

Gentrification and Green Urbanism in Sub- Sahara Africa: The Case of Bamenda in Cameroon

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Abstract : Gentrification brings changes in socio-economic and environmental aspects in cities. This is a concern for local governments and urban residents, as rapid urbanization poses a challenge to SDGs 11 and 13. This paper aims to: (1) examine the dominant gentrification actions that counteract the drive towards green urbanism; (2) evaluate policy actions and institutions created to promote green urbanism; (3) explore the constraints that hinder development proponents from achieving the goal of green urbanism. A mixed research design (survey and exploratory) was used, along with snowball sampling techniques, to administer the questionnaire. Structured interviews and focus group discussions were also conducted to assess the efforts and success rate of planning and development proponents in achieving green urbanism. Secondary data provided the basis for a literature review on activities that promote brown cities, which hinder green urbanism. The results of the study revealed that gentrification in Bamenda is mainly focused on upgrading infrastructure within the city centre. This transition is accompanied by unsustainable architectural developments, sprawl into peri-urban ecosystems, and climate-incompatible developments. Efforts to achieve green urbanization in Bamenda are insignificant. Socio-economic and policy actions of residents do not reflect a move towards sustainable cities, which is a common theme in most development agendas. This undermines the ecology, health, and general well-being of its inhabitants, increasing vulnerability. The study suggests that there is a need to learn from the few green cities in Africa and adopt a holistic approach towards green urbanization. This approach should include green transportation, preservation of green spaces, and retrofitting brown buildings to green buildings, through synergies, motivation and subsidization through green governance.

Keywords : environmental sustainability, green urbanism, green governance, retrofitting

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