

SOCIAL HIERARCHIZATION THROUGH A MULTIDIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS OF HOUSEHOLD POVERTY IN THE TOWNS OF COTONOU, SAVÈ AND KARIMAMA (REPUBLIC OF BENIN)

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Abstract: *This study addresses the theme of the multidimensionality of household poverty in the Republic of Benin. It attempts to establish a social hierarchy of households through a multidimensional analysis of poverty under a triple demographic, economic and socio-health prospecting. It was carried out over three months with 1,261 households in three communes in Benin: Cotonou (richer commune), Savè (middle commune) and Karimama (poorer commune). Two types of complementary approaches have been adopted. A univariate and bivariate descriptive analysis as well as a correlational explanatory analysis of the data which made it possible to characterize and classify the households according to the various deprivations suffered. It emerges from this study that the proportion of under 15s represents almost half (43.85%) of the population studied, men are more educated than women and that Karimama is the municipality where the proportion of households without no educational level is the highest. Access to basic services such as water, electricity or health care is limited for these households, as is banking services. Households in Savè and Karimama live in precarious and acceptable housing, while households in Cotonou mainly live in decent housing. In general, 64.19% of the surveyed population live below the multidimensional poverty line and 6 out of 10 surveyed households suffered deprivations in at least 3 of the 10 areas covered by the indicators. Also, the severity of multidimensional poverty increases as we move from Cotonou to Karimama. Four (4) social classes are identified: the class of the very rich, that of the rich, the class of the poor and that of the very poor. From the various results obtained, it can be retained the need for the definition of objective contextual criteria in the measurement of household poverty. Methodological tools taking into account sociological, economic and environmental realities should be integrated into the development of national development programs and the definition of strategies for a more effective and efficient fight against multidimensional poverty in Benin. Better consideration of the intrinsic realities of the social hierarchy in the establishment of basic infrastructure in Benin will improve access to health care, the level of education and access to financial services for households and will have a greater impact on their standard of living.*

Key Words: *Households. standard of living. multidimensional poverty. social classes.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

The level of poverty has a direct impact on the quality of life of individuals, their health as well as their productivity. Poverty reduces access to basic services such as education, health and financial services. This is why the fight against poverty is a priority for international organizations (World Bank, UNDP, NGOs, etc.) and the countries of the South, particularly Benin, which is among the poorest countries on the planet.

Thus, if we want to target the "poor" in the formulation and implementation of a development policy, it will first be necessary to be able to recognize them. In fact, an effective fight against poverty must go through a clear definition of the various poverty criteria in order to identify the type of poverty, the degree of poverty and its severity in order to carry out specific targeted actions against this scourge. For many years, poverty has been defined on the basis of economic capacity. Thus is poor any individual who has insufficient income (or expense) that does not allow him to meet his needs. For developing countries, this threshold set by the World Bank is around \$ 1.90 in purchasing power parity (PPP) per day (World Bank, 2015), but in Benin, this threshold is estimated according to the Cost of Essential Needs (CBE) method at 140,808 FCFA per year, i.e. around 385 FCFA (0.64 Euro) per day (INSAE, 2015). This approach, especially in poor countries, does not allow us to identify all the dimensions of poverty and could involve some bias in assessment. It is therefore important to use another assessment criterion, that of the so-called non-monetary or multidimensional current, that is to say an approach to poverty that takes into account several dimensions (Sen, 1993). According to this approach, the poor are not only those with low income, but also those who cannot meet their basic

needs relating to food, shelter, clothing, health, education. This broader approach makes it possible to define poverty criteria allowing a more precise assessment of poverty and the poor. Characterizing the poor and taking them into account in the social realities of their environment makes it possible to establish a link with other members of society and to classify them in a category of the social structure. The objective of this study is to establish a social hierarchy of Benin through a multidimensional analysis of the standard of living of households after a description of their socioeconomic and demographic characteristics and their classification.

2. METHODOLOGY:

2.1 Type of study and data used

This descriptive-correlational study was carried out in the communes of Cotonou, Savè and Karimama in the Republic of Benin. The data used comes from a sample survey carried out from December 2019 to February 2020.

2.1.1 Choice of study areas

The three municipalities namely: Cotonou, Savè and Karimama were selected on the basis of a reasoned choice taking into account the objectives of the study and the characteristics of each of these municipalities in relation to the standard of living. In Benin, Cotonou is considered as a municipality with the highest standard of living, Savè has an average standard of living while that of Karimama is considered the lowest according to the RGPH 4.

2.2 Study population and sampling method

The study population is made up of all the households of the three municipalities represented by their respective heads. The survey was carried out among a representative sample of households in the three municipalities. The minimum sample size (n) in each municipality was calculated from Sloven's formula (Cochran, 1963; Yamane, 1967). This formula is $n = N / (1 + N * e^2)$ where n is the sample size, N is the population size (here it is the total number of households in each municipality), and the margin of error used is $e = 5\%$ (conventionally used in economic and social sciences). According to the General Population and Housing Census, fourth generation (RGPH-4) of 2013, the cities of Cotonou, Savè and Karimama have 166,433, 16,096 and 9,168 households respectively (INSAE, 2016). The minimum sample size determined in each municipality is 399.04 for Cotonou, 390.30 for Savè and 383.27 for Karimama. Taking into account demographic changes, the sample size was increased by 10%. Thus the final size (n) of the population was 1292 households, of which 440, 430 and 422 respectively for Cotonou, Savè and Karimama. The sample was obtained using the two-stage cluster-area sampling technique. The primary sampling units (UPS) are the enumeration areas (EAs) defined during census mapping work carried out within the framework of the RGPH-4 of 2013. The secondary units (US) are made up of households living in the EAs drawn. After enumeration, the households were drawn by systematic selection. In total, 1261 households were actually surveyed using a questionnaire and an observation grid.

2.2.1 Inclusion and non-inclusion criteria

To be part of the sample, households had to reside in one of the target communes for at least two years, have a head of Beninese nationality and give their informed consent to participate in the study. Not all households were selected whose heads or any other member who could provide reliable information on the household were absent or did not provide all the information necessary for data processing.

2.3 Data collection tools

In order to guarantee the validity and reliability of the data, the questionnaire was drawn up based on the questionnaires used during modular surveys periodically carried out by INSAE (INSAE and ICF, 2019). A total of 58 questions were proposed in this questionnaire. These questions were used to create a data entry application with CsPro software (version 7.3.1), which enabled digital data collection using smartphones (CAPI). Direct observation was carried out by the investigators using an observation grid designed from the DHS and MICS survey questionnaires usually used by INSAE in order to observe the socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the households surveyed. .

2.3.1 Data collection protocol

A first enumeration step made it possible to enumerate all the households in each EA. During this operation, making contact with the households surveyed enabled them to explain the objectives of the research to them and to guarantee the confidentiality and anonymity of the data to be collected. An appointment was subsequently made with the heads of the selected households to answer the questionnaire. On the day of the appointment, the team of interviewers administered the questionnaire to the head of household and the information was recorded as it was collected in the CsPro software.

2.3.2 Data analysis and use

The various data from this survey were processed by a univariate and bivariate descriptive analysis as well as a correlational analysis. Univariate descriptive analysis made it possible to describe individual study variables using graphs and tables. For bivariate analysis, contingency tables and crosstabs were used. Also, it was mainly a question of calculating the multidimensional poverty index to assess the standard of living of households. The calculation of this index was based on the methodology described by Sabina, Jindra, Robles and Vaz (2016) and then adopted by the United Nations. For correlational analysis, exploratory statistical methods; factorials and classification were used. The aim is to determine the categories of households according to multidimensional poverty and to make a description of the different household profiles obtained. The factorial method chosen is multiple correspondence analysis (MCA). The objective of the ACM for this study is to provide factor axes for the classification (Lebart and Morineau, 2000). Thus, the hierarchical classification was used because the data is not large and ascending because it is more precise than the hierarchical descending classification. For the implementation of this ACH, the aggregation index used is the Euclidean distance and the aggregation criterion is that of Ward. The CAH then gathered the individuals iteratively to produce a dendrogram or classification tree. By cutting this tree to a certain chosen height, the desired partition is produced. This analysis ends with a description of the classes obtained.

3. ANALYSIS & RESULTS:

In the municipalities studied, the surveyed population is made up of 44.55% men and 55.45% women. The structure by large groups highlights the youth of the Beninese population, a little less than half of the population (43.85%) being aged under 15 years. People aged 65 and over make up about 5.5% of the population. (Figure 1)

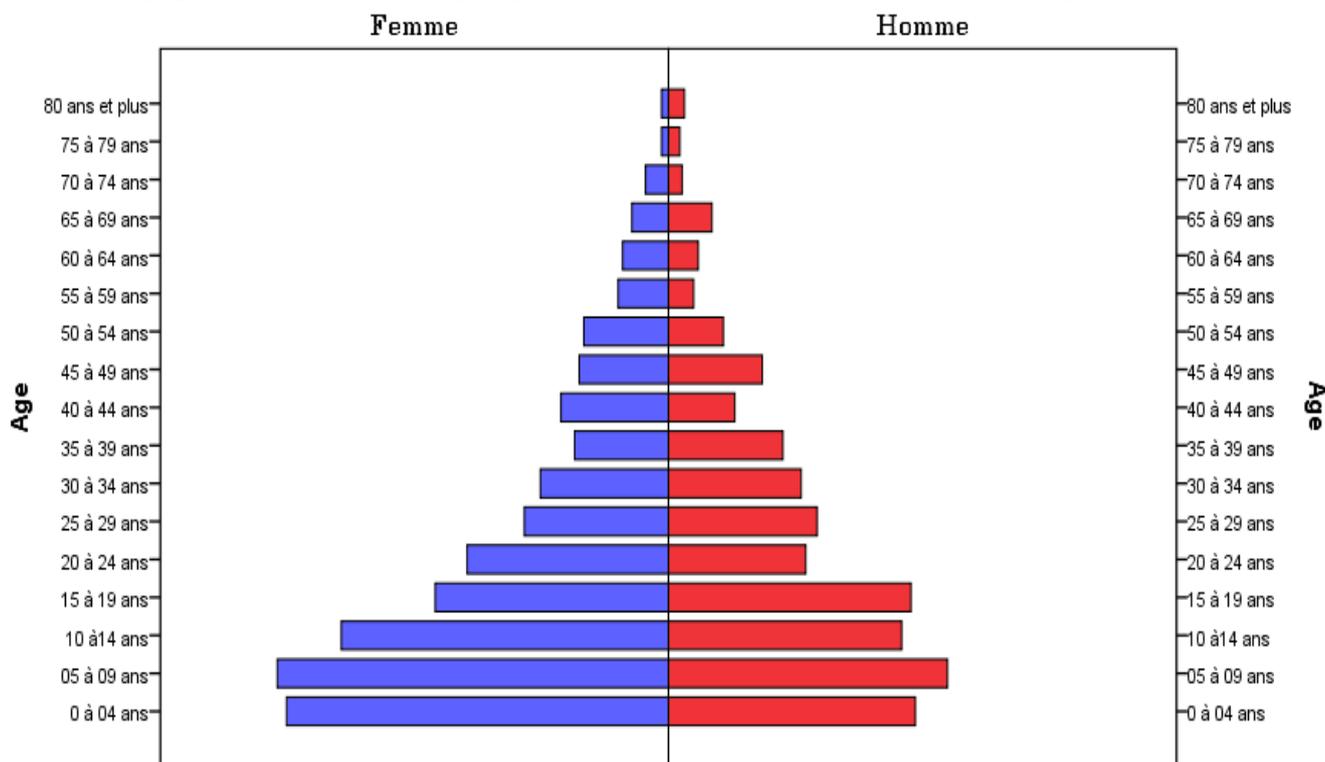


Figure 1: Age pyramid of the population
 Source: Field survey results January 2020, Akpovo, Abalot, Ouendo, 2020

These same results show that 37.58% of respondents have no level of education. This proportion of people who have never left school is 48.27% for women against 31.02% of men. Overall, the higher the level of education, the lower the proportion of people who have attained it, and there are still fewer women than men. This downward trend is also observed regardless of the municipality considered, but with some specificities. The commune of Karimama has the highest proportions of people without education with 64.56% and 72.81% respectively for men and women while they are in the minority in Cotonou where there are 8.29% of men and women. 18.42% of uneducated women. The commune of Cotonou has more people with a university level (14.34% men and 7.83% women) than Karimama (0.93% women and 3.24% men). In Savè, these proportions are close to the general trend: 29.78% of men had no education, 23.42% had primary level, 38.19% secondary level and 8.61% university level (Table 1).

Table 1: Distribution of the study population according to municipality, sex and level of study.

Municipalities	Sex	Aucun	Primary	Secondary cycle 1	Secondary cycle 2	University
Cotonou	Homme	8,29%	26,12%	31,43%	20,11%	14,34%
	Femme	18,42%	39,31%	22,17%	12,27%	7,83%
Savè	Homme	29,78%	23,42%	14,88%	23,31%	8,61%
	Femme	41,38%	21,59%	16,23%	15,28%	5,52%
Karimama	Homme	64,56%	8,71%	13,57%	10,02%	3,24%
	Femme	72,81%	12,50%	9,74%	4,02%	0,93%
Total	Homme	31,02	21,42	20,62	14,71	12,23
	Femme	48,27	26,03	18,31	5,26	2,34
	Ensemble	37,58%	24, 37%	19,72%	13,16%	6, 17%

Source: Field survey results January 2020, Akpovo, Abalot, Ouendo, 2020

Also, for the entire population considered, a household has an average of 5.3 people with significant spatial disparities. More specifically 3.4 people on average per household in Cotonou, 5.1 people in Savè then 9.2 in Karimama. In total, households with a maximum of three people represent a percentage of 25%, while 75% of them have a maximum of 6 people (Table 2).

Table 2: Household composition

Municipality Indicator	Cotonou	Savè	Karimama	Together
Minimum	1	1	1	1
Utmost	9	12	19	19
1st Quartile	2	3	4	3
Median	3	4	5	4
3ème Quartile	6	6	7	6
Average	3,4	5,1	9,2	5,3
Standard deviation	2,163	2,392	3,837	2,987

Source: Field survey results January 2020, Akpovo, Abalot, Ouendo, 2020

More than seven (07) out of 10 households (71.06%) are headed by a man, and nearly 3 in 10 are headed by a woman (28.94%) (Figure 2). These heads of households are mostly married (67.21%) and 17.26% are single, 8.64% divorced, 7.89% widowed (Figure 3). By focusing on their socio-professional categories, we note that the heads of households surveyed are mainly Employees (32.19%), craftsmen (23.21%), traders. s (21.37%) and there are only 5.37% frames (Figure 4).

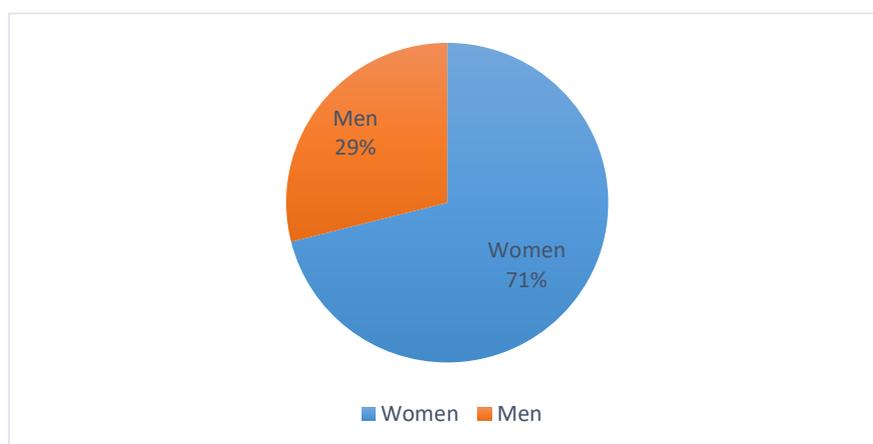


Figure 2: Gender distribution of heads of household

Source: Field survey results January 2020, Akpovo, Abalot, Ouendo, 2020

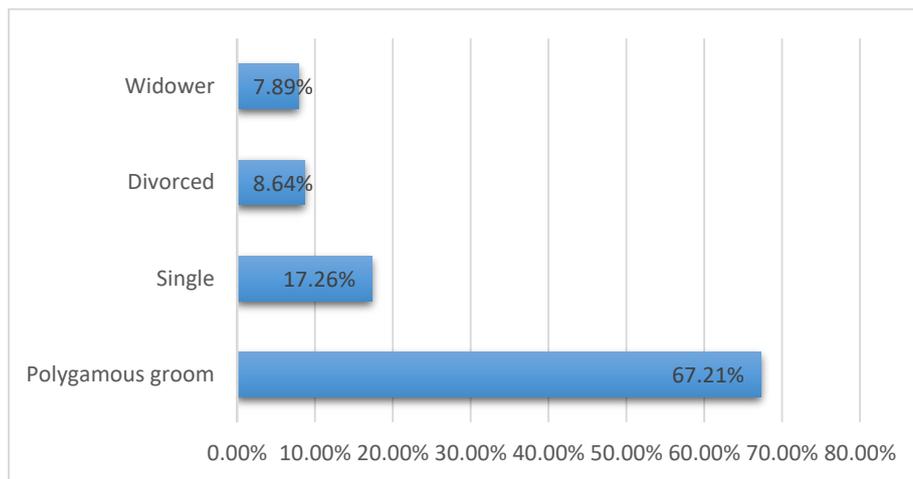


Figure 3: Marital status of the head of household
 Source: Field survey results January 2020, Akpovo, Abalot, Ouendo, 2020

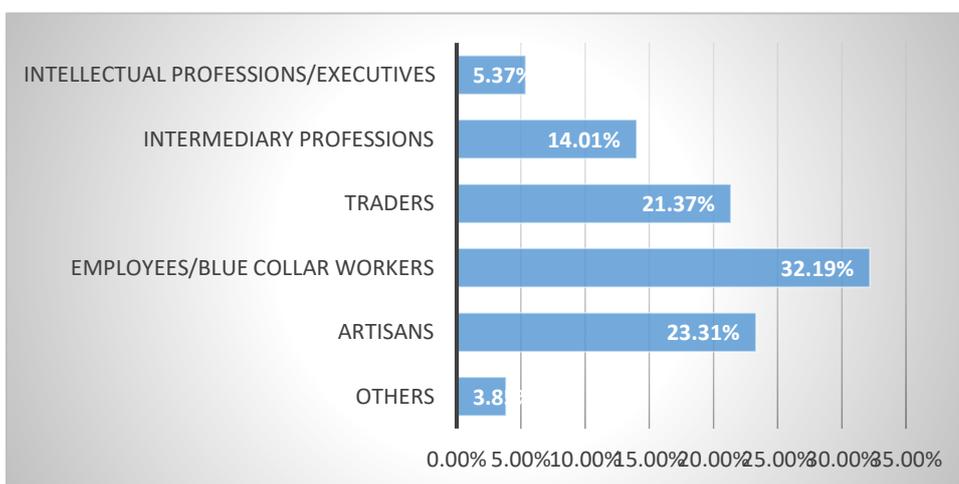


Figure 4: Socio-professional situation of heads of households
 Source: Field survey results January 2020, Akpovo, Abalot, Ouendo, 2020

Regarding the results related to household living conditions, it is noted that drinking water is available in 63.41% of households. However, the service rate varies according to the municipality: 82.78% in Cotonou, 59.08% in Savè and 47.58% in Karimama (Figure 5).

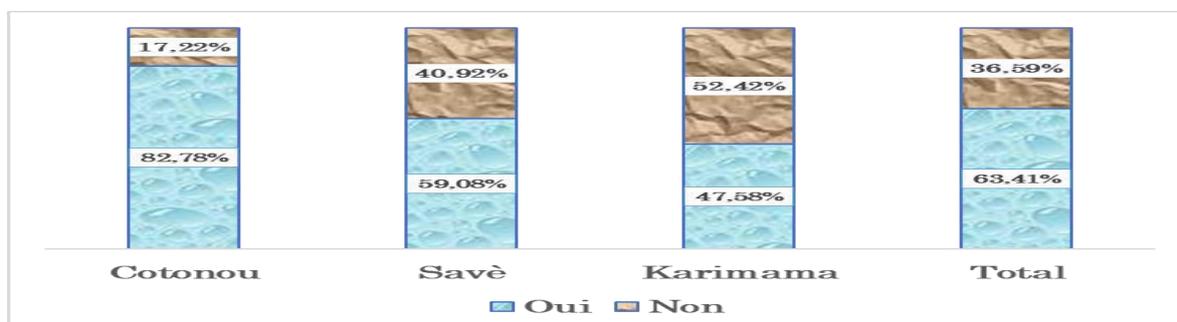


Figure 5: Access to drinking water
 Source: Field survey results January 2020, Akpovo, Abalot, Ouendo, 2020

In terms of electrification, two out of five households (43.78%) of the population considered have electricity. In Karimama, only 8% of households live in housing with electricity compared to 78.56% and 42.35% respectively in Cotonou and Savè (Figure 6). Of all decent housing recorded, 73.20% are located in urban areas while only 26.80% are in rural areas (Figure 7).

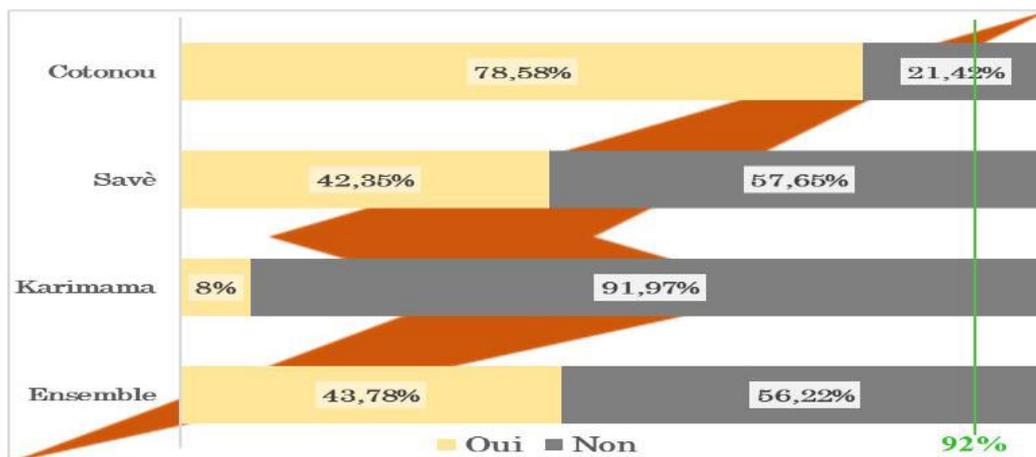


Figure 6: Access to electricity
 Source: Field survey results January 2020, Akpovo, Abalot, Ouendo, 2020

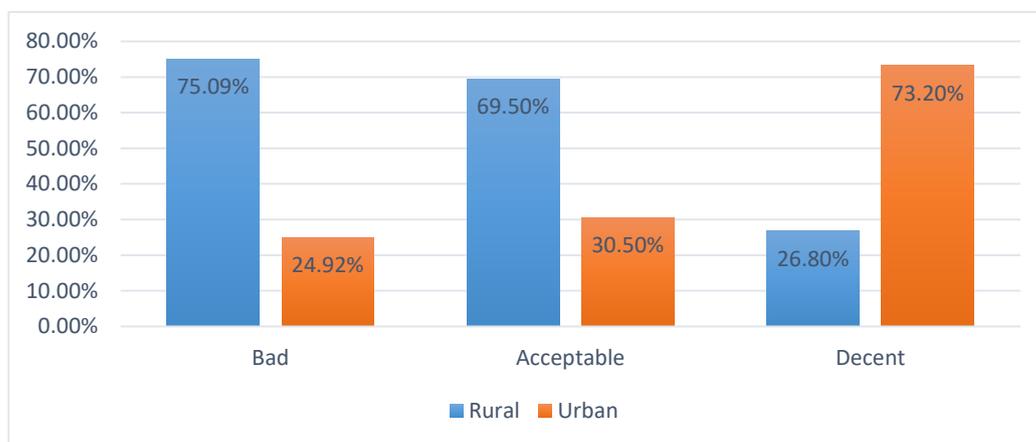


Figure 7: Housing conditions
 Source: Field survey results January 2020, Akpovo, Abalot, Ouendo, 2020

The majority (70.52%) of households live in an unsanitary environment (Figure 8). These results also reveal that 23% of households have access to financial services, including 11% in Cotonou, 10% in Savè and 2% in the commune of Karimama. In total, three out of four households do not have access to financial services (has access to financial services, a household of which at least one member has an account in a bank or microfinance institution) (Figure 9).

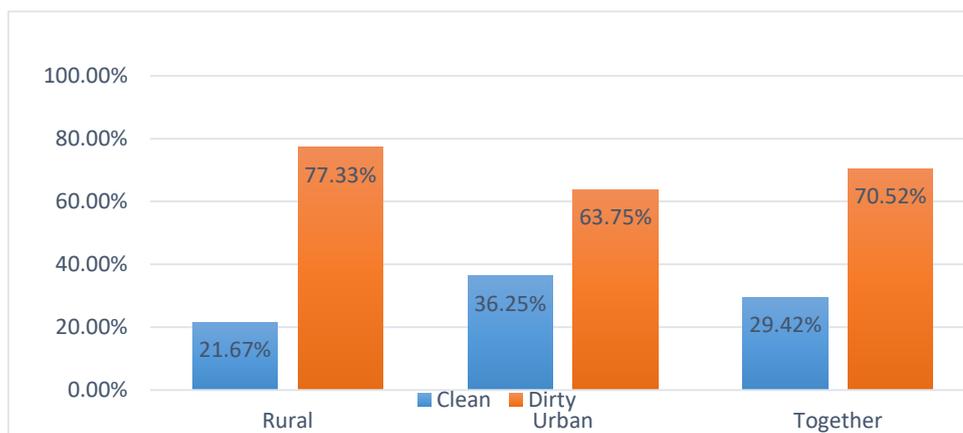


Figure 8: Sanitation of the living environment
 Source: Field survey results January 2020, Akpovo, Abalot, Ouendo, 2020

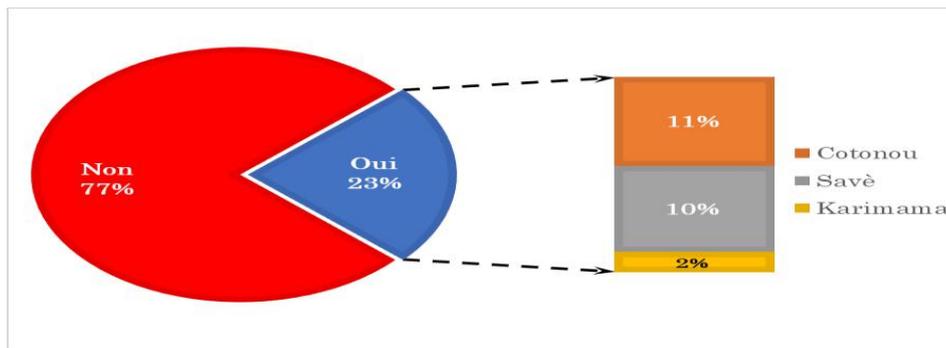


Figure 9: Access to financial services

Source: Field survey results January 2020, Akpovo, Abalot, Ouendo, 2020

In terms of geographic accessibility, it is noted that in Karimama commune, households must travel an average of at least 14.67 km before reaching the nearest public health center. However, this distance is 9.71km Savè and in Cotonou 3.42km (Table 3).

Table 3: Average distance from the nearest public health center

Municipalities	Average distance from the nearest public health center (km)
Cotonou	3,42
Savè	9,71
Karimama	14,67

Source: Field survey results January 2020, Akpovo, Abalot, Ouendo, 2020

As for the evaluation of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), the various calculations show that it ($MPI = H * A$) is 0.3982 in the three municipalities studied. Precisely 0.2097 in Cotonou, 0.2356 in Savè and 0.6892 in Karimama (Table 4). Among heads of multi-dimensionally poor households, 64.54% have no education while only 1.69% have a university level. Among those who are rich, 23.40% have no education while 15.60% have a university level. Among the heads of households most vulnerable to poverty, 41.42% have a primary level among those who are vulnerable to poverty (Table 5).

Table 4: Multidimensional poverty indicators in the 3 communes

Municipalities	Multidimensional poverty rate (H)	Severity of multidimensional poverty (A)	Population vulnerable to multidimensional poverty %	Population living in extreme multidimensional poverty %	Multidimensional poverty index (IPM=H*A)
Cotonou	41,51%	50,29%	25,42%	8,56%	02097%
Savè	47,56%	49,59%	26,41%	16,42%	0.2356
Karimama	94,29%	70,97%	4,48%	72,40%	0,6892
Together	64,19%	62,03%	17,52%	34,12%	0,3982

Source: Field survey results January 2020, Akpovo, Abalot, Ouendo, 2020

Table 5: Distribution of the level of deprivation according to some socio-demographic characteristics of households.

		Quality of life		
		Poor	Rich	Vulnerable
Chief's level of education	None	64,54%	23,40%	30,27%
	Primary	22,82%	24,56%	41,42%
	Secondary	10,95%	36,43%	21,01%
	University	1,69%	15,60%	7,31%
Marital status	Single	3,06%	18,47%	4,07%
	Divorced	8,10%	6,96%	12,42%
	Monogamous married	61,68%	54,06%	58,39%

	Polygamous groom	14,69%	2,23%	7,05%
	Widower	12,48%	18,27%	18,08%
Place of residence	Rural	63,69%	33,21%	31,38%
	Urban	36,31%	66,79%	68,62%
Access to drinking water	No	44,35%	25,40%	28,60%
	Yes	55,65%	74,60%	71,40%
Electricity	No	75,59%	27,27%	37,63%
	Yes	24,41%	72,73%	62,37%
Housing condition	Acceptable	19,56%	22,59%	28,58%
	Good	32,81%	75,77%	64,71%
	Bad	47,63%	1,65%	6,71%
Access to financial services	No	87,11%	56,79%	72,29%
	Yes	12,89%	43,21%	27,71%
Sanitation of the living environment	Clean	27,72%	39,44%	21,60%
	Dirty	72,28%	60,56%	78,40%

Source: Field survey results January 2020, Akpovo, Abalot, Ouendo, 2020

Households with very young heads (under 25) are more exposed to multidimensional poverty for both sexes, but with a lower rate for men. From the age of 30 for men and 40 for women, households have an average standard of living (between 22 and 35% deprivation) which stabilizes until the age of 60. Households headed by men are always better off than those headed by women in this age group (30-60 years). The level of deprivation begins to increase again and increases until the age of 80 when the head of household is over 65 (Figure 10).

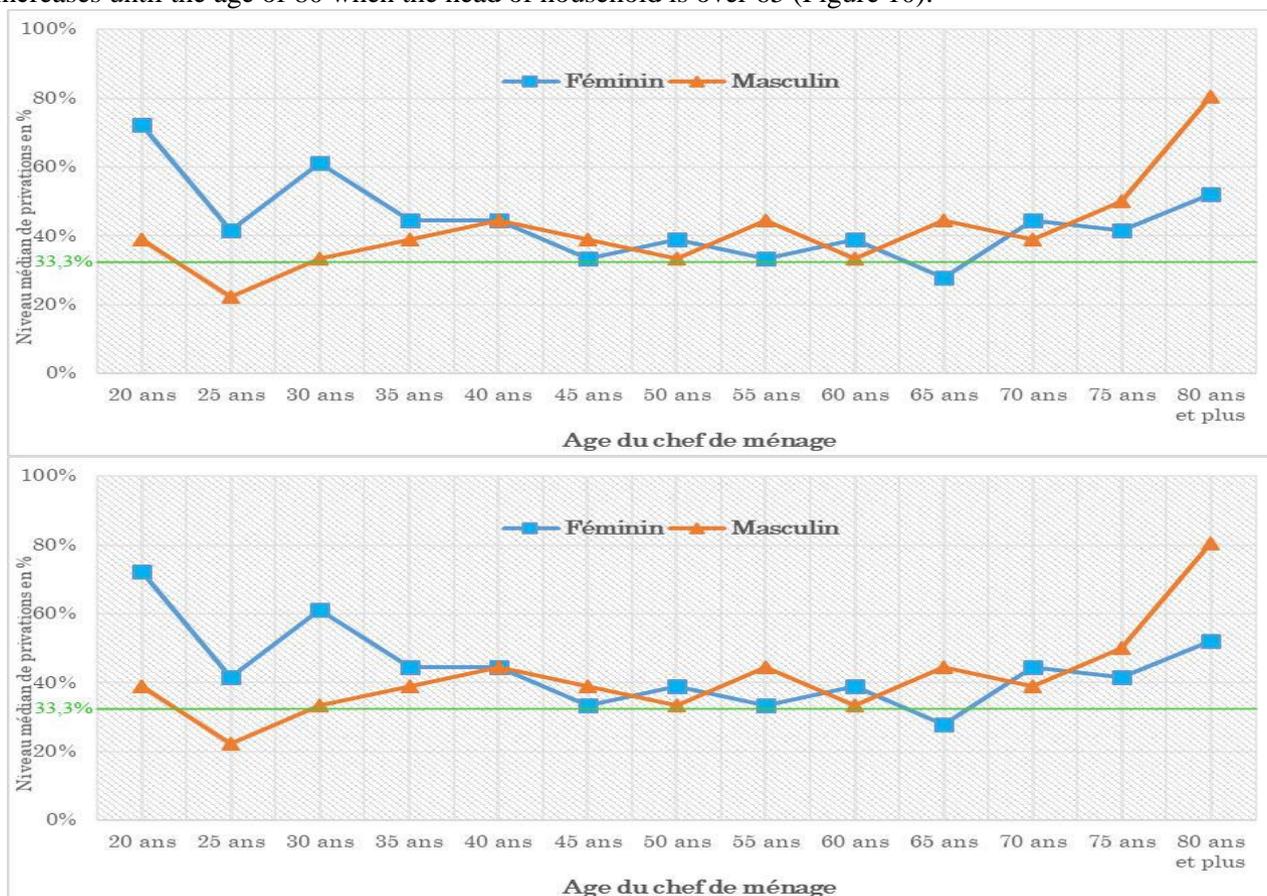


Figure 10: Level of household deprivation according to the age and sex of the head of household
 Source: Field survey results January 2020, Akpovo, Abalot, Ouendo, 2020

In addition, the Ascending Hierarchical Classification of the households studied in these three municipalities made it possible to group them into four main classes: 1, 2, 3 and 4 (Figure 12, 13). So :

- class 1 is characterized by households generally possessing luxury goods, living in high standard housing (tiled floor in urban areas) and in a clean environment (because they have adequate sanitation infrastructure). These households generally have access to electricity, drinking water (the source is in their home or yard) and financial services. The head of household is highly educated and literate, all household members have access to education. These housewives do not own arable land, nor cattle, nor cart and live mainly in the commune of Cotonou. This class during this survey is called the “very rich” class;
- class 2, it is essentially made up of households with a few luxury goods, residing in an urban environment in a not very clean setting in medium-level housing (but the floor is cement). They have access to electricity and drinking water, but the source of the latter is a tap at their home or at a neighbor's. These are one-person households (usually female) with the highest level of education in secondary school. This class corresponds to that of average or vulnerable households;
- class 3 consists mainly of households headed by widowed women over the age of 50 who have no education and can neither read nor write. These households live in rural areas in medium-level housing, but the living environment is unsanitary since they do not have toilets in the majority of cases. Garbage, sewage and waste are thrown in the yard or in nature. This class is that of “poor” households.
- class 4 is basically made up of rural households with no access to drinking water, electricity or financial services. Housing conditions are poor and sanitation infrastructure is non-existent. The heads of these households are generally married monogamous or married polygamous men without education and working in the agricultural sector. In these households there is at least one person suffering from malnutrition, the level of education is generally very low. They do not have luxury goods other than bicycles, farmland, cart, and cattle. This class brings together “very poor” households.

Classification hiérarchique directe

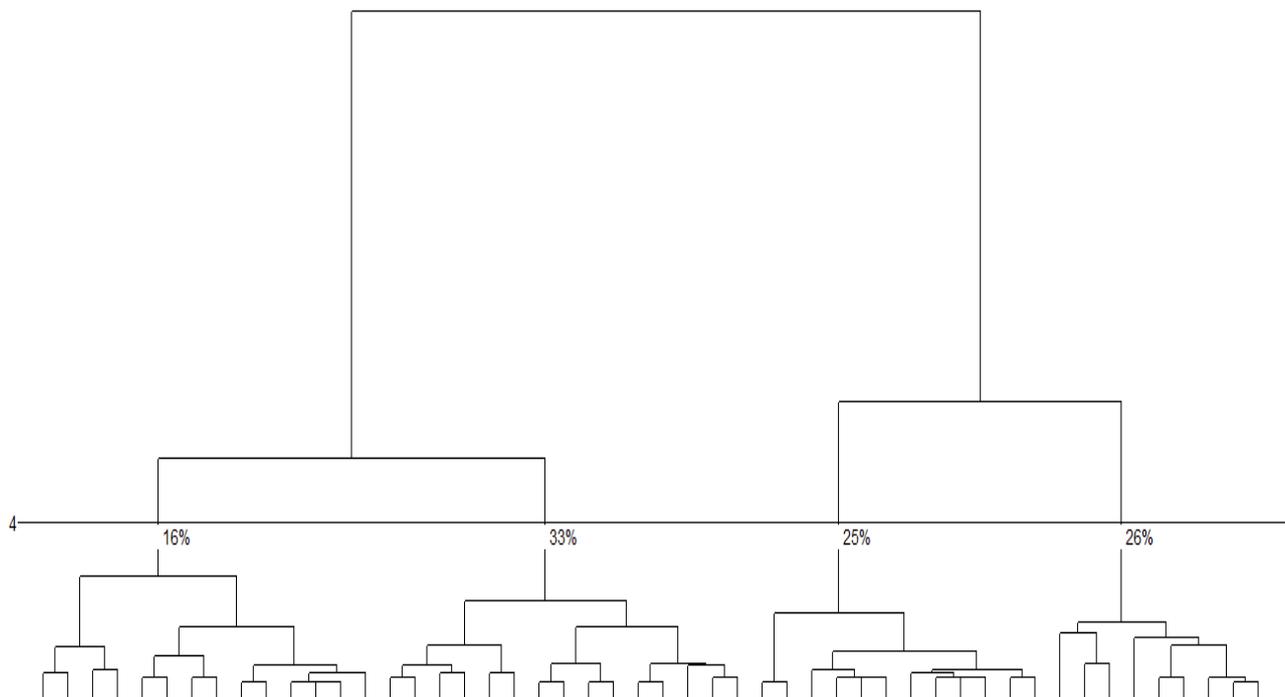


Figure 11: Classification tree or dendrogram (cut)

Partitions	Inerties	Valeur de l'inertie	% d'individus dans la classe	Distances à l'origine des centres de classes
Partition en 2 classes	Inter-classes	0,20223	-	-
	Intra-classe	-	-	-
	Classe 1 / 2	0,62880	49,49%	0,20638
	Classe 2 / 2	0,50945	50,51%	0,19816
	Totale	1,34048		
	Quotient (I. inter / I. totale)	0,15086		
Partition en 4 classes	Inter-classes	0,37307		
	Intra-classe			
	Classe 1 / 4	0,14402	16,24%	1,22484
	Classe 2 / 4	0,38161	32,74%	0,18215
	Classe 3 / 4	0,23813	24,62%	0,19322
	Classe 4 / 4	0,20366	25,13%	0,52988
	Totale	1,34048		
	Quotient (I. inter / I. totale)	0,27831		
Partition en 5 classes	Inter-classes	0,39966		
	Intra-classe			
	Classe 1 / 5	0,05911	4,82%	1,94570
	Classe 2 / 5	0,13978	11,68%	0,53102
	Classe 3 / 5	0,30015	31,47%	0,18654
	Classe 4 / 5	0,23813	26,90%	0,19322
	Classe 5 / 5	0,20366	25,13%	0,52988
	Totale	1,34048		
Quotient (I. inter / I. totale)	0,29815			
Partition en 7 classes	Inter-classes	0,45963		
	Intra-classe			
	Classe 1 / 7	0,05911	2,82%	1,94570
	Classe 2 / 7	0,11847	10,15%	0,56501
	Classe 3 / 7	0,13746	14,47%	0,40729
	Classe 4 / 7	0,16113	16,54%	0,17996
	Classe 5 / 7	0,04965	6,85%	0,60869
	Classe 6 / 7	0,16189	20,05%	0,20842
	Classe 7 / 7	0,19315	29,11%	0,54267
	Totale	1,34048		
Quotient (I. inter / I. totale)	0,34289			

Source: Field survey results January 2020, Akpovo, Abalot, Ouendo, 2020

4. DISCUSSION:

This study, which is based on the assumption that households whose size is greater than or equal to 5 where the head is a woman are essentially poor in Benin, is one of the first to describe and classify households on the basis of multidimensional analysis of poverty. It highlights the municipalities with a high standard of living (Cotonou), an average standard of living (Savè) and a low standard of living (Karimama).

Thus, from a socio-demographic perspective, the population studied is essentially young and predominantly female. It is well known that young people and women are a vulnerable segment of the population faced with several social problems: illiteracy, unemployment, delinquency, unwanted pregnancies, STDs... (Jimenez and Murthi, 2006). However, this demographic time bomb could be turned into a demographic dividend if substantial investments are made in this segment of the population. Any structuring investment in health and education will prepare these young people to be productive resources for the wealth of tomorrow. Youth issues should remain at the heart of the main concerns of leaders in order to have a positive impact on policies to fight poverty and development strategies for the supply and access to basic social services, in particular access to education and health. At the level of women, it will be a question of strengthening existing policies for the empowerment of women. Better access to the health service, an improvement in reproductive health and an improvement in the condition of the maintenance of children for whom women are generally responsible are a sine qanun condition for increasing the standard of living of the household. The need for the feminization of development strategies constitutes a catalyst for the system of the fight against household poverty, whatever the municipality considered.

Faced with this demographic picture, more than half of the households surveyed do not have access to drinking water, as is the case nationally. The situation in Karimama commune where only 8% of households have access to drinking water is quite striking. The lack of drinking water exposes populations to enormous health risks, in particular water and / or hygiene diseases. Under these conditions, populations resort to wastewater which promotes the increase of water-borne diseases which are linked to water quality and access to drinking water. These poorly treated diseases can lead to complications with high risks of death in the event of late treatment. We therefore understand the urgency of facilitating access to drinking water to these already vulnerable populations in order to reduce mortality in general but above all to guarantee them a satisfactory level of well-being, especially since in these areas, the health center the nearest is on average 17 km and the poverty of the populations does not allow them to adequately afford appropriate medical care. Also, the difficult living conditions of the populations are accentuated by the inaccessibility to electricity. While populations can create certain conditions for having drinking water, for example setting up closed and well-maintained wells or using hydraulic pumps, having electricity is generally the domain of the state. The state must build infrastructure to ensure the supply of electricity. Electricity promotes the use of household appliances such as those relating to information (radio, television, cell phone, etc.), facilitating education and thus improving the living conditions of populations. It should be remembered here that different lifestyles are strongly influenced by access to water and electricity, but also by the appearance of different dwellings. In general, households live in housing that is not always convenient, especially in rural areas. It was also noted during this survey that the majority of decent housing is located in urban areas, that is to say in Cotonou and Savè. Very few of the accommodations in Karimama are decent. Many do not have sanitary-standard latrines or simply do not have them. In this case, the members of the household are forced to meet their physiological needs in nature. This waste subsequently comes into contact with humans and causes foodborne poisoning which poses real health problems. Awareness campaigns on the importance of sanitation are needed in order to expose households to the risks associated with insalubrity to promote general awareness of the populations.

In addition to all these difficulties, among these different households, there is also the difficulty of accessing financial services. As observed in the other cases, it is in the commune of Karimama that the populations have the least access to financial services (2%). This situation seems to reflect the financial difficulties of the households surveyed. The various micro-credit programs for the poorest and other similar projects have not been able to have a lasting impact on the beneficiaries who are still struggling to develop small businesses or if they succeed in doing so, income and profits are mixed family resources thus weakening the achievement of initial objectives. It is therefore necessary to strengthen the monitoring mechanisms for the management of these microcredits.

Also, in this study, the Multidimensional Poverty Index was calculated and is estimated at 0.3982 for all populations of the municipalities considered, thus reflecting the fact that each household suffers on average six out of ten deprivations. This situation is of concern because a household is considered poor as soon as it experiences at least three deprivations. These deprivations are more accentuated in Karimama where households suffer nine. Thus, the proportion of households living in multidimensional poverty is lower in Cotonou (41.69%) and excessively high in the commune of Karimama (94.29%), i.e. a gap of 50% at the 5% threshold. This observed gap results from the status of the capital city of Cotonou where the national powers sit and which enjoys preeminence in the social, cultural, economic and sporting fields. This is not the case in the other municipalities. However, the households of Cotonou and those of Karimama suffer more deprivation in the area of health (52.93% and 36.90% respectively). How then to explain that in Cotonou, the richest municipality, which has more socio-sanitary infrastructure, households suffer more deprivation in the field of health compared to Karimama, the poorest municipality in which there is geographic inaccessibility to health services?

This observed contrast can easily be explained by the cost of health services, which remains out of step with the low purchasing power of households, particularly in Cotonou. To this, there could be added the quality of food in Cotonou households, which is moving further and further away from dietary standards and may promote the emergence of certain chronic conditions within populations such as metabolic diseases (diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity). Similarly, the environmental dimension and the precarious and unhealthy living environment in places in the municipality can have a negative impact on household health. If health is incriminated as the dominant deprivation in the explanation of multidimensional poverty in the communes of Cotonou and Karimama, it is more the dimension of "possession of assets" that contributes more to multidimensional poverty in the commune of Savè (41, 43%). A household's assets are an essential part of its livelihood. These resources are reinforced by the capacity of households to use their assets. If deprivation in terms of asset ownership contributes significantly to the multidimensional poverty of households in the commune of Savè, it is above all human capital (household members, active work, education, knowledge and capacities) and possibly financial capital. (savings / debts, gold / jewelry, income, credit, insurance) that would justify this result. Neither natural capital nor social capital can be blamed. Indeed, this study showed that the population of Savè had easy access to land, water, pasture, wild products and biodiversity. Moreover, this population cannot suffer from conflicts of social, religious or ethnic groups given that the "Tchabè" population is renowned, one

of the most sociable of Benin where the family occupies a privileged place and the language a cement for the relations between groups (Capo-Chichi, 2006; source humanite, 2017; Wikipedia, 2020). It will then be a question of strengthening the mechanisms of access of these populations to financial services. The facilitation of micro-credit granting procedures could be considered to strengthen income-generating activities. Anything that contributes to improving the living conditions of households in this municipality. In addition, a vertical reading of the results of this study shows that education does not strongly participate in multidimensional household poverty whatever the municipality considered, but its incidence does not remain without influence on the general rate of poverty obtained.

In fact, among heads of multi-dimensionally poor households, 64.54% have no education while only 1.69% have a university level. Among those who are rich, 23.40% have no education while 15.60% have a university level. Among the heads of households most vulnerable to poverty, 41.42% have a primary level. These figures show many disparities in educational attainment between the sexes, between social groups and between municipalities. Even if it is recognized that education does not significantly explain multidimensional poverty, it is necessary to recognize that poverty can lead to low education. Thus, one way to move towards improving the level of education of grassroots populations remains education in itself. This same improvement should take into account the realities of each social class in order to strengthen policies and mechanisms to fight multidimensional poverty.

Finally, during this study, on the basis of multidimensional poverty, four social classes were identified. The very rich class, the rich class, the poor class and the very poor household class. This social hierarchy has made it possible to have a pyramidal structure of households holding a positive social value at the top (very rich class) and at the bottom households with negative social value (very poor class). The other two classes (rich and poor) constitute the category of intermediate households and therefore vulnerable to poverty. This social stratification does not seem to differ from that described by Karl Max who notes that social classes are determined according to the relations of production. For him, in capitalist society, the relations of production are defined by the ownership of the means of production. Thus, we distinguish the capitalist class, or bourgeoisie, from the working class (Karl Max and Friedrich Engels, 1848). In the capitalist mode of production, the means of production are owned by a small number of people, who do not need to work to live: the bourgeoisie. The others are forced to "sell their labor power" in order to live: the workers. The households of each identified class therefore participate in the production of national wealth, each economic agent in the corridor of his production unit. The question is to know in what proportion the households benefit from the redistribution of this wealth. This unequal distribution of national wealth induces the possibility for a household or an individual to change classes or to remain in its original class that inherited from its parents. A blacksmith father can have a whole line of senior management. At the same time, for generations and in some parts of the country, reproduction is systematic. Poverty is passed on from generation to generation. Thus, to improve the situation of households, it is necessary to work on this architecture, through the establishment of appropriate mechanisms aimed at improving the production conditions of farmers, artisans and workers in various sectors.

However, this study, while being of major interest for the definition of strategies and the development of programs and projects to fight against poverty, could not address the dimensions of poverty in the other communes of Benin. It is possible that the realities cannot be alike; the number, levels and degrees of deprivation are highly variable contextual elements. These weaknesses mentioned constitute as many new avenues of research that can be explored to strengthen the capacities of the state in understanding and controlling the phenomenon of poverty.

5. CONCLUSION:

The different households studied are generally multidimensional poor. Among other things, the low education rate, the poor health coverage of the country, the low income of households are the main causes of this poverty which also induces significant social inequalities between the populations of rich areas, those of poor areas and between the two. The various national poverty reduction policies would become more effective if they take into account the apprehension of the poor, in their environment and in the complexity of their realities. The ultimate question for the success of these policies is "who is the poor? ". The answer to this basic question remains the essential element in defining, developing and conducting said policies. Grassroots communities can only be impacted by various state measures when they are taken in all their dimensions.

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