

# Factors and Constraints of Street Economy Activities in the City of Natitingou in Northern Benin

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**Abstract:-** In a context of demographic growth, the various proximity services are a major issue, particularly in Benin. This research focuses on the factors and constraints of the street economy in the city of Natitingou.

A documentary research and a field survey of 70 people were carried out in order to collect data. The data collected is related to demographics, obtained from INSAE from 2002 to 2013, information about the course of the activity and constraints. The collected data were processed through the methods of descriptive statistics. The profitability of production and processing was determined by the R = CD/CC protocol.

The results obtained show that street activities in the city of Natitingou are favored by the demographic concentration, administrative services, tourism and economic activities. The main activities that drive the street economy are in the formal sector (60%) and the informal sector (40%). But the work is not accomplished without difficulties. These can be summed up as organizational (80%), technical (65%) and anthropic constraints, mainly theft (45%). Nevertheless, street activities allow its actors to live in more or less better conditions. They earn income that allows them to take care of their needs and ensure the well-being of their families.

**Keywords:-** City of Natitingou, street economy, informal sector, socio-economic importance.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Urbanization is a major trend with profound implications for Africa's growth and transformation. The rate and extent of urbanization is transforming not only the demographic profile of the continent, but also its economic and social outcomes. By 2035, about half of Africa's population will be urban, which will create considerable demand for jobs, services, and infrastructure, but will also have benefits for economic growth. The urban transition is also underway as the continent faces demographic change and a growing young population that is increasingly moving to cities. While unemployment is very low in Benin, affecting barely 0.7% of the active population, underemployment affects 72.9% of the active Beninese. (INStAD, EMICoV, 2015 quoted by Prodij p 5).

Like other countries south of the Sahara, Benin is facing enormous socio-economic difficulties that require solutions for mobilizing additional financial resources. In this perpetual quest for additional resources to finance its development program, the Beninese government has several

options, including taking into account the informal sector, which represents an intermediary sector between the traditional rural world, characterized by barter, and the modern sector. Since 1990, Benin has opted for economic liberalism. But, 23 years later, the country remains one of the poorest in the world with an embryonic private sector and a prominence of the informal sector (Abel Gbetoenonmon, 2013 p 1). Already during the colonial era, citizens were subject to the capitation tax that they paid with the income from their production. However, it was following the deterioration of the Beninese economy in the 1980s that the informal sector hyperdeveloped, with the appearance of exchange activities that are carried out near high-traffic areas such as the streets. The estimated contribution of the sector to GDP is 67.3%. This contribution is estimated at 65% by the same institute in 2008. This sector, which contributes more than two-thirds of GDP, is clearly one of the vital levers of the Beninese economy (National Institute of Statistics and Demography [INStAD], 2006 p 32).

Also, the General Census of Enterprises (RGE) shows that: nearly 98% of enterprises are in the informal sector and contribute more than two-thirds of the national wealth and less than 86% of local taxes; more than half of the enterprises have been in existence for less than three years, perhaps reflecting a question of survival rate in the consolidation and growth phase of the enterprises (African Development Bank Group 2019, p. 34).

Considered as a source of vitality and diversity of the economy for some, a precarious and marginal recourse for others, the informal sector is nowadays at the heart of economic debates. The will to organize the sector so that it contributes to the General State Budget is obvious and is reflected in studies and the implementation of programs. However, it is clear that despite the precariousness of jobs, the informal sector remains predominant and causes significant shortfalls for the State, despite the efforts made by the latter.

Reflection on the informal sector has progressed considerably in poor countries since the concept was invented by experts from the International Labour Office (ILO) in the 1970s. Despite its importance, this sector faces three problems: its definition, its usefulness and its role in the national economy (Charmes Jacques, 1987 p. 3).

It is therefore appropriate to analyze this sector in order to determine whether it is a hindrance or a development factor for the Beninese economy and to study the extent to which it is possible to provide solutions to the problems encountered by the actors in this sector with a view to integrating it into the formal sector or not.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach focuses on the data used, their collection and processing, and the analysis of the results.

### A. Data used

Several types of data were used in this study. These are as follows

- INStaD demographic data from 1979, 1992, 2002, and 2013 made it possible to analyze the evolution of the population of the city of Natitingou;
- Socio-anthropological data from field surveys;
- statistical data on the number of street economy actors obtained from the Town Hall's collection department.

### B. Data Collection

Data was collected through documentary research and field surveys.

For the documentary research, several books, reports and memoirs were consulted in the various documentation centers.

Data collection in the field was done through a questionnaire. This stage is effective thanks to the determination of a sample and the use of specific techniques and tools.

### • Sampling

The sample size is determined by the reasoned choice method. The target group consists of street food vendors; managers of miscellaneous stores; vendors of GSM products; bar and restaurant owners and craftsmen. As far as craftsmen are concerned, they are welders, car and motorcycle mechanics, dressmakers and hairdressers. These trades were chosen on the basis of Decree No. 2017-176 of March 24, 2017 on the approval of the nomenclature of crafts in Benin. These different categories of people were chosen because of their high propensity to set up shop along roadsides to conduct their activities. The survey unit was the individual (person) and only those who met the following criteria were interviewed.

Be at least 20 years old to provide information consistently;

- Have at least two (2) years of experience in order to provide effective testimonials on the benefits and constraints of the trade;
- Reside in an urban district of the city of Natitingou.
- Given the specificity of this research, the above criteria are cumulative. In addition to these people, there were also those in charge of the structures (town hall, corporatist organization) involved in the sector. Table I presents the structure of the sample.

City neighborhoods	Number of people surveyed					Total	Contacts
	AR	MD	BR	PGSM	Artisanat		
Natitingou 1	10	5	1	3	3	22	- CSR/Head Office - OC
Natitingou 2	4	3	5	4	5	21	
Natitingou 3	6	4	2	6	9	27	
Total	20	12	8	13	17	<b>70</b>	<b>2</b>

Table 1: Sample Structure

Data source: INStaD, 2019

Legend: AR = Street food; MD = Miscellaneous stores; PGSM = GSM products; BR = Bar and restaurant; OC: Corporate organization.

A total of 70 people were interviewed, with 20 street food vendors (waché, porridge, doughnuts, fruit ...), 12 miscellaneous store managers (spare parts, general food, plastics, hardware), 8 bar/booth keepers, 13 call unit and money transfer vendors, 17 artisans. In addition to these groups, there was the head of the collection department at the town hall and the secretary of the hairdressers' association. These last two categories of people were interviewed as resource persons, given the role they play in the local economic chain.

Data is collected from identified individuals using multiple tools and collection materials and techniques.

In order to collect the maximum amount of data necessary for the writing of the brief, several techniques are used. These include: direct observation to assess the effects of various constraints on street activities. This technique

also allowed us to understand the different strategies developed by these actors to minimize their difficulties;

Interviews to establish a rapport with the actors and to gain the trust of the interviewees, because of the information concerning their private lives;

The Active Participatory Research Method (APRM) was used to remain in harmony with the people in the collection of information.

For data processing, the survey results were quantified based on the actual score of each item in the questionnaire from the total number of respondents. Thus, the factors and constraints were determined from the perception of each actor. The number of responses per type of question was expressed by the statistical protocol P:  $P = \frac{n}{N} \times 100$ , where, n: the number of people who gave positive responses and N: the sample size at the district level.

To determine the profit margin that the merchant/artisan earns from his activity, the profitability was calculated. It is expressed by the following formula:  $R = \frac{CD}{CC}$ , with R; the profitability, CD; the distribution cost and CC; the load cost.

- If  $R < 1$ ; then the activity / trade is not profitable for the trader / craftsman;
- If  $R > 1$ ; then the activity/trading is profitable for the trader/artisan.

In this research, the population size of the study area was projected to 2020 using the following formula:  $a + (c/100 \times a)$ , where a; the population size at the last population census, and c; the growth rate.

The SWOT (Strengths Weakness Opportunities Threats) model was used to analyze the data. This model allowed us to assess the situation and determine the potential in terms of strengths of the research sector on the one hand and the difficulties in terms of weaknesses that weigh on this

sector on the other. Finally, it allowed to identify the management methods and the adaptation to the situation.

Data processing and analysis of the results made it possible to identify the factors and constraints, to evaluate the influences of biophysical conditions (rainfall, planimetry) on this activity and to analyze the effectiveness of the strategies developed by the actors of the street economy in the city of Natitingou.

### III. RESULTS

#### A. Geographic, demographic, tourist and financial factors

Among the factors underlying the development of street activities in Natitingou is its geographic location. The city of Natitingou is made up of three urban districts and is located between  $10^{\circ} 16'$  and  $10^{\circ} 19'$  north latitude and  $1^{\circ} 21'$  and  $1^{\circ} 24'$  east longitude. Figure 1 presents the geographical location of the study area.

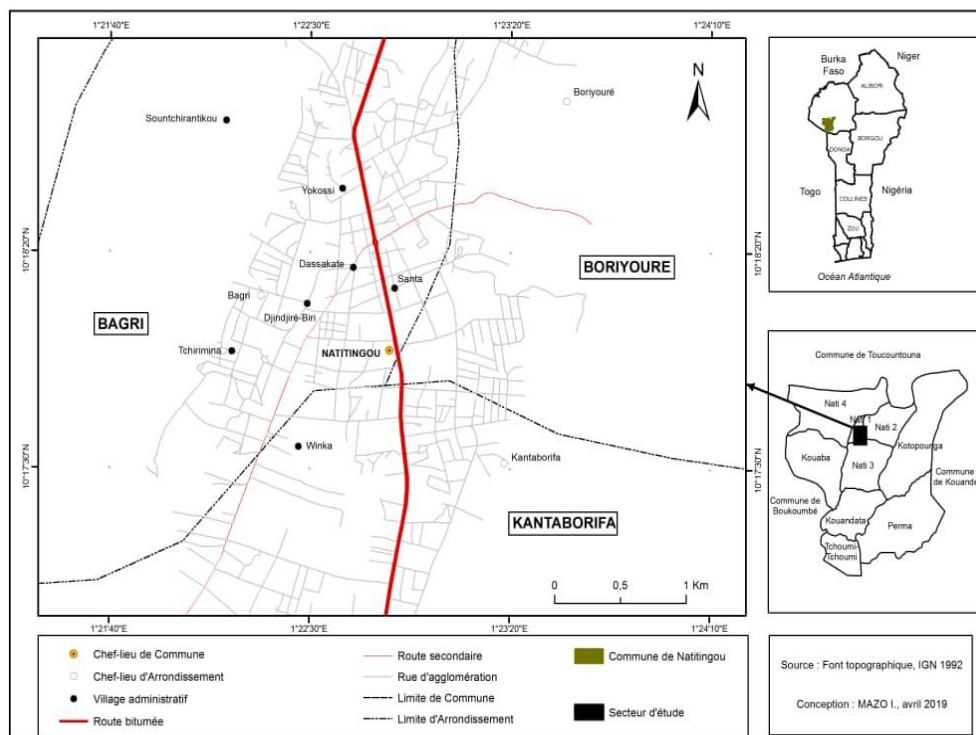


Fig. 1: Geographical and administrative situation of the city of Natitingou

Also, the city of Natitingou, as the chief town of the department, ensures the management of administrative affairs, at the deconcentrated level of 9 other communes (Kérou, Kouandé, Péhunco, Coby, Boukoumbé, Matéri, Toucountouna and Tanguiéta) and 384 villages, i.e. a vast area of 20499 km<sup>2</sup> with a population of 772,262 inhabitants in 2013. During the requests for administrative acts, the populations of the surrounding communes who travel constitute prospects or customers, and thus a stock of demand for food and urban services that arouse the appetite of the populations of Natitingou, who do not hesitate to propose offers in the field of clothing, food, mechanics...

Because of its geographical location and apart from Burkina-Faso and Togo, Atacora offers Benin an opening to other countries in the West African sub-region such as Mali. This factor greatly influences the supply and demand systems for food products in the department.

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However, this relief is also considered a major tourist asset for the development of the city. Indeed, the immediate geographical environment of the city is characterized by the Atacora mountain range from which it derives its rugged relief, composed mainly of plateaus and hills whose valleys are often steep. This Atacora chain has a soft topography (640 m altitude) with two parallel ridges separated by a depression into which flows the upstream section of the Pendjari River, which is the water tower from which the major rivers of Benin and Togo (Ouémé, Mono, Mékrou,

Pendjari and Oti) are born (INStAD, 2008 p 16). The mountain ranges are made up of ferruginous soils of the tropical type in some places; ferrallitic soils especially in the mountainous regions, with quartzite elements giving a whitish appearance to the sides of the mountains. These physical features constitute attractive natural wonders which drain curious, researchers and other lovers of natural beauty to stay, devoting themselves to ballads and to the purchase of products of all kinds during their displacement.

Beyond these natural tourist attractions of the Atacora, the city of Natitingou conceals the economic benefits of the other communes of the department, in its quality of chief town and abounding in infrastructure of reception and safety. The panorama and the habitat ("Tata somba", tanéka villages, panoramic site of Koussokouangou), the mountainous landscape (sacred cave of the tanéka, plain of Boukoumbé, the waterfalls of Tanongou and Kota...) and the hunting areas of Porga and Atacora, the Pendjari national park offer picturesque pictures to the tourists.

The fourth factor that has influenced the growth of street activities in Natitingou is demographic change. Indeed, the city of Natitingou has a rapidly growing population. The growth rate was estimated at more than 5.6 percent in 2002. But this rate has dropped and is stagnant at 5.4% in 2013. According to the results of the latest RGPH4 (INStAD, 2013), the population of Natitingou is estimated at 45,875 inhabitants. Figure 2 presents the demographic evolution of the city of Natitingou.

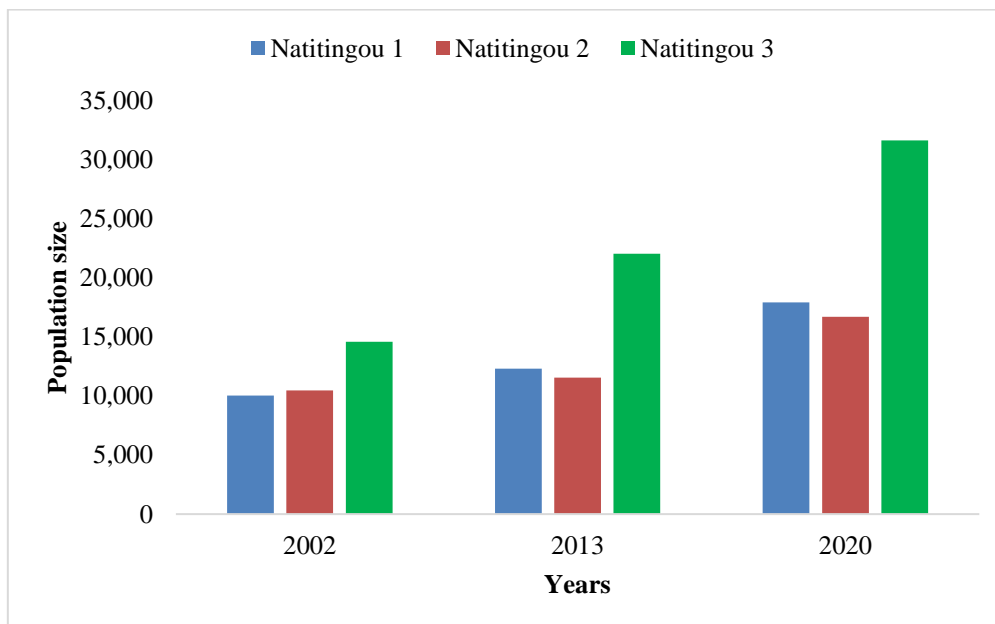


Fig. 2: Demographic evolution of the city of Natitingou by district from 2002-2013, plus projection to 2020

Data source: INStAD, 2019 projections

The population of the city of Natitingou, as shown in Figure 2, shows that the population is growing from year to year, with a relative variation from one district to another. It should be noted that it is Natitingou 3 that shows a clear difference over the three different dates (2002, 2013 and 2020). In this arrondissement, the population, which was

14559 in 2002, rose to 22011 in 2013. On the other hand, the first two districts (Natitingou 1 and Natitingou 2) have fairly comparable populations. This phenomenon can be explained by the fact that the latter districts are saturated while Natitingou 3 receives the rest of the city's population, which is expanding rapidly. In addition, Natitingou 1 houses

most of the administrative services (the tax department, the health center, the town hall, the prefecture, the departmental civil service directorate, etc.). As for Natitingou 2, it is almost the same situation as Natitingou 1. It should be noted that the above-mentioned services are all located along the Inter-State Road n° 6 (Benin-Burkina Faso).

As such, these administrations and services are places that attract the public, around which small traders, particularly food sellers, congregate to conduct their activities. Thus, in order to sell their products, street economy actors prefer to set up shop near these services to offer their goods to the users of these services. Plate 1 shows street vendors set up in front of public establishments.



Plate 1: Street food vendors in front of the health center (1.1) and the town hall (1.2)

Shot: Ayahoué, April 2019

The photos in Plate 1 show female food vendors in front of government facilities, serving meals to customers. These locations appear strategic for the sale of their products because the actors serve three categories of clients at once, according to 89% of respondents: patients and citizens who have come to request services, staff of deconcentrated state structures, and road users.

All of these actors who offer street services and activities are mostly supported by financial structures. In the city of Natitingou, three microfinance institutions support these actors according to their institutional arrangements (Table II).

Microfinance institutions	Types of support	Loan amount	Repayment period	Interest rate (%)
CLCAM	Strengthening	50 000 à 500 000	3 à 6 mois	10
SIA N'SON-ONG	Start-up and strengthening	50 000 à 300 000	3 à 6 mois	5
PADME	Strengthening	50 000 à 500 000	3 à 6 mois	10

Table 2: Financial institutions supporting the street economy

Source: Fieldwork, April 2019

These Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) provide credit to different actors in varying proportions (Figure 3)

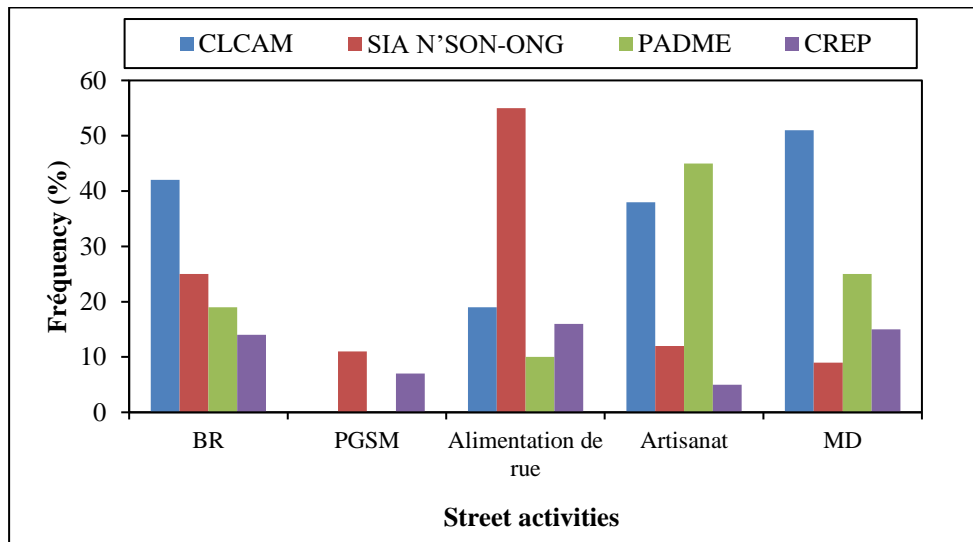


Fig. 3: Proportion of loans by MFI

Source: Fieldwork, April 2019

The analysis of Figure 3 shows that the number of street economy actors seeking loans varies. Indeed, MFIs attract people depending on how tolerant they are, how efficient they are, and how well they are doing. Overall, street economy actors all make loans to CLCAM and CREP in almost equal proportions, which is not the case for the other MFIs. Artisans (45%) are more interested in PADME's offers, while Sia N'son is the one that attracts the most attention from street food vendors (55%). This can be

explained by the relatively low interest rate offered by Sia N'son.

This support of microfinance structures is carried out on five types of street activity: street food; various stores; sale of GSM products (Mobile Systems Group); refreshment stands and restaurants and handicrafts. All of the above actors are set up in three ways: purchase (23%), inheritance (12%) and rental (65%) (figure 4).

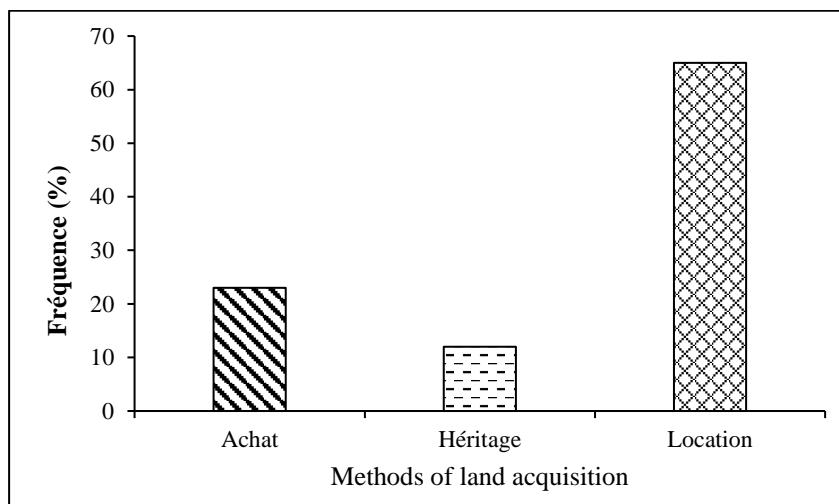


Fig. 4: Methods of acquiring space

Source: Fieldwork, April 2019

For renting, the amounts of rent for the plots, they vary according to the neighborhood and the area occupied (figure 5).

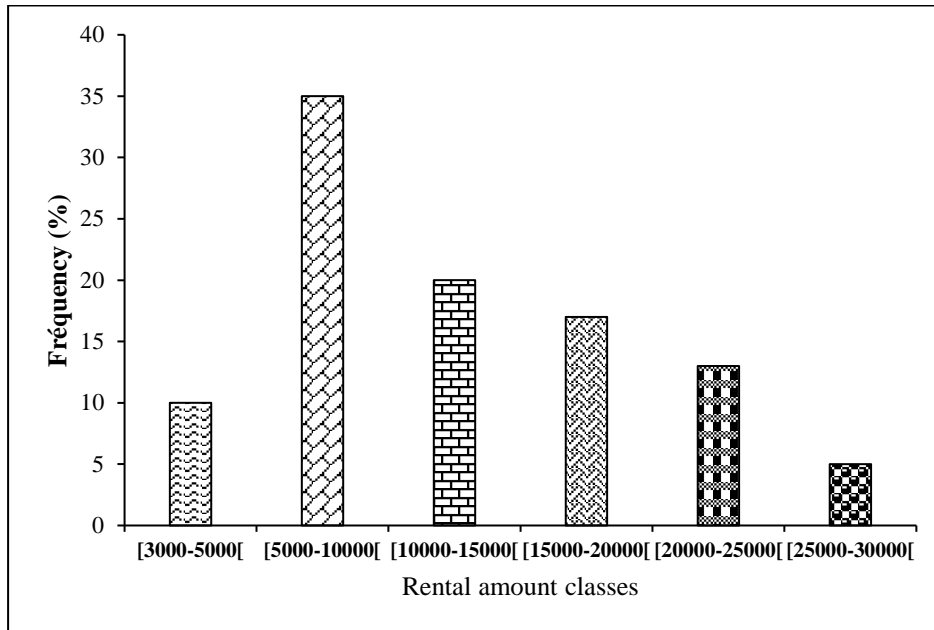


Fig. 5: Classifications of rental amounts in the city of Natitingou

Source: Fieldwork, April 2019

Examination of figure 5 shows that rental fees vary from 3,000 FCFA to 30,000. In the class of 3 to 5000, we find mainly telephone booths, while the majority, i.e. 55% of street tenants pay between 5 and 15000 FCFA per month. The people who pay more for the rental of their plots are in the range of 25 to 30,000 FCFA and it is essentially the restaurant and bar owners.

As for the street food vendors, they offer various dishes such as rice, beans, "waché" (a mixture of rice and beans), white and red corn pasta, and black pasta made from yam pods and fruit juices: Dêguê, bissap, baobab, tamarind, etc. 70% of these street food vendors have changed careers to become involved in this activity. They have had a specific professional life in the past (figure 6).

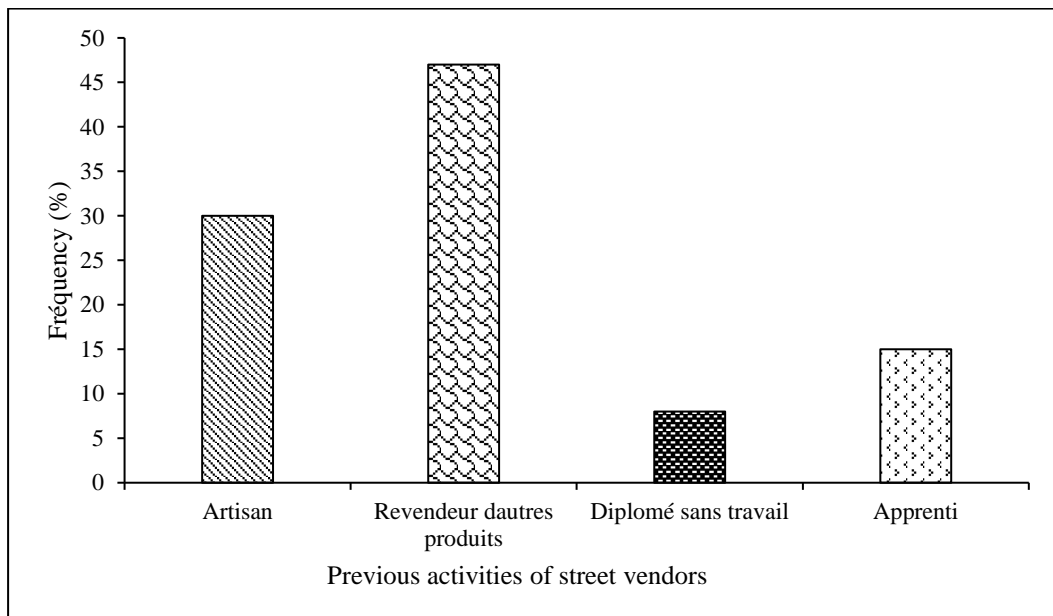


Fig. 6: Previous work life of female street vendors

Source: Fieldwork, April 2019

Figure 6 shows that the street vendors ended up working "by accident" because they were unable to become what they wanted to be or because they lacked the means to start a trade after their apprenticeship.

These different street activities contribute to local development through the taxes allocated for this purpose (table III).

Nature	Amount (FCFA)	Periodicity	Beneficiary structures
ODP	100 à 2000	Daily	Town Hall
Tax	10000	Annual	Treasury
Copyright	25000	Annuel	BuBéDrA
Commercial rights	3500 à 20000	Biannual	Directorate of commerce

Table 3: Taxes collected by the authority on street activities

Source: Fieldwork, April 2019

BuBéDrA: Beninese Copyright Office

Examination of Table III shows that street activities/trade participate in the city's development through several taxes. The actors in the formal sectors pay taxes annually into the coffers of the public treasury. For those who play music in the course of their activity, they must pay dividends to the artists' association as an acquired right of their creative genius.

For merchants (street food vendors in particular) who display their goods in the State's domains, the City Council

has instituted a tax called "Taxe ODP (Occupation du Domaine Public)".

B. Points of installation of street activities in Natitingou

The actors of the street economy are distributed along the main arteries of the city of Natitingou. In order to understand the occupation of urban space by these actors, the geo referenced data were projected onto a planimetric support (Figure 7).

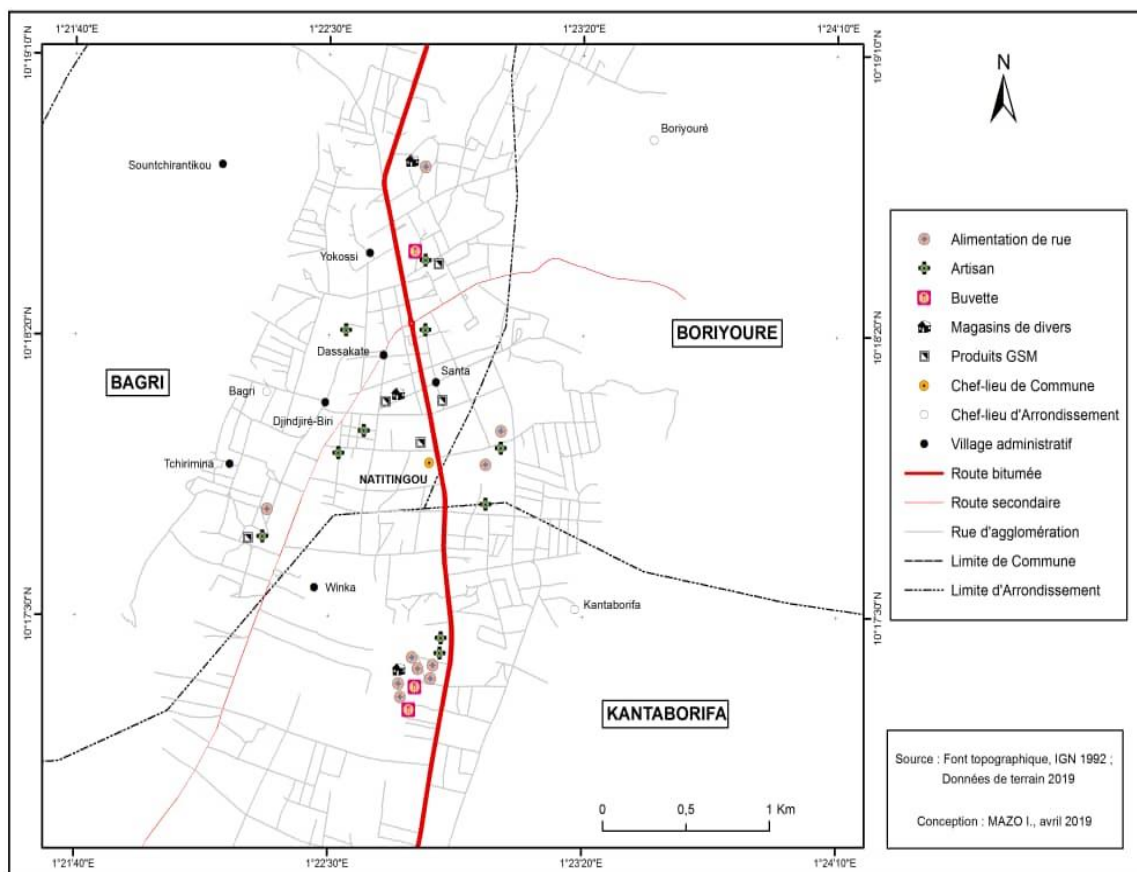


Fig. 7: Spatial distribution of street activities in the city of Natitingou

Figure 7 shows that the concentration of actors along the road differs from one neighborhood to another and according to the type of product sold. Indeed, there is a strong presence of street food vendors at both ends of the main road. This can be explained by the fact that the exit (to the north) concentrates more of the state's public services

(health center, regional water directorate, the revenue collection office). At the entrance to the city (to the south), public services are concentrated because it is an expanding district where there are several construction sites.



*C. Constraints, advantages and solution approaches*

The exercise of street activities obeys a mechanism and an organization that allows the actors to make a living from their trade, but with a certain number of constraints.

In fact, the street economy is confronted with difficulties that undermine its real development and do not allow the actors to fully enjoy the fruits of their efforts. They are of various kinds:

- the bad organization of the sector of the small trades which constitutes a loss of earnings for the municipality;
- the anarchic occupation of public areas;
- the difficult access to microcredits;
- the lack of mastery of business management (absence of rigorous accounting);
- the absence of social security;
- the lack of mastery of information and communication technologies (ICT);
- the use of rudimentary tools;
- illiteracy;
- the eviction operation;
- the lack of sales by merchants due to the economic crisis and the resulting drop in purchasing power;
- the absence of social security;
- the high cost of taxation and various taxes;
- the insufficiency of retraining;
- the high cost of raw materials and work tools;
- the lack of manpower skills.

In addition to these constraints, there are natural constraints that disrupt the activities of street actors. The negative influence of the natural elements has been accentuated after the operation to free up public space.

Faced with these constraints, several strategies have been developed by the street trade actors:

In reaction to the economic stakes, the actors adopted community measures to take charge of themselves by instituting tontines in the form of collective life annuities and which result from the pooling of capital. These tontines take place at various times, at the end of which the funds collected are paid to a member in turn. According to 75% of respondents, most of these funds are invested in street commerce. Beneficiaries find this system satisfactory, because the procedures are not as rigorous as in the case of conventional MFIs.

In the absence of a strong organization and in order to defend their interests, the actors try to group together within professional associations for the artisanal trades (sewing, hairdressing, boiler making, mechanics, etc.). Thus, these professional associations organize monthly meetings for their members to discuss difficulties and exchange solutions in their sector. They also ask their members to contribute at least 500 francs per member and per meeting. These funds are used to maintain the headquarters and to organize the annual party.

In the face of theft/burglary, and failing to control it in the study area, the actors use various techniques, including:

- the agreement with the young people of the district, to whom gifts are offered at times for the surveillance of the places of exercise,
- moving materials and other work goods, which can be stolen, every night,
- the placing of furniture in a padlocked chain.

As for the problems related to the profitability of the operation, they are managed according to the category of activity of the street. Operating accounts allow us to better appreciate this fact (tables IV, V, VI and VII).

Description	Quantity	Unit price (FCFA)	Amount
Basin	2 pieces	3500	7000
Ladle	2 pieces	300	600
Spoon	12 pieces	600	600
Dish	12 pieces	1500	1500
Rice	1 bon'go	15000	15000
Bean	3 kg	600	1800
Ingredients and seasoning	-	-	5000
Table + stool	1 pièce	7000	7000
Tax	1 pièce	100	100
<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>38600</b>
<b>Sale</b>			<b>43400</b>

Table 4: Operating account for street food activities at start-up  
 Piece=Unit, bon'go=unit of mulch for fence

Source: Fieldwork, April 2019

Examination of Table IV shows that the average cost of expenditures made by street food vendors is 38800 FCFA and the realized selling price is 43400 FCFA. The street food trade is therefore profitable in that it allows the woman

to make a profit of 4800 FCFA per day of sale. The profit margin is even higher over time because the equipment is not renewed at each operation.

<b>Désignation</b>	<b>Allocation</b>	<b>Commission</b>
<b>Call unit R1</b>	10000 FCFA	400 FCFA
<b>Calling unit R2</b>	10000 FCFA	500 FCFA
<b>e-Banking</b>	Deposit (R1 and R2)	5000 FCFA 0,14 %
	Withdrawal (R1 and R2)	100 FCFA 60 %

Table 5: Profit margin from the sale of GSM products

Source: Fieldwork, April 2019

The analysis of Table V shows that for a sale of 10,000 FCFA of calling units, the actor earns 400 and 500 FCFA respectively on network 1 and network 2. For e-banking services, the seller's profit is expressed as a percentage. On the deposit of a given amount, the seller (also called

merchant) has a commission of 0.14%. On the other hand, for an amount withdrawn, the commission is shared between the operator (40%) and the merchant (60%). According to 90% of the respondents, the latter service is the most profitable for merchants and the gain is instantaneous.

<b>Désignation</b>	<b>Purchase amount (FCFA)</b>	<b>Selling price (FCFA)</b>
<b>Beauty products</b>	30000	35000
<b>Cosmetic products</b>	25000	32000
<b>Food products</b>	45000	55000
<b>Drinks</b>	20000	35000
<b>Rental</b>	8000	-
<b>Miscellaneous expenses</b>	2500	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>130500</b>	<b>157000</b>

Table 6: Profitability of sundry stores and restaurants

Source: Fieldwork, April 2019

Table VI shows that the average supply cost is 130500 FCFA and the realized selling price is 157000 FCFA. It therefore emerges that the traders of the various products make a profit of around 26500 FCFA. The activity is therefore profitable per sale.

For the refreshment stands, SOBEBRA products are marketed and according to 80% of the owners interviewed, they earn 50 francs per bottle of beer sold and 35 francs on average per sweetened drink.

<b>Désignation</b>	<b>Amount (FCFA)</b>
<b>Materials</b>	100000
<b>Apprentice expenses</b>	18000
<b>Rental</b>	7000
<b>Taxe</b>	10000
<b>Contribution</b>	500
<b>Total</b>	<b>135500</b>

Table 7: Monthly profitability of handicrafts

Source: Fieldwork, April 2019

On average, artisans make an investment of 135500 FCFA. The gain concerning this category is not evaluated per unit. However, it should be noted that their activity allows them to make daily tontines, the average amount of which varies from 300 to 1500 FCFA, and earn a net monthly income of 30000 FCFA.

The economic profitability of these street activities is variable and the earnings obtained have various destinations depending on the actors. These earnings are used in various ways such as savings, construction and realization, social needs (funerals, marriage, health, education) and reinvestment (Figure 8).

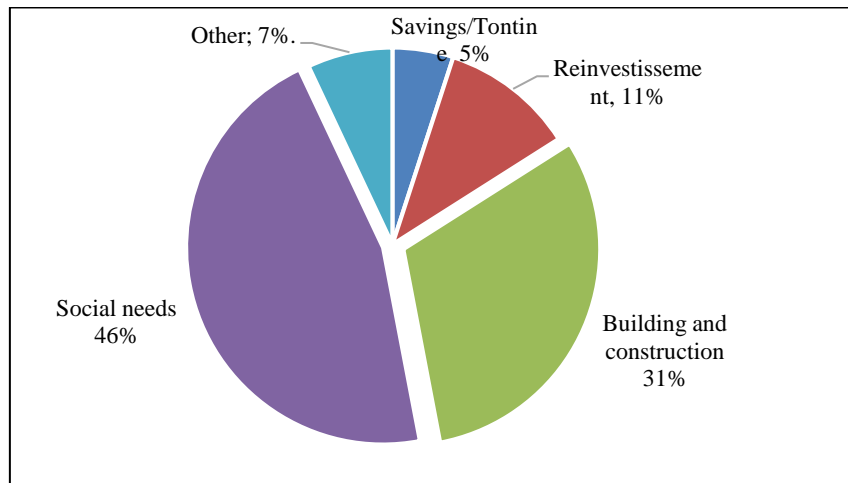


Fig. 8: Destination of earnings from street activities

Source: Fieldwork, April 2019

Figure 8 shows that street economy actors in the city of Natitingou spend the financial benefits in four key areas. While social needs constitute the largest destination with 49% of expenditures, savings are only 5%, while reinvestment and construction and realization are 11% and 35% respectively. There is the heading "other" which concerns unforeseen cases such as unfortunate events due to accidents (illnesses and deaths).

#### IV. DISCUSSION

This study shows that the street activity sector is still poorly structured and still holds the attention of decision-makers and especially economists.

Thus, Jacques Charmes believes that this sector remains unstructured and leads to confusion with the terms poverty and survival on the one hand and unemployment and underemployment on the other. He believes that this concept is difficult to approach from its birth or origin. The author notes that the modern sector, and more specifically the industrial sector, was not able to absorb the ever-growing surplus of labor. He bases his theory on the International Labour Office (ILO) report on Kenya and finds that the informal sector is associated with marginal activities (on the streets or in makeshift establishments, "tâcheronnage") and crafts in production and service, and petty trade. For the definition of the informal sector, the author draws on the results of the International Conference of Labor Statisticians held in Egypt, to mean that the sector is made up of all non-agricultural activities that are not regularly and distinctly recorded by conventional statistical surveys.

These ideas of the author support the sense in which this study has perceived the concept.

The assessments of the Reflection Group on the social situation of young trade graduates in the neighborhoods of the cities of Cotonou and Abomey-Calavi show that young trade graduates and unemployed people believe that nowadays the job market is saturated and that they are the biggest victims; They confessed that their unsuccessful

search for employment leads them to other alternatives that are often unproductive and illicit, often bringing them into conflict with the law and the police; they think that if they had a lasting job, they would not be idle; they could have avoided these problems, to which they add those of the family; this is how they selected "Unemployment" as their main problem. The Group believes that young graduates of trades and unemployed should have the audience and support of personalities and institutions committed to the promotion of human rights; they can count on all their solicitude which their initiatives need and their requests will benefit from a sustained attention on their part, it is only asked to guarantee their availability to undertake the steps judged necessary, in order to chase away their regrettable past and to have an aptitude for the management of professional workshops, equipments and tools and as a support to their installation, an aptitude for the creation and the management of activities generating incomes, which allow them to live of their knowledge, added to their know-how. These results allow us to understand that street activities should be better supervised for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As for street food, it is undergoing the effects of population growth and consequently the increasing demand for food consumption devices. This poses public health concerns due to the conditions in which meals are prepared and served.

These results are similar to those of Janvier Assouni, who found that food sold along the streets and in public places accounts for a significant portion of food consumption in this city. The populations of Djougou do not take care of their households and prefer to eat in these restaurants at lower cost. Socio-economic factors contribute to the growth of street food in Djougou. These include the monetary poverty of households and the presence of migrants living alone in precarious situations or with low incomes.

For Lamine Baba-Moussa et al, street food is most often a source of food poisoning due to the ingestion of microbial toxins are widespread throughout the world. These food poisoning are very frequent in African countries where street food allows more than 80% of the urban population to eat easily and cheaply. Food sold on the streets of our cities is a major public health problem because of the multiplicity and diversity of the microbial flora it carries. The food offered allows most of the population, especially civil servants, pupils, craftsmen, students, etc. to eat easily and relatively cheaply outside the home. But unfortunately, these foods undergo unhygienic operations during the manufacturing and selling process, leading for the most part to microbial and/or toxinogenic contamination. Also, they noticed that the stands and improvised structures along the sidewalks are the places where street foods are sold. Food vendors share the sidewalk with many other street vendors selling clothes, toys, and especially sewage and garbage are dumped in the streets near the sales areas. After preparation, the food is laid out on tables, often on the ground and roughly covered near busy streets, and is not reheated before being served most of the time. During the monitoring of sales operations, it was noted that the street and semi-fixed vendors do not have enough water for washing dishes. Moreover, the state and nature of the packaging used are deplorable and are made up of old, mouldy paper, inadequate plastic bags and cement bag paper.

Our study also showed that a variety of dishes are served in the city of Natitingou. This offers customers a preferential choice that influences eating habits and increases competition. However, these results are not consistent with those of Innocent Y. Bokossa et al. show that in central and southern Benin, the most popular and widespread street food is *Ablo* (a fermented, slightly salty and sweet paste, steamed and sold in the form of dumplings). They characterize the activity as exclusively female. It is carried out by women of all ages. The transmission of the technology was matrilineal. In fact, from a young age, daughters followed their mothers in the activity until they took over when their mothers retired. Most (60.98%) of the women producers and sellers of *Ablo* were illiterate. The respondents stated that they had no other activities and that 85.35% of the women had been selling *Ablo* for more than nine years, while only 14.65% had less than nine years' experience. *Ablo* is sold only in the evenings (around 6:30 p.m.) in the streets and other public places in the cities of Abomey, Bohicon and Covè; whereas in the city of Comè, the product was available at any time of the day and sometimes until very late at night. *Ablo* is also served at receptions during ceremonies and in restaurants.

The *Ablo* dumpling, which weighed between 38 and 40 g, is sold at a price of 12.5 FCFA (two for 25 FCFA) in Comè. On the other hand, we found dumplings of the same weight range at 25 FCFA each in Abomey, Bohicon and Covè.

## V. CONCLUSION

In sum, this study on street activities in Natitingou reveals that the sector has important assets for its development. Nevertheless, they are confronted with economic, organizational and institutional difficulties. These activities serve and encourage the actors to satisfy their needs and those of their families, but also allow the municipality to obtain substantial resources for the development of the locality. However, some threats remain and risk dampening the hopes of the actors and undermining the rules established by the authority. These threats are: the trend towards urbanization with the risk of eviction, the risk of epidemics (cholera, Lassa fever, etc.), and the unfair competition between these actors and the sellers in the city's markets, who will be tempted to leave the sheds and move to the streets.

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