

**URBAN TRANSPORTATION WITH TRICYCLES IN PARAKOU (BENIN)**

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**ABSTRACT**

Three wheels engines commonly called tricycles are more and more solicited in the urban transportation in Parakou. These engines are used for goods, goods and people, the transportation research work aims to analyze the importance of this new means of transportation of tricycle engines in the city of Parakou. The used methodology articulates around the collection of the data, their process through software Word and Excel 2013 and the analysis of the results through "SWOT tool ". A sample of 255 people based on specific criteria has been investigated. The results of the investigations reveal that the tricycles play an important role in the accessibility in urban transportation in the city of Parakou. Indeed, they are used for the transportation of building materials, goods and people. Goods transportation is increasing, as well those of motorbike because of their ability to load more goods and people the last one. The level of education of the tricycle drivers in Parakou explains the non observation of the driving. Indeed, 60% of the investigated drivers attend primary schools, 17% the secondary level and 23% illiterate. Permanent drivers are the most numerous (70%); 30% non permanent. There are kind of contracts of work, one allows the driver to become at the end, the owner of the engine meanwhile the owner will collect his engine. Though the flourishing aspect of tricycle transportation, the sub sector is confronted to 4 main problems due to road insecurity (35%), the impracticability of the roads (32%), the inorganization of the sub sector (23,4%) and the lack of equipment of the drivers (9,6%).

**Keywords:** Role, Place, Tricycle, Transportation, Parakou (Benin).

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The mobility is one of the fundamental needs of the humanity and the transportations represent one of the most important global human activities. They are indispensable in the economy and play a major role in the spatial relations between geographical places (R. Kouagou, 2014, p.12). Men are daily eager to move. For Plassard mentioned by M. Didier and R. Prud'homme (2007, p.9), " this eagerness of mobility, this needs to always move from one place to another in all societies lead people to constantly consider new means of transportation. So, the displacements are basis of all economic development. Transportation therefore constitutes an economic development indicator because the infrastructures and means of transportation always constituted

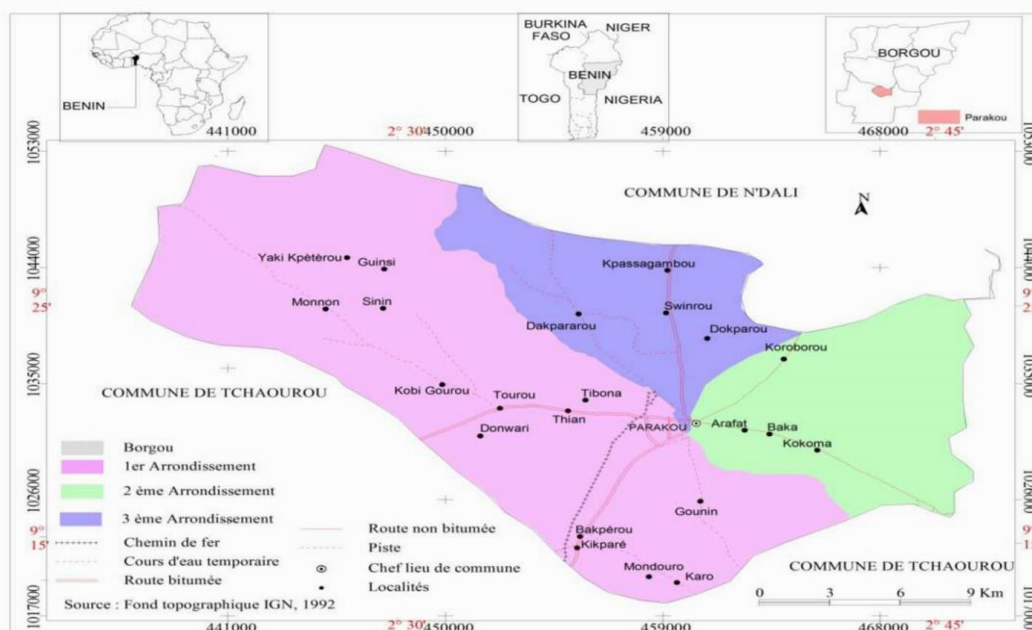
a vital support of the society. The quality of the infrastructures and the network of transportation is a factor limiting in the process of development of a nation (S. Mora, 2012, p.14).

Since the XIX<sup>eme</sup> century, the progress of the technology occurred with all means of transportation. we notice the greatest breakthroughs with plane station mainly through the propulsion by turbo reactor that allows the planes of line to reach the speed of 1000 km/h. Road transportation are not excluded from highest this evolution. They also tempted to increase their capacity but a little scale. Trains with highest (TGV) has revolutionized the railway and beget the fastest road means of transportation. The car, the motorcycle, due to their softness use, plays specific in cities economic growth and welfare in. They allow people to move from one place to another, goods transactions to satisfy their various specific needs so their economic and social progress. The infrastructures of transportation have considerably been expanded in order to cover even previously abandoned areas or ill-treated areas.

Thus, " the urban transportation eclosion upset human being conditions in cities. In most cities, building of road as channel of communication lead to the center: it is a factor to the urban unification, to exchange and to the people meeting, to the intensity of the exchanges, to the quality of the services considering the thus offered " maximum accessibility (J. Beaujeu-Garnier, 2006, p.79). The insufficiency of the infrastructures, means of transportation and communications therefore they can hinder the development of some regions and slow down some activities. In rural areas, the insufficiency and the precariousness of the infrastructures of communications, of the means of transportation and distributions channels commerce are for person responsible of the qualitative unbalances of the nutrition often noted (Marc - Ela J. mentioned by K. SIMMALA, 2009, P. 15). indeed, stand for not only to infrastructure of transportation setting but also of means of transportation the requirements of the hour and the geographical space constitutes an indispensable basis of development.

The tricycle, a tool of transportation appeared these last decades is an easy and affordable means of transport to convey goods rural region to urban markets and inside the cities. In the township of Parakou as well as in other townships of Benin, tricycles exist as means of transportation and contribute to the improvement of the conditions of life of the populations even though it is confused and cause of multitudes issues that hinder actors full growth. The daily and increasing use of this means of transportation in Parakou deserves attention and credible study so as to identify its place in the transportation in Parakou and some challenges of this sub-sector.

The township of Parakou is situated to 415 km in the north of Cotonou, between 9°18'0 " and 9°22'30 " North latitude then between 2°34'30 " and 2°40'30 " longitude East. Head city of Department, it is by its population, its socioeconomic and political infrastructures, the biggest city of the northern region of the country and the third city of Benin after Cotonou and Port wine - Novo (A.R. Y. M. Aboudou, 2010, p.4). According to this author, it occupies a crossroads position and is limited at the north by the township of Dali and enclosed completely, in the rest, by the township of Tchaourou. This position of crossroads city is not only favorable to the development of the urban transportation not only because of important human fluxes that converge toward the city, but also of multiple economic activities. Here is figure 1 of geographical situation of the township of Parakou.



**Figure 1:** Geographical situation of the Township of Parakou

On a human size, the population of the township of Parakou is composite and cosmopolitan, around 103.577 inhabitants in 1992 to 149.819 inhabitants in 2002, may be an intercensitive growth rate of 3,76%; and of 149.819 inhabitants in 2002 to 255 478 inhabitants in 2013 for a rate of growth of 4,9% (INSAE, RGPH 1, 2, 3 and 4). The three fourth of its population are installed in the truly urbanized zone, the remaining in the peripheries. Parakou is an outdoor city by its strategic position and occupy a great place in the urban nature of the northern region of Benin (A.R.Y.M. Aboudou, 2010, p.6).

In 2013, we started out 87068 jobs all sectors referring to (INSAE, 2015, p. 32). These economic activities in the township of Parakou regroup: agriculture, breeding fishing, art and craft, the industry, the trade, services and manufacturing. All these economic activities require the use of the transportation means, and the tricycles are the most practical, useful and convenient for their development.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

For the realization of this work, materials and tools have been used.

### 2.1. Sampling

The sampling is composed of the actors of tricycles that are the drivers of tricycles, traders, Parakou mayor office agents and the other means drivers.

Two hundred fifty-five (255) people have been investigated on the very definite criteria basis based on direct implied or indirect in the merchant transportation in the township. They investigated the different category level are at random. The investigation took place in the parking, before the cement factory, hardwares, the big shops of various agricultural products of the districts of the city considering their company by the users. These people have been investigated on the basis of the questionnaires and maintenance guide. The number of people

investigated by target is determined according to the importance of this target in the subsector. The distribution of this strength by is presented in the table I.

**Table I: Distribution of people investigated by objective.**

Category	Size
Drivers of tricycle	100
Recipients of the tricycle services	100
ADVTW	10
Mayor agents	02
Others means drivers	43
<b>Total</b>	<b>255</b>

Source: work of land, 2020

## 2.2. Tools and materials of data collect

The collect of the data on the land was based on questionnaires, of the guides of interviews and a grid of observation. The questionnaires are used to collect some information from the drivers, the recipients and the Association of the Drivers of Vehicles to Three Wheels of Parakou of (ADVTW), the maintenance guide to the agents of the town hall and sages and finally the grid of observation to appreciate the conditions and consequences of the exercise of this activity. One numeric camera permitted to take illustrative views, a computer for the data typing and a GPS for the coordinates of the places of parking of the tricycles.

These materials and tools of collection of data permitted to collect quantitative and qualitative information.

## 2.3. Treatment and Analysis of the results

The treatment of the data was manual and computerized. The software Word and Excel 2013 have been used for the typing and the statistic treatment of the data, the realization of the diagrams and pictures. The analysis of the results is made according to the model (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities Threats and (SWOT) (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats in French version) that permitted to identify the internal, external factors and the socioeconomic impacts of the transportation merchant of tricycle in the township of Parakou.

## 3.RESULTS

### 3.1. State of the places of the tricycles in Parakou

In the township of Parakou **occurs** the transportation with taxi-moto, motorcycles having three wheels, one wheel forward and two behind. These motorcycles include a bigger luggage rack capable to transport some luggages or temporary or both together. They are of different marks most Dayangs, Dayun, Pablo, Haojin, Apsonic and other. According to the investigations on field, three different categories of vehicles exist with three wheels in the township of Parakou.

There are some tricycles with wheel having a back allowing them to get rid easily of charges as the one of the vehicles fools and whose burr is similar to the one of a tractor (photo 1).



**Photo 1:** Tricycle fools  
**view taken:** S. Aïdo, February 2020,

The population of Parakou has the tricycles play the role of a truck then fools. It is used for gravels or agricultural harvested products transport. Other categories are used to transport people and goods (plate I)



**Photo a:** Comfortable tricycle      **Photo b:** Less comfortable tricycle  
**Plate 1:** Comfortable and less comfortable tricycles  
**view taken:** S. Aïdo, February 2020

The tricycle (photo a), named " Zé-fê " or car by the population present features of a car and endowed with an extinguisher in case of fire. Of the field investigations, this type of vehicle can

normally transport four people including the driver. The report is that the drivers transport five to seven people. In these cases, the customers are not well at ease; they lose their comfort thus and the risks of insecurity are raised.

The last category of tricycle (photo b) is endowed of a carry-baggage that allows it to load more two-wheeled motorcycles. For the outfitter, this category is destined to the transportation of goods and other but not for the transportation of people because it is not endowed with seats for passengers but only for the driver. However, he/it is also used for the transportation of people in the sector of survey. 37% of the dealers investigated confess to recognize the insecurity in which they are while going up on board of this vehicle, but estimate that they don't simply have the choice because it is less expensive (photo 2).



**Photo 2 :** Embarking for the Kpassa market  
**view taken :** *S. Aïdo, February 2020*

These tradesmen travel in very deplorable conditions because exposed to the climatic and environmental in clemencies. They inhale the dust easily especially as this way of Kpassa is neither paved nor tarred. The drivers of these tricycles investigated are to 90% without driver's license. They declare that it is just after a practice that they start with rolling.

### **3.2 Working of the transportation merchant to three wheels in the vile.**

Different actors exist in this sector. One note of its different categories of drivers. However, the fashion of working of the activity is not function of the type of drivers, because they must all park in front of the cement factory, hardware, the big boutiques, in some auto-stations of the city. It is necessary to specify also that this type of transportation requires some knowledge in the domain and the friendly relations with the customers and imply several other actors.

### **3.3 Actors of the transportation merchant with tricycle**

Several actors are to count in this activity.

#### **3.3.1 Drivers of tricycle**

Three categories of tricycle driver, exist in Parakou.

##### **3.3.1.1. Temporary drivers**

They practice the activity of tricycle driver in time of shortage or failure of their mains activity. They have a main activity that provide them with incomes but become drivers of tricycle a moment. These are farmers, masons, woodworkers, of school dropout etc. This category of drivers represents 30% of those investigated.

### **3.3.1.2. Permanent drivers**

One can call them permanent tricycle drivers, those that choose tricycle driving as their main and unique activity to answer their daily needs. Of the land results, he/it comes out again that the permanent drivers mostly are constituted of the drivers that drive in societies of drink deposit, yogurt, pure water, bip stopwatch etc. these drivers are monthly salary paid. This category of drivers represents 70 % out of 100 drivers of tricycle interviewees.

### **3.3.1.3. Contractual drivers:**

The contractual drivers are those that drive for a boss's account in return out of a very definite work contract. These contracts are written by the owner or orally. From the results of field investigations, those drivers don't have enough means to obtain their own contraption in order to exercise the activity of taxicab - tricycle. This category of drivers is the most important (60%) of those investigated. Two ways of contract usually exist.

- ***Loses the motorcycle at the end of the contract***

In this kind of contract, the driver pays an amount per day to the owner of the motorcycle. He/it is responsible for the breakdowns of tires, of the draining, of a broken cable, of everything that is wrong apart from, the motor of the tricycle. This contract can last 12 at 18 months depending on the state, the mark and the owner of the tricycle. It can be established either friendly, either to the police of Parakou is before a notary according to the degree of confidence that the boss granted the driver.

- ***Takes the motorcycle at the end***

Contrary to the contract in which the boss loses his tricycle at the end, in this second type, the length is not foreseen in advance. The boss can collect his motorcycle whenever he wants. The driver must daily pay to the owner a determined or specific sum but lower to the one of the first contract. The driver is as responsible for the breakdowns of tires, of the draining, of a broken cable, of everything that doesn't have to do with the motor of the motorcycle. He/it can also be established either friendly, either to the police of Parakou or before a notary according to the degree of confidence that the boss granted the driver. For 70% of the investigated drivers, the owner recovers her motorcycle for all late due for more than one week against 30% for that the owner can be patient until a month.

### **3.3.1.4. Drivers-owners**

The leader-owners are called thus because they practice the activity for their own accounts. According to the investigations on field, these drivers are sometimes of the breeder or farmers who sell a part of their product in order to buy the motorcycle with which they work. Among these, one also notes the drivers of two-wheeled motorcycles whom due to the profit of the tricycles take some loans or sell goods to buy tricycle. This category of drivers represents 20% of the drivers of tricycle interviewees.

These drivers of tricycle are of different age groups

- ***Slices of ages of the tricycle drivers investigated***

The majority of the tricycle drivers in Parakou is the young. According to the results of investigations 70% of them investigated have an age between 18 and 35 years, 30% of these tricycle drivers investigated have an age superior to 35 years. That leads us to guess that large number of Parakou youth is greatly involved in this activity to satisfy their daily needs. This strong presence of youth in this sector reveals the strong rate of unemployment and physical labor power that requires this activity.

#### **3.3.1.5. Potential customers**

These are the tradesmen or dealers, the persons responsible of the big shops of sale on the whole such as the bags of rice, sugar, salt and of the cardboards of tomatoes, milk, spaghetti, couscous, of the oil cans etc. that make resort to the drivers of tricycle for the transportation of their goods to their shops or the markets. To these, added the farmers who resort to the tricycles after the harvests for the conveying of their products to homes or the markets for sale. We also notice the simple purchasers of goods as the cement, the tiles, the pots of painting, the irons of construction etc. The individuals also resort to the tricycles for their movement.

#### **3.3.2. Union**

It is a physical or moral people grouping for defense or the common interest management. Here, he/it designates drivers of vehicles of three wheels that regroup in associations (unions of the tricycle drivers). The investigations on field revealed that the aforesaid Association recorded under the number N°2017-4 /0011/PDB/SG/SAG/DAONG OF FEBRUARY 14, 2017, is unknown of the majority of the population and even of some drivers of tricycle. The association of the Drivers of Vehicles to Three Wheels of Parakou (ADVTW) is constituted of 13 members with a (01) President, a (01) vice-president, a (01) general treasurer and its deputy, a (01) Chief of Staff and his/her/its deputy, three (03) Promoters, two (02) commissioners to the account and two (02) wise men. These wise men are not the taxi drivers tricycle, but rather of the worthy people and respected of the city of Parakou. They bring their ideas and all other useful means the development of the association. From the results of investigations, only the drivers - owners are part of this association.

### **3.4. Socioeconomic impacts of the transportation merchant in Parakou township**

#### **3.4.1. Engins with three wheels: merchant transportation and purification**

Tricycles are more and more numerous in the streets of Parakou and used in different domains. Sellers of "pure water", yogurt and some juices of fruits use them to circulate through the city. They also serve for the transportation of goods and people and contribute to the purification of the environment. They offer many advantages therefore to the population. Some societies or citizens shape them at very determined purposes (plate 2).





**Photo a:** MTN Mobile Money in University of Parakou      **Photo b:** Sale of yaourt

**Photo c:** Pickup of the domestic garbage

**Plate 2:** Different shap of tricycle for different uses  
**view taken:** D. Imorou, February 2020

The tricycle (photo has) is shaped according to the purchaser's will. This tricycle to handlebar is shaped by the MTN society in order to spread these activities and to be again more close to the student community of Parakou. Here, the tricycle is endowed with an office to wait on the subscribers.

On the photo b of the plate 2, it is the same tricycle shaped for the sale and the distribution of yogurt. According to the driver, it is thanks to this tricycle that it manages to distribute yogurt named " Dolait " to the subscribers. It functions practically as the refrigerated trucks according to the driver. The same type of tricycle shaped by the BETHESDA structure participates in the purification of the city of Parakou through the domestic garbage collection. Thanks to this shaping has little risk of casting of the garbage at the time of the transportation.

### **3.5. Consequences on other means of transport**

Tricycles likely replace the cars for people who don't have any a lot of means. Even the sellers of foods use this means. According to the sellers of food interrogated, before, to transport three iceboxes of foods, it was necessary to have a car to disposition or to take three taxicabs motorcycles but with the motorcycles three wheels, all is easier and it is not as expensive as a car ". The motorcycles with three wheels are more economic than the cars and more convenient than the motorcycles with two wheels, what brings many Parakoises to adopt them (photo 3).



**Photo 3 :** Distribution of the drink by a tricycle  
**view taken: S. Aïdo, Février 2019**

This means has for advantage according to the tradesmen to be more close to the customer and permits to go the earliest at the market that possible; what allows them to sell the products quickly.

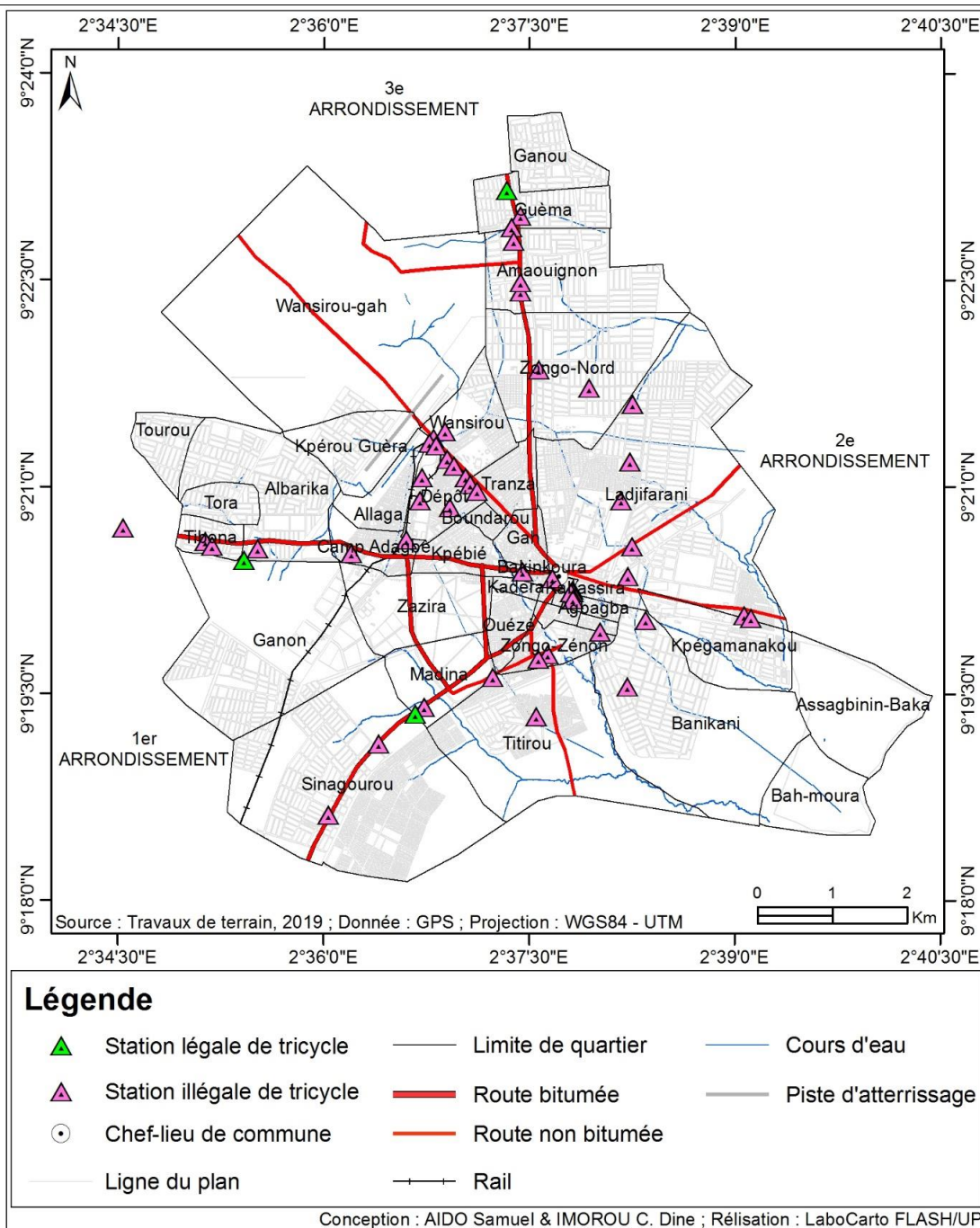
### **3.5.1. Consequences on drivers**

The consequences of this activity appear as well among the drivers of tricycle as on the other categories of drivers. They are positive to the level of the tricycle drivers. Indeed, 73% affirm to be attached henceforth to this activity because it allows them to satisfy to their needs and those of their family. For 27%, the activity participates in the domestic expenses but is not sufficient to cover all needs. As for the drivers of the other means of transportation, the advent of the tricycles is damaging to their activities. 82% of the drivers of the other means of transportation (zimidjan and vehicle) declare that their daily income decreasing from 20 to 50% against 18% that don't feel any change.

#### **3.5.1.1. Tricycles parking in Parakou**

From the results of the field of investigation, there is no proper parking for tricycles. The users as the drivers are creative of transportation places, including places of the territory of where can be assured the mobility of people and goods. It is about the auto-stations, markets place, public places, before hardwares, the cement factory, the big boutiques of the city, of the secondary markets. The drivers of tricycle create their own stations thus and share those of the other means transportation. Out of a total 56 stations among which 3 legal that are not anything else that the parking of the vehicles with four wheels. While contributing to create these places, the actors personalize them, print that there that they are and make. Today, the merchant transportation with three wheels, is part of the universe of the transportation in spite of its unorganized character.

Figure 2 shows the spatialization of the sites using as parking lot for the tricycles in Parakou.



**Figure 2:** Spatialization of the sites of parkings of the vehicles with three wheels in Parakou

**3.5.1.2. Difficulties due to the three wheels in Parakou**

Engins with three wheels offer many advantages but they are sources many problems for the users of the road. Only 10% of the tricycle drivers investigated possess their driving license. These drivers affirm that there is not a driver's license for the tricycles, but of the permits delivered for the cars with a special mention indicating that they can also drive some motorcycles. They estimate to 71% that their tricycle has a bodywork that resists the shocks a lot.

They fear nothing and think that the two-wheeled drivers and even some cars avoid them; they drive then without control. These drivers of tricycle don't have any respect then for the traffic light and are for 90% ignorant of the code of the road. The level of education of the tricycle drivers in Parakou explains their non respect of the code of the road. Indeed, 60% of the drivers investigated attended the primary only, 17% the secondary level and 23% were never at the school. In Parakou, the secondary roads are not all arranged as well as rural roads leading in villages or farms. During the rainy season, several among them become unpractical. The emission of gases coming from the exhausts of the tricycles, and the air pollution has a harmful impact on the quality of air and on the man's health. So, 98% of their complain such as the muscular pains, fatigue, pain of back, the pulmonary illnesses etc. The phenomenon of overcharge becomes more and more recurrent exercise among the drivers (especially the contractual drivers that must give account to their bosses). worrying about to have income at the end of the day, they are often authors of accident. to reduce the risks of circulation accidents caused by this type of tricycles in period of weak visibility or sight, the mayor of the township of Parakou advocates a decree for the regulation of the hours of their circulation. According to the article 1 of the decree municipal N°50/114/MPKOU/SG/DAJC/DST/SA of the 29/10/2021 carrying regulation of the circulation of the vehicles with three wheels called tricycles, " the vehicle with three wheels commonly named tricycles are not allowed to circulate between 18 hours and 07 hours in the territory Parakou township ".

86% of the drivers don't belong to any union. The reason, according to these drivers, is that the unions don't care about the problems of the members. They affirm that these unions mind more political issue rather the problems of the adherents.

In spite of tricycle transportation increasing, the subsector is confronted to 4 main problems bound to the road insecurity (35%), the impracticability of the roads (32%), the inorganization of the subsector (23,4%) and to the lack of drivers equipment (9,6%). The drivers are confronted to the raised cost of the participative taxes and taxi duties that rise to 32000 FCFA at the rate of 12000 FCFA for the union, the macaroon and the professional card, 2000 FCFA for expenses of renting of the trade union offices and other; the 18000 FCFA remaining are poured to the town mayor office.

#### **4. DISCUSSION**

The results of investigation permitted to identify several actors in this sector. It is about the different categories of drivers, of the potential customers, unionist and wise men. According to E. Winssou (2012, p.35), the actors of the transportation are multiple. It is among others about the drivers and the institutional setting that is nothing else than the politico-administrative authorities. According to this author, it is commonly about the vehicle drivers with four wheels, three wheels, and two wheels named Zemidjans and the drivers of vehicles thick carriers; but we didn't try to identify the actors to the level of every means of transportation. For S. Kora Gounou (2014, p.37), the actors are not anything else that the popular transportation operators. It is about the tradesmen, of the elected local, of the drivers of taxi motorcycles, users, drivers, shippers and chiefs of station.

In the other hand, the socioeconomic impacts due to transportation with three wheels in the city of Parakou are multiple. In the city of Parakou, it is difficult to ignore the importance of the economic, commercial activities and services that the transportation merchant generates to three wheels. The motorcycles with three wheels are more economic than the cars and more convenient than the two wheels, what brings many Parakoises to adopt them. They are used as

means of transportation of goods and people. They offer many advantages therefore to the population. R. Kouagou (2014, p.42), confirm that the transportation facilitates the access to the markets. To this effect, the transportation plays a fundamental role for the local economy. They generate important income to mayor office, but also to the users. But, the bad organization of the sector generates direct impacts on the population such as the cases of accidents without forgetting the infrastructures of transportation in disrepair that is the cause of many cases of accident of the vehicles with three wheels.

The works of land showed that the drivers of tricycle are very little interested in their union. According to them, these unionists worry no longer of their situation and take their money for own interests. For R. Kouagou (2014, p. 48), the misunderstanding between the union classes generates many problems.

The sector of the transportation by the tricycles, constitute an important pillar for numerous activities. It plays a role of development not only social but also that economic. However, no one could know how to deny this sector not only generates but it is also confronted to enormous constraints. These constraints constitute a brake therefore in general to the good organization of the transportation and of the activities of the transportation merchant in particular. According to K. Seneh (2012, p.4) the construction of the Nouakchott-Nouadibou Road, a new dynamic in a territory conceived around the conservation of the nature is discerned at a time like source of deterioration of the environment and is considered like socio-economic development vector. This contradiction reveals the difficulty to dissociate the negative " environmental " impact of the transportation of its positive impact on the socio-economic development. In the city of Parakou, meanwhile the tricycles constitute a source of insecurity for the pedestrians and for the two-wheeled motorcycles, contribute to the deterioration of the environment by the clearing of gas, they facilitate the transportation of people and goods even in the farther places and at less cost. A. Noukpo (2005, p.139), showed that the statute of the tricycles causes problem. According to him, the city of Cotonou has recently, a rule that obliges the motorcycles and the cars to borrow different sections. This rule that contains some sanctions for those that don't lend doesn't take itself of it in account the tricycles with three wheels; a very problematic situation. The vehicles with three wheels pass the side of the cars and motorcycles with no negotiation. They occupy a big place on the road deserved to the motorcycles what makes that sometimes they disrupt the fluidity of the circulation. In Parakou, the drivers have a weak education level. These drivers don't have any mastery of the code of the road then. It joins the works of J. S. S. Mondesir (2016, p.52 and 53) for that, the level of taxi drivers motorcycle education in the Cayeses explains the failure to respect of the code of the road.

## **5.CONCLUSION**

The fundamental preoccupation landed in this survey is the knowledge of the merchant transportation with three wheels (tricycle) to Parakou and its socio-economic impact. The tricycle allows to bring closer its customers. It allows the provision of the markets in products of big consumptions and assures a considerable help therefore to the food security of the populations. The merchant transportation by the three wheels in Parakou is one of the fundamental pillars of the economic growth, of the welfare of the different economic activities, of the attraction of the different markets by the agricultural, and other product displacement for sale. These tricycles offer many advantages but are sources of problems for the users of the road. The bad organization of the sector is to the cause of many disturbances.

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