

**URBAN REGENERATION OF HISTORICAL DISTRICT IN METROPOLITAN  
CONTEXT: CASE OF “OLD BÈ”, A DISTRICT OF GREATER-LOMÉ (TOGO),  
A SUB-SAHARAN CAPITAL<sup>1</sup>**

**METROPOLİTEN BAĞLAMINDA TARİHİ BÖLGELERİN KENTSEL DÖNÜŞÜMÜ:  
ALT SAHARAN BAŞKENTİ, BÜYÜK -LOMÉ (TOGO) BÖLGESİ,  
“ESKİ BÈ” ÖRNEĞİ<sup>2</sup>**

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**Dong TCHEDRE**

PhD. Student, City and Regional Planning, Institute of Graduate Education, Konya Technical University,  
e208131001003@ktun.edu.tr  
ORCID: 0000-0001-6278-6043

**Neslihan SERDAROĞLU SAĞ**

Corresponding Author, Assoc. Prof. Dr., Department of City and Regional Planning, Faculty of Architecture and Design, Konya Technical University, nssag@ktun.edu.tr  
ORCID: 0000-0001-8002-4499

**Abstract**

Globally in sub-Saharan Africa, and particularly in West Africa, capital cities have old districts or centers dating from the colonial or post-colonial era. Nevertheless, there is one fact that should not be overlooked. These old districts are now part of the most important elements of African cultural heritage. Faced with the various challenges generated by the strong urbanization of the African continent, the regeneration of these old cities has taken a back seat to industrialization projects and the creation of new cities. Dealing with the issue of urban regeneration of historic districts in Africa is a paradigm shift. Because in Africa, the essentially physical transformation approach resulting in restructuring, renovation, or urban rehabilitation is still perceptible. Exploring the urban regeneration approach in an old historic district and the context of a metropolitan city is the main objective of this article. Abundant literature brings together research aimed at analysing the problem of old historic districts and exploring various approaches to solutions that exist. This article aims to report on an experience of researching the digestion of solutions developed throughout this abundant literature and translating it into a unique territory different from that of the other countries. Thus, after the introduction, the context, and the methodology, it will first be a matter of taking stock and planning practices of the metropolitan context through the presentation of the Greater-

<sup>1</sup> This article was prepared within the scope of the PhD. Program in Konya Technical University, Institute of Graduate Studies, Department of City and Regional Planning, in the fall semester of academic year 2021-2022 for the course unit “Urban Regeneration Models and Applications” offered by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Neslihan Serdaroglu Sag.

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Lomé. Secondly, we are zooming in on the old Bè. The history, morphology, population, education, health, and religious facilities, superstructures, infrastructure elements, and the current situation of the cultural assets to be preserved were assessed. After the assessment of the assets of the current situation, a SWOT analysis was carried out. Suggestions for interventions that should be prioritized in the regeneration were elaborated. In conclusion, it is possible to say that this article will be a small start for successful urban regeneration in the Old Bè.

**Keywords:** Urban regeneration, Historical and cultural district, suggestion for interventions, Old Bè, Greater-Lomé.

### Öz

Küresel olarak Sahra altı Afrika'da ve özellikle Batı Afrika'da, başkentlerin sömürge veya sömürge sonrası dönemden kalma eski bölgeleri veya merkezleri vardır. Bu eski mahallelerin artık Afrika kültürel mirasının en önemli unsurlarının bir parçası olduğu gözden kaçırılmaması gereken bir gerçektir. Afrika kıtasının güçlü kentleşmesinin yarattığı çeşitli zorluklarla karşı karşıya kalan bu eski şehirlerin dönüşümü, sanayileşme ve yeni şehirlerin yaratılmasının yanında arka planda kalmıştır. Afrika'daki tarihi bölgelerin kentsel dönüşümü sorunuyla uğraşmak bir paradigma kaymasıdır. Çünkü Afrika'da esasen yeniden yapılanma, renovasyon veya kentsel rehabilitasyonla sonuçlanan fiziksel dönüşüm yaklaşımı hala hissedilmektedir. Bu makalenin temel amacı, eski bir tarihi semtte kentsel dönüşüm yaklaşımını bir metropol kenti bağlamında keşfetmektir. Geniş kapsamlı literatür araştırması, eski tarihi semtlerin sorununu analiz etmeyi ve var olan çözümlere yönelik çeşitli yaklaşımları keşfetmeyi amaçlayan araştırmaları bir araya getirmektedir. Bu makale, literatürde geliştirilen çözümlerin araştırılması ve tarihi semtlerin dönüşümü konusunu diğer ülkelerden farklı, benzersiz bir bölgeye çevirme deneyimini aktarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu nedenle, giriş, bağlam ve metodolojiden sonra, öncelikle Greater-Lomé'nin tanıtımı yoluyla metropoliten bağlamın varlıklarını ve planlama pratikleri ele alınmaktadır. İkinci olarak, eski Bè'ye yaklaşılmaktadır. Eski Be' de korunması gereken kültür varlıklarının tarihi, morfolojisi, nüfusu, eğitim, sağlık ve dini tesisleri, üst yapıları, altyapı unsurları ve mevcut durumu değerlendirilmiştir. Mevcut duruma ait varlıkların değerlendirilmesinin ardından SWOT analizi yapılmıştır. Varlık değerlendirilmesine bağlı olarak dönüşümde öncelik verilmesi gereken müdahale önerileri detaylandırılmıştır. Sonuç olarak, bu makalenin Eski Be'de başarılı bir kentsel dönüşüm için küçük bir başlangıç olacağını söylemek mümkündür.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Kentsel dönüşüm, Tarihi ve kültürel bölgeler, müdahale önerileri, Eski Bè, Büyük-Lomé.

### Structured Abstract

Globally in sub-Saharan Africa, and particularly in West Africa, capital cities have old districts or centers dating from the colonial or post-colonial era. Nevertheless, there is one fact that should not be overlooked. These old districts are now part of the most important elements of African cultural heritage. Faced with the various challenges generated by the strong urbanization of the African continent, the regeneration of these old cities has taken a back seat to industrialization projects and the creation of new cities. Despite being one of the least developed continents, urbanization remains the fastest in west Africa.

Dealing with the issue of urban regeneration of historic districts in Africa is a paradigm shift. Because in Africa, the essentially physical transformation approach resulting in restructuring, renovation, or urban rehabilitation is still perceptible. Exploring the urban regeneration approach in an old historic district and the context of a metropolitan city is the main objective of this article.

In this article, Greater-Lomé, capital of Togo and more particularly "Old Bè" will be the spatial framework discussed on which we will define according to indicators for urban regeneration operation in a double context; that of a metropolis and West Africa. The "Old Bè" is a sector rich in its cultural, human, environmental, and architectural heritage. Former village among the first surrounded by urbanization and annexed to the Municipality of Lomé in 1971, the "Old Bè" has retained a unique identity and remains a strong landmark for the population from Lomé. Since the end of the 1980s, it has been known for its high density and is marked by a "village" habitat. Long left behind, today it faces several major issues and challenges to ensure a comfortable and pleasant living environment for its population. To protect this heritage, primarily, an understanding of the various urban changes undergone by the "Old Bè" is imperative.

Abundant literature brings together research aimed at analysing the problem of old historic districts and exploring various approaches to solutions that exist. This article aims to report on an experience of researching the digestion of solutions developed throughout this abundant literature and translating it into

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a unique territory different from that of the other countries. Thus, after the introduction, the context, and the methodology, it will first be a matter of taking stock and planning practices of the metropolitan context through the presentation of the Greater-Lomé. Secondly, we are zooming in on the old Bè. The history, morphology, population, education, health, and religious facilities, superstructures, infrastructure elements, and the current situation of the cultural assets to be preserved were assessed. After the assessment of the assets of the current situation, a SWOT analysis was carried out.

The SWOT analysis also reveals a rich cultural heritage in Old Bè, but this is not promoted. Original initiatives related to culture are imperative. Another element revealed by the SWOT analysis is the almost non-existence of a tourist economy, despite important assets. After the assessment of the assets of the current situation, a SWOT analysis was carried out. Suggestions for interventions that should be prioritized in the regeneration were elaborated.

The production of cultural elements within the framework of the urban regeneration of old Bè will have as its flagship the sacred forest of Bè. The latter must first benefit from a clear delimitation. This limit which will be protected by a concrete block wall will be framed by a tertiary pedestrian route. Indeed, as said above, it has lost a large part of the area due to human activities. Despite the current setting of a fencing belt around the forest, a study must be carried out to redefine a new one for exploitation both to maintain the religious practices and the cultural events that take place within the forest and also to develop other activities to make the forest liveable.

The old Bè, strong with its history, and different heritage elements, has a strong potential to become a cultural district. However, for this potential to be harnessed and become effective, there is a long way to go. As part of a process of regeneration of the old Bè, the cultural axis is the center around which the creation of a healthy district revolves, a modern district with economic potential through tourism. Indeed, there are many concepts in terms of the urban regeneration approach. Nevertheless, given the specificities of old Bè, the approach centered around cultural value is undoubtedly the most qualified. Culture appears to be the main trigger for transformation, raising awareness and mobilizing the inhabitants for the regeneration of Bè.

In conclusion, it is possible to say that this article will be a small start for successful urban regeneration in the Old Bè.

#### 1. Introduction and Conceptual Research

Globally in sub-Saharan Africa, and particularly in West Africa, capital cities have old districts or centers dating from the colonial or post-colonial era. Nevertheless, there is one fact that should not be overlooked. These old districts are now part of the most important elements of African cultural heritage. Faced with the various challenges generated by the strong urbanization of the African continent, the regeneration of these old cities has taken a back seat to industrialization projects and the creation of new cities. Indeed, according to the World Bank (2006), the peak of African urbanization is yet to come. Despite being one of the least developed continents, urbanization remains the fastest in west Africa. One of the most obvious spatial manifestations of urban growth is metropolization. Metropolization is a term that designates the process of making an important, influential, powerful city, a city above all others. These metropolises are districts of attractiveness, the main poles of socio-economic opportunities, and areas of strong demographic pressure.

Constituting an important heritage for these metropolises in search of urban identity, the question of old districts very commonly comes to the fore because of their situations. The latter requires major regeneration in terms of the renovation of buildings and services, but also in terms of the development of

external spaces, the improvement of transport, and the living environment to make their districts like any other, more pleasant to live in for their inhabitants. Defining the need and/or the urgency to transform these old districts is not enough to create an effective integration into the city even after the transformation. Abundant literature dealing with the issue of revitalization and integration of old historic districts focuses on urban regeneration. Over the past decades, many countries around the world have adopted urban regeneration to solve social problems, stimulate the local economy, create better environmental and cultural conditions and improve the competitiveness of the city (Xuili and Maliene, 2021).

Urban regeneration is defined as "a comprehensive and integrated vision and action which leads to the resolution of urban problems and which seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area which has been subjected to changes." (Roberts, 2000). Thus, urban regeneration goes beyond urban renewal (essentially physical process of change), urban development (general mission) and urban revitalization (no precise method of approach). Urban regeneration implies that all approaches "must be built with a longer-term and more strategic goal in mind" (Roberts, 2000). The need for an overarching strategic agenda and cross-sectoral integration is seen as fundamental to urban regeneration. (Insights in the British Debate about Urban Decline and Urban Regeneration, 2005). Given its inter-dimensional character, urban regeneration leads to an effective transformation of historic districts with cultural significance. Thus, it is an approach that guarantees the protection of cultural heritage while revitalizing it. The future of cultural heritage, therefore, depends mainly on its integration into the context of life (Dorathl, 2005).

As mentioned above, the new trend today in urban intervention and an existing urban fabric is urban regeneration. In Europe, in the 1960s, urban revitalization was a means of bringing new life and improving the living environment and social well-being in degraded urban areas (Roberts, 2000). This urban revitalization is reflected in the operation of urban restructuring followed in the 70s and 80s by new approaches such as urban renewal and redevelopment. The latter as underlined by Roberts (2004), Tsenkova (2002), and Coach (1990) are over this period the most used and involve a total renewal via physical interventions (demolitions and significant changes in the shape and uses of the areas intervened). Today in Africa, urban restructuring is still the flagship operation in terms of urban regeneration. Indeed, among the orientations and zones defined during the elaboration of the Master Plans for Urban Development and Planning (the leading planning document for African cities), restructuring is the operation par excellence programmed for old districts and spatially irregular spaces. Urban restructuring is an operation that consists in reconstituting the structure of a "disorganized" urban fabric. It is a question of widening, straightening, prolonging certain roads or creating them, with a minimum destruction of constructions and by bringing in the various networks to improve the living environment and possibly recover<sup>3</sup>. The matter is how to develop a strategy within the framework of an urban regeneration that could be carried out to allow a good development and reintegration of the districts presenting the challenges and issues of the old districts and being a cultural heritage in the urban dynamics of the West African metropolitan cities.

Research has been carried out on built heritage, industrial heritage, tourism, and many other fields. Heritage conservation has been largely integrated with urban regeneration and has played an important role in increasing the economic and social sustainability of the regenerated area (Xuili and Maliene, 2021). As said above, heritage is a potential lever for development. In this direction, Nasser (2003), proposes several sustainable approaches to the management and planning of cultural heritage by addressing the conflicts between heritage protection, tourism development, and sustainable development from the relationship symbiotic between tourism and heritage areas. Safeguard heritage "Yes", but the need is to adapt to various new contemporary needs. Thus, there is a need to focus on sustainable urban regeneration on culture (Daglio et al., 2020). For Rodwell (2007), open spaces, landscape elements, the way they interact with each other, and their static and temporal relationships combine to define the character and values of a place's urban

<sup>3</sup> Course on town planning documents: Regeneration of old fabric (Yawo Joseph Aholou, EAMAU, 2015-2016).

landscape. Overall, it is a matter of emphasizing the conservation of cultural heritage in the context of urban regeneration that is closely linked to the objective of sustainable development. All in all, it is imperative to proceed with the conservation of the urban landscape (non-mineralized open spaces) during urban regeneration operations, at a time of "climatic recharging", and of "urban heat island" issues.

In this article, Greater-Lomé, capital of Togo and more particularly "Old Bè" will be the spatial framework discussed on which we will define according to indicators for urban regeneration operation in a double context; that of a metropolis and West Africa. The "Old Bè" is a sector rich in its cultural, human, environmental, and architectural heritage. Former village among the first surrounded by urbanization and annexed to the Municipality of Lomé in 1971, the "Old Bè" has retained a unique identity and remains a strong landmark for the population from Lomé. Since the end of the 1980s, it has been known for its high density and is marked by a "village" habitat. Long left behind, today it faces several major issues and challenges to ensure a comfortable and pleasant living environment for its population. To protect this heritage, an understanding of the various urban changes undergone by the "Old Bè" is primarily imperative.

## 2. Development of The Methodological Approach

The methodological approach developed within the framework of this article is based on an important literature review on the questions of urban regeneration in general and in the old historic districts with cultural values, a review of the writings on the old of Bè, and a field analysis based on observation. Indeed, "at the beginning of everything, there must be observation, it is the only reliable scientific method" affirm Bastié and Dézert (1980). Thus, the study at the base of this article on old Bè was carried out via an urban analysis. Specifically, it was a question of an analysis of the urban morphology of old Bè, which made it possible to better appreciate the current situation of the district and to highlight the changes that have taken place in its territorial jurisdiction in recent years.

A review of the existing documentation on the city of Lomé and particularly the old Bè and knowledge of the said district were our main sources. Indeed, experience in the field was acquired during an academic visit as part of the heritage and urban dynamics course in 2016 and during the surveys and the development of the Master Plan for Development and Director of Greater-Lomé in 2018 Regarding the visual illustrations, they were taken by Sandani and Babale (2021).

This article, divided into three parts, focuses firstly on the presentation of the city of Lomé, the development of the Greater-Lomé since its creation, and the need for an urban regeneration approach on the territory of Greater-Lomé in the context of achieving these development objectives and vision. Secondly, the article focuses on the historical, cultural, and environmental properties of the Bè district. It also presents the degradation of the urban fabric highlighting the need for an urban regeneration project. Finally, in a third step, and with the idea of the accepted regeneration, it will be a matter of identifying the elements to be transformed. An approach corresponding to the context of an old district with an irregular urban fabric, a degraded living environment, a disappearing sacred forest, and a strong historical and cultural context.

In addition, the current situation of Old Bè in terms of population, urban morphology, superstructure facilities, and service infrastructure, i.e., transport, education, health, commerce, security, religious facilities were analysed. After the assessment of the strengths of the current situation, a SWOT analysis was carried out. The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for urban transformation in Old Bè were assessed with a SWOT analysis. SWOT is a tool to help define development strategies. It involves taking into account both internal and external factors, maximizing the potential of strengths and opportunities, and minimizing the effects of weaknesses and threats. SWOT analysis constitutes a decision support model to help administrations undertake urban regeneration projects with a focus on vulnerable

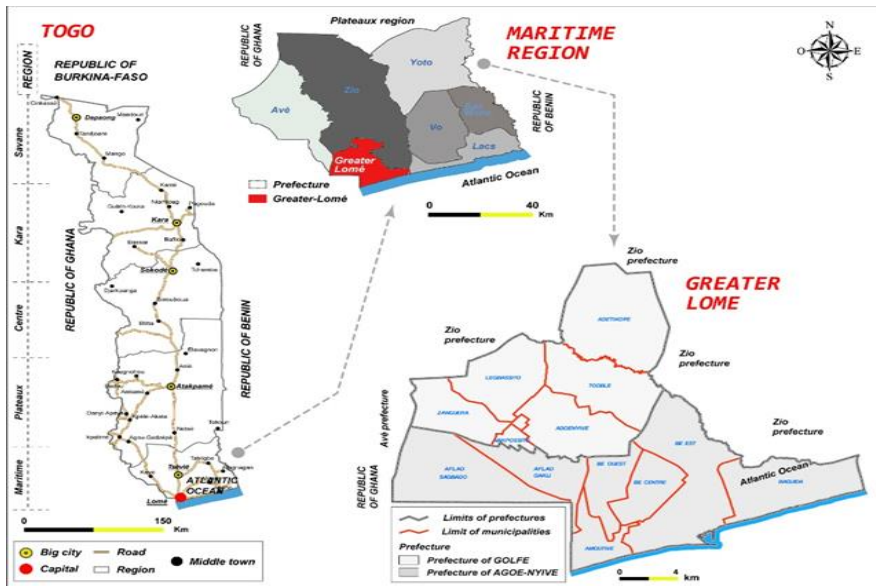
areas and buildings (Rua, et al., 2020). Thus, intervening at the urban and building level profoundly influences the social perspective. All in all, in the course of urban regeneration of vulnerable areas different actions to be carried out should be prioritized to reduce negative impacts on citizens and users and to improve their well-being by obtaining social benefits and overcoming vulnerability. In the light of these assessments, suggestions have been developed for the interventions to be prioritized for regeneration.

To do this, we will rely on the different elements developed in the large quantity of literature available. We will use this abundant literature to produce a factual inventory of Old Bè and to develop an innovative and specific approach for the beginning of urban regeneration of old cultural urban fabrics such as Old Bè. A macro-spatial analysis of Old Bè across Greater Lomé will be carried out to highlight its willingness to regenerate these old historical districts for the effective realization of its development vision.

### 3. The Urban Fact in Greater-Lomé

#### 3.1. General information of Greater-Lomé

Greater-Lomé is located in the Maritime Region, one of the five (5) administrative and economic regions of Togo (Figure 1.). The Maritime Region is located between that of the Plateaux with which it borders in the north over a length of 130 km, the Atlantic Ocean in the south over a length of 50 km, the Republic of Benin in the east over 100 km, and Ghana over a length of 80 km to the west.



**Figure 1:** Geographical location of Greater-Lomé. (Realization: Dong Tchedre, 2022 / Source: Data from OpenStreetMap and Communalization of the Territory of the Greater-Lomé)

It covers an area of 6,100 km<sup>2</sup> or nearly 11% of the total area of the country, concentrates 42% of the population of Togo, and is the smallest of the five regions of Togo.

The economic and political capital of Togo, Greater-Lomé is located in the extreme southwest of Togo, on the Atlantic coast, and has nearly two (2) million inhabitants (INSEED\_Togo, 2021).



Composed of two prefectures, namely the prefecture of Agoè-Nyivé and the prefecture of the Golfe, Greater-Lomé is made up of 13 municipalities, since Law No. 2017-008 of 29 June 2017 establishing the municipalities in Togo. 2007-011 of March 13, 2007, on decentralization and local freedoms.

### 3.2. Planning tools for Greater-Lomé

The city of Greater-Lomé has known two (02) planning documents during its history. Before the elaboration of these two (02) planning documents, there was already a first plan carried out in 1897 and a second carried out in 1913. The first German governor, August Kohler, was the planner of these two first plans of the Togolese capital. Indeed, Togo therefore indirectly, the city of Lomé has known, through its history, more than one colonial system. First, the German system, then after that of the English, and finally the French system.

The 1897 plan was about the plans of parcel divisions over an area of 150 hectares intended to accommodate national and foreign traders. Indeed, the year 1897, is the year in which the German administration left the city of Zébé for the city of Lomé, to establish the new capital of the country there (Marguerat, 1989). This is a semi-Radius concentric plane. This first nucleus was delimited by the Circular Boulevard and the Ocean, suddenly representing the current city center.

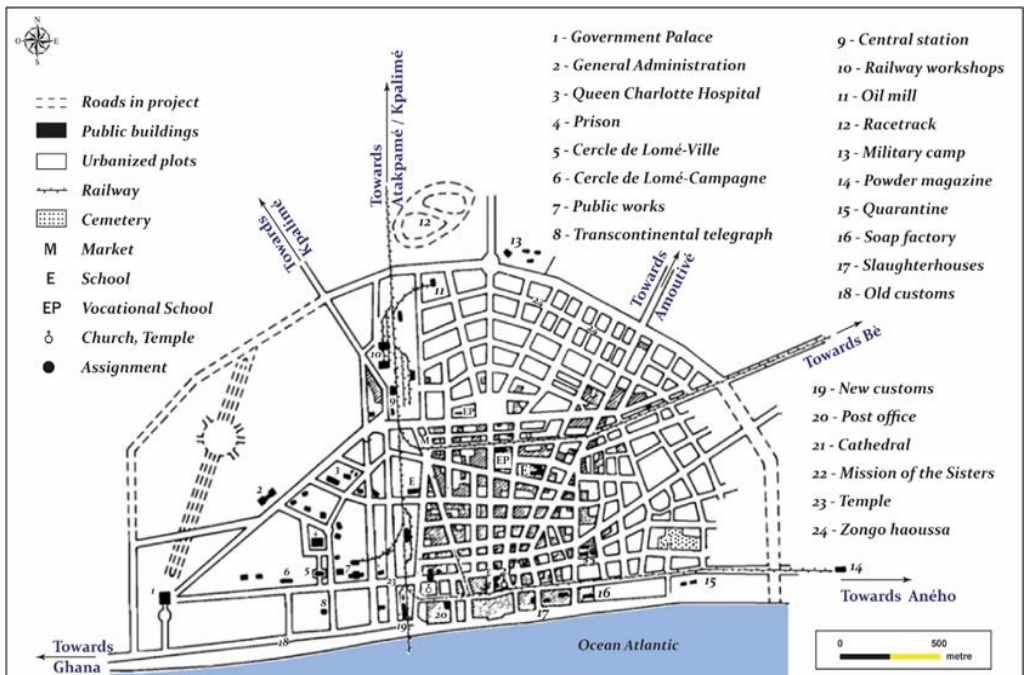


Figure 2: Plan of Lomé in 1913 (Source: Marguerat, 1989)

The 1913 plan is a subdivision, therefore the first town planning document for the city of Lomé (Figure 2). It was the French who, after the First World War, became the colonial power that implemented this subdivision plan from 1920.

### • 1981 Master Urban Plan

The 1981 Master Urban Plan is the first planning document for the city of Lomé (Figure 3). It was produced by the Italian agency called Technosynesis. The plan was the first real planning for Greater Lomé, with orientations and actions planned over 20 years. This plan set the development guidelines and defined an urban perimeter in which the city of Lomé was to evolve spatially. Notwithstanding the content of the 1981 Urban Master Plan, it should be remembered that has only been partially implemented<sup>4</sup>.

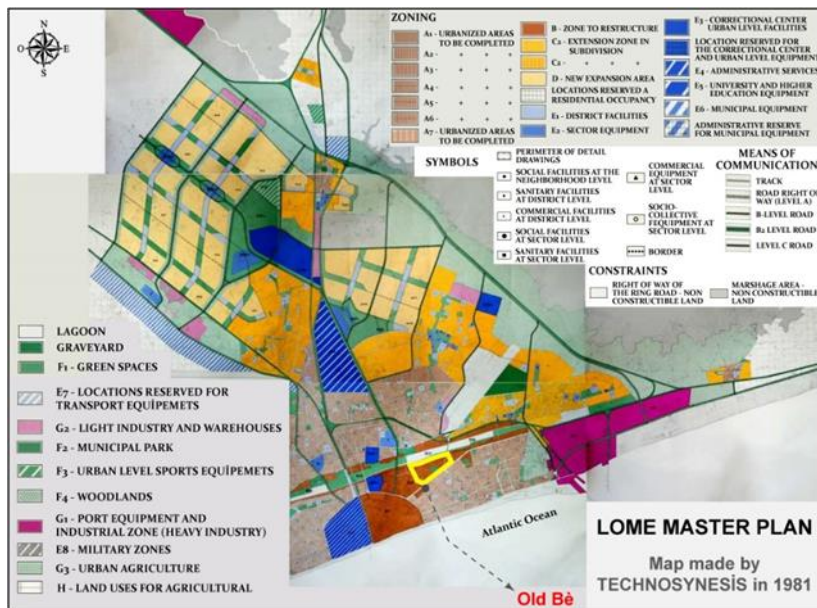


Figure 3: 1981 Master Urban Plan of Lomé (Source: Agence Technosynesis, 1981).

The main orientations adopted in this context are as follows:

- safeguarding the natural and urban environment;
- the creation of service to meet the needs of the population;
- the distribution of facilities in the urban space at different scales such as the city, urban sectors, and districts;
  - the establishment of certain activities such as small industry, crafts, or urban agriculture in the districts;
  - the creation of a second center in the heart of the expansion zones;
  - the construction of a water treatment plant and
  - the creation of a green zone (agro-pastoral) on either side of the bypass.

As mentioned above, several of the orientations proposed in terms of infrastructure networks have not been implemented. In addition to carrying out two major remedial operations between 2010 and 2015 such as the construction of the bypass to divert traffic from the port area and the construction of the axes structuring the north-west pole but which unfortunately does not go achieve the objective of the initial plan, due to the lack of recommended land reserves.

<sup>4</sup> Greater-Lomé Development and Urban Master Plan, Volume I - Presentation report page 36.



None of the other big plans have been realized. An example of the green stripe along the Zio valley (initially reserved for urban agriculture, wooded areas, and plantations) is today occupied by residential areas even though they are liable to flooding. Also, the service frames provided in the extension zones are not respected in the subdivisions carried out. The Old Bè as well as the left half of the area included in the circular boulevard have been identified as a Restructuring Area. Indeed, urban restructuring, which is essentially a physical operation, has been decided for several sectors of Greater-Lomé. All these actions have never been implemented.

- **2018 Greater-Lomé Development and Urban Master Plan.**

The overall objective of the Greater-Lomé Development and Urban Master Plan is to set the strategic orientations of the territory and to determine, in the medium, short and long term, the general destination of the soils. As the orientations of the 1981 Master Plan were only halfway, some of them were taken up for the 2018 Master Plan. The main orientations adopted continued the territorial diagnosis, within the framework of this town planning document are the following (Figure 4):

- Metropolization, polarization, and centralities

This involves distributing facilities of metropolitan interest on the scale of the metropolitan area and a hierarchy of centers of centrality affirmed and structured.

- Economic competitiveness

This second orientation consists of the hierarchy of tertiary economic centralities; to proceed with the implementation of integrated urban logistics; a lagoon area favorable to relaxation and leisure; to promote an adequate hotel offer and to develop agricultural land.

- Urban recomposition and habitat

It is a matter of proceeding to a change of the Administrative and Commercial Center of Lomé; developing the maritime facade of Lomé into a qualitative seafront; proceeding with a strategic approach to the land of the central services of the State; developing urbanization along structural axes; constitute a green belt and agricultural development zones and proceed with the development of operations of urban transformation of the housing zones to be regularized, rehabilitated, densified and restructured.

- Improvement of urban mobility

Here, it is a matter of organizing a mobility strategy by the development of an urban travel plan and a traffic plan, of organizing multimodal exchange poles, public transport with a high level of service. on structuring paths; to preserve the site of the railway tracks in order to create a mass passenger transport network capable of connecting the new airport of Tsévié and to proceed with the creation of an Urban Transport Organising Authority (UTOA) of Greater-Lomé.

- Environmental Protection

Develop the Zio floodplain; preserve the agricultural and tourist character of the Baguida coastal barrier; engage Greater-Lomé in the treatment of wastewater and domestic sludge; build rainwater retention basins; safeguard the lagoon system and the connecting channels; preserve the last forests of Greater-Lomé; create an urban park to replace the Agoè-Nyivé landfill and the shooting range; develop an urban green corridor under the high voltage lines between Lomé and Togblé; limit noise pollution and relocate industries whose activity presents a risk to the population.

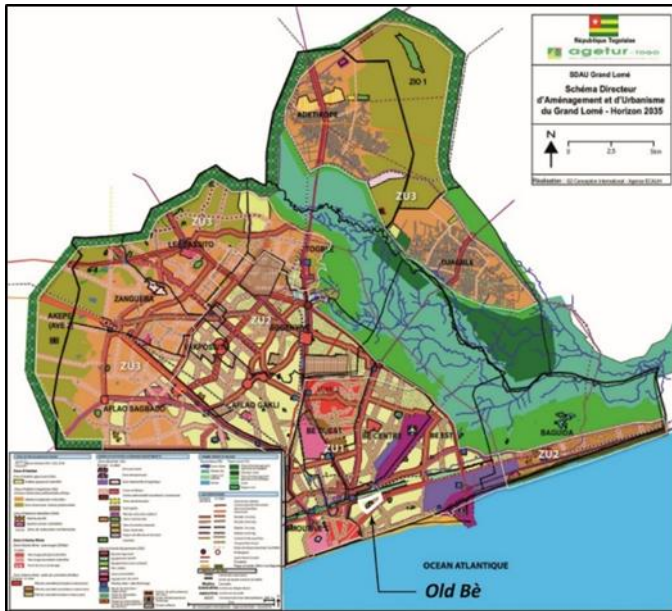


Figure 4: Greater-Lomé Development and Urban Master Plan (Source: Group of G2 Conception - ECAUH, 2018)

Old Bè, Old Agoè, and several sectors of Greater-Lomé have been identified as areas that should benefit from an urban transformation operation given their current state of insalubrities and dilapidation.

- **Urban evolution of Greater-Lomé and socio-cultural consequences**

The post-colonial period more precisely the last four decades is strongly marked in the countries of Africa in general and those of the west coast, by a particularly rapid urban growth (Biakouye, 2014). Indeed, the small sub-Saharan towns at the end of the colonial period quite quickly became metropolises as explained in the context. This urban growth has led to a relatively rapid spatial dynamic, especially in the peripheries, and is characterized by socio-spatial changes, with serious consequences both for the living conditions of city dwellers and for the organization and management of urban space. The fact is that in reality, the growth of Lomé has become uncontrolled, rather anarchic, leading to various serious problems which are essentially reflected in the inadequacy of basic socio-community facilities, the absence of sanitization, the degradation of the environment, the housing crisis, and the development of precarious housing, in short, the appearance and multiplication of poorly-equipped and under-integrated districts (Nyassogbo, 2010). Thus, like other West African metropolises, the development of Greater-Lomé is marked by self-construction led by the inhabitants themselves and without the control of the public authorities. This lack in terms of presence on the part of the public power makes the investment and the attention paid to the control of the spatial extension of Greater-Lomé obsolete. It is the appearance of all of these problems caused by the disproportionate urban sprawl of Greater-Lomé that triggered a change of paradigm. Indeed, the districts of Greater-Lomé are today the target of public power investments to control urbanization and therefore the disproportionate spatial extension of the latter.

The districts are in a state of continuous deterioration. These various troubles caused by the evolution of the city seem to be becoming major challenges that undermine urban cohesion and harmony, especially since the problems are not only located in the peripheries but also in the central districts. This explains the

multitude of urban regeneration operations on the territorial space in Greater-Lomé. Old Bè is one of these central and historical districts, in a critical state with an endangered environment, a degraded living environment, and a chronic lack of basic socio-community facilities. It has been identified as an area in need of restructuring.

- **New projects emerging to regeneration for Greater-Lomé**

The desire to make Greater-Lomé a truly competitive development pole emerged at the end of the 2010s with the launch of several flagship programs aimed at making the city of Lomé a true capital of West Africa. We have the Urban Planning Project of Togo (UPPT) launched in 2011 which aims at the construction and development of sanitization works, the strengthening of institutional capacities, and the supplies to the technical services of the communes and which should make it possible to relieve more than 300 thousand households. The main objective is to improve the standard of living of the populations of Lomé by securing and improving the urban environment. In the same vein, we have the Emergency Project for the Rehabilitation of Infrastructure and Electrical Services (EPRIES) in 2009 which aimed to restore, increase, and extend the access of the population of Lomé and its peri-urban districts to infrastructure services and to improve their living conditions. Concretely, it was a question of proceeding with drainage and sanitation; the rehabilitation of urban roads; supply of drinking water, and rehabilitation of the electricity network. In the same vein, we find the Lomé Urban Environment Project (LUEP) launched in 2006. During this year the failure of public services in the areas of rainwater treatment and garbage collection was observed. The lower part of the city of Lomé suffered from annual flooding. The Lomé urban environment plan was launched to respond to these shortcomings. In 2010, the emergence of the Lagoon Zone Development Project (LZDP) was part of a vast modernization plan which included the dredging of the East Lake and the equilibrium channel of the great Lomé lagoon, the dredging from the lagoon of Bè and 5 urban lanes over a length of 5692 meters. We also note the City Development Strategy of Greater-Lomé (CDS Greater-Lomé) adopted in July 2012. The Lomé Urban Development Strategy is a strategic planning tool allowing the implementation of short-term actions within the framework of a long-term strategy. It is also a broad-spectrum multisectoral development tool, which makes it possible to address all urban aspects: economic, political, social, and environmental. It resulted in the formulation of a futuristic, realistic, and shared vision: “By 2030, Greater-Lomé will be a modern, healthy, attractive urban community, endowed with a strong local government, a transit center, a competitive development pole in West Africa and a better-structured agglomeration where citizens are well-developed”. This strategy will subsequently lead to the development of the Greater-Lomé Development and Urban Master Plan adopted in 2018. The general decisions in the planning proposals of the City of Lomé and the decisions regarding the Old Bè are summarized in the table 1.

**Table 1:** Summarise plans and proposals for Greater Lomé.

Name	Year	General decisions for Lomé	Decisions for Old Bè
Development plan	1897	- Develop a 150-hectare area to accommodate national and foreign traders.	-
Subdivision Plan	1913	- Define the blocks that are to house administrative and service facilities; - Define the blocks that are to house residential buildings; and propose a road system.	-

<p>Urban Master Plan</p>	<p>1981</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Safeguarding the natural and urban environment;</li> <li>- The implementation and distribution of facilities in the urban space at different scales (city, urban sectors, and districts);</li> <li>- The establishment of activities such as crafts or urban agriculture in the districts;</li> <li>- The creation of a second administrative center in the heart of the expansion areas;</li> <li>- The creation of a water treatment plant and</li> <li>- The creation of a green zone on both sides of the bypass road.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proceed with the restructuring of Old Bè.</li> </ul>
<p>Urban Development Strategy</p>	<p>2015</p>	<p>By 2030, Greater-Lomé will be a modern, healthy, attractive urban community with strong local government, a transit center, a competitive development hub in West Africa, and a better-structured agglomeration where the citizen is empowered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- By 2030: the living environment of the commune in which Old Bè is located will be developed and will offer the population a healthy environment, equitable access to basic social infrastructures and a territory where land and housing issues, as well as access to credit and well-paid jobs, will have found an adequate and lasting solution.</li> <li>- Safeguard the image of the old city.</li> </ul>
<p>Development and Urban Master Plan</p>	<p>2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Metropolization, polarization, and centrality</li> <li>- Economic competitiveness: it is a question of prioritizing economic centralities and creating new economic zones</li> <li>- Urban recomposition and housing</li> <li>- Improving urban mobility</li> <li>- Improving access to urban facilities and services</li> <li>- Environmental protection: this involves preserving and developing water bodies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proceed with the restructuring of Old Bè.</li> <li>- Develop the lagoon area of Bè as a recreation and transport area.</li> <li>- Identify as an area to benefit from architectural restoration.</li> <li>- Identify as an area to be covered by individual sanitation through the implementation of watertight pits.</li> </ul>

Regarding sanitation programs and improvement of the urban environmental framework of Greater-Lomé, monitoring, and maintenance not being present, Greater-Lomé is still characterized by high insalubrity and optical and chemical pollution and bacteriological soils. Solid waste litters the streets, sidewalks, and public places of the city and illegal dumps are proliferating everywhere. As mentioned above, the only town-planning document for Greater-Lomé is the Master Plan for Planning and City Planning for Greater-Lomé adopted in 2018 is still not translated into operational town planning tools with the development of plans details and operations of urban restructuring and regularization. Thus, the absence of these plans makes impossible this desire to make Greater-Lomé a modern, healthy, attractive, and better structured urban community where the citizen blossoms. In this trend, we observe the case of Old Bè, a village nucleus whose transformation was acted upon in the two planning documents of the capital of Togo, but to this day is still in a situation of continuous degradation.

### 3.3. Analysis of the Current Situation of the “Old Bè”; a Cultural, Human, and Architectural Heritage

Bè is a working-class district in Lomé the capital of Togo. Located in the south-eastern part of Lomé, Bè extends from the Atlantic Ocean to the lagoon of the same name, itself limited by a plateau (Tokoin hill in particular) almost parallel to the sea, which we can see in Lomé (Figure 5). Bè is made up of several districts.

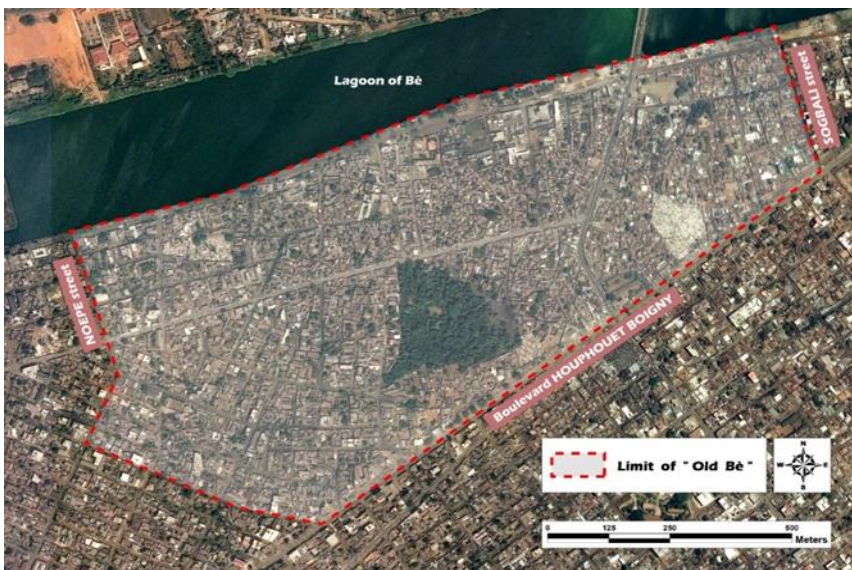


Figure 5: Location of "Old Bè" (Realization: Dong Tchadre, 2022 / Source: Ortho-image, 2014, PGCIT)

The "Old Bè" which covers 77 hectares is the oldest district of Bè. The "Old Bè" is limited to the north by the lagoon of Bè, to the south by boulevard Houphouët Boigny, to the west by rue Noepe and to the east by rue Sogbali<sup>5</sup>. As mentioned above, the perimeter of “Old Bè” does not concern the whole of Bè but the village core made up of the islet of Bè, its sacred forest, and its surroundings.

<sup>5</sup> Delimited by the Development Committee of Bè (DC Bè) met within the framework of the elaboration of the Development and Urban Master Plan of Greater-Lomé.



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As for the history of "Old Bè", it merges on several levels with that of the city of Lomé. Indeed, the village core of Bè is a very old village, well before the city of Lomé, (Marguerat, 1989). It is common knowledge that it was Dzitri who founded the city of Lomé in 1630, in the 17th century. Dzitri named this place Alomé about the trees which vegetated there and whose fruits are called "alo". The Ewés having fled Notsè, would therefore be the first inhabitants of Lomé. The second would have come from the east, that is to say from Dahomey (now Benin) to flee the war. Having settled down comfortably in Lomé, Dzitri decided to found for his eldest son Aglen a village, initially called "Adelatô" (hunting district) then Bè.

The urban analysis allows the evaluation and creation of a project context favorable to the development of cultural districts, by initiating a reflection on the site to include the notion of public space and urban development upstream of the project. Concretely, it is a matter of studying the socio-economic elements and the urban morphology.

- *Population*

The Old Bè with an estimated population of 9,471 inhabitants<sup>6</sup>, benefits from a considerable density in a context where the urban fabric is marked by constructions on the ground floor, of the plot. The inhabitants of Bè come mainly from the traditional families of Bè present for several generations. Thus, the traditional configuration of plots (large size) and islands takes on its meaning.

- *Services*

- *Infrastructure service*

The "Old Bè" is an area with a very unstructured road network (Photo 1,2 and 3). Only has three developed lanes, two of which turn in the East-West direction.



Photo 1, 2 and 3: Street, a lane of 1m and a lane of 1.5 m (Source: Sandani and Babale, 2021)

This state of affairs makes North-South connections complicated. Exactly, there is an absence of a structuring axis in this direction outside the street Augustino DeSouza. Access to the interior of the islands is also difficult because of the configuration of the tracks, some of which are less than two meters in length. The network serving the concessions is similar to a real network of alleys.

<sup>6</sup> Greater-Lomé Development and Urban Master Plan of 2018 (Phase II: Prospective, Page 129).

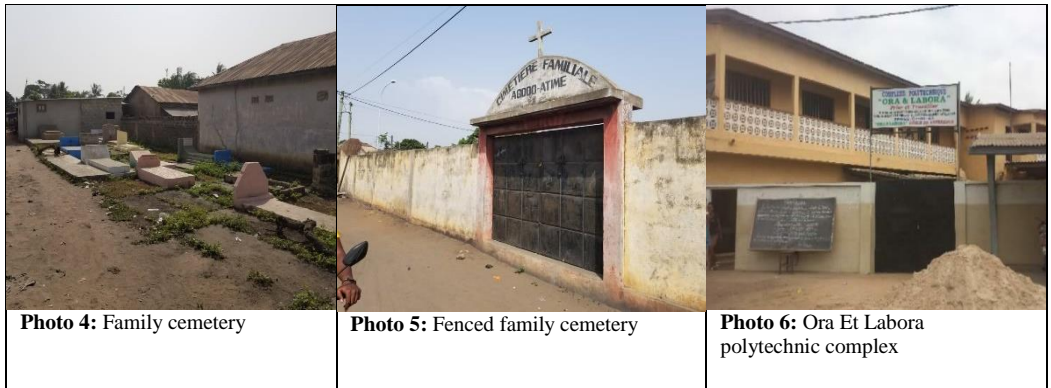


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The various networks such as the gutters for sanitation and the drinking water supply network are often linked to the road network. Thus, the absence of a structuring road network leads to the non-existence of other miscellaneous networks, making life in Old Bè unbearable. Access to households is only possible by walking and circulation on the developed axes is very difficult because stormed by the beginnings and small retail business. There are drinking water supply problems for households on the site. Indeed, the network does not cover the “Old Bè” where the road network is in poor condition, with tracks of the order of one meter.

### - *Surface structure service*

Old Bè has many facilities for public use, which are nevertheless insufficient to meet the needs of the population. The service is distributed all over Old Bè without any particular focus (Photo 4,5 and 6). In terms of educational services, there is a total of 16 schools, however, these schools, mostly private (15 out of 16) do not allow all children to have access to them because the cost of schooling is quite high, only public primary schools in Togo being free. It is important to point out that these schools are located for the most part on very dense plots with the absence of sports grounds and relaxation areas. Regarding the other public spaces, the Old Bè has seven (7) public spaces to be developed.



**Photo 4:** Family cemetery

**Photo 5:** Fenced family cemetery

**Photo 6:** Ora Et Labora polytechnic complex

Source: Sandani and Babale, 2021)

These places host important community events like weddings, funerals, and voodoo worship events. In the category of commercial services, we note the domination of local shops, along the main axes (Boulevard Houphouët Boigny, Amemakalibla Street, Augustino DeSouza Street, and Samai Street) (Figure 6).

Given its traditional character, Old Bè has a specificity, the presence of a fairly large number of family cemeteries. Indeed, there is a total of eight (8) cemeteries. In terms of health service, the zone has only one clinic dealing with prenatal and postnatal care. This situation is very critical and must be corrected. Regarding the local safety service in the Old Bè, it must be said that there is none. However, it does benefit from the presence of the police station less than 10 minutes from Old Bè.



Figure 6: Analysis of "Old Bè" (Realization: Dong Tchadre, 2022 / Source: Ortho-image, 2014, PGCIT)

In terms of religious facilities, we have a total of eight (8) facilities of this kind, including places of animist worship (03), mosques for Islam (01), churches for Christianity (04) (Figure 6). There is a coexistence of several religions in our area as a result of a strong cultural identity.

### 3.4. Urban morphology of Old Bè

Despite its historical character and its past, it is necessary to note the virtual absence of writing or study on the Old Bè relating to its morphology and the various components of its structure. Nevertheless, reading the formation of the urban fabric of Old Bè is rather easy to read, in particular through an analysis of the configuration of the blocks, plots, and transportation axes. The Old Bè can be separated into three main areas namely: the area of the Sacred Forest, the regular area, and the area of the old district (Figure 7).



Figure 7: Spatial organization of "Old Bè" (Realization: Dong Tchadre, 2022/ Source: Ortho-image, 2014, PGCIT)

- *The area of the Sacred Forest of Bè*

The Sacred Forest Bè plays a very important role in the management of natural resources and the conservation of biodiversity, especially in the context of Greater-Lomé where this forest happens to be the only open space planted (Photo 7). The Sacred Forest Bè is perceived to be a very important part of the cultural heritage for the population of Lomé and Togo. In old Bè, the sacred forest is at the heart of the life of the community because it is the place of the practice of ancestral religious beliefs. De facto, we can guess that we are in the middle of Vodou, one of the most widespread religions in Togo.



**Photo 7:** The priestesses in the sacred forest of Bè (Source: [Africavivre](#))

The social balance of these communities is guaranteed by this heritage element that is the sacred wood. So, we must recognize in animism a humanism that is expressed in several values within African societies in general. Sharing, hospitality, love, solidarity, in short, “Living together” which is becoming a fashionable concept these days, are secular values that flow in the blood of those who have their identity anchored in Vodou belief (Edem Kodjo Latevi, 2019).



**Photo 8**



**Photo 9**

**Photo 8 and 9:** Entrance and Construction of a fence around the Sacred Forest of Bè (Source: Sandani and Babale, 2021)

In addition to its role as a place of worship, an important place for managing crises that communities may experience, the Sacred Forest of Bè is a witness to the history of the community (Photo 8 and 9). Indeed, the Sacred Forest was the place of hiding of the Adjias when they arrived.

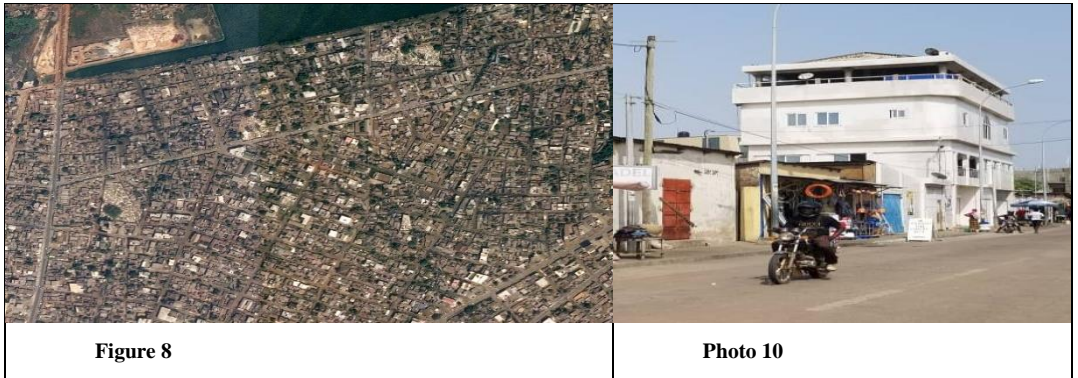
Despite its heritage status, the sacred forest of Bè faces two major challenges that put its life in danger. Within these difficulties, we find the insalubrity around the forest and the reduction in the area of the forest. The forested island is surrounded by piled-up waste. It has been used as a public latrine for years. Indeed, we



observe fragments of the sacred forest of Bè which disappear and leave their places of residential buildings. To overcome these various problems, the authorities decided to set up a fence to protect and conserve the sacred forest.

- *The regular zone*

This zone is the last in terms of temporality of the Old Bè.



**Figure 8.** Spatial organization of the core of the regular zone (Source: Ortho-image, 2014, PGCIT)

**Photo 10.** Modern type frame (Source: Sandani and Babale, 2021)

This zone is much more regular with a more or less orthogonal grid and regular plots. It is located in the western part of Old Bè (Figure 8). The plots in the zone perform different functions, we have the housing functions, the administrative function, the commercial function, and the educational function. However, a parcel can perform several functions at the same time and thus be a mixed-function parcel. There are many more modern-type dwellings in this area than in the village core (Photo 10). Commercial activity is structured around major road axes and more regular and better-dimensioned service axes.

- *The village core area*

The village core area includes all of the eastern parts of Old Bè and even includes the sacred forest (Figure 9).



**Figure 9:** Spatial organization of the core of the village core area ( (Source: Ortho-image, 2014, PGCIT)

**Photo 11:** Old type frame (Source: Sandani and Babale, 2021)

This area houses the voodoo convents which is a structure, a framework where the training of followers of the voodoo religion takes place. The area of the village core has a particularity, it is the family cemeteries, there are a total of eight (08) cemeteries. The fabric of this area is marked by traditional style with concessionary habitats in the spatial organization (Photo 11). Indeed, we discover large plots and in terms of construction methods, we note the preponderance of the traditional in the core having mostly residential functions (individual housing and collective housing) and the worship function (with voodoo fetish statues and pieces dedicated to voodoo ceremonies and worship). Still, about the dwellings and particularly the heights of the buildings, the area is characterized by a very low built environment. This is partly due to the difficulties of the transfer and acquisition of land in this area. As mentioned above, land changes little because of its inalienability. This practice penalizes the evolution and change in the form of buildings and types of housing.

The built environment in Old Bè is undoubtedly the oldest in the capital of Togo. These buildings do not benefit from any treatment due to their historical values and the vicissitudes of history translated by bad weather continue to deteriorate. Particularly in the village core, buildings are dating from the pre-independence period (before 1960) and are often in a state of total dilapidation. Habitats are generally rectangular or square and with a courtyard in the middle. The concrete blocks are made of dried clay covered with cement plaster and the roof of corrugated iron. This type of housing is often referred to as a “Soldier line.” This term is used to refer to a linear, multi-room construction made along one side of the plot. Most of these accommodations do not have amenities and sanitation. For decades there has been a new one around the lagoon. It is the emergence of a small slum, one of which is in Old Bè (Liberté Togo, 2016). It is necessary to underline at the outset, the heterogeneous character of these precarious dwellings where people live. These constructions are anarchic and often on illegally occupied land.

However, in recent decades there has been a change in the habitat landscape. Indeed, some new buildings are appearing in the heart of the village core and as we move away from it, we tend towards modern construction techniques. To provide a larger living space per inhabitant, it would be crucial to promote the development of the built environment and to unblock the situations of succession and transfer of land titles.

- *The lagoon of Bè*

The Bè lagoon is one of the portions of the Lomé lagoon system. Indeed, the lagoon of Lomé is an expanse of water made up of four lakes (West Lake, East Lake, the Bè Lagoon, and the fourth Lake) and dividing the city of Lomé into two parts. The lagoon of Bè is part of the northern border of Old Bè (Figure 10).



**Figure10**



**Photo 12**

**Figure 10:** The Bè lagoon (Source: Ortho-image, 2014, PGCIT)

**Photo 12:** Insalubrity around (Source: Sandani and Babale, 2021)

Today and for years the lagoon of Lomé in general and particularly the lagoon of Bè is strongly affected by human activities whereas it is found to be a fishery resource for the populations of Lomé (Photo 12). Indeed, fishing is the most practiced activity in connection with the lagoon.

The results presented following studies carried out at these heights mentioned above in the scientific journal WATER concern inorganic contaminants (metallic trace elements, TME<sup>7</sup> and rare earth, TR) in the sediments of this lagoon. These elements induced by human practices and activities make a potential resource a source of health problems. These contaminants are very toxic. There is a risk of seeing the lagoon system transforming into a marsh, accentuating the risk of flooding and the presence of diseases in the surrounding districts (Greater-Lomé, Development and Urban Master Plan, 2018). The latter in the period of heavy rain for lack of protective structure overflows and floods the surrounding districts.

### 3. 5. SWOT analysis of Old Bè

The urban diagnosis of Old Bè will be carried out using the SWOT (Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats) analysis tool. The SWOT analysis mentions the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of the different elements of the urban analysis in the economic, cultural, and social environment of Old Bè. Furthermore, the SWOT allows us to highlight the recurrent problems of the territory and to prioritize the different actions within the framework of an urban regeneration approach. The aim was to carry out a SWOT analysis. Indeed, the analysis of the different problems allowed us to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of Old Bè to help define a strategy (Table 2).

**Table 2:** SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A hydraulic network (Bè lagoon);</li> <li>- A sacred forest.</li> <li>- Presence of some wasteland used as public squares.</li> <li>- Presence of a public square;</li> <li>- Large supply and good distribution of public schools</li> <li>- Existence of gutters along asphalt roads.</li> <li>- A young and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Muddy soil in the rainy season;</li> <li>- Anarchic cutting of trees and disappearance of the sacred forest;</li> <li>- Illegal occupation of the banks of the Bè lagoon;</li> <li>- Presence of wild dumps in the old Bè.</li> <li>-Land speculation;</li> <li>- Presence of large plots;</li> <li>- Practice of alienation by some conservative properties.</li> <li>- Lack of landscaped areas;</li> <li>- Insufficient sanitation and drinking water supply facilities</li> <li>- Lack of protection works around</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strong will of the local authorities to develop the surroundings of the Bè lagoon;</li> <li>- Strong will of local authorities to protect the sacred forest;</li> <li>- Strong will of local authorities to control flooding.</li> <li>- Acquisition in the public interest.</li> <li>- Undertake street and lane improvements in the course of urban</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environmental and ecosystem degradation;</li> <li>- Alteration of the quality of the water resource due to unconventional practices around the water resource;</li> <li>- Pollution of the Bè lagoon and the atmosphere;</li> <li>- Development of diseases due to unhealthy conditions and pollution;</li> <li>- Hydrography (lagoon) source of flooding in the rainy season;</li> </ul>

<sup>7</sup> The ETM contents are relatively high for arsenic, cadmium, molybdenum, lead, antimony, tin and zinc in the sediments of the three lakes of the lagoon.



<p>dynamic population;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A population attached to customary values.</li> <li>- Effective effort to adapt between tradition and modernity in the buildings.</li> <li>- Presence of the Bè lagoon, a fishing resource.</li> </ul>	<p>the lagoon;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Poor location of commercial floors along the asphalt roads;</li> <li>- Very low supply and uneven distribution of public schools;</li> <li>- Poor provision of sanitary facilities</li> <li>- Abuse of nature by waste;</li> <li>- Proliferation of anarchic dumps;</li> <li>- Almost total absence of leisure facilities and public squares;</li> <li>- Undeveloped cemeteries adjacent to dwellings;</li> <li>- Impassability of roads;</li> <li>- Lack of gutters;</li> <li>- Difficult accessibility;</li> <li>- Lack of local health facilities.</li> <li>- Non-use of good hygiene practice daily is by the population;</li> <li>- Strong socio-economic contrast between urban and rural areas.</li> <li>- The construction process is informal and uncontrolled;</li> <li>- Presence of large plots that do not rationalize spatial occupation.</li> <li>- Embrittlement of natural ecosystems by the uses of the population;</li> <li>- Predominance of the informal sector;</li> <li>- Lack of accommodation facilities (inns and hotels).</li> </ul>	<p>regeneration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cultural heterogeneities;</li> <li>- Religious practices as a place of gathering and territorial structuring are indispensable.</li> <li>- The authorities pronounced will to proceed with an architectural restoration operation in Old Bè.</li> <li>- Presence of the Bè lagoon and the sacred forest constitutes a landscaping potential.</li> <li>- Sacred forest not fully exploited, a tourist potential;</li> <li>- Presence of banks of the lagoon not yet exploited;</li> <li>- Potential for developing a cultural economy.</li> </ul>	<p>Climate change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Land disputes.</li> <li>- Increased environmental pollution;</li> <li>- Lack of policies for sustainable use and management of the environment and natural resources;</li> <li>- Development of diseases due to unhealthy conditions and pollution.</li> <li>- Disinterest of young people in the old customs of Old Bè.</li> <li>- Unavailability of land due to inefficient use of plots;</li> <li>- Absolute disappearance of traditional identity buildings in favor of modern buildings.</li> <li>- Hypertrophy of the Old Bè;</li> <li>- Absence of an infrastructural environment allows a good structuring of activities in Old Bè.</li> </ul>
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Indeed, the SWOT analysis shows that the environment of Old Bè is constantly and increasingly polluted and therefore its ecosystem is fragile. In particular, the Lagoon of Bè is an important source of fishing, and its lagoon banks in particular offer possibilities for fun and attractive developments. The SWOT analysis also reveals a rich cultural heritage in Old Bè, but this is not promoted. Original initiatives related to culture are imperative. Another element revealed by the SWOT analysis is the almost non-existence of a tourist economy, despite important assets.

The willingness of the authorities to set up a lagoon transport system and to develop the banks is an opportunity that Old Bè has and which will give a boost to the economic sector. The various economic activities carried out in Old Bè are informal, so a restructuring and relocation of activities are to be expected. Furthermore, the SWOT analysis also highlights the chronic lack of local facilities, which implies a reconsideration of this problem in a redevelopment of the area. In light of all these problems, actions will be taken to solve them.

#### **4. Argument: Urban and Architectural Interventions: What Approach to Urban Regeneration Adopted in Be and in The Context of A Sub-Saharan African Capital?**

The city of Lomé and particularly the Old Bè certainly has the characteristics of a locality that has benefited from an urban regeneration operation, but unlike most cities in the North has specificities that are personal to it. Indeed, like the mother districts of sub-Saharan capitals, which do not benefit from the treatment of a heritage-listed UNESCO (2005) world heritage site, there are special states.

In the old Bè, as in the old districts of African cities, basic social and community facilities are almost non-existent, and access to housing is very complicated because of the configuration of the streets. The streets are flooded in the rainy period. Concretely, the heritage in old Bè is reflected through what elements?

An old modern Bè, healthy and attractive this translates only through an approach of urban regeneration. Indeed, Ahokpe and Serdaroğlu Sağ (2021) asserted that the regeneration approach, the concept of cultural districts is used even if often at the base the area contains little or no cultural heritage or any cultural activity and that it is an urban policy approach to revitalize an urban area. In the same sense, Montgomery (2003) argues that the development of cultural districts with high tourist and economic potential in recent times is a deliberate model of urban regeneration of declining urban areas. In practice, what solutions, what elements should be changed, what approach to urban regeneration to make Old Bè a healthy, modern, attractive and, cultural district (Table 3).

Notwithstanding the difference in context Kim et al., (2020), argue that community engagement can be and is an element that can eradicate the various ills of an area that can benefit from an urban regeneration approach. Participation, as a concept in urban projects in Africa in general and in West Africa in particular, is a utopia. Indeed, the inhabitants do not participate in the actual design of the projects. It is in this sense that Daglio et al. (2020), argue that the success of the regeneration project of the historic district of Oliena (Nu) can be explained by the success of the annual workshops.

As mentioned above, the population of old Bè, at least a large part of the inhabitants, is still very attached to the customs, folklore, and land of old Bè. It will thus be opportune to define a strategy for the participatory part of the urban regeneration approach. As a first step, organize awareness-raising and training campaigns for the target population living in old Bè. During these awareness and training campaigns, it will be a question of explaining what a project consists of within the framework of an urban regeneration approach and its objectives. Always before and during the start of the concrete project, proceed with the organization of workshops as in the project of regeneration of the historic district of Oliena (Nu). These workshops will be open to all socio-economic and monthly classes over the entire period of project development and implementation. Within these workshops, the question of heritage will be one of the most important points to be dealt with. The enthusiasm of the population will be natural if the urban regeneration approach is centered on culture. To this end, Xuili and Maliene (2021) argues that successful culturally focused urban regeneration projects should involve people's sense of belonging to a place (Miles and Paddison, 2005). Likewise, Bailey et al. (2004) argue that linking local cultural projects to civic identities can help local communities and strengthen local uniqueness.

It will be a matter of defining possible orientations and actions of intervention, making it possible to make more visual the cultural identity of old Bè through its social and cultural particularities. It will thus be a question of focusing our regeneration approach on culture to give an identity to the old Bè. Likewise, Xuili and Maliene (2021) argue that culturally-focused urban regeneration strategies have been widely used to create a positive urban landscape, stimulate urban economic growth, and improve the competitive position of cities (Bassett, 1993; Bianchini and Parkinson, 1993; Garcia, 2004; Evans, 2005).

The production of cultural elements within the framework of the urban regeneration of old Bè will have as its flagship the sacred forest of Bè. The latter must first benefit from a clear and clear delimitation. This limit which will be protected by a concrete block wall will be framed by a tertiary pedestrian route. Indeed, as said above, it has lost a large part of the area due to human activities. Despite the current setting of a fencing belt around the forest, a study must be carried out to redefine a new one for exploitation both to maintain the religious practices and the cultural events that take place within the forest and also to develop other activities to make the forest liveable.

In addition to the sacred forest, which is a heritage in its own right, Old Bè is a history and a concentration of customs and folklore. These are not tangible and therefore fall into the category of intangible heritage. It will be a question of materializing this intangible heritage spatially on the territorial space of Old Bè. First, modernize the community center in order to highlight the culture, folklore, history, and heritage of old Bè. Schedule exhibitions and events in this center to meet and popularize the past of old Bè. Secondly, it will be a question of rearranging the axis passing in front of the sacred forest and creating an animation translating the story of old Bè along this path and around the sacred forest. Thus, create a historical path on the fence around the forest and along the new path developed through the installation of an urban facade through wall frescoes.

These frescoes will describe the history of the Ewé people, the Adjas people, the birth of the city of Lomé, and the old Bè. All of these elements will promote the birth of several cultural and tourist activities that bring old Bè to life and make it dynamic.

Thus, creating a sustainable urban life around cultural activity. These aforementioned elements combined with the results of the various discussions within the workshops. These will produce interesting cultural activities that can provoke a craze within the old town and its surroundings.

It is about the physical transformation of old Bè. Indeed, any initiative and proposal leading to a physical transformation (urban and architectural) of an already built human settlement should above all, first of all, address the conversion of the perception of the inhabitants of this establishment, according to the European landscape convention (European Council 2000), and therefore benefit from their involvement and full participation.

Table 3: Some approaches to a solution.

Determining priorities for urban regeneration	Suggested strategies/interventions
<p>What to do to eliminate the negativities of the weak points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Protect and develop the banks of the Bè lagoon;</li> <li>- Restructure the road network in the village district of Bè;</li> <li>- Raise awareness among the population about hygienic practices;</li> <li>- Set up a campaign to raise awareness among the population on the importance of mutation and renewal of buildings;</li> <li>- Program and better distribute basic socio-community facilities;</li> <li>- Restructure all economic activities that clutter up the primary roads;</li> <li>- Proceed with the development of public squares;</li> <li>- Construct protective structures around the lagoon to protect Old Bè from flooding;</li> <li>- Provide for the construction of sanitation and drinking water supply works;</li> <li>- Proceed with the paving of the various streets to alleviate the problem of muddy ground in the rainy season.</li> </ul>
<p>What needs to be done to support the strengths</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clean up the hydraulic network (Bè lagoon);</li> <li>- Develop the surroundings of the Bè lagoon as a place of relaxation and recreation;</li> <li>- Redefine and protect the limits of the sacred forest;</li> <li>- Develop the sacred forest in two areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the sacred part where customary and cultural uses and religious practices are held, which will be left as it is, and</li> <li>- the non-sanctuary part (non-sacred) where a public garden, a place to relax, and a play area will be created.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Encourage the youth of Old Bè to invest in the transformation of the latter;</li> <li>- Take advantage of the population's attachment to customary values by organizing festivals;</li> <li>- Develop the various public squares in Old Bè as a place</li> </ul>

	<p>to relax;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strengthen the educational framework of Old Bè by programming public schools;</li> <li>- Adapt traditional practices to modernity in the construction and development of public squares;</li> <li>- Create a historical pathway within Old Bè;</li> <li>- Create an urban facade through murals that meet the history of Old Bè.</li> </ul>
<p>What to do to assess opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Take advantage of the authorities' strong desire to develop the area around the Bè lagoon and to develop lagoon transport;</li> <li>- Take advantage of the local authorities' strong will to protect the sacred forest to prevent its disappearance;</li> <li>- Take advantage of the authorities' strong will to control flooding by making specific proposals for the portion of the lagoon overlooking Old Bè;</li> <li>- Strengthen the unifying character of religious practice to better structure the territory;</li> <li>- Possibility of acquiring land for public use to set up facilities and carry out other types of development;</li> <li>- Take advantage of the potential of the Old Bè heritage to develop a cultural and tourist economy;</li> <li>- To take advantage of the authorities' pronounced will to proceed with an architectural restoration operation in Old Bè;</li> <li>- Take advantage of the presence of the Bè lagoon and the sacred forest to improve the landscape perception of Old Bè.</li> </ul>
<p>What to do to mitigate threats</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Raise awareness of the population on the degradation of the environment and the ecosystem and the pollution of the lagoon induced by anthropic actions;</li> <li>- Implement actions to eradicate the threat posed by the Bè lagoon, a source of flooding in the rainy season;</li> <li>- Revive the enthusiasm of young people for the old customs of Old Bè;</li> <li>- Raise awareness among the population on the importance of building renewal to avoid land conflicts due to the practice of land alienation.</li> </ul>

Initially, it will be a question of encouraging the development of the built environment by modernizing the road network capable of opening up the village core and promoting the development of land and the modernization of nearby housing. The opening up of the islands by widening certain alleys to 6/7 meters (one-way street) to allow access to RVN (Roads and Various Networks) is essential to resolve the difficulties of access to sanitation for the populations. Also develop secondary roads with sewerage networks (gutters, separate wastewater networks) and create two or three car parks to facilitate traffic flow in old Bè. Strong political will is also needed to initiate a transformation of the built environment. There is no question of making everything new, but of modernizing what exists. Other secondary roads will have to be created to improve accessibility within the village core. The establishment of these actions was possible thanks to a strategy derived from the SWOT analysis explained in table 3 above.

Then, improve the quality of life in the old Bè with the realization of the sanitation of the district by the development of gutters and DWS (Drinking Water Supply), the development of the seven (7) existing public places but not designed to allow people to relax, breathe and meet. In the same direction, proceed to the development of the surroundings of the lagoon of Bè, to develop their spaces of relaxation, a space dedicated to the parking of canoes and fishing gear.

Finally, it should be noted that this approach is based on a gradual evolution of old Bè. The development will be done with a pre-existing structure which although evolving, is essential in the urban structure of the area. All of these developments will be very favorable to the development of tourism. There is material to attract tourists from the lagoon to the forest through the historical path. Indeed, it will be a manifesto in the name of the history of the majority ethnic group in terms of numbers in the country (Ewé) and the history of the birth of the capital of Togo.

## **Conclusion**

The Old Bè has many characteristics that make it a heritage site in its own right such as its history, the presence and history of the sacred forest and the practice of the voodoo religion which existed long before the creation of the city of Lomé. The ambition of Greater-Lomé for the coming years is to be a powerful and competitive metropolis with a modern, healthy and attractive urban community, for that, particular attention must be paid to Old Bè.

The old Bè with its strong history, and different heritage elements, has a strong potential to become a cultural district. However, for this potential to be harnessed and become effective, there is a long way to go. As part of a process of regeneration of the old Bè, the cultural axis is the center around which the creation of a healthy district revolves, a modern district with economic potential through tourism. Indeed, there are many concepts in terms of the urban regeneration approach. Nevertheless, given the specificities of old Bè, the approach centered around cultural value is undoubtedly the most qualified. Culture appears to be the main trigger for transformation, raising awareness and mobilizing the inhabitants for the regeneration of Bè.

The success of this process of regenerating the historic district of the Bè district is hidden behind the success of the campaigns and workshops. Public participation in discussions and initiatives will strengthen the project in achieving its objectives. Indeed, the latter will be defined based on their proposals, their specific needs, and their expectations. These are various recommendations in terms of development to achieve a healthy, modern, and cultural old Bè.



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