
FONCIER ET AMENAGEMENT URBAIN : ENJEUX, PRATIQUES LOCALES ET DEFIS DANS LA VILLE DE SAVE (REGION CENTRE DU BENIN)

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this work is to highlight the development challenges of the town of Savè, based on an analysis of the topographical characteristics of the town and the land practices that are observed there. The methodology used to conduct this work was based on documentary research, field observations and investigations with the main actors of land management in the city.

The data collected have undergone qualitative or quantitative analysis, content analysis or statistical processing. The results obtained were analyzed according to the PEIR model (Pressure-State-Impact and Responses). At the end of the investigations and analyzes it is observed that the city is experiencing constraints of extension due to the series of hills that encircle it to the north and the valleys of the river Ouémé and its tributary Okpara which delimit it in its western parts, East and south. Certainly, the commune of Savè has adopted a Master Plan of Development in 2006 supposed to ensure the harmonious occupation of the communal territory and therefore of the urban space. But this scheme has never really been implemented. The only development actions recorded in the city are limited to subdivision operations. They covered three sectors of the city namely Savè new, Savè new extension and Savè new extension II. They did not lead to a genuine verbalisation of the districts concerned (installation of supply and electricity networks, sanitation, etc.) but were limited, at best, to the layout of the tracks. However, with the installation of the Supreme Society of Savè (SSS), which became Suces et Complaints du Benin (SUCOBE) and a University Center, the city's demographic and spatial dynamism has been strengthened. It is therefore important that bold actions be taken to deal effectively with urban development challenges arising from the demographic and spatial dynamics of the city.

Keywords: Town of Savè, urban planning, land practices, constraints of extension

Introduction

The land, once collective and inalienable, has become, since colonial times, the object of greed that grows with time. Support for life and human activities, it is solicited to meet individual

needs as well as collective needs: housing, roads, socio-community infrastructure, etc. In cities, which in essence are characterized by a concentration of people and activities, the demands of the land are even stronger.

According to Vissoh (2012), the cities of the underdeveloped countries spread out more than they develop in height. This requires that the authorities and other actors of urban management work to provide these cities with effective tools to control their extension. According to Michel et al (2011), the cities of the countries of the South are experiencing considerable growth which is not sufficiently accompanied by the necessary facilities and facilities to provide the inhabitants with a decent living environment. This observation was already made by Durant-Lasserve et al (1999) when they asserted that urban growth in the underdeveloped countries has taken a much greater pace than the capacity of the States to provide services and equip urban spaces.

For various reasons, some cities see their land availability reduced while they are marked by a significant demographic dynamics. This is the case of the town of Savè, which is confronted with numerous constraints due to the presence of a series of hills (known as the Savè Mamelles) located to the north of the city and other on the other hand, the valleys of the Ouémé river and that of its tributary Okpara, which delimit the city to the west, to the south and to the east.

According to the results of the last general population and housing census, the town of Savè has a population of 31,444 inhabitants in 2013 (INSAE, 2013). This figure was 26,440 in 2002 and 19,880 in 1992 (INSAE, 2002). This increase in the urban population increases the need for building land. There is therefore an important problem: on the one hand, the city is experiencing real difficulties of extension, and on the other hand, the need for building land is increasing. Under these conditions, how is the land apprehended in the town of Savè? What tools are put in place by the authorities to manage it? Will these tools effectively address the city's current challenges and prepare solutions to the problems it faces tomorrow?

Based on an analysis of land practices in the city, this work, while providing some answers to these questions, will focus on the place of land in urban planning.

1. Data and methods

1.1 Geographic focus of the study

The town of Savè, part of the present study, is located in the Department of Hills. The capital of the municipality with the same name is between 2 ° 48 'and 2 ° 49' east longitude on the one hand and between latitude 8 ° 03 'and 8 ° 04' north, 'somewhere else. From a surface area of 750 km² (INSAE, 2013), the city is bounded on the north by the Sakin District, on the east by Okpara, on the south and on the west by the Borough of Offe (Figure 1); it is made up of three districts (Adido, Boni and Plateau) and fourteen districts of town.

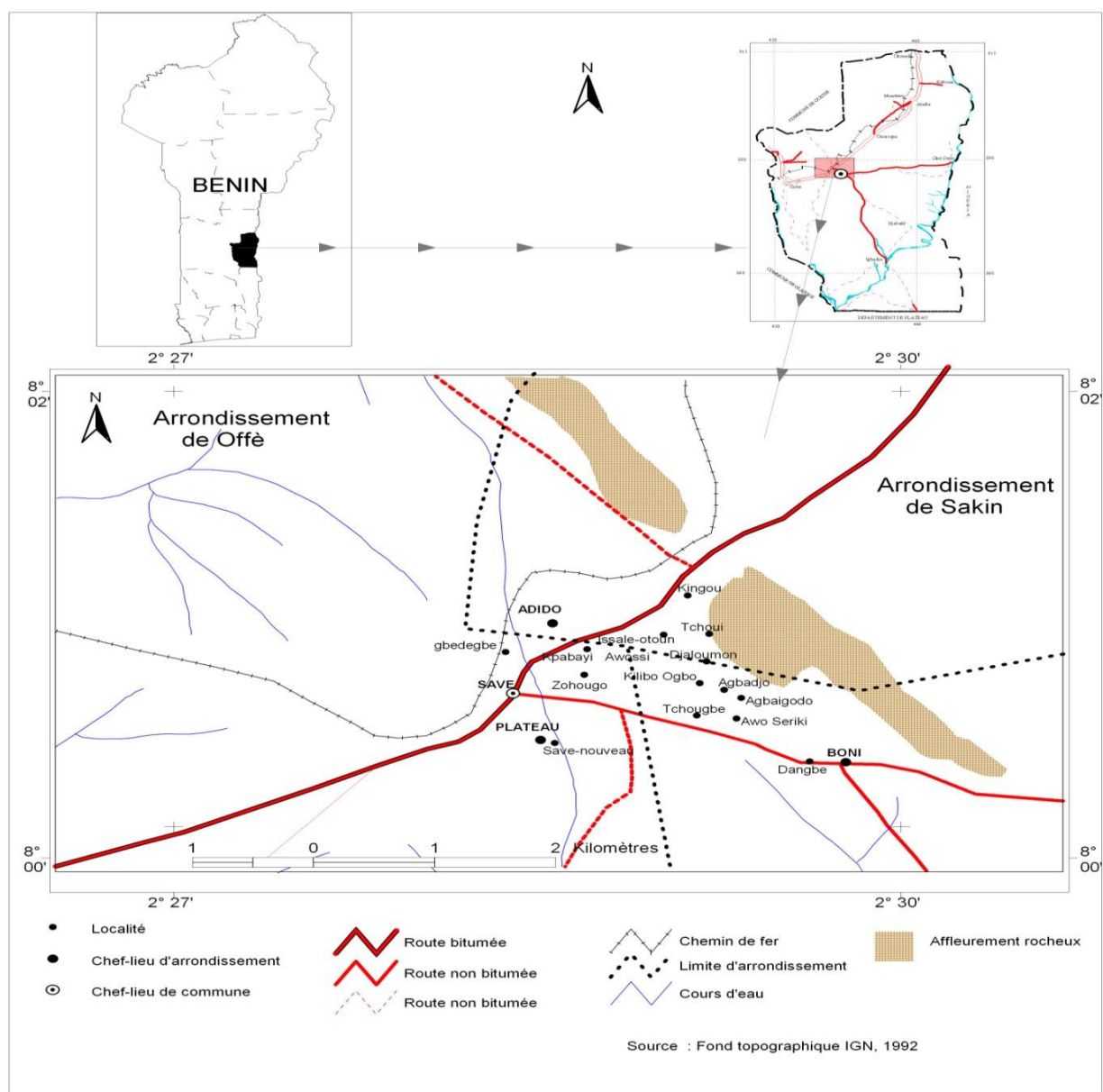


Figure 1: Location of the town of Savè

1.2 Nature of data collected

The data collected in this study are topographic, socio-demographic and spatial. They deal with the physical and human characteristics of the city, the modes of access to urban land, the nature of community infrastructure and facilities, their condition, urban space management tools, etc.

1.3 Data collection techniques, materials and tools

To carry out the data collection, the following materials and tools were used:

- two maintenance guides addressed respectively to the municipal authorities and to the city's elders and notables.
- questionnaires for households and municipal agents in charge of urban space management.

As research techniques, documentary research was initially carried out in libraries and documentation centers. This research was complemented by interviews conducted in the field. The sample size used for household surveys was determined using the Marien and Beaud formula (2003): $n = \frac{N}{\sqrt{N}}$; with n , the sample size, N , the total number of households estimated at 6321 according to the results of the last general census of population and housing (INSAE, 2013). Thus, 376 households were surveyed using this formula. (i) at least twenty-five (25) years of age and (ii) have been residing in the town of Savè for at least ten (10) years. This age and duration of residence are chosen to ensure that respondents are able to provide relevant information on land practices given the complexity of these practices. Seven (07) of the fourteen (14) districts in the city were visited at three (03) in the Boni district and two (02) in each of the Plateau and Adido districts.

2. Results

2.1 Constraints to the extension of the city

Numerous rock outcrops occur in the urban space in the form of domes (Figure 2).

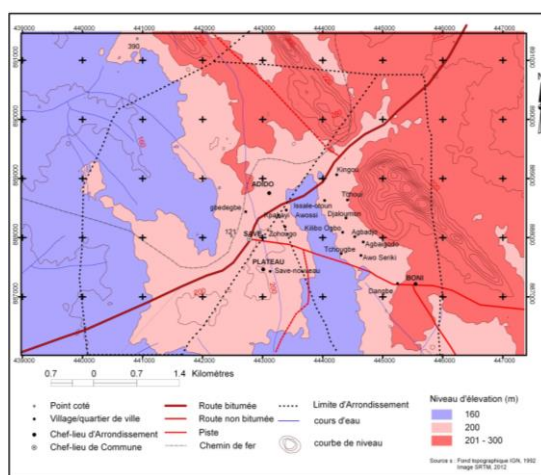


Figure 2: Hills and valleys constraining the extension of the town of Savè

In this figure, in the east and north of the urban space, there is an alignment of concentric contour lines, the value of the ribs of which increases from the outside towards the center of the curves. This form of contour presentation reflects the presence of hills. The peculiar disposition of these hills has given them the name of Savè's mamels. It is a rather picturesque relief of the region (photo 1), potentially valuable for tourist purposes but which is a constraint to the extension of the city. The same remark is made by Fagbédji (2009) about the city of Atakpamè (Togo) nestled at the bottom of a basin. The natural belt formed by this basin gives the city a very attractive geographical landscape. But the relief and the configuration of the urban perimeter are a hindrance to the extension of this one.



Photo 1: Partial view of the breasts of Savè

Shooting: Kotchoni, January 2017

There are also two valleys: the Ouémé river and its Okpara tributary, which delimit the urban site to the west (Ouémé valley), to the south and to the east (Okpara valley). To this must be added the lower valley of the Ahin River, which divides the town into two natural slopes: the eastern slope, which extends to the foot of the "mamelles" and which shelters the old town and the western slope, which houses the new quarters.

As can be seen, the urban space is experiencing real difficulties of extension because of these constraining topographic units (hills and valleys). This limits the availability of building land in the city. Despite these limitations, the population of the city is increasing due to a number of factors.

2.2 Factors of urban dynamism

The annual growth rate of the urban population was 3, 30% between 1992 and 2002 and 1.89% between 2002 and 2013.

The high rate recorded between 1992 and 2002 is a consequence of the rural exodus which the city benefited from the resumption of the activities of the Sugar Savings Society (SSS). The company was set up in 1973 by Benin and Nigeria and was interrupted between 1981 and 1987 before being taken over by the Agrimatec Group and then SUCOBE in 2003. In the context of economic gloom, characterized the period from 1981 to 1988, the resumption of the company's activities in 1988 caused a major rural exodus in favor of the town of Savè. Added to this are the effects of the creation of a number of socio-community infrastructures such as secondary schools, the railway station, etc. Even if between 2002 and 2013 the rate of increase has decreased, demographic projections, carried out over ten (10) years from data from the 2013 general population census (Figure 3), show a sufficient population size high for urban access, an important concern for the development of the city.

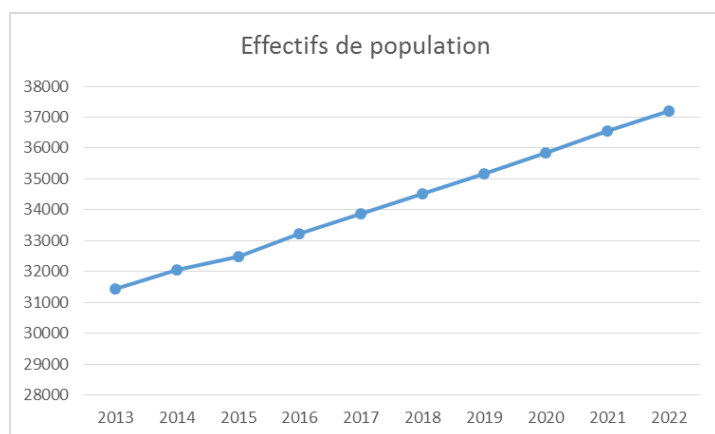


Figure 3: Evolution of the population of the town of Savè between 2013 and 2022

Source: According to INSAE, 2013

Figure 3 shows that the urban population will exceed 37,000 by 2022 if the annual growth rate is maintained at its present value of 1.89%. Indeed, the population would be 37198 inhabitants for a city whose area is valued at 750km² (INSAE, 2013); this would mean an average density of 49.59 inhabitants / km² compared to 41.92 inhabitants / km² in 2013.

Land cover analysis in 1995 and 2015 shows an increase in built-up area and fallow land, and a decline in rock surfaces and forest galleries (Figures 4 and 5).

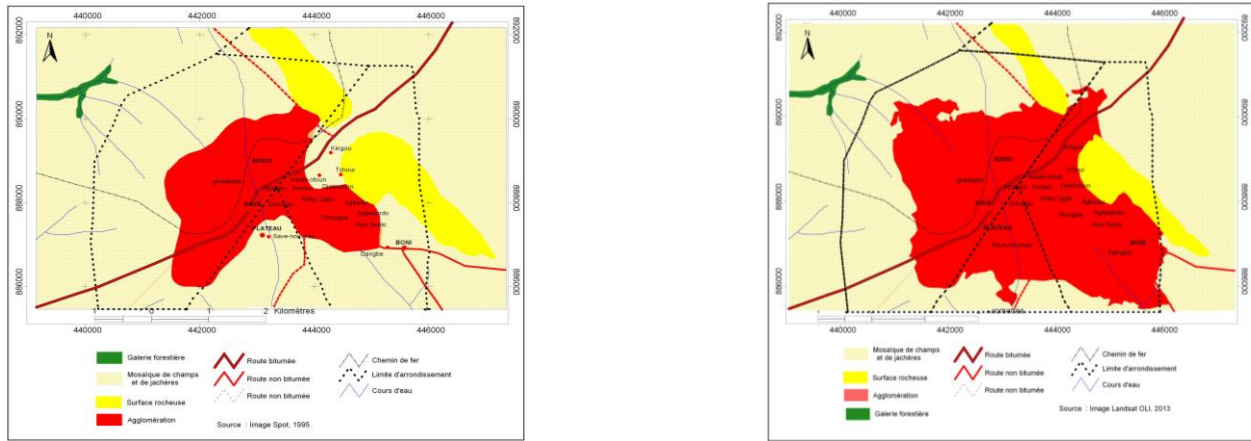


Figure 4: Land use in the town of Savè in 1995, Figure 5: Land use in the town of Savè in 2015

Analysis of Figures 4 and 5 shows a decline in forest galleries (from 7% to 5%) in favor of fields and fallow land (which grew from 71% to 73%) and built-up areas (agglomerations) (from 18% to 20%) to the detriment of rock surfaces (which declined from 4% to 2%). In fact, the populations began by building at the foot of the hills thus nibbling the areas of these.

2.3 Land practices in the town of Savè

Two main modes of access to land are recorded in the town of Savè (Figure 6).

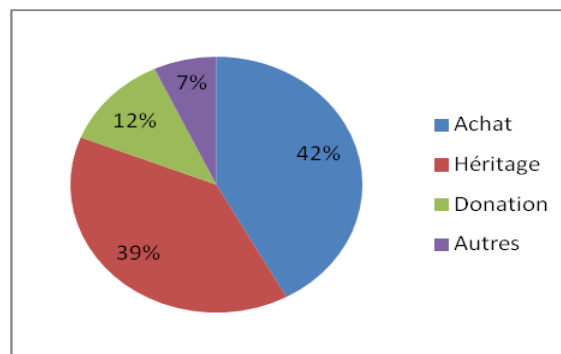


Figure 6: Relative importance of access to land in the town of Savè

Source: Survey results, January 2017

This figure shows the preponderance of the purchase as a mode of access to the land and reflects the will of each city dweller to have his "home", considered as a proof of social success. This desire to dispose of one's own "home" leads to a frantic race towards the urban land and weakens the traditional relations of man to the earth, characterized by the collectivism and the inalienability of the earth. Moreover, it makes it difficult to mobilize land for socio-community infrastructure. Because expropriation procedures are often complex and difficult to conclude because local authorities or even the central state do not always have the appropriate tools. The only opportunities available to the authorities to dispose of land for the benefit of the community remain subdivision operations. In the town of Savè, three subdivision phases were carried out respectively in 1980, 1990 and 2003. They covered the Savè-nouveau, Savè nouvelle-extension and Savè nouvelle extension II sectors. None of these phases of subdivision have really succeeded. They have led, at best, to fragmentation of domains without opening channels as provided for in the plans. This has led to inadequate viability: no water supply and no electricity. These operations, which constitute the only tools for land management, are sometimes challenged by populations, particularly those in the Zongo district (Plateau district), who consider them to be parcel operations. In fact, subdivisions often take place after the settlement of populations. In order to dispose of land for the purpose of installing the infrastructure and facilities necessary for community life (roads, markets, schools, playgrounds, health centers, etc.), the authorities apply a so-called reduction coefficient, is nothing more than the percentage of the right of way of these infrastructures in relation to the total area of the estate to be subdivided. In the town of Savè, this reduction coefficient varies from 20 to 40% depending on the number of facilities and infrastructure (market, playground, schools, health center, etc.) that existed in the neighbourhood before start of subdivision operations. The 40% rate adopted by the local authorities to be applied in the Plateau district seemed too high in the eyes of the populations who then opposed subdivision operations. It should be pointed out that, in reality, the land reserves set up following the application of the reduction coefficient are not always used for the purposes for which they were set up. They are sometimes fragmented and ceded to individuals; which often provokes the astonishment and anger of the populations.

In short, it appears that the management of land as practiced by urban actors is not conducive to the sustainability of the city: changes in people's relations to land, changes in the way land is accessed, lack of effective land management tools, difficulties in conducting and completing subdivision work, etc. These facts give rise to many challenges to the development of the city.

2.4 Challenges to the Town of Savè

Land is an important resource, even essential for urban development. There is practically no development action that is not supported by land (Vissoh, 2012). In the special case of the town

of Savè where land availability is limited, this resource must be managed with more rationality. It is important that the city's infrastructure needs are immense. Those that exist are either in a dilapidated state (Photo 2) or cramped.



Photo 2: Partial view of the building housing the public kindergarten in the Borough of Boni Shot: Kotchoni, January 2017

Faced with this situation, the first challenge for local authorities will be to equip themselves with the tools to rationally manage the access and use of urban land. To this end, two tools seem indispensable: the Municipal Development Master Plan (SDAC) and the Land Use Plan (POS).

According to the DAT (2007), the BIA is a planning document that sets out the basic long-term orientations for the management of the communal area, preserving the balance between urban extension and the practice of rural activities, the development of other economic activities, the protection of forest areas, sites and landscapes and the preservation of natural sites. Its main objective is to ensure a coherent organization of space by providing a framework for development, planning and protection policies. It has three essential functions, namely spatial planning, the coherence of infrastructures and facilities in the commune and the spatial coordination of economic and social development. The usefulness of this tool lies in the fact that it makes it possible to define the allocations of the communal territory by distinguishing the zone "U" or urban zone, zone "AU" or zone to be urbanized, zone "A" and pastoral areas and the "N" zone, also called natural areas equipped or not. The elaboration and implementation of this tool will allow economical and balanced use of spaces (natural, urban, peri-urban and rural), taking into account the prevention of predictable natural risks (due to the presence of hills). Admittedly, in 2006 the municipality had a BIA; but to the test of facts, this document proved to be inoperative due primarily to the approach of its elaboration, which according to local actors would not have been participatory. Then it was not popularized and therefore not appropriate by the populations. Local authorities, when developing the new BIA, must avoid these pitfalls in order to make them a genuine development tool.

The second tool advocated (the Land Use Plan -POS) will define the areas where constructions are permitted, the density requirements, the easements and the architectural features that buildings must respect (Belmer, 2011). Through this tool, local authorities will be able to combat urban sprawl (the source of land wastage) and the occupation of hill feet as is currently the case.

These two tools will provide the local authorities with a framework for the actions of urban planning in general and urban space in particular. Thus it will no longer be a question of subdividing but subdividing only those areas which would have been defined as being capable of housing constructions.

3. Discussions

The situation observed and analyzed above is not specific to the town of Savè. Indeed, for Durand-Lasserve (1986), access to land is one of the main obstacles to the implementation of public housing programs, and thus one of the major causes of the rapid development of housing areas irregular. Despite this close relationship between land availability and management actions, authorities at various levels often do not have the right reflexes to ensure the harmonious development of urban spaces. According to Ndadoun (2003), the development of the city of N'Djaména was not a major concern of the institutions in charge of it. Apart from the interminable restructuring operations aimed at correcting the effects of spontaneous growth, there was no real policy of urban planning and maintenance of the city's infrastructure. According to Fagbédji (2009), the large demographic growth experienced by large cities in sub-Saharan Africa over the past several decades has resulted in uncontrolled urban sprawl, inadequate basic services such as schools, health centers, electricity and drinking water. .) and poor accessibility of the outlying districts. This was particularly noticeable in Tizi-Ouzou, where the city, like a torrent seeking its way, rushes into the slightest breach, the smallest ravine, to realize and contain its extension (Laïche and Sadoudi, 2011).

In a situation such as the town of Savè, where the availability of building land is limited, the authorities in charge of urban management and development must be sufficiently proactive to anticipate the human occupation of urban space. Unfortunately, the extension of cities in sub-Saharan Africa is still ahead of the completion of development works and the provision of public facilities (Fagbédji, 2009). Finally, an important shortcoming often noted is the lack of tools for planning and managing urban extension. Thus, in most cities of Benin, the only tools available to the authorities in the field of land management remain subdivisions. As Domingo (2007) pointed out, subdivisions are retail operations that can only be carried out in construction areas.

Conclusion

The access of urban dwellers to healthy and decent housing and quality services is an important issue in urban planning. Therefore, rational management must be made of land, especially in cities such as Savè, marked by strong constraints of extension. No negligence should be tolerated in the management of land; it must be done with efficient tools to ensure the harmonious occupation of the urban space and the control of its extension. It is an indispensable condition for the sustainable development of the city.

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