Ethnic Residential Spaces and Socio-Economic Implications in the Kumba Municipality

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Abstract
Propinquity on urban space is symbolized by ethnic residential groups in countries with great ethnic, religious and racial affinities and viewed as a major structural mechanism through which ethnic and other groups are denied equal access to opportunities, rewards and amenities. The study identifies the reasons and socio-economic implications of ethnic residential affinity in the Kumba municipality of Cameroon. Data was based on cross sectional and household surveys within seven sampled sites and questionnaires administered within households of 6 residential areas. Structured interviews were undertaken with some officials of the city Council and the local administration. Findings reveal that ethnic residential affinity is more the result of cultural than social and economic reasons. Job creation/offers and land tenure arrangements in the city are related to ethnic affinity. These practices exist due to the glaring absence of public presence in the provision of basic socio-economic infrastructures and thus results in disproportionate urban growth and development. There is the need for the local administration to device strategies that should transcend ethnic affinity to achieve a more harmonious and balanced development. This balance can be achieved through the provision of low-cost residential areas for middle and low-income earners and efforts should be made at providing public services in areas of need so as to offset the spatial imbalance resulting from ethnic differences.

Key Word: Residential affinity, segregation, Kumba urban space, urban development, Social interaction.

Introduction
International, national and rural–urban migration has occurred in many countries making the urban area multi-ethnic. The tendency for the newly arrived to seek for areas with close relatives and members of similar ethnic affinity has led to the growth of residential areas with socio-cultural bias; people settle in communities already occupied by their tribesmen for business purposes, religion, culture or tribal reasons. According to Rian (2011) when a certain ethnic group occupies a space to some degree separate from the rest of the population, it is called residential affinity. Ethnic residential affinity (ERA) has been an issue for a long time in the history of America with decreasing trends of Blacks and White affinity along the years (Reardon, 2006). At first property owners prohibited African Americans from owning or occupying homes in White neighbourhoods. Even though this discrimination has decreased since 1989, residential affinity remains today in the US with White colour still a visible characteristic in some states.
Battu et al (2009) found that, in Britain, ethnic minorities like the Black and Indians tend to associate into groups. Varshney (2002) highlights the case of Bhivandi city near Bombay, where the Muslims associate and create a neighbourhood away from the Christians. Wong (2002) equally argued that new comers are compelled to cluster in co-ethnic areas due to financial limitations and to seek shelter from tribesmen which they consider will be cheaper or affordable. Immigrants from neighbouring Nigeria into Kumba town find the 'Ibo quarter' as a safe haven since the majority of the residents are Nigerians. “Attitudes and preferences do not only influence individuals and groups to choose one neighbourhood over another, they also substantially influence individuals and groups to initiate actions designed to preserve the existing ethnic composition of their neighbourhood by erecting ‘barriers’ designed to restrict the access of members from other ethnic groups such as from renting or purchasing houses in their areas (Yinger, 2005).

Cameroon has over 200 ethnic groups, each having its own language, dressing, traditional dishes and other cultural practices. This diversity in ethnic groups spans all across sub-Saharan Africa such as the Ibos, Yurobas and Hausas in Nigeria; the Tutsis and the Hutus in Rwanda and Burundi; the Asantes and Fantes in Ghana and the Kikuyus, the Louwohs and ethnic Somalis in Kenya. With such diversities in ethnic groups and culture, it is more likely that, there will be prejudices and discrimination leading to tension and conflicts within the urban space shared by these different communities. Several ills have been generated as a result of ethnic associations which range from social disruptions, unbalanced development, political malpractices, to sects and gangsterism. However there are certain gains arising as a result of such ethnic association.

Alberto et al (2009) argued that, substantial disparities between ethnic populations in income and wealth have a substantial effect on ethnic affinity. Ethnic groups are spatially distributed according to their ability to pay for housing at the price offered in the market whether renting or owning a shop. While income acts as a constraint in view of other expenditures incurred by households, price acts as a filter in which some areas are inaccessible because of housing costs. This filtering produces the clustering of ethnic groups according to their ability to pay for land rent and housing, thereby enhancing division in ethnic neighbourhoods, breeding nepotism and further retarding national unity since ethnic groups are unable to integrate.

Filth is a major characteristic of some neighbourhoods by virtue of their living habit. This is exhibited by poor cultural attitude to waste disposal within the town, causing blockage of drains and diseases. In Hausa quarter, the gutters serve as solid waste dump sites in the rainy season. These neighbourhoods are characterized by the prevalence of mosquitoes, malaria, dysentery and even cholera which have become commonplace (Ntum Queenta, 2013). The sale and renting of land as well as houses in Kumba is at times predicated on ethnic basis and not on the ability to pay. Based on these problems, the study seeks to investigate the manifestations of ethnic affinity and the extent to which differences in ethnicity reflect the way socio economic activities are operated within the Kumba municipality.

Conceptual View

There are a number of theories that apply to ethnic residential segregation within the urban space where important spatial variations of economic and social characteristics have been observed. Researchers have attempted to describe and explain all of this which can be applied to the Kumba urban space. Amongst the various concepts, this study considers the work of Skouras (2008) on the spatial behavior of migrants or new comers. The model is based primarily on residential pattern or preference of new comers into the urban space. The general trend reported is the continuous movement into metropolitan areas by migrants, which offer substantial employment opportunities. The study indicates that, new comers tend to concentrate in areas where their co–ethnic group members reside and where low–cost housing can be found. In explaining residential preferences of new comers and the spatial pattern that results from their location decision, Skouras identified five separate dimensions to the segregation of any one group incorporated from the ideas of Reardon et al (2004). The five dimensions include the unevenness of its residential distribution, its
isolation from other groups in the area, its clustering into ghetto-like areas, its concentration into high density districts and its relative centralization within the urban fabric. According to the model, evenness and exposure are spatial dimensions while clustering and isolation are dimensions of segregation and affinity.

More recently, scholars like Reardon and O’Sullivan (2004) have elaborated on the above approaches to develop more refined measures of spatial segregation that analyses patterning along two axis: one indicating spatial exposure (or spatial isolation) and the other indicating spatial evenness (or spatial clustering). Spatial exposure refers to the extent that people belong to one ethnic group are mixed with people from other groups (or remain spatially isolated) in their local environments. Spatial evenness assesses the distribution of a group in the residential space, specifying the extent to which its members prefer to cluster. The combination of the two analytical concepts gives four patterns of residential location as shown in Figure 1. The upper half of the diagram presents two patterns of evenly distributed households, indicating low level of ethnic affinity. Also people of two groups in the upper right pattern (T2) are mixed with others (inter ethnic mix) whereas in the upper left quadrant (T1) households are more isolated. In turn both patterns at the bottom half of the figure indicates high levels of ethnic residential affinity.

![Figure 1](image.png)

**Figure 1.** A hypothetical dimension of spatial relationships in residential areas


The reasons behind the development of the various patterns of ethnic residential affinity are explained by cultural and economic factors. From a cultural perspective, new comers into the metropolitan area tend to locate close to ethnic group members in order to take advantage of their integrated social network and to retain valued elements of the cultural heritage such as language and religion. From an economic perspective, attention is drawn to the functioning of both the labour and housing market, asserting that new comers cluster in the least expensive parts of the city due to income and information limitations. These areas are first solicited because, new comers into the city are usually low-skilled, low paid or unemployed. Secondly they are faced with both restricted access to loans and thus associate with ethnic group members for financial assistance and to learn a trade. This is a common in-migrant characteristic in third world cities.

Although this concept explains the social, cultural and economic reason for E.R.A, there are still a few lapses which require explanations. Firstly the concept emphasizes on identifying the factors determining the location preferences of migrants into the city but place less attention to their effects on the structure of urban neighbourhoods. Does E.R.A accelerate or hinder socio-economic or infrastructural development? Or can economic growth be limited to particular ethnic residential neighbourhood? Secondly the model did not foresee the influence of time progressive dispersal of initially spatial-concentrated ethnic groups paving the way to inter-ethnic mix by the process of acculturation and assimilation as explained by Freeman.
(2000). Through prolonged contact with the natives and other ethnic groups, the social distance between the different ethnic group members diminishes gradually leading to a decrease of the spatial distance between them, thereby verging more towards association.

As observed in Kumba, ethnic residential neighborhoods represent the stronghold of cultural identity of the ethnic group’s own identity. In a sense, it constitutes a specific ethnic local good or social space. It enables the groups to sustain aspects of their pre-migration cultural practices (religion and language). Economically, association with ethnic group members is a means of fortifying initial difficulties that might eventually arise such as job acquisition, financial assistance for business ventures and urban survival. This creates a more homogenous urban space in terms of ethnic groupings though resulting in disparate levels of development in third world urban areas of where community rather than public presence is more prominent.

Methodology and Study Area

The Study Area

Kumba municipality is located in Meme Division of the South West Region of Cameroon. Kumba is the Divisional capital of Meme located within latitude 9°25’E and 9°29’E of the GMT and longitude 4°35’N and 4°39’N of the Equator. This rapidly urbanizing settlement is ranked first in terms of population in South West Region. It had a population of 166,331 inhabitants in 2005 (Bureau National de Recensement) and an annual growth rate of 4% occupying a surface area of 8213km² including its surrounding settlements of Fiango, Barombi Kang, Kossala, Kake, Ikiliwindi, Barombi Mbo, Laduma and Mambanda (Divisional Delegation of Economy, Planning and Urban Development Kumba, 2013).

Methodology

Seven study sites that covered the three administrative subdivisions of Kumba were selected for the study. These were Kumba Town, Ibo neighbourhood, Metta, Bamileke, Hausa, Mabanda, and Kang Barombi. These are areas where ERA is perceived to be conspicuous and the sampled population was obtained randomly including administrative officials, chiefs, local council authorities and the elderly with whom oral interviews were conducted. Men and women and especially household heads were the main focus of interrogation by use of questionnaires. Questionnaires were based on a representation of 60% males and 42% females because the former in most cases move first into the city and so take the initial decision on place of residence. The highest groups of respondents were those between the age range of 40-59 years (those who have resided for over 30 years in Kumba) and 20-39 years (those thought to foster strong ethnic social groups). Both groups represent 84% of the total sample size. Structured interviews were used for the authorities of the City Council and some chiefs of the main ethnic groups under study. A total of 240 questionnaires were administered with a minimum of 30 allocated to each of the seven sample sites. The product moment correlation analysis was used to find out if there was a relationship between ERA and the provision of educational infrastructures within a selected neighbourhood.

Results

Reasons for ethnic residential affinity in Kumba. This study examines the social, cultural and economic reasons that account for ethnic residential association in Kumba. The social and cultural reasons are identified by family influence/presence of relatives and tribal/village preference. According to tribal links, field studies illustrate that the Metta, Bamileke and Hausa (tribal groups) are closely knit, recording 55.5%, while the others represent 44.5%, with the least being the Bakundus. Tribal affinity is stronger with the Ibos and the Bamilekes than the other tribal groups. These two groups are more business inclined, being highly involved in commercial activity. However, according to field study, the general tendency is for the newly arrived to solicit areas dominated by members of the same tribal group than family members or relatives (51.9% as against 48.1%)
Economic reasons are identified by trading, farming, and employment by the local council administration. Table 1 indicates that trading is the most striking economic driver for ethnic association, represented by 57.4% of the respondents and closely followed by employment by the local councils with 25.9%. The Ibos and Bamileke groups dominate the economic sector through trading; representing 18.6 and 16.7% respectively. Given that the Bafaws and Kang Barombis represent the indigenous ethnic group, their dominance in the local councils (Kumba I and 3 sub Councils and the City Council) is impressive; representing 50% and 28.5% respectively in that activity. The Mettas associate to exploit farming opportunities representing the highest (44.4%) in the activity, followed by the Bamilekes with 22.2%. While the Mettas are involved mainly in cash crop cultivation of cocoa, oil palm and small holder rubber schemes at Matoh Butu area, the Bamilekes exploit food crops like vegetables mostly within the city.

Table 1. Economic Reasons for Ethnic Residential Affinity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residential area</th>
<th>Trading</th>
<th>Farming</th>
<th>Employment in local administration</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bafaw</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hausa</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibo</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bamileke</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kang Barombi</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakundu</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metta</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field work, 2013.

A comparison of social, cultural and economic factors of residential affinity confirms the diversities exhibited in Table 1. Overall, and as illustrated in Figure 2, cultural factors have a greater influence in the association of tribal groups in Kumba with the Mettas to a great extent and the Bafaws representing above 17%. Social factors are more dominant as concerns the Bafaws, Hausas and the Kang Barombis (22% and 16% respectively), while economic factors are prominent within the Ibo and Bamileke groups both representing over 17%.

Figure 2. A comparison of social, cultural and economic reasons for ethnic residential affinity in Kumba. Source: Field work, 2013
Manifestations of ethnic residential affinity in Kumba

The parameters used to investigate the manifestations of ethnic residential affinity in Kumba are the sale, purchase, renting of land and employment offers made to various ethnic groups under study. Building space and employment are thought to be very crucial demands by in-migrants and the fact that their access is linked to ethnic/tribal affinity gives room for them to be examined in this study.

Sale/purchase of land in Kumba: The sale/purchase of land in Kumba is closely linked to culture, financial ability of the person soliciting the land and tribal affinity or acquaintance with the supplier. Land is sold and rented based on cultural, financial and acquaintance basis as revealed in Figure 3. 48.78% of the sampled population attest to the fact that cultural factors greatly influence the sale and purchase of land as against 29.27% and 21.95% for financial and acquaintance reasons respectively. The Mettas, Bakundu and Bamileke ethnic groups greatly exert cultural influence in the sale and purchase of land compared to the other seven tribes under study, while the Bafaws and the Ibos exhibit more financial strength in the purchase of land compared to the Bamilekes and the Mettas.

![Figure 3. Criteria for the sale/purchase of land by various tribal groups in Kumba](source: Field work, 2013.)

Basis for employment offers: The opinion of 43 employers was sampled within the seven ethnic groups who advanced three main reasons for employment/job offers by members of the various ethnic groups. These are cultural, acquaintance and other reasons such as skills/qualification and experience in order of preference. Based on their opinions, 53.5% acknowledge that cultural reasons greatly influence employment offers compared to acquaintance and other reasons. The Mettas, Bakundus, Bamilekes and Ibos in particular provide employment opportunities based on cultural affinity.

A further examination of the rate of scholarisation based on schools created by each tribal group within its neighbourhood gives clues as to the tenacity of association. This was achieved through a correlation analysis based on data on schools created by its members within each of the neighbourhoods with dominant tribal groupings. This data is presented in Table 2 and used to calculate the product moment correlation represented by the formula;
The number of schools in each neighbourhood is considered as the independent variable (x) and schools owned by main tribal groups as the dependent variable (y). The calculated correlation value, $r = 0.83$. This implies that there is a strong positive correlation between number of schools owned by tribal members in a neighbourhood and the dominance of that tribal group. This thus indicates that there is a strong positive correlation between ERA and the provision of educational infrastructure within a given residential area by its members. This further implies that the association by the seven tribal groups impacts on the scholarisation rate in Kumba and its environs. This phenomenon can be explained by the presence of several private nursery, primary and secondary institutions in the study area.

**Ethnic residential affinity and planning in Kumba.**

The strong ethnic residential segregation and its manifestations in Kumba obviously impact on the overall planning, the life style of the population and the way socio economic activities are operated. Filth characterizes some neighbourhoods, such as Hausa, Bamileke, and Ibo through careless dumping of solid and liquid waste (adjacent streams and gutters) as seen in Plate 1. The Bamileke neighbourhood in particular is noted for its untidy environment as it is common for household waste to be swept and dumped on the streets. In the Hausa neighbourhood, improper liquid and solid waste disposal is the raison d'être for constant pools of water around compounds both in the rainy and dry season. Solid waste disposal in streams and gutters cause un-conducive human living conditions through stench, disease and pests.

Plate 1. Solid waste deposited in a stream in Hausa quarter
Seasonal flooding of Hausa and Kosala areas is a common phenomenon resulting from such uncivil waste disposal attitudes. The absence of garbage collection cans and the municipal vans not being able to access these neighbourhoods due to inaccessible streets is a thorny urban development issue especially when the local population does not cooperate in city cleaning exercises. High crime wave and insecurity noted within the Hausa neighbourhood (Public Security, Kumba, 2013) has scared non-religious group members from soliciting residences within the neighbourhood. Field study indicates that 45% of the crimes committed in the area are orchestrated by youths of the dominant religious group.

Land scarcity is artificially created and has caused tribal disputes because each group wants to protect its culture and homogeneity. In 2002, the Bafaws were attacked by the Mettas for the seizure of their land at Matoh close to Kosala. This resulted in the loss of lives, enormous destructions of agricultural products and the jailing of some Metta and Bafaw natives (Kumba SDO’S Office, 2013). Alongside ethnic disputes, the Hausa/Bamileke conflict in 2012 resulted in the loss of lives and the burning of an Imam’s vehicle as declared in an interview with the Imam in February 2013. Such dissentions have rendered the entire city insecure for the non-resident population and needing greater planning and administrative approach to neutralize such feuds.

The settlement of immigrants in Kumba is based on tribal links and more specifically related to religious inclinations. For example, people from Batibo and Ngie will prefer settling closer to the Mettas; the Ibibios, Yorubas and other Nigerians closer to Ibos; and the Fulanis and Mbororos closer to Hausas. Substantial disparities between ethnic populations in income and wealth also have great effects on tribal segregational practices. Tribal groups at times are spatially distributed according to their ability to rent at the price offered in the market. While income acts as a constraint in view of other expenditures incurred by households, price acts as a filter in which some areas are inaccessible due to high housing cost. This explains why the Ibos are mostly concentrated close to the CBD. They have the ability to pay for housing and can make high incomes/profits as businessmen and women compared to the other tribal groups that are less business inclined.

The morphology and settlement pattern of Kumba can be attributed to land scarcity at the CBD and its availability at the peripheral areas of Barombi Nkang and Bakundu quarters. Due to land scarcity in the city centre which is highly occupied by the Ibos, land values are very high (a piece of land with area of 400m² is valued at about 5 to 6 million FCEA (10,500 to 12,500 USD}) compared to any other area within the town. This high value has determined the kind of structures constructed and the income status of the residents. Here, mainly multi storey buildings are erected. Areas out of the centre especially those occupied by the Bakundus and Mettas with lower land values, have dispersed housing patterns intercepted with small-scale farming and characterized by sub standard and wooden structures.

Findings and Discussions

Findings reveal that among the 3 reasons influencing ethnic residential affinity in Kumba, cultural factors are very strong in attracting tribal groups. Among the seven ethnic groups identified in the study, the Mettas greatly exhibit cultural affinity in their activities in Kumba. Socially the Bafaws are more interactive with other ethnic groups in Kumba probably due to their 'openness'. This is exemplified by their traditional slogan ‘Bakeng’ which means ‘love for strangers’. This slogan has greatly made the indigenous Bafaw neighbourhoods (at Town Green) multi ethnic by 75% as opposed to any of the other sampled areas. The reduction in social distance in terms of space and time by this ethnic group confirms the process of acculturation and assimilation observed by Freeman (2000).

Economically, the Bamilekes and Ibos are more discrete in opening out to other tribal groups not to reveal certain talents/secrets to the latter as that might mean their having to face a greater number of business competitors.

Alberto et al (2009) argued that Ethnic groups are spatially distributed according to their ability to pay for housing at the price offered in the market whether renting or owning a shop. This filtering produces the
clustering of ethnic groups according to their ability to pay for land rent and housing. In the case of the Kumba municipality, the Ibo occupy the area with the highest housing values (rent) which is the city centre. Other groups like the Bakundus, Mettas, and Barombis are attracted to the suburbs, hilly and swampy areas where land values are low. This spatial pattern according to ethnic groups reflects the link between land values, environment and the quality of housing. Studies reveal that residential areas with low land values are dominated by substandard structures as opposed to those at the city centre where land values are higher.

“Attitudes and preferences do not only influence individuals and groups to choose one neighbourhood over another, they also substantially influence individuals and groups to initiate actions aimed at preserving their ethnic composition in the neighbourhood. This is achieved through the erection of barriers designed to restrict the access of members from other particular ethnic groups in renting or purchasing houses in their areas (Yinger, 2005). The case of the Bafaws is noteworthy since they claim to be the “sons and daughters of the soil”. As such, they have initiated actions designed to preserve their ethnic residential neighbourhood. The erection of a statue of the founder of the municipality and his wife, and the chief’s palace close to their neighbourhood are conspicuous.

E.R.A in Kumba retards social interaction. For instance, it is rare to find a Muslim child attend a non-Arabic or lay private institution because of religious ideology. This attitude can be a prejudice to other tribal or religious groups, the development of a neighbourhood and can lead to a low level of social cohesion and social mobility as viewed by Grady (2006). Carr et al (2008) argued that, discrimination occurs where E.R.A exists because group members perceive the presence of non group members as threatening their life style, socialization of children, life and property. Although such threats may be based on stereotype and prejudice, it is group member’s perception of threat that matters. The Bafaws (natives) of the Kumba municipality claim that their lifestyle (Sawa) is being threatened by new comers or other ethnic groups.

Some of the tribal conflicts that arise in Kumba render it inhospitable and disagreeable to tourists and visitors. This perception of a town as inhospitable can also result to disparity in needs and development because of different preferences to the type of public goods provided which results in spatial inequality in the availability of urban services and opportunities. This was equally affirmed by Alesina et al (2000) who explained how each group or residential area might prefer distinctive types of public goods, roads, and socio-educational facilities like parks, public libraries, water, and electricity.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

There are substantial tribal divisions in the Kumba municipality which has led to disparity in the rate of development and growth of the city. This disparity can be blamed on the relatively weak role played by the local planning authority in effecting rational and spatial planning policies. Social areas are identified based on tribal and religious groups partly due to very strong levels of affinity. The negative effects of E.R.A abound since each community is responsible for the supply and management of many public services like water and waste. It is necessary to upgrade the educational levels of youths, ensure a more rational development planning approach in the city so as to promote greater awareness of the benefits of social interaction in the socio-economic development of the City of Kumba. E.R.A constitute a setback in city growth and development, but it however satisfies the expectations of some groups who feel at home through association, interaction in the local dialect and involvement in cultural activities like traditional values that can easily be transcended to the younger generation. These practices, notwithstanding, create imbalances in urban growth in the 21st Century with greater penchant towards urban cultural mix which are characteristics of the sustainable city and in the background of globalization drive. The local administration needs to device strategies that encourage ethnic association so as to achieve a more harmonious and integrated growth. This could be achieved through the provision of low-cost residential areas for middle
and low-income earners that does not depend on race, tribe or religion as well as the enactment of laws against discrimination in employment and land use/sales that are rooted on ethnic lines.

6.2 Recommendations

Cultural ties on ethnic lines and the need to associate within a given urban milieu enhance ERA in Kumba. These tendencies breed dissention and encourage disparity in income levels and wealth. The manifestations need to be addressed so as to ensure spatial equity in urban development. Investing in human capital especially in education and health can reduce the rate of ethnic segregation. Increase in educational attainment levels can increase the level of social thinking as well as increased opportunities for different job absorptions. The raison d’être can be an increase in income and social status leading the educated person to prefer neighbourhoods based on social rather than cultural ties. This is reflected by the Bonakama and Alaska Street neighbourhoods whereby the highly educated and high income classes of various ethnic groups’ under study live in association. Conversely, the less educated ethnic individuals still reside in their neighbourhoods of birth or first-settled neighbourhoods in Kumba; a matter of perception than rationality.

The high rate of ethnic groups not favouring social interactions stems from the fact that some neighbourhoods are characterized by violence and insecurity, often attributed to the lack of job opportunities. To solve this situation companies and businesses in Kumba should be encouraged to absorb skillful and talented youths based on merit for better output, change the mindset of the youths that can eventually reduce insecurity and hostility rate as well as increase social interaction rate among various ethnic group members and neighbourhoods. Development planning actors need to ensure an equitable and rational distribution of basic services within the urbanscape so as to give equal opportunities to the youths in terms of access to public goods and services so as to limit ethnic residential segregation.

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Figure 2. Spatial distribution of major areas of ethnic segregation in Kumba.