

THE UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL CENTER : A MAJOR STRUCTURING FACILITY SERVING THE DISTRICT OF ANGRÉ

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ABSTRACT

The construction of the University Hospital Center (UHC) of Angré in the district of Cocody is part of the ivoirien State's policy of bringing third-level health structures closer to the populations in the city of Abidjan, which is experiencing a rapid demographic growth and a significant spatial expansion. Built on an area of 4.5 hectares, this new center was built to relieve congestion and strengthen the healthcare offer of the three UHCs (Cocody, Treichville and Yopougon) which already existed and have not undergone major extension work capacity. With a capacity of 250 beds, the UHC of Angré has a technical platform that is relatively well equipped with medical devices and has an international center for endoscopy and advanced technique in surgery, an operating room, a dental office, and many specialized services. Beyond these health care opportunities offered, the UHC of Angré plays a major role in urban changes of the district of Angré. This study highlights the positive mutations generated by this new UHC. The methodology adopted for this purpose is based on documentary research, observation and surveys (interviews and questionnaire). The results obtained show that the construction of the UHC has led to a transformation of the Angré district, through its construction, the opening and asphaltting of the service roads, accompanied by public lighting, as well as the development of various economical activities.

Keywords: Angré, university hospital center, construction, equipment, urbanization

1. Introduction

Representing the last level of the health system in Côte d'Ivoire, the University Hospital Center (UHC), beyond its regalian functions is at the heart of several scientific debates. It is undoubtedly an important element of the urban landscape, an attribute of the city in the same way as a cathedral in its monumental aspect or a university in its multiple functions (Fleuret, 2003). Like these facilities that make up the city, the Angré University Hospital Center, located in the prestigious commune of Cocody, on the northeastern outskirts of the Abidjan metropolis (Figure 1), is a facility that structures the Angré district on several levels. Beyond its health function, which remains the primary element of characterization of its activity, this UHC is at the same time an employer, a consumer, a trainer and an important urban actor that is a fundamental element in the creation of urban space (Nikiema, 2014). It is presented as a major facility serving the economic and social development of the place where it is located (Gogbé and Kobenan, 2016). Initially located in an enclave, marked by a highly unfinished landscape, the UHC is now at the heart of the urbanistic changes taking place in this area. It is becoming more and more important as a credible and influential player in the Angré district. The UHC of Angré is the "mirror" of this neighborhood because its presence has many repercussions and effects on its "urban life" (Cantal-Dupart, 2012). Considering these observations, this article analyzes the positive transformations brought about by the establishment of this University Hospital in the Angré district. This study therefore proposes to analyze the various urban and landscape transformations brought about by the construction of the University Hospital in the Angré district. In other words, the aim is to see how the urban dynamics of the Angré district have been positively influenced by the presence of the University Hospital.

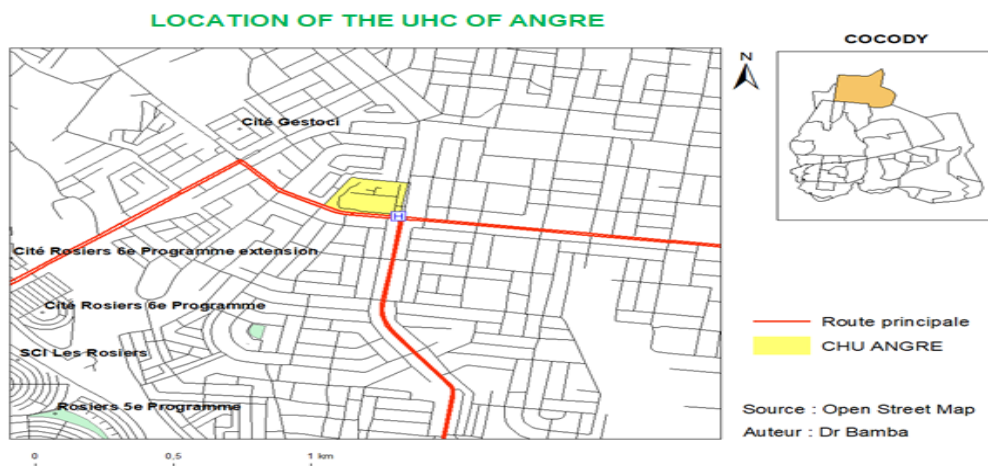


Figure 1. Presentation of the study site

2. Methodology

This study was conducted using a methodology based on documentary research, observation, and surveys (interviews and questionnaire). The documentary research, which led to the bibliographic reference, was carried out in several libraries (Institute of Research and Documentation (IRD) of Abidjan, Institute of Tropical Geography (ITG), Central Library of the University Félix Houphouët-Boigny of Abidjan, etc.) and on the Internet. This bibliographic reference obtained, through the writings of Fleuret (2003), Knoll (2011), Corbille (2011), Huchon (2011), Gogbé and Kobenan (2016), etc., and which are related to the impact of facilities on their environment, the development of cities, regions, etc., has helped to better circumscribe and define the subject. The documentary research was accompanied by several field visits, carried out from September to December 2020 and from January to February 2021, in order to observe closely the various transformations generated by this equipment in the Angré district, particularly in the sub-districts of Djorogobité, Riviera Palmerais and Angré 7^e tranche. Also, through this direct observation, the different rallying circuits, and nodes (bus station, wôrô-wôrô cabs, etc.) generated by the UHC to occupy the urban space of the neighborhood and the municipality of Cocody were examined. This field observation made it possible to see the various transformations that the neighborhood has undergone since the construction of the University Hospital Center. All this was completed by surveys through interviews and a questionnaire. To better appreciate the various transformations brought about by this health facility in Angré, a neighborhood in the commune of Cocody, interviews were conducted with the Technical Director of the Cocody Town Hall and the Director General of the University Hospital. Also, using the reasoned choice method, a questionnaire was administered to 85 heads of households living near the UHC. These surveys made it possible to collect their opinions on the impact of the UHC in the development of this neighborhood. The combination of these techniques permitted to draw up a plan focusing on the influence of the University Hospital as an active and passive actor in the transformation of the Angré district.

3. Results

The University Hospital Center is a polarizing and structuring facility within the district of Angré because it is both an active and passive player in the development and transformation of this district.

3.1. UHC as an active player in the development of the district of Angré

The UHC is an active player because it generates urban projects directly attributable to its presence in the Angré district. This can be seen in the opening and paving of the neighborhood's

roads, the reinforcement of electricity and public lighting, in short, the construction of the Angré neighborhood. Built on the site of Bessikoi, with a land area of 4.5 hectares, the UHC occupies a considerable space whose influence extends into the Angré district, as well as into the neighboring districts. Its influence is such that the sub-neighborhoods of Djorogobité 1, Cité SIR, SIPIM 4, 7, 8 and 9 sections, etc., are often considered as sub-neighborhoods of the UHC.

Its establishment in the district has not only triggered several large-scale real estate operations, but also led to an increase in the land value in the area. Indeed, initially sold, during the period of 2000 and 2010, between \$ 4312.40 and \$ 8624.81 for 600 m² and 700 m² lands, the financial value of these same surface of lands now ranges between \$ 43124.03 and \$ 103497.66, depending on their geographical location in relation to the University Hospital and certain infrastructures. This represents an increase of approximately 90% of the cost of sale of the same land surface which is practiced in the district. Also, the opening of the University Hospital since 2017 has led to a real estate boom in the neighborhood. As a result of the presence of the University Hospital, chic cities composed of large villas hidden behind large fences and buildings of R+3 and R+4 have been built in its perimeters (Figure 2).



Figure 2. View of the buildings being finished near the UHC (Kobenon, 2020)

The site of Bessikoi in the district of Angré composed of a low-plateau relief dotted with small, very narrow valleys with more or less steep slopes, was, until 2017, a landlocked area with completely unpaved roads that were not open in certain places. However, with the construction and commissioning of the UHC, the Ivorian government, supported by partners such as the World Bank, the European Union, the African Development Bank (ADB), etc., has launched several works to open and pave the roads serving the UHC (Figure 3).

These are the routes of the 7^e, 8^e and 9^e sectors and of Saint-Viateur, thus making it possible to connect the Angré and Riviera Palmerais neighborhoods. With a length of 7.687 kilometers, the access roads to the UHC are composed of two main routes: -the route going from the southwest sector precisely of the 7^e, 8^e tranches through the Rosiers 6^e program to the UHC. This route is a 2x2 lanes with a mixed structure bridge, metal and concrete, 110 meters long. The construction of the bridge aims to cross the natural obstacle that is the V-shaped valley separating the 7^e, 8^e tranches and Rosiers sectors, from the 7^e, 9^e sectors; -the route from Collège Saint-Viateur to the Riviera palmerais and to the UHC is a 2x1 lane road.



Figure 3. View of a plaque announcing the construction of service roads for the UHC (Kobenan, 2021)

These different newly paved roads not only facilitate access to the UHC, but also largely solve the problem of isolation of the area and contribute to the modernization of the living environment of the local populations. For example, they allow users coming from the city of Bingerville to reach the districts of Angré, 2 Plateaux or the district of Abobo without having to pass through the Faya and Palmeraie crossroads after the dam and the traffic circle at Riviera 3, known as the 9 Kilos crossroads. Also, with this opening up, many unbuilt plots of land are built and inhabited. These new roads are obviously leading to significant changes in the Angré district and, by extension, in the entire commune of Cocody. They are also an opportunity for the competent authorities to provide households with serviced land. A dazzling evolution of the

cadastral plan of the commune of Cocody, and in particular of the Angré district, following the modernization of the access roads to the University Hospital, should also be noted. About three hectares of land have been subdivided. These lands are quickly developed by buyers, leading to peri-urbanization and the development of the surrounding areas. This spatial development, which is inevitably linked to the execution of the project to asphalt the access roads to the University Hospital, reflects the strong correlation between the modernization of the road network and the installation of human.

The UHC is carrying out a project that goes beyond the health center to take on the role of planner and promoter. In fact, to ensure a continuous supply of electricity to the new UHC, the “Ivorian Company of Electricity” called CIE, has installed a new 90 KV transformer station in the neighborhood.

This new substation also contributes to the reinforcement of the transmission and distribution network to guarantee a greater continuity of the supply of electrical energy to consumers and access to electricity by a greater number of households in the district. Entire areas, including Djorogobité I and II, which were previously plunged into darkness, now benefit from quality street lighting. Similarly, most of the access roads to the University Hospital have good public lighting coverage. They are lit by lamp posts supporting two lamps.

At nightfall, these lamps give a beautiful view of the sub-districts crossed by the roads. This luminous embellishment is more marked as the edges of the asphalt roads are the most prized by the human establishments of leisure (bars, restaurants, maquis, etc.). At night, the continuous lighting along the roads combined with the play of lights from the bars, restaurants and maquis give an idyllic image of the neighborhood.

3.2. UHC, a passive actor in the development of the Angré district

The University Hospital Center is also a passive actor in the development of the area because, by its presence, it induces several effects, notably the development of commercial activities and transport lines.

The opening of the University Hospital has resulted in the development of a significant number of commercial activities within its perimeter. If some shops were already dotting the landscape, with the construction of the UHC, which had an impact on the urbanization of the district, these have increased. They include stores located in most of the sub-neighborhoods, supermarkets, mini-markets, clothing and other beauty products stores, hardware stores, cement stores, dry cleaners, pharmacies, etc., located along the main access roads to the University Hospital (Figure

4).The development of economic activities along the access roads to the UHC is mainly linked to the concern of the actors to facilitate accessibility and visibility, with the aim of making them profitable.



Figure 4. View of commercial activities near the UHC access roads(Kobenan, 2021)

Within a radius of at least one kilometer, out of 556 economic activities counted, 405, or 73%, were established after the commissioning of the UHC. They are dominated at 45% by hardware stores and cement sales, because Angré has become the new urban front of the Cocody commune.

The more the district is built, the more it calls for the establishment and growth of economic activities.

Also, the presence of the University Hospital is a major traffic generator within the municipality of Cocody and particularly towards Angré. Indeed, as a major public facility, the UHC implies a massive attraction of travel flows. It is a major player in generating travel not only in the Angré district and the commune of Cocody, but also at the level of the Abidjan metropolis, due to the large number of users who frequent it daily. Therefore, with the reinforcement of the road network to the UHC, several public transport lines have been developed. These are the lines of Abidjan Transportation Company (SOTRA) and Wôrô-wôrô (artisanal or informal public transport).

At the level of SOTRA, these are: line 90 linking the UHC to the Blockosse district in the township of Cocody, line 80 linking the UHC to the township of Abobo with the traffic circle of the “gendarmerie” as a load break, line 611 linking the UHC to the Abobo-Baoulé district in the township of Abobo. It should be noted that the cost of a ticket for these different SOTRA lines is \$ 0.34. As for the Wôrô-wôrô, the cost is generally higher and most of them have the UHC as a stop. Unlike SOTRA, which has a single fare regardless of the line used, the costs of the Wôrô-wôrô lines differ according to the route (Table 1 and Figure 5).

Tableau 1. The different lines of wôrô-wôrô linking the UHC and their cost

Lines of wôrô-wôrô	Cost (\$)
Riviera Palmerais-UHC	0.52
PETRO Ivoire Agnré- UHC	0.69
Carrefour Abobo baoulé- UHC	1.21
Carrefour la vie-PETRO Ivoire- UHC	1.38
Djorogobité I et II- UHC	0.34
SIPIM 4- UHC	0.34
Cité SIR- UHC	0.52
Angré 7 ^{ème} , 8 ^{ème} et 9 ^{ème} tranches- UHC	0.34
Grand carrefour de Treichville- UHC	1.72
Grand carrefour de Koumassi- UHC	1.72



Figure 6. View of Wôrô-wôrô and bus of SOTRA coming from the UHC of Angré (Kobenan, 2021)

The local populations, who used to face real difficulties in getting around, now benefit from a fluidity in mobility with the implementation of these public transport lines. Also, the transport lines in turn promote commercial activities in and around the stations.

4. Discussion

The establishment of the University Hospital Center (UHC) in the district of Angré got many effects on the urban life of this part of the Cocody commune. It has brought about important spatial and socio-economic changes. According to Najem(2010), the buildings of 3 and 4 floors are the current characteristic of the habitat in the Angré neighborhood. All in all, under the impetus of the CHU, the entire Angré neighborhood has become the new urbanization front of the Cocody commune.

The University Hospital is therefore a tool for urban development because it acts and transforms its immediate environment. This reality is attested in Tunis by Dhaher (2010), who states that "the establishment of some Tunisian university campuses influences and changes the urban composition of their immediate environment. The Tunis campus has changed its environment, first directly by extensions and developments but also indirectly by the creation of many businesses and various activities. These university campuses, which are major facilities, are also

sometimes major projects, considered by the communities as development engines. Sometimes located in depreciated sectors, they serve and make visible their host area, modifying its image and attractiveness (Knoll, 2011). Like these major facilities, the University Hospital is a major facility that is emerging as an important player in the visibility of the Angré district. It participates in recreating this part of the commune as a social, urbanistic and landscape integration facility. According to Corbille(2011), on the influence of the UHC as a facility serving the transformation of space, the equipment took place in the city and participated in its construction and structuring. Even today, the facilities have an urban function in the district. They have a function of animation, of putting users in touch with each other and of creating a territory. Participating in the construction and structuring of cities, facilities have thus acquired a real "urban function" over the course of history, which they still retain today. Huchon (2011) emphasizes in the same vein that facilities and services create urbanity, both literally and figuratively. They are therefore, like the university hospital, generators of the city, because they create interior spaces and proximity spaces. Similarly, for Grumbach (1996), the city is made by public buildings. When one makes a public building, by extending the public space, one extends it "inside". Thus, the combination of inside and outside translates the relationship between the public building and the city. Brenoum et al (2019) rightly noted that "the implementation of the project to asphalt the access roads to this health structure has accelerated the densification of the GESTOCI, SIPIM 4 and Djorogobité I and II sub-neighborhoods, with the massive arrival of populations.

Conclusion

Perceived as a breath of fresh air by the people of Abidjan, the Angré University Hospital, in addition to its health role, is an important facility for urban and landscape change. The results of this study clearly show that the CHU is no longer seen as a simple institution implanted in the urban space, but rather as an essential agent in the construction of the Angré district. The construction of this hospital center in this part of the municipality of Cocody, which was previously isolated and disadvantaged, has stimulated its opening up and urbanization. Under its impetus, the area has become the new urbanization front of the Cocody commune. Today, it is therefore seen as an important agent of urban soil production and urban management. In sum, the UHC and all that is associated with it make the Angré district, and by extension the commune of Cocody, and ostensibly shape its landscape (Brenoum and Eleazarus, 2018). It is therefore an excellent facility that positions itself in the Angré neighborhood as an agent of spatial and economic development. It represents for the district of Angré and for the entire municipality of Cocody, an important pole of urbanistic visibility.

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