musulmanes et la politique au Cameroun de la période française à nos jours*, Doctorate Thesis in History, The University of Yaounde 1, 1996.

were recruited within the Union of the Peoples of Cameroon (UPC), the struggle for independence was focused on main objectives, among which the reunification of the two parts of the country and a complete break up with the systems of Western occupation, politically, economically, socially, and culturally<sup>14</sup>. This independence was possible by an armed struggle, the outcomes of which are subject to secrecy and cause controversy to this day. The governance of the mandatory powers mentioned in the second chapter of this thesis should focus on the development of the country's self-administration skills<sup>15</sup>. However, in the face of various petitions and claims for autonomy, these powers have opposed harsh repression. This opposition to the Cameroonian independence was supported by projects of assimilation to France in order to preserve its interests. It explains the temerity of the claims for autonomy, which targeted, beyond armed struggle, the background of colonial ideology. Therefore, as part of the struggle for independence emerged an anti-colonial ideology from which results a difficult perception of the colonial past, and hence of its built remains.

### **A. “Decolonization” and the Construction of an Anti-Colonial Heritage in Douala**

The struggles for African independences were nourished by a central idea, namely the oppression of the African people by Western powers since the slavery trade. In this regard, Francis Abiola Irele claims that:

“pour mieux comprendre certains aspects du nationalisme africain et de ses succédanés, il nous incombe de retenir que la situation coloniale ne se limite pas aux seules institutions fonctionnelles qui régissent l’ordre public ; elle englobe un ensemble de faits définissant un cadre socioculturel dans lequel le colonisé est enfermé et (...) qui détermine son expérience du monde et de soi<sup>16</sup>”.

(to better understand certain aspects of African nationalism and its substitutes, it behooves us to remember that the colonial situation is not limited to only the functional institutions which govern public order; it encompasses a set of facts defining a socio-cultural framework in which the colonized is locked up and (...) which determines his experience of the world and of himself).

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<sup>14</sup> Georges R. Manue, “L’indépendance du Cameroun”, in *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1960, Pp.461-473 ; Anne Karin Hofseth, *L’UPC en France. Un chapitre de la lutte upéciste pour l’indépendance du Cameroun (1948-1960)*, Master’s Thesis, The University of Oslo, 2020 ; Stéphane Previtali, *Je me souviens de Ruben Um Nyobe. Mon témoignage sur le maquis du Cameroun (1953-1970)*, Paris, Karthala, 1999 ; Japhet A. Anafak, “Le mouvement nationaliste au Cameroun sous tutelle française relaté par la presse écrite de France (1945-1960)”, in *Présence Africaine*, Nos187-188, 2013, Pp.291-313.

<sup>15</sup> As underlined in Chapter II, the Mandate and Trusteeship regimes bear witness to a reductive vision of the Cameroonian populations, supposedly deemed incapable of administering the country, notwithstanding the existence of solid pre-colonial political structures. In fact, long before the European conquest, there were kingdoms and empires whose structure conferred an indisputable capacity for land management. It simply turns out, on analysis, that the International Mandate and Trusteeship regimes constituted a pretext for some western powers to occupy Cameroon, under a different legal framework, finally ruled like all the other colonies in Sub-Saharan Africa.

<sup>16</sup> Francis Abiola Irele, *Négritude et condition africaine*, Paris, Karthala, 2008, p.17.

This turned into an ideology at the antipodes of Western culture. It advocates a break, illusory in neo-colonial relations between the Western powers and the independent States of Africa. To better understand the interaction between the cement of decolonization movements and post-independence memory dynamics, this subsection recalls some central elements of colonial ideology before addressing the contradiction of Western and African Negro cultures and the disillusionment of a decolonization, which crystallizes difficult and complex relations with colonial architecture in Cameroon.

## **1. Recall of the African Perception of Some Central Elements of the Ideology of French Colonization**

The struggle for decolonization in Africa in general and Cameroon in particular followed a methodology, which determined, beyond political domination, the deepest aberrations of European colonial systems, with a view to autonomy intended as total and complete rupture. Indeed, colonial domination, as experienced in Cameroon, has been enshrined, in its philosophical and theoretical dimension, in the denial of humanity to the black man, which justifies racism, inhuman and disgracing treatment, cultural denial among others, theorized by European philosophers<sup>17</sup>. Reminding these racist positions helps identify colonial violence as well as the restoration of the "Negro cultural" values advocated by Cameroonian separatists and pan-Africanists. In the 19th century:

“Hegel excluait le Noir africain de l’histoire du monde parce qu’il ne reconnaît pas en Afrique noire la révélation de la Raison Divine, de l’Esprit Universel, ni aucune sublime création de la raison dans l’évolution historique de l’humanité, (autant) Gobineau refuse au Nègre tout rôle majeur ou simplement significatif dans l’évolution historique de l’humanité, vu l’infériorité de la race noire<sup>18</sup>”.

(Hegel excluded the African Black from the history of the world because he does not recognize in black Africa the revelation of the Divine Reason, of the Universal Spirit, nor any sublime creation of reason in the historical evolution of humanity, (as much) Gobineau denies the Negro any major or simply significant role in the historical evolution of humanity, given the inferiority of the black race).

Many other European think-thanks, where racism was conceptualized, consider the Black Man at the primitive, even prelogical stage of civilizations<sup>19</sup>, whose passage to the human

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<sup>17</sup>Further details in: George M. Fredrickson, *Racism: A Short History*, Princeton University Press, 2015, 232p., Robert Miles, *Racism*, Routledge, 2004, 176p., Robert Ross (Ed.), *Racism and Colonialism. Essays on Ideology and Social Structure*, Springer Science & Business Media, 2012, 288p.

<sup>18</sup> Théophile Obenga, *Volney, Cheikh Anta Diop et le Sphinx, contribution de Cheikh Anta Diop à l’historiographie mondiale*, Paris, Présence africaine, 1996, p.33.

<sup>19</sup> Nicolas Journet, “De la mentalité primitive à la pensée sauvage. Lucien Lévy-Bruhl (1857-1939)”, in *La culture*, 2002, Pp.159-166 ; Dominique Merlié, “Durkheim, Lévy-Bruhl et la ‘pensée primitive’ : que différend”, in *L’année sociologique*, No2, Vol. 62, 2012, Pp.429-446 ; Lilian Maury, “Lévy-Bruhl et la mentalité primitive”, <https://journals.openedition.org/bibnum/697>, 15/03/2020 ; Raymond Lenoir, “La pensée primitive”, *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*, No2, T.29, 1922, Pp.199-224.

stage is only possible through a “civilizing mission” as “burden of the white man<sup>20</sup>”. In this logic, the expansion of Western culture requires the enslavement of the black man through the mobilization of methods as brutal as the whip, forced labour, the imposition of the European language and culture among others. These different philosophers and theorists of racism mobilize different explanations to argue that the black man is inherently inferior to other races, and his universal condition is to serve the supposed superior races. Lewis Gordon for example, claims that “l’existence noire devient une forme ‘d’embarras’ avec une réaction théodicéenne qui place les Noirs dans une relation *extérieure* à la tradition philosophique occidentale<sup>21</sup>”. (Black existence becomes a form of 'embarrassment' with a theodicean reaction that places blacks in an external relationship to Western philosophical tradition). In this same vein, John Stewart Mill<sup>22</sup> claims:

“la condition ordinaire (et qui sera bientôt universelle) des populations les plus arriérées est d’être sous le despotisme direct des peuples avancés, ou sous leur ascendant politique absolu/.../ Un peuple peut en posséder un autre comme une garenne pour y faire fortune, pour y battre monnaie : une ferme de bestiaux humains destinés à son service<sup>23</sup>”. (the ordinary (and soon to be universal) condition of the most backward populations is to be under the direct despotism of the advanced peoples, or under their absolute political ascendancy/.../ A people may possess another as a garenne to make a fortune, to beat it currency: a farm of human cattle intended for its service).

Georges Balandier mentions among these "moral" justifications for racist theses:

“l’incapacité des indigènes à se diriger correctement, le despotisme des chefs traditionnels, la tentation qu’auraient les (actuels) leaders politiques de se constituer en ‘clique dictatoriale’ ; l’incapacité des indigènes à mettre en valeur les ressources naturelles de leurs territoires ; les médiocres ressources financières des pays coloniaux ; la nécessité de maintenir le prestige etc<sup>24</sup>.” (the inability of the natives to navigate properly, the despotism of traditional leaders, the temptation of the (current) political leaders to form a 'dictatorial clique'; the inability of indigenous peoples to develop the natural resources of their territories; the poor financial resources of colonial countries; the need to maintain prestige etc.).

More than racial ideology, the question of the economic benefit of the colonial enterprise was the subject of debate in European think-thanks in the 19th Century. In England, for example, John Stuart Mill argues that colonies would help solve settlement and employment

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<sup>20</sup> This concept is by Joseph Rudyard Kipling, who made it the title of a poem published in February 1899 (the white man's burden). Refer to: Jean Pierre Naugrette, “Kipling et le fardeau de l’Homme Blanc”, in *Revue des deux mondes*, avril 2018, Pp.72-78.

<sup>21</sup> Lewis R. Gordon, “L’existence noire dans la philosophie de la culture”, in *Diogène*, Nos235-236, 2011, Pp.130-144.

<sup>22</sup> John Stuart Mill is a famous 19th century British philosopher, economist, and public figure. A royal civil servant, he is recognized as one of the fathers of classical liberalism in economics. For his biography, refer to: Nicholas Capaldi, *John Stuart Mill: A Biography*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, 436p.

<sup>23</sup> John Stuart Mill, “Du Gouvernement des colonies”, in *Gouvernement représentatif*, Paris, Guillaumin, 1862, cité par par Merle Marcel, *L’anticolonialisme européen de Las Casas à Marx*, Paris, Armand Colin, 1969, p.331.

<sup>24</sup> Georges Balandier, « La situation coloniale : approche théorique », in *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie*, Vol.11, 1951, Pp.44-79.

problems faced by the United Kingdom. In addition, according to his analyses, colonies would be able to self-finance through the exploitation of their natural resources<sup>25</sup>. It is in this logic that this author advocates the enslavement of colonized people, especially in the form of labour that the colonial powers can use in their sole interest. He thus indirectly connects economic liberalism to Western imperialism<sup>26</sup>.

These misleading thoughts formed the moral matrix of colonial action, sometimes immoral, in the conduct of territorial conquest and the administration of the occupied territories. The unashamed violence that characterized the German presence in Cameroon is part of these thought patterns. For illustration, reporting testimonies collected between 2000 and 2001 in 66 villages in Western Cameroon, Stefanie Michels notes that heavy trends emerge in the collective memory of the German past in Cameroon. Violence remains at the heart of these collective memories and is expressed through remembrance of rape, forced labour, hanging, deportation and imprisonment. “The majority of this violence is directed against the Africans, especially ‘rape’ and ‘beating,’ as well as ‘forced labour’ and ‘problems with chiefs,’ which in most cases subsumed hanging, exiling or imprisoning<sup>27</sup>. These painful memories in the form of permanent violence would be a one-way perception, in the sense that, according to the above-mentioned testimonies, violence was only intended for local populations. It is both physical and moral, creating, therefore complex relationships with the relics of the colonial past.

Moreover, the racist and dehumanizing ideology that underpinned European imperialism in Africa has structured relations between Africans and settlers. Aimé Césaire maintains that “entre colonisateur et colonisé, il n’y a de place que pour la corvée, l’intimidation, la pression, la police, le vol, le viol, les cultures obligatoires, le mépris, la méfiance, la morgue, la suffisance, la muflerie, des élites décérébrées, des masses avilies<sup>28</sup>”. (between colonizer and colonized, there is only room for drudgery, intimidation, pressure, police, theft, rape, obligatory cultures, contempt, mistrust, morgue, smugness, muflerie, decelerated elites, degraded masses). For Aimé Césaire, the relationship between the settlers

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<sup>25</sup> Duncan Bell, “John Stuart Mill on Colonies”, in *Political Theory*, No38, Vol.1, 2009, Pp.34-64.

<sup>26</sup> Katherine Smits, “John Stuart Mill on the Antipodes: Settler Violence against Indigenous Peoples and the Legitimacy of Colonial Rule”, in *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, No1, Vol.54, 2008, Pp.1-15.

<sup>27</sup> Stefanie Michels, “‘The Germans were brutal and wild’. Colonial legacies”, in Stefanie Michels & Albert-Pascal Temgoua (dirs.), *La politique de la mémoire coloniale en Allemagne et au Cameroun. Actes du colloque de Yaoundé, octobre 2003*, Münster, LIT Verlag, 20005, Pp.37-58.

<sup>28</sup> Aimé Césaire, *Discours sur le colonialisme. Suivi de Discours sur la négritude*, Paris, Présence Africaine, 2004, p.23.

and the African peoples was essentially a tendency towards the dehumanization of the colonized. In this regard, he establishes a relationship between colonial ideology and Nazi ideology, which he believes have in common the denial of humanity to any race other than the White considered Race.

Based on the above, Jean Ziegler thinks that the colonial past, coupled with slavery, the perverse effects of globalization widening the gap of poverty against the African continent, structure and deconstruct the relationship between the West and the Third World. According to him, the outbreak of violence in relations between the West and the rest of the world is partly because “les mémoires des ressortissants d’Amérique Latine et des Caraïbes, d’Afrique noire, d’Arabie et d’Asie sont des mémoires blessées<sup>29</sup>” (the memories of nationals of Latin America and the Caribbean, Black Africa, Arabia, and Asia are wounded memories). These difficult memories are reminiscent of the unpunished crimes committed by the West in the context of transatlantic trade and colonial exploitation. Joseph Wouako Tchaleu claims that Slavery Trade and colonization in Africa are both based on racial segregation, supported by some scientists:

“En Afrique Subsaharienne, la destructivité nécrophile de l’Occident judéo-chrétien ainsi que de l’Arabie musulmane se déploya avec une rare cruauté, au nom d’une mythologie de la race véhiculée par des discours pseudoscientifiques. Les éléments tangibles de cette agression raciste furent la traite négrière et la colonisation<sup>30</sup>”.

(In Sub-Saharan Africa, the necrophilic destructiveness of the Judeo-Christian West as well as of Muslim Arabia unfolded with rare cruelty, in the name of a race mythology conveyed by pseudoscientific discourses. The tangible elements of this racist aggression were the slave trade and colonization).

Thus, having identified the ideological roots of colonialism, the movement of decolonization targeted the restoration of the dignity of the black man through negritude and pan-Africanism. These political ideologies have an impact on colonial architecture, through the identification of designers and the use of the buildings concerned during the colonial period, to a former oppressor. The colonial architecture in Douala recalls the difficult past of colonial systems and is sometimes akin to the architecture or heritage of a former enemy<sup>31</sup> (enemy in the context of the War of Independence). It testifies to the forced labour mobilized on construction sites. It reminds some of the places of caning and imprisonment, as well as vicious court judgments. All things that complicate the relationship between local people and buildings inherited from colonial systems. The use of the currents of Negritude and Pan-

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<sup>29</sup> Jean Ziegler, *La haine de l’Occident*, Paris, Albin-Michel, 2008, p.67.

<sup>30</sup> Joseph Wouako Tchaleu, *Racisme colonial : analyse de la destructivité humaine*, Paris, L’Harmattan, 2015, p.11.

<sup>31</sup> For more details on enemy’s architecture in dissonant heritage, refer to Hila Zaban, “Preserving ‘the enemy’s’ architecture: preservation and gentrification in a formerly Palestinian Jerusalem neighbourhood”, in *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, Vol.23, 2017, Pp.961-97



Africanism provides a better understanding of the influence of colonial ideology on the fate of the built remains of Western dominations in Douala.

## **2. Negritude, Pan Africanism or the Contradiction of Western and Negro-African Cultures in Postcolonial Context**

Within the struggle for independence, to take into consideration, the roots of European colonial systems, much more than popular mobilization, African intellectuals set out to deconstruct the racist theories in vogue in Europe, about an alleged hierarchy of races, by rewriting African history<sup>32</sup>. Faced with the denial of humanity, the repudiation of all technical thought in the African societies, the refusal to recognize to them a civilizational capacity, various intellectuals of the continent have proceeded to the enhancement, the restoration of the cultural values of the African peoples. Their research focused on rewriting the history of Africa, starting from ancient Egypt, by demonstrating the anteriority of Negro civilizations compared to Roman and Greek civilisations<sup>33</sup>. These thoughts have supported nationalist movements in many African countries, exploiting the pain felt and experienced by African people since the slavery trade. To reinforce their chances of a sufficient echo, African researchers<sup>34</sup> have formed within Négritude<sup>35</sup> and Pan-Africanism, two movements that are difficult to dissociate, infused and abstract, which have largely influenced intellectual production (the reference to the Negro-African literature falls in line with this) and action of African political leaders for many years. To mark the complementarity of these two movements, it should be noted that Negritude appears to us to be more philosophical, while Pan-Africanism constitutes its political side. The diffuse and confused character of these two movements is the origin of the concept of "Pan-negrism," which tries to put together the ideals underpinning them. According to Amzat Boukari Yaraba, the definition of "Pan-Africanism" varies between:

“un concept philosophique né avec les mouvements philosophiques émancipateurs et abolitionnistes (de l’esclavage) de la seconde moitié du XVIIIème siècle et la fin de la seconde

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<sup>32</sup> Lionel Zevounou, “Produire des savoirs ‘africains’”. Réflexions à partir du CODESRIA”, *Revue d’anthropologie des connaissances*, No14, Vol.02, 2020, <http://journals.openedition.org/rac/6102>, 15/07/2020

<sup>33</sup> Théophile Obenga, “Contribution de l’Égyptologie au développement de l’histoire africaine”, in *Présence Africaine*, No94, 1975, Pp.117-139.

<sup>34</sup> Several African intellectuals, by their respective work, can be classified as part of the current of negritude or pan-Africanism. The most famous examples include Aimé Césaire, Mongo Beti, Léopold Sedar Senghor and Birago Diop among others. To these is added Léon Gontran Damas, French poet and politician born in Cayenne.

<sup>35</sup> On Negritude, refer to: Reiland Rabaka, *The Negritude Movement: W.E.B. Du Bois, Leon Damas, Aime Cesaire, Leopold Senghor, Frantz Fanon, and the Evolution of an Insurgent Idea*, Lexington Books, 2015, 533p.

Guerre Mondiale, ou une doctrine de l'unité politique formulée par les nationalistes Africains dans le cadre des luttes anticoloniales et indépendantistes<sup>36</sup> ”.

(a philosophical concept born with the emancipatory and abolitionist philosophical movements (of slavery) of the second half of the 18th century and the end of the Second World War, or a doctrine of political unity formulated by African nationalists within the framework of the anti-colonial and independence struggles).

By this assertion, the author underlines that Pan-Africanism draws its source from the movements aimed at the liberation of the Black Man from slavery in America. He thus recalls the deep ideological roots of negritude, which he traces with the work of Marcus Garvey. This Jamaican led his fight for the unity of black people through an association created in July 1914, known as the *Universal Negro Improvement and Conservation Association*, puis *African Communities League*<sup>37</sup>. Elie Mambou points out that beyond Marcus Garvey, other figures such as W.E.B. DuBois, George Padmore, Jean Price Mars, Henry Sylvester Williams, James Weldon Johnson, Booker Taliaferro Washington have contributed to the rise of the Pan-Africanist movement. Quoting W.E.B. Du Bois, he claims that Pan-Africanist movement is for black people, what Zionism is for Jews<sup>38</sup>.

This movement has spread to Europe, but also to the United States of America, where Pauline Guedj underlines the creation of the *Akan* movement around the creed *Africa must unite*. Several organizations of Marxist inspiration, integral part of the *Akan* movement, advocated, in the 1950s and 1960s, for a return to Negro cultural values, by complete mental and psychological separation from the western culture<sup>39</sup>. For Georges Padmore, “ l'idée du panafricanisme surgit d'abord comme une manifestation de la solidarité fraternelle entre africains et peuples d'ascendance africaine<sup>40</sup> ” (The idea of Pan-Africanism first arises as a manifestation of fraternal solidarity between Africans and peoples of African descent). According to Mongo Beti and Odile Tobner, Pan-Africanism “ exprime l'aspiration des Africains à se rassembler en une nation unique, sous la bannière d'un seul Etat, pour restaurer leur dignité outragée par des siècles de traite, d'esclavage et de colonisation, et prendre, en un mot, leur revanche sur l'histoire<sup>41</sup> ” (expresses the aspiration of Africans to come together in a single nation, under the banner of a single State, to restore their dignity outraged by centuries

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<sup>36</sup> Amzat Boukari-Yaraba, *Africa Unite ! Une histoire du panafricanisme*, Paris, La Découverte, 2017, p.5.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p. 79.

<sup>38</sup> Elie Mambou, “Le panafricanisme de William Edward Burghardt Du Bois : entre réalisme et utopie”, in *COMMposite*, No 18, Vol.1., 2015, Pp.128-148.

<sup>39</sup> Pauline Guedj, “Du panafricanisme à la réafricanisation : formation et actualité du mouvement Akan aux Etats-Unis”, in *Journal de la Société des Américanistes*, No 91-1, 2005, Pp. 93-112.

<sup>40</sup> Georges Padmore, *Panafricanisme ou communisme ? La prochaine lutte pour l'Afrique*, Paris, Présence Africaine, 1960, p.129, cited by Kader Stéphane Dabiré, *Le Panafricanisme : analyse de l'histoire d'un mouvement fédéraliste*, Master's Thesis, Université de Québec Montréal, 2017, p.8.

<sup>41</sup> Mongo Beti & Odile Tobner, *Dictionnaire de la Négritude*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1989, p.188.

of slavery trade, slavery and colonization, and to take, in a word, their revenge on history). From these few definitions, it emerges that Pan-Africanism is based on the idea of solidarity between African peoples to unite against Western exploitation. This solidarity can only find the weapons of its action by drawing on the intellectual movement aimed at rehabilitating African history, to which Negritude responds.

Regarding the concept of "Négritude," it is a creation of "Africans"<sup>42</sup> of French expression<sup>43</sup> and appeared in a scientific publication for the first time in 1939, in *Cahiers d'un retour au pays natal*, published by Aimé Césaire<sup>44</sup>. However, this date does not mark the birth of the ideology of Negritude, whose roots merge with Pan-Africanism. Aimé Césaire<sup>45</sup> defines Negritude as he follows:

“La négritude, à mes yeux, n’est pas une philosophie.  
La négritude n’est pas une métaphysique.  
La négritude n’est pas une prétentieuse conception de l’univers.  
C’est une manière de vivre l’histoire dans l’histoire : l’histoire d’une communauté dont l’expérience apparaît, à vrai dire, singulière avec ses déportations de populations, ses transferts d’Hommes d’un continent à l’autre, les souvenirs de croyances lointaines, ses débris des croyances assassinées<sup>46</sup>”

(Negritude, in my eyes, is not a philosophy. Negritude is not a metaphysics. Negritude is not a pretentious conception of the universe. It is a way of living history within history: the history of a community whose experience appears, to tell the truth, singular with its deportations of populations, its transfers of men from one continent to another, the memories of distant beliefs, its debris of assassinated beliefs).

The originality of this current of thought lies in the connection it establishes between Africa and its diaspora in America, thus giving depth to the history of the oppression of African peoples. As Elikia M'bokolo points out, “sans l’Afrique, les diasporas africaines n’ont pas d’identité; sans les diasporas, l’Afrique perdrait de vue aussi bien l’ampleur des

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<sup>42</sup> Limiting Negritude to Africans alone is a reductive approach that would aim to denigrate the movement, because the black people are not only Africans, except that they are of African origins. On the other hand, Négritude, which was born in the face of racism, focuses itself on the black race whose it seeks to highlight culture. In this regard, it arouses criticisms that are sometimes based, not on the constructive thought of Negro African civilizations, but on the basis of its cohort of the opposition of races it is supposed to fight.

<sup>43</sup> Georges Balandier, « Les mythes politiques de colonisation et de décolonisation en Afrique », in *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie*, Vol.33, 1962, Pp.85-96

<sup>44</sup> Francis Abiola Irele, *Op., Cit.*, p.45.

<sup>45</sup> Aimé Césaire is a politician (member of the French Communist Party) and writer, born in Martinique on June 26, 1913 and died on April 17, 2008. Author of several books, he is co-founder with Alioune Diouf, of the review *Présence Africaine*, which supported the scientific and literary production of African intellectuals from the 1930s. Among others, his work, *Discours sur le colonialisme*, is one of the most famous because of acerbic critics of colonialism it formulated. Refer to: Roger Toumson & Simonne Henry Valmore, *Aimé Césaire : le nègre inconsolé, biographie*, Vents d’ailleurs, 2002, 285p. ; Buata Bundu Malela, *Aimé Césaire et la relecture de la colonialité du pouvoir : avec Sartre, Fanon, Glissant, Kourouma, Badian, Schwaetz-Bart, Dadié et Ouologuem*, Paris, Editions Anibwe, 2019, 317p. ; Nicolas Martin-Granel & al., “A propos de Aimé Césaire (1913-2008) par Romuald Fonkoua”, in *Etudes Littéraires Africaines*, No31, 2011, Pp.69-79 ; Pierre Bouvier, “Aimé Césaire, la négritude et l’ouverture poétique”, in *Esprit*, No7, 2008, Pp.15-28.

<sup>46</sup> Aimé Césaire, *Op., Cit.*, p.82.

contribution passée à notre monde que l'étendue mondiale de ses responsabilités<sup>47</sup> ” (without Africa, African diasporas have no identity; without the diasporas, Africa would lose sight of both the scale of its past contributions to our world and the global scope of its responsibilities). In many ways, the momentum of anti-colonialism draws on the highlighting of the suffering endured by blacks around the world, as well as the deconstruction of the contradictions of the thesis of "the inferiority of the black man"<sup>48</sup>. This "rehistorization of the African past"<sup>49</sup> was initially the prerogative of an essentially intellectual elite, widespread in America, Europe and Africa. One of the leading figures of this movement is Cheikh Anta Diop<sup>50</sup>, who has devoted his work to the restitution of African cultural values to the rewriting of the history of Africa. In a thesis rejected by the University of Paris 1 Sorbonne<sup>51</sup>, he demonstrates that the Ancient Egyptian civilization<sup>52</sup> is a black African one. Implicitly, on the basis of arguments that are difficult to refute, he defeats the racist theories that classify Africa at a primitive scale of rationality. Also, he claims that black people are at the forefront of all sciences:

“En disant que ce sont les ancêtres des Nègres, qui vivent aujourd’hui principalement en Afrique noire, qui ont inventé les premiers les mathématiques, l’astronomie, le calendrier, les sciences en général, les arts, la religion, l’agriculture, l’organisation sociale, la médecine, l’écriture, les techniques, l’architecture... en disant tout cela on ne dit que la modeste et stricte vérité, que personne, à l’heure actuelle, ne peut réfuter par des arguments dignes de ce nom<sup>53</sup> ”.

(By saying that it was the ancestors of the Negroes, who today live mainly in black Africa, who were the first to invent mathematics, astronomy, the calendar, the sciences in general, the arts, religion, agriculture, social organization, medicine, writing, techniques, architecture ... by saying all this we are only saying the modest and strict truth, which no one, at present, can refute with arguments worthy of this name).

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<sup>47</sup> Elikia M'bokolo, “Georges Padmore, Kwamé Nkrumah, Cyrille L. James et l'idéologie de la lutte panafricaine”, <https://codesria.org/IMG/pdf/mbokolo.pdf>, 13/05/2019.

<sup>48</sup> Victor Picquet, *La pensée panafricaniste de Kwamé Nkrumah à travers son ouvrage majeur : Africa must unite*, Mémoire de Maîtrise d'Histoire, Université de Sherbrooke, 2019, p.72.

<sup>49</sup> This concept is borrowed from Victor Picquet, who uses it in the sense of the restitution or restoration of African history, stripping it of the tendentious stories and theses constructed by European philosophers in the 19th century. Read Victor Picquet, *Ibid*.

<sup>50</sup> Cheikh Anta Diop (December 29, 1923 February 1986) is a Senegalese historian, who became famous for his works which established the Negro character of the Pharaonic civilization. He studied in Paris in several disciplines, including physics, economics, sociology, anthropology, linguistics among others. His research in History followed a critical line of Western thought on Sub-Saharan Africa. More details in : John Henrick Clarke, “The Historical Legacy of Cheik Anta Diop: His Contributions To a New Concept of African History”, in *Présence Africaine. Nouvelle Serie*, Nos149-150, 1989, Pp.110-120; Cheikh M'backé Diop, *Cheik Anta Diop: L'homme et l'œuvre, aperçu par le texte et par l'image. Les racines du futur*, Paris, Présence Africaine, 2003, 407p. ; François-Xavier Fauvelle-Aymar, *L'Afrique de Cheik Anta Diop : Histoire et idéologie*, Paris, Karthala, 1996, 237p.

<sup>51</sup> This rejection targets keeping Africans in a limited level of knowledge of their past, in order to preserve the mental domination of Europe on the African continent. In addition, Cheik Anta Diop was the symbol of the capacity of African intellectuals to build an irrefutable scientific discourse on their history, breaking with European thesis, underpinned by racism and the negation of the intellectual aptitude of Africans (Black people essentially). By a

<sup>52</sup> Ancient Egypt, also called Pharaonic Egypt refers to an ancient civilization developed on the banks of the Nile River, between the approximate period ranging from 3000 to 30 BC.

<sup>53</sup> Cheik Anta Diop, *Nations Nègres et culture*, Paris, Présence Africaine, 3<sup>ème</sup> Ed., 1979, p.411.

Cheik Anta Diop replies to the untruths of certain European philosophers of the 19th century. He succeeds in restoring to the Africans their right place in human history and thus helps them recover their dignity, flouted by the colonialist theses. It is in this regard that Okpewho Isidore considers the thought of Cheik Anta Diop as a launching pad for Negro African nationalism<sup>54</sup>, stressing that “Diop’s books are a landmark of Black nationalist thought and were part of the general impulse which paved the way for the political liberation of several Black nations in the fifties and sixties<sup>55</sup>”. Georges Balandier, who follows this same logic, thinks that Cheik Anta Diop is one of the thinkers engaged in the militant rewriting of African history, with a view to rehabilitating the value of African civilizations<sup>56</sup>. These authors (exalt or (they) adjust the past to ensure the rehabilitation of African civilizations and Negro peoples. They reverse the relationship of dependence; they transform the great civilizations those we have called the great civilizations into debtors of African civilization) “exaltent ou (ils) aménagent le passé pour assurer la réhabilitation des civilisations africaines et des peuples nègres. Ils renversent la relation de dépendance, ils transforment les grandes civilisations - celles que nous avons appelées les grandes civilisations - en débitrices de la civilisation africaine<sup>57</sup>”. Clearly, the African thinkers of negritude are turning world history upside down by putting Africa at the heart of millennial civilizations. They lead a fight to awaken Negro consciousness, to effectively oppose the imperial systems. The definition below of Negritude, provided by Mongo Beti and Odile Tobner supports this point:

“La négritude, c’est l’image que le Noir se construit de lui-même, en réplique à l’image qui s’est édiflée de lui, sans lui donc contre lui, dans l’esprit des peuples à peau claire – image de lui-même sans cesse reconquise, quotidiennement réhabilitée contre les souillures et les préjugés de l’esclavage, de la domination coloniale et néo-coloniale<sup>58</sup>”.

(Negritude is the image that the Negro constructs of himself, in response to the image that has been built of him, without him and therefore against him, in the minds of light-skinned peoples - image of itself ceaselessly reconquered, daily rehabilitated against the stains and prejudices of slavery, colonial and neo-colonial domination).

It emerges therefore that negritude is defined in opposition to the perceptions that the Western world has made of the Black Man. Thus, to simplify the apprehension of the trajectory of these movements, we limit the concept of Pan-Africanism to the nationalist side

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<sup>54</sup> African nationalism can be defined as a movement aimed at liberating the continent from the yoke of colonialism, by restoring both African dignity and cultural identity.

<sup>55</sup> Okpewho Isidore, “Cheikh Anta Diop: The Search for a Philosophy of African Culture”, in *Cahiers d’Etudes Africaines*, Vol.21, No84, 1981, Pp. 587-602.

<sup>56</sup> Saliou Ndiaye, “L’apport de Cheik Anta Diop à l’historiographie africaine”, in *Africa: Rivista Trimestrale Di Studi e Documentazione Dell’Istituto Italiano per l’Africa e l’Oriente*, vol. 54, No. 2, 1999, Pp. 231–243.

<sup>57</sup> Georges Balandier, 1962, *Cited.*

<sup>58</sup> Mongo Beti & Odile Tobner., *Cited.*, p.06.

of Negritude<sup>59</sup>. These movements, which fuelled the anti-colonial ideology, lead at the accession to independence the construction of an African national cultural identity, poles apart from the colonial legacy. In this regard, they complexified the cultural enhancement of the vestiges inherited from colonialism. This underlines a problem of memory, history and the universality of cultures, especially when the representative elements of the latter stir up painful remembering. Decolonization was not, from the point of view of nationalist and independence movements, a simple accession to political autonomy. It is a process that comprises an inseparable restoration of African culture and the dignity of black peoples. In this context, the enhancement of built remains of colonialism could be likened to the apology of colonial systems. It is perceived as a form of perpetuation of imperial thought, essentially thought of subjugation, subsumption, and substitution of the cultural identity of peoples formerly submitted to colonial powers. To this is added a striking observation, that of an evolution of postcolonial international relations towards a misguided decolonization, which reinforce the fear of imperialist systems of domination and hence, the complex relations with the built remains of colonialism.

### **3. Post-Colonialism and Neo-Colonialism: The Disillusionment of a Semblance of Decolonization in Cameroon**

In the history of the decolonization in sub-Saharan Africa, the situation of Cameroon had a peculiarity because of its international status. Indeed, the Mandate and Trusteeship regimes had a common objective, which is the supervision of local populations with a view to acquiring capacities for self-administration. This should presage easy independence since it is not a colonial situation in the strict legal sense. However, France opposed, through various manoeuvres, the demands for reunification and independence of Cameroon, formulated at the end of the 1940s by the UPC militants. This opposition raised the issue of the relevance of the Mandate and Trusteeship regimes, which Giovanni di Stefano equates to a form of denial of the ability of the concerned peoples to self-administer<sup>60</sup>.

The decolonization movements in Cameroon under French domination have made clear demands, namely, the immediate autonomy and reunification of the two Cameroons. These demands are close to a call for a return to the pre-colonial situation. They also remind

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<sup>59</sup> Amady Aly Dieng, "Nationalisme et panafricanisme", <http://ccs.ukzn.ac.za/files/dieng.pdf>, 12/06/2020.

<sup>60</sup> Giovanni Distefano, "Article 22 du Pacte de la Société des Nations: Les Mandats", in R. Kolb (Ed.), *Commentaire sur le Pacte de la Société des Nations*, Bruxelles, Bruylant, 2014, Pp.841-1002.

us that the concept of decolonization is polysemous and depends on the forms of territorial occupation. According to Alexis Rappas, Decolonization :

“peut se référer à un processus d’émancipation des anciennes colonies qui s’inscrit dans le long terme, toujours en cours-face aux héritages coloniaux et à des phénomènes néo-et postcoloniaux-, se déclinant à plusieurs niveaux (politique, économique et culturel) et selon des temporalités variées<sup>61</sup>”. (Can refer to a long-term process of emancipation of the former colonies, still underway in the face of colonial legacies and neo and postcolonial phenomena, occurring at several levels (political, economic and cultural) and according to various temporalities).

Benoit Verhagen further claims that: “la décolonisation n’est pas un acte de souveraineté du colonisateur Belge, ni un renoncement généreux, ni une preuve de bon sens, mais tout simplement une conquête des Africains<sup>62</sup>” (decolonization is not an act of sovereignty by the Belgian colonizer, nor a generous renunciation, nor a proof of common sense, but quite simply a conquest of the Africans). This decolonization is not a demand for a simple change of political systems or governance and did find satisfaction.

Indeed, postcolonial literature demonstrates an evolution that marks a shift of colonial domination systems in the form of the various relations established between Cameroon and its former Mandatory and Tutelary powers. For some authors, like Jean François Bayart, Jean Ziegler and Achille Mbembe or Kum'a Ndumbe III, among others, the decolonization process has been reduced to political independence, far from translating the rupture desired by Cameroonian nationalists<sup>63</sup>. Furthermore, Achille Mbembe underlines especially that the political elites of the newly independent Cameroon have been coped for the preservation of the interest of the former colonial powers<sup>64</sup>. Daniel Abwa states in this respect the emergence of the concept of “collaborator,” which he differentiates from that of partner<sup>65</sup>. This author stresses on the very spirit of decolonization, which lays in total sovereignty, including political management entirely at the local level. However, by mobilizing “collaborators,” France has promoted leaders who are committed to its interests, who owe their power only to the French elite. Kum'a Ndumbe III points out that “Beaucoup de nos compatriotes se sont conformés à

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<sup>61</sup> Alexis Rappas, “Décolonisation”, in Dionigi Albera & al., *Dictionnaire de la Méditerranée*, Actes Sud, 2016, pp.331-341.

<sup>62</sup> Benoit Verhaegen, “Autour d’une décolonisation”, in *Présence Africaine*, No23, Vol.6, 1958, pp.97-106.

<sup>63</sup> For various reasons, drawing up a list of Cameroonian figures of the colonial struggle is subject to ambiguity. However, with regard to their respective role, we can evoke leaders of the main independence movement, the UPC (Ruben Um Nyobe, Ernest Ouandié, Felix Moumié) and leaders of newly independent Cameroon (Ahmadou Ahidjo, André Marie Mbida among others).

<sup>64</sup> Further readings : Achille Mbembe, *La naissance du maquis dans le Sud-Cameroun, 1920-1960: histoire des usages de la raison en colonie*, Paris, Karthala, 1996, 438p., Achille Mbembe, “Du gouvernement privé indirect”, in *Politique Africaine*, No73, Vol.1, 1999, Pp.103-121.

<sup>65</sup> Daniel Abwa, “De la collaboration au partenariat : le défi du XXIème siècle des relations France-Afrique”, in *African Journal of International Affairs*, Vol.1, No1, 1997, Pp.17-31.

cette situation, même de vaillants pères, de vaillantes mères qui ont lutté pour l'indépendance se sont finalement rangés à cette nouvelle réalité politique de l'échec de nos indépendances <sup>66</sup>” (Many of our compatriots have conformed to this situation, even valiant fathers, valiant mothers who fought for independence have finally come to terms with this new political reality of the failure of our independence). Mongo Beti names as an example the, first President of independent Cameroon, Ahmadou Ahidjo<sup>67</sup>, whom he considers to have been used by the French elite to eliminate Cameroonian nationalists. According to him, the fair education of President Ahidjo predisposed him to vassalage, and consequently to the manipulation of the former colonial power<sup>68</sup>. Moreover, noting that the request of the UPC have not finally been taken into consideration, the process of decolonization of French-speaking Cameroon seems to have been planned in order to preserve France's interest only. Instead of total autonomy, from 1959, the French Government worked for the signing of so-called cooperation agreements with Cameroon. These agreements concern areas of sovereignty such as defense and the economy. In terms of defense, France provides what is referred to as technical support for the training of troops, which is nothing other than a strategy for controlling the Cameroonian army<sup>69</sup>. Regarding the economy, it should be noted that Cameroon, from the Second World War was integrated into French Equatorial Africa (AEF)<sup>70</sup>. Also, the country was imposed the franc CFA, which, by keeping the operating account in the French treasury, by requiring the presence of a representative of France within the governing body of the Central Bank (Bank of Central African States), by indexing an exchange rate on the current currency in France, makes all the countries that share it, dependent on France<sup>71</sup>.

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<sup>66</sup> Kum'a Ndumbe III, *50 ans déjà! Quand cessera enfin votre indépendance-là ???*, Douala, Editions AfricAvenir/Exchange & Dialogue, 2011, p.17.

<sup>67</sup> Ahmadou Ahidjo (1924 November 30, 1989) is the very first President of the newly independent Republic of Cameroon. He ruled Cameroon from 1960 until his resignation on November 6, 1982. A politician with little education but not illiterate, he is recognized as one of the architects of the reunification and unification of the two Cameroons, in 1961 and 1972. He died in exile, following a conviction in absentia, accused of involvement in the aborted coup d'Etat of the 06<sup>th</sup> April 1984. More information: Barbara Belluzzo, *Il Camerun contemporaneo. Gli anni della presidenza di Ahmadou Ahidjo (1960-1982)*, Torino, L'Harmattan Italia, 2002, 192p., Samuel Eboua, *Ahidjo et la logique du pouvoir*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1995, 235p., Samuel Eboua, *Une décennie avec le président Ahidjo*, Paris l'Harmattan, 1995, 175p

<sup>68</sup> Mongo Beti, *Main basse sur le Cameroun. Autopsie d'une décolonisation*, Paris, La Découverte, 2010, p.49.

<sup>69</sup> Ousmanou Zourmba, *Le Cameroun face aux menaces sécuritaires transnationales*, Mémoire de Master, IRIC, 2009-2010, p.54.

<sup>70</sup> French Equatorial Africa (AEF) designates an entity born in 1888, from the merger of the French colonies of Gabon, the Middle Congo and later of Oubangui and Chad. With Brazzaville as its capital, this federation of French colonies in Equatorial Africa was an integral part of the French colonial empire. More details in: Pasteur Valléry-Radot, “Afrique Equatoriale Française : Colonie d'avenir”, in *Revue Des Deux Mondes*, vol. 53, No4, 1939, Pp. 678–695 ; Charles Robequin, “L’Afrique Equatoriale Française et le Cameroun pendant et depuis la guerre”, in *Annales de géographie*, No299, 1946, Pp.188-195.

<sup>71</sup> Martin Mbengue Nguime & Nathalie Nangang, “Ordre néocolonial, intégration continentale et développement de l’Afrique : 1960-2010”, <https://publications.lecames.org/index.php/hum/article/view/468/315>, 13/05/2020 ; Fanny



Likewise, through the agreements signed after independence, France imposed a monopoly on Cameroon's natural resources. Many authors claim that these agreements give France power of control by the army and by the economy over Cameroon. This confiscates the independence hardly and bloodily obtained. On the other hand, for France, this strategy is part of a claim for a sort of retribution for the infrastructures and other realization in Cameroon during colonial period. For these reasons, these agreements are referred to as treaties of neocolonialism. For illustration, Antoine Ondoua stresses that:

“En fait, comme les autres Etats africains signataires à leur indépendance d’accords de défense, toute la sécurité du Cameroun - intérieure principalement puisque le quadrillage international français excluait de véritables menaces extérieures – était aux mains de l’ancien colonisateur. Autant il est difficile de contester toute la logique d’assistance et de formation militaires (compte tenu du stade embryonnaire de l’Etat et surtout de ses carences infrastructurelles), autant les seconds accords sont moins défendables sauf sous l’angle hégémonique<sup>72</sup>”.

(In fact, like the other African states signatories to their independence of defense agreements, all the security of internal Cameroon, mainly since the French international grid excluded real external threats - was in the hands of the former colonizer. As much as it is difficult to dispute the whole logic of military assistance and training (given the embryonic stage of the State and especially its infrastructural deficiencies), likewise, the second agreements are less defensible except from hegemonic angle).

Moreover, these incestuous relations to the detriment of the former colonies are at the heart of the debate surrounding the concept of "Françafrique," which does not designate normal relations between France and its former colonies, but more reticular logics of influence. Klaus Schlichte thinks that Françafrique as an African policy of postcolonial France is part of a clientelism unfavorable to the former French colonies in Africa<sup>73</sup>. Maja Bovcon underlines that the teleological meaning of the concept of Françafrique refers to a French backyard space in Africa, in other words, an area of influence of France in the international order. This notion gives French-speaking Africa a secular proximity<sup>74</sup>, which cannot be distanced, in its apprehension, from the history of its colonial domination; “In its simplest sense, *Françafrique* can be interpreted within IR literature as meaning France’s ‘sphere of influence’ or its ‘*pré carré*’ (backyard), which presupposes the hierarchical order of an otherwise anarchical

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Pigeaud & Ndongo Samba Sylla, *L’arme invisible de la Françafrique : une histoire du franc CFA*, Paris, La Découverte, 2018, 277p.

<sup>72</sup> Antoine Ondoua, *Sociologie du corps militaire en Afrique noire : le cas du Cameroun*, Ph.D Thesis, Université de Rennes 1, 2013, p.109.

<sup>73</sup> Klaus Schlichte, “La Françafrique – Postkolonialer Habitus und Klientelismus in der französischen Afrikapolitik”, in *Zeitschrift Für Internationale Beziehungen*, vol. 5, no. 2, 1998, Pp.309–343.

<sup>74</sup> About *Françafrique*, refer to: François-Xavier Verschave, *La Françafrique, le plus long scandale de la république*, Stock, 1998.

international system<sup>75</sup>”. Olivier Blamangin is more detailed in the following description of *Françafrique*:

“des « assistants techniques » sont envoyés par milliers pour conseiller ministres et chefs d’État, et les interventions militaires, plus ou moins clandestines, se multiplient. C’est le temps des présidents africains « aux ordres » – les récalcitrants sont évincés –, des coups d’État pilotés depuis Paris, des guerres secrètes au Cameroun, au Tchad ou au Biafra (Nigeria), et des assassinats politiques, comme ceux du leader camerounais Félix-Roland Moumié, empoisonné à Genève en 1960, ou de l’opposant tchadien Outel Bono, abattu en plein Paris en août 1973. Des réseaux occultes sont mis en place auprès des dirigeants africains pour garantir l’influence française. En retour, l’argent de la corruption et les valises de billets détournées de l’exploitation pétrolière financent en secret les principaux partis politiques français<sup>76</sup>”.

(“technical assistants” are sent by the thousands to advise ministers and heads of state, and military interventions, more or less clandestine, are increasing. It is the time of African presidents "under orders" - the recalcitrants are ousted -, coups d’état piloted from Paris, secret wars in Cameroon, Chad or Biafra (Nigeria), and political assassinations, like those of the Cameroonian leader Félix Roland Moumié, poisoned in Geneva in 1960, or the Chadian opposition leader Outel Bono, shot in Paris in August 1973. Occult networks are set up with African leaders to guarantee French influence. In return, money from corruption and suitcases of banknotes diverted from oil exploitation secretly finance the main French political parties).

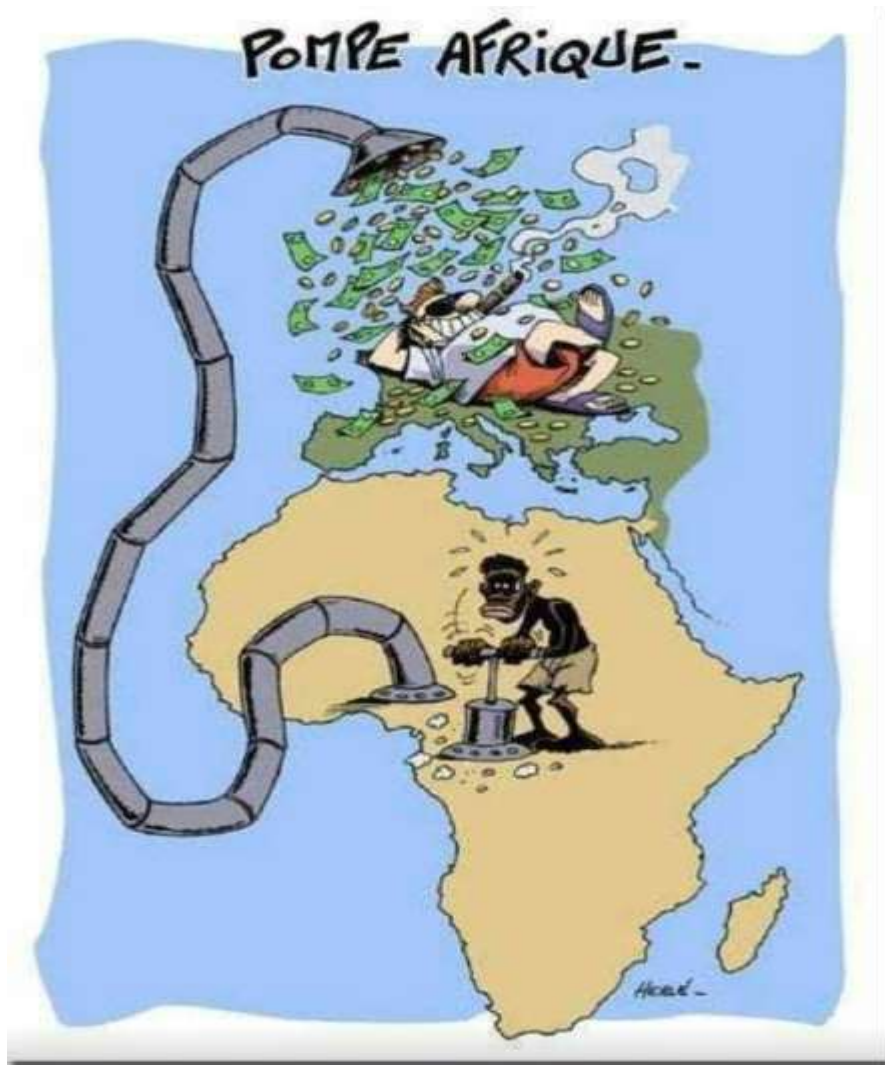
All these elements, which sufficiently prove the stranglehold of France on postcolonial Cameroon, stirs up strong criticism and fierce opposition from a fringe of the Cameroonian population to the remains and traces of colonialism. Basically, the responsibility for Cameroon's underdevelopment is thrown to the former colonial powers, accused of maintaining political regimes that are complicit, docile, corrupt and without any vision for the development of the country. Cameroonian political leaders since 1960, are accused of connivance with colonial powers, which pump without sharing and without any benefit for the local populations, the natural resources of the country, among which the wood, the mineral and oil resources. The following cartoon adequately portrays these accusations against the former colonial powers.

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<sup>75</sup> Maja Bovcon, “Françafrique and regime theory”, in *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol.19, No1, 2011, Pp.5-26.

<sup>76</sup> Olivier Blamangin, « Que reste-t-il de la Françafrique », in *Manuel Indocile des Sciences Sociales*, 2019, Pp.624-633.

**Figure 1 : An illustration of the “pumping” of African resources by Europe**



**Source:** <https://steviakmc.wordpress.com/2015/08/07/176/>, 12/04/2020

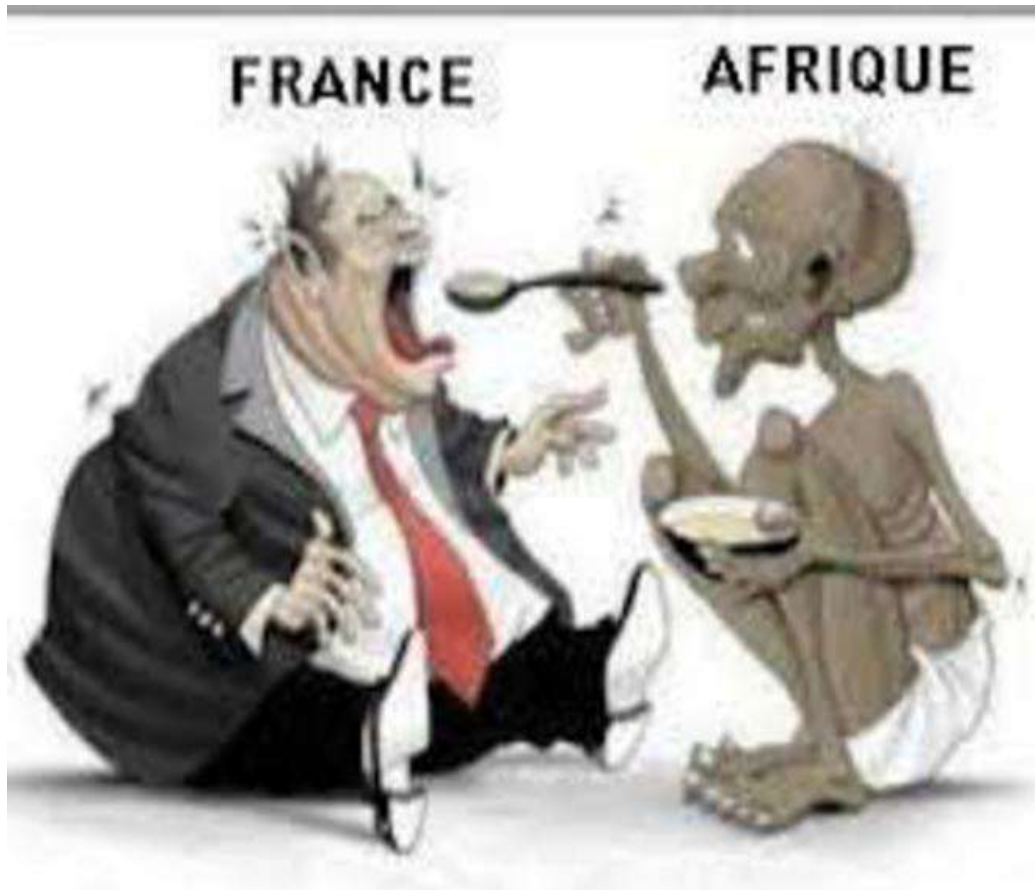
Considering the caricature as a form of visual writing<sup>77</sup>, its examination follows a very precise methodology, ranging from its presentation to its interpretation<sup>78</sup>. The abovementioned photography, taken from web sources that do not indicate its author as well as the year of production, is descriptive of a certain apprehension about postcolonial relations between Africa and Europe. It illustrates the perversity of these relations, essentially forged to the detriment of Africa's interests, through the abusive exploitation of the continent's natural resources. This cartoon depicts an African worker operating a fuel pump. The crude oil extracted is transferred directly to Europe in the form of banknotes. The unidentified author

<sup>77</sup> Christelle Amina Djoulde & Gilbert L. Taguem Fah, "Trajectoire dialectique de la violence politique dans la grammaire caricaturale au Cameroun postcolonial (1991-2013)", in *African Humanities*, Vol.5, 2020, Pp. 53-82.

<sup>78</sup> Refer to: Amina Djoulde Christelle, *Caricature et politique dans le Cameroun postcolonial (1960-2012)*, Ph.D, Thesis, the University of Ngaoundéré, 2014-2015.

demonstrates that the natural resources of postcolonial Africa are plundered by the colonial powers. Beyond the looting, the African workforce is abused there, with regard to the clothing of the employee, as well as his physical condition. The following cartoon goes in this direction.

**Figure 2 : A representation of Postcolonial Relationships between Africa and France**



**Source:** Bocar Gueye, « France à Fric », [https://www.politico.sn/France-a-fric-\\_a162.html](https://www.politico.sn/France-a-fric-_a162.html), 12/06/2020.

This cartoon, posted online in 2019, further illustrates the exploitation of postcolonial Africa by France. It represents an African visibly unable to dress normally, emaciated to the extreme. Oddly enough, notwithstanding these illustrative traits of his life's hardships, he feeds an overweight, well-dressed man representing France. It is a caricature that depicts the overexploitation of African countries impoverished by France. The picture is an oxymoron, in the sense that the person in of the food need is the one who feeds the obese France.

These two caricatures are illustrative of colonial memory in Africa, made up of accusations of extreme exploitation of natural resources. It translates into hatred, the impact of which remains real on the symbolism of colonial architecture.

## **B. The Symbolics of Colonial Architecture in Douala**

The observation of the evolution of the relations between the townspeople and the public monuments of the city of Douala since 1990, allows us to bring out an analysis which demonstrates, on the one hand, a resurgence of the colonial trauma, and on the other hand, a tiny nostalgia complicit in the colonial order.

### **1. Imperial Monuments and the Resurgence of Colonial Trauma in Douala**

The resurgence of colonial trauma around the built remains inherited from the German and French presence in Douala is manifested by a selective process of popular reappropriation through destruction and by a memorial competition around monuments in honour of local figures of the struggle against the western colonial system.

#### **a. The Appropriation of Intentional Colonial Monuments by Selective Destruction in Douala**

The intentional monument can be defined as an architectural or artistic creation, designed to commemorate, celebrate, or maintain a figure, a rite or an episode in the history of a region<sup>79</sup>. Sabine Forero-Mendoza suggests the following meaning to the intentional monument:

“le monument intentionnel à pour fin de maintenir présent un événement, une personne, un rite ou une croyance: il participe à l’édification, par un groupe humain, d’une mémoire collective propre à l’établissement des mythes fondateurs, car le passé, en quelque sorte convoqué, est sélectionné de manière à préserver l’identité d’une communauté<sup>80</sup>”.

(the intentional monument is for the purpose of keeping an event, a person, a rite or a belief present: it participates in the construction, by a human group, of a collective memory specific to the establishment of the founding myths because the past, in a way summoned, is selected so as to preserve the identity of a community).

Basically, the intentional monument is a creation that claims to be heritage<sup>81</sup>, unlike other architectural remains, which only acquire heritage status at the end of a process of enhancement or classification. In the city of Douala, intentional monuments include figures of colonialism, like the monument of General Leclerc, the monument in honour of the unknown French soldier, the Gustave Nachtigal monument, among others. These monuments, which celebrate European actors

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<sup>79</sup> Alois Riegl, *Le culte moderne des monuments*, Paris, l’Harmattan, 2003, 124p.

<sup>80</sup> Sabine Forero-Mendoza, *Le temps des ruines: l’éveil de la conscience historique à la renaissance*, Editions Champ Vallon, 2002, p.71.

<sup>81</sup> Robert S. Nelson & Margaret Olin, *Monuments and Memory, Made and Unmade*, University of Chicago Press, 2003, p.103.

of colonialism dominate an urban landscape marked by the small number of monuments relating to local prowess, both cultural and political. Some not very visible examples exist, in particular the burial of King Rudolf Duala Manga Bell and that of Ngosso Din, his Secretary of misfortune, hanged together by the Germans in August 1914.

**Figure 3: Funerary Monument of Duala Manga Bell and Ngosso Din in Douala**



**Source :**

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Monument\\_fun%C3%A9raire\\_des\\_rois\\_Bell\\_2.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Monument_fun%C3%A9raire_des_rois_Bell_2.JPG), 15/04/2018.

On the other hand, this monument is located in a place that offers little visibility in comparison with the monuments in connection with actors of European colonialism in Douala. This shade, interpreted as a temptation to impose an urban identity, foreign to the occupants of the city, justifies the popular protests brought by the inhabitants of Douala. Indeed, celebrating, commemorating or immortalizing people who served as the armed wing of the colonial administration does not match local memories of the colonial past. On the contrary, it leads to

the resurgence of painful memories, manifested in the rejection of symbols of the past<sup>82</sup>. This is reflected in the emergence of activists, both political and heritage, who claims especially for the recognition and the rehabilitation of Cameroonian figures of colonial history instead of celebrating the memory of European actors of colonial rule. In this logic, two activists deserve to be mentioned, given the temerity of their demands as well as the progressive popular support for their cause: Mboua Massock and Andre Blaise Essama.

Mboua Massock, whose real name is “Mboua Camille Parfait” is an accountant by profession, who has decided to get into politics. Its political line is the liberation of Cameroon, enshrined in a political party known as NODYNA (Nouvelle Dynamique Nationaliste Africaine), launched around 2009. According to the vision of this activist, African nationalism must be exercised through the atonement of all traces of colonialism from the historical heritage. Thus, from 1990, while Cameroon was experimenting multipartyism, Mboua Massock led political claims, which included the appropriation of public monuments in Douala<sup>83</sup>. His populist actions conferred him a recognition as the “père des villes mortes<sup>84</sup>” or freedom “fighter.<sup>85</sup>” In this logic, he called for the destruction of monuments in honour of the French soldiers in Douala. From 2001, he attacked the statue with handwork tools,<sup>86</sup> and succeeded in some minor damage. From 2006, he changed his method and opted for mayhem to express his rejection of the said monuments, as shown in the image below.

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<sup>82</sup> Pierre Abomo, “Le destin politique de la mémoire du nationalisme camerounais : entre réhabilitation et rejet”, in *Cahiers Mémoire et Politique*, No4, 2015, Pp.81-98.

<sup>83</sup> Christelle Amina Djoulde, “Esthétique de l’information pictographique caricaturale et accueil d’éléments culturels français au Cameroun postcolonial”, in Alpha Bary, (dir.), *L’information dessinée en Afrique francophone. Postures critiques et transmission de savoirs*. Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 2019, Pp.129-145.

<sup>84</sup> Makeda Lydie Ngotuom, “Cameroun : les organisations dénoncent l’arrestation de Mboua Massock à Douala”, <https://www.journalducameroun.com/cameroun-les-organisations-denoncent-larrestation-de-mboua-massock-a-douala/>, 12/04/2020

<sup>85</sup> Ngono Ebode, “Cameroun : le Combattant MBOUA MASSOK affronte le régime. MBOUA MASSOK affronte Paul BIYA”, in *Le Messager* du 07 janvier 2010, <http://tmewe.afrikblog.com/archives/2010/02/13/16900487.html>, 13/06/2020.

Ngono Ebode, “Cameroun : le Combattant MBOUA MASSOK affronte le régime. MBOUA MASSOK affronte Paul BIYA”, in *Le Messager* du 07 janvier 2010, <http://tmewe.afrikblog.c>

**Figure 4 : Grabuges by Mboua Massock on the Statue of General Leclerc in Douala**



**Source:** [https://www.dibussi.com/2006/03/mboua\\_massok\\_wh.html](https://www.dibussi.com/2006/03/mboua_massok_wh.html), 12/04/2020

The monument itself was erected in 1948, on the Place du Gouvernement (the heart of the administrative district of the city), to commemorate the figure of General Leclerc<sup>87</sup>, due to the mobilization he led of the fighters in favour of *France Libre*, within the framework of the Second. Although few details are available on the designer of the statue, its history shows that it is a relic that fits into its context. For the French people, Philippe de Hauteclocque, by his birth name, is an important figure in the liberation of Paris, alongside General De Gaulle on August 25, 1944. It should also be remembered that it is in Douala that he meets the first colonial contingent of combatants who responded favourably to the appeal of June 18, 1940, launched by General De Gaulle from London<sup>88</sup>. It is in the light of his services that he was posthumously appointed Marshal of France. Thus, for France, General Leclerc is a hero, an actor in the liberation from

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om/archives/2010/02/13/16900487.html, 13/06/2020.

nian colonial history, refer to Chapter II of this thesis.

<sup>88</sup> For the biography of General Leclerc, refer to : Jean Compagnon, *Leclerc: Maréchal de France*, Paris, Flammarion, 1994, 625p. ; André Martel, *Leclerc : le soldat et le politique*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1998, 571p. ; Michel Marmin, *Leclerc*, Editions Chroniques, 2013, 136p.



the German occupation, a historical figure both political and military. This justifies the dedication to him of intentional monuments and street names in France and in the French colonies.

On the other hand, for the inhabitants of Douala, General Leclerc is not a local figure of the past. Rather, he is an accomplice, even an actor, in the French colonial system. This is the main reason for the refusal of the inclusion of his statue in the ranks of the intentional monuments of the city. Thus, through stunts, Cameroonian activists request the demolition of this monument. Mboua Massock, in 2006, had given a deadline of 180 days for its demolition as well as its replacement by a statue of a local martyr of decolonization. Beyond difficult memory, he calls for a reappropriation of public space, through local history. He notes it himself in the following comment relayed by blogger Joe Dinga Pefok: “Mboua Massock has since last year (2009) been calling for the destruction of the monuments of expatriates in Douala, especially that of French colonial Governor, General Leclerc. He has been insisting that priority in the construction of monuments in the country ought to be given to national heroes or martyrs<sup>89</sup>”. These incursions led him to imprisonment and fine terms, which failed to deter the surge of heritage nationalism. On analysis, even if he does not succeed in truly debunking the intentional monuments in memory of the French colonial soldiers, the fact remains that Mboua Massock achieved the feat of integrating public heritage into the democratic debate in Cameroon. He remains a pioneer in the public rejection of these monuments and inspired Andre Blaise Essama.

André Blaise Essama is renowned in the continuity of activism around heritage, initiated in Douala by Mboua Massock. He is known for his popular and populist actions in favour of the celebration of Cameroonian martyrs of decolonization and reunification<sup>90</sup>. He considers the existence of French soldiers’ statues as symbol of the continuation of the colonial domination, favoured by local political regimes. In this logic, he stresses that the struggle against neo-colonialism is absolutely peered by the appropriation of intentional monuments<sup>91</sup>. According to explanations provided during one of his media outings, he emphasizes having undertaken letter-writing exchanges with the Urban Community of Douala, with a view to replacing the public monuments bearing the effigy of the settlers in the city. He therefore considers the duty of memory an obligation for the creation of monuments in the public space in Douala<sup>92</sup>. In his approach, he advocates the destruction supported by rituals of atonement and the replacement of said monuments, targeting both the statue of General Leclerc and that of the Unknown (French) Soldier,

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<sup>89</sup> Joe Dinga Pefok, “Douala to Create Monuments For National Heroes”, <https://cameroonpostline.com/douala-to-create-monuments-for-national-heroes/>, 13/05/2020.

<sup>90</sup> Anonym (no name), “Cameroun. La claque du général de Haute cloque”, <https://cameroonvoice.com/opinion/2013/09/04/cameroun-la-claque-du-general-de-haute-cloque/>, 12/04/2020.

<sup>91</sup> Franck Foute, “Cameroun : ’le combat contre le colon ne sera jamais doux’ ”, <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/1008127/societe/cameroun-le-combat-contre-le-colon-ne-sera-jamais-doux/>, 07/09/2020.

<sup>92</sup> Jonathan Paquette et Robin Nelson, “Éthique et politiques du patrimoine : regards sur la notion de responsabilité”, in *Éthique publique*, Vol.19, No2, 2017, <http://journals.openedition.org/ethiquepublique/3019>, 22/11/2020.

located in Bonanjo. The symbolism of the monument of the unknown soldier is part of the celebration, by the French administration, of its soldiers, who made it possible to establish the colonial authority in Douala. The army was, in the colonial context, the secular arm of the imperial administration. It is therefore inseparable from the painful memories of colonialism, of which it is the main cause. Thus, on August 31, 2013, the activist debunked the statue of General Leclerc and explained his act as follows:

“J’ai cassé ce monument afin que le Général Leclerc rejoigne la terre de ses ancêtres en Hexagone. Car je pense bien que sa place est certainement de ce côté-là. Cette place où trônait ce monument de la honte est désormais pour nous, la place de Um Nyobe, John Ngu Foncha, Martin Paul Samba, Douala Manga Bell et bien d’autres héros nationaux. C’est un appel lancé à l’endroit de nos autorités ayant en charge la gestion de nos villes afin que les rues soient baptisées du nom de nos héros, que les monuments soient érigés en mémoire de nos martyrs<sup>93</sup>”.

(I broke this monument so that General Leclerc could join the land of his ancestors in France. Because I think his place is certainly on that side. This place where this monument of shame was enthroned is now for us, the place of Um Nyobe, John Ngu Foncha, Martin Paul Samba, Douala Manga Bell and many other national heroes. It is an appeal launched to our authorities in charge of the management of our cities so that the streets are named for our heroes, that monuments be erected in memory of our martyrs).

Likewise, he notes that it is an act of revenge to honour the Cameroonian martyrs unjustly killed by France during colonial period: “La destruction de ce monument est un retour d’ascenseur au général Leclerc, en souvenir aux martyrs camerounais injustement décapités et pendus par la France<sup>94</sup>” (The destruction of this monument is a return of the elevator to General Leclerc, in memory of the Cameroonian martyrs unjustly beheaded and hanged by France). This explains ritual acts, in the form of atonement and dismissal of colonialism, when he beheads the statue of General Leclerc. Attacking the statue of the unknown French soldier to the cheers of the crowd, André Blaise Essama first simulates lashes, he says, as punishment for this “criminal.<sup>95</sup>” Symbolically, one could interpret this act as a form of revenge for the violence inflicted by colonial administrators to local populations. It could also be considered as a reappropriation of the colonial past by an expiatory justice, certainly symbolic, a pledge of reconciliation.

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<sup>93</sup> Anonyme, “Un activiste Camerounais détruit la statue du Général Leclerc à Douala”, <http://negronews.fr/actualite-activiste-camerounais-detruit-statue-du-general-leclerc-douala/>, 13/06/2020.

<sup>94</sup> Anonym (no name), “Au Cameroun, la statue du général Leclerc gît, décapitée. ‘Jouissif’ “, <https://www.nouvelobs.com/rue89/rue89-monde/20140221.RUE2247/au-cameroun-la-statue-du-general-leclerc-git-decapitee-jouissif.html>, 13/05/2020.

<sup>95</sup> Olivier Tietsap, “André Essama Vs Le Général Leclerc”, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7\\_nuzTTxew](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7_nuzTTxew), 12/04/2020.

**Figure 5 : General Leclerc Statue in Douala Overthrown by Andre Blaise Essama**



**Source:** <https://www.bbc.com/afrique/region-53244725>, 13/04/2020

Apart from these two statues, André Blaise Essama also tackled in 2017 a project to erect in Douala, a monument suggested by a French artist who asks forgiveness for the crimes committed during the French colonial occupation<sup>96</sup>. Sylvie Blocher, who proposed the monument, explains that her intention is to claim for forgiveness and reconciliation in connection regarding colonial memories in Cameroon<sup>97</sup>. These action by the Cameroonian activist can be interpreted as a rejection of the location of this French monument in the public space in Douala. He therefore seeks to “réhabiliter ce qui a été contesté par le colonisateur, (...) un certain ordre

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<sup>96</sup> Anonyme, “Destruction d'une "oeuvre" d'une artiste française demandant pardon pour la colonisation au Cameroun”, <https://www.voafrique.com/a/destruction-d-une-oeuvre-artiste-francaise-demandant-pardon-pour-la-colonisation-au-cameroun/4153364.html>, 12/04/2020.

<sup>97</sup> Elisabeth Kouagne, “Cameroun : polémique autour d’un monument d’une artiste française à Douala”, <http://afrique.le360.ma/autres-pays/societe/2017/12/07/17046-cameroun-polemique-autour-du-monument-dune-artiste-francaise-douala-17046>, 13/05/2020.

de la civilisation, un certain agencement des sociétés africaines<sup>98</sup> ” (rehabilitate what was contested by the colonizer, (...) a certain order of civilization, a certain arrangement of African society) through the recognition of their past struggles, the memories of their heroes, and, to sum, their history. When he stands upright, with firm wrists, in place of the statue of General Leclerc, he suggests a reconquest of local sovereignty on public space.

These synthetic elements demonstrate the difficult relationship between the population of the city of Douala and its built remains inherited from European colonial systems. They proof of difficult memories which stir up desires for revenge, atonement, and a shift from everything that seems to pay homage to colonial history. The commitment of these two activists reflects the rejection, the negation of the official history whose traces are recorded through these monuments, the destruction of which aims at a reappropriation and a visual and public rewriting of local and national history. As stakeholders of heritage, these activists position themselves as spokespersons for the negation of postcolonial relations between Cameroon and France. They claim to protest the postcolonial domination of Cameroon and campaign for the decolonization of public monuments in the city of Douala. These difficult memories are also reflected in competitions around the history of the city; which resurge as an additional dissonance in colonial memories in Douala.

### **b. Memory Competitions around a Project for a Monument a Local Decolonization Actor**

Under pressure from the local activists, who found more and more echoes among the local population, the City Council of Douala<sup>99</sup> undertook to immortalize the memory of Ruben Um Nyobe<sup>100</sup>. In this logic, an intentional monument project in his memory has been projected at the Ndjoh Ndjoh crossroads in Douala. This project revealed memory competitions within local communities, who claim roles in colonial history. Competitions around colonial memories in Douala have been exposed through protest, supported especially in the case of Ruben Um Nyobe monument, by the Chief of Canton Bell. They embedded at odds with the tensions, which, until then, had the merit of unifying the population.

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<sup>98</sup> Georges Balandier, « Les mythes politiques de colonisation et de décolonisation en Afrique », in *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie*, Vol.33, 1962, Pp.85-96.

<sup>99</sup> City Councils in Cameroon have been part of local authorities that superior Mayors in cities comprising many divisions. Until 2020, the Heads of city councils used to be nominated by presidential decree, which disconnect them from local populations' pressure. After the Major National Dialogue, held in 2019, City Councils heads become elected among municipal councillors.

<sup>100</sup> Chapters II and III afford with more details on Ruben Um Nyobe.

It is necessary to recall, as mentioned earlier in this section, that the construction of monuments in honour of Cameroonian heroes of colonialism is a frequent claim, both in scientific circles<sup>101</sup> and of local activists. It is considered as an alternative model to the rejection of the monuments of the European actors of colonialism. The project of a public statue to the memory of Ruben Um Nyobe, revealed in 2014 on the occasion of the celebration of the 56th anniversary of his assassination, is a concrete echo to this claim. Supported by the *Amish Arts association*, the project is described as follows: “It has a weight of 170 kg and a size of 2 m 10. It was mounted with a black and white photo. It portrays Ruben Um Nyobe, the hero of the struggle for the independence of Cameroon, wearing a shirt and a loincloth. In his left hand, he has a peace tree and in the right hand, Spears<sup>102</sup>”. The picture below is the statue, as initially suggested by *Amish Arts*.

**Figure 6 : Proposal for a Statue to the Memory of Ruben Um Nyobe by *Amish Arts***



**Source:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Af23kbhITI>, 12/07/2019.

This sculpted statue presents Ruben Um Nyobe in an outfit typical of the coastal peoples of Cameroon, in a posture of guide and liberator. In his right hand, he holds coconut leaves, a

<sup>101</sup> Ndjock Nyobe Pascal Isidore, *Op.cit.*

<sup>102</sup> Anonyme, “Statue of Ruben Um Nyobe unveiled in Douala“, <https://www.camerounweb.com/CameroonHomePage/NewsArchive/Statue-of-Ruben-Um-Nyobe-unveiled-in-Douala-311565>, 12/02/2019.

symbol of appeasement, recalling that his project for the liberation of the country aimed to break, among others, with colonial violence. The swords he carries in his left hand symbolize the tool of the conqueror, but also of a Chief who leads his community towards an ideal destiny. At its presentation to the public, members of the *Amish Arts Association* indicated contacts with the city council to grant to it the quality of an intentional, as well as to allocate to it an ideal location. The idea is, above all to bring Ruben Um Nyobe out of oblivion, probably an integral part of a national policy towards memory until recently<sup>103</sup>. The media underline the following:

“Jusque dans les années 1990, au Cameroun, toute évocation de Ruben Um Nyobè était interdite. Il a fallu attendre la loi de réhabilitation du 16 décembre 1991 pour briser ce tabou. Pourtant l’ancien syndicaliste, fondateur de l’Union des populations du Cameroun (UPC) en 1948, a été l’objet, après son assassinat par l’armée française, d’une immense admiration populaire<sup>104</sup>”. (Until the 1990s, in Cameroon, any mention of Ruben Um Nyobè was prohibited. It was necessary to wait until the rehabilitation law of December 16, 1991 to break this taboo. Yet the former trade unionist, founder of the Union for the Peoples of Cameroon (UPC) in 1948, was the object, after his assassination by the French army, of immense popular admiration).

Therefore, this project appears, in the eyes of its initiators, as a step towards a better appropriation of the public monuments of the urban space in Douala. The sculpture seems to have caught the attention of the City Council, who decided for the reasons highlighted above, the implementation. On July 10, 2017, a call for tenders was opened, with a view to designing the space provided to accommodate the monument. It was in May 2018 that the project entered its implementation phase, with concrete set up of the devices for establishing the monument. This aroused opposition from the Canton Bell, whose Chief provides the following reasons to the trashing of the project:

“Il s’agit quand même d’un signe fort. Eriger un monument d’une telle envergure dans un village comme le nôtre, qu’on nous surprenne comme tout le monde, ne nous paraît pas correct. Raison pour laquelle nous avons voulu qu’il soit clair que cette façon de faire n’est pas du tout appréciée par nous. Notre manifestation montre que nous ne voulons pas avoir ce monument. C’est un droit<sup>105</sup>”. (It is still a strong sign. Erecting a monument of such magnitude in a village like ours that we are surprised like everyone else does not seem correct to us. This is why we wanted to make it clear that this way of doing things is not at all appreciated by us. Our demonstration shows that we do not want to have this monument. It is a right).

Helped by other Cantons, in particular, those of Bonapriso, Bonadouma and Bonandoumbe, the Bell community, to express its anger and its refusal, maintains that:

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<sup>103</sup> We refer especially, beyond political discourses, to the adoption of a Law, which rehabilitate some historic figures of the anticolonial struggle, among whom Ruben Um Nyobe and Ernest Wandie: Law No91/022 of December 16, 1991.

<sup>104</sup> Emile Costard & Laureline Savoye, “Panafricain-e-s : Ruben Um Nyobè, le héros oublié du Cameroun”, *Le Monde*, 28 mars 2018, [https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/video/2018/03/28/panafricain-e-s-ruben-um-nyobe-le-heros-oublie-du-cameroun\\_5277543\\_3212.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/video/2018/03/28/panafricain-e-s-ruben-um-nyobe-le-heros-oublie-du-cameroun_5277543_3212.html), 12/07 2019.

<sup>105</sup> Jean Yves Eboumbou Manga, propos recueillis par Mathias Emale, <https://www.journalducameroun.com/douala-chefs-canton-bell-detruisent-chantier-monument-dum-nyobe/>, consulté le 28/05/2018.

“il est anormal de servir en la matière d’abord, quelqu’un d’autre à cet endroit stratégique du Canton alors que celui-ci compte aussi d’imminents héros en l’occurrence Rudolphe Douala Manga Bell qui mérite à tous points égards de disposer d’un monument avant Um Nyobe<sup>106</sup>”.

(it is abnormal to serve in the matter first, someone else at this strategic location of the Canton while this one also has imminent heroes in this case. Rudolphe Douala Manga Bell who deserves in all respects to have of a monument before Um Nyobe).

**Figure 7 : The Destruction of Devices for the Construction Um Nyobe Monument in Douala**



**Source:** <https://www.journalducameroun.com/douala-chefs-canton-bell-detruisent-chantier-monument-dum-nyobe/>, 28/05/2018

The protesters of the monument also question the selection made between the victims of French colonialism and those of the German colonial system. As a backdrop to this argument, there is the idea of a local caging of the monument, both geographically and culturally. Then there are claims for another monument, in memory of Rudolf Duala Manga Bell, which have not been met and which give the impression of a historical replacement. This reflects a feeling of unfair political selection in colonial memory, which would be detrimental to the descendants of

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<sup>106</sup> Manfred Essome, “Douala : le monument Um Nyobe à terre”, <https://www.villesetcommunes.info/actu-cameroun/douala-monument-um-nyobe-a-terre/>, 12/07/2019.

the Bell lineage. In addition, through this argument, Canton Bell claims the right to be associated with any project to enhance the historical remains of the city of Douala. Furthermore, an analysis of the memory dynamics around Cameroon's colonial history makes it possible to underline that this opposition to the erection of a monument to honour a famous actor of independence result from ethnic competitions for historical recognition. Indeed, Um Nyobe belongs to the Bassa tribe, which is not, in the history of its human settlement, part of the majority of tribes that occupied Douala in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. It should be noted that in colonial context, the ethnicity has been instrumentalized to divide the African peoples. As Ibrahim Mouiche underlines, the ethnic group participates in the segmentation of the State, that served reduce the pressure of the independentist struggles on the colonial administration<sup>107</sup>. This segmentation scheme thus seems to work with colonial memories.

In this regard, the destruction of the project for this monument provoked mixed reactions, tending towards the disapproval of a memorial competition. For some, the opposition of the Duala Communities, which sanctified the project site by placing a fetish that would make it impossible to continue the work, is an expression of tribalism. Some people postulate that Um Nyobe is a national hero who transcends the tribal schemes. André Blaise Essama claims that he has been fighting for the recognition of Cameroonian heroes, disregard the piece of the Cameroonian on which a statue is built to commemorate them<sup>108</sup>. He invited Cameroonians to transcend tribal or ethnic delineation when it comes to nationalism<sup>109</sup>. Political reactions have been recorded, condemning the destruction of the project. For example, Anicet Ekane, President of MANIDEM (Mouvement Africain pour la Nouvelle Indépendance et la démocratie) claimed that such acts from traditional rulers are shameful and scandalous<sup>110</sup>. Herve Emmanuel Nkom, an influent member of the ruling party in Cameroon, the CPDM (Cameroon People's Democratic Movement) evoked an unacceptable memorial desecration of Ruben statue<sup>111</sup>. Mathias Eric

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<sup>107</sup> Ibrahim Mouiche, "La Question Nationale, L'ethnicité Et L'état En Afrique: Le Cas Du Cameroun", in *Verfassung Und Recht in Übersee / Law and Politics in Africa, Asia and Latin America*, Vol. 33, No. 2, 2000, Pp. 212–233.

<sup>108</sup> Anonym, "Destruction du monument de Ruben Um Nyobe: Vague d'indignation sur la toile", [https://www.mbogliaa.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=426%3Adestruction-du-monument-de-roben-um-nyobe-vague-dindignation-sur-la-toile&catid=55%3Amonument-um-nyobe&Itemid=144&lang=en](https://www.mbogliaa.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=426%3Adestruction-du-monument-de-roben-um-nyobe-vague-dindignation-sur-la-toile&catid=55%3Amonument-um-nyobe&Itemid=144&lang=en), 12/12/2018,

<sup>109</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WKDQjFGzZ\\_Y&t=41s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WKDQjFGzZ_Y&t=41s), 13/01/2021.

<sup>110</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qx-DfDh1O8o>, 13/01/2021.

<sup>111</sup> Hervé Villard, "Destruction du Monument Um Nyobe: Les camerounais s'indignent", <http://hervevillard.over-blog.com/2018/05/destruction-du-monument-um-nyobe-les-camerounais-s-indignent.html>, 12/12/2018.



Owona Nguini stated that there no place for memory competition between two Cameroonian heroes, who deserve each commemoration with regard to their past roles<sup>112</sup>.

From this analysis, it appears that memory dissonance around the colonial past in Douala takes on several dimensions. It is first of all an opposition between the colonized and the colonist, each having a specific vision, memories and objectives in an eventual enhancement of the colonial remains. Then, it emerges from the relations between the French and the Germans with regard to the city of Douala. Finally, it resurges in colonial memory competitions among the local population. This resurgence complexifies and deepens tensions around the enhancement of colonial built remains. These levels of dissonance add to the complicit nostalgia for the colonial order, noticeable at the local level, especially with regard to the German colonial period.

## **2. The Complicit Nostalgia of the Past Colonial Order**

Beyond trauma and ethnic competitions around the colonial memories, the built colonial remains in Douala bear a certain nostalgia, admittedly limited in scope. They remind some of the memories of a "glorious" period, the explanation of which lies in the strategy of taming mobilized in colonial context, and in the postcolonial relations established between the former imperial powers and the elites of the Third World. According to Daniel Abwa, the "collaboration" formed the matrix of relations between the French administration in Cameroon and the local populations, with a view to isolating any local resistance<sup>113</sup>. Through "collaboration" that he opposes to "partnership," there is maintenance of the dominant/dominated relationship, which has allowed the French power to promote only its interests. The distinction he makes between the two concepts is that, within collaboration, local leaders are corrupt and work only in favour of France. Whereas partnership supposes basically, a win-win cooperation, based on an equal and equitable treatment. Through this strategy of collaboration, France vehemently fought all the incorruptible traditional leaders who opposed its power and replaced them with more docile individuals<sup>114</sup>. The strategy also relied on the education system and drew on the pool of educated people for the same purpose. This policy of taming also finds its roots in the German colonial system, which invested in the promotion of the German to the detriments of local cultural backgrounds<sup>115</sup>. Also, those who benefited from employment colonial multinationals saw a form of failed development with the departure of the Germans, as assert the following position of a traditional ruler in

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Daniel Abwa, 1997, *Op. Cit.*

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Francis Abiola Irele, *Op., Cit.*, p.43.

Cameroon, questioned by Stefanie Michels about his remembrance of the German Protectorate: “When the Germans opened the CDC (the plantations at the coast), they will pay you money and give you rice, oil and soap. Right now, such amenities are no longer there; (...) if it were the Germans alone, development should have been too much because there was nowhere that they did not reach<sup>116</sup>”. This same politics of taming continued after independence, with a view to ensuring the sustainability of former colonial powers’ interests in Cameroon and left pernicious consequences, in particular, the "assisted mentality and mediocrity<sup>117</sup>". The systems theory in international relations helps better understand the taming approach in postcolonial context. Indeed, this theory serves as an explanation of the relations between Africa and the former colonial powers from the angle of a collaboration between the elites of the periphery (leaders of the countries of the South) and the metropolis<sup>118</sup>. The latter, dubbed by the metropolis, act with a view to guaranteeing their positions rather than in the specific interest of their country. They are also quick to defend the metropolis, including the colonial system. In this regard, nostalgia operates as political positioning, a desire to please those who have the levers for change of power in the countries of the South. It can also reflect contemporary difficulties, to which some may prefer prebends of the corruption by colonial systems.

With regard to the above, this section underlined the memory dynamics around the built remains of colonialism in Douala. These memory dynamics operate under the double meaning of rejection and a nostalgia that is certainly limited but real. The rejection of the remains of colonialism is the result of trauma issued from various episodes of colonial conquest, economic exploitation as well as wars of independence. On the other hand, the colonial strategy of taming by the co-optation of collaborators created some nostalgic for the colonial period, more by ambition of capturing a remuneration. This dynamic therefore implies a community quest to select and enhance the built remains of colonialism, with strict respect for memory dissonances, which should be sought in the place given to these remains in the cultural heritage.

## **II. An Overview of Local Approaches to the Enhancement of Colonial Built Remains in Douala**

The enhancement of the built remains of colonialism in Douala encompasses the problem of their integration into the cultural and historical heritage of Cameroon since independence. The difficulties in preserving and enhancing these remains can be explained in particular by ambitions

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<sup>116</sup> Propos du Chef d’Inokun, cité par Stefanie Michels, « ‘The Germans were brutal and wild’. Colonial legacies », in Stefanie Michels & Albert-Pascal Temgoua, *La politique de la mémoire coloniale en Allemagne et au Cameroun. Actes du colloque à Yaoundé, octobre 2003*, Lig Verlag Münster, 2005, pp.37-58.

<sup>117</sup> Daniel Abwa, 1997, *Op, Cit.*

<sup>118</sup> For more details on the systems theory : Philippe Braillard, *Théorie des systèmes et relations internationales*, Bruxelles, Bruylant, 1977 ; Innerio Seminatore, “Interdependance, *linkage* et système international : de l’analyse conceptuelle aux problèmes de politique étrangère”, in *Etudes Internationales*, Vol.18, No2, 1987, pp.329-352 ; Dario Battistella, *Théories des Relations Internationales*, 4<sup>ème</sup> Editions, Paris, Presses de Sciences Po, 2012, 760p.

for cultural authenticity in the 1960s and 1970s and resulted in a flowering of local initiatives from the 1990s, without any real success.

### **A. From cultural authenticity to postcolonial openness<sup>119</sup>**

In line with the anti-colonial ideology, which dominated the first years of independence in Sub-Saharan Africa, several countries have engaged in cultural revisionism<sup>120</sup>, the aim of which is to shed the cultural traces of colonial systems in favour of African cultures, considered as authentic. This is the case of the Belgian Congo, whose leaders have decided to change the name, modify historic monuments, and promoted local clothing style as well as revised the history of the country in school textbooks<sup>121</sup>. If these policies participate in "decolonization," ideologically conceived as a total break with the colonial order, they became an object, at least in Cameroon, of a relaxation allowing a gradual, admittedly difficult, integration of the colonial buildings into the nomenclature or the landscape of historical monuments in cities like Douala.

### **1. The Cultural Authenticity Model and the Rejection of the Built Remains of Colonialism**

The impact of the ideology of decolonization as a political, economic and cultural break with the former imperial power was quickly felt on cultural heritage in general and on the conservation of the remains of colonial systems, regardless of countries, territories as well as the historical values that could be attributed to them. This cultural impact manifests itself in the form of a certain questionable cultural abandonment, at least by the definition of cultural policies geared towards authenticity. One of the emblematic cases of attempts at cultural rupture and a return to cultural authenticity in postcolonial Africa is that of the Congo, renamed "Zaire." The discourse of authenticity is in fact part of a "doctrine politique et culturelle prônant la désaliénation par le recours aux valeurs proprement africaines<sup>122</sup>" (political and cultural doctrine advocating disalienation through recourse to specifically African values). In the sense of

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<sup>119</sup> By cultural openness, we refer to an integrated approach to cultural heritage, considering the elements resulting from contacts with other peoples. In the postcolonial context, it is precisely the consideration of the remains of colonialism in the enhancement of cultural heritage.

<sup>120</sup> By cultural revisionism we mean a sum of initiatives aimed at creating an authentic culture, by expiating the cultural heritage from any external or foreign inputs. For this definition, we have been inspired by the following paper: Miriam Hernandez Reyna, "Les politiques interculturelles au Mexique : du révisionnisme historique à une nouvelle histoire officielle ?", in *Conserveries mémorielles*, 2017, <https://journals.openedition.org/cm/2608>, 12/03/2021.

<sup>121</sup> Bob W. White, "L'incroyable machine d'authenticité. L'animation politique et l'usage public de la culture dans le Zaïre de Mobutu", in *Anthropologie et Sociétés*, Vol.30, No2, 2006, pp.43-63 ; Mussia Kakama, " 'Authenticité' : un système lexical dans le discours politique au Zaïre", in *Mots. Les langages politiques*, No6, 1983, pp.31-58 ; Jean-Pierre Chrétien, "Le Zaïre : de la colonie modèle à l'authenticité africaine", in *Esprit*, No432, 1974, pp.327-385.

<sup>122</sup> Mussia Kakama, *Cited.*

President Mobutu, this doctrine formulated in 1971 has several dimensions, in particular a way of being, a political action, the expression of ancestral customs<sup>123</sup>, among others. However, this recourse to authenticity is supposed to depart from blind nationalism understood as a cultural competition with former colonial powers<sup>124</sup>.

These cultural politics have been implemented in Cameroon between 1960 and 1990. The elements drawn from public political speeches and legal instruments such as decrees or laws help afford an overview of this politics in the evolution of the Cameroonian cultural heritage from 1960. It is necessary to notice that, after independence, the country witnessed the establishment of an institutional framework for the protection of monuments. Although the achievements of this legal framework are difficult to highlight, it is clear that it translates a political direction given to the cultural heritage. These orientations of the cultural policy of the newly independent Cameroon are contained in a speech delivered in 1969 by President Ahmadou Ahidjo. Here are the main lines of that speech:

“ la culture du peuple Camerounais se conçoit dans la double perspective de l’enracinement dans le passé et du dynamisme face à l’avenir. C’est en se réalisant ainsi qu’elle donnera au Cameroun sa carte d’identité parmi les autres peuples de l’univers. Englobant l’ensemble des valeurs traditionnelles (politiques, économiques, sociales, religieuses, artistiques, littéraires), elle doit les traduire en termes de créativité pour ne pas figer notre manière de vivre dans le passé, quelle que soit la richesse de celle-ci, et pour créer une personnalité culturelle camerounaise capable de faire l’histoire tout en restant fidèle à l’authenticité des réponses que son génie propre aura données aux multiples problèmes de son développement futur<sup>125</sup>”

(the culture of the Cameroonian people is conceived in the double perspective of rooting in the past and dynamism in the face of the future. It is in this way that it will give Cameroon its identity card among the other peoples of the universe. Encompassing all traditional values (political, economic, social, religious, artistic, literary), it must translate them in terms of creativity so as not to freeze our way of living in the past, whatever its richness, and to create a Cameroonian cultural personality capable of making history while remaining faithful to the authenticity of the answers that its own genius will have given to the multiple problems of its future development).

The argument of authenticity is part of the continuation of the anti-colonial struggle, which was nourished by the discourse of the cultural alienation of Africa by the Western powers. In line with the impetus of anti-colonial nationalism of the early independence, the approach of local anchoring of cultural heritage has developed, which tacitly excludes colonial heritage<sup>126</sup>. This was only a simulacrum, given the French imprint on the urban heritage of the city of Douala.

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<sup>123</sup> Bob W. White, *Cited*.

<sup>124</sup> Bokmga Ekanga Botombe (Ed.), *La politique culturelle en République du Zaïre*, Paris, Presses de l’Unesco, 1975, p.55.

<sup>125</sup> Bahoken J-C. *La politique culturelle en République Unie du Cameroun*, Paris, Les Presses de l’Unesco., 1975, p. 19.

<sup>126</sup> Talking about the colonial heritage reveals an ambiguity, referring to the diversity and disparity of the colonial legacy. This legacy is at the same time political, economic, social and cultural among others. It is made of buildings, secular relations of exploitation characterized and described in the concept of *Françafrique*.

Nevertheless, this approach of a local culture at the antipodes of the universal had as consequences, among other things, the rejection of the material relics of the European colonial presence. One of the questions raised by the enhancement of colonial built relics in Africa in general is to know to what extent the legacy of a former "enemy"<sup>127</sup> could constitute a heritage. Buildings like industrial sites, administrative premises have thus been abandoned without being given the status of historical monument they deserve. This rejection follows a logic that Mathias Eric Owona Nguini describes as the logic of constituting a clean heritage. For this author, the Western model of promoting cultural heritage, issued from the desire to "collect the world," matches only the aspirations of western countries<sup>128</sup>.

Furthermore, this approach suggests an insufficient or erroneous understanding of the model of construction of cultural heritage specific to the Western countries, insofar as, for example, the museum does not seem to reflect the heritage vision of African communities. Datouand Djoussou claims that the process of heritagization by the museum, through the creation of protected areas, desacralizes the object and space, thus depriving it of its spiritual essence<sup>129</sup>. Without that essence, it loses its value as a heritage. He, therefore, explains that the conception of cultural heritage in traditional African societies is different from the European meaning based on accumulation<sup>130</sup>. Clearly, the heritage value of an object in an African context obeys its meaning, its use as well as its intangible dimension. So-called "vernacular"<sup>131</sup> architecture meets these criteria, particularly through its forms, uses and rituals which have often presided over the construction process<sup>132</sup>. In this logic, it should be noted that beyond the rejection linked to difficult memories, the absence of preservation policies, or even the abandonment of colonial buildings, stems from a lack of understanding of the models for the enhancement of architectural remains, weak appropriation of Western models of enhancement of historical remains as well as

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<sup>127</sup> This concept of the enemy is difficult to apply to postcolonial Africa, due to the age-old nature of the connections established between the colonial powers and the elites of the countries of the South. In Francophone Africa, the concept of "Françafrique" accurately depicts the relationship between Africa and its former colonies and testifies to the difficulty of speaking of enmity.

<sup>128</sup> Mathias Eric Owona Nguini, "Penser le patrimoine à partir de N.M. Granel: une reflecture géopolitique d' "à chacun son patrimoine""", *Enjeux No 15*, April-June 2003, Pp. 3-5.

<sup>129</sup> Jean Marie Datouand Djoussou, *Patrimoine et patrimonialisation au Cameroun : les Diy-gid-biy des monts Mandaras septentrionaux pour une étude de cas*, PhD Thesis, Université de Laval, 2014, p.131.

<sup>130</sup> This assertion can be discussed. In fact, the weakness of this statement is the tendency of the author to approach Europe as a unique cultural model. Museums in Europe are not only places of accumulation. Some are places of memory,

<sup>131</sup> For further details on vernacular architecture: Amos Rapoport, *House form and culture*, Printice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.Toronto, Printice-Hall of Canada, 1969b.

<sup>132</sup> Rémy Dzou-Tsanga, "Architecture and Technical Identities in Cameroon", in *Journal of the history of technology*, Vol.2, 2016, Pp. 36-48.

the weakness of financial resources. This is noticeable by the limited number of training institutes and schools in heritage studies, which specifically focus on colonial-built relics. Mahamat Abba Ousman, former Deputy-Director of the National Museum of Cameroon claims that “Il faut noter également le manque de volonté des autorités politiques camerounaises à promouvoir des lieux de mémoires en rapport avec la présence coloniale et leur désir manifeste à se départir de l’histoire coloniale, en africanisant les noms des villes<sup>133</sup>” (It should also be noted the lack of will of the Cameroonian political authorities to promote places of memory related to the colonial presence and their manifest desire to depart from colonial history, by Africanizing the names of cities). However, the commitment of Unesco<sup>134</sup>, the economic potential of the cultural tourism sector, as well as a quest for recognition of communities strongly affected by colonial violence, helped raise awareness in Cameroon on the universality of heritage and its contribution to development. As a result, there is an attempt to gradually integrate historical buildings, including those bequeathed by the colonizers, within the national cultural heritage.

## **2. A Progressive Integration of Colonial Architecture into Cultural Heritage in Postcolonial Cameroon**

The evolution of cultural heritage in post-independent Cameroon shows a timid consideration of the built remains inherited from colonization. Indeed, colonial powers invested in cultural heritage in Cameroon through the confiscation of some art object and the creation of museums by the *Institut Français d’Afrique Noire*, IFAN. These museums emerged on German cultural project, especially the creation of an ethnographic museum, to collect and exhibit anthropological objects<sup>135</sup>. Within these cultural projects, seized objects become properties of colonial powers. In this regard, museums created in colonial context were not typically places of permanent exhibitions<sup>136</sup>. They were rather, collection points where the most valuable objects are selected to enrich museums in Europe. This explains the location of the first-ever French museum in Cameroon, in the warehouse of Woermann Company, which is in the surroundings of the port

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<sup>133</sup> Mahamat Abba Ousman, “Les monuments historiques “oubliés” du Département du Logone et Chari dans la Région de l’Extrême-Nord (Cameroun)”, *Vestiges : Traces of Records*, Vol.4, 2018, pp.13-31. <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>, 12/08/2019.

<sup>134</sup> Cameroon ratified many Unesco Conventions on heritage. As a member of this Organization, the country benefited from its technical assistance to update its national inventory of cultural heritage since 2001. This inventory included, therefore, beyond two sites classified to the World Heritage List, many archaeological, architectural, and natural sites. For further details, refer to <https://whc.unesco.org/fr/etatsparties/cm>, 13/04/2021.

<sup>135</sup> H. Glenn Penny, *Objects of Culture: Ethnology and Ethnographic Museums in Imperial Germany*, University of North Carolina Press, 2002, p.29.

<sup>136</sup> Anne Gauge, “Musée et colonisation en Afrique tropicale”, *Cahiers d’Etudes Africaines*, Vol.39, Nos155/156, 1999, Pp.727-745.

area in Douala<sup>137</sup>. This location facilitated the transport of cultural object seized by France. From Douala, museum culture, in its colonial conception, spread to other towns in Cameroon<sup>138</sup>. However, that museum's approach suffered from a weak appropriation from 1960.

**Figure 8: Premises of the Woerman firm in Douala around 1890-1915**



**Source:** <http://www.bild.bundesarchiv.de,12/01/2015>.

Moreover, the regulatory framework for cultural heritage in the newly independent Cameroon did not necessarily refer to colonial architecture. In 1963, a federal law<sup>139</sup> on the preservation of historical monuments was introduced into the Cameroonian legal nomenclature<sup>140</sup>. This Law

<sup>137</sup> Anonym (no name), "Les musées de l'IFAN au Cameroun", *Africa*, No27, Vol.3, 1957, p.286.

<sup>138</sup> Emile Meslé, *Les musées de l'IFAN au Cameroun*, Institut français d'Afrique Noire, Centre Cameroun, 1956, 55p.

<sup>139</sup> This is call Federal Law for the main reason that from October 1961 to May 1972, Cameroon was a Federal Republic, with as Federated States, Southern Cameroon (formerly under British supervision) and Eastern Cameroon former administered by France within the framework of the Trusteeship regime. Federal laws are those adopted at the federal level and applying to the whole Cameroonian territory.

<sup>140</sup> Loi Fédérale No63-22 du 19 juin 1963, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000081559>, 26/06/2020

remains rather very light on the concept of the monument and does not precisely define the “historical character” of the sites or objects likely to be the subject of classification among monuments. It is limited to determining the actors called upon to intervene in the classification process, especially the Ministry of National Education, through a specific Commission. It also sets out the legal effects resulting from classification, as well as procedures for removing objects or sites from the heritage list or historical monuments in Cameroon. Upon analysis, if this Law, now obsolete, was of a certain relevance, the imprecisions on the meanings of the concepts used, let priority to the appreciation of the experts of the Ministry of National Education, to decide on the heritagization of building. Likely, with the dissemination of the theses of cultural authenticity mentioned above, it appears that the heritage creation by the monument did not have a great echo in Cameroon. The few cases on the list of the Ministry of Culture turn out to be relics of local origins rather than colonial ones<sup>141</sup>.

However, in 1988, considering the faltering of cultural authenticity approach, Paul Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon claims that “il n’est pas juste que notre pays fasse disparaître toutes les traces de son histoire récente. Un effort doit donc être fait en vue de sauvegarder les sites et les monuments historiques méritant d’être entretenus en tant que tels sur l’ensemble du territoire national<sup>142</sup> ” (it is not fair for our country to erase all traces of its recent history. An effort must therefore be made to safeguard historic sites and monuments deserving to be maintained as such throughout the national territory). This statement comes within the framework of a political discourse, which seemed to have followed little concrete effect. It has at least the merit of translating a theoretical break with cultural authenticity politics. The author and politician<sup>143</sup> thus calls for an integrated approach to cultural systems in Cameroon, the enhancement of which is likely to help the development of the country. This political orientation has spurred various concrete initiatives to preserve historical buildings.

## **B. The Diversity of Local Initiatives for the Enhancement of Colonial Buildings in Douala**

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<sup>141</sup> Gouajeu Kameni Germain, *Le patrimoine culturel Camerounais : typologie, nature et politique de conservation de 1960 à 2000*, Master’s Thesis, The University of Yaounde 1, 2000/2001, p. 61.

<sup>142</sup> Paul Biya, *Pour le libéralisme communautaire*, Favre ABC, 1988, p.146.

<sup>143</sup> Paul Biya is a Cameroonian politician, born on February 13, 1933. After having occupied senior positions in the Cameroonian public service, on November 6, 1982, he succeeds the resigning President of the United Republic of Cameroon. He has held this position since then, notwithstanding the multiparty system and the organization of elections which have always given him most votes, beyond the protests of competing parties.



Beyond the resurgence of colonial trauma and the inadequacy of the European approach to the architectural heritage, German and French architecture in Douala is part of various enhancement projects. These projects are initiatives of both the government branches and private associations. They focus on the perseverance and the transmission of the painful colonial past.

## 1. Cautious Government Initiatives

Following the pressures of the above activists, and within a gradual integration of colonial buildings in the architectural heritage, the Government has mobilized some initiatives. These are carried out, beyond the Ministry in charge of Culture, by the Douala Urban City Council.

From the 1990s, there was a publicly expressed desire of the Government officials in charge of culture to explore new impetus to this sector, including by impelling an inscription of Cameroonian sites on the World Heritage List, the identification and classification of some sites on the Cameroonian Indicative List of Heritage. In Douala especially, in 1992, an Inter-ministerial Committee emerged to monitor the restoration and rehabilitation of historic heritage. This appears to be a unique evolution and devotes the recognition of architectural remains as part of the city's heritage. Also, this Committee, by its composition that comprises the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Urbanism and Housing<sup>144</sup>, and the Urban City Council, testifies to an ambition to preserve and enhance the historic remains of the city. The following missions, assigned to it, testifies of its ambition:

- “l’identification du patrimoine historique digne d’intérêt ;
- la définition de la destination des locaux à réhabiliter et de la réinstallation des services publics touchés par cette opération ;
- les négociations des financements de l’opération ;
- la programmation et du suivi des études et des travaux de restauration et de réhabilitation dudit patrimoine<sup>145</sup> .”

(the identification of historical heritage of any interest;

The definition of the destination of the premises to be rehabilitated and the relocation of public services affected by this operation;

The financing negotiations for the operation;

The programming and monitoring of studies and process of restoration and rehabilitation of said heritage).

It appears that this Committee, limited to the inter-ministerial framework and the inclusion of the Urban City Council, is influenced by the context of violence in relation to the return to multi-party rule, which characterized the years 1991 and 1992 in Cameroon<sup>146</sup>. This

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<sup>144</sup> It should be noted that in Cameroon's institutional nomenclature, the protection of architectural heritage falls within the competence of the Ministry of Housing, in accordance with Decree No2012/384 of 14 September 2012 organising that Ministry.

<sup>145</sup> Ministerial Order No0265/MINUH/MINCULTURE/MINTOUR/CUD, 21/08/1992, *portant création d'un Comité de suivi de l'opération de restauration et de réhabilitation du patrimoine historique de la ville de Douala*.

<sup>146</sup> Bidima Innocent Bertin, “Les forces armées et le maintien de l'ordre dans le contexte de transition démocratique au Cameroun”, in *Afrique et Développement*, Vol.26, No1/2, Pp. 225-249

context of tensions and ghost towns complexified possibilities of collaboration between the central state and associative bodies<sup>147</sup>. As noted in the previous section of this chapter, some politicians approached the quest for democracy through cultural heritage, the appropriation of which, according to them, could contribute to the liberation of Cameroon from neocolonial domination. In this regard, government initiatives in the heritage sector in 1992 could respond to a communication strategy rather than a desire to really act<sup>148</sup>. The inter-ministerial Committee disappeared without possibilities of tracing its achievements and real impact on the enhancement of historical heritage in Douala. Beyond the mainly political explanations of this initiative, one should add the economic crisis that hit Cameroon from 1994, as well as a certain caution about the possible implications of the enhancement of colonial remains. However, the relevance of this institutional framework lies in bringing together various stakeholders involved in the preservation and the enhancement of architectural heritage.

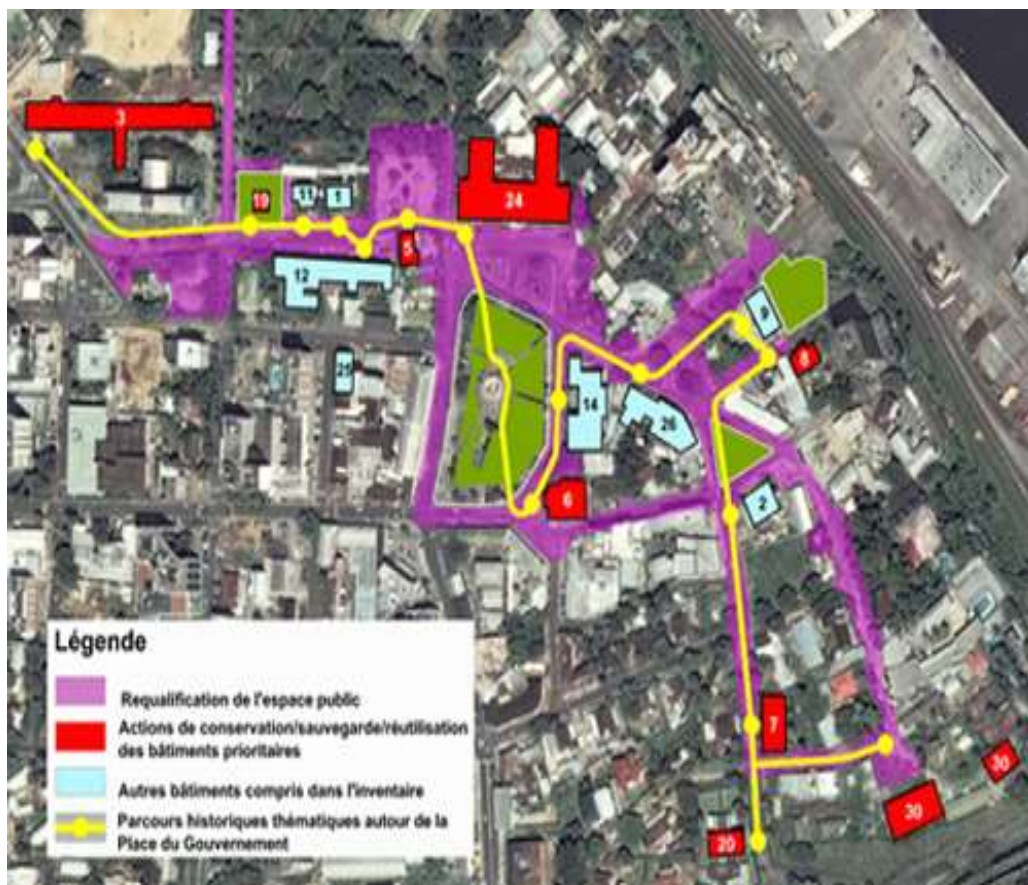
In addition, in 2009, the Douala City Council launched a feasibility study on the enhancement/preservation of the cultural heritage of the city. The study, led by a consortium of Italian companies consisting of *Cotecno Development Consulting Srl and Mga architettura* provided outstanding information on the variety of the architectural heritage in Douala. The study report published in 2009 could serve as a primary inventory of historic buildings in Douala. Furthermore, based and emphasizing on the regulatory framework for the protection and enhancement of cultural heritage in Cameroon, the Consortium made relevant recommendations. For example, a tourist route has been proposed to the City Council through the following map.

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<sup>147</sup> Mathias Eric Owona Nguini & Hélène-Laure Menthong, “ ‘Gouvernement perpétuel’ et démocratisation janusienne au Cameroun (1990-2018)”, in *Politique Africaine*, No 150, Vol.2, 2018, Pp.97-114.

<sup>148</sup> Tandia Mouafou Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “Jeu et enjeu du discours politique au Cameroun”, [https://www.fssp.uaic.ro/argumentum/numarul%205/05\\_Tandia\\_Mouafou.pdf](https://www.fssp.uaic.ro/argumentum/numarul%205/05_Tandia_Mouafou.pdf), 12/05/2019

**Figure 9: Proposal for a Touristic Route in Douala**



**Source:** Anonym (no name), “Mise en valeur du patrimoine culturel à Douala”, <http://keios.it/fr/portfolio/italiano-valorizzazione-del-patrimonio-culturale-douala-camerun/>, 13/02/2020

From the investigation by the Italian consortium<sup>149</sup>, it appears that Douala is full of rich heritage, capable of strengthening its sustainable development strategies. The proposal for a tourist route aims to transcend the debates of memory to focus on the functionality of heritage in a changing city, including its contribution to sustainable development and the strengthening of its identity. Other initiatives by private association to preserve the traces of the history of Douala better highlight this strategy.

<sup>149</sup> The choice of an Italian consortium for this project could be justified by Italy's expertise and presumption of neutrality regarding Cameroon's colonial past. As far as expertise is concerned, it is not necessary to demonstrate the preservation of the built remains of the Roman Empire in Italy. Concerning the presumption of neutrality, at the local level, the fact that Italy is not directly associated with Cameroon's colonial past constitutes for the Consortium an exclusion from possible rejection of its work.

## 2. The Proliferation of Promising Private Initiatives

Beyond the initiatives of the state and its dismemberments, the preservation and enhancement of the architectural remains inherited from the colonial presence in the city of Douala, mobilizes private actors. They experimented with various approaches, including the collection of historical data, the identification of the Places of memory in relation to colonialism, and an attempt to link colonial architecture to the urban artistic landscape of the city of Douala. Most renowned of these private initiatives are those of *Doual'art* and *AfricAvenir International* Foundations.

### a. *Doual'art*: From Identification to the Physical Protection of Colonial Buildings

*Doual'art* is a non-profit organization focused on contemporary art in the city of Douala through various dimensions, including painting, sculpture, and architecture. It emerged in 1991 from a direct descendant of Rudolf Duala Manga Bell, Mrs Marilyn Douala Bell<sup>150</sup> and Didier Schaub<sup>151</sup>. It began functioning in 1998, offering a diverse collection of art objects. The idea behind the project is geared towards a desire to give an artistic meaning to the city of Douala<sup>152</sup>. Indeed, the postcolonial city has often been described as the epicentre of disorder, unsanitary conditions, and even a hail without hope<sup>153</sup>. This image of an African city in crisis is imbedded in the anti-colonial struggle as well as the blurring of the markers of urban identity<sup>154</sup>. The factors of urban violence are numerous and include ethnic conflicts, power claims, guerrillas, high banditry among others, and have been aggravated, as far as Cameroon is concerned, by the protests linked to the return to democracy from 1990. Some authors believe that violence is consubstantial to urban development in Africa since 1960s<sup>155</sup>. Beyond these sociological dimensions, the urban image of Douala is portrayed by its spatial structuring that recalls the gentrification project evoked in the third chapter of this thesis, which explains the organizational

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<sup>150</sup> She is a Duala princess, descendant of Rudolf Duala Manga Bell. She is a socio-economist by training and chairs the contemporary art center, *Doual'art*.

<sup>151</sup> Didier Schaub is the husband of Marilyn Douala Bell, founder with his wife of *Doual'art*. He serves as the artistic director of this organization.

<sup>152</sup> Ousmanou Zourmba, *Cited.*, 2017, p.96.

<sup>153</sup> Claire-Antoinette Lindenlaub, "Ville-latrine ou ville poubelle ? La dialectique de l'espace urbain post-colonial dans *La latrine* de Sévérin Cécile Abega", in *Francofonia*, No08, 1999, Pp.267-290.

<sup>154</sup> Claire-Antoinette Lindenlaub, "Ville-latrine ou ville poubelle ? La dialectique de l'espace urbain post-colonial dans *La latrine* de Sévérin Cécile Abega", in *Francofonia*, No08, 1999, Pp.267-290.

<sup>155</sup> Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, *Villes et violence en Afrique noire*, Paris, Karthala, 2002, p.11

anarchy of certain neighbourhoods, like New Bell. Thus if the city is a planned creation, a work whose beauty prints the best to be there, Douala does not reflect this aspiration.

To imprint a new face to the urban space of Douala, the promoters of the *Doual'art* Foundation launched many activities, including exhibitions of artistic objects, street art<sup>156</sup> and public art. One of its first achievements is the Statue of the New Freedom, established in July 1996 at the Deido roundabout. It is a statue weighing 10 tons and a height of 12m, made from recovered irons. Realized by Joseph Francis Sumegne<sup>157</sup>, the New Liberty Statue has first been contested by inhabitants before it becomes the picture that symbolizes the art in Douala. Its realization costed around 40 million CFA Francs, with a contribution of the *Institut Culturel Français*<sup>158</sup>.

In terms of historical heritage enhancement, *Doual'art* initiated the *Arches de la Mémoire* project. This is a cultural program that includes the identification of historic sites or buildings in the city, as well as the highlighting of their importance as heritage, by placing descriptive plates. The description texts have been written in English and French. Through this project revealed in 2009 and supported by German organizations such as Goethe Institut, *Doual'art* has succeeded in pushing towards the legal protection of some historic buildings in the city. The Foundation thus contributes to strengthening heritage awareness by recalling the historicity of each site. Nevertheless, the descriptive plates fixed, although consulted regularly by visitors, have often disappeared by alteration due to lack of maintenance and private claims on land properties. They have, in some cases, been destroyed by private individuals who consider the identified site to be their individual or family heritage. For example, the Bonakouamouang Water Chimney, of which the attached images, became in 2016, an integral part of a private domain, the simple visit of which depends on the goodwill of the occupants.

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<sup>156</sup> "Street art" is a concept which designates public art such as drawings, caricatures, representations made in open space. More details in: Ulrich Blanché, "Qu'est-ce que le *Street art* ? Essai et discussion des définitions", in *Cahiers de Narratologie*, No29, 2015, <http://journals.openedition.org/narratologie/7397>, 13/04/2021

<sup>157</sup> Joseph-Francis Sumegne is a Cameroonian painter and sculptor, born July 30, 1951 in Bamendjou. He stayed for a few years in Doual'art, with a view to setting up the Statue of New Liberty. He is the author of several monuments in France, Germany, Gabon, Central African Republic, Senegal among others. For further details: <http://doualart.org/portfolio/joseph-francis-sumegne/>, 12/02 /2020.

<sup>158</sup> Joseph-Francis Sumegne, "La Nouvelle Liberté de Sumegne", <http://doualart.org/portfolio/la-nouvelle-liberte-de-sumegne/>, consulté le 12/02/2020.

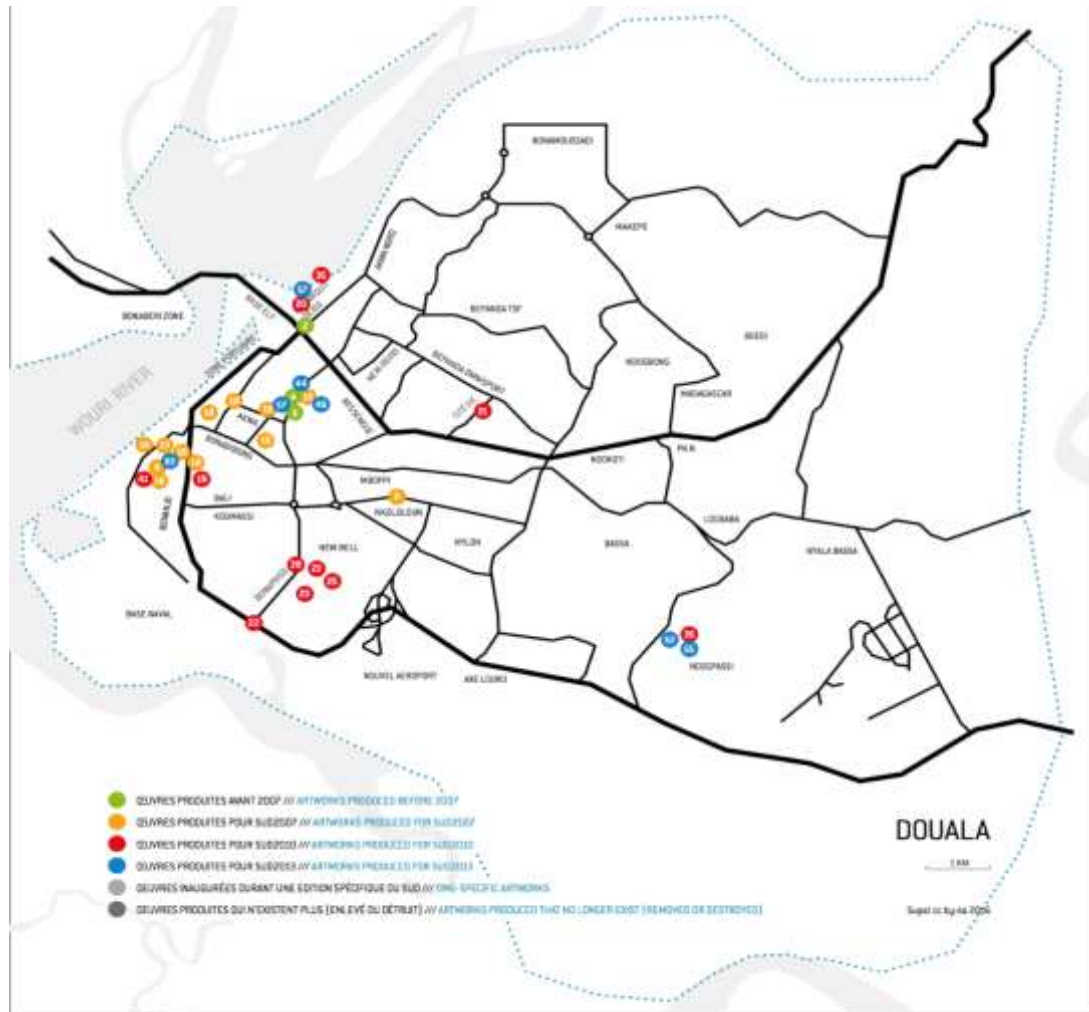
**Figure 10: The Remains of the German Water Plant in Bonakoumouang (Douala)**



**Source: Author, 18/08/2016.**

Based on the investigation carried out all around the city, *Doual'art* has drawn up the following map of the sites identified Memory-Places of Colonialism in Douala. The map shows a concentration of the built remains of colonialism around the port area, precisely in Bonanjo, the actual administrative quarter in the city. This distribution connects the remains with urban plans highlighted in Chapter III. It also shows a historic centre of Douala, the preservation of which could be through historic landscape or by distinct sites or buildings. Within the framework of a historic centre preserved as a landscape, the consubstantial protection considers all the components, namely the streets, buildings, any gardens, among others.

**Map 11: Mapping of Historic Sites identified by Doual'art in Douala**



**Source:** <http://doulart.org/art-public/>, 13/02/2020

With regard to the above, through the Arches de la Mémoire project, Doual'art is positioned as a pioneer association in the enhancement of architectural heritage in Douala. Its action is visible on the ground and differs from the *Afric Avenir International* Foundation but remains complementary to it.

### **b. Afric Avenir International: An Approach by Strengthening Historical Knowledge of Douala**

Like Doual'art, the *AfricAvenir International* Foundation is a private association interested in the colonial memory and History of Douala. It was founded by Prince Kum'a Ndumbe III, born November 1, 1946 in Douala, professor of history, and Germanist.

Grandson of Lock Priso, King of Hikory town who refused to sign the protectorate treaty with Germany, Prince Kum'a Ndumbe III, belongs to the great Bele Bele family whose influence is undisputed in Douala. He studied high school in Munich then at the University of Lyon, where he obtained his doctorate in history, political science and German studies in 1985. Committed pan-Africanist, his doctoral thesis focused on the Nazi program for the recolonization of Africa, which earned him ban in Germany, before gaining support from famous French Philosophers like Jean Paul Sartre<sup>159</sup>.

The creation in 1985 of the *AfricAvenir International Foundation* reflects the pan-Africanist commitment of Prince Kum'a Ndumbe III, who criticizes a loss of memory in habits and education in Africa. He notes, based on his teaching experience in several African countries, a concern linked to the history of Africa:

“quand vous voyez ce qui est au programme, c'est-à-dire que nous payons les impôts pour détruire la mémoire de nos enfants, ceux qui doivent prendre le relais. Puisque nous-mêmes notre mémoire a été détruite, nous continuons sans le savoir<sup>160</sup>”. (when you see what is on the agenda, which is that we are paying taxes to destroy the memories of our children, the ones who have to take over. Since our own memory has been destroyed, we continue without knowing it).

According to him, there is a sort of enslavement, a continuation of cultural, mental, and psychological domination that demeans black wherever he is in the world, resulting from educational programs inherited from colonial systems<sup>161</sup>. His commitment encompasses the demand for the recognition of figures of Cameroonian nationalism, like Duala Manga Bell, Ernest Ouandié<sup>162</sup> and Ruben Um Nyobe, among others, as well as the restitution of artistic objects confiscated from Cameroonian communities by the Germans and the French during the colonial period. He specifically claims for the restitution of a royal object, the *Tangué*, looted by the German army during an incursion on the Palace of his Grandfather Lock Priso, on December 22, 1884. The following passage illustrates the importance he attaches to that family object:

“A peine deux ans après ce braquage à Bonabéri, Max Buchner devient conservateur du Musée ethnographique de Munich où atterrit le Tangué de Kum'a Mbape. Max Buchner restera conservateur dans ce musée jusqu'en 1907, le Tangué y est toujours en otage jusqu'à ce jour de juin 2015, et je demande au gouvernement allemand de me rendre les armoiries royales du père de mon père, à moi et à notre famille<sup>163</sup>”

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<sup>159</sup> The web site of *AfricAvenir International* contain a resume of its founder: <http://www.africavenir.org/about-us/prince-kuma-ndumbe-iii.html>, 12/02/2020

<sup>160</sup> Speech by Prince KOUM'A NDUMBE III, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uQCnUROw4sg>, 18/12/2019.

<sup>161</sup> Claude Marchand, “idéologie coloniale et enseignement en Afrique noire francophone”, in *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, No4, Vol.3, 1971, pp.349-358.

<sup>162</sup> Ernest Ouandié is a leader of the UPC, who fought for the independence of Cameroon. More details in: Louis Kamga Kamga, *Ernest Ouandié : le révolutionnaire*, Publication indépendante, 2019, 188p ; Louis Kamga Kamga, *Ernest Ouandié : Le Che Guevara 'Africain, dernier chef historique de l'UPC'*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2016, 194p

<sup>163</sup> Anonym (no name), “Pr KUM'A NDUMBE III sur le vol de la culture africaine”, <https://www.africadiligence.com/en/2015/07/17/pr-kumaa-ndumbe-iii-sur-le-vol-de-la-culture-africaine/>, consulté le 13/02/2020.



(Barely two years after this robbery in Bonabéri, Max Buchner became curator of the Munich Ethnographic Museum where Kum'a Mbape's *Tangué* landed. Max Buchner will remain curator in this museum until 1907, the *Tangué* is still hostage there until this day of June 2015, and I ask the German government to return to me the royal coat of arms of my father's father, to me and to our family).

Subsequently, the *AfricAvenir International Foundation* carries out various activities with a view to working for the preservation of local heritage, as well as strengthening its awareness. To this purpose, the library of the Foundation is full of precious books, papers and archives, the quality of which results in particular in the capacity of the founder to extract precious information from archives in the (ancient) German language. It also conserves data collected within a multidisciplinary project that gathered German scholars, historians, economists, legal experts, anthropologists and sociologists, who crisscrossed Cameroon in the 1980s. The Objective assigned to the team was to research and interview eyewitnesses from the German colonial period as well as resource persons in other parts of Cameroon's history. Under the topic of “remembering of the German period in Cameroon,” the project allowed gather more than 120 testimonies, preserved in audio files. These primary sources are supplemented with translations German resources issued from public and private archives<sup>164</sup>. In total, we note an intense search for data to the assets of the Foundation, including in particular: collections of tales and proverbs in Cameroonian languages in the 1880s, the creation of the Cheikh Anta Diop Library, the reading and archiving of the press among others. Regarding particularly the Library called Cheikh Anta Diop, it keeps books on own acquisition on the birth of Cameroon, on the evolution of the African continent, on African diaspora. This library promotes the rewriting of African History through the collection of African Historians books.

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<sup>164</sup> Interviews with Prince KUM'A NDUMBE III, available online reveal a titanic work in collecting archival data, including artifacts. For example, the Founder of *AfricAvenir* mentions a loss of his family's archives, because of the leaflets organized by the French administration against the militants of the UPC. It should therefore be noted that the ability of the Founder to read and understand the German language strengthen the quality of his data.

**Figure 12 : A Front View of the AfricAvenir International Foundation**



**Source:** <http://www.africavenir.org/fr/qui-nous-sommes/section-douala.html>, 12/01/2020.

### **Conclusions**

This Chapter proves that colonial ideology is based on racial discrimination and the negation of humanity to local populations. This ideology underlies the inhuman and degrading treatment inflicted by colonial administrators and European businessmen, within forced labour, human carriage, wars of resistance, among others. In Douala, the essential markers of colonial memories retain a difficult period of violence, assassination, and the imposition of Western cultures. This violence on the population is perceived as consubstantial with the buildings inherited from European colonial systems. Also, the difficult relationship of the local populations to colonial architecture justifies the tensions that have arisen around certain monuments in the honour of French soldiers. These tensions unearth a quest for the appropriation of the urban heritage landscape, a claim for an urban identity in line with the struggles that have marked the city, as well as a rewriting of the visual history of colonialism in Douala.

## **Chapter V**

### **Difficult Colonial Memories in Germany and France: From Shame to the Enhancement of Shared Colonial Built Remains in Douala**

The enhancement of a historical site includes various interventions and a process that connects memory and the relationships between all the actors who recognise a link with its past. The outcome of a “restricted appropriation<sup>1</sup>,” heritage creation is the result of a process of filtering and extracting elements from memory and history<sup>2</sup>, with a view to a cultural product in the form of an object, a reconverted space or cultural site with economic, touristic, and educational value<sup>3</sup>. One of the methodological steps is therefore, the identification of the interest groups to determine the interaction of the different memory layers. In the case of sites with memory dissonances, this step reveals crucial importance, insofar as it makes it possible to highlight the characteristic features of the relationships that each interest group establishes with the site, and therefore, to reconcile the tensions inherent to its past or interpretation of the object or site. This is precisely the case with buildings inherited from the European colonial systems of the 19th and 20th centuries in Douala.

In fact, the historicity of the colonial construction of Douala highlights two main imperial powers, namely Germany and France. These contacts between people of different origins produce what Tzvetan Todorov designates by the term of cultural crossing. Beyond the various interactions, this author explains that the cultural crossing produces judgments which depends on the balance of power<sup>4</sup>. In colonial context, several apprehensions characterised the relationships that were forged between the local populations and the Western settlers. If pan-Africanist authors, like Aimé Césaire, evoke reports of violence of all kinds, other mainly Western thinkers, including Bernard Lugan, focus their reflections on the “benefits” of the European colonialism for Africa. These contradictory relations to the colonial past have an impact on the enhancement of historical buildings that emerged during that period. Perceived by some as a heritage that pays tribute to a former oppressor and a symbol of all-out violence, colonial architecture in Douala is presented by others as a witness to a civilisational evolution.

This chapter aims to demonstrate that the approaches of the imperial powers to their colonial past in Cameroon reveal disparities, which find their roots in the colonial strategies of imposing

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<sup>1</sup> Lionel Prigent, *Valeur d'usage et valeur d'existence d'un patrimoine. Une application de la méthode d'évaluation contingente au Mont-Saint-Michel*, PhD Thesis, Université de Bretagne Occidentale, 2001, p.38.

<sup>2</sup> J.E. Tunbridge & G. J. Ashworth, *Dissonant Heritage. The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict*, John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 1996, p.6.

<sup>3</sup> Annett Neugebauer, *Pro-active Dissonant Heritage Management. Reducing Discordances at Sites of Atrocity*, VDM Publishing House Ltd, 2009, Pp.15-18.

<sup>4</sup> Tzvetan Todorov, “Le croisement des cultures”, in *Communications*, No43, 1986, Pp.5-26.

their respective cultures. These disparities could explain the low efficiency of the shared heritage approach, supported mainly by Germany.

## **I. Insight on the Historical Anchoring of Colonial Memories in Germany and France: Colonial Strategies of Cultural Contradictions**

The pattern of the memory dynamics of the French and German colonial powers around the built remains of their presence in Douala is rooted in the occupation strategies that each designed and implemented. The correlation of these strategies unearths, on the one hand, construction of the German cultural establishment at the antipodes of local cultures (A). On the other hand, a French imperial doctrine in Douala was conceived in opposition to Germany's vestiges.

### **A. A German Colonial Occupation Strategy Designed Against Local Cultures in Douala**

Although based on trade treaties signed with local Chiefs in Douala and whose vocation was to regulate commercial exchanges between the two parties, the German administration refined its occupation strategy based on military victories during territorial conquests wars. The pacification of the country opened the breach to the establishment of an administrative system, which imposed the overcoming of the racial distancing advocated the benefit of the imposition of the German Language.

#### **1. From Overcoming Racial Distancing in German Colonial Strategies in Douala .....**

The colonial occupation of Africa, in general, was motivated by mainly economic interests. In this logic, the theories put forward of the civilising mission simply served as a justification for the treatment inflicted on African populations, often reduced to situations close to slavery<sup>5</sup> with the use of forced labour. Until 1894, the Germans did not consider the Cameroonian peoples as worthy of humanity or freedom<sup>6</sup>. Indeed, the Germans considered their presence in Douala, at the very beginning of the Protectorate, from an essentially commercial point of view.

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<sup>5</sup> It is necessary to remind that Germans used slaves among their first police troops in Cameroon. These slaves were bought from Western Africa. They worked with promise of getting their freedom after some years of service. More details in Alejandro de Quesada & Chris Dale, *Imperial German Colonial and Overseas Troops 1885-1918*, Ospercy Publishing, 2014, p.8.

<sup>6</sup> Germany is one of the European countries whose citizens are among the defenders and designer of the hierarchy of races, which places Africa at the primitive stage of civilizations. For more details, refer to Chapter 4.

In his report concluding an expedition of the German Committee for which he is responsible, Siegfried Passarge<sup>7</sup> is very explicit in this regard:

“je ne tiens pas pour vraisemblable qu’une race qui, eu égard à son caractère, s’est montrée inférieure depuis des millénaires et s’est cantonnée dans la même situation depuis l’époque des anciens Egyptiens, où elle fut déjà de préférence chassée comme esclave, devienne en quelques générations, un peuple plein de caractère, indépendant et libre<sup>8</sup>”.

(I do not consider it probable that a race which, having regard to its character, has been shown to be inferior for millennia and has been confined in the same situation since the time of the ancient Egyptians, where it was already preferably hunted as a slave, become in a few generations, a people full of character, independent and free).

By this assertion, the German Colonial Administrator applies the theory of white racial hegemony to the specific case of Cameroon. He defends the thesis of the economic exploitation of the country through several orientations without any human consideration towards the local population. He precised that the exploitation could easily take the form of agricultural projects and trade. He also claimed that offering a good education to native Cameroonians would be a sacrilege, insofar as Western education would give them the means to challenge the “moral superiority” enjoyed by Europeans. Learning German in Cameroon, said Passarge, will not consolidate the German colonial presence. On the contrary, according to him, it would raise awareness and forge the capacity to challenge European exploitation.

Over a short period, this approach was the common thread of the action of the German Governors in Cameroon. Thus Education was abandoned by the missionaries, just as pidgin, resulting from the deformation of the English Language<sup>9</sup>. It was used as a language of exchange and contact between Germans and local populations in Douala. This idea was espoused by German industrialists and traders present in Cameroon, who refused to educate the natives. For manpower needs, they planned to bring Chinese workers<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Otto Karl Siegfried Passarge is a German geographer born in 1866, who was sent on mission to explore the interior of Cameroon. The results of this exploration served investment planning as well as the policy of Germany's colonial presence in Cameroon during the protectorate period. In scientific circles, he is particularly famous for his theories on racial geography. His research in ethnologies and cultures, which he classifies according to region, has notably supported these theories. Further details: Siegfried Passarge, *Geographische Völkerkunde*, Vol.3, Diesterweg, 1933, 129p., Siegfried Passarge, *Geographische Völkerkunde: Afrika*, Diesterweg, 1933

<sup>8</sup> Siegfried Passarge, *Adamawa : Rapport de l'expédition du Comité allemand pour le Cameroun au cours des années 1893-1894*, Paris, Karthala, 2010, p. 551.

<sup>9</sup> The use of pidgin by the coastal populations of Cameroon in the 19th century is explained by the commercial contacts they established with British merchants. It should also be noted that because of these contacts, the British had the impression of having acquired Cameroon as a territorial possession before the signing of the protectorate treaties which mark the German presence. Read :Harry R. Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914: A Case Study in Modern Imperialism*, Greenwood Press Publishers, New-York, 1968.

<sup>10</sup> Adalbert Owona, *La naissance du Cameroun 1884-1914*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1996, p.82.

However, this strategy of domination and exploitation by maintaining the local population in a state of ignorance has shown its limits, faced with the contingency of local collaboration.

## **2. ....To the Imposition of the German Culture Over Local Customs in Douala**

The racial distancing advocated by the German colonial administrators in Douala posed challenges to administration and collaboration with the local population. To fix this issue, Germany invested largely in promoting its Language as the basis of cultural evolution towards the abandonment of local customs.

Indeed, the transmission of the Language was one of the vectors of colonial domination. Language is a cultural marker that contains patterns of thought and elements of the history of a people. It is one of the foundations or main features of cultural identity. In addition, for the European colonists, the knowledge of local languages, if not their rejection in favour of European languages, constitute the key to success in setting their power. In this respect, the colonial system was strongly focused on the linguistic transformation of the occupied territories. Beyond being understood, the introduction of languages was a strategy of Soft power, praising the merits of a distant culture, presented with the aim of seducing the youngest.

Germany used this strategy firstly to facilitate communication between its representatives and the local populations. In this logic, from 1887, Cameroon witnessed the introduction of the basic elements of the German Language in the education system. But it is especially from 1890, that the Governor Von Zimmerer<sup>11</sup> adopted a policy which aims at the cultural transformation of Cameroon, in a German cultural continuum. The objective was to provide its administration with accounting, customs and post staff, teachers, nurses and interpreters, among others, capable of interacting with public officials and working according to the German system. This is how German schools were created, in which Cameroonians were nourished with the taste and the hope of becoming Europeans. The deployment of the Cameroon cultural transformation strategy operated as follows:

“Première école allemande : le 24 février 1887 à Douala, 362 élèves en 1912 ;

Deuxième école allemande : 1898 à Victoria, 257 élèves en 1912 ;

Troisième école allemande : le 1<sup>er</sup> décembre 1908 à Yaoundé, 160 élèves en 1912 ;

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<sup>11</sup> Eugen Ritter Von Zimmerer (1843-1918) est un administrateur allemand, qui a prédestiné à la gestion du Kamerun du 15 avril 1891 au 13 août 1895. Juriste de formation, après des services d’avocat et de juge en Bavière, il rejoint le service colonial allemand en 1887. Lire : Bucher Gruppe (Dir.), *Gouverneur (Kamerun): Julius Von Soden, Jesko Von Puttkamer, Otto Gleim, Eugen Von Zimmerer, Karl Ebermaier, Theodor Seitz (Allemand)*, Books LLC, 2010.

Quatrième école allemande : 1906 à Garoua, 54 élèves en 1912<sup>12</sup>.  
(First German school: February 24, 1887 in Douala, 362 students in 1912;  
Second German school: 1898 in Victoria, 257 pupils in 1912;  
Third German school: December 1, 1908 in Yaoundé, 160 students in 1912;  
Fourth German school: 1906 in Garoua, 54 students in 1912)

These schools functioned in strict compliance with the programs defined by the Protectorate administration through official decisions, which formally prohibited the teaching and use of English. These programs are tailor-made, with the ideology of avoiding “an overly intellectual education (which) could distract young people from “practical” work or turn them into “rascals” who would no longer accept their positions of a servant<sup>13</sup>. Paul Zang Zang describes as following the language teaching programs at the primary level:

“Les ordonnances impériales du 25 avril 1910 et du 25 avril 1913 fixent les programmes officiels comme suit : **première année** : lecture et écriture en allemand, 1 heure par semaine ; **deuxième année** : lecture et écriture en allemand 3 heures par semaine ; **troisième année** : éléments de grammaire et d’orthographe allemande 4 heures ; **quatrième année** : lecture, écriture, interprétation de morceaux choisis allemands, 4 heures par semaine ; **cinquième année** : exercice de grammaire allemande 4 heures<sup>14</sup>”.

(The imperial ordinances of April 25, 1910 and April 25, 1913 set the official programs as follows: **first year**: reading and writing in German, 1 hour per week; **second year**: reading and writing in German 3 hours per week; **third year**: elements of German grammar and spelling 4 hours; **fourth year**: reading, writing, interpretation of selected German pieces, 4 hours per week; **fifth year**: German grammar exercise, 4 hours).

The aim of this education system is not simply to impart knowledge of the German Language. There was a desire to communicate culture on a foundation that reflects the implementation of the “civilising mission”. In fact, the Cameroonians were taught that “un Noir germanisé n’est plus un noir ordinaire. Il a plus de considération qu’un Européen sauf si celui-là est un Français ou un Anglais<sup>15</sup>” (a Germanized Black is no longer an ordinary black. He has more consideration than a European unless that one is a French or an English). Behind such an assertion, there is the expression of the inferiority of the Black man compared to the European. To pull them towards a supposedly superior level of civilisation, some Cameroonians were encouraged, even funded, to continue their studies in Germany<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> Paul Zang Zang, “La dégermanisation du Cameroun”, *Revue Electronique Internationale des Sciences du Langage*, N°14, 2010, Pp.79-104

<sup>13</sup> Rudolf Strumpf, *La politique linguistique au Cameroun de 1884 à 1960*, Berne, Peter Lang, 1979, p.57, cited by par Paul Zang Zang, *Cited*.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Jean Ikele-Matiba, *Cette Afrique-là*, Paris, Présence africaine, 1963, p. 63, cited by Paul Zang Zang, *Op., Cit.*

<sup>16</sup> The reason for the support to the education of some Cameroonians in Germany is not only civilizational. It is also ethnologic. That is, having a better understanding of local customs and languages. Besides, there is a will to strengthen the support of local leaders to the Germans, by supporting the education of their children.



It should be noted that access to these schools was selective and reserved for Cameroonians who had the potential to serve German interests. For example, referring to the support he suggests to educate the son of an interpreter practising in Douala, Governor Von Zimmerer underlines, in a letter sent on April 18, 1891 to the German Chancellor, to take into consideration the services he could return to Germany after training<sup>17</sup>. The second example is that of Mpondo Akwa, son of Akwa King. From the age of 14, to benefit from the support of Germany to continue his studies, he signed a firm commitment to promote German culture once he succeeded his father as King of the Akwa<sup>18</sup>. Another example is that of Alfred Bell, nephew of King Bell. To study in Hamburg, he left Cameroon in 1887, with funding from German firms. After months in Germany, he was the subject of monitoring by the German Governor, who asked for better supervision as well as greater surveillance of the competent institutional bodies of his country<sup>19</sup>. This testifies to the will of the colonial authorities to maintain the level of education to what is strictly necessary to serve Germany.

However, due to the excessively high cost, estimated at between 1,000 and 5,000 marks per year and per student, very few Cameroonians have been able to pursue studies in Germany. Also, at the local level, beyond the German schools created by the German administration, the latter exercised control over missionaries' schools. The objective here is to ensure that the German Language takes precedence over any other in the education system so that these languages gradually disappear. In this regard, large subsidies were given to missionaries' schools, only for the purpose of teaching German. Zang Zang Paul puts forward the following figures, which testify to the importance of these subsidies:

“En 1911 et 1912, elle s'élevait à 20.000 Marks. En 1913, elle est répartie proportionnellement au nombre d'écoliers ayant subi avec succès les épreuves de l'examen officiel : Mission catholique : 9.624 M ; Mission de Bâle : 6.101 M ; Mission américaine : 2.308 M ; Mission baptiste : 1.963M. En 1913, année des grandes inaugurations au Cameroun, elle s'élève à 30.000 marks<sup>20</sup>”.

(In 1911 and 1912 it stood at 20,000 Marks. In 1913, it was distributed in proportion to the number of schoolchildren who had successfully passed the official examinations: Catholic Mission: 9,624 M; Basel Mission: 6,101 M; American mission: 2,308 M; Baptist mission: 1,963M. In 1913, the year of the great inaugurations in Cameroon, it amounted to 30,000 marks).

However, Germany has also worked on learning Cameroonian languages to understand local customs better. Charles Atangana is among the very rare Cameroonians who taught a

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<sup>17</sup> ANY, FA1.37, F.180-182.

<sup>18</sup> ANY, FA1.37, F.144.

<sup>19</sup> ANY, FA1.37, F.77.

<sup>20</sup> Zang Zang Paul., *Cited*.

local language, Ewondo, between 1912 and 1913 at the University of Hamburg. With Alfred Bell, he is part of an African elite, which occupied positions in German institutions by the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century<sup>21</sup>.

From the above, the German administration had the ambition to promote its culture, history and Language in Cameroon through education. Very quickly and without waiting for this policy to bear fruit in the long term, from 1913, the German Governor criticised the use of pidgin English by his administration and German traders in their communications with local populations. Going further in this logic, in 1914, German Governor Karl Ebermaier<sup>22</sup> declared that the use of pidgin English was considered a state crime throughout Cameroon. Thus, only the German Language should prevail on Cameroonian territory, a real cultural option that transforms the country into a German cultural space. These traits, by their cultural reflection, were the target of the French strategy of occupation of the city, designed for their substitution.

## **B. A French Establishment Strategy Designed Against the German Heritage in Douala**

The French administration established itself in Cameroon, at the end of a war waged against Germany, won with the help of a few allies, including the United Kingdom. This war was part of the operations of the First World War, which ended in the German defeat, ratified by the Treaties of Versailles of 1919<sup>23</sup>. Also, these Treaties have innovated in the management of international affairs, through the creation of the League of Nations, with among its missions preventing conflicts between nations<sup>24</sup>. In this regard, the question of the status of the former German territorial possessions was settled by placing their management under the responsibility of the League of Nations. How did France perceive or internalise this control on one of the territories it conquered by military force? Beyond questioning the French perception

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<sup>21</sup> Robbie Aitken & Eve Rosenhaft, *Black Germany: the Making and Unmaking of a Diaspora Community, 1884-1960*, Cambridge University Press, 2013, p.2.

<sup>22</sup> Karl Ebermaier (1862-1943) is a German jurist, who served notably as Governor of the Protectorate of Cameroon, between 1912 and 1916. He was the last German Governor in Cameroon. He had a rich experience in the German colonial administration, as he served first in German East Africa, then from 1902 as Vice Governor in Cameroon. More details in : Bucher Gruppe (Dir.), *Cited*.

<sup>23</sup> Gerd Krumeich, "Le débat sur la responsabilité de la guerre à l'ombre de Versailles, 1919-1933", in *Revue d'Allemagne et des pays de langue allemande*, No52, Vol.2, 2020, Pp.303-315.

<sup>24</sup> Germany's reluctance to accept the creation of a supra-state organization capable of subjecting countries to an international legal system should be noted. This can be explained especially by its imperial politics in the 19th century, but above all by the responsibility attributed to it within the framework of the settlement of the First World War, and subsequently its disarmament. For further details: Arthur L. Smith Jr., "Le désarmement de l'Allemagne en 1919: Les vues du général von Seeckt", in *Revue Historique*, T.228, Fasc.1., 1962, Pp.17-34 ; Jean-Michel Guieu, "Les Allemands et la Société des nations (1914-1926)", in *Les Cahiers Irice*, No8, Vol.2, 2011, Pp.61-90.

of the status of “Mandate”, this issue is revealing of the French approach to its mission in Cameroon within the framework of the international regimes of Mandate and Trusteeship.

## **1. The French Approach to Cameroon’s International Regimes: Towards a “Colonial” Interpretation of the Mandate and Trusteeship**

At the time of disarming Germany and its Allies, defeated and held responsible for the outbreak of the war, certain powers, in particular the United States of America, weighed in to grant international status to the former German territorial possessions. France reacted to this with sustained opposition, supported by a call for empire, as well as an interpretation of the Mandate regime, which made it not less than a colonial status.

### **a. The French Opposition to International Status of Cameroon**

The French politics of occupation of Cameroon is in line with its imperial project in Africa. Indeed, its colonial ambition was to occupy a vast territory capable of affording strategic control of the entire continent. Regarding Cameroon, Daniel Abwa justifies France’s position with geostrategic arguments. First, the country’s position, which brings French Equatorial Africa closer to French West Africa (AOF) as well as an opening onto the Gulf of Guinea. Then there are geoeconomic reasons, notably the potential for the development of various activities for production and trade<sup>25</sup>. Therefore, it is noted activism of officials and French associations, which mark opposition to any regime applied to Cameroon, which could be different from colonial status.

From December 9, 1915, General Aymerich suggested placing under the authority of the French army all civil servants in Cameroon<sup>26</sup>. This proposal was the subject of a decree in 1916, which confirms the French option of absorbing Cameroon within its colonies in Equatorial Africa<sup>27</sup>. In a statement made public on March 10, 1920, the French Colonial League requested French authorities to work so that Cameroon (as well as Togo) be given to France as colonies. The argument mobilised is that the Mandate Regime “est de nature à empêcher la France de mener l’œuvre de civilisation et de développement économique dont elle a assumé la charge<sup>28</sup>”. (is likely to prevent France from carrying out the work of civilisation and

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<sup>25</sup> More details in : Daniel Abwa, *Commissaires et hauts-commissaires de la France au Cameroun (1916-1960) : ces hommes qui ont façonné politiquement le Cameroun*, Yaoundé, Presses de l’Université Catholique d’Afrique Centrale, 1998, 439p.

<sup>26</sup> ANOM, 21.189, “Lettre du Général Aymerich, Commandant supérieur des Troupes (françaises) au Gouverneur Général de l’AEF”, 09.12.1915

<sup>27</sup> ANOM, 21.165, “Correspondances avec l’autorité militaire. Octobre 1914-juin 1916”.

<sup>28</sup> ADF, 53PCOM103, Afrique. Questions Générales, P.78.

economic development for which it has assumed responsibility). In the same logic, the French Colonial Union asked the government, in a letter dated July 5, 1920, to extend the total authority of France over Cameroon by refusing any control by the International Community over its management. This association stirs up an “expertise” of France in the colonial occupation, for which it asks for the recognition of other powers<sup>29</sup>.

This involvement of associations pushed the French Minister of Colonies to clearly stand for a pure and simple integration of Cameroon into the French colonial empire, to the detriment of an international Mandate regime. In his letter of October 12, 1920, addressed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, he clearly expresses his concerns in the search for ways and means by the League of Nations, with a view to following up the evolution of Cameroon through a specialised organ, the Permanent Mandates Commission (PCM). He claims that “le fait de soumettre, dès maintenant, notre administration à des investigations, - quelque forme amicale que ces dernières revêtent, - ne saurait donc apparaître que comme prématuré<sup>30</sup>”. (the fact of submitting, as of now, our administration to investigations, whatever friendly form these last take, can therefore only appear as premature). Furthermore, he argues that the creation of a Permanent Mandates Commission within the League of Nations would have no legal basis and would reduce France’s powers over Cameroon. Also, he asks the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to agree with the United Kingdom to simply obtain Cameroon as a territorial possession (colonial).

Beyond the strategy of the French Ministry of Colonies, the Mandate regime contains in its legal provisions and its philosophy the seeds of the transformation of Cameroonian territory into a global colony. It provided for the opening of the country to all the member states of the League of Nations, whose citizens could freely settle and invest in the territory without restrictions. But this status of the world colony was even more favourable to the French and British administrators. The mandatory powers had, in fact, extended powers of administration of the territory as well as of legislation. Enoh Meyomesse underlines in this regard that:

“ en sa qualité de colonie, enfin, tout le personnel colonial en provenance de France et d’Angleterre, du gouverneur au dernier des plantons français et anglais, ainsi que tout le personnel indigène de l’administration coloniale, était rémunéré à partir du budget généré par le Cameroun<sup>31</sup>”.

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<sup>29</sup> ADF, 53CPCOM110, Afrique. Questions Générales.

<sup>30</sup> ADF, “Lettre adressée par le Ministre des Colonies au Ministre des Affaires Etrangères le 12 octobre 1920”, 53CPCOM103, 1918-1940. Afrique, *Questions Générales*, 95, Pp.100-102.

<sup>31</sup> Enoh Meyomesse, *Histoire du Cameroun de 1940 à nos jours, Tome1*, Yaoundé, EdkBooks, 2016, p.30.

(in its capacity as a colony, finally, all the colonial personnel from France and England, from the Governor to the last of the French and English employees, as well as all the native personnel of the colonial administration, were paid from the budget generated by Cameroon).

With regard to the above, from the conclusion of the Paris Peace Treaties in 1919, the French administration showed no willingness to accept Cameroon's international status. Unable to obtain pure and simple assimilation to its territories with colony status, France strove to find from 1920 a favourable interpretation of legal provisions for the conduct of the League's missions.

## **b. The Struggle to Turn the Mandate and Trusteeship Regimes in Cameroon into a Colonial Regime**

The positions mentioned above demonstrate that France opposed an international regime, as well as any mechanism for the control of its management of the territory. The various petitions for annexation constitute political manoeuvres to satisfy French colonial ambitions<sup>32</sup>. One could deduce that for France, Cameroon is a war trophy whose administration should be an integral part of its international sovereignty. Even though the Mandate regime seemed inevitable, due to international pressure, France adopted a partisan interpretation of its obligations arising from the Statutes of the League of Nations by assimilating Cameroon to a colony. One of these interpretations is found in the justification before the Permanent Mandates Commission of the imposition of the French Language in Cameroon. F. Boisson underlines that it "ne faudrait d'ailleurs pas croire qu'administrer sous le régime du Mandat nous impose des sujétions particulières"<sup>33</sup>. (we should not believe that administering under the Mandate regime imposes particular constraints on us). Giovanni Distefano underlines that several currents have emerged from 1920, suggesting sovereignty of the mandatory power over the mandated territory on the one hand, and on the other, the sovereignty of the people with the limited exercise of public power by the mandatory administration<sup>34</sup>. In any case, several elements underpin the assimilation of Cameroon to France colonies. Mandate regime was exerted as a civilising mission which involves the introduction or the imposition of the French Language on the populations of the part of Cameroon whose management is entrusted to France. From the effective control of the territory, General Aymerich transforms German

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<sup>32</sup> ANOM, 21.194, "Partage du Cameroun".

<sup>33</sup> Boisson F., "Le Mandat français au Cameroun", in *Politique Etrangère*, No1, 1938, Pp.59-67.

<sup>34</sup> Giovanni Distefano, "Les territoires sous mandat de la Société des Nations : colonialisme déguisé ou administration internationale ?", in *Mélanges en l'honneur de Piermarco Zen-Ruffinen*, Helbing & Lichtenhan, Bâle, 2011, Pp. 491-512.

schools into the champion of the French education system. He explains this initiative through an obligation to educate, not to exploit the natives<sup>35</sup>, with the sole purpose of reinforcing the collaboration of the local population with the French administration. He targets, through French education, to lead to the cultural transformation of Cameroon by the adoption of French culture and the abandonment of local customs. In this logic, the French administration prohibited, from December 1920, any education in a language other than French<sup>36</sup>. This initiative, liable to condemnation based on the Mandate regime, was justified before the League of Nations by the need to “draw the local population to a higher stage of civilisation<sup>37</sup> “. According to the French administration, the exercise of the mandate would be possible only by the transmission of French cultural values, likely to lead the Cameroonian populations towards the capacity to self-manage<sup>38</sup>. Thus, for France, the League of Nations should limit itself to observe rather than appreciate its action on the Cameroonian territory.

This same position was reflected in relations between France and the United Nations (UN) from 1945, and hence in the execution of the clauses of the Trusteeship. There is no need to recall here General De Gaulle’s opposition to the extensive powers of the UN Security Council. For France, the Trusteeship of Cameroon is a form of legal dressing which cannot remove this territory from the colonial empire. The strategy deployed for this purpose is attested at several levels. On the political level, the creation in 1946 of the French Union, the objective of which was to bring together the overseas territories and departments, the territories under Mandate or Trusteeship as well as those under Protectorate, within the French empire was a turning point in Cameroon’s assimilation policy<sup>39</sup>. Also, Territorial, Legislative, and Representative Assemblies created to integrate colonies in the decision process in France, concerned Cameroon<sup>40</sup>. From an Economic point of view, Cameroon was assimilated to the CFA zone after World War II. This monetary zone was reserved for French colonies to better codify commercial and financial exchanges with France. The integration of Cameroon into the

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<sup>35</sup> Engelbert Atangana, *Cent ans d’éducation scolaire au Cameroun : une réflexion sur la nature, les moyens et les objectifs de l’entreprise (1885 à nos jours)*, Paris, L’Harmattan, 1996, p.17.

<sup>36</sup> Valentin Feussi, *Une construction du Français à Douala-Cameroun*, Ph.D Thesis, Université François Rabelais, Tours, 2006, p.43.

<sup>37</sup> Ousmanou Zourmba, *The Conservation and the enhancement of the German protectorate’s heritage in the city of Douala (Cameroon)*, Master Thesis, Paris I Pantheon Sorbonne/Università Degli Studi di Padova/Univesidade de Evora, 2017, p.69.

<sup>38</sup> Eric A. Ancimbe, *Language Policy and Identity Construction: The Dynamics of Cameroon’s Multilingualism*, John Benjamins Publishing, 2013, p.4.

<sup>39</sup> Benjamin Stora, “Les décolonisations : importance et déni”, in Pascal Blanchard & al (Dir), *Décolonisations françaises. La chute d’un empire*, Editions de la Martinière, 2020, Pp.7-9.

<sup>40</sup> ARCAM (Representative Assembly of Cameroon), ALCAM (Legislative Assembly of Cameroon), ATCAM (Territorial Assembly of Cameroon), legislative structures created in France, have been applied to Cameroon.

CFA zone goes beyond the exercise of the mandates of the League of Nations and of the UN Trusteeship. It reflects an assimilation of the said regimes into the colonial system. It is therefore no surprise that the French administration is pleased to have imposed a colonial system in Cameroon, as highlights below, F. Boisson: “En résumé, nous estimons, à l’heure actuelle, que la colonisation européenne a fait son plein au Cameroun (...)”<sup>41</sup>. (In summary, we believe, at the present time, that European colonisation has been in full swing in Cameroon (...)). In fact, this is observed by the pure and simple application of the administrative system of the mandatory powers on Cameroonian territory<sup>42</sup>.

However, this transformation of international regimes into a form of imperialism came up against the remains of the German presence, especially in Douala, leading the French administration to reinforce the memory dissonance around colonial buildings in this city through *degermanisation* and the fight against Germanophile movements.

## **2. The Substitution of German Urban Traces in Douala Douala**

By substituting itself to Germany, from 1914, France found in Douala, a population greatly embedded in the culture of its enemy. By developing German language teaching programs, by encouraging Cameroonians to learn German, by investing in town planning and agriculture, the Germans had found means of proximity to the local population, which has widely adopted their Language. This constitutes a challenge for the French administration, haunted for years by the hypothesis of a possible return of the Germans. From then on, from 1916, began in Douala, an unspoken program of substitution of traces of the German presence. It is this program that Paul Zang Zang designates by *degermanisation* of Cameroon. He understands by this concept, erasure and substitution, by French cultural traits (education, Language, literature, architecture), of any symbol of the German presence in the city<sup>43</sup>. The *degermanisation* in Douala is notably declined in the search for the accomplices of the Germans within the local populations, the confiscation and the auction of the goods and properties belonging to the native Germans and finally, the fight against the Germanophile movements.

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<sup>41</sup> Boisson F., *Cited.* .

<sup>42</sup> Mark Dike Delancy & al., *Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Cameroon* (4<sup>th</sup> Edition), The Scarcrow Press, 2010., p.237.

<sup>43</sup> Paul Zang Zang, “La dégermanisation du Cameroun”, in *Revue Electronique Internationale des Sciences du Langage*, No14, 2010, Pp. 79-104.

Relying on the support of local population<sup>44</sup> on the military front against the German army in 1914, as well as the Treaty of Versailles of 1919, which stipulates that “Germany renounces, in favour of the allied powers, all its rights and titles over its overseas possessions<sup>45</sup>”, France worked to track down traces of proximity to the Germans. In details, are considered proof of complicity with Germans, any administrative documents book in the German Language. According to Valère Epée, the episodes of this hunt in Douala were so violent that they were inscribed among the markers of the memory of French colonialism. This ethnologist emphasises that the French administration deployed soldiers:

“des hommes en armes dans les cases, dans les maisons individuelles pour fouiller. Si on trouvait le moindre document en allemand, c’était une punition exemplaire. Il y avait dans la rue, un tonneau sur lequel on vous couchait, vous chef de famille, devant vos épouses, vos enfants, vos voisins etc., pour recevoir 25 coups de fouet. S’ils trouvaient par contre des livres, vous êtes un espion des allemands et c’était la prison<sup>46</sup>”.

(armed men in the huts, in the individual houses to search. If any document was found in German, it was an exemplary punishment. There was in the street, a barrel on which you were laid, you, head of the family, in front of your wives, your children, your neighbours, etc., to receive 25 lashes. If they did find books, however, you are a German spy and were sent to prison).

Regarding the confiscation and the auction of German properties in Cameroon, beyond the war context, it appears within France’s approach to devaluate the German tangible remains in Cameroon. It begins with the sequestration by Ordinance of the Court of Douala dated November 16, 1916, with management entrusted to a judicial representative<sup>47</sup>. The public auction began in 1923, based on conditions pertaining to the political context:

“les ressortissants des puissances ex-ennemies sont exclus des enchères, ce qui entraîne pour tout acquéreur éventuel l’obligation, avant de soumissionner ou d’enchérir, d’apporter les preuves en règles de sa nationalité ; que la faculté de déclarer commun est interdite, qu’enfin les adjudicataires ne peuvent dans un délai de cinq ans, revendre les immeubles sans en référer à l’administration locale et sans son agrément<sup>48</sup>”.

(nationals of ex-enemy powers are excluded from auctions, which entails for any prospective purchaser the obligation, before subscribing or bidding, to provide legal proof of his nationality; that the ability to declare common is prohibited, that, finally, the successful tenderers cannot resell the buildings within a period of five years without referring to the local administration and without its approval).

This auction continued until 1950. It implies a program of management of the said goods by the agent of justice. Although archives do not provide detailed information about the

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<sup>44</sup> Philippe-Blaise Essomba, “La guerre des voies de communication au Cameroun, 1914-1916”, *Presses Universitaires de France*, No 248, 2012, pp. 7-26.

<sup>45</sup> Article 119 of the Versailles Treaty of 1919, <http://mjp.univ-perp.fr/traites/1919versailles5.htm>, 07/04/2017.

<sup>46</sup> Valère Epée, interview realized the students of the Lycée Savio (Douala), May 2014, [http://pedagogie.lyceesavioudouala.org/histoire-geographie/app\\_grande-guerre/pages/page\\_7c.htm](http://pedagogie.lyceesavioudouala.org/histoire-geographie/app_grande-guerre/pages/page_7c.htm), 22/02.2021.

<sup>47</sup> Thomas Eric Ndjogui et al., *Historique du secteur palmier à huile au Cameroun*, Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), 2014, p.17.

<sup>48</sup> Anonym (no name), *Bulletin de l’Agence Générale des colonies-1919-1934*, p.595.



concerned belongings, it appears that some of these properties have been the subject of rental exploitation. The Official Journal of French Cameroon mentions that it is the Representative Assembly of Cameroon which authorises the territory to purchase some of the German properties still under sequestration. For example, the respective acquisitions of an urban building located on 1,004 square meters and of a two-storey urban building in Douala, belonging to Woermann Linie, were authorised by various Deliberations of January 25, 1950<sup>49</sup>. This is the case with the DKG property in Bonejang (Douala), comprising a dwelling house with garage built on 3,021 square meters, sold in a lot comprising the assets of this German company in Yaoundé, at a price of 4 million francs<sup>50</sup>.

In addition, the confiscation and liquidation of German belongings in Cameroon served to deter any subsequent return of Germans natives. Their auction, well codified, did not reflect the real value of the goods. France initially refused any repurchase of said belongings by German citizens, preferring French customers and sometimes Cameroonians. Even if due to the loss of the archives, it seems difficult to establish the complete list of German properties liquidated by the French<sup>51</sup>, the change of owner led to destruction, alteration and ruin of some German built remains in Douala. One of the examples is the railway heritage, of which the houses of the employees would have passed into the hands of the private persons before becoming almost common living spaces, without a trace of a historical memory.

Furthermore, France used these properties in Douala as compensation for damages owed by Germany for World War I. This leads to underestimating the values of the goods concerned, the bid price of which is set by the French administration. This is what emerges from an official note, which emphasizes that “la valeur de ces biens doit être déduite de l’indemnité due à la France par l’Allemagne<sup>52</sup>” (the value of these goods must be deducted from the compensation due to France by Germany). The preliminary draft decree, which sets the conditions for the liquidation of said assets provides more details on the strategy of the French administration. This document specifies that the liquidation must be the subject of judicial authorisation, reserving to the French State the power of pre-emption, including that

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<sup>49</sup> Délibérations No21/50 et 24/50 du 25 janvier 1950, *Journal Officiel du Cameroun français*, Pp. 105-106.

<sup>50</sup> Délibération No 34/50 du 25 janvier 1950, *Journal Officiel du Cameroun français*, p. 108.

<sup>51</sup> Philippe-Blaise Essomba, *Le Cameroun : les rivalités d'intérêts franco-allemandes de 1919 à 1932*, Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 2004, p.19.

<sup>52</sup> ADF, “Note : liquidation des biens des Allemands au Cameroun”, in *1918-1940. Afrique, Questions Générales*, 97, p25.

of claiming the property at the minimum price it has set<sup>53</sup>. Therefore, taking of the non-inclusion of German belongings in settlement of the First World War<sup>54</sup>, France used them as part of its strategy to impose its power over Cameroon. The confiscation and liquidation of these belongings led to the deterioration of the German built Remains in cities like Douala.

The most visible axis of the cultural substitution of Germany by France in Douala is directly connected to elements of town planning. The physical features of a city constitute an imprint of the past and are hoisted in the elements which make the visual uniqueness of the urban space. Architecture is a mirror of local know-how. It is integrated into the technical heritage of a locality by symbolising a part of its identity, in particular when there is “un tissu bâti au sein duquel les constructions entretiennent un certain degré de similarité<sup>55</sup>” (a built fabric within which constructions maintain a certain degree of similarity). Architecture contributes to the evolution of societies “en influençant et subissant réciproquement son influence<sup>56</sup>” (by influencing and mutually undergoing its influence).

This interaction between city, architecture and local identity is perfectly described in the diagram below of a case study in Canada, proposed by Imen Ben Jemia.

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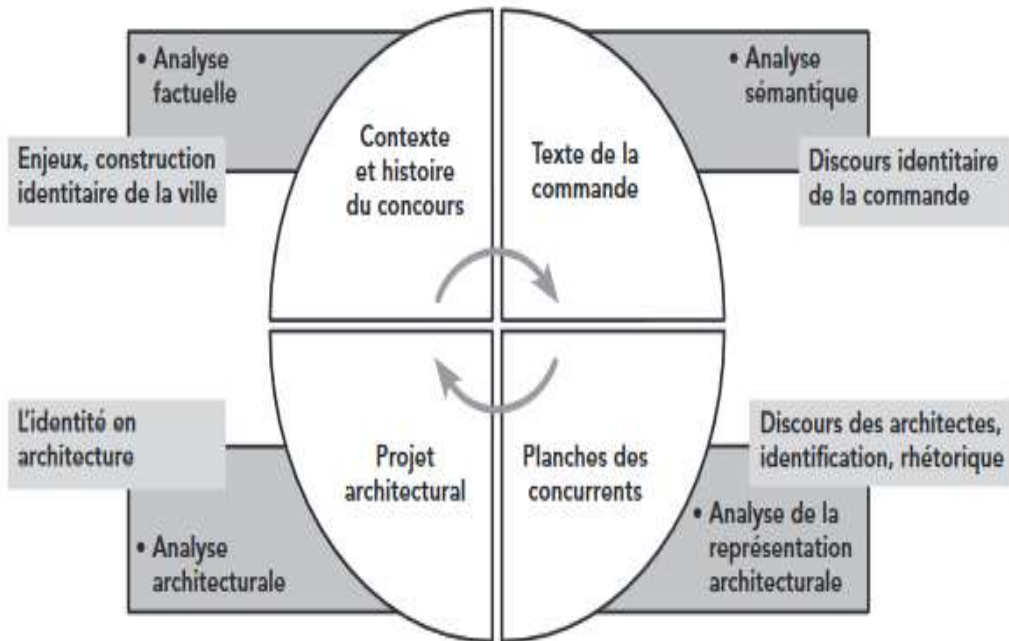
<sup>53</sup> ADF, “Avant-projet de décret relatif à la liquidation des biens ayant fait l’objet d’une mesure de séquestre de guerre dans les territoires du Togo et de l’ancien Cameroun placé sous l’autorité de la France”, in *1918-1940. Afrique, Questions Générales*, 97, p.49.

<sup>54</sup> Refer to: Pierre Renouvin, in *Revue Historique*, vol. 197, No. 1, 1947, Pp. 130–132 ; Georges-Henri Soutou, *La Grande Illusion : quand la France perdait la paix. 1914-1920*, Tallandier, 2015, 379p. ;

<sup>55</sup> Grégoire Hattich, *Architecture, paysage et identité*, Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, 2016.

<sup>56</sup> Imen Ben Jemia, “L’identité en projets. Ville, architecture et patrimoine. Analyse de concours à Québec et à Toronto”, in *Les Cahiers de la Recherche Architecturale et Urbaine*, No30/31, 2014, Pp.173-181.

**Figure 1 : Analytical diagram taken from a case study of the city / architecture / identity interaction**



**Source :** Imen Ben Jemia, “L’identité en projets. Ville, architecture et patrimoine. Analyse de concours à Québec et à Toronto”, in *Les Cahiers de la Recherche Architecturale et Urbaine*, No30/31, 2014, Pp.173-181.

The enhancement of the urban architectural heritage, particularly in the context of tourism projects, is part of a discourse that shapes the perception of the city. Cultural mediation around the architectural heritage is based on the designer’s genius (the architect), the builder (the engineer), as well as the beauty of the site. It thus connects the object to its origins<sup>57</sup>, but also to its past use as well as the local representations that result from it. Therefore, urban construction is part of sustainability that becomes dissonant when the city changes occupants, especially by war episode. This is what Hila Zaban describes when referring to the architecture of an enemy in the confines of Jerusalem<sup>58</sup>. The same is true of David Bruce and Oliver Creighton, who evoke discrepancies in European town walls and walled towns that recalls a rejected gentrification period<sup>59</sup>.

Correlated with the colonial ambition of France in Cameroon, this analysis of the role of town planning in the construction of an urban identity highlights the malaise of the French

<sup>57</sup> Julie Manfredini, “Repenser la ville : la construction des identités urbaines à travers la publicité touristique”, in *Revue Franco-Brésilien de Géographie*, No36, 2018, <http://journals.openedition.org/confins/14502>, 02/11/2020.

<sup>58</sup> Hila Zaban, “Preserving ‘the Enemy’s’ architecture: preservation and gentrification in a formerly Palestinian Jerusalem neighbourhood”, in *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, Vol.23, 2017, Pp.961-976.

<sup>59</sup> David Bruce & Oliver Creighton, “Contested Identities: The Dissonant Heritage of European Town Walls and Walled Towns”, *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, Vol. 12, NO 3, Pp. 234-254.

administration, in 1914, with the urban landscape of Douala. This justifies the “francizing” of the city by stripping it of its German traces. One of the first axes was the modification of the German names of the streets of the city. These German names basically reflected urban planning as imagined by the administration of the Protectorate. As a reminder, at the beginning of the 20th century, a master plan for the development of the city of Douala was created. This plan<sup>60</sup> provided in particular for the extension of the port area, the creation of an administrative centre on the Joss plateau (currently known as Bonanjo), the repression of populations living in these spaces, pushed to move in suburb areas, separated from the white city by a free zone area of 1000 meters<sup>61</sup>. In the so-called European or white city provided for by this master plan, there are typically German street names mixed with some Cameroonian names<sup>62</sup>. Most city maps from the German period show that not only the streets have German and Cameroonian names, but also public places are clearly named in the German Language. We find for example *Breite Strasse*, *Sosenallee*, *Woermann Strasse*, *Ziegelstrasse*, *Grüner Weg*, *Bonaku Strasse*, *Japoma Strasse* among others. Regarding the public places, examples are *Haussa Platz*, *Marien Platz*, et *Öffentlicher Park*<sup>63</sup> as shown in the maps preserved in the national archives of Cameroon<sup>64</sup>.

The French administration, therefore, took the initiative to change the German names of the streets of the city of Douala, definitively imposing a new cultural landscape. Most of these names, sometimes without a direct link with the history of Cameroon, have been preserved until today, to the point where some observers have not failed to note a kind of alienation from France.

## **II. A difficult Reconciliation of the Colonial memories in Imperial Powers Around the Enhancement of Their Built Remains in Douala**

The accession of Cameroon to independence on January 1, 1960, brought the colonial heritage back to the rank of vestiges of the past that should be considered in the process of

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<sup>60</sup> See Chapter III for more details.

<sup>61</sup> Philippe Haeringer, “Propriété foncière et politiques urbaines à Douala”, *Cahiers d’Etudes Africaines* No51, Vol. XIII, 1973, pp. 469-496

<sup>62</sup> Lire à ce sujet, le chapitre III de la présente thèse.

<sup>63</sup> ANY, *F.T. 16, Carte de la ville de Douala en 1916*.

<sup>64</sup> The state of conservation of the maps of the city of Douala, in the funds of the German period, at the National Archives of Cameroon in Yaoundé, makes it difficult, if not impossible, to reproduce them, to provide them for illustration in the present Thesis.

constituting a national cultural and historical heritage. This process now involves taking into account the interests of the French and German imperial powers, which have become “historical” or even “privileged” partners, in reference to the official speeches in Cameroon. On the other hand, the French opposition to the demands for autonomy formulated for decades augured a difficult post-independence relationship with the legacy of the colonial past. The antagonism exuberated by the memory dynamics around the Cameroonian colonial past in Germany and France rubs off on attempts at reconciliation through the implementation of the Shared Built Heritage approach in Douala to overcome oblivion. Selective and nostalgia of the ancient colonial empire.

### **A. The Scheme of National Shame: Denial of Colonial Past, Selective Oblivion and Nostalgia for Former Colonial Empires**

A cross-examination of the relationships to the Cameroonian colonial past in Germany and France reveals a level of antagonism, consubstantial with a complicit renunciation and a nostalgia for a “glorious” past. If Germany has been trying, for a few years now, to assume its colonial past, France for its part remains cautious and takes on half-hearted parts, refusing any attempt likely to make it bear a responsibility that could lead to compensation or poison its interest in Cameroon, gained from that colonial past. For accuracy, this subsection presents first the postcolonial memories post-1960 Germany, followed by France.

#### **1. Post-1960 Germany and It's Colonial Built-Remains in Douala**

In 1919, the Treaties of Versailles, which sealed the settlement of the Great War, dismembered Germany from its colonial possessions<sup>65</sup>. Notwithstanding the pan-German ambition of the 1930s, German power has definitively re-entered the category of countries with colonial heritage, with reference to its former European and colonial empire<sup>66</sup>. Therefore, the decolonisation of Cameroon has concerned the German public only by extrapolating from the past. Moreover, the question of colonial memories in Germany has its roots in the Germanophile movements, which bear witness at least to colonial nostalgia

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<sup>65</sup> Beyond cutting Germany off its colonies, the Covenant of the League of Nations demarcated the borders between Germany and its neighbors. See article 27 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, <https://www.herodote.net/Textes/tVersailles1919.pdf>, 12/12/2020 ; Dominique Lejeune, “Extraits du Traité de Versailles (28 juin 1919). Commentaire de texte”, <https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/cel-01493587/document>, 12/12/2020.

<sup>66</sup> Joachim Zeller, “Berlin dekolonisieren. Das Afrika-Haus präsentiert die Dauerausstellung „Berlin - ein postkolonialer Gedächtnisraum“”, <http://lernen-aus-der-geschichte.de/Lernen-und-Lehren/content/14793>, 12/12/2020.

but also to the heavy liabilities of the legacy atoned for by Nazism from the late 1940s on. On the other hand, other facts, especially observed from the late 1990s, tend to underline the end of amnesia in favour of the assumption of the colonial past. Thomas Thiemeyer explains this evolution by four main reasons:

“Four reasons seem to me to be significant: first, Germany’s transformed self-conception into that of a country of immigration; second, the widely publicised debates surrounding the Berlin Humboldt Forum; third, the changing place of the Holocaust within the German culture of remembrance; fourth, international debates about the rights of ownership of cultural heritage within contexts of injustice, namely art looted by the Nazis and collections from the colonial period<sup>67</sup>”.

Thus, with a view to a concise schematic view of the relationship in Germany to The Cameroonian colonial past from 1960 onset, this subsection presents, on the one hand, the amnesia towards a painful past that should not add to the shame of the Nazi regime, and the cautious reconciliation from the 2000s on.

### **a. An Amnesia From a too More Painful Past**

After the Second World War, Germany experienced serious difficulty in meeting its historical liabilities, not only because of human disasters but also because the priority was to reconstruction and unification to a lesser extent. The Second World War, due to the horrors of the Holocaust, the loss of human life recorded in Germany and in Europe in general, led to certain schizophrenia vis-à-vis the colonial past<sup>68</sup>. Most Germans especially did not want to reinforce the hard memory of the horrors of Nazism by stirring up the wounds of the German colonial system, whose heritage is otherwise geographically distant from the country.

Especially regarding the relations with the colonial past, the momentary oblivion is explained in particular by the absence of a strong, active diaspora in the main German cities<sup>69</sup>, capable of raising questions in public opinion on their trajectories and their origins<sup>70</sup>. Indeed, unlike other European powers such as France or Great Britain, post-1960, Germany did not welcome considerable masses of migrants from its former African territorial possessions. This

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<sup>67</sup> Thomas Thiemeyer, “Cosmopolitizing Colonial Memories in Germany”, <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdf/10.1086/703964>, 13/01/2021.

<sup>68</sup> Wendt Johannes, “L’anamnèse du colonialisme allemand”, *L’homme et la société*, No 175, 2010, pp. 57-80, <http://www.cairn.info/revue-l-homme-et-la-societe-2010-1-page-57.htm>

<sup>69</sup> There are stories of an arrival in Germany of black soldiers belonging to its army, on which it would be advisable to further research to find possible descendants. More details in: Stefanie Michels, *Schwarze deutsche Kolonialsoldaten. Mehrdeutige Repräsentationsräume und früher Kosmopolitismus in Afrika*, Bielefeld, Transcript Verlag, 2009, 265p.

<sup>70</sup> Anonym (No name), “Facing the Past to Liberate the Future: Colonial Africa in the German Mind”, *Humanity in Action*, <http://www.humanityinaction.org/knowledgebase/246-facing-the-past-to-liberate-the-future-colonial-africa-in-the-german-mind>, 06/03/2017.

fact confirms colonial amnesia, described as follows, by Michael Perraudin and Jürgen Zimmerer:

“For almost 60 years, from the end of the World War Two, The German public had forgotten about its colonial empire. Whereas other European powers experienced the traumatic violence of decolonisation, Germans believed that they have nothing to do with the colonial exploitation of the large parts of Africa, Asia or South America. They were innocent – so many believed – of the devastations brought about by European colonialism and therefore could engage with the new-postcolonial world without the dark shadow of the colonial past<sup>71</sup>”.

On the other hand, this questionable reality does not correspond with the responsibility and the role of Germany in the African colonial past, in particular, because of the organisation of the Berlin conference of 1884 1885<sup>72</sup>. Germany is a colonial power that enjoys a long passivity towards Africa<sup>73</sup>. Nevertheless, in a context of nationalism that leads to denying the past, Germany has surfed on this context to refute its involvement in the debates relating to the colonial past and African independence in the 1960s. Consequently, the Germans in their majority, ignore, if not, know little about this episode in the history of their country, as noted by Christian Kopp, member of the Berlin Post Kolonial Association: “le thème du colonialisme allemand a trop longtemps été négligé et très peu étudié dans les écoles. (...) Lorsqu’il l’est, il concerne la France et la Grande Bretagne mais pas l’Allemagne<sup>74</sup>”. (the theme of German colonialism has been neglected for too long and very little studied in schools. (...) When it is, it concerns France and Great Britain but not Germany). In this same line, Henning Melber & Reinhard Kössler claim that :

“many Germans are not even aware that their country once ruled colonies in Africa, Oceania and China. Such public amnesia about Germany’s colonial past does not imply only a lack of knowledge. Rather it manifests in the refusal to acknowledge the practice of German colonialism and countenance the consequences<sup>75</sup>”.

Until the end of the 20th century, one of the major actions concerning colonial memory in Germany was the modification of some street names celebrating the actors of the German colonial system. This option continues until a recent period, with the announcement by the City of Berlin, to rename certain streets of the capital, to give them names that recall the African

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<sup>71</sup> Michael Perraudin & Jürgen Zimmerer (Eds.), *German Colonialism and National Identity*, Routledge, 2010, p.1.

<sup>72</sup> Monika Albrecht, “Postcolonialism and migration into Germany’s colonial past”, in *German Life and Letters*, Vol.65, No3, 2012, Pp. 363-377

<sup>73</sup> Sebastian Conrad, “Rethinking German Colonialism in a Global Age”, in *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol.41, No4, 203, Pp.543-566.

<sup>74</sup> Delphine Nerbollier, “Berlin décolonise ses rues”, *La Croix*, <http://www.la-croix.com/Monde/Europe/Berlin-decolonise-rues-2017-02-08-1200823357>, 02/04/2017.

<sup>75</sup> Henning Melber & Reinhard Kössler, “Colonial amnesia and Germany’s efforts to achieve ‘internal liberation’”, <https://theconversation.com/colonial-amnesia-and-germanys-efforts-to-achieve-internal-liberation-138840>, 13/01/2021.

actors of the anti-colonial struggle, like Rudolf Douala Manga. Bell, Maria Mandesi Bell for Cameroon<sup>76</sup>. It involves changing the names of the streets Petersallee (bearing the name of Carl Peters) inaugurated in 1939, Lüderitzstrasse (immortalising Adolf Lüderitz), which exists since 1902 and Nachtigal Strasse<sup>77</sup>.

It appears from the above that Germany is moving towards an assumption of its colonial past by recognising the facts, by assuming them and thus paving the way to reconciliation.

## **b. A cautious Assumption of the Colonial Past in Cameroon**

In the image of other colonial powers, the colonial memory in Germany is largely dominated by the Herero issue. To summarise very shortly, the massacre of the Herero and Namas refers to an episode of the German military conquest in Namibia, which resulted, between 1904 and 1907, in the extermination of about 80% of the populations, made up of resistance fighters<sup>78</sup>. The number of deaths in prisons (which some equate to concentration camps) varies between 40,000 and 100,000<sup>79</sup>. Several years after independence, historians, politicians, and descendants of the Herero demanded recognition and subsequent damages reparation<sup>80</sup>.

Despite this struggle for recognition by descendants of the Hereros, the colonial issue gained public in Germany openly from 2004. This is the year that saw the commemoration in Berlin, of the centenary of the genocide of the Hereros, and of the 120th anniversary of the Berlin Conference of 1884 fixing the rules of the colonial partition of Africa.

Pressure from Namibian scientific and political circles resonated in Germany. In 2004, the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Greens introduced in the Federal Parliament a text whose objective is to restore the memory of the victims of war in the former

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<sup>76</sup> Gwénaëlle Deboutte, "Allemagne : Berlin renomme ses rues en l'honneur des résistants africains au colonialisme", *Jeune Afrique*, <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/mag/371742/societe/alle-magne-berlin-renomme-rues-lhonneur-de-resistants-africains-colonialisme/>, consulté le 05 avril 2016.

<sup>77</sup> Nathalie Steiwer, "Noms racistes et passé colonial, Berlin renomme ses espaces publics", *Belgique La Libre*, <http://www.lalibre.be/actu/international/noms-racistes-et-passe-colonial-berlin-renomme-ses-espaces-publics-58517219cd70d27636995c5d>, consulté le 16 mars 2017.

<sup>78</sup> Lars Muller, "'We Need to Get Away from a Culture of Denial'? The German-Herero War in Politics and Textbooks", in *Journal of Educational Media Memory and Society*, No5, Vol 1., 2013, Pp.30-71.

<sup>79</sup> Vilho Amukwaya Shigwedha, "The Return of Herero and Nama Bones from Germany: the Victims' Struggle for Recognition and Recurring Genocide Memories in Namibia." In Jean-Marc Dreyfus and Élisabeth Anstett (Eds.) *Human Remains in Society: Curation and Exhibition in the Aftermath of Genocide and Mass-Violence*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2016, Pp. 197–219.

<sup>80</sup> Morgan Karie L., "Remembering against the nation-state: Hereros' pursuit of restorative justice". In *Time & Society*. No 21, Vol.1, 2012, Pp.21-38.



German colonies of East Africa and West Africa. Through this commitment, these two political parties want their country to assume responsibility for the damage caused by its colonial system. At the same time, there was a demand for the construction of a monument in the Neuköln (Berlin) cemetery in memory of the African fighters of colonialism. The hope of these two initiatives, witnesses of the importance of the colonial past in public debates in Germany, was to succeed in laying the groundwork for a reconciliation with the painful memories surrounding said past in Africa. They were, however, despoiled by the ruling class, which managed to prune the strongest proposals contained in the resolution introduced by the Social Democratic party, in particular the German responsibility for the Herero massacre<sup>81</sup>. On the other hand, several other associative organisations began to take more interest in the colonial question. Thus, in June 2004, the Global African Congress, Internationale Liga für Menschenrechte, Gesellschaft für bedröhte Völker organised a press conference and a public demonstration, asking, beyond commemorative plaques, to make the colonial past a public debate, to eliminate postcolonial structures, as well as pay for repairs.

In line with this growing interest of Germany for its external heritage, it is worth highlighting the artistic retouching brought to the Edéa railway bridge in Cameroon in 2011 to give it an image of a symbol of cultural exchange between the two countries. This bridge, built as part of the section of the Centre railway line, the work of which was interrupted by the First World War, was at the heart of an artistic project called “pont colutrel - flanneurs d’Edéa<sup>82</sup>”, supported by the Goethe Institute in Yaoundé, in collaboration with government institutions, the German Embassy, Doual’Art, Cameroonian artists and local associations. This broad spectrum of stakeholders responds to the objective of popular acceptance to give the project a chance for success. In addition, in the notice presenting the project, the Goethe Institute evokes the German colonial past as the basis of intercultural dialogue between Cameroon and Germany.

Symbol of the technological prowess of German buildings in Cameroon, the Edéa railway bridge, by its solidity (it has always remained in use), testifies to the quality of German achievements. Within the framework of the operations of the First World War, it was at the heart of the military strategies of the forces in presence. According to Philippe Blaise Essomba,

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<sup>81</sup> Wendt Johannes, *op. cit.*

<sup>82</sup> Anonym (No name), “Le projet ‘Pont culturel - Les Flâneurs d’Edéa’”, <https://www.goethe.de/resources/files/pdf12/pk8651223.pdf>, 11/11/2020.

Germany had planned its destruction to slow down the expeditionary troops who were moving towards Douala<sup>83</sup>.

**Figure 2: A View of the German Railway Bridge in Edéa**



**Source :** Pascal Ndjock Nyobe, “De l’étudiant TPTI au professionnel du patrimoine historique et culturel”, in *TPTI’s Newsletter*, No13, 2020, Pp.9-12.

According to Pascal Ndjock Nyobe’s brief presentation, the construction of this bridge mobilised various German engineers, who worked on the structure, its adaptation to the type of soil and the flow of the affected bed of the Sanaga River as well as its form. In particular, the choice of the arched shape was aimed at supporting the metal structure of the bridge<sup>84</sup>, but also symbolises the connection between peoples.

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<sup>83</sup> Philippe-Blaise Essomba, “La guerre des voies de communication au Cameroun, 1914-1916”, *Cited*.

<sup>84</sup> Pascal Ndjock Nyobe, « De l’étudiant TPTI au professionnel du patrimoine historique et culturel », in *TPTI’s Newsletter*, No13, 2020, Pp.9-12.

Beyond this project which materialises a German desire for reconciliation with the colonial history of Cameroon, the organisation at the *Historisches Museum* in Berlin from November 14, 2016, to May 14, 2017, of an exhibition on German colonialism, in general, participates in the popularisation and appropriation of the colonial past. Furnished with images and light texts, this exhibition recalls both the borders of the German colonial empire and the memory of this episode in its history, however, stripped of the elements of racism. Moreover, the flyer of the History Museum presenting this exhibition emphasises that these are only fragments of history<sup>85</sup>.

From the above, it appears that beyond the amnesia of a past which refuses to pass, of a desire to idealise a “brief colonialism”, Germany is progressively carried towards the recognition and the will of assuming responsibility for its colonial past. Actions have thus been taken, in line with this logic, even if they fall short of the expectations of a certain uncompromising opinion on the damage caused by European countries to Africa in the context of colonisation. This evolution is nevertheless different from France, where the relationship to the colonial past seems largely to be dominated by nostalgia.

## **2. Colonial Memories in Postcolonial France: Between National Shame, Idealisation and the Nostalgia of Colonial Empire**

Based on political speeches, paintings and, to some extent scientific analysis, this presentation aims to show the predominance of nostalgia for the colonial empire, the temptation to idealise and partisan empathy among others, predominate in the relations with the colonial past in France.

### **a. The Nostalgia of the French Colonial Empire**

As for colonial nostalgia, it is rooted in the lost greatness of France, which was based on its colonial empire. In 1943, France had the second-largest empire in the world. The country had more than twelve million square kilometres of territory, with under its control about seventy million so-called indigenous populations<sup>86</sup>. It is in this respect that some French nationalists view the colonial past as a glorious period. This rhetoric turns the wars of

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<sup>85</sup> Anonym (no name),” German Colonialism Fragments Past and Present”, *Deutsches Historisches Museum*, Berlin, <https://www.dhm.de/en/ausstellungen/german-colonialism.html>, consulté le 12 décembre 2016.

<sup>86</sup> Pascal Blanchard & al., *Décolonisations françaises : la chute d'un empire*, Editions de la Martinière, 2020, p.17.

independence in Africa and Asia into movements of subversion against the imperial crown. Referred to as the “wealth of the Great France<sup>87</sup>”, the colonies supplied France with raw materials and constituted its main outlet for selling its industrial production. They were the cornerstone of its power and cemented national pride. The organisation of a colonial exhibition in 1931<sup>88</sup> fell within this framework. At the opening of the stands, the Minister of Colonies, Paul Reynaud, gave a sufficiently clear speech:

“Le but essentiel de l'Exposition est de donner aux Français conscience de leur Empire, pour reprendre le mot des hommes de la Convention. Il faut que chacun d'entre nous se sente citoyen de la plus grande France, celle des cinq parties du monde ... La France métropolitaine a le plus grand territoire de l'Europe après la Russie. Elle n'est cependant que la vingt-troisième partie de l'Empire français<sup>89</sup>”.

(The main purpose of the exhibition is to make the French aware of their empire, to use the word of the men of the Convention. Each of us must feel a citizen of the greatest France, that of the five parts of the world ... Metropolitan France has the largest territory in Europe after Russia. It is however only the twenty-third part of the French Empire).

The colonial empire was thus the symbol of the greatness of France, imposed on the African and Asian peoples. Therefore, according to Benjamin Stora, for France, the accession to independence of the colonies crystallizes a remorse which (is built on the feeling of a political defeat and the withdrawal of the territories long considered as French. This undeniable wound of French nationalism is struggling to heal) “se construit sur le sentiment d'une défaite politique et du retrait des territoires longtemps considérés comme français. Cette blessure indéniable du nationalisme français a du mal à se refermer<sup>90</sup>”. This feeling of defeat explains a certain ambiguity in the politics of colonial memories in France in the 1960s. It is specifically the policies of selective oblivion, of polishing memories of the colonial past by classifying the archives of wars of decolonisation. Cameroon's war of independence is included in this register and is thus subject to silence in France<sup>91</sup>. The related archive data has been classified as a defence secret, making it difficult to reconstruct and interpret its various episodes. These politics of selective forgetting can be explained by the fact that (the Republic did not know what to do with the colonial past. Successive presidents and governments have therefore

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<sup>87</sup> Catherine Hodeir & Michel Pierre, *L'exposition coloniale : 1931*, Editions complexes, 1991, p.7.

<sup>88</sup> Charles-Robert Ageron, “L'exposition coloniale de 1931. Mythe républicain ou mythe impérial”, in *De l'Algérie Française à l'Algérie Algérienne*, Vol.1, 2005, Pp.369-386 ; Steve Ungar, “La France impériale exposée en 1931 : une apothéose”, in Sandrine Lemaire (éd.), *Culture coloniale 1871-1931*. Paris, Autrement, 2 003, Pp.201-211.

<sup>89</sup> Girardet Raoul, “L'apothéose de la ‘plus grande France’ : l'idée coloniale devant l'opinion française (1930-1935)”, in *Revue française de Science Politique*, No6, 1968, Pp.1085-10114.

<sup>90</sup> Benjamin Stora, “Les décolonisations : importance et déni”, in (préface) Pascal Blanchard et al., *Op.cit.*, Pp.7-9.

<sup>91</sup> Pierre Abomo, “Les destin politique de la mémoire du nationalisme Camerounais : entre réhabilitation et rejet”, in *Cahiers Mémoire et Politique*, No4, 2015, Pp.81-98.

decided to do nothing (to overcome the traumas of the past) “la République n’a pas su quoi faire du passé colonial. Les présidents et gouvernements qui se sont succédé ont donc décidé de ne rien faire (pour dépasser les traumatismes du passé)<sup>92</sup>”. In this same line, Pascal Blanchard claims that the accession of the African colonies to independence deepens a trauma which associates the history of decolonisation with a painful episode in French national life.:

“au regard de ces histoires traumatiques, mieux valait *oublier* ou transformer ces phases peu glorieuses, pour réinvestir le rêve de la “grandeur de la France”. Le choc des décolonisations avait en effet été d’autant plus brutal que, jusqu’au bout, la propagande coloniale et les pouvoirs successifs avaient martelé sans relâche le refrain obsédant de la “mission civilisatrice” de la France, apportant généreusement progrès économique et bonheur social à des populations reconnaissantes<sup>93</sup>”.

(in view of these traumatic stories, it was better to *forget* or transform these inglorious phases, to reinvest the dream of “the greatness of France”. The shock of decolonisation had indeed been all the more brutal since, until the end, colonial propaganda and successive powers had relentlessly hammered home the haunting refrain of France’s “civilising mission “, generously bringing economic progress and social happiness to grateful population).

From the point of view of the ultra-nationalists generally grouped within the extreme right-wing, Anna Bozzo recognises an influence of the French colonial past, which is still exerted today. According to her, this colonial past is even at the heart of the thought of right-wing political movements in France<sup>94</sup>. In their political speeches, the reference to the decolonisation of Africa appears as a political failure, a disintegration of the French Empire. Olivier Dard underlines in this regard that “la défense de l’Empire colonial conjugue plusieurs éléments. En premier lieu, la perpétuation d’une puissance de la France mise à mal par le second conflit mondial et ce même si la France compte parmi les vainqueurs<sup>95</sup>” (The defense of the colonial Empire combines several elements. In the first place, the perpetuation of the power of France undermined by the second world conflict and this even if France is among the winners). Also, nationalism in France is directly linked “à l’essence même du jacobinisme qui, s’il se présente sous le label d’un universalisme, entend d’abord assurer la domination d’une couleur, d’une religion et d’un genre. Un « universalisme » donc blanc, masculin et catholique<sup>96</sup>”. (to the very essence of Jacobinism, which, if it presents itself under the label of universalism, first of all, intends to ensure the domination of one colour, one religion and one genre. A “universalism” therefore white, masculine, and Catholic).

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<sup>92</sup> Anonym (no name), “Quand “Valeurs actuelles” répète les pires mythes coloniaux”, <https://histoirecoloniale.net/Quand-Valeurs-actuelles-repete-les-pires-mythes-coloniaux.html>, 12/06/2020.

<sup>93</sup> Pascal Blanchard et al., *Op., Cit.*, p.226.

<sup>94</sup> Anna Bozzo, “Islam and the Republic: A long uneasy History”, Nicolas Bancel & al. (Eds), *The Colonial Legacy in France: Fracture, Rupture and Apartheid*, Indiana University Press, 2017, Pp.123-129.

<sup>95</sup> Olivier Dard, “Les droites radicales et l’empire colonial au vingtième siècle”, in Philippe Vervaecke, *A Droite de la Droite : Droites radicales en France et en Grande Bretagne au XXème Siècle*, Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2012, Pp.169-193.

<sup>96</sup> Esther Benbassa, “La France en situation postcoloniale ?”, in *Mouvements*, HSN01, 2011, Pp.9-12.

An attempt to idealise French action in its former colonies supports this resentment towards decolonisation.

## **b. From Shame to the Idealisation of Colonial Action in Africa**

The rhetoric of colonial nostalgia in France is coupled with the idealisation of the heritage of French colonialism, especially in Africa, with the ambition of clearing France of all the accusations made against it by the decolonisation movements as well as supporters of ‘compensation’ for colonial damage. In this register, historians with sulphurous positions, like Bernard Lugan<sup>97</sup> stand out by a desire to “finir avec cette ‘honte française’ imprégnée dans nos esprits par des slogans de culpabilisateurs<sup>98</sup>” (end with this “French shame” impregnated in our minds by guilty slogans). He stands for a deliberately beneficial assessment for Africans, of the French colonial presence. He claims that France has provided Africa with high-quality infrastructure that meets European standards:

“Durant ses quelques décennies d’existence la colonisation n’a pas pillé l’Afrique. La France s’y est même épuisée en y construisant 50 000 km de routes bitumées, 215 000 km de pistes toutes saisons, 18.000 km de voies ferrées, 63 ports équipés, 196 aérodromes, 2 000 dispensaires équipés, 600 maternités, 220 hôpitaux dans lesquels les soins et les médicaments étaient gratuits<sup>99</sup>”.

(During its few decades of existence, colonisation did not plunder Africa. France has even exhausted itself there by building 50,000 km of paved roads, 215,000 km of all-season tracks, 18,000 km of railways, 63 equipped ports, 196 airfields, 2,000 equipped dispensaries, 600 maternities, 220 hospitals in which care and medication were free).

Disregarding forced labour and the mechanism for financing colonial projects in Africa, this historian goes back to the theses of the civilising mission and maintains that France has brought peace and stability to Africa<sup>100</sup>. Therefore, he suggests that in the current world balance, the balance of profit from colonisation is against Europe.

The speech delivered in Dakar on July 26, 2007 by French President Nicolas Sarkozy is very significant of the approach of the French political class towards colonial history and the history of decolonisation. The symbolism of this speech lies in the place where it was delivered.

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<sup>97</sup> Bernard Lugan is a French historian born May 10, 1946. He is the author of several books and publications in which he tries to trivialize the responsibility of European colonial systems in the plunder of Africa. These essays also aim to “put an end” to what he calls the received ideas on colonization as well as to demonstrate the colonial benefits for Africa. Refer to : Bernard Lugan, *Pour en finir avec la colonisation : L’Europe et l’Afrique. XVè-XXème siècle*, Editions du Rocher, 2017, 388p., Bernard Lugan, *Osons dire la vérité à l’Afrique*, Editions du Rocher, 2019, 224p.

<sup>98</sup> Léa Pajon, “Colonie, une nostalgie française”, <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/547934/culture/colonies-une-nostalgie-francaise/>, 04/04.2018.

<sup>99</sup> Bernard Lugan, “L’escroquerie historique de la ‘légende noire’ de la colonisation”, <https://www.asafrance.fr/item/bernard-lugan-l-escroquerie-historique-de-la-legende-noire-de-la-colonisation.html>, 13/12/2020.

<sup>100</sup> Bernard Lugan, “Le vrai bilan de la colonisation en Afrique”, <https://lesquen.fr/2016/03/15/le-bilan-positif-de-la-colonisation-en-afrique/>, 13/04/2020.

It is the Cheik Anta Diop University of Dakar, a place of African knowledge and the re-writing of African history by Africans. Then, this speech is the first that this French President delivered in sub-Saharan Africa. In his remarks, the French President indicates that he wants to address:

“Africains qui sont si différents les uns des autres, qui n'ont pas la même langue, qui n'ont pas la même religion, qui n'ont pas les mêmes coutumes, qui n'ont pas la même culture, qui n'ont pas la même histoire et qui pourtant se reconnaissent les uns les autres comme des Africains<sup>101</sup>”.

(Africans who are so different from each other, who do not have the same Language, who do not have the same religion, who do not have the same customs, who do not have the same culture, who do not have the same, not the same story and who nevertheless recognise each other as Africans).

In this speech, the author recognises the symbolism of places. However, he tries to make a mockery of the thesis of the cultural unicity of the peoples of Africa, defended by Cheik Anta Diop<sup>102</sup>. Consequently, African authors and historians have seen in it a frontal attack on Africa, or even “an often appalling display of absurdities, approximations and intellectual conformism<sup>103</sup> “. The remainder of the speech focused on demonstrating that the civilising mission of European settlers in Africa was cut short by the decolonisation movements. It notes in this regard that :

“La colonisation n'est pas responsable de toutes les difficultés actuelles de l'Afrique. Elle n'est pas responsable des guerres sanglantes que se font les Africains entre eux. Elle n'est pas responsable des génocides. Elle n'est pas responsable des dictateurs. Elle n'est pas responsable du fanatisme. Elle n'est pas responsable de la corruption, de la prévarication. Elle n'est pas responsable des gaspillages et de la pollution<sup>104</sup>”.

(Colonisation is not responsible for all of Africa's current difficulties. It is not responsible for the bloody wars that Africans are waging among themselves. It is not responsible for genocides. It is not responsible for dictators. It is not responsible for fanaticism. It is not responsible for corruption, for prevarication. It is not responsible for waste and pollution).

According to him, beyond the looting, the imposition of languages, religions and other elements of Western culture, the settlers also contributed a lot to Africa, including the construction of roads, bridges, hospitals, schools and dispensaries. The consequence of decolonisations, by analysing his speech, is that they have left Africa on the margins of globalisation<sup>105</sup>. The caricature below by Damien Glez is illustrative of the meaning of this speech.

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<sup>101</sup> Anonym (no name), “Le discours de Dakar de Nicolas Sarkozy. L'intégralité du discours du président de la République, prononcé le 26 juillet 2007”, [https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2007/11/09/le-discours-de-dakar\\_976786\\_3212.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2007/11/09/le-discours-de-dakar_976786_3212.html), 12/04/2020.

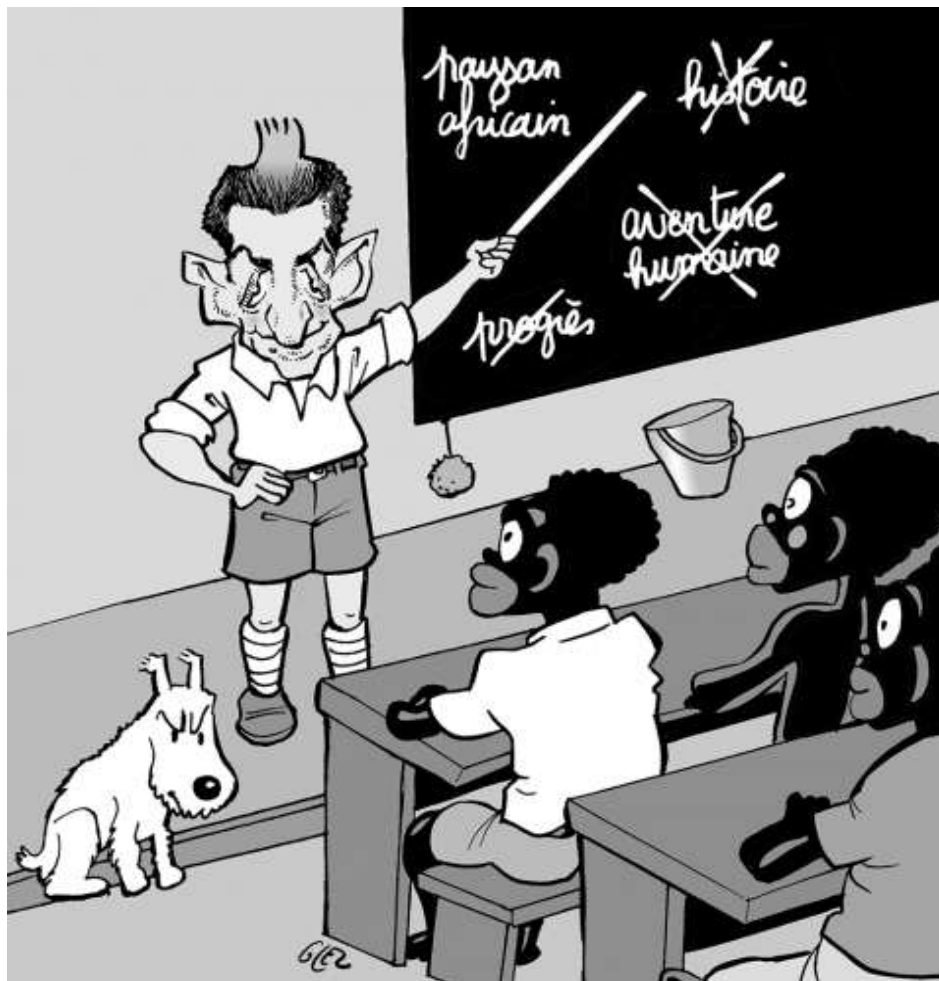
<sup>102</sup> Cheik Anta Diop, *L'unicité culturelle de l'Afrique noire*, Paris, Présence Africaine, 2000.

<sup>103</sup> Catherine Mazauric & al., « A propos du “Discours de Dakar” », in *Etudes Littéraires Africaines*, No27, 2009, Pp.74-82.

<sup>104</sup> Anonyme, « France – Sénégal : extraits du discours de Dakar prononcé par Nicolas Sarkozy en 2007 », <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/173901/politique/france-s-n-gal-extraits-du-discours-de-dakar-prononc-par-nicolas-sarkozy-en-2007/>, 12/04/2020.

<sup>105</sup> Jean-Pierre Chrétien, « Le discours de Dakar. Le Poids idéologique d'un ‘africanisme’ traditionnel », in *Esprit*, No339, 2007, Pp.163-181.

**Figure 3: Caricature of Dakar Speech by Damien Glez.**



**Source :** Pascale Barthélémy, “Nul ne peut faire comme si rien n’est arrivé”. Retour sur la réception du “Discours de Dakar””, in *Ailleurs*, No7, 2011, Pp.33-42.

This caricature represents Nicolas Sarkozy in the posture of a teacher facing Africans dumbfounded by the content of his argument. This is a postulate that puts all of Africa at the level of a peasant, without history and on the fringes of history, incapable of innovation and progress. Furthermore, according to Sarkozy, Africa is at the peripheries of the great human adventure of globalisation. The depiction of the individual character of Sarkozy, represents him under the figure of a monster who acts as a negationist. Achille Mbembe claims in this regard that the African vision of the French right-wing under the presidency of Nicolas Sarkozy takes up the Hegelian vision of Africa, considered as (the land of still substance and the dazzling,



joyful and tragic mess of creation) “le pays de la substance immobile et du désordre éblouissant, joyeux et tragique de la création<sup>106</sup>”.

This speech thus demonstrates the discordance of colonial memories, at least between the French right-wing and African intellectuals and politicians<sup>107</sup>. It also displays the desire to idealise the French colonial heritage in Africa, by clearing France of all accusations of exploitation, looting, wars among others, brought against it by a large majority of Africans<sup>108</sup>. The painting below, taken from the website of the National Liberal Party<sup>109</sup>, testifies to an idealistic vision of French colonialism in Africa.

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<sup>106</sup> Achille Mbembe, “L’Afrique de Nicolas Sarkozy”, in *Mouvements*, No52, 2007, Pp.65-73.

<sup>107</sup> In a collective book published in 2013, some African historians expressed critical analyzes of the Dakar speech. The authors stand against the remarks made in the said speech, and therefore oppose the approach of the French right-wing to colonial memory in Africa. For details: Philippe Rey & al., *L’Afrique répond à Sarkozy. Contre le discours de Dakar*, Edition Social Science, 2013, 544p.

<sup>108</sup> After this speech and several other acts taken by the then French President, Nicolas Sarkozy, several authors in France, in Europe and in Africa questioned his African, European, and even foreign policy. While some credit him with no clear political vision, others perceive him as ignorant, zealous, and too Gaullist. For references: Gordon D. Cumming, “‘A Piecemeal Approach with No Vision’: French Policy Towards Africa under Nicolas Sarkozy”, in Raymond G.G. (eds), *The Sarkozy Presidency. French Politics, Society and Culture Series*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, Pp.104-129; Denis Abrams, *Nicolas Sarkozy*, Infobase Publishing, 2009, 136p.; Jérôme Sgard, “Nicolas Sarkozy, lecteur de Gramsci. La tentation hégémonique du nouveau pouvoir”, in *Esprit*, No7, 2007, Pp.10-22; Angeliki Koukoutsaki-Monnier, “La construction symbolique de l’identité nationale française dans les discours de la campagne présidentielle de Nicolas Sarkozy”, in *Communication*, Vol.28, No1, 2010, Pp.11-39 ; Assan Thiam, “La politique africaine de Nicolas Sarkozy : rupture ou continuité ?”, in *Politique Etrangère*, No4, 2008, Pp.873-884.

<sup>109</sup> The French National Liberal Party is known for its extreme positions on issues of history and memory. The various windows of its website contain ideological publications, which tend to justify France’s role in the transatlantic slavery trade as well as in colonization. These publications, in support to a partisan and almost blind nationalism, tend, according to the authors, to restore the honour of France by clearing the accusations based on its past.

**Figure 4: Painting Representing an Idealisation of the French Colonialism in Africa**



**Source :** [https://henrydelesquen2017.files.wordpress.com/2016/03/capture-d\\_c3a9cran-2016-03-15-c3a0-18-08-02.png](https://henrydelesquen2017.files.wordpress.com/2016/03/capture-d_c3a9cran-2016-03-15-c3a0-18-08-02.png), 13/04/2020.

This painting schematised the arrival in Africa of a French monarch on a boat, accompanied by a guard and holding on the one hand, a tree of peace, and on the other hand, a flag in the colours of France bearing the mentions: “Progress, civilisation, commerce”. To welcome this delegation, one distinguishes people recognisable as of African origin by their clothing and their skin colour. One could risk indicating that these are representative of the whole of Africa, from the Maghreb to sub-Saharan Africa.

Such a representation of colonial occupation contains bewildering untruths. It tends to assume that the occupation of Africa was peaceful, based on the promises of progress, civilisation, and trade, and did not face any local resistance. The painting tends to support further the idea of curiosity in Africa, where imperial powers would have been accepted as supposedly bearing projects of a brighter future for all. It therefore appears that this is an

instrumentalisation of the collaboration of certain leaders in Africa, corrupt or forced, who have served the colonial cause. One could, moreover, question the concept of civilisation within the debate on the anteriority of Ancient Egypt and Western Empires. Undoubtedly, this painting is a replica of the arguments of the supporters of colonialism in the 19th century.

Other paintings are representative of the relations between post-1960 France and its colonial past, such as the following by François Feugas.

**Figure 5: Painting Representing the “Benefits” of the French Colonisation in Sub-Saharan Africa**



**Source:** Françoise Feugas, “Dessins et desseins de la France coloniale”, <https://orientxxi.info/lu-vu-entendu/dessins-et-desseins-de-la-france-coloniale,4246>

This pictorial representation idealises French colonialism in the form of a nurturing benefactress who brings both knowledge and gold to the African people. The idea underlying this representation is to reject the plundering of Africa’s natural resources by colonial France. The painting rather reverses the situation, showing a lady with graceful forms bringing with

her gold with which she abounds Africans in their fields exploited with rudimentary hand tools. According to this painter, it is rather France which would have shared its natural resources with the African continent. Likewise, the figure of the colonial soldier is materialised here through the prism of an educator, who shows the way forward towards civilisation to an African peasant probably lost in his calculations and his dependence on the seasons.

Beyond this idealisation, the memory of colonialism in France is characterised by nostalgia for the French empire of the 19th and 20th centuries. It is also marked by an empathy complicit in Western superiority.

### **c. An Empathy Complicit in a Legacy of “Colonial Superiority”**

According to Marie Claude Smouts, the question of colonial memory resurfaces in France, in particular, because of the presence of many migrants from former French colonies. The latter, bearers of painful memories, sometimes resentment linked to an episode in colonial history, find a discriminatory French system, which limits their residence, accommodation, and access to employment. These restrictions reminded some of the difficult times of discrimination on the natives that marked the French colonial presence on their territory. Added to this is a generational phenomenon in favour of the emergence of researchers causally linked and interested in the colonial history, whose historiographical contribution is assessed in terms of a militant memory<sup>110</sup>. This issue resurged in the debates around the colonial heritage in France. Several events have contributed to the polarisation of this debate, with on the one hand nationalists and ultra-nationalists, hostile to any empathy towards the former colonies, and on the other hand, an ideological openness that subtly and progressively recognises the difficult liabilities of colonial systems, pleading for a helping hand to immigrants from former colonies<sup>111</sup>. In this last ideological trend, it should be noted that empathy towards immigrants from former colonies was aimed at selective integration into French society for perpetuating

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<sup>110</sup> Marie-Claude Smouts, “La question de la mémoire postcoloniale”, in *Mémoires et nations*, No6, 2006, Pp.91-96.

<sup>111</sup> In general, there is a tendency in France to draw an ideological divide around colonial memory, opposing the Left-wing parties to the Right-wing. This trend, often deemed too easy by researchers like Olivier Dard or Jacques Marseille among others, is questionable for several reasons. Firstly, because the French ultra-nationalists counted, before 1960, by critics of French imperialism. Then, the decolonization movements in Africa have long been equated with subversions against the backdrop of the instrumentalization of the communist bloc. Finally, both the Right and the Left-wing parties in France each aim to make the French people benefit from imperialism, either by the creation of an empire (hard power) which inspires the greatness of France, or by means of trade (soft power). They are quite simply two approaches, sometimes complementary, of international power. More details: Jacques Marseille, “La Gauche, la Droite et le fait colonial en France des années 1880 aux années 1960”, in *Vingtième siècle. Revue d’histoire*, No24, 1989, Pp. 17-28.

the ideology of imperial superiority. Thus, promotions within the senior administration were the result of a communication coup, as emphasised below by Thomas Deltombe and Mathieu Rigouste:

“The figure of the muslim préfet, as an embodiment of the state and its assimilation model, was the implicit response to the “Islamic threat”. In a form of summetry, “Dermouche as model of assimilation” symbolised an Islam that had willfully submitted to the Republic, a departure from previous media images in which a veiled Marianne had once symbolised the risk of submission to Islam on the part of the Republic<sup>112</sup> “.

This posture with the appearance of empathy towards the African peoples, to whom there is a recognition of heavy colonial damages, is borrowed from a demonstration of superiority. Like the discourse of the *Immigration Choisie* (selected immigration), adopted for the integration of foreigners who assimilate French culture, the posture of empathy suggests pulling the peoples of former colonies towards an evolution supposedly possible by the sole support of the former imperial power.

This testifies of memory tensions that could find conciliation in the *Shared Built Heritage* approach.

## **B. An Implementation of the *Shared Built Heritage* Approach in the Enhancement of Colonial Buildings in Douala**

In general, from the 1990s, migratory pressure in Europe, coupled with the search for new heritage territories, generated public interest in a more inclusive approach to urban monuments. This interest extended to the colonial past’s remains, approached as *Shared Heritage*. For example, in 2005, the *Mayor’s Commission on African and Asian Heritage (MCAAH)*, created by the Mayor of London in 2003, published a report on the topic: *Delivering Shared Heritage*. This report recommended considering the inclusiveness and diversity of London’s public heritage<sup>113</sup>. It suggested the creation of the *Heritage Diversity Task Force*, whose mandate was to conduct an in-depth reflection on diversifying the heritage of the city of London so that it reflects the past and the sociology of the city<sup>114</sup>.

This subsection focuses on the experimentation of the concept of *Shared Built Heritage* and its experimentation with the enhancement of colonial built heritage in Douala.

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<sup>112</sup> Thomas Deltombe & Mathieu Rigouste, “The ennemy within: The construction of the ‘Arab’ in the Media”, in Nicolas Bancel & al. (Eds), *The Colonial Legacy in France: Fracture, Rupture and Apartheid*, Indiana University Press, 2017, Pp.115-122.

<sup>113</sup> Clara Arokiasamy, “Embedding shared heritage: the cultural heritage rights of London’s African and Asian diaspora communities”, in *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, Vol. 18, 2012, Pp.339-345.

<sup>114</sup> The Mayor’s Commission on African and Asian Heritage, *Embedding Shared Heritage. The Heritage Diversity Task Force Report*, Greater London Authority, 2009, 92p.

## 1. *The Shared Built Heritage Concept: Heuristic Content and Implementation*

The enhancement of buildings inherited from colonial systems was notably addressed by ICOMOS<sup>115</sup>. During a meeting held in Stockholm in September 1998, the experts of this international body decided to create a Scientific Committee on Shared Colonial Architecture and Urbanism of ICOMOS (ICOMOS Scientific Committee on Shared Colonial Architecture and Town Planning). As a framework for reflection bringing together heritage experts, this committee put lights on the concept of Shared Built Heritage, an approach to enhancing the built remains of colonialism throughout the world. It is assigned many objectives, among which: “Identify and value/revalue monuments, sites and landscapes of mutual heritage; stimulate and pioneer preservation and restoration/renewal projects; encourage integration into planning and development programmes; publish and present results of research, design and advisory work; provide technical assistance in relevant territories and sites<sup>116</sup>”.

One of the innovative ideas that reside in this concept is above all to put colonial architecture back into the relics of history, which deserve to be preserved and enhanced. This theoretical framework emerges for the main purpose of fostering the reflection on the fate of colonial heritage within the evolution of epistemic approaches to social sciences towards considering the diversity of interest groups. Also, it is within this context that Tunbridge and Ashworth conceptualise Dissonant Heritage. In this regard, the notion of shared heritage subjugates an opening towards the pooling of the interests of stakeholders by overcoming or reconciling any possible discrepancies. The concept of sharing, which here refers to the common character of the heritage object, brings together the various stakeholders in colonial history. It includes constructions erected by one country, on the territory of another, in relation either to a past of empire or to a colonial past<sup>117</sup>. It is near to the term Mutual Heritage, which designates the direct connection of interest groups to the heritage object<sup>118</sup>. Angela Labrador suggests the following definition:

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<sup>115</sup> The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) emerged in 1965. It results from concerns expressed in Athens in 1931, around the restoration of historic buildings. Serving as the advisory board of the World Heritage, its missions focus the preservation and protection of historic buildings. It gathers experts on heritage and produce some documents to Unesco meetings. Further details on its website: <https://www.icomos.org/en/about-icomos/mission-and-vision/icomos-mission?start=1>, 13/05/2021.

<sup>116</sup> Anonym (no name), “COMOS Scientific Committee on Shared Built Heritage”, <https://uia.org/s/or/en/1100010468>, 12/12/2020.

<sup>117</sup> Hanny Maria Caesarina, *Shared Heritages as a Challenge for spatial planning in ex-colony cities. A case study of Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia*, Master Thesis, The University of Greenwich, 2007, p.3.

<sup>118</sup> A project to enhance Shared Heritage / Mutual Heritage was carried out by the Netherlands from 2005 to 2006, targeting the legacy of the slavery trade (in Ghana, Cape Verde among others) and that of Apartheid in South

“shared heritage as a creative cultural strategy that anticipates the future while fostering an ethos of coexistence. Central to this framework is my recognition of two performative aspects of heritage: (1) its capability to intervene in or perpetuate alienating conditions of modernity; and (2) its capacity to unite and divide communities—to instill love and hatred<sup>119</sup>”.

Some major elements emerge from this definition. First, the author notes the harmful nature of the abandonment of shared heritage sites, as it can leave free way to the promotion of the tensions inherent in the memory of places. Lack of preservation and enhancement of shared built heritage sites thus perpetuates latent tensions, and therefore reduces the chances of a guided evolution of memories. Here, far from reflecting the major trends in memory, heritage enhancement contributes to the evolution of memory patterns. Then, the function of reconciliation consubstantial with the shared heritage through its capacity to promote coexistence. This is the uniqueness of the actions in favour of the enhancement of the heritage site, which goes through the highlighting of the common funds of the relations between the different interest groups and the historicity of the considered site.

The lack of an appropriate theoretical framework for the enhancement of sites linked to colonial history could explain the enthusiasm aroused by the Scientific Committee for shared heritage among researchers. Therefore, national branches have emerged, which have enriched reflections on various historical sites in South Africa, Sri Lanka, Ghana, Indonesia, among others<sup>120</sup>. However, an analysis of the current composition of the ICOMOS Shared Built Heritage Committee shows a numerical predominance of Western researchers. In Africa, the only representative of the committee is of South African nationality<sup>121</sup>. This raises the question of the adhesion of experts from Sub-Saharan Africa to the Shared Built Heritage approach. Nonetheless, the objectives that this committee sets itself, among which the networking of researchers and professionals working in the sector, the promotion of research as well as

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Africa. More details in the following links: <https://sharedheritage.dutchculture.nl/en/mutual-heritage-shared-heritage>, 12/01/2021; <https://english.cultureelerfgoed.nl/topics/shared-cultural-heritage/what-is-shared-cultural-heritage>, 26/11/2020.

<sup>119</sup> Angela M. Labrador, *Shared Heritage: an anthropological theory and methodology for assessing, enhancing and communicating a future-oriented social ethic of heritage protection*, PhD Thesis, University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2013, p.10.

<sup>120</sup> Siegfried RCT Enders, “COMOS International Scientific Committee on Shared Built Heritage Its history, work and role in preservation and conservation of transcultural heritage”, <http://www.sbh.icomos.org/images/Documents/SBH-History-1998---2016a.pdf>, 10/12/2020.

<sup>121</sup> The Committee comprised a President (German), a Vice-President (Australian), a Secretary General (Canadian) and one expert from each continent: <http://sbh.icomos.org/index.php/committee>, 12/02/2021.

support for the preservation of sites belonging define as Shared Built heritages<sup>122</sup>, among others, should normally attract African heritage researchers<sup>123</sup>.

## **2. The *Shared Built Heritage* Applied to the Enhancement of Colonial Buildings in Douala**

The Shared Heritage approach has experimented with the enhancement of colonial buildings in Douala. This follows the German line of reconciliation with its colonial past by making it a subject of public policy. In this logic, a technical committee of the German branch of ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) has planned, from 2003, the transformation of the building that served as the German post office in Douala, into a postal services museum.

The project began when the Cameroonian branch of ICOMOS called for assistance to save buildings inherited from the colonial period during a meeting held in Madrid in 2002. This call was spontaneously welcomed by German architectural heritage experts, including Dr. Birgitta Ringbeck, Irmela Spelsberg, Dr. Siegfried Enders. They organised successive meetings to define strategies for finding possible means of safeguarding the concerned colonial buildings<sup>124</sup>. The project gathered German, Cameroonian, French, and British national branches of the ICOMOS<sup>125</sup>. This pooling of the parties involved in such a project testifies to the shared character of the heritage value of the building, which served as the very first postal service office in Cameroon. An enhancement strategy has been adopted, ranging from the identification of actors to means of action, including field activities.

Regarding interest groups and stakeholders, at the level of Cameroon, the Ministry of Culture, the German Embassy, universities, among others, have been identified as stakeholders. A special committee, comprising German, French, British and Cameroonian representatives, should be assigned to monitor the implementation on the ground of the reconversion project, following the picture below, realised by the representative of the Cameroonian section of ICOMOS.

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<sup>122</sup> The full list of the objectives of the Committee is available on the following website of the ICOMOS: <http://sbh.icomos.org/index.php/what-we-do/objectives-of-sbh>, 12/02/2021

<sup>123</sup> Africa is one of the continents characterized by the low level of enhancement of its cultural and historical heritage, judging by the number of sites inscribed on the World Heritage List. However, this weakness raises questions related to cultural models which could differ by place from Western approaches.

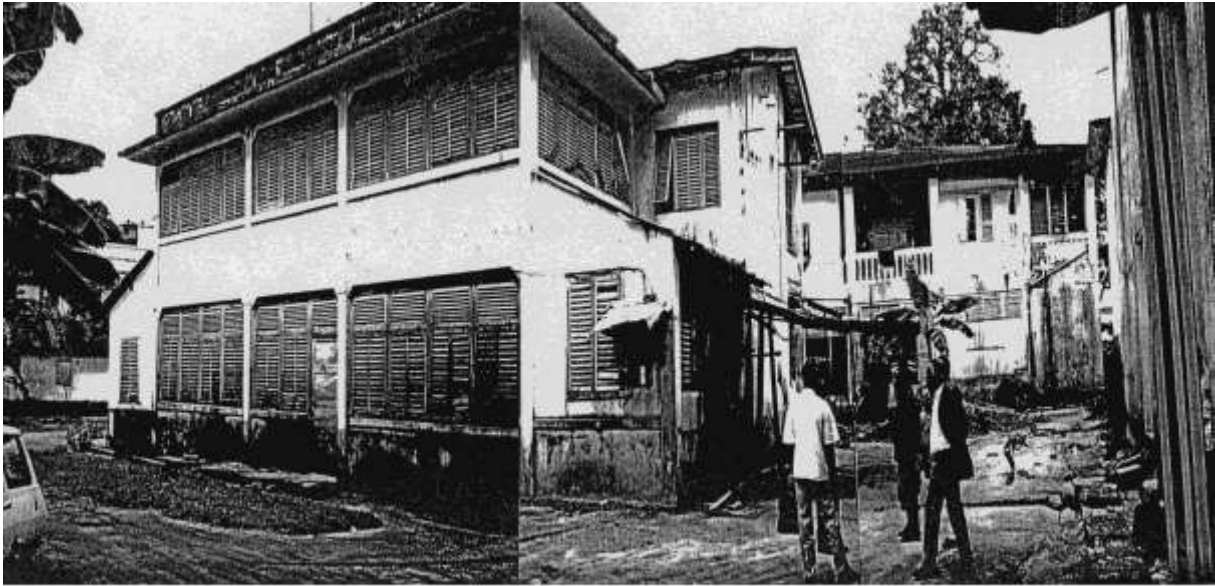
<sup>124</sup> Memo ICOMOS Germany, for the preparation of a meeting held in Paris on the 11<sup>th</sup> June 2004.

<sup>125</sup> The pooling of the four national branches of ICOMOS aims to bring together the main interest groups around the site concerned. It reflects the history of the building, erected by Germany, then jointly administered by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and France, before coming under the international regimes of Mandate and Trusteeship, the exercise of which was entrusted to France.



**Figure 6: Views of the German post office in Douala**

**Source:** Anonym (unedited document), « Einrichtung und Bau eines Museums für Post und



Kommunikation in Kamerun », *ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Shared Built Heritage*.

**Figure 7: An overview of the reversion project**



**Source:** Anonym, (unedited document), « Einrichtung und Bau eines Museums für Post und Kommunikation in Kamerun », *ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Shared Built Heritage*

For the German section of ICOMOS, this project results from the need to preserve the history of the postal services, but also of colonial buildings in Cameroon. It is in this sense that a note emphasises the following:

“Durch die engen geschichtlichen Beziehungen zwischen der ehemaligen deutschen Kolonie Kamerun bietet sich eine Zusammenarbeit mit Deutschland an, da auf beiden Seiten wichtige historische Zeugnisse der gemeinsamen Kommunikationsgeschichte vorhanden sind, die es zu erhalten und pflegen gilt<sup>126</sup>”.

(Due to the close historical ties between the former German colony of Cameroon, cooperation with Germany is ideal, since important historical evidence of the common history of communication exists on both sides, which must be preserved and enhanced).

This assertion places the reconversion project in the field of cooperation, which is revealed as an operational framework for the enhancement of Shared Built Heritage. In essence, cooperation means the synergy of efforts around an ideal, a project with a view to achieving common objectives. In this logic, in a correspondence dated February 12, 2005, ICOMOS Germany underlines that the Postal Services Museum project in Douala is registered by the ICOMOS Committee public German development aid to Africa. The letter also indicates the participation of the German Embassy in Cameroon in the project, in particular by the supervision of visiting delegations:

“Es fanden hierzu 2 Treffen in Paris statt (am 06.11.04 und 21.01.05) und am 04.02.05 wurde das „Kamerun-Projekt“ bzw. ein Afrika-Hilfsprojekt im Exekutivkomitee von ICOMOS behandelt. Dem zu Grunde lag ein Vorschlag von mir baldmöglichst ein Treffen aller Beteiligten zu arrangieren, um eine bestmögliche Information über den Zustand des kulturellen Erbes, die Probleme bei der Behandlung und Pflege und Hilfsmöglichkeiten zu diskutieren. Nach unseren Informationen sind Ende der 80er Jahre im Zusammenhang mit der 100-jährigen deutsch-kamerunischen Kontaktaufnahme erhebliche Anstrengungen unternommen worden, um das deutsch-kamerunische Kulturerbe zu inventarisieren und es wurden wohl auch schon mit deutscher Hilfe einige Gebäude in der Vergangenheit renoviert bzw. restauriert<sup>127</sup>”.

( There were 2 meetings in Paris (on November 6th, 2004 and January 21st, 2005) and on February 4th, 2005 the “Cameroon Project” or an Africa aid project was dealt with in the ICOMOS Executive Committee. This was based on a proposal from me to arrange a meeting for all those involved as soon as possible in order to discuss the best possible information about the state of the cultural heritage, the problems with treatment and care, and opportunities for help. According to our information, in connection with the 100 years of German-Cameroonian contact, considerable efforts were made at the end of the 80s to inventory the German-Cameroonian cultural heritage and some buildings were probably renovated or restored in the past with German help).

Beyond the requests, ICOMOS Germany, through this letter, informed me about the history as well as the scope of the project. Likewise, the letter sets out the possible partnerships for further financial contributions via the Post and Telecommunications Museums Foundation,

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<sup>126</sup> Anonyme (document inédit), « Einrichtung und Bau eines Museums für Post und Kommunikation in Kamerun », *ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Shared Built Heritage*

<sup>127</sup> Dr Siegfried RCT Enders, “Mögliche ICOMOS Aktivitäten in Kamerun“, Letter to the German Ambassador in Cameroon (unedited document), 12/02/2005.

which maintains museums in Hamburg, Berlin, Frankfurt and Nuremberg among others.<sup>128</sup> In response, the German Ambassador, Volker Seitz provided an overview of the situation of the architectural heritage inherited from the German Protectorate in Cameroon:

“Ein Teil der historischen Gebäude wird zwar häufig noch von Regierung, Provinzregierung oder Gemeinden genutzt, doch echte Instandhaltungsarbeiten finden selbst an diesen Regierungsgebäuden nur selten statt. Oft dürfen diese offiziellen Gebäude, wie z.B. der Gouverneurs Palast in Buéa, nicht einmal fotografiert werden. Dass dieses Gebäude den längst überfälligen frischen Anstrich (und eine häßliche Mauer) im letzten Jahr bekam, ist nicht etwa Teil eines kamerunischen Denkmalpflegeprogramms, sondern lediglich die Reaktion der Stadtverwaltung auf die Ankündigung des Staatspräsidenten, Buéa während der heißen Wahlkampfphase im Oktober 2004 zu besuchen<sup>129</sup>”.

(Some of the historic buildings are often still used by the government, provincial government or municipalities, but real maintenance work rarely takes place even on these government buildings. Often these official buildings, such as the Governor’s Palace in Buéa, are not even allowed to be photographed. The fact that this building was given the long overdue repainting (and an ugly wall) last year is not part of a Cameroonian monument preservation program, but merely the reaction of the city administration to the announcement of the arrival of the President of the Republic in Buéa during the hot election campaign in October 2004).

From this assertion, Germany expresses concerns about the preservation of its architectural heritage in Cameroon. The Ambassador in fact, marks his incomprehension towards the exclusion of these buildings from the national list monuments and is surprised that those in use do not benefit from optimal maintenance. While welcoming the project, he expresses reserve and doubts about its successful implementation.:

« Nach meiner Einschätzung hat das von Ihnen geplante Projekt nur dann wirklich einen Sinn, wenn zunächst die kamerunische Regierung Ihr Interesse und Engagement auf diesem Gebiet unter Beweis stellt. Solange nicht die Verantwortung für den Erhalt dieser Gebäude tatsächlich vom kamerunischen Staat übernommen wird, werden diese historischen, nun kamerunischen Gebäude nur dazu benutzt werden, um den alten Kolonialmächten, und hier besonders Deutschland, die Verantwortung für den Erhalt Ihrer ehemaligen Gebäude zuzuschieben<sup>130</sup>».

( In my opinion, the project you are planning will only really make sense if the Cameroonian government first demonstrates its interest and commitment in this area. As long as the responsibility for the preservation of these buildings is not actually taken over by the Cameroonian state, these historical, now Cameroonian buildings will only be used to shift the responsibility for the preservation of their former buildings to the old colonial powers, especially Germany).

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<sup>128</sup> The following paper provides more details on the Post and Telecommunication Museum Foundation in Germany: Vera Losse, “Das Museum für Kommunikation Nürnberg in der Museumsstiftung Post und Telekommunikation seit 1995”, in Vera Losse & al., *Kommunikation und Postgeschichte anschaulich gemacht : 100 Jahre Museum für Kommunikation Nürnberg*, Nuremberg, Museumsstiftung Post und Telekommunikation, 2005, Pp.63-70.

<sup>129</sup> Volker Seitz, “Mögliche ICOMOS Aktivitäten in Kamerun “, Letter to the German ICOMOS National Committee (unedited document), 15/02/2005.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

The German diplomat bases his doubts on his analysis of the Cameroonian approach to heritage, made of the distinction between cultural heritage and colonial heritage. Such an opinion takes up the concept “to each his own heritage” by Mathias Eric Owona Nguini<sup>131</sup>, that appears to be an operational theoretical framework for the exclusion of colonial heritage from the vast field of Cameroonian cultural heritage. It is in this logic that he deplores the rejection of the responsibility for the preservation of German buildings to his government.

This project could not yield results for several reasons. First, the weak impact of the ICOMOS Cameroon branch on the raising awareness on historical heritage in Douala. This committee is little known in Cameroon and has no real influence on the enhancement of historical sites. The second reason relates to the weak involvement of stakeholders at the local level. Government structures and Universities, listed as stakeholders during the work of the above-mentioned ICOMOS sections, are more perceived as elitist. Involving local communities and associations would have given this project more chances of success. In addition, as underlined by correspondence from the German Embassy in Yaoundé, the government authorities seem to have not fully understood the value of such a conversion project and remained in an observer posture. Finally, the difficult functioning of the Cameroonian ICOMOS branch, with the lack of real leadership and animation, reduced the enthusiasm of the European partners for this project, which was finally abandoned.

## Conclusions

The analysis of memory dynamics in Germany and France, around the built remains of their different colonial systems in Douala reveals elements of historical anchoring. These are occupation strategies designed, first by the Germans, in the sense of replacing local cultures. Then, by the French, to erase and replace the intangible, physical and urban traces of the German presence in Douala. In addition to these discrepancies consubstantial with colonial strategies, there are relationships with the imperial past tinged with a desire to forget, select, and nostalgia for the old colonial empire. The attempt to reconcile colonial memories by mobilising the Shared Heritage approach has shown its limits, particularly because of the weakness of the spectrum of stakeholders, which does not include, for example, the local population in Douala.

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<sup>131</sup> Mathias Eric Owona Nguini, “Penser le patrimoine à partir de N.M Granel : une reflecture géopolitique d’ « à chacun son patrimoine »”, *Enjeux N°15*, avril-juin 2003, Pp. 3-5

## **General Conclusions**

The analysis of the issue of the enhancement of the built remains of colonialism in Douala helped highlight the importance of colonial architecture in that city. This architecture is part of the historicity of the construction of the city. It turns out to be the bearer of the elements of antagonism which depend on the posture of each of the protagonists of colonial memories<sup>1</sup>. These constraints sufficiently show the relevance of dissonant heritage approaches, the merit of which resides in particular in the necessary highlighting of various memory dynamics. Indeed, Douala is the historical core of colonialism in Cameroon. This city of colonial occupation, through its current physical features, its spatial organization, the redistribution of its economic activities, is the result of urban initiatives designed each against the one that preceded<sup>2</sup>. In fact, on the one hand, Douala is a city born from local groups. In this regard, it is an initiative of the populations which was driven by ambition of fishing and trade. On the other hand, this city has undergone profound transformations driven by successive German and French colonial administrators. Animated by racist ideas, nourished by the ambition to create conditions almost similar to those of the German metropolises, the administrators of the protectorate committed the city to an urban planning project with the first objective of capturing strategic positions both for the security control of the city and for the grabbing of commercial space, in particular the port<sup>3</sup>. It is within this framework that an architecture essentially of power emerges. such a dynamic betrayed a desire to crush if not to replace local populations installed in areas deemed strategic. Then, the French, who arrived in Cameroon in the context of the First World War, engaged in transformation projects that clearly aimed at cleaning up both cultural and physical Urban features of the German heritage located in the city of Douala.

These different urban construction initiatives, which have been juxtaposed and superimposed in Douala have endowed it with a complex cultural system. By cultural system we mean a superposition in the same geographical space of several cultural or civilizational layers, sometimes difficult to dissociate<sup>4</sup>. The study of built remains in Douala from the 19th to the 20th century highlights several cultural elements: vernacular architecture bearing an

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<sup>1</sup> Lynn Schler, "Ambiguous Spaces: The Struggle over African Identity and Urban communities in Colonial Douala 1914-45", in *The Journal of African History*, Vol.44, No1, 2003, Pp.51-72.

<sup>2</sup> René Gouellain, "Douala : Formation and Developement of the City during the Colonial Period", *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, Vol 13, No51, 1973, Pp. 442-468.

<sup>3</sup> Ralph A. Austen, "Duala versus Germans in Cameroon: economic dimensions of a political conflict", in *Revue française d'histoire d'Outre-mer*, Vol.64, NO237, 1977, Pp.477-497.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Banton, *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, Psychology Press, 2004, 176p.

element of foreignness architecture built on the model of European countries with multifaceted forms, sometimes drawing on the prefabricated material. These different architectural forms overlap in places, contradict each other in other places. Between the different cultural layers that make up this system, the binder recalls tensions, due to the objective of substitution that surrounds German and French architecture.

Beyond the tensions resulting from the antagonistic urban projects in the city of Douala, the analysis of the relations with the colonial past reinforces the fracture and the rupture with the buildings inherited from the colonial period. At the local level, decolonisation implied a break with the imperial order, a return to the pre-colonial cultural order. This results in attempts to define a cultural policy based on the concept of authenticity. Cameroonian historiography around the colonial fact shows the significance of memories of wars, bullying, harassment and forced labour. These memories explain the rejection of buildings inherited from colonial systems, whose integration into the historical heritage of the city of Douala faced popular contestations. Tensions are further hated around the intentional monuments designed to celebrate the memory of the European actors of colonialism<sup>5</sup>.

In the European context, especially in Germany and France, the memory of colonialism is materialized through attempts at elective oblivion, idealisation and nostalgia for the colonial empire. In the 1960s, Germany was concerned about the Nazi past, as well as the heavy compensations imposed on it following World War II. In this context, the colonial past seemed to be too much of a legacy that Germany did not wish to assume. In France, the various wars of decolonization in Africa, including the war against the UPC separatists in Cameroon, have caused deep wounds at the national level. Decolonisation was thus seen as the source of the disintegration of the colonial empire, this lost grandeur of France<sup>6</sup>. On the other hand, migratory pressures, the desire for reconciliation with the past, the search for new heritage territories, explain, from the 1990s onwards, an admittedly limited, but certain desire to showcase the built remains of colonialism. In this logic, the mobilisation of the Shared Built Heritage approach in Douala has shown its limits, due to the limited spectrum of actors involved in the projects concerned.

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<sup>5</sup> Ndjock Nyobe Isidore Pascal, "L'héritage colonial à l'épreuve de la mémoire : le cas du monument Leclerc A Douala", in Emmanuel Tchumtchoua & Albert François Dikoume (Eds.), *Douala, histoire et patrimoine*, Yaounde, CLE Editions, 2014, Pp.295-316.

<sup>6</sup> Pascal Blanchard & al., *Décolonisations françaises: la chute d'un empire*, De La Martinière Editions, 2020, 239p.



It thus appears that the absence of reconciliation contributes to further widening the gap in the memories of colonialism in Europe and in Africa in general. The proposed methodology adapted to the enhancement of buildings inherited from colonialism shows that beyond the tensions, the usefulness of said remains depends on the meaning or the objectives assigned to their preservation. Dissonant remains are an outstanding tool for reconciliation around the past, as they could serve foster local development strategies.

Furthermore, the statements discussed in this Thesis provide answers to the central question which structures it. Indeed, Dissonant Heritage is an open paradigm from which one can validly draw inspiration for the enhancement of the built remains of colonialism. This paradigm affords methodological tools for the identification of interest groups that claim a connection to the enhancement of the historic site, their relationship to the heritage object, as well as the tensions that structure the interpretation of the heritage site. These elements, put together with the preliminary study of the historic site, provide material for an interpretation commonly accepted by most interest groups<sup>7</sup>. In this logic, the Dissonant Heritage approach seems appropriate to reconcile the tensions arising from the interpretation of cultural heritage, by offering the perspectives of a balanced cultural mediation, adapted to the sociology of the public or group of visitors.

Beyond proposing a methodological approach to highlighting colonial architecture inspired by the Dissonant Heritage paradigm, this Thesis puts into perspective, architecture, and building as a material for the rewriting of African history. In general, colonial architecture is approached in Africa through the prism of the symbols of colonial domination<sup>8</sup>. As such, buildings inherited from Western colonial systems are rejected from the landscape of monuments or cultural heritage. On the other hand, the approach commonly used in Europe considers colonial buildings as symbols of Western genius which deserve to be preserved. This heritage is a testimony of a former glorious empire, that disappeared with African independence<sup>9</sup>. Transcending these cleavages, this Thesis considers the built remains of

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<sup>7</sup> Zhang Rouran & Smith L., “Bonding and dissonance: rethinking the interrelations among stakeholders in heritage tourism”, in *Tourism Management*, Vol.74, 2019, pp.212-223.

<sup>8</sup> Ambe J. Njoh, “Urban planning as a tool of power and social control in colonial Africa”, in *Planning Perspectives*, Vol. 24, No3, 2009, pp.301-317; Ambe J. Njoh & Liora Bigon, “Germany and the deployment of urban planning to create, reinforce and maintain power in colonial Cameroon”, in *Habitat International*, No49, 2015, pp.10-20.

<sup>9</sup> Further details in Pascal Blanchard & al (Eds.) *Décolonisations françaises. La chute d’un empire*, Editions de la Martinière, 2020 ; Charles-Robert Ageron, “L’exposition coloniale : 1931. Mythe républicain ou mythe impérial”, in *De l’Algérie Française à l’Algérie Algérienne*, Vol.1, 2005, pp.369-386.

colonialism in Douala as places of memory and historical sites whose preservation is far from any celebration of former oppressors. This assertion offers the advantage of giving free rein to heritage stakeholders, in looking for the right balance between the memory approaches applicable to these sites subject to tensions. This is based on the central idea that heritage, an outcome of selection, is the result of social construction<sup>10</sup>. The teleology of heritage sites is intrinsically linked to the functions attributed to them, whether it be the preservation of a past, the commemoration of the victims, or the perpetuation of a scientific, technical, or artistic genius. Thus, the meaning given to a historic site depends on social and political dynamics<sup>11</sup>. Heritage is therefore embedded in time and space.

However, this research remains confined to the theoretical framework, even though the enhancement of historic sites requires a concrete application. The historical remains mentioned for illustration in this dissertation deserve each an in-depth study, which determines their significance in the colonial history of the city of Douala. This highlights the difficulty to mention the exact number of colonial memory places in Douala. The study should in this regard extend to surveys in the three countries concerned by the colonial past in Douala. This, because of the limited time allotted for the PhD program, as well as the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic, was not possible. Nevertheless, the analysis put forward, in terms of perspectives, a vast field of research, ranging from the study of historical sites, construction techniques, the evolution of construction materials, colonial memories, public policies approach to colonial heritage, the commitment of private associations for colonial heritage among others.

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<sup>10</sup> Anne-Françoise Garçon, “ Le patrimoine : antidote de la disparition ? ”, *Historiens et Géographes*, No405, 2009, pp.105-114.

<sup>11</sup> Isabelle Brianso & Yves Girault, “Developmentalist and Political Instrumentalizations of African Cultural Heritage”, in *Varia*, No42, 2014, pp.149-162.

## **APPENDIXES**

## APPENDIX 1

### Memo:

**Appointment:** 11-6-2004

**Place:** 11 to rue Alfred roll 75017 Paris,  
(Office of Mdme. Schmückle-Mollard)

**Topic:** Cooperation for the strengthening of the consciousness of the meaning of the common cultural inheritance  
ICOMOS (great Britannia, France, Germany, Cameroon)

### Participant:

ICOMOS Germany: Dr. Siegfried Enders, Ma .-narrow. Frank Woringen

ICOMOS France: Dr. Christiane Schmückle, Mollard, employee: Abdoul Sow  
(PhD student from Senegal)

ICOMOS Cameroon: Mohaman Haman (president of ICOMOS Cameroon and  
Employee: Claire Lagrange

ICOMOS great Britannia: (still not tied)  
Contact person: Prof. Roger H Leech (Univ. of Southampton) SBH  
Round Table forum Melaka 2004  
Daryl Fowler), Richard Paice, Philip Hugh Davies,  
Sherban Cantacuzino (SCAT founder members at the GA  
in Mexico 1999)

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The reason for this meeting was the dramatic call for help started from ICOMOS Cameroon in Madrid 2002, common initiatives to be seized to save the shared cultural heritage in Cameroon. In a small exhibition the danger became very clearly (primarily). The historic buildings from the colonial times are obviously in great danger. Interest to help was shown spontaneously by some German colleagues (Dr. Birgitta Ringbeck, Irmela Spelsberg, Dr. Siegfried Enders). A meeting of Mdme. Dr. Schmückle-Mollard and Dr. Enders in Budapest and Pécs in May 2004 led to a new venture.

It was an aim of the meeting to discuss the actual situation of the cultural heritage in Cameroon, particularly the cultural heritage created by the three former colonial powers Germany, France and Great Britannia together with Cameroon, to find means and ways to care. The fact that only little attention is given by the national and international community to the heritage of Cameroon is responsible for the dramatic destruction and demolishing of those culture witnesses of the shared heritage. The exhibition at the GA in Madrid was the first attempt of ICOMOS Cameroon to change this. To increase the sensibility for a shared built heritage in Cameroon among the population and primarily among the decision makers, an international attention or pressure seems to be urgently advisable.

In the meeting in Paris we were pointing out the necessity to start an initiative. We agreed to the demand of ICOMOS Cameroon to encourage ICOMOS colleagues, to feel the task to help this heritage kept; at least those from the countries involved in the shared built heritage, Germany, France and Great Britannia. It is all about to make the common responsibility and competence. The responsibility for these tasks lies in the hands of the international scientific committees of ICOMOS International. It should be the task of ICOMOS SBH colleagues from the different countries to try to help the colleagues from Cameroon to rise the awareness among the stakeholders and decisionmakers in those countries being affected by history. A classic task for non government organizations (NGO)!!!

To be mentioned and included the attempt should be

- the ministries for culture,
- the ministries of foreign affairs,
- the universities'
- the monument authorities and institutions
- etc.

The situation of the national conservation and preservation of historical monuments in Cameroon.

The national conservation of historical monuments in Cameroon and the corresponding conservation act follows the French example. The topmost authority is the Ministry for Culture and Information. No sufficient information has been submitted so far about the mode of operation and effectiveness, the staff, the material and remedies for the preservation of historical monuments to get a comprehensive idea.

#### Inventory and Listing

On the occasion of the 100-year anniversary of the foundation of the German colony in 1884 a team of German architects and Cameroonian scientist prepares a documentation of the buildings under the supervising of Prof. Wolfgang Lauber, FH Constance from the German epoch. It is a systematic nationwide recording of the buildings, what an excellent basis for an inventory represents. The work and the publication to this which is unfortunately out of print were financed by the foreign ministry completely at that time. At the moment a French experts team, well in the order of the French department? supports the Cameroon colleagues on-site at the Inventarisation of her cultural possession for culture at present. The buildings should be in the foreground from the French time. It could be not found out how far the work has made progress. The inventory of English and local architecture is known to the experts but still not comprehensively documented and published. Mr Haman wants to do a catalog of the bedeutensten cultural monuments in Cameroon in the near future. The cultural monuments of the first and second category shall similarly in this be represented in photo, situation and short description like in the French system.

Which possibilities of playing a part of the preservation of the cultural possession in charge a practical preservation of historical monuments in Cameroon has lies still in the unclear one. The same applies monument nursing interests in the planning processes in the context of an urban development preservation of historical monuments to an inclusion.

In opinion of the participants a future cooperation of the four ICOMOS committees should structure as follows in:

## 1 phase, information exchange and project finding

In order to provide an understanding of the situation of conservation in Cameroon and enable a fundamental discussion and analyses of the state and non-state preservation of historical monuments should be presented by the Cameroon colleagues in a comprehensive report. It should include,

- the historical development of the conservation efforts and show the "present monument politics" in the country so available,
- explanation of the legislation and conservation administration,
- an inventory which should represent the till now available scientific discussion with the common historical cultural heritage nationally as international,
- finding and representing the till now available monument lists, publications to the monument stock and groundworks to this nationally as international,

One should expect delegation obtain clarity large Britannia and Cameroon of ICOMOS International about the points listed above, consisting of 2-3 SBH members each of the national committees of Germany, France. She shall attract this one in decision makers responsible to the preservation of historical monuments in all levels for the preservation and care of the common cultural inheritance and look for ways under arrangement of the respective messages in conversations as this can happen in a common responsibility as official ICOMOS -- delegation.

It is, jutting out a possible aim and find ensemble, at which exemplary cultural monument measure out a restoration or a nomination for UNESCO world cultural heritage by a corresponding one is worked out.

## 2nd phase cooperation project

Acquirement measure one out for the restoration of one or more exemplary buildings for the nomination of one or several cultural monuments' or ensemble's for UNESCO world cultural heritage list //und/oder//.

- Acquirement of concepts for further-reaching measures and preservation and protection concepts for the possible world cultural heritage
- Common execution of a restoration measure with the colleagues and colleagues of Cameroon

## 3rd phase execution of the restoration project

### The time and finance plan

The phase 1 should be tackled as soon as possible. It was agreed to this that an ICOMOS SBH delegation shall set out for Cameroon to a 14-day study visit already in February 2005. The period from this 01.02.2005 to 2-14-2005 is scheduled

The financing of the study visit has to be organized by the delegation members over the national committees.

For the two German participants, Dr. Enders and M.Eng. Woringen made approx. EUR 5,000.00 in result for costs. ICOMOS Germany is asked to apply for project costs with the federal representative for culture and media to the support.

The phase 2 shall start with 2006. To this an organizational and financial planning as regards content, 2005, has both to be carried out. The acquirement of Dossiers or restoration concepts have to be assigned to experts who should come and are carried out freelancelly from the rows of ICOMOS. The formulation and the Controlling of the work shall assign to a committee consist 1 person (for every country) from participants of the delegation,.

The financing of the phase 2 will need far larger means which should be found by sponsors, such as foundations etc.. At the application of corresponding sponsors the connections and experiences of the committee of ICOMOS International of decisive importance will be. You also should have a try governments of the states involved in the common cultural heritage by Cameroon to tie the national one. For the Federal Republic of Germany could here (at an early registration be the culture budget of the ministry of foreign affairs of great importance).

signed Dr. Enders            and F. Woringen  
voted SHB member  
11-13-2004

Memo

## RESCUE AND SUSTAINABLE MAINTENANCE OF THE SHARED BUILT HERITAGE IN CAMEROON

Reason for this initiative was the dramatic call for help started from ICOMOS Cameroon in Madrid 2002 to save the shared built heritage in Cameroon.

### Proposal for a Round-Table-Meeting in Yaounde and Study Tour in Cameroon

1<sup>st</sup> day

#### 1. Round Table meeting in the German (French or British) Embassy in Yaounde

Aim: drawing a realistic picture on the situation of conservation of shared built heritage in Cameroon

- **legal and administrative situation in Cameroon**
- Conservation Act, other regulations like Building Act, Planning Act etc.
- State and local conservation administration
- **Inventory and listing of protected buildings and sites in Cameroon**
- a) Documentation of the Architecture of the German Period in Cameroon 1885 – 1986 ( Area of Buea, Limbé, Dschang, Bamenda, Douala, Edéa, Kribi, set up by an German-Cameroon Research Team in 1986/87)
- b) List of the Architecture of the French and British Period in Cameroon
- c) List of the vernacular Architecture in Cameroon
- Protected historical buildings in danger
- Common projects:
  1. Completion of the inventory and listing of historical buildings in Cameroon
  2. Restauration of a building
  3. Preparation of a dossier for application for putting a (some) monument(s) on the UNESCO World Heritage List
  4. actual Project: Museum of Post and Communication (Museum de la Poste)

#### Participants:

##### - **Cameroon – British – French - German ICOMOS experts team**

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- Cameroon      Mohaman Haman
- 
- Germany:      Prof. Dr. Michael Petzet
- Dr. Siegfried RCT Enders
- Ma.-Eng. Frank Woringen
- 
- France:        Mdme. Dr. Chr. Schmueckle – Mollard
- Claire Lagrange
- 
- Great Britain   N.N.
- N.N.
- 

##### - **Workshop participants:**

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##### - **German Embassy**

- Volker Seitz, Ambassador
- Ralph Holzhauer, Cultural Attache

##### - **French Embassy**

- N.N. Ambassador
- N.N. Cultural Attache



- **United Kingdom Embassy**
- N.N. Ambassador
- N.N. Cultural Attache
- **Ministry of Information and Culture**
- N.N. Head of Cultural Section
- Dr. Hansel Ndumbe Eyoh, Cultural Affairs Director
- Nestor NGumu
- **Ministry of foreign affairs**
- N.N. Head of Cultural Section
- **National Conservation and Preservation Office**
- N.N.
- **Museum**
- Albert Leopold Mvondo
- **Universities**
- Prof. Dr. Eballa Yalla
- Prof. Lovett Elango
- Prof. Jean Nfoulou
- **National Archive**
- N.N.
- **ICOMOS Cameroon:**
- Jean Pahai
- Emmanuel Moya
- **Former German Research Team:**
- Prof. Wolfgang Lauber
- Prof. Manfred von Mende
- Prof. Fritz Wilhelm
- Dipl. Ing. Dorethea Blink
- Dipl. Ing. Traudel von Mende
- Dipl. Ing. Bernd Vetter
- Dipl. Ing. Achim Zobel
- **Former Cameroon Research Team**
- Dipl. Ing. Tete André Menduga
- Kevin Mbayu
- Dr. Pie-Claude Ngumu
- Dr. George Nyamndi

## **2<sup>nd</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> day Study tour by the ICOMOS experts delegation**

2<sup>nd</sup> day

Jaounde – Ebolowa - Kribi

3<sup>rd</sup> day

places to visit Kribi

(District office, German Church, House of the priest, Lighthouse)

4<sup>th</sup> day

Kribi – Douala

5<sup>th</sup> day

places to visit in Douala

(Pagode Manga Bells Palace, Woerman residence, Mandessi-Bell residence, former imperial hospital, former post office, former district officer residence, apartment house for employers)

6<sup>th</sup> day

Douala – Limbé (Victoria)

7<sup>th</sup> day

places to visit in Limbé

( district office, former district officer residence, Governors residence, School, hospital, White House, open air theatre, greenhouses, lighthouse cape Nachtigal , Preuss residence)

8<sup>th</sup> day

Limbé (Victoria) – Buea

places to visit in Buea:

( governor's palace – chateau du president, district office – vieux secretariat, school – former Construction office, Bismarck- fontaine, German graveyard, several residence of farmers and employers)

9<sup>th</sup> day

Buea – Mamfé

10<sup>th</sup> day

places to visit in Mamfé

( senior district officer's house, defence tower, hanging bridge Cross river )

11<sup>th</sup> day

Mamfé – Bamenda

12<sup>th</sup> day

places to visit in Bamenda:

fort, fort-hotel- former officer's casino, governor's residence, court building, Bamenda club house

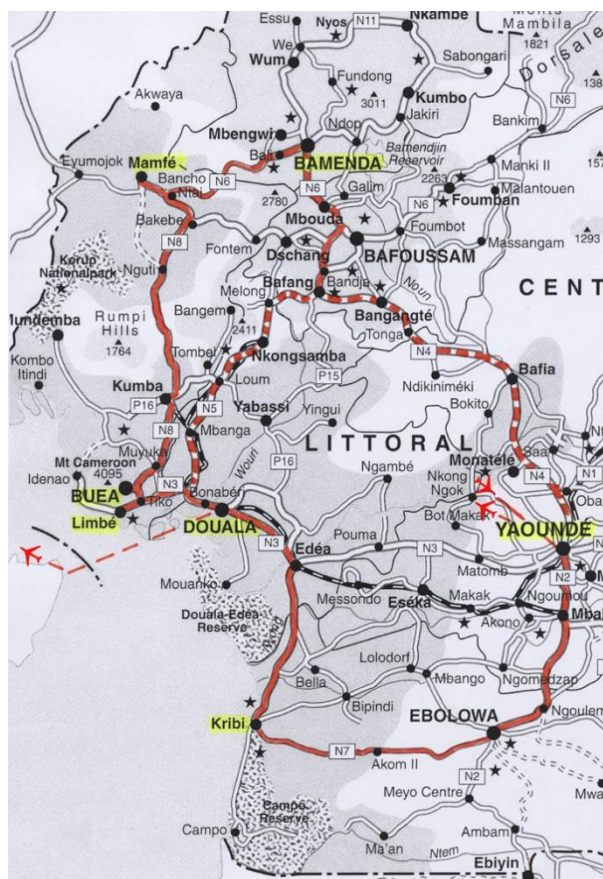
13<sup>th</sup> day

Bamenda – Douala (Yaounde)

14<sup>th</sup> day

Returnflight from Douala (Yaounde)

Proposed period:  
July / August 2005



Routing map

## Budget

Foreign participants:

### 8 ICOMOS experts

flight Europe – Cameroon – Europe ca. 1.500,00 EUR/pers.	12.000,00 EUR
daily expenses in Cameroon 46 EUR/Day 46 x 14 x 8	5.152,00 EUR
Hotel ca. 40 EUR/Night 40,00 EUR x 14 x 8	4.480,00 EUR
Travel expenses in Cameroon 250,00 EUR/pers.	2.000,00 EUR

<b>Total</b>	<b>23.640,00 EUR</b>
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**1 pers. 2.955,00 EUR**

### 7 Foreign experts for the Round-Table – Meeting

flight Europe – Cameroon – Europe ca. 1.500,00 EUR/pers	10.500,00 EUR
3 nights in Yaounde	
daily expenses in Cameroon 46 EUR/Day 46 x 3 x 7	966,00 EUR
Hotel ca. 40 EUR/Night 70,00 EUR x 3 x 7	1.470,00 EUR

<b>Total</b>	<b>14.406,00 EUR</b>
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**1 pers. 2.058,00 EUR**

The conference facilities for ca. 40 pers. is kindly requested from the German/French or. British Embassy.

Dr. Enders  
 26.01.05

### APPENDIX 3

Absender: ".JAUN L-VZ1 Schwermer-Mbaye, Susann" <l-vz1@jaun.auswaertiges-amt.de>  
Empfänger: <rct.enders@t-online.de>  
Kopieempfänger: "607-S Atori, Andrea" <607-S@auswaertiges-amt.de>,  
"Ralph" <Ku-10@jaun.diplo.de>  
Datum: 15. Feb 2005 15:30  
Betreff: Mögliche ICOMOS-Aktivitäten in Kamerun

Bezug: Ihr Schreiben vom 12.02.2005

Sehr geehrter Herr Dr. Enders,

haben Sie vielen Dank für Ihr Schreiben vom 12. Februar 2005, in dem Sie die Botschaft über Ihr geplantes Vorhaben in Kamerun informieren.

Wie Sie selber ganz richtig schreiben, besteht im Bereich des Kulturerhalts in Kamerun ein ganz erheblicher Handlungsbedarf. Allerdings sind in diesem Land die Rahmenbedingungen für eine nachhaltige Denkmalpflege extrem ungünstig:

Ein Teil der historischen Gebäude wird zwar häufig noch von Regierung, Provinzregierung oder Gemeinden genutzt, doch echte Instandhaltungsarbeiten finden selbst an diesen Regierungsgebäuden nur selten statt. Oft dürfen diese offiziellen Gebäude, wie z.B. der Gouverneurs Palast in Buéa, nicht einmal fotografiert werden. Dass dieses Gebäude den längst überfälligen frischen Anstrich (und eine häßliche Mauer) im letzten Jahr bekam, ist nicht etwa Teil eines kamerunischen Denkmalpflegeprogramms, sondern lediglich die Reaktion der Stadtverwaltung auf die Ankündigung des Staatspräsidenten, Buéa während der heißen Wahlkampfphase im Oktober 2004 zu besuchen.

Ein echtes Engagement der kamerunischen Regierung auf dem Gebiet der Kultur- und Denkmalpflege ist nirgends feststellbar.

Wenn in Kamerun historische Gebäude gepflegt bzw. instandgesetzt werden, was punktuell vorkommt, dann ist dies hauptsächlich privater Initiative zu verdanken.

Die Botschaft hat im Rahmen des Kulturerhaltprogramms des Auswärtigen Amts im Jahr 2003 die Renovierungsarbeiten des königlichen Palastes in Bafut schwerpunktmäßig finanziert. Im letzten Jahr wurde das Nationalarchiv von Buéa durch eine Gerätespende (u.a. Luftentfeuchter, Computer, Fotokopierer) von der Botschaft unterstützt.

Nach meiner Einschätzung hat das von Ihnen geplante Projekt nur dann wirklich einen Sinn, wenn zunächst die kamerunische Regierung Ihr Interesse und Engagement auf diesem Gebiet unter Beweis stellt. Solange nicht die Verantwortung für den Erhalt dieser Gebäude tatsächlich vom kamerunischen Staat übernommen wird, werden diese historischen, nun kamerunischen Gebäude nur dazu benutzt werden, um den alten Kolonialmächten, und hier besonders Deutschland, die Verantwortung für den Erhalt Ihrer ehemaligen Gebäude zuzuschieben.

Ich bedaure, Ihnen kein positiveres Bild schildern zu können.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

Ihr Volker Seitz

## APPENDIX 4

### **Loi n°91/022 du 16 décembre 1991 portant réhabilitation de certaines figures de l'histoire du Cameroun.**

**Article 1<sup>er</sup>.**- (1) La présente loi porte réhabilitation de grandes figures de l'histoire du Cameroun, aujourd'hui disparues, qui ont œuvré pour la naissance du sentiment national, l'indépendance ou la construction du pays, le rayonnement de son histoire ou de sa culture.

(2) En application des dispositions de l'alinéa (1) ci-dessus, sont réhabilités, MM. Ahmadou Ahidjo, Um Nyobé Ruben, Moumié Félix, Ouandié Ernest.

**Article 2.-** La réhabilitation visée à l'article 1<sup>er</sup> ci-dessus a pour effet de dissiper tout préjugé négatif qui entourait toute référence à ces personnes, notamment en ce qui concerne leurs noms, biographies, effigies, portraits, la dénomination des rues, monuments ou édifices publics.

**Article 3.-** (1) Le transfert des restes mortuaires au Cameroun des personnes citées à l'article 1<sup>er</sup> ci-dessus, inhumées à l'extérieur du territoire national, peut s'effectuer à la demande de la famille ou de cujus, sous réserve de la dernière volonté du défunt et conformément à la législation du pays d'inhumation,

(2) Les frais occasionnés par ledit transfert sont à la charge de l'Etat.

**Article 4.-** Sur proposition du gouvernement ou de l'Assemblée Nationale, le bénéfice des dispositions de la présente loi peut être étendu à d'autres personnes répondant aux critères énoncés à l'article 1<sup>er</sup> ci-dessus.

**Article 5.-** La présente loi sera enregistrée et publiée suivant la procédure d'urgence, puis insérée au Journal Officiel en français et en Anglais.-

**Fait à Yaoundé, le 16 décembre 1991  
Le Président de la République,  
(é) Paul BIYA**

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### III- University Thesis

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## ABSTRACT

Douala is a Cameroonian city located on the banks of the Wouri River, that experienced various economic, social, and spatial evolution due to the succession of colonial systems: German protectorate from 1884 to 1916, Franco-British condominium from 1916 to 1919, Mandate then Trusteeship regimes under the French supervision from 1919 to 1960. These successive colonial systems have reshaped the urban space of Douala, through numerous projects and town planning initiatives. Some of these urban projects have been designed on the basis of massive expropriation of local populations, as well as urban segregation, for reasons of so-called hygiene. Urban construction and architectural forms in colonial Douala were conceived to impose Western hegemony. True support of power, colonial architecture in Douala reflects antagonistic urban initiatives, opposing the locals to the German and then French administration. Some of these buildings bear memories of forced labour, assassinations, racism, the imposition of cultural values, whips, and other inhuman and humiliating treatment that colonial administrators inflicted on local populations. On the other hand, within the former colonial powers in the postcolonial context, the imperial past in Cameroon is often equated with a glorious past of empire, which arouses nostalgia contrary to the difficult and painful tendencies of colonial memories in Africa. It is in this logic that the colonial past is subjected to selective oblivion, and idealisation aiming at its polishing. In this regard, the colonial buildings in Douala are the object of memory tensions that complexify their enhancement.

Colonial memory discrepancies can be explained by the dissonant heritage approach, theorised to highlight the tensions likely to affect the enhancement of historic sites in relation to atrocities. These are the sites of painful memories, with which various interest groups recognise linkages. The paradigm of Dissonant Heritage that emerged in the 1990s, inspired various other concepts in the study of heritage and heritage tourism, among which Difficult Heritage and Rejected Heritage. These evolving concepts recall the different possibilities to inspire from the Dissonant heritage, with a view to enhancing historical sites. In this logic, heritagisation models have emerged and inspired a specific heritage model applied to colonial built remains.

**Keywords: Dissonant Heritage, Colonial Architecture, Colonial Buildings, Colonial Memories, Colonial Built Remains.**