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RESEARCH ARTICLE

PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN URBAN-RURAL RELATIONS IN THE JACQUEVILLE DEPARTMENT (CÔTE D'IVOIRE)

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Abstract

Urban-rural relations in the Jacqueline department are marked by daily mobility between rural and urban populations. These journeys are made possible by a network of "taxi-brousses" which provide links between these two geographical areas. This study aims to determine the central role of mobility between the town of Jacqueline and its hinterland. To achieve this main objective, a methodology based on documentary research, interviews and field surveys was favored. Investigations revealed that, despite relative mobility between the town of Jacqueline and its rural area, transport means and infrastructure between this urban center and its hinterland remain in an advanced state of deterioration, making mobility between these geographical areas difficult.

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Introduction:-

Urban-rural relations in Jacqueline department are marked by the daily movement of rural dwellers towards its main urban center. The concentration of command services and commercial centers in town explains this movement. Indeed, "the lack of certain goods, resources or services in rural areas forces their populations to head for the city to benefit from certain services that the rural environment cannot offer them" (A. A. Moussoh and K. Tano, 2021, p. 230). As a result, this mobility is driven by the need to satisfy a need, and is considerably accentuated by rapid means of transport (mechanical or motorized). However, the use of various types of public transport vehicles (bush cabs, minibuses, etc.) can vary from one region or department to another, depending on their economic weight and their attractiveness to their immediate environment. In the department of Jacqueline, mobility evolves at the pace of the local economy, based on seaside tourism and coconut farming, and the affluence of its main urban center. Indeed, all city-countryside links start from Jacqueline, which remains the pole of attraction, capturing all flows to and from its rural area. However, despite the regular flow of people and goods between this urban center and its rural zone, the rural tracks are deteriorating and the means of transport are outdated. This raises the problem of a mismatch between transport supply and people's travel conditions. This raises questions about mobility as an essential factor in travel. What types of vehicles are used to travel between town and country in the Jacqueline department? How does this mobility work? What are the motives for rural travel? The aim of this study is to gain a better understanding of the role of mobility in town-country relations in the Jacqueline department. Specifically, the aim is firstly to identify the types of vehicle used for town-country links, then to analyze the reasons for these journeys and finally to determine the reasons for the journeys.

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Materials And Methods:-

Geographical setting

Jacqueville department is located in the south of Côte d'Ivoire, on the coast some 60 km from the Abidjan metropolis. This predominantly island territory is bordered to the north by the Ebrié Lagoon and the Dabou department, to the east by the Songon sub-prefecture, to the west by the Grand-Lahou department and to the south by the Atlantic Ocean (Figure 1). Also bordered by the coastline to the south and the Ebrié Lagoon to the north, Jacqueville is a narrow strip of land with a juxtaposition of seaside settlements.



Figure 1:- Presentation of the study area.

Data collection method

The results of this study are essentially based on field surveys supplemented by interviews with a sample of 300 people in 5 villages (Ahua, Djuacé, M'bahiama, Adessé, Attoutou B), including the town of Jacqueville. These surveys began on June 20, 2023 and ended on August 10, 2023. Concerns focused on the frequency, motives and modalities of mobility of respondents. Questions were also administered to local officials of the Syndicat National des Transporteurs de Voyageurs et de Marchandises and drivers at the various destinations. The interviews revealed the various destinations, the condition of vehicles and rural tracks, service frequencies and costs. All these concerns made it possible to determine the area of influence of this urban center on its rural zone.

Results:-

Bush cab services by destination

In the department of Jacqueville, mobility between the main urban center and the outlying villages is provided exclusively by bush cabs. These are low sedan-type vehicles. They are old, uncomfortable vehicles in poor condition, dating back at least forty years. Two main taxi-brousse stations serve as links between Jacqueville and its hinterland. The first is Adesse, shown in photos 1 and 2.



Photos 1 and 2:- Bush cabs parked and waiting for customers at Adessé station.
Our shots, July 2023

The condition of these vehicles leaves much to be desired. This station also serves the villages of Ahua, Grand-Jack, Adjué, Adjacoutié...as far as Adessé. The second line runs through camps to the village of Attoutou B. Photos 3 and 4 clearly show the Attoutou B station in Jacqueville.



Photos 3 and 4:- Motorized vehicles at Attoutou B station.
Our shots, July 2023

The state of the vehicles in a summary station clearly indicates that this business in crisis is in a state of total anarchy. In addition to these uncomfortable vehicles, the defective state of the rural tracks, or the fact that they are in an advanced state of deterioration, means that transport vehicles frequently break down. A remarkable fact can be noted. In the Jacqueville department, there is no policy for renewing the vehicle fleet, because on the one hand this sector remains informal, and on the other, the players in the sector remain insolvent when faced with the exorbitant prices of new vehicles. In other words, the acquisition of a vehicle is very costly in relation to the purchasing power of the majority of bush-cab owners. Although a second-hand market enables equipment to be distributed among the lowest-income bush-taxi owners, it is still out of reach. As a result, transporting people in Jacqueville department is more about necessity and the use of mobility than about comfort and better travel conditions (N.H. J. Kablan, 2011, p. 89).

Cost and frequency of travel between Jacqueville and its hinterland

The supply of bush cabs is stable, daily and inexpensive (Table 1). Indeed, fares to reach the various villages from the urban center do not exceed 1,500 CFA francs, depending on the destination.

Table 1:- Destinations and costs between Jacqueville and its rural area.

Localities	Distance (Km)	Transport costs	Road conditions	Frequency
Grand-Jack	5	300	runway	1 travel/taxi
Adjué	15	600	runway	1 travel/taxi
Adjacoutie	17	600	runway	1 travel/taxi
M'Bokrou		750	runway	1 travel/taxi
Bahuama		800	runway	1 travel/taxi
Addah	25	1000	runway	1 travel/taxi
Adesse	30	1200	runway	1 travel/taxi
Attoutou B	14	1000	runway	1 travel/taxi

Source: Personal surveys, 2023

The Jacqueville-Adesse line has around twenty bush cabs, compared with fifteen on the Jacqueville-Attoutou B line. Each cab usually makes one trip a day, due to the poor condition of the road surface and the lack of passenger traffic. As a result, there is no pre-established frequency for the departure of a vehicle to a village from the two stations. In fact, the frequency with which a vehicle departs is linked to the sluggishness of passenger numbers. Vehicles load in turn. When a vehicle is full, it starts according to its waiting rank before loading. This means that a vehicle can take one to two or even three hours to load. Prices for local transport remain attractive, depending on the distance covered. However, we are witnessing a gradual decline in the taxi-brousse business due to unfair competition from tricycles. Young people from the villages they serve are organizing themselves with their tricycles to transport people and their goods to town at reduced fares compared with those of the taxi-brousses. Photos 6 and 7 show the presence of a tricycle station.



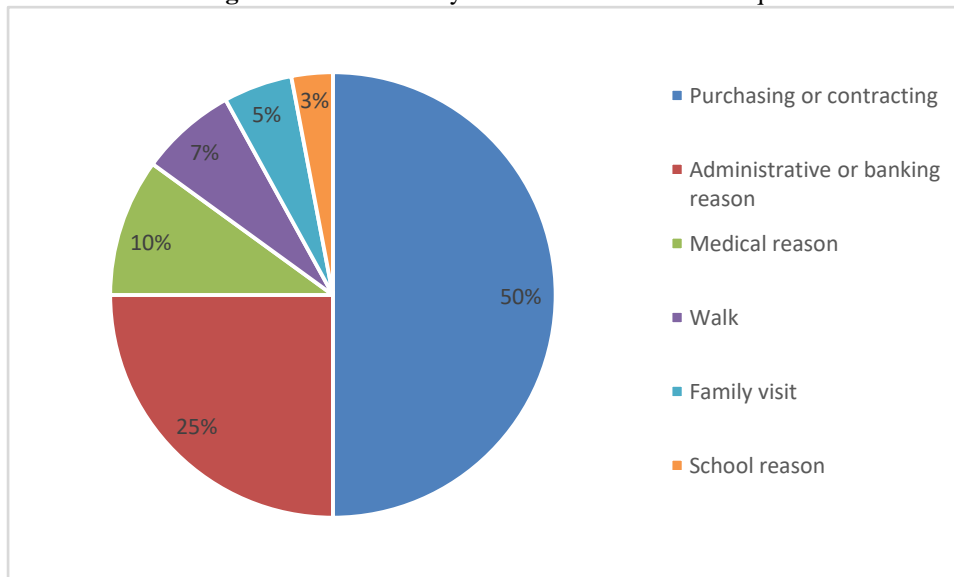
Photos 6 and 7:- Tricycles at their adjacent Adesse station.
Our shots, July 2023

These tricycles serve the Ahua village near Jacqueville, 800 meters from the town. In the past, they only served this village, including the various districts of the town. Today, they serve almost every village, competing unfairly with the taxi-brousses. Figure 2 gives an overview of the different destinations from Jacqueville.

The map illustrates the coastal region of Senegal, highlighting the study area. Key features include the Atlantic Ocean, major roads (Tarmac and Unpaved), and various towns and villages. The legend identifies symbols for the Head of departement, Head of Sub-prefecture, Village, Existing college, New college, Tarmac Road, Unpaved Road, Departement boundary, and Sub-prefecture boundary. A scale bar indicates distances up to 8 km, and a north arrow is present.

Rural travel patterns in Jacqueville

Figure 3:- Reasons why rural dwellers move to Jacqueville.



Rural commuters travel to the main urban center on a daily basis to satisfy a need. Rural travel is dominated by buying and selling. Rural people come to the city to buy manufactured goods or items that are in short supply in the countryside. Other rural residents take advantage of the opportunity to offer local products in town. The second reason for mobility is administrative and banking. The existence of departmental command services (prefecture and sub-prefecture, departmental directorate of agriculture, fisheries resources, etc.) and banks (Banque Populaire, NSIA Bank, etc.) are factors in mobility. Rural people come to Jacqueville to benefit from certain administrative acts

and/or banking services. A small proportion of rural people come to the city for medical reasons, followed by walking, family visits and schooling. In fact, in the medical field, the absence of specialized services in rural areas means that people have to go to town to benefit from certain services not available in rural areas. As for walking, Jacqueville is a tourist and seaside resort that attracts not only the urban population and that of other cities, especially the Abidjan metropolis, but also that of its rural area. Then there are the rural residents who visit their relatives back in town. Lastly, for educational reasons, some rural secondary school pupils attend public schools in the city.

Discussion:-

The results of this study clearly show that the town of Jacqueville maintains close, daily relations with its rural area through mobility. Indeed, the town's commanding powers, services and shops exert a polarizing effect on its outlying villages. In terms of administrative support for rural populations, our investigations revealed that 25% of rural dwellers benefit from administrative or banking services. Indeed, the existence of these services makes the city attractive, by encouraging rural mobility. It should be noted, however, that the primary reason for rural mobility is economic (purchase of manufactured goods or sale of local products, especially attiéké (local couscous made from powdered cassava). The town's role as a driving force in the department is well known, thanks to the work of J. Nzisabira (1995, p. 10) and J. Beaujeu-garnier (1969, p 710-711). For these authors, the city appears as a central place that distributes goods and services to its rural area, hence this mobility. It should be noted, however, that the sale of local produce in the town is part of the theoretical framework for the supply of food to the town by its rural area. In other words, the rural area is supposed to supply the town of Jacqueville with food products. Indeed, the countryside is characterized "by the size of the area devoted to agricultural activity" (K. Messaoudi, 2003, p. 22). As a result, the rural area plays a vital role in supplying the town with food. This supply is essential to the city. This is what O. Dolfus (1973, p. 93) understood when he established a historical relationship between the supply of food to cities during the Industrial Revolution. In his words, "historically, cities have only been able to emerge and develop when the countryside has been able to generate a productive surplus to supply them". However, in the department of Jacqueville, apart from attiéké, the rural area does not supply the town of Jacqueville with food products. Indeed, the rural economy is dominated by coconut exports and fishing, to the detriment of food crops. As a result, Jacqueville's central market is supplied by the Abidjan metropolis. It is therefore an extroverted or exogenous food supply with no direct links to its hinterland. A similar study carried out in the Dabou department in 2014 produced the same results (L.K. Atta et al: 2014, p. 303). Indeed, the inability of the rural area of Dabou department to satisfy its main urban center, Dabou, with food supplies, forces this town to obtain supplies directly from Abidjan. The results also show that mobility between Jacqueville and its outlying villages is possible thanks to the development of a network of roads and public transport vehicles capable of providing daily services between these geographical areas. Indeed, roads and means of transport remain a sine qua non for any mobility between Jacqueville and its rural area. This view is shared by A. Ndao (2017, p.85), T. A. Koby (1993, p. 413), J. Lombard and O. Ninot (2012, p. 4) and G.K. Nyassogbo (2003, p. 2). For these authors, mobility inevitably requires the development of means and routes of transport.

Conclusion:-

The results of this study reveal daily mobility between the town of Jacqueville and its rural area. Economic reasons by far dominate these movements, followed by administrative and banking services. Our investigations also revealed that, despite relative mobility between the town of Jacqueville and its rural zone, transport means and infrastructure between this urban center and its hinterland remain in an advanced state of disrepair, making mobility between these geographical areas difficult. In short, mobility conditions are particularly difficult due to poorly maintained village tracks and dilapidated transport equipment.

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