

# INDUSTRIAL LOGICS, STRUCTURING PROJECTS AND LAND CONFLICTS IN CAMEROON: THE CASE OF THE CITY OF KRIBI (2010-2021)

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**Abstract:** *The advent of major structuring projects in Cameroon is the daughter of major structural and geo-economics changes induced by public policies of sectorial development such as thinking by great ambitions and carrying by great achievements whose strategic city of Kribi embodies the implementation, and the materialization of national growth. Indeed, starting from this prism amounts to being part of cultural spatial imaginaries and the logic of land power of which land is the base and the issue that fuels conflicts between actors. The natural resource potential available to Cameroon, in general and the city of Kribi in particular, to induce the State to set up structural projects there (the industrial-port complex of which the deep-water port of Kribi is a component, the construction of the Kribi II natural gas power plant and the construction of roads and especially the Lolabé-Kribi highway). Since 2010, the city of Kribi has been at the centre of all attention (international and national); this because of the said structuring projects. In such a context of development, the earth is in the foreground, as a material support that shelters these projects. The State, the economic stakes and the populations coming from the four corners of the national triangle have enormous needs in land to make their capital grow. This research has led to intensive land speculation in the city of Kribi, with local populations and buyers of plots of land as the main actors. This reflection aims to highlight the land disputes arising from the establishment of such projects in the city of Kribi. Data analysis was based on a methodological approach that was both diachronic and synchronic, based on a variety of documentation consisting of articles, dissertations, theses and books; passive observations and interviews carried out in the districts of Kribi I and II. The establishment of structuring projects in the city of Kribi has given rise to a vast network of interaction around land between customary owners, canvassers, buyers, speculators and the administration. It emerges from this analysis that structuring projects are vectors of land disputes in the city of Kribi. However, to address these disputes that cause land insecurity, there is an urgent need to reform the land management system in Cameroon. This is in order to prevent potential clashes between different groups and especially that development projects are no longer interrupted because of said disputes.*

**Keywords:** Industrial logics, structuring projects, land disputes, Kribi.

## 1. Introduction

Kribi, city of light bears the seeds of its own charm: industrial-port complex, Lolabé gas plant, the Memve'ele hydroelectric dam, the construction of the Kribi-Lolabé highway and above all the asphaltting of urban roads. Located in the heart of the Cameroonian coast, the city of Kribi, urban mirror and strategic industrialization centre of Cameroon is one of the main coastal cities of Cameroon next to Douala, Limbe and Buea. Custodian of a relief favourable to developments due to the diversity of its landscapes and its very little contrasting morphology, Kribi has been since the 2000s the heavenly destination of the demographic boom which is not without consequences (Abega, 2015: 26). However, this allows it to exert a double attraction at the national level, first on the local populations and its hinterland, and also on the other regions of Cameroon. At the international level, tourists from the sub-region, Africa and internationally

are flooding into Kribi. Due to its advantageous maritime-type climate, the town of Kribi is characterized by abundant rainfall, i.e. 219 days of rain per year on average, with average temperatures of 26°C (Bokalli, 1997: 3). The dry season is well marked, although there are no hot months. Added to this are other advantages such as: vegetation suitable for agricultural activities, a subsoil with mining resources, such as oil and natural gas in Eboundja, zircon in Lobé, etc. All this makes it conducive to the exploitation of resources for the development of the city through the creation of industries (Dong Mognol, 2006: 74). In addition, its economic situation and its geostrategic position have motivated the State in the establishment of structuring projects in Kribi. This establishment has drained with it a large number of various actors (investors, non-native populations) and other factors (rural exodus, various migrations).

Indeed, the current situation in the city of Kribi marked by the accelerated urban population growth of recent decades is the result of the high birth rate and the immigration of people from diverse backgrounds. It constitutes an important factor in reinforcing the land pressure observed in this area; the increase in the demand for land for the construction of social housing or individual dwellings, the demand for land or space for the State, the increased investments in the mining sector, in gas and oil exploitation and the infrastructure development (roads, railways, dams, ports, pipeline), are all elements that justify the unprecedented interest that the land knows and undergoes in the department of the ocean in general and specifically in the city of Kribi since the 2000s (Elong et al, 2010: 18). However, the challenges of this vision are five in number: the first challenge is that of consolidating the democratic process and strengthening national unity; the second challenge is that of economic growth and employment; the third challenge is socio-demographic; the fourth challenge is that of urban development and land use planning and the last challenge is that of governance. This study is the result of a documentary review and oral data. Following an approach that is both diachronic and synchronic, the analysis of the data collected made it possible to build the corpus of work in three parts. The first part sets out to present the various structuring projects implemented in the city of Kribi. The second focuses on the socio-economic changes induced by these projects and which have led to the emergence of land disputes. Finally, the third traces the typologies of subsequent land disputes between 2010 and 2021.

## **1. From capturing public policies to setting up structuring projects in the city of Kribi (2010 -2021)**

The initiative of public policies, the leitmotif of structural configurations, is undoubtedly fuel for the industrialization of strategic sectors intended to promote all-out development in the city of Kribi. Structuring projects can be understood as “designs that are part of the region’s development priority and in an area with demonstrated significant growth potential that has a multiplier effect in the region’s economy”. They promote the attractiveness of the area concerned through the creation of jobs, the impetus (Mbaha, 2021: 13) of economic activities and finally the specific facilities and infrastructures (construction of communication routes, installations of energy lines, etc. In the town of Kribi, capital of the Ocean department, these structuring projects concern the industrial-port complex, the gas power station and the asphaltting of the Kribi-Grand-Zambi and Kribi-Lolabé roads.

### **1.1. Major structuring projects: between urban change and industrial innovation in the city of Kribi**

Four major infrastructural projects, carriers of development and drivers of transformation of the national industrial fabric, drive the vision of Cameroon's influence by 2035. Indeed, among these projects stands the industrial-port complex of Kribi. Born from the overriding interest in restructuring the port sector. Thus, by law n° 98/021 of December 24, 1998 (Etoga, 2010: 14) on the organization of this sector and the various provisions arising

therefrom”, it was decided to build an industrial-port complex in the seaside town of Kribi for industrial purposes. This ambition began to materialize from 2011 with the launch of the construction of the deep water port of Kribi. This obviously marks the beginning of a new era in the process of economic development in Cameroon. This is that of major structuring projects, integrating and generating growth, jobs and wealth.

Located in the locality of Mboro, its construction began in 2011 and was completed in 2018. For this phase, the works were carried out in the form of an Engineering Procurement and Construction (EPC) contract by the Chinese company CHEC for a cost total of 497,000,000.000 FCFA. Its funding was 85% provided by a loan granted by Exim-bank-China and 15% by the State of Cameroon (Etoga, 2010: 19). The operation of the deep water port of Kribi began with the reception of "large commercial vessels with a capacity of up to 100,000 tons and a draft of 15 to 16 meters". Indeed, its materialization on the ground is envisaged as follows: the construction of a mineralized terminal in the locality of Lolabé, the construction of a general port in Mboro (Mbodé) and the construction of a marina in Grand - Batanga I, which aims to promote seaside tourism and industrial fishing (Mbaha, 2021:23). The same is true of the redevelopment of the existing port to make coastal fishing, artisanal fishing and recreational activities prosper, as well as the construction of a new town in the Nlendi-dibé site. It should also be noted that the said port project is structured into four kinetic interest zones: the Magzi zone which is reserved for industries; the industrial-port area, which should house almost the entire complex; the MAETUR area housing titled land for sale and social housing and the area of the new city which is to be the seat of administrative institutions, shopping centres and the residential district. Following the port, another structuring project was implemented in the town of Kribi. This is the natural gas plant.

### **1.2. The Kribi gas plant**

The gas plant project developed by AES SONEL is part of the medium-term strategic development program for the supply of electricity in Cameroon. It is with this in mind that AES SONEL hired Scott Wilson (SW), an international firm of environmental and civil engineering consultants, to carry out the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) of the Kribi Energy Project. (Ngnoungou, 2020: 33). An ESIA was therefore carried out in accordance with Cameroonian laws on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), as set out in Decree No. 2005/0577 of February 23, 2005, at World Bank OP 4.01 and IFC performance standards. The Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection officially approved the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment Report (Scott Wilson, October 2006) of the Kribi Power Project on April 5, 2007 (Mbaha, 2021:43). The Kribi power station project includes: the power station itself the construction on the Mpolongwé site of a power station with a capacity of 216 MW fuelled by natural gas, the construction of electricity transmission facilities including a lift station (11 to 225 kV) on the site of the power plant in Mpolongwé; a 225 kV double circuit transmission line approximately 100 km long between the power plant and the 225/90 kV substation at Mangombe, Edéa, the connection of the transmission line at the substation Mangombe, accompanied by the installation of new 225 kV line segments (Onomo Etaba, 2009: 47).

In 2009, the government of Cameroon entrusted the Kribi Power Development Corporation (KPDC) with the design, construction, financing and operation of the gas power plant in Kribi with a capacity of 216 MW (Mbaha, 2021:13). “This project was carried out in the form of a public-private partnership contract for a period of 20 years”. The Kribi natural gas power plant project is located in the locality of Mpolongwé, Kribi I district. It was built between 2010 and 2013. It is important to note that, “this power plant is the first of the -Central Africa region and is the leading independent electricity producer in the country ahead of the Dibamba power station”. Besides this project, we have the asphaltting of the roads.

### **1.3. Communication infrastructure**

From 2010 to 2021, two roads were paved in the Kribi area. These are the roads (Kribi-Lolabé and Kribi-Grand-Zambi). Work on the development of the Kribi-Lolabé road began in 2015. This section is 38.5 km long and goes from the Mboro village to end at Bilolo in the Kribi II district (Etoga, 2010: 23). It is connected to the national road n°7 Edéa-Kribi at the level of the village Lolabé. Its realization was ensured by the Chinese company China Harbor Engineering Company and financed by the Exim bank to the tune of 250 billion FCFA. It was commissioned in 2020.

The second road is that of Kribi-Grand-Zambi. It extends over "53 km, the work for its construction began in 2017 and was completed in March 2021". It was completely paved by the Ministry of Public Works through the Chinese company CGCOC and jointly financed by the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the State of Cameroon to the tune of 36233276410 billion FCFA. Its commissioning was effective in March 2021 by the Ministry of Public Procurement. The structuring projects implemented in the city of Kribi (Mbopda, 2021: 8) have made it possible to energize all the sectors whose interactions are additional and simultaneous. At the same time, they have had consequences both at the socio-cultural level and on the land.

## **2. The impact of structuring projects in the city of Kribi**

The effects of major structuring projects in the city of Kribi are visible. They can be perceived through socio-economic life with its corollaries on land.

### **2.1. Socio-economic repercussions of structuring projects**

Kribi is a cosmopolitan city which has become urbanized and populated rapidly due to the presence of agro-industries (Hévécam, Socapalm and logging). However, it is the implementation of structuring projects that has caused the demographic explosion of the city. Recent estimates give the opportunity to characterize the rate of population growth of the city of Kribi during each of the following periods: 1976-1987 and 1987-2005, from 1976 to 1987. "The population (MINHDU, 2016:11) of the town of Kribi grew at an average annual rate of 6.1%, bringing it from 11,261 inhabitants in 1976 to 21,507 inhabitants in 1987. From 1987 to 2005 the increase in population continued with an average annual rate of 5.7%, for a population of 59,928 inhabitants in 2005". With this new rate of population growth, if the current trends were maintained, the city of Kribi entered in 2015 among the cities of 100,000 inhabitants. This population has continued to grow. Thus, the city has seen its population increase from 11,512 inhabitants in 2016 to 14,246 inhabitants in 2020. Said population is increasing, yet the land area continues to decrease. Structuring projects have led to various migrations, rural exodus and all-out tourism. To this end, (Onomo, 2009: 7) Professor Onomo Etaba, understands tourism as "a complex set of activities and services whose interactions with other economic, environmental and social sectors are multiple".

The little illustrated Larousse defines the rural exodus as being "a definitive migration of the inhabitants of the countryside towards the cities. It is, in other words, the displacement of populations from villages to cities in search of better living conditions. The rural exodus results in the increase of the population of the cities, the increase in the demands of the places of residence, etc. The dynamic of structuring projects in the city of Kribi has attracted more people from different regions of Cameroon. Having become a gigantic pool of jobs in addition to its tourist potential, it is seen as the new place of investment for economic operators. As a result, its population has changed with the implementation of structuring projects. It is with this in mind that (Tassou, 2018: 17) Esther Boupda believes that: "This demographic dynamic has been accompanied by an expansion of the city following a spontaneous movement of urbanization and an uncontrolled colonization of spaces private or public, in particular by an

increasingly heterogeneous and cosmopolitan population which, on a daily basis, produces or co-produces its space, in a context where the action of the public authorities is increasingly insufficient. The population has certainly changed, diversified and above all increased, however, "the area of the city of Kribi (i.e. 203km<sup>2</sup>)" has remained the same, which means that the city has remained exposed to land problems linked to the access and occupation of space through housing. In addition to the aforementioned factors, there has been added the emergence of both the informal and formal economy. Fishing, trade and other informal sector activities are developed because of the coastal position of the said locality. From the above, what impacts do the structuring projects have on the land in the city of Kribi?

## **2.2. Impact of structuring projects on land**

The structuring projects occupy a large land area: "the Kribi industrial-port complex alone covers an area of 26,000 hectares". As for the gas plant, it covers a total area of 16 hectares for a period of 25 years (MINHDU, 2016: 61). In addition, the State, which does not have a land bank, has used the customary heritage of local communities for the implementation of major projects and the agro-industries already present in the town of Kribi have been the origin of the migratory movements of several people and the establishment of various economic activities that are changing it and its surroundings. This population increase has led to increased land needs, which are often the source of social tensions between foreign and native populations, members of the same family, the State and individuals.

The advent of the port alone had the impact of increasing the price of plots of land (for example, the plot (Mbaha, 2021:23) of land which cost 2000 frs in the districts of Mpangou and Afan-Mabé in the 2000s, is today at 10,000frs), all-out land speculation by all formal and informal socio-land actors. Permanent acquisitions of land by individuals, third parties, foreigners and even by the State are increasingly solicited at all costs and by all means. While the need for land is enormous, land speculation is growing and the protection of indigenous lands is intensifying through direct registration. As a result, land disputes arise between different actors. The enormous needs for land create scarcity, scarcity and, by extension, land disputes. That said, what are the land disputes resulting from the introduction of structuring projects in the city of Kribi?

## **2.3. The different types of land disputes resulting from structuring projects**

Three main clusters of land disputes have been identified in the town of Kribi. These are customary land disputes, land disputes resulting from non-compliance with the land law and finally land disputes arising from land speculation. These disputes demonstrate in a way the complex management of land in Cameroon. When land management becomes difficult or complex within a society, most of the time we see crises. It is in this perspective that Le Bris, Le Roy and Mathieu assert:

*"Land conflicts or disputes (Onomo, 2009: 47) appear when the diversity of issues can no longer be regulated by a single authority".*

In this case, the differentiation of uses explains the manifestation of divergent interests which can be managed in a negotiated or judicial manner. To the extent that, in any society, several authorities contribute to controlling access to land or the distribution of its fruits, conflicts normally arise from this situation. Order is not manifested by the absence of conflicts or disputes, but results from the ability to control them. These land disputes arise, in large part, because of development, but also because of the lack of fluidity in land regulations. Besides these aforementioned factors, there are the socio-cultural considerations of the land by the populations. Under these conditions, when a certain number of precepts are no longer respected, we witness land disputes of several kinds.

#### **2.4. Customary land disputes**

Customary land disputes can be understood as those arising from non-compliance with customary norms in terms of management and traditional land rights by members of a family, clan or community. Since the advent and establishment of structuring projects in the city of Kribi, land needs have multiplied, because individuals want to invest. As a result, the natives who own huge land areas have started to sell. The sales, for the most part, are made without the knowledge of certain members of the family, clan or community. However, in Africa, in general, and in Cameroon, in particular, the earth, according to the habits and customs, (Dong, 2006:94) is a collective good whose sale is prohibited, as affirmed by Dong Mognol: "the land was the property of the entire clan community". Going in the direction of the primacy of custom, Bokalli notes that: "in traditional Africa the law found its source only in custom, that is to say a usage that slowly emanates from popular consciousness and which, little by little considered obligatory, will become a rule of law (Bokalli, 1997: 23). The custom thus presented has the advantage of being flexible, malleable and of corresponding at all times to the popular will, to the ideas, to the mores of the social or ethnic group which generates it. It is for this reason that it is as respected here as it is firmly established.

Since the implementation of major structuring projects, the land has become the source of all confrontations between the different members of society. Land that once had a sacred connotation has become a tool of division. The collective character has been trivialized. The effects of development have somehow led to the alienation of customary values. The land which was the legacy of the whole community, the collective good is becoming an individual good; this because of the selfishness of each other with regard to the co-owners. Indeed, the profitability of the land and the revitalization of the economy are at the origin of the upheaval of customary values, especially in the field of land in the city of Kribi. In customary land disputes, we note "disputes arising from the sharing of inheritance between the various co-owners, land disputes relating to succession (Dong, 2006: 74) and land disputes arising from donations". These land disputes, for the most part, are located in the city of Kribi. "For the period from 2010 to 2021, they were around 1563". In addition to this category of land disputes, there is the second category which is related to land regulations.

#### **2.5. Land disputes related to land administration**

Land disputes related to land regulations can be described as those arising from administrative or non-administrative shortcomings in the various procedures related to the said area. Cameroon's land law is subject to many discrepancies. This law is sealed with a double seal of management of two rights which coexist without really being complementary. On the one hand we have legitimate customary land rights, held by the indigenous populations, and on the other hand we have the modern so-called legal rights held by the Cameroonian legislator (Bokalli, 1997: 53). The 1974 reform which regulates land in Cameroon does not really respond to the realities of societies. It is in this duality at the level of the land law is a source of multiple misunderstandings and land disputes. In fact, it certainly recognizes the right of enjoyment of local populations, but not the legal right of said populations. By imposing registration as the only method of securing land, opposition between various actors arises. During registration, mistakes can be made on both sides (administration and other land actors). It is in this perspective that Nkankeu and Bryant affirm that: "since European colonization, the public authorities in sub-Saharan Africa have wanted to establish (Bokalli, 1997: 63) economic development on the exploitation of the land in order to control the value of the territory or to dispose of it for public utility purposes". But this political will almost everywhere came up against the reluctance of the populations, because as a general rule, in African mentalities, land has always been considered, not as the property of a single man or of an institution, but always like that of a community or a family.

It becomes obvious to understand why modern land law is a source of much rejection by the Cameroonian populations and that of the city of Kribi. It is this incomprehension and this refusal, coupled with the introduction and implementation of structuring projects, from which benefit.

## 2.6. Disputes arising from land speculation

Land disputes arising from land speculation result from the sale or purchase of land by various actors with or without compliance with the regulations in force. It becomes less and less difficult in a society governed by capital and the market economy to believe in ethnic or tribal difference when it comes to the sale or purchase of land. To be a landowner, it is enough to be wealthy or to have the capacity to acquire a plot of land. It is in this logic that Bokalli declares:

“Money today is the graveyard of ethnic groups. Whoever has the money can settle wherever he wants”. In such a context, to be a landowner in a specific region of Cameroon, it suffices to have the necessary financial means” (Bokalli, 1997: 36)

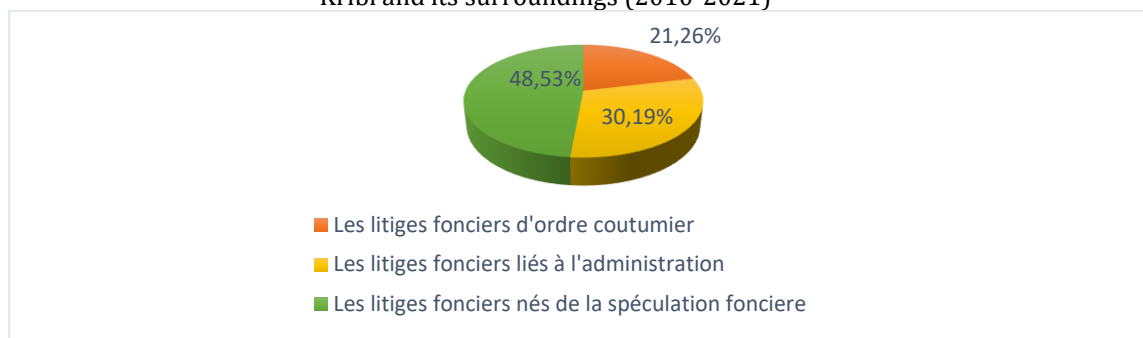
**Table 1: Summary of land disputes arising from major structuring projects in the town of Kribi and its surroundings: 2010-2021**

Years Denomination	2010	2011	2015	2021	Totals	Percentage (%)
customary land disputes	205	356	589	413	1563	21,26%
Land disputes related to land administration	347	503	669	700	2219	30,19%
Disputes arising from land speculation	382	789	1194	1202	3567	48,53%
Totals	934	1648	2452	2315	7349	100

Source: Compilation of data from the archives of the departmental delegation of domains, cadastre and land affairs (division of the land registry service), the Kribi Court of Appeal, customary authorities and private archives.

The observation that emerges from this table is as follows: land disputes arising from land speculation in the city of Kribi are significant, i.e. 3,567 complaints recorded in the various formal or informal places. This sufficiently shows the involvement of structuring projects in land disputes. Administrative disputes take second place with 2,219 recorded cases (Tchappmegni, 2005: 13). They are explained by the concern to secure the land of the populations in the face of their invasion of the land by the structuring projects. Finally, customary land disputes closed with 1,563 cases listed. Most of all these disputes peaked between 2011 and 2015. This is mainly due to the implementation of major structuring projects, such as the industrial-port complex which is the main link in mass investment in the town of Kribi. The following chart shows the proportion of these land disputes

**#Graph 1:** Representation of land disputes arising from structuring projects in the city of Kribi and its surroundings (2010-2021)



Source: Graph produced on the basis of data from Table 1.

The proportion of land disputes in our study area is significant. Thus, land disputes resulting from land speculation are 48.53% (MINH DU, 2016:81). Those related to the administration also represent an impressive share of 30.19% and finally, those of customary order represent 21.26%. This amounts to saying that structuring projects are double-edged swords. On the one hand, they allow the improvement of the living conditions of the different social strata and on the other hand, they are instruments of land disputes. From the above, what are the consequences of land disputes arising from structuring projects and their methods of resolution?

### **3. The typology of land disputes, logics of actors and resolution mechanisms**

Land disputes have considerable consequences for society and especially for the various actors involved. This is why mechanisms have been put in place for their resolution.

#### **3.1. The typology of land disputes**

Land disputes are at the root of evils such as fratricidal quarrels, physical and verbal violence, and the deterioration of social relations between the various protagonists, inter-ethnic clashes and above all social instability. In June 2021, a complaint for assault and battery was filed at the Kribi II police station. It opposed two members of the same community (MINH DU, 2016:51). Legion are complaints recorded in police stations, gendarmeries and chiefdoms in relation to abuses relating to land disputes in the city of Kribi; they are around 312 complaints. In the city of Kribi, certain ethnic groups, in this case nationals of the West Cameroon region, are exposed to verbal abuse from the indigenous populations, because they are the major land buyers. It is in this logic that Dong MougnoI declares:

*“From the land opposition a certain hatred against immigrants was born; which gave rise to multi-dimensional inter-ethnic crises”.*

In addition to this, there is the birth of a galloping and anarchic urbanization, dependent on the establishment of structuring projects. Indeed, the construction of places housing certain commercial premises or habitats are in risk or prohibited areas. There really is no environmental impact study by investors on the land requested. This is what made Tassou say that:

This seems to justify the irrational use of land on the one hand and the proliferation of spontaneous habitats in most of the study cities on the other (...). It is mainly poor families (in this case those of immigrants) who are at the origin of the multiplication of precarious housing, which only increases over the years” (Dong, 2006: 174).

From the above, we understand that development projects are at the origin of various changes that are political, economic and socio-cultural. These mutations are at the origin of the



exploitation and mass occupation of the earth. The occupation of the land in this case is unequal in the city of Kribi because it is the highest bidder who quickly obtains the best spaces. This inequality is responsible for the anarchic occupation of spaces. It is this reality that prompted Bokalli to assert:

*"the less well-off, at their level, manage as best they can in areas at risk, this inevitably leads to disputes over land and the proliferation of spontaneous housing" (Bokalli, 1997: 46).*

Along the same lines, Oscar Tagni declares that

"The lack of financial means for some and the need for land for the better off create a lack of land and above all better spaces". This often results in the anarchic occupation and forbidden spaces by third parties. The overbidding of plots of land in the districts of Afane Mabé, Mpangou where the square meter varies between 10000 and 12000 frs) and the high cost of housing are born of the establishment and the realization of structuring projects in the city of Kribi and its surroundings. To this, we can add the scourge of corruption which plagues the land sector. How are these land disputes managed in the city of Kribi?

### **3.2. Logic of actors and endogenous regulation of land tensions in the city of Kribi**

Due to its nature and scope, the implementation of structuring projects raises environmental and social concerns. To this end, the legislation in force in Cameroon in the matter, and specifically Law 96/012 of August 05, 1996 on the framework law relating to the management of the environment in its title III chapter II, prescribes that the promoter of the works and activities that risk harming the environment is required to carry out an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) (MINHDU, 2016:41).

In the town of Kribi, it has become extremely difficult to acquire a piece of land. Indeed, since the start of construction work on the city's deep-water port, almost all the land has been acquired (including areas not yet serviced), and the first buyers are no longer willing to sell their property to new owners. Potential other buyers without having maximized earnings. As a result, prices have skyrocketed, both for individuals, real estate agents and companies who are now flocking to this seaside town, which could soon become Cameroon's main industrial city. The trigger for this gradual transformation of the coastal town of Kribi (Tchamagni, 2005: 11) is, without a doubt, its deep-water port, the commissioning of which is announced for the near future. Around this port infrastructure, in fact, are grafted many projects in fields as varied as mining (the exploitation of the Mont's Mamelles deposit by the Sino steel company), heavy industry (aluminum and oil refineries), energy (gas liquefaction plant), car manufacturing, telecommunications, railway industry, public works, etc. From now on, this city already known for its immense tourist wealth concentrates so many industrial projects, to the point where the government, in order to capitalize on the opportunities that this locality holds today, launched in January 2015 a call for tenders for the elaboration of a development strategy for Kribi. Through this approach, indicate sources introduced within the Ministry in charge of the economy, the government aims a double objective. The first step is to identify the expectations of investors involved in the projects announced or in progress in this city or its surroundings, with a view to providing adequate responses. Then, it is a question of evaluating the capacity of Cameroonian SMEs (Onomo, 2009: 47) to ensure subcontracting for multinationals within the framework of the above-mentioned projects, with the aim of boosting the creation of local jobs and ensuring technology transfer. In short, with the construction of the deep-water port, many economic analysts already see the heart of the Cameroonian economy beating a little more in Kribi than in Douala, the current economic capital of the country. And the ambitions of the Cameroonian government for this city, located about 150 km from Douala, lead us to believe that over the next few years, failing to become the main economic pole of Cameroon, Kribi will be one of the essential links in the national economy.

### **3.3. Mechanism for resolving land disputes**

The process of settling land disputes in the city of Kribi combines customary, administrative and judicial procedures. The customary mode of management is based on tradition and makes it possible to manage disputes between the various protagonists. The objective study of sources and ethnographic data show that the Negro African civilization is defined in terms of dialogue, compromise, coexistence and peace. Traditional African society is therefore predisposed to peace, a peace that it perpetually seeks and that it permanently cultivates; African thought seeks life in peace (Temgoua, 2012: 5). This peace, this permanent search for peace shows its extreme importance among Africans. From the above, the African peoples, in general, and those of Cameroon, in particular, are followers of peace in society. The search for harmony between men is at the center of the various concerns and remains a philosophy of life that respects the latter and, in turn, makes it sacred. In the resolution of a dispute, it is the head of the village, family or clan who presides. He is often assisted by notables, patriarchs and protagonists. The mechanisms used in the traditional way of resolving land disputes in Kribi are as follows: Conciliation, mediation, the palaver tree and negotiation. Thus, for “the period from 2010 to 2021, 3102 disputes were resolved by the customary mode”.

In addition to this mode, there is the administrative mode. It makes use of the regulations in force on land. These are two commissions, namely “the advisory commission which settles objections and applications for the registration of rights as a principal title and the commission for the settlement of border disputes which intervenes exclusively when the land to be registered overlaps the disputed limits of the administrative districts or traditional command units”. We also have the minister in charge of land, cadaster and land affairs. This mode really contributes to the settlement of land disputes in the city of Kribi, although it is expensive. Thus, between “2010 and 2021, 1370 (Temgoua, 2012: 9) land disputes were managed by this mode”. Finally, there is the mode of judicial resolution of land disputes. The mode of judicial resolution of land disputes is very unusual in the city of Kribi. It is provided by the courts. The populations do not really use this mode; this because of its repressive and constraining character. Thus from “2010 to 2021, 267 land disputes were managed”. However, it contributes considerably to the resolution of land disputes in the city of Kribi and its surroundings. Indeed, the high number of land disputes has led people to resort to this method of management. Since the advent and implementation of structuring projects in the city of Kribi, land disputes have increased considerably. This is why Tchapmegni asserts:

“the barometer of the level of land tensions in the areas of southern Cameroon can easily be measured through the roles of the court hearings, especially repressive ones, and the registers of complaints in the sub-prefectures and other administrative units” (Tchapmegni, 2005: 17). Thus, with regard to any epistemological consideration, it is unequivocally accepted that the earth is the base of any socio-anthropological mutation.

### **4. Conclusion**

The implementation of structuring projects has drained with it land insecurity in the city of Kribi. These development projects have reinforced land issues involving several categories of actors with diverse and multifaceted interests. On the one hand, we have the socio-cultural conceptions and the demographic pressure which accentuate the demand for land which give rise to land disputes. To this are added migrations of all kinds, rural exodus, tourist activities therefore benefiting the said city, social inequalities and the complexity of Cameroonian land law which are catalysts for land disputes. Since the advent of major structuring projects initiated by the State of Cameroon, the populations of the said area, driven by a casual attitude, have embarked on the all-out sale of land. This anarchic sale resulted in land disputes which, for quite some time, have punctuated the lives of the indigenous populations. These land disputes can be considered as indicators of the ineffectiveness of the

public policies put in place by a country, namely land, agricultural, social, land use policies, etc. The incoherence of these policies would accentuate the land pressures created by the imbalance between population growth and.

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