

Research Article

The Transition from Agricultural Land to Nzila Village in the Commune of Bimbo in Bangui in the Central African Republic

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Abstract

Agricultural land near large cities is undergoing unprecedented changes across the world. The land resources suitable for agriculture in Nzila village, in the commune of Bimbo near the city of Bangui are no exception. The objective of this study is to analyze the transition that agricultural land is undergoing in the Nzila village in the face of the phenomenon of urbanization. It makes it possible to diagnose the causes and consequences of this transformation on the food security of rural and urban populations. Analytical and descriptive methods are used to carry out this study. A survey of 60 people based on a series of interviews and questionnaires made it possible to collect the field data contained in this work. According to this survey, 78.33% of people recognize that agricultural land in Nzila has undergone a transition due to urbanization. In 2008, this agricultural area was selected for the establishment of industries. This project came to fruition in 2010 with the construction of a cement plant in Nzila by an Indian company. This cement plant occupies a large part of the 10 hectares to the detriment of the first occupants of the area. The subdivision of the entire Laurent-Bois sector in 2012, by the land registry services, took place in plantations of cassava, yams and plantains, and corn, leading to uprisings among the victims. Farmers are forced to free up this agricultural space to cross beyond 1 kilometer, to the Trandia village opposite to cultivate, while the others have left 54 km away due to the transformation of the village into an industrial zone. The anarchic occupation of land for the construction of housing has negative effects on peri-urban agricultural land, that is to say without notice from the land registry services or town planning services following the urbanization of the certain peripheral districts of Bangui. This situation will push farmers to seek or move very far from the city in search of agricultural land. The State is involved in the disappearance of peri-urban agricultural land south of the city of Bangui through its subdivisions. He expropriates farmers from their agricultural land by forcing them to go 30 km, very far, to make way for him. In the Central African Republic, the State has the power to expropriate and evict a natural or legal person from land.

Keywords

Transition, Land, Agriculture, Urbanization

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1. Introduction

Transition is a concept that affects several areas of human life, ecosystems and administrative management. The ecological transition, for example, refers to the transition from one ecosystem to another with negative or positive repercussions on life. Climate change is at the origin of certain transformations which are leading humanity today towards an energy transition. It concerns the transition from fossil energy to renewable energies. The end of the transition on a political level refers to the establishment of a stable regime after a provisional emergency regime following an upheaval of institutions in a country, especially in Africa, after a coup d'état. Indeed, the land transition brings together all the transformations that the land and all its components undergo following changes in use, depending on the needs and the new services they offer.

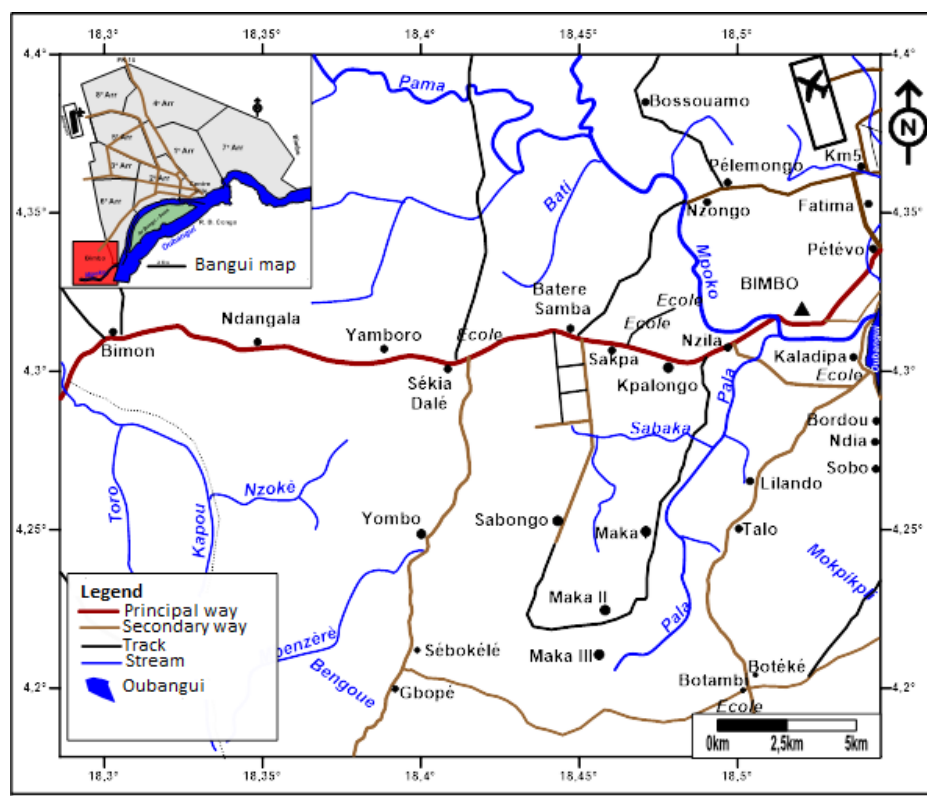
Agricultural land constitutes a major issue these days with all forms of possible transition (Goupe de recherche poster) [4]. In the Nzila village, it is the subject of speculation, both by the urban population for the satisfaction of housing needs, industrial and cultural societies and the State for various services, and by rural people for food needs. This pluralism of actors is at the origin of land conflicts in peri-urban areas. Legitimate land confronts legal land.

Nzila means Zila which is the old name and means “dizziness” in the Ngaka language. Currently, its pronunciation is Nzila and indicates “vigilance”. The village is not vigilant.

He suffers from dizziness due to the presence of several actors who torment him.

The peri-urban space in Nzila village is strongly marked by the period of strong urbanization of the 1970s, characterized by rapid expansion of the city of Bangui and the demographic explosion. Bangui has 1,145,280 inhabitants with a density of 17,094 inhabitants / km² (digital mapping of General Population and Housing Census, RGPH-4 2021). This urban concentration has mainly affected the south of the city, because relative security reigns there during armed conflicts [3]. The development of urban uses of land in rural areas (residences, industrial and cultural companies, garbage depots and quarries). The weak spatial planning policy has favored the construction of a fairly spontaneous peri-urban space consuming agricultural spaces to the south of the city of Bangui (Figure 1).

The utility of agricultural land is neglected [5]. Agricultural land is not protected by appropriate rural modernization policies due to lack of specialists. They are sacrificed by urban policies through building permits (for example the minimum size of building plots in peri-urban rural areas). The study aims to examine the factors that contribute to the transition from agricultural land to the Nzila village, by analyzing the causes, consequences and proposed solutions for good governance of peri-urban agricultural land.



Source: Laboratoire des Analyses Cartographiques, Climatiques et des Etudes Géographiques (LACCEG).

Figure 1. Peri-urban villages in transition south of the city of Bangui.

2. Issue

In recent decades, sub-Saharan Africa has experienced one of the most significant phenomena of the twenty-first century: the spectacular growth of cities, such as in the Central African Republic. The peri-urban area of the village of Nzila, located south of the city of Bangui, is strongly marked by the period of intensive urbanization in the 1970s, during which an increase in the population was observed south of the city of Bangui. It has a negative effect on peri-urban agricultural land. To this day, the city of Bimbo has experienced unprecedented population growth. This is the result of natural increase and rural exodus. The movement of the population in search of work in the city and for access to certain socio-educational services that are rare in the countryside has repercussions on the spatial level.

In the context of transition, agricultural lands are experiencing rapid urbanization, strongly marked by urban growth, population explosion and the anarchic expansion of peripheral cities. Indeed, the urbanization rate in the CAR is 39%. This rate is lower than that of the entire African continent, which is 50%. With an urban growth rate of 3.4%, the urban population will experience a strong evolution in the future with the doubling of its population in less than 10 years.

On the one hand, the spatial extension of the city of Bangui is an obstacle to agricultural land, that is to say, the city of Bangui is experiencing a significant growth in its population which is 1,145,280 inhabitants with a density of 17,094 inhabitants/km². In search of space, the population is forced to move down to the outskirts to seek to settle. As land becomes increasingly scarce in the city, the population buys agricultural land and in the long run the agricultural land is used by the population in terms of housing construction. This spatial extension causes the distance of agricultural land around Bangui.

According to Jean-Philippe Plateau [16], population growth and the introduction of commercial agriculture are the factors of land transition. Another difficulty related to the transition of agricultural land is that of the commodification of peri-urban agricultural land. Land was an inalienable community asset. The indigenous people occupied areas for agriculture which subsequently became their "properties". As the population grows in the Nzila village, the community land reserve diminishes and becomes family land reserves by becoming privatized [13]. This situation leads to the individualization of land rights, thus marking a break with the traditional mode of access in favor of a modern mode of access.

Agricultural land has become a commercial asset and is transforming into private property. However, the importance of food products from the land in a country in perpetual socio-political crisis leads to the dynamics of agricultural land in the South of Bangui, perceived as the area of relative security compared to other localities around "Bangui the rocket, city of Bandits".

Somewhere, the immediate surroundings of cities are sub-

ject to intense competition in terms of land use and land prices. Agriculture is only one of the possibilities for land use, confronted with many other uses, in terms of infrastructure or housing for example. Furthermore, we can raise the case of illiteracy. By its definition, an illiterate person has significant difficulties in daily life, but also in building their place in society. We take an example, if among the farmers who are in the village of Nzila in Bimbo, many have not gone to school. Since they cannot read or write, they cannot secure their land. They are unable to go to the land registry services and follow the procedures for acquiring land titles for their domain.

Lacking financial means, they move away from the city by losing their land to state housing developments. These farmers need to be supervised to secure their land in the long term. How does the transition from agricultural land to the Nzila village in Bimbo manifest itself? What are the causes and consequences of this transition? Who are the main actors? How can we modernize the countryside near large cities without harming agricultural land? This article attempts to answer these questions.

3. Terms and Definition

The key terms to define are transition, agriculture, land and urbanization.

3.1. Transition

Transition is the action of moving from one state of affairs to another. It is the transition from one situation to another and this in several areas. For example, political transition refers to the transition from one political regime to another regime. Ecological transition involves the idea of a transformation, a change, a mutation of the ecosystems of a given environment to another environment.

3.2. Agriculture

Agriculture is the set of economic activities whose main purpose is the cultivation of land. It is the set of works that transform the natural environment for the production of plants and animals useful to man. They make it possible to produce financial income from the exploitation of the land.

3.3. Land

Land is everything that relates to real estate. It is the land and everything that composes it. Indeed, agricultural land around large cities is undergoing enormous spatial transition. Fields are disappearing and residential houses, industrial and commercial zones are being built. This is the case of agricultural land in the village of Nzila in Bangui, which this study addresses.

3.4. Urbanisation

Urbanization is the action of urbanizing. The word carries the idea of promoting the growth and development of cities. It designates much more in the case of the city of Bangui, the strong continuous concentration of the population in urban housing. The realization of modern communication infrastructures and development accelerate the process of urbanization around the city of Bangui. It is this situation which is at the origin of the transition of agricultural land to the village Nzila.

4. Materials and Methods

The materials and method used for this research are: the individual questionnaire for surveying the rural population, associated with the interview guide for the Nzila group leader, the managers of the actors who managed the agricultural land according to their activities in this village. As for the data collection method, it consists first of all in documentary research which is essential and mandatory. It provides us with information, knowledge relating to our theme on the actors and the date of the creation of industrial zones on this agricultural land in Nzila.

Then, the surveys and interviews in the field made it possible to have detailed information on the decline of agricultural land among the rural population in addition to the analysis of official texts and others. The analytical and descriptive methods made it possible to identify the specific elements concerning the transition of agricultural land to the Nzila village. The analytical method amounts to "being interested in the genesis, the causes of phenomena and making comparisons by establishing correlations". In the context of this study, the present method allowed us to understand that peri-urban agricultural activities obey a climatic, edaphic and sociological logic which conditions their location and their organization.

The descriptive method has always been one of the pillars of the geographical approach. The geographical description "which aims to be both reasoned and evocative, meets precise criteria, the first of which is neither exhaustive, schematic nor selective". This method allows us to decipher the complexity of special phenomena. It is primarily based on location. In the context of this article, the descriptive method allowed us to situate our field of investigation in a larger whole in relation to its geographical coordinates and to specify its main characteristics (climate, soil type, population).

5. Results

Peri-urban agriculture appears to be a local activity that ensures the survival of urban populations in difficult situations. These populations remain attached to the city, which offers infrastructure and services that they cannot have in rural areas. The intensity of relations between the city and the countryside depends on the state of the communication

routes. Their degradation causes a disarticulation of city-countryside relations and favors the emergence of "urban and peri-urban agriculture".

5.1. Causes of the Transition of Agricultural Land to the Nzila Village

In the peri-urban area, the urban fabric alternates with agricultural and natural spaces. These spaces are subject to the pressure of urban growth to a greater or lesser extent depending on the distance from the center and the attractiveness of the area concerned. They are often referred to as "unbuilt spaces" or "unbuilt" according to an urban approach [7]. "When agriculture disappears, these spaces lose their rural identity and then become in-between spaces that are often designated by their character, which no longer becomes that of agricultural production but of a land reserve that has not yet been built. The point of view adopted generally becomes urban" [8].

There are multiple factors that explain the transition of agricultural land to the Nzila village in Bimbo. Faced with demographic growth and the increase in the needs of the urban population, the village of Nzila, located 11 kilometers south of the city of Bangui, is forced to gain access to peripheral space.

5.1.1. Population Growth and Its Spatial Impact

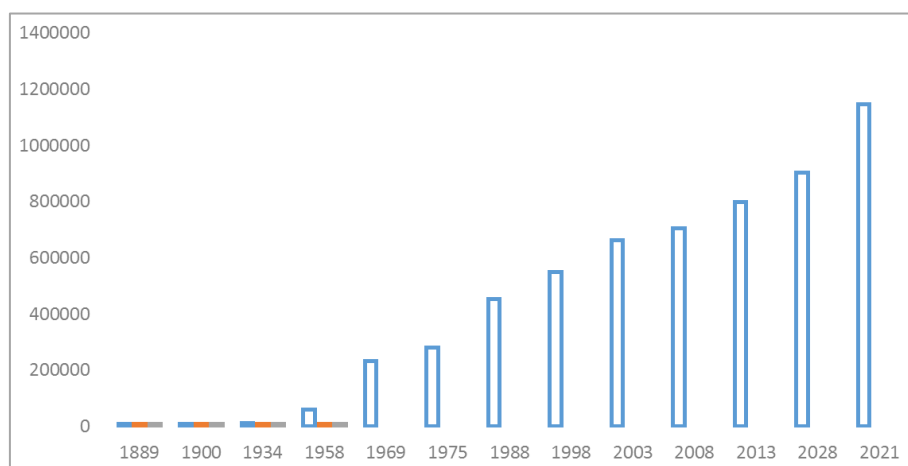
Table 1. Population growth of the city of Bangui from 1960 to 2021.

Year	Number
1889	24
1900	2.000
1920	10.753
1934	1.900
1938	60.000
1969	232.300
1975	279.792
1988	451.690
1998	550.000
2003	662.771
2008	704.969
2013	798.571
2018	903.268
2021	1.145.280

Source: Central African Institute of Statistics and Economic and Social Studies.

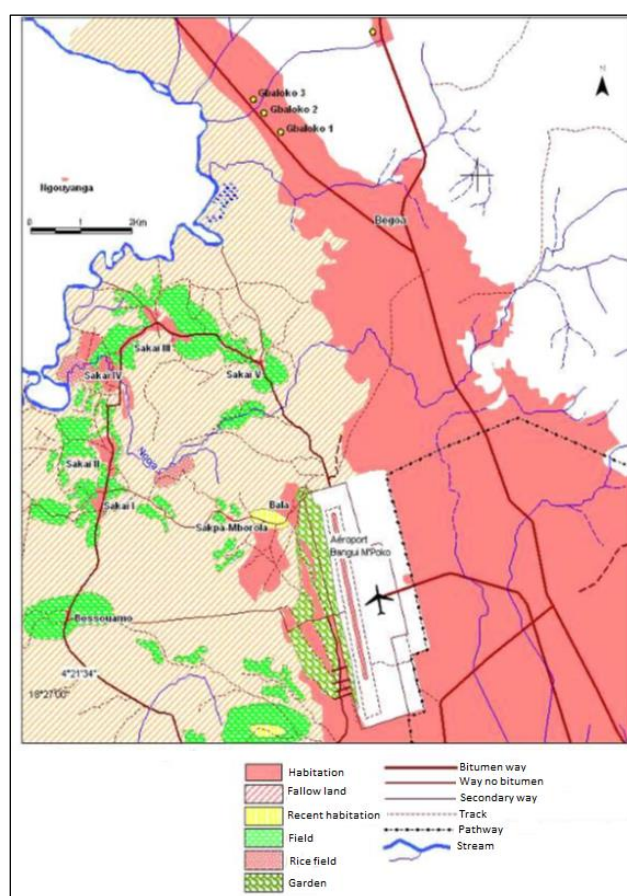
The primary cause of the transition from agricultural land to the village of Nzila in Bimbo in the Central African Republic is population growth, which accentuates the phenomenon of urbanization (Table 1). From the 1970s to the present day, the city of Bangui has continued to experience unprecedented population growth. This is the result of natural increase and

the migratory flow, which is the rural exodus. Migration concerns the search for employment and access to certain socio-educational services that are rare in rural areas: reference hospitals, large higher education centers such as the university. All these factors contribute to the population growth of the city of Bangui (Figure 2), and the impact is reflected spatially.



Source: Central African Institute of Statistics and Economic and Social Studies (ICASEES).

Figure 2. Population growth of the city of Bangui from 1889 to 2021.



Source: Central African Institute of Statistics and Economic and Social Studies (ICASEES)

Figure 3. Juxtaposition of urban and rural spaces.

This demographic dynamic is accompanied by major developments. The progressive urbanization of the population, without depopulating the rural environment where the population continues to grow, is a phenomenon that is accelerating. The demographic transition is still slow but inevitable in the medium term before reaching its plateau; a change in income, lifestyles and eating behaviors; a strengthening of rural/urban links with the effects of a complementarity of exchanges, without the response to growing urban demand being to the detriment of the food security of rural people. These exchanges will lead to an integration of sectors and economic actors in line with the ongoing structural transformation of national economies [17]. According to Félix Ngana [12], urban space consumes immediate agricultural land by being juxtaposed (Figure 3).

This demographic dynamic is accompanied by some major developments: the progressive urbanization of the population, without depopulating the rural environment where the population continues to grow. The demographic transition is still slow but inevitable in the medium term before reaching its plateau; a change in income, lifestyles and eating habits; a strengthening of rural/urban links with the effects of a complementarity of exchanges, without the response to growing urban demand being to the detriment of the food security of rural people. These exchanges will lead to an integration of sectors and economic actors in line with the ongoing structural transformation of national economies [16].

5.1.2. Urban Spatial Expansion

Another characteristic of the transition of agricultural land in the Nzila village in Bimbo is the urban spatial expansion. Agricultural land in the Nzila village is in danger because of an urban spatial expansion of the city of Bangui. This land suffers from spectacular changes due to the horizontal spread of constructions. The lack of land planning is the basis for the creation of neighborhoods without a solid urbanization support. Residential buildings occupy the place of fields that move away from the city each year. Bangui began in Bimbo in its origins. Created on June 26, 1889 by Uzac and Michel Dolisie from Brazzaville, the colonial military post of Bangui was installed at the time upstream on the banks of the river, where the Oubangui no longer allows navigation (the Bangui rapids). The acts signed by the Governor on October 4, 1911 in Brazzaville, Capital of French Equatorial Africa (AEF) gave Bangui the status of commune.

Later, with the arrival of the settlers and the development of trading posts, African villages, following a discriminatory pattern, were grouped, at significant distances, around a commercial administrative district. Against this backdrop, the city continued to develop gradually towards the west, southwest and north in the marshy plain. It was not until June 16, 1946, almost 57 years after the birth of the Bangui Rapids trading post, that a decree established the city's first urbanization plan [13]. Since then, Bangui has experienced

spatial and demographic growth without a master plan. Thus, in 1986, Bangui was divided into eight districts and its population was estimated at 622,771 inhabitants in 2003. In 2013, the population of Bangui was estimated at 798,568 inhabitants (BCR, December 2003). In 2016, it had 860,188 inhabitants. According to the projection of the Central African Institute of Statistics and Economic and Social Studies (ICASEES), the population of Bangui will increase to more than one million inhabitants by 2025. The demographic growth of Bangui is not unique. It corresponds to that of many cities in developing countries, born from European colonization in the 19th century. This strong population growth puts pressure on urban space. The city has experienced a very notable spatial expansion since 1960 (Table 2).

Table 2. Spatial expansion of Bangui from 1960 to 2000.

Année	Espace urbain	Agglomération
1960	20,685km ²	21,240km ²
1986	50,847km ²	89,039km ²
2000	51,285km ²	90,835km ²

Source: Aristide OUESSEBANGA [14], remote sensing and GIS study of the expansion of the city of Bangui and its influence on the peri-urban landscape page 97.

The table above indicates that the city of Bangui has exceeded its legal framework. It has spilled over into the area of neighboring municipalities such as the municipalities of Bégoua and Bimbo. The whole gives a total area of approximately 51,285 km² for a large city of Bangui and 90,835 km² for a conurbation Bangui, Bimbo and Bégoua. This strong spatial expansion is only the result of a rapid increase in the rural population found in Bangui [8].

5.1.3. The Quest for Land for Urbanization

In the village of Nzila, the practice of agricultural land is done in a pejorative manner. The village chiefs are at the origin of the creation of agricultural spaces. But, as the State has not placed emphasis on the application of the rules concerning land, the village chiefs take advantage of this opportunity to allocate land for free to their acquaintances, their parents or by the commercialization of land to the urban population [2].

However, land is an inalienable community asset. The natives occupy areas for agriculture which subsequently become their property. But the occupation of land for agriculture by this means is not framed in the standards of the State which is the guarantor or owner of the land. It is the State which must monitor, manage and allocate plots rationally to avoid the destruction of the environment due to anarchic occupation.

The anarchic occupation of land for the construction of housing has negative effects on peri-urban agricultural land, that is to say without notice from the land registry or urban planning services following the urbanization of certain peripheral districts of Bangui. This situation will push farmers to seek or move far away from the city in search of agricultural land, specially the women [5].

The State is one of the actors who contribute to the disappearance of peri-urban agricultural land in the South of the city of Bangui because of its subdivisions. It expropriates farmers on their agricultural land by forcing them to go more than 30 km away. In the Central African Republic, the State has the power to expropriate a natural or legal person from a property.

This practice is justified by the implementation of Projects of General Interest for which the State alone is the guarantor. Thus, at the level of the village of Nzila, the State allocates part of the cultivated plots of farmers for its public needs, such as the site of the cement factory which occupies 15 hectares. It classifies the industrial zone and prohibits the practice of agricultural activities.

In addition, more than 40 hectares of agricultural land are allocated to a Chinese company. In 1965 and 1966, for reasons of public utility, 5 hectares were allocated to the cemetery of Nzila for burials. But, given the rapid growth of urban sprawl that continues, this cemetery has become a place of residence and even coveted by certain economic operators. Nzila has lost its agricultural space and will lose its cemetery to urban facilities.

(i). Destruction of Agricultural Land by Opening a Quarry in Nzila

In the 1960s, the Ministry of Public Works carried out a number of activities in this agricultural area. It removed laterites to build the current Bangui M'Poko Airport since June 8, 1967. For the Ministry of Public Works, agricultural land is state property, since the land belongs to the state and this agricultural area is transformed into a quarry (Figures 4, 5). After this construction work, the peri-urban agricultural land became a garbage dump.



Source: Field survey, November 2023.

Figure 4. A laterite quarry in Nzila.



Source: Field survey, November 2023

Figure 5. Garbage dump of all industrial companies.

5.1.4. Industrial installations

The MOCAF brewery, the Soci  Centrafricaine du Bois, the unnamed Chinese company and the cement factory have negatively transformed the village of Nzila.

(i). The MOCAF Brewery and Agricultural Land in the Village of Nzila

The MOCAF brewery uses this agricultural land as a garbage dump to dump broken bottles. After the intervention of the Ministry of Public Works in Nzila and the Mocaf brewery, the Soci  Centrafricaine du Bois sets up shop.

(ii). The Central African Timber Company (CENTRABOIS)

The Central African Timber Company operates on agricultural land in the village of Nzila. The intervention consists of dumping the waste from their boards in this village. The area has been transformed into a dump.

Companies such as Castel and CENTRABOIS exert a lot of pressure on the village of Nzila. Initially, it was the Ministry of Public Works that destroyed the agricultural land by removing laterite for the construction of the Bangui - M'poko airport from 1964 to 1966. It was shortly after Independence that the first infrastructures were built. After this destruction, this agricultural land was transformed into a garbage dump for all other industries.

(iii). The Nzila Cement Plant and Land South of Bangui

The Nzila cement plant site is located 11km from Bangui on the Mba ki road. In relation to its geographical position, it is located on the left on the road leading to Botambi. It was the Colonists who traced the tracks to make a road in the 1918s. After the First World War, the objective was to promote the free movement of basic necessities, the various exploitations of mineral resources such as gold, diamonds, rubber, etc. Previously, this land was an agricultural site. But in 2008-2009, the State, which is the owner of the land, has the power to expropriate the rural population on their agricultural land for public utility reasons. This is how it divides this area into two parts. On the right, the area remains for rural people from where they carry out their agricultural activities, and on the left, the area is reserved for the industrial zone.

On August 7, 2010, it was the President of the Republic, Head of State, His Excellency François BOZIZE, himself who laid the first stone and that day marked the beginning of construction work on the Nzila cement plant by the Indians. The financing comes from the Indian State through the EX-IMBANK note.

5.2. The Consequences of the Transition of Agricultural Land to the Nzila Village

The loss of land reserves useful for agricultural activities, the remoteness of agricultural land, the mobility of producers in search of new plots, the risk of food insecurity and the loss of power of local authorities constitute the main consequences of the transition of agricultural land to the Nzila village.

5.2.1. The Remote Location of Agricultural Land

The remoteness of agricultural land is part of the consequences of the transition of agricultural land to the Nzila village. Agricultural spaces are disappearing in favor of construction and industrial activities. Producers are forced to change location in search of new land reserves. The State, by proceeding with the subdivision-sale of land in the neighborhoods of cities, hopes to obtain revenue for its sovereignty expenses. This is also where social housing construction projects are carried out. The majority of producers have lost their plots, following the urbanization process at the level of Laurent-Bois, the division of agricultural land for the installation of industrial zones in the Nzila village, landless producers are forced to cross beyond 1 kilometer, to the Trandia village opposite to cultivate, while the others have left 54 km due to the transformation of the village into an industrial zone. In this village, the Ngaka breed dominates.

The Ngakas can access land free of charge depending on the ethnic ties they have with the population of the host area. The departure of producers is taking place at the same pace as the agricultural production areas that were once on the outskirts of the city of Bangui are shrinking. According to

the results of the survey in Nzila, out of 60 people surveyed, 40 producers, or 66.66% of local stakeholders, confirmed the remoteness of their new fields. This remoteness risks raising food problems due to the increase in transport costs incurred. The remoteness of supply areas from the city leads to an increase in the prices of food products, given the distance from the new production areas.

5.2.2. The Precariousness of Agricultural Land

Land insecurity and agricultural fragility, the peri-urban space is under threat, between a conquering city and a destabilized agriculture that is flowing back towards exclusively rural areas. A fluctuating contact line, sometimes difficult to identify, it seems destined for inexorable urbanization and investment [11].

The decision to build, to occupy space, is irreversible, while the decision to protect it is always provisional. The void attracts the full, the full never retreats in favor of the void. For public opinion, the space surrounding cities is indeed a "shagreen skin" destined to inexorably shrink. The pressure it is undergoing comes, as we have emphasized above, from increasing urbanization which results in the construction of housing estates, shopping centers and the installation of transport infrastructures (ring roads and roundabouts in particular) which prove to be major consumers of space. However, currently no system specifically protects peri-urban agricultural land or promotes its management. This is why it is often gradually devoured. The fragility of peri-urban agriculture results in a gradual decline in cultivated areas. Experience shows that grasslands and livestock farms disappear first [10]. Then tree and market garden lands are taken over by fallow land or, more often, divided into lots. Land insecurity and agricultural decline are therefore the obverse and reverse of the same coin.

5.2.3. The Disappearance of the Nzila Cemetery

The Nzila cemetery located 11 kilometers south of the city of Bangui was previously in the village of Nzila where land use was much more reserved for agricultural activities. But in the years 1965 to 1966, this agricultural land became the cemetery. Given the population growth and urban sprawl that continue to extend towards the outskirts of Bangui. In addition, land is rare and expensive in the city, city dwellers have been forced to move back to the outskirts to look for land to house themselves around 8 to 15 kilometers from Bangui. Nowadays, the Nzila cemetery has become the residential area. More than three (3) years today, with the contribution of the State, the cemetery is no longer in function, to deal with housing problems. Thus, the gradual erasure of agricultural land in this village is very visible.

5.2.4. The Installation of Industrial Zones

The industrial and cultural companies that install and occupy agricultural land in this village are the following: the

Chinese company, the MOCAF brewery, the CENTRABOIS industry, and the cement industry.

(i). The Chinese Company and Agricultural Land in the Nzila Village

A company occupied rural land in the Nzila village as shown in the photos below (Figures 6, 7, 8).



Source: Field survey, November 2023

Figure 6. The Chinese dormitory.



Source: Field survey, November 2023

Figure 7. The machines.



Source: Field survey, November 2023

Figure 8. Work equipment.

The three photos represent the Chinese company. In this part of the industrial zone, the Chinese have occupied a large part of the agricultural land in Nzila. They have pushed rural

people to go very far to look for agricultural land. This is what is causing agricultural land in the village of Nzila to decline.

According to sources provided in the field by some villagers, the Chinese compensated the rural population on their cultivated agricultural land, that is to say paid for their field, and the rural people left this place to go very far in search of agricultural land. In September 2017, the machines were installed on the site. But until then, the Chinese company has no name and no activity is carried out on this site.

(ii). The CENTRABOIS Industry

The Central African Wood Industry was created in 2010 to 2011 by Ibrahim BITARD, son of Lebanese NGOUMBA. His various works are to send their wood abroad.

(iii). The Cement Industry

The Nzila cement plant site is located 11km from Bangui on the Mba ki road, in the commune of Bimbo. In relation to its geographical position, it is placed on the left on the road leading to BOTAMI. It was the Colonists who retraced the tracks to become a road in the 1918s, after the First World War for the free movement of basic necessities, the various exploitations of mineral resources such as gold, diamonds, rubber, etc.

6. Discussions

Coline PERRIN [15], in her article entitled "Agricultural land in urban planning: the role of actor configurations in the local production of law" is interested in the relationships between law and geography through the question of public regulation of the urbanization of agricultural land. It shows the close interactions between the local configuration of the actors' game and the forms taken by urban sprawl between 1960 and 2000 (Lyon).

Félix Ngana [12], Pabamé Sougnabé Bernard Gonné addressed an innovative subject entitled "Land transformations in peri-urban areas in Sudanese Central Africa". Since the 1970s, peri-urban areas in Sudanese Central Africa have experienced an unprecedented land transformation. The space between rural and urban is becoming an important place for agricultural and real estate speculation. Indeed, they focused on the North of Cameroon. The North-West of the city of Bangui, passing through southern Chad. In this area, cities are constantly evolving demographically.

Rural land dominated by family farming is transforming into a privileged place for agricultural and real estate speculation. They showed the example of the outskirts of Bangui with the case of the village of Gbaloko, located 16 km northwest of Bangui where more than 70% of farmers have lost their land to subdivision following real estate speculation that intensifies, with the expansion and growth of the urban population. In this study, the causes and consequences of

these land transformations are discussed.

Emmanuel MBETID-BESSANE [9] did his research in 2012 on "Modeling and estimation of the value of agricultural land in the peri-urban area of Bangui in the Central African Republic". He noted that in the Central African Republic towards the outskirts of the city of Bangui, the phenomenon of commodification of agricultural land is accelerating, under demographic pressure and for economic and social reasons, and whose operating mechanism and price determinants are not controlled. Thus, in his research, he set an objective which consists of highlighting the factors which determine the price of agricultural land in the peri-urban area of Bangui in Central Africa in order to provide the public authorities with elements for decision-making.

6.1. Projet for a Better Urban Transition in Rural Areas: Modernization of Countryside Areas

According to François ONFRAY in his Master 2 Geography thesis - specializing in Societies, Planning and Territorial Governance on the theme "The relocation of agriculture by the valorization of agricultural land, issues, initiatives and perspectives in the urban areas of Nantes, Angers and Lorient", pages 116:

Isn't the crisis that the agricultural world is experiencing above all a land and food crisis? The difficulties currently encountered in the agricultural sector are multiple. However, several trends can be imagined concerning the future of agricultural activity. To do this, a new look must be taken at the issue of agricultural land. There are initiatives for its preservation, but given the current context, the land issue must no longer be addressed solely from the perspective of its preservation. A policy to enhance the value of agricultural land must be implemented in parallel. Implementing a policy in favor of agricultural establishment remains the best way to protect agricultural space.

To do this, this desire must come from a strong political choice shared by a group of stakeholders. This policy therefore requires rethinking the approach to land. Enhancing the value of land aims to support innovative projects that respect the environment. This also requires paying attention to the quality of the soil. Land is a production tool that does not belong to farmers. It must be transferable to future generations [1]. Implementing such a development policy therefore requires helping to set up new agricultural projects that are part of a local economy by integrating food issues, issues related to the preservation of biodiversity, etc. Different actions must be carried out in order to promote the establishment of agriculture. Land development (plot exchange) must be encouraged and supported to facilitate the takeover of a farm and/or installation. In view of the current agricultural context, these issues must be addressed by land entry within an agricultural project set up by local authorities supported by agricultural structures and civil society (agricultural

associations, citizens, etc.).

Urbanization and economic development of territories (activity zones, infrastructure, roads, etc.) will continue to be to the detriment of agricultural and natural spaces. Protecting these agricultural spaces therefore seems obvious, but today it is no longer a question of trying to answer the question "how to protect?", it is rather a question of going beyond this question (which also sometimes constitutes a sticking point in the various development policies) with the idea behind this question of what kind of agriculture we wish to develop. This reflection requires above all a land approach, because the land orientations that will be taken today will condition the agriculture of tomorrow.

6.2. Rural Project in Nzila

Today, land is a source of issues, conflicts and relationships between stakeholders. It connects indigenous people and non-indigenous people, occupants and the State, members of a family or lineage. It challenges customary hierarchies and State power.

Studying land means opening a window on social relationships. Today, agricultural land is considered a common land reserve for certain groups of stakeholders, including public authorities (States and Communities) who use it as they please to implement major urban planning projects or to meet housing needs. They are therefore there as a simple adjustment variable. But then, are the interests of farmers and the population considered?

7. Conclusion

At all times, agricultural land in the village of Nzila, rare and expensive, is often considered as land to be urbanized. It is an essential work tool that is constantly under threat. However, it is also an economic, food and biodiversity resource. It is a means of production, a source of income for its holder in Bangui. The city of Bangui has experienced rapid and disorderly growth. This anarchic urbanization is due to unprecedented demographic pressure. According to the Central African Institute of Statics and Economic and Social Studies, in 2021, the population reached 1,145,280 inhabitants, i.e. a density of 17,094 inhabitants per km². As a result, we are witnessing the creation of spontaneous neighborhoods devoid of adequate urban infrastructure.

Today, the nibbling away of peri-urban agricultural space for housing and economic activities is a national reality and a challenge that is still very pronounced in the village of Nzila. Thus, spaces with natural and nourishing vocations are still, in many minds, an adjustment variable for economic or residential development [6].

The maintenance of agricultural spaces in peri-urban areas therefore appears to be an essential condition for the development of sustainable territorial systems and is now an essential issue for urban planning policies and a challenge for

regional planning stakeholders. The widespread awareness of the need to accommodate between urban and agricultural stakeholders leads to an increasing integration of agricultural concerns in territorial planning.

One of the current challenges in combating the land transition in Nzila is to have frameworks and methods that make it possible to analyze the causes of this land transformation and manage this complexity, with a view to meeting the imperatives of sustainability of agricultural land resulting from good land governance. The management of peri-urban agricultural areas, at the heart of the relationship between cities and the countryside, is a crucial issue that directly questions the question of governance and constitutes a challenge for sustainable land development [7].

Indeed, to resolve this impasse and promote good preservation of agricultural land in a sustainable way in the village of Nzila, it is now necessary to put in place some proposals on the right approach to land preservation such as: Strengthening citizen participation through decentralization, participation in land management, participation in defining land management rules, integrating women for good land preservation practice and setting up Sustainable Development and Planning projects. These projects allow stakeholders to create a common language, learn to work together and install young farmers or set up a producers' market.

The State must take some measures to develop new legislation on more suitable land management. These include, for example, land security, land reform, and the definition of a legal status for peri-urban farms.

The government, in order to address the problems that are causing the decline of agricultural land in this village, must monitor and update draft law number 08 on the agro-pastoral code in the Central African Republic and especially Title 4 on agricultural land management. It is important to take into account the recommendations on land management and the strategic axes on the transition of agricultural land to the Nzila village.

Abbreviations

AEF	French Equatorial Africa
BCR	Central Census Bureau
ICASEES	Central African Institute of Statistics and Economic and Social Studies
LACCEG	Laboratory of Cartographic, Climatological Analyses and Geographical Studies
RGPH	General Population and Housing Census

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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