

## **Typology and Reasons for the Development of Non-Agricultural Activities in the Rural Areas of The Sub-Prefecture of Koun-Fao (Ivory Coast)**



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**SUMMARY:** Agriculture will remain the main source of income and socio-economic development in rural areas of Côte d'Ivoire for a long time to come. However, the successive crises in the coffee-cocoa sector and in almost all other agricultural sectors have led to the emergence of non-agricultural activities in rural areas of Côte d'Ivoire, such as those of the Koun-Fao sub-prefecture in the east of the country. In these areas, these activities have become a real alternative in the fight against rural impoverishment. Given the role played by this non-agricultural sector, the main objective of this research is not only to identify the types of activity but also to determine the reasons behind their development in the Koun-Fao area. To achieve this objective, the methodology adopted is a combination of documentary research, observation, interviews and surveys by questionnaire with 122 actors of non-agricultural activities in 8 villages of the Koun-Fao sub-prefecture. The surveys in the sub-prefecture of Koun-Fao reveal a diversity of non-agricultural activities, which include all the small trades described as informal in urban areas. The actors in this sector are not only Ivorians and non-nationals, but also a high proportion of young people. Non-agricultural activities owe their establishment and development to several factors, the most important of which are the lack of arable land and the income generated by these activities, which is clearly better than that from agriculture in a region with a long agrarian tradition.

**KEY WORDS:** Typology, non-agricultural activities, development, Koun-Fao.

### **INTRODUCTION**

From colonial times to the post-colonial era, Côte d'Ivoire has focused its economic and social development on agriculture. Thus, in 2012, the agricultural sector occupied 66% of the active population and contributed 70% of export earnings (ROPPA, 2012, p 51). According to the Ministry of Agriculture (1999, p 7), the income from agriculture has been used to finance a vast investment programme in socio-economic infrastructure in Ivorian towns and villages. This strategic position of the agricultural sector in the development of Côte d'Ivoire has led the political authorities to encourage the population to turn to agriculture, which is becoming an essential lever in the fight against poverty and social development in rural areas.

But with the agricultural crises of the 1980s and 1990s, combined with those linked to food in 2007-2008 (A. A. Adayé, 2021, p. 245), economic activities in rural areas have undergone a change. Thus, the rural economy is no longer the exclusive domain of agriculture insofar as rural people practice numerous non-agricultural activities in the countryside, which have become a springboard for the development of areas such as those of the sub-prefecture of Koun-Fao, in eastern Côte d'Ivoire.

Traditionally and in line with the seasonal nature of agriculture and the specialisations of certain families, non-agricultural activities have always existed in West Africa in general and in Côte d'Ivoire in particular to meet the demand of the sector, which needs the development of product processing activities, advice, transport, sales structures and financing (Grain De Sel, 2009, p. 25). Despite the indispensable nature of the rural world, agricultural activities have still not been sufficiently taken into account in the various development plans of Côte d'Ivoire (Y. F. Kouassi and A. Koulaï, 2018, p 53). However, this institutional marginalisation has not been a brake on the non-agricultural sector, which is growing in the villages of the Koun-Fao sub-prefecture. According to local actors, non-agricultural activities have become real alternatives in the fight against poverty in rural areas.

Given the indispensable place that non-agricultural activities now occupy, scientific research deserves to be conducted. It is with this in mind that this research looks at the typology and reasons for their development in the terroirs of the Koun-Fao sub-prefecture. The main objective of this work is to identify the types of non-agricultural activities and to determine the factors underlying their emergence in the rural areas of Koun-Fao.

# Typology and Reasons for the Development of Non-Agricultural Activities in the Rural Areas of The Sub-Prefecture of Koun-Fao (Ivory Coast)

## MATERIEL ET METHODES

### 1-The study zone

Established in 1969 by decree N°80-1099, the sub-prefecture of Koun-Fao is located 305 km from Abidjan in the North-East of Côte d'Ivoire, in the Gontougo region, and in the Zanzan district. According to the RGPH (2014), this sub-prefecture has 16352 men and 15630 women, making a total of 31982 people. It is bordered to the north by the sub-prefectures of Kouassi-datekro, Diamba and Tanda, to the south by Duffrebo and Tankesse, to the east by Transua and to the west by Bohai and Samanaza (Figure 1). This sub-prefecture is known for its ethnic diversity as it comprises 4 ethnic groups. This makes it a cosmopolitan sub-prefecture. A predominantly agricultural area, Koun-Fao also has very close trade relations with Ghana because of its proximity to the latter.

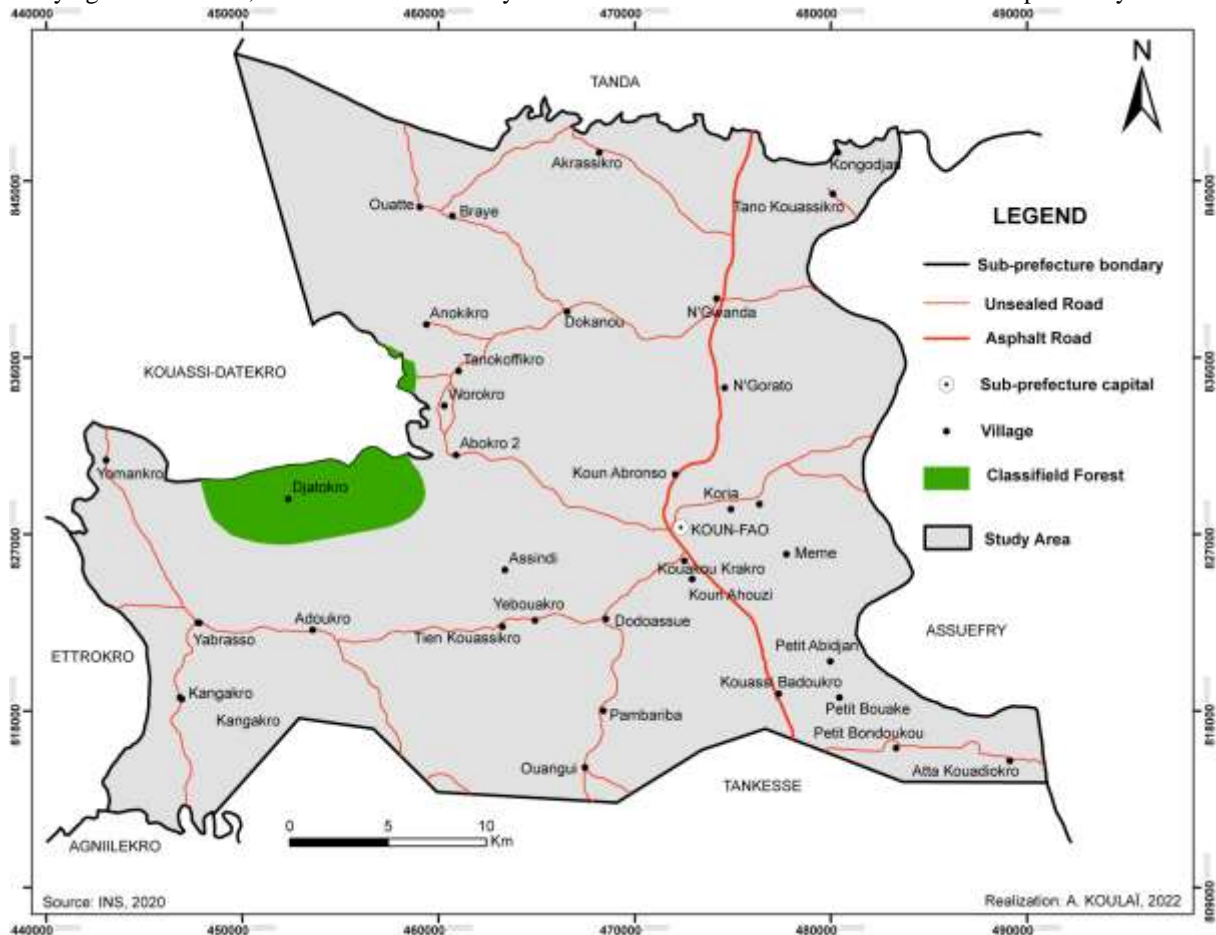


Figure 1: Presentation of the sub-prefecture of Koun-Fao

### 1-Data collection methodology

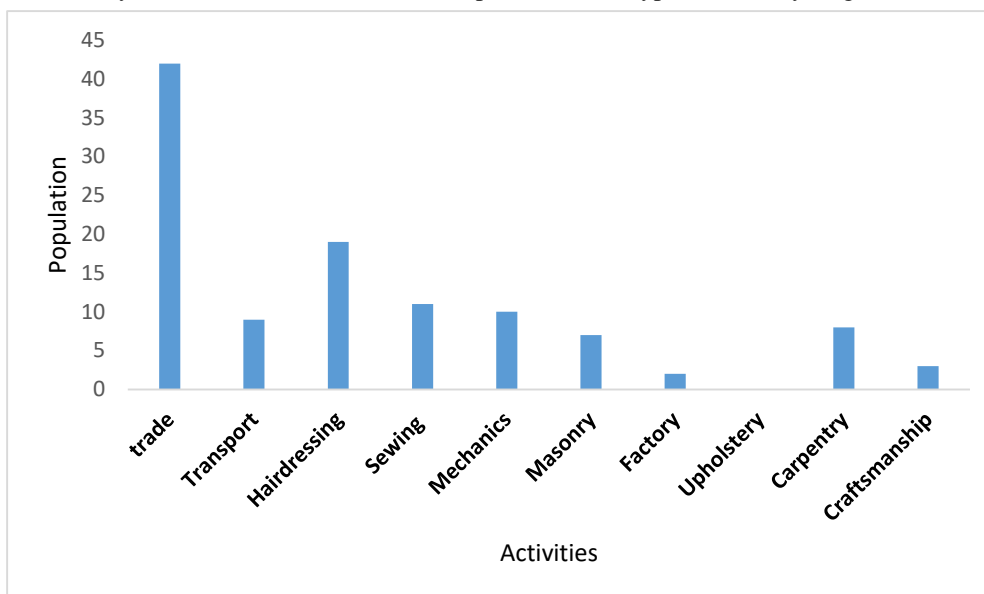
The methodology of data collection for the present study revolved around three main techniques, namely: documentary research, direct observation, and interviews, not forgetting the field surveys. The documentary research consisted essentially of a search for books, statistical and cartographic documents. Due to the dispersion of the documents, the works were consulted in several libraries, centres and research institutes. After the documentary research phase, the conditions were met to undertake field research, which required a prior definition of the survey periods. In the villages of the Koun-Fao sub-prefecture, the field surveys took place in January and February 2022. This field survey phase began with observation. It was carried out through several visits to 8 villages in Koun-Fao in order to closely assess the typology and scope of non-agricultural activities. In addition to observation, the understanding of the socio-demographic characteristics of the actors as well as the factors underlying the establishment and development of non-agricultural activities required the use of interviews with customary and administrative leaders in the various localities surveyed. In addition to social and administrative leaders, knowledge of the profile of actors in the non-agricultural sector and the factors behind the emergence of non-agricultural activities was also possible thanks to a questionnaire survey of 122 heads of household or heads of activity in the 8 villages selected for this study. The number of actors to be interviewed per village was proportional to the size of the total population engaged in non-agricultural activities in the 8 rural localities of the Koun-Fao Sub-Prefecture.

## Typology and Reasons for the Development of Non-Agricultural Activities in the Rural Areas of The Sub-Prefecture of Koun-Fao (Ivory Coast)

### RESULTS

#### 1- Typology of non-agricultural activities in the Koun-Fao terroirs

The non-agricultural economy of the Koun-Fao terroirs encompasses several types of activity (Figure 2).



**Figure 2: Distribution of actors by type of non-agricultural activity**

Source: Personal surveys, February 2022

The results of the field investigations contained in Figure 2 show that there are about ten agricultural activities practised by the population in the villages of the Koun-Fao sub-prefecture. However, a closer look at the data in this figure shows that trade is the primary non-agricultural activity developed by the population. This activity occupies 43 actors, or 35%. Apart from trade, hairdressing is the second activity, involving 20 people or 16%. Sewing is the third with a proportion of 11% or 13 actors. Mechanics and transport are the fourth activities practiced by the population with 9%. Actors working in industrial units are the least representative with barely 1%.

#### 1- Socio-demographic characteristics of non-agricultural actors in the Koun-Fao terroirs

Non-agricultural actors in the Koun-Fao areas have socio-demographic characteristics based on the following variables: gender, age, nationality, marital status (Table 2), number of children, education level and religion (Table 3).

**Table 2: Structuring of actors by gender, age, nationality and marital status**

LOCALITY	GENDER		AGE RANGE			NATIONALITY		MARITAL STATUS		
	M	F	22-30	31-40	40+	Nationals	Non-Nationals	Married	Widow(er)	Single
KOTO N'GANDA	19	12	04	15	12	12	19	15	04	12
AKRASSIKRO	07	04	02	07	02	09	10	06	00	05
YOMIANKRO	09	05	03	07	04	08	03	07	01	06
OUATTE	09	13	06	09	07	13	09	19	00	09
YAKRASSO	04	08	01	08	03	05	07	04	01	07
DOKANOU	07	04	06	04	01	07	04	03	01	07
KORIA	01	03	03	01	00	03	01	03	00	01
ASSINDI	11	06	04	10	03	08	09	04	01	12
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>59</b>

Source: Personal surveys, February 2022

Table 2 shows that the majority of actors in the non-agricultural sector in rural Koun-Fao are men (55%). With regard to age, the table shows that this sector of economic activity is the business of young people and adults, with half of the actors in the 31 to 40 age group. These activities occupy both nationals and non-nationals, but with a slight superiority to Ivorians (51%). The marital

## Typology and Reasons for the Development of Non-Agricultural Activities in the Rural Areas of The Sub-Prefecture of Koun-Fao (Ivory Coast)

status of the non-agricultural population clearly indicates that this sector is essentially the business of single and married people. These two statuses account for 94% of the respondents, but with a slight advantage for married people.

**Table 3: Structuring of actors by number of children, level of education and religion**

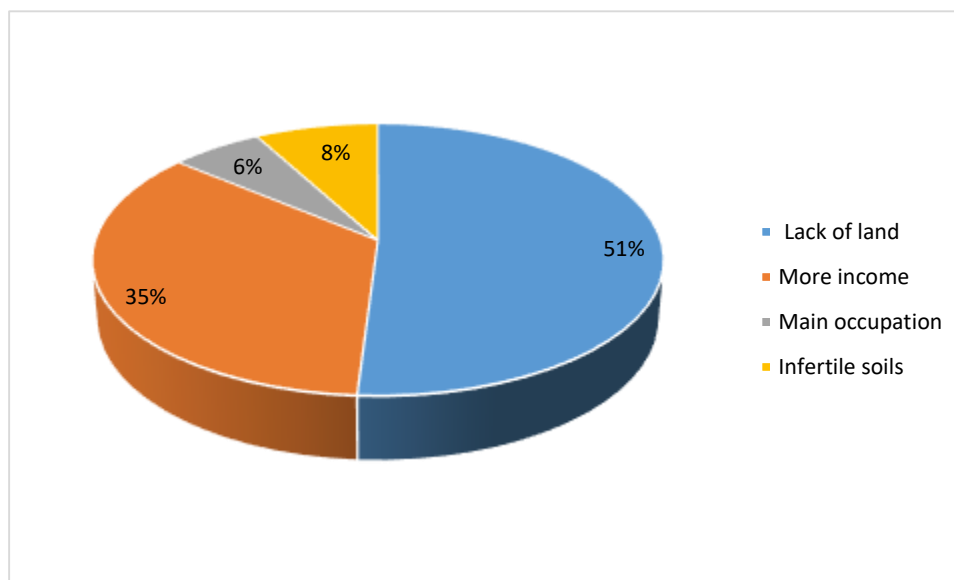
LOCALITY	NUMBER OF CHILDREN			LEVEL OF EDUCATION			RELIGION		
	o to 3	4 to 6	7 and more	Primary	Secondary	Superior	Christian	Muslim	Animist
KOTO N'GANDA	18	09	03	10	13	08	14	16	01
AKRASSIKRO	07	03	01	04	05	01	02	07	02
YOMIANKRO	05	08	01	06	08	00	05	08	01
OUATTE	09	08	05	08	11	03	08	14	00
YAKRASSO	06	04	02	06	05	01	04	07	01
DOKANOU	08	03	01	07	02	01	06	04	01
KORIA	04	00	00	03	01	00	03	01	00
ASSINDI	10	05	02	06	08	03	08	09	00
<b>TOTAUX</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>06</b>

Source: Personal surveys, February 2022

The data in Table 3 indicate that the majority of people engaged in non-agricultural activities in the Koun-Fao areas (55%) have an average of three children per household. They are followed by actors with between 4 and 6 children (33%). Only 12% of actors have 7 or more children per household. As for the level of education, the same table shows that most of the actors in the non-agricultural sector of Koun-Fao who can read and write are at primary and secondary level (86%), but with a slight advantage for those at secondary level (44%) compared to 42%. Actors with a higher level of education constitute barely 14%. The structuring of these actors according to religion shows that Muslims constitute more than half (54%). They are followed by Christians who represent 41% of the actors. Animists come last with only 5%.

### 2- Reasons for the practice of non-agricultural activities in the Koun-Fao terroirs

People working in the non-agricultural sector in Koun-Fao gave more reasons for practising the activities inherent in this environment (Figure 3).



**Figure 3: Proportion of reasons for engaging in non-farm activity**

Source: Personal surveys, February 2022

Examination of Figure 3 indicates the existence of four basic reasons for the establishment and development of non-agricultural activities in rural Koun-Fao. The first reason for the practice of these activities is the lack of land for agriculture. This reason was confirmed by more than half of the respondents. The second reason that drives people to non-agricultural activities is the income generated (35%). These two causes are followed by infertility of cultivable land and non-agricultural activity as the main occupation with 8% and 6% of respondents respectively.

## Typology and Reasons for the Development of Non-Agricultural Activities in the Rural Areas of The Sub-Prefecture of Koun-Fao (Ivory Coast)

### DISCUSSION

The rural economy in Côte d'Ivoire is no longer limited to the agricultural economy but also includes many other activities in which rural people live, particularly in the sub-prefecture of Koun-Fao. The results of surveys on the development of non-agricultural activities in Koun-Fao reveal several socio-demographic profiles of its main actors. Thus, more than half of the active population is male. This predominance of men in the non-agricultural sector of Koun-Fao contrasts with the work of the INS (2005, p.15) which reveals that 55.5% of the informal sector (essentially non-agricultural) workers in Abidjan and its surroundings are women. In addition to gender, the profile of non-agricultural sector actors in Koun-Fao shows a high rate of youth. These young people, whose average age is between 30 and 40, make up more than half of the active population. This situation of youth dominance in the non-agricultural sector in rural Koun-Fao is corroborated by the INS (2005, p.16), which states that young people over the age of 30 not only represent 40% of the informal workforce, but also make up more than 63% of the labour force.

Nationality and level of education remain major characteristics of actors in non-agricultural activities in the Koun-Fao terroirs. In this respect, the surveys underline that nationals and non-nationals have similar proportions, with a slight advantage for Ivorians. The large share of nationals in the non-agricultural sector, sometimes considered as the informal sector, was highlighted by F. Gohourou et al (2020, p. 28). These authors reveal that in the rural locality of Gadouan in the centre-west of Côte d'Ivoire, informal non-agricultural activities occupy 55% of Ivorians against 45% of foreigners. With regard to the level of education, the surveys show that the majority of those involved in non-agricultural activities know how to read and write, but with a high concentration at primary and secondary level. This situation regarding the level of education of non-agricultural actors in Koun-Fao is similar to that of the INS (2005, p.16), which stresses that informal workers in Abidjan and its surroundings who have a diploma at the Certificat d'Etude Primaire et Élémentaire (CEPE) are all the more likely to be employers or partners. Thus, according to the NSI, the level of education constitutes an asset for informal workers in the sense that it allows them to access better status.

These actors, with different socio-demographic profiles, practice rich and diversified non-agricultural activities. Thus, surveys in the terroirs of the Koun-Fao sub-prefecture reveal a dozen informal economic activities of several types. It is this typology that F. Gohourou et al (2020, p.29) have tried to divide into four (4) main categories: art (hairdressing, sewing), trade (commerce, construction, distribution), production (carpentry, animal husbandry) and service (mechanics, transport, restaurant). This categorisation of informal activities in rural areas is shared by E. Baumann (1984, p.41) who divides the informal units in the centre of Sea in Cameroon into three sectors, namely: service (hairdressing, welding, mechanics), production (bakery, sewing, shop) and trade (itinerant trade, established trade, restaurant, bar).

Although categorised, most of the non-agricultural activities cited by these authors, namely trade, transport, hairdressing, mechanics and carpentry are also found in the villages of Koun-Fao. The diversity and richness of the typology of non-agricultural activities found in the study area are similar to those mentioned by A. Koulaï (2014, p.226) in his research in the rural areas of the department of Kouibly in the mountainous west of Côte d'Ivoire. Thus, according to this author, in addition to the expansion of rural markets, certain so-called informal activities have also developed in Kouibly. These include, for example, repair shops for household appliances, hairdressing salons, tailoring shops, shoe repair shops, drinks shops, bars, maquis-restaurants and telephone booths.

Despite the fact that the majority of non-agricultural activities are in the informal sector, there are industrial units in the villages of Koun-Fao. The installation of these factories in these areas is not unique to this zone but is similar to the situation in Dabou in the south of Côte d'Ivoire where E.J.B. Koueh et al (2021) note that agro-industries are essentially located in rural areas.

The numerous non-agricultural activities as well as the socio-demographic dynamics of the actors in the terroirs of the Koun-Fao sub-prefecture are the consequence of several factors. Thus, the non-agricultural sector owes its development to four fundamental reasons: lack of land, more income, main occupation and soil infertility. The number of factors for the establishment and development of non-agricultural activities is highlighted by F. Gohourou et al (2020, p. 34) who underline four reasons for emergence which are socio-economic, cultural, institutional and socio-demographic. In the same vein, E. Baumann (1988, p.45-49) reveals that in a cocoa-growing area of Cameroon, non-agricultural activities have become an alternative to land because of the demand for informal products in rural areas, the agricultural crisis, especially in cocoa, the situation of young people without plantations who want to become financially independent through non-agricultural occupations, and the plurality of incomes in the informal sector. The numerous non-agricultural activities as well as the socio-demographic dynamics of the actors in the terroirs of the Koun-Fao sub-prefecture are the consequence of several factors. Thus, the non-agricultural sector owes its growth to four fundamental reasons: lack of land, more income, main occupation and soil infertility. The number of factors for the establishment and development of non-agricultural activities is highlighted by F. Gohourou et al (2020, p. 34) who underline four reasons for emergence which are socio-economic, cultural, institutional and socio-demographic. In the same vein, E. Baumann (1988, p.45-49) reveals that in a cocoa-growing area of Cameroon, non-agricultural activities have become an alternative to land because of the demand for informal products in rural areas, the agricultural crisis, especially in cocoa, the situation of young people without plantations who want to become financially independent through non-agricultural occupations, and the plurality of incomes in the informal sector.

## Typology and Reasons for the Development of Non-Agricultural Activities in the Rural Areas of The Sub-Prefecture of Koun-Fao (Ivory Coast)

The general observation is the apparent divergence of factors or reasons both in the authors' writings and in those listed by the surveys in the rural area of Koun-Fao. However, a close examination reveals some similarities, particularly in the socio-economic factors mentioned by F. Gohourou et al (2020, p.35). Indeed, these authors state that the emergence of informal non-agricultural activities in Gadouan is 50% the result of soil impoverishment, 30% the result of the fall in the cost of cash crops, and that 75% of farmers now carry out a non-agricultural activity that provides them with additional income. Based on these writings, we note the existence of common points in the reasons for the establishment and development of non-agricultural activities in the terroirs of the Koun-Fao sub-prefecture, namely the infertility of the soil and the gain in income greater than that from agriculture.

### CONCLUSION

In rural areas of Côte d'Ivoire in general and in the sub-prefecture of Koun-Fao in particular, the economic sector is no longer limited to agriculture. Rural populations now live from non-agricultural activities which have become an alternative to the many problems faced by the agricultural sector. It is with the aim of highlighting these activities, which in the current context are a means of accessing financial autonomy, that this research work was initiated. In the sub-prefecture of Koun-Fao, the surveys reveal a diversity of non-agricultural activities which include all the small trades described as informal in urban areas. The actors in this sector are not only Ivorians and non-nationals, but also a high proportion of young people. Non-agricultural activities owe their establishment and development to several factors, the most important of which are the lack of arable land and the income generated by these activities, which is clearly better than that from agriculture in a region with a long agrarian tradition.

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