

# DYNAMICS OF SOCIAL REPRO-MOBILITY OF HOUSEHOLDS VULNERABLE TO MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY IN THE TOWNS OF COTONOU, SAVE AND KARIMAMA (REPUBLIC OF BENIN)

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**Abstract:** *The objective of this study is to analyze the dynamics of social repro-mobility on the basis of a social hierarchy of households in Benin. It was carried out in three months in three communes of Benin, in particular Cotonou (richer commune), Savè (middle municipality) and Karimama (poorer commune) with 1,261 households. Household standard of living is assessed using the multidimensional poverty index, which has made it possible to highlight the different levels of deprivation experienced by households. A Multiple Components Analysis, supported by an ascending hierarchical classification was used to construct a hierarchical pyramid-type structure of the populations studied. 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. The vulnerability of individuals to multidimensional poverty is explored to appreciate the different movements of individuals between classes. The analysis of these interclass movements led to a two-dimensional pyramidal-type social structure characterized by a dominant systematic reproduction and a slight mobility of individuals between the different identified classes. It emerges from these results that a better consideration of these movements between classes in Benin society would make it possible to draw a profile of the intrinsic realities of the social hierarchy and to analyze in depth the levers on which it is possible to act to improve the content of investments in basic infrastructure, access to health care, level of education and access to financial services for households for a significant reduction of poverty in the municipalities studied.*

**Key Words:** multidimensional poverty, Level of deprivation, Social hierarchy, Repro-mobility.

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

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 one of the poorest countries on the planet. Thus, improving the living conditions of populations is one of the major challenges of every developing country. To meet this challenge, it is first necessary to be able to recognize not only the poor but also the classified 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. Indeed, is a peasant who produces his own food, owns his own cattle and meets these basic needs really poor even if he does not have sufficient monetary resources according to established standards? The answer to this question involves recourse to another assessment criterion other than the monetary criterion, that of the so-called non-monetary or multidimensional current, that is to say an approach to poverty taking into account several dimensions (Sen, 1993). The question of targeting the poor as well as controlling their characteristics becomes a necessity in the definition and implementation of development policies. Faced with these challenges, governments are pursuing several policies on behalf of poor and vulnerable populations. However, despite the proliferation of these different development policies and the exorbitant resources devoted to them, some populations are struggling to get out of poverty. Even if it must be recognized that no less negligible results are obtained in terms of economic growth, government measures and policies aimed at reducing poverty do not significantly impact all populations at the base. This has the consequence of maintaining populations in precariousness and poverty for generations. Thus, to analyze the different explanatory elements of these movements (reproduction and mobility), it was first necessary to target the poor in all these dimensions, to classify them and finally to analyze the possibilities of mobility that they are likely to operate between the different classes of Benin society. This

dynamic is essentially based on the degree of vulnerability to poverty of each individual taken in a context of the search for satisfaction of his essential needs relating to food, housing, clothing, health and education. The objective of this study is therefore to analyze the dynamics of the movements of individuals from one class to another on the basis of the social hierarchy of Benin through a multidimensional analysis of the standard of living of households in the communes of Cotonou, Savè and Karimama.

## 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 come from a sample survey carried out in the three (03) municipalities from December 2019 to February 2020 thanks to the technical assistance of the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Analysis (INSAE).

### 2.2 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, according to the last population and housing census (RGPH 4), 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 like the weakest.

### 2.3 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). 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 (ZD) defined during the census mapping work carried out within the framework of the RGPH-4 of 2013. The secondary units are the households drawn from each enumeration area. In the first stage, 66 ZD were drawn (ie 22 ZD per municipality), by carrying out a systematic selection with probability proportional to the size of the ZD. All selected clusters were subjected to a comprehensive household enumeration. In the second stage, 20 households were drawn with equal probabilities, from the list of households established during the enumeration operation. In total, 1261 households were actually surveyed using a questionnaire and an observation grid.

#### 2.3.1 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.

### 2.4. Data collection tools

In order to guarantee the validity and reliability of the data, the questionnaire was drawn up on the basis of the questionnaires used during the modular surveys periodically carried out by INSAE (INSAE and ICF, 2019) and the questionnaires of the "surveys on health and social protection" carried out periodically in France by IRDES (IRDES, 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 to observe the socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the households surveyed.

### 2.5 Data collection protocol

A first step before the field is the drawing of the enumeration areas with the technical assistance of INSAE. A second enumeration step made it possible to enumerate all the households in each EA. During this operation, contacting the households surveyed enabled them to explain the objectives of the research to them and to guarantee them 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 investigators administered the questionnaire to the head of the household and the information was recorded as it was collected in the CsPro software.

## 2.6 Data analysis and use

The various data from this survey were processed by a descriptive correlational analysis. For the descriptive analysis, it was mainly a matter 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. Each person is assigned a score based on the number of deprivations suffered per household for each of the 10 indicators. The maximum score is 100, with each dimension being weighted equally. In other words, the maximum score for each dimension is 33.3%. The education and health dimensions each have two indicators; each component therefore has a value of 5/3, or 16.7%. For its part, the standard of living dimension is based on six indicators; therefore, each component is equal to 5/9, or 5.6%.

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). It is a statistical technique for summarizing the information contained in a table crossing N individuals and P qualitative variables in order to facilitate the interpretation of the correlations that exist between the variables, the modalities and the individuals. For this, the reduction of the dimensions of the data is sought by representing the associations between individuals and between variables in factorial spaces of small dimensions (Saporta, 1990). Graphic visualizations present individuals and variables according to their proximity or correlation. The objective of the ACM for this study is to provide factor axes for the classification (Lebart and Morineau, 2000). Thus, it was used for this study, the hierarchical classification because the data is not voluminous and ascending because it is more precise than the descending hierarchical classification. The principle of CAH is to partition households into homogeneous classes using successive grouping algorithms. Class homogeneity translates into the sense that individuals of the same class will look alike with respect to variables of the same class depending on the resemblance criterion or the proximity index chosen (Lebart and Morineau, 2000). 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. RESULTS:

### 3.1- Multidimensional Poverty Index

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 1). 72.40% of households in Karimama live in extreme poverty compared with 8.56% and 16.42% of households surveyed in Cotonou and Savè respectively.

The proportion of households vulnerable to multidimensional poverty is 26.41% in Savè and 25.42% in Cotonou. This proportion is low in Karimama (4.48%).

Table 1: Multidimensional poverty indicators in the 3 municipalities

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	41,69%	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
<b>Together</b>	<b>64,19%</b>	<b>62,03%</b>	<b>17,52%</b>	<b>34,12%</b>	<b>0,3982</b>

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

#### 3.1.1 Level of deprivation according to some socio-demographic characteristics of households

Among the heads of multi-dimensionally poor households, 64.54% have no education while only 1.69% have a university level. Of those who are wealthy, 23.40% have no education while 15.60% have a university education. Among the heads of households most vulnerable to poverty, 41.42% have a primary level among those who are vulnerable to poverty (Table 2).

Table 2: 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

### 3.1.2 Level of deprivation of households according to the age and sex of the head of household

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 1).

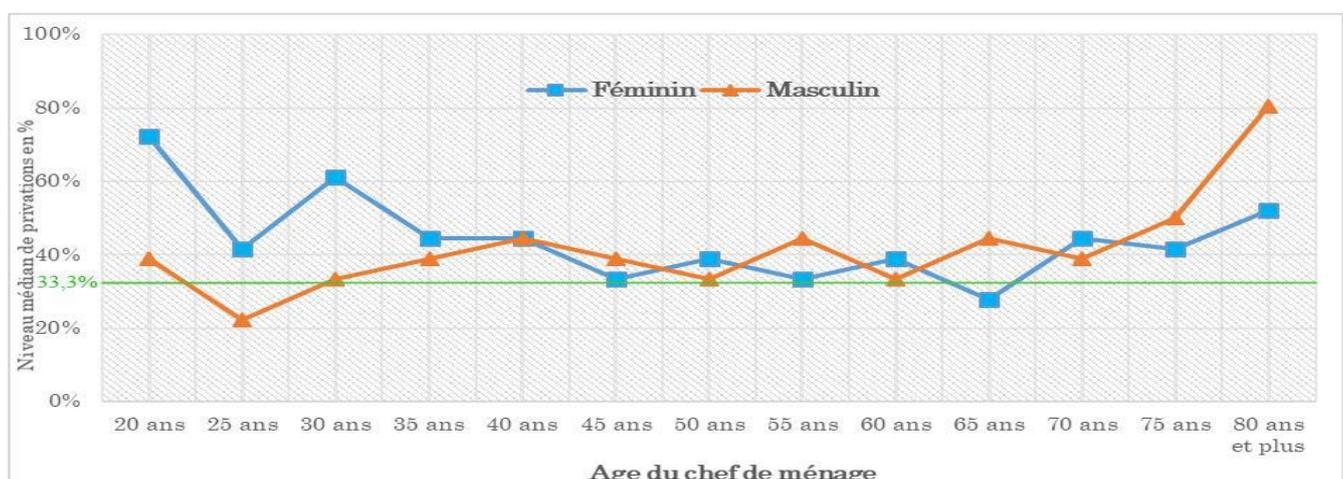


Figure 1: Level of household deprivation according to the age and sex of the head of household

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

### 3.2. Ascending Hierarchical Classification (ACH) of households

Examination of the scale of aggregation indices gives an idea of the number of classes to retain. On the histogram obtained, several significant jumps or "bends" are observed:

- between the 1st and the 2nd node forming a partition with two classes;
- between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> node forming a 3-class partition;
- between the 3rd and 4th node forming a 4-class partition;
- between the 6th and the 7th node forming a 7-class partition;

In order to select the optimal partition, inter and intra class inertias are analyzed. The principle is to choose the partition which minimizes infra-class inertia and maximizes interclass inertia. This makes it possible to obtain a stable partition with homogeneous classes. Thus, the results of this study show that the partition which maximizes interclass inertia and minimizes infra-class inertia is that of 7 classes. This score summarizes 34.29% of the information. However, the distribution of individuals into classes is not balanced because class 1 includes 2.82% of individuals while class 2 includes nearly 30% of individuals. To be optimal in statistical terms, this partition is therefore not relevant. The partition into 5 classes has the same defect.

On the other hand, the partition into 4 classes makes it possible to have balanced classes in terms of the number of individuals without losing its power of synthesis and its informational power. In fact, each of the 4 classes comprises 16.24% respectively; 32.74%, 24.62% and 25.13% then the inertia ratio is around 30%. It is also noticed that the interclass inertia differences between this partition and the other two is small, which means that by choosing this partition, not enough information can be lost compared to the 7 class partition, nor the one with 5 classes. Consequently, the 4-class partition is therefore retained. The figure below shows the hierarchical classification tree which confirms the choice of the 4-class partition.

Classification hiérarchique directe

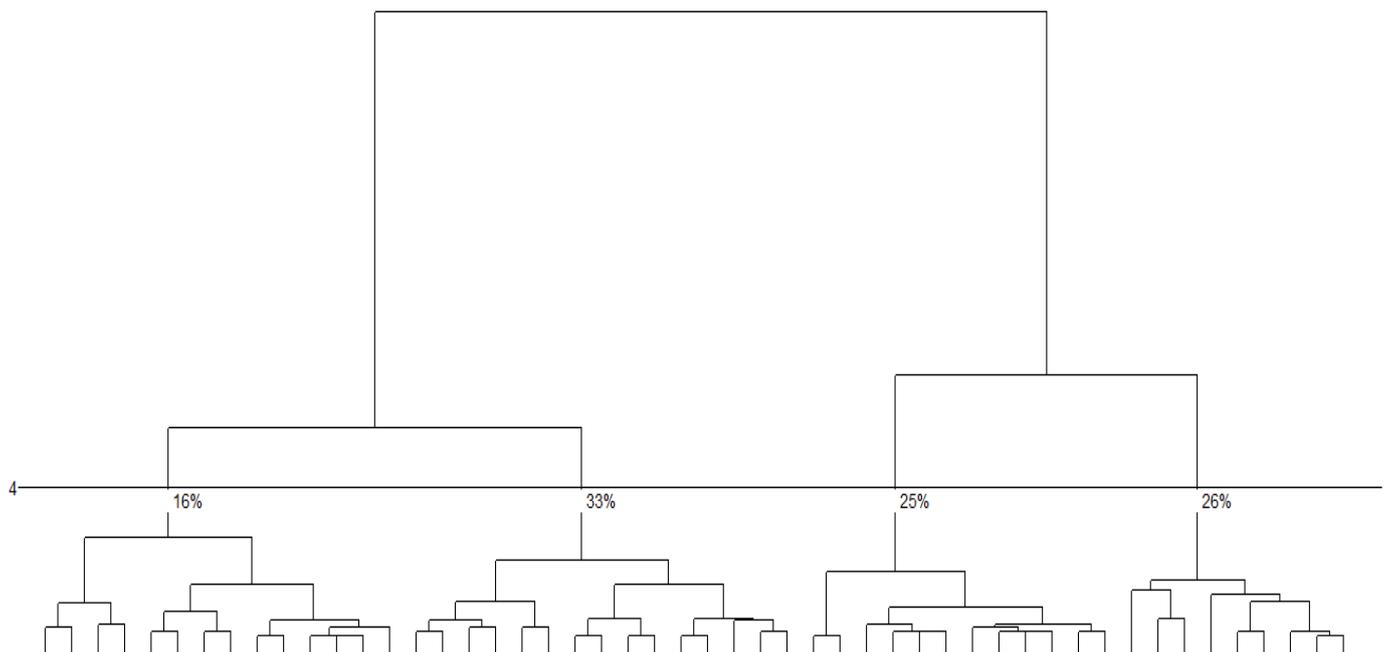


Figure 2: Classification tree or dendrogram (cut)  
Source: Field survey results January 2020, Akpovo, Abalot, Ouendo, 2020

#### 3.2.1 Classes obtained

The Ascending Hierarchical Classification of the households studied in these three municipalities allowed them to be grouped into four main classes: 1, 2, 3 and 4 (Figure 3). The richest class, the richest class, the poorest class and the poorest class (Figure 3)



### 3.3. Possibilities of movements between classes

The possibilities of movement between classes are closely linked to the vulnerability or not of the households studied to multidimensional poverty on the one hand, but also to their capacity to significantly improve their living conditions. In the first case, the study looked at the vulnerability of households to poverty. Vulnerability is the variable that reflects the probability for a household to fall downward in the lower class. Indeed, the results of this study show that there are two (2) vulnerable intermediate classes; that of poor households and those of fairly rich households. The two household classes are not far from the multidimensional poverty threshold value. They are therefore exposed and therefore may suffer the negative effects of poverty further degrading their standard of living. Also, the study notes that 17.52% of the population studied are vulnerable to multidimensional poverty and that this vulnerability remains highly variable between the three municipalities. The proportions of vulnerable populations in Savè and Cotonou are almost identical (around 26%) and thus remain higher than the overall average. A second variable that acts on the vulnerability of populations to poverty remains the severity of poverty, that is to say its intensity. In the case of this study, the vulnerability and severity ratio is calculated.

Table 4: Description of the ratio of vulnerable population to severity of multidimensional poverty

Municipalities	Multidimensional Poverty Rate	Populations vulnerable to poverty	Severity of multidimensional poverty	Ratio
Cotonou	41,69	25,92	50,29	0,51
Savè	47,56	26,41	49,53	0,53
Karimama	94,29	4,48	70,97	0,06
Together	64,19	17,52	62,03	0,28

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

It can be seen from this table that the intensity of multidimensional poverty acts on vulnerable populations in a ratio of about ½. This means that one (1) in two (2) vulnerable individuals may fall into a lower class under the influence of the severity or intensity of multidimensional poverty. However, Karimama's situation does not present the same overview. The probability that vulnerable households will fall into poverty as a result of the severity of poverty is 0.06%.

### 4. DISCUSSION:

Using the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), this study explored the living conditions of households in the three municipalities. It made it possible to target poor households, to characterize the type of poverty, its intensity and the proportion of vulnerable households by commune. The multidimensional character of poverty reflects the standard of living achieved by households taken together or in isolation. Standard of living refers to the quality and quantity of goods and services that a person or an entire population can appropriate and is related to their income and wealth. Indeed, the weakness of the assets associated with the lack of financial means are surely one of the reasons which explains the multiple deprivations suffered by the households studied in terms of health, education and standard of living. All these indicators have made it possible to construct the measure of multidimensional poverty. In the present study, the Multidimensional Poverty Index is 0.3982 for all the 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 in this study is considered poor as soon as it experiences three deprivations. These deprivations are more accentuated in Karimama where households suffer nine. Thus, households living in multidimensional poverty are 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. The central administration is located there as well as the main large markets, port and airport, thus animating the economic life of the country. This animation of economic life offers many opportunities to the different populations of the metropolis. Economic activity is shrinking as it goes up in the northern part of Benin. This justifies the decline in the standard of living of households as one leaves Cotonou for Karimama via Savè where it is observed that nearly half of households (47.56%) are multidimensionally poor. However, the households of Cotonou and those of Karimama suffer more deprivation in the field of health (52.93% and 36.90% respectively). How to explain that in Cotonou, the richest municipality, which has more socio-health infrastructure, households suffer more deprivation in the area of health compared to Karimama, the poorest municipality in which there is a 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, especially in Cotonou. Modern medicine has a privileged place in the capital. Very few households benefit from health coverage and most of them cannot afford health care, which remains expensive due to the modernity of the technical platform. The preponderance of clinics and private health centers increases the burden of health services for households. All of which explains the difficulty in financial accessibility to health care for

households in Cotonou. To this, it 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).

Also, the environmental dimension and the precarious and unhealthy living environment in places in the municipality can negatively impact the health of households in these living conditions. 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 deprivations in terms of Possession of assets contribute significantly to the multidimensional poverty of households in the municipality 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. Likewise, 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 relations between groups (Capo-Chichi, 2006; source humanity, 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 may 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 pace of poverty obtained. Among the heads of multidimensionally poor households, 64.54% have no education while only 1.69% have a university level. Of those who are wealthy, 23.40% have no education while 15.60% have a university education. Among the heads of households most vulnerable to poverty, 41.42% have a primary level among those who are vulnerable to poverty. These figures show many disparities in educational attainment between the sexes, between social groups and between municipalities. Even admitting that education does not significantly explain multidimensional poverty, it is necessary to recognize that poverty can lead to low educational attainment. This state of affairs corroborates the research results of some authors who explain that poverty can be the most important cause of low schooling for children (Knodel and Jones, 1996). Children from poor backgrounds do not have the minimum required materials, not to mention the poor environment conducive to school work (Mulusat, 1992). They drop out of school early because they have to work to help their parents care for younger children, and parents cannot meet the direct and indirect costs of educating all their children. They perform less well because of the malnutrition they suffered during childhood and the fact that they do not enjoy the same learning conditions as children from rich families. The juxtaposition of these data proves that poverty affects the level of education and conversely the low level of education can also impact the degree of poverty and its severity by putting into play the vulnerability of households to multidimensional poverty. The development of strategies for a better education rate of grassroots populations will have to take into account the realities of each social class to strengthen policies and mechanisms to fight multidimensional poverty.

In addition, the sample survey carried out made it possible, thanks to an analysis of multiple components and an ascending hierarchical classification, to obtain four (4) social classes. The richer household class, that of fairly rich households, that of poor households and the class of very poor households. The description of the content of each class made it possible to build a pyramidal social 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 (fairly rich and poor) constitute the category of intermediate households and therefore vulnerable to poverty. These results corroborate those of the study on “Inequalities and Polarization of Household Income in Benin” carried out by INSAE in 2015. It emerged from this study that the stratification of the Beninese population can be observed according to three classes (poor, middle class, rich) and that the distribution of the mass of income according to decile of per capita income would highlight a very unequal distribution of income at the national level with widening gaps between the extreme classes. In 2007, the 10% of the poorest households held 4.8% against 16.0% for the 10% of the richest households. These shares respectively rose to 6.1% and 14.1% in 2011 to fall to 2.6% and 22.5% in 2015. 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. He thus describes two (2) classes and explains that in the capitalist mode of production, the means of production are owned by a small number of people, who do not need to work in order to live: the bourgeoisie. The others are forced to “sell their labor power” in order to live: the workers. In fact, what is at stake in the economic order determines social organization. This is what makes some classical authors say that the dominant-dominated link can remain very beneficial economically (Pierre, 2007). Sidanius and Pratto (1993) join Max and propose the “Social Dominance Theory, SDT” which postulates that all

complex societies are characterized by the existence of a social hierarchy made up of one or more dominant and hegemonic groups at the top, and one or more groups dominated at the base. While the latter would be characterized by the possession of negative social value, the dominant and hegemonic group (s) would possess disproportionate positive social value. Concretely, a positive social value means the possession of political authority, power, wealth, high social status, material and economic resources, as well as privileged access to health and education. In contrast, a negative social value means having low power, low social status, low material and economic resources, less access to health and education, and obtaining negative sanctions (prison, death penalty, etc...). This social hierarchy, based on belonging to distinct groups, is believed to be the source of intergroup conflicts and all forms of social oppression (Sidanius & Pratto, 1993, 1999; Sidanius, 1993). Ultimately, the stratification of Beninese society remains similar to all those described above with sociological and anthropological nuances associated with differentiated exogenous and demographic socio-economic factors which interact and form the basis of the significant differences between the classes. Thus in the present study, 92% of heads of household declared having a job. These heads of households are mainly employees (32.19%), craftsmen (23.21%) and traders (21.37%). In addition, managers only represent 5.37% of heads of households. They therefore all 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 question calls for the political model of the country which is based on a democratic society as opposed to a society of orders or castes. In the first society, all social positions are theoretically accessible to all individuals. In the second, there is a transposition of classes from one generation to another.

Thus, two (2) postulates emerge from this dynamic:

- the first, called social mobility, describes the possibility of a change in an individual's social position from one social group to another. This change in social position can be upward or downward. It is ascending when the individual or household leaves its original class for a higher class in the social structure. This dynamic is mainly based on the existential capacity of a household, in particular its head, to bring the members of his household to better living conditions than those in which the parents live or have lived. A parent farmer or artisan, as soon as he has favorable living conditions in terms of education, health and income, has the possibility when he is not influenced by ethnic, religious and cultural constraints to positively transform the life of household members. He manages to ensure their education, their nutrition and their well-being in a satisfactory manner. The result is an increase in the standard of living of parents and consequently that of household members. National poverty reduction policies influence this dynamic and should facilitate this transition from lower to upper classes. The poorest classes, that of the poor and those of fairly wealthy households are affected by this rise. Conversely, the movement can go in the descending direction. The severity of poverty can affect vulnerable households. Indeed, middle class households are exposed to precarious living conditions. The low level of education, the unsatisfactory health status and the unpopular family environment can lead to a deterioration in the existential conditions of already fragile households and push them to descend from their original class;
- as for the second postulate, it is said of social reproduction. There are many reasons for this movement. In this case, there is an almost systematic social reproduction where poverty is transmitted from generation to generation through a systematic transposition of classes. This phenomenon describes a social practice relating to the family, consisting in maintaining a social position from one generation to the next through the transmission of heritage, whether tangible or intangible. Today, it is statistically translated by the fact, for example, that a workman's son is more likely to become a worker than to leave his social class and just as a manager's son will tend to become a manager in turn than to change social class. Social reproduction was in part studied by Marx, who was primarily interested in the accumulation and reproduction of capital. Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron in *Les Héritiers*, published in 1964 show by the example of the students and how the social position of the parents constitutes a heritage for the children, some inheriting good social positions; hence *Les Héritiers* while others on the contrary are the disinherited (Bourdieu and Passeron 1970). These same authors strive to show that the education system exercises a "power of symbolic violence", which helps to legitimize the balance of power at the origin of social hierarchies. However, reproduction has a double dimension; the so-called constraining one and therefore linked to the weakness of the existential means of parents who have no other choice than to transmit poverty or misery to their offspring and the so-called de facto one consisting just of a transposition of the original family pattern by desire or envy to his descendants.

The reality of Beninese society remains mixed and therefore shared between reproduction and mobility.

In this context, there is the possibility for a household or an individual to change classes; a blacksmith father can have a whole line of executive descendants. At the same time, for generations and in some parts of the country, reproduction is systematic. The social hierarchy is perpetuated over time, children occupy the same social positions as their parents. From grandparents farmers, we come to great grandchildren farmers. While admitting the usefulness of

this mixed character of the social structure of Benin, it is interesting to analyze its contribution to the development of the country. Indeed, if the multidimensional poverty index gives the trajectory of 6 deprivations on average per household on at least 3 of the 10 indicators considered, it is obvious that the Beninese communities at the base still live under the weight of extreme poverty. It can be deduced from this that the current social structure does not make it possible to orient the country towards harmonious and sustainable development. It is necessary to work on this architecture, through the establishment of appropriate mechanisms aimed at improving the production conditions of farmers, craftsmen and workers in various sectors. Reducing unemployment should be a priority to support young people who are also a vulnerable layer because they are exposed to the vices of modern times (Drugs, theft, rape, etc.). One line of proposals could be the strengthening of agricultural modernization and the development of agro-business. It could also be explored raising qualifications by strengthening the technical capacities of managers at the intermediate level to push more people to the top by improving their income. The youth employment integration program and the various projects and microcredit programs for the poorest are key areas of intervention to create more jobs and thereby reduce the unemployment rate in Benin. This tertiarization of the economy will generate the growth of the middle class (employees, workers), intermediate classes that promote the dynamization of the economy. This restructuring will thus be able to contribute to improving the standard of living of households and therefore significantly impact community development and by extension the development of the country.

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. Also, it is important to note that the study did not propose a concrete strategic plan for the fight against multidimensional poverty through the definition of appropriate sector policies for improving the standard of living of the populations of the target municipalities. These weaknesses mentioned constitute as many new avenues of research that can be explored to strengthen the capacities of the state in understanding and mastering the phenomenon of poverty.

## 5. CONCLUSION:

The different households studied are generally multi-dimensionally poor. Among other things, the low level of education, 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. Under the effect of other aggregates or unexpected exogenous shocks, the poor can become very poor or destitute and the rich can fall into poverty. The various national policies to combat poverty 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.

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