



# Communication and Urban Mobility in Major Cities in Burkina Faso: Case of the Construction of the Northern Interchange in the City of Ouagadougou

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**Abstract** - Superstructure projects are systematically exposed to the risk of opinions. Among other discursive resources to legitimize them, principles of communication of acceptability have been identified. However, they remain insufficiently demonstrated, which limits their scope. This case study contributes to the knowledge of the discursive resources of legitimization, linking these practical principles and the conceptual mechanisms that govern the communicational fabric of legitimacy. This research provided a robust theoretical anchorage to these principles of communication, which will become a real tool of intelligence of the communication situation. Among other things, the oral communication tools are adapted in a context of awareness for acceptability and the participatory approach must not be on the margins of a project with a strong social impact.

**Keywords:** Communication; Urban mobility; Acceptability; Market Gardener; Ouagadougou

## Introduction

If communication is today a prerogative in all field of social life, the field of public policies and more specifically, of public action in the field of spatial planning, is no exception. The need to inform and communicate on the actions and operations carried out on an infrastructure in an urban environment appear legitimate and useful with regard to the democratic principle which has been bitterly defended for thirty years. The information and communication in question must be defined here in the sense of a debate, of an exchange, as a process in which the citizen appropriates the public sphere. Therefore, information and political communication must be seen as a process of information exchange, but also of the public's appropriation of information, that is to say, a process of transmission of information first, and then, interpretation of the information. In parallel with a general theoretical framework, many reflections are developed in the field of political science, urbanism planning, and by the political actors themselves, to implement the

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ideal of a participative democracy through the public participation in development projects, especially in urban areas.

In Burkina Faso, the government undertook since 2015 the construction of the biggest interchange in the city called “interchange of the North”. This project will eventually offer, on the one hand, several traffic alternatives, will relieve the population living in the northern part of the city of Ouagadougou and the other hand the reduction of urban pollution due to gas emissions (African press agency, 2013). We ask three questions, to which we will have to sketch out an answer: Can the new communication and information techniques that have been use for a few years renew the participation of citizens in infrastructure development projects in urban areas? What is their effect on the modalities and content of this participation? In addition, what about the representation, and the reception by the population, of project spaces that result from the use of information and communication?

## **1. Methodology**

This study took place in 2018 in the former district of Sig-Nonghin of Oagadougou where since 2015 have started the construction of the interchange of the North. These works affect several layers of the local population from households, trades to market gardeners installed along the Baskuy dam, site on which works are taking place.

To achieve the objective of this research, we conducted a survey of 50 market gardeners and 30 households. The people involved in our study are technically called by the project team “Project Affected People (PAP)”. The choice of a questionnaire is justified by the fact that it is a data processing facilitator tool, adapted to collect the maximum amount of information and generalize the results. The households and market gardeners survey were chosen randomly. The random sampling has the merit of obtaining from the populations spontaneous answers without external influence.

The data collected where entered on the Sphinx software and analyzed on the Microsoft Excel software



Figure 2: Satellite image on 22.06.2015 of the interchange site



Figure 1: Satellite image on 12.10.2017 of the interchange site



### 3. Results

#### 3.1. *Communication strategy of a modern construction company.*

In project implementation affecting the populations, it is important to set up a solid communication strategy between the actors.

Given the importance of communication in projects with high social impact, a communication strategy has been created. That communication strategy involves the following actors:

- Technical partners (Production Company, control offices, other direct or indirect technical participants for the realization of the works).
- Financial partners;
- Government structures (Ministry of Infrastructure, Access and Transport, Prime Ministry and other state institution...)
- The social and political partners (traditional and religious leaders, young people and women's associations in the sectors concerned by the works, town halls and other political structures of the sectors concerned)
- The local populations;
- The users (general public).

The diversity of the actors aims to apply the principle of the participative communication in order to have a strong impact.

Moreover, with this diversity of actors involved, the general objectives of the communication strategy are to:

- involve the users as much as possible, local populations, state actors, the private actor, the various technical and financial partners involved in the construction of the structure, as well as training structures in Public Buildings and Works sector (BTP in French);
- Ensure a better visibility of the various stages of the construction of the works (relocation of local residents, start of works, construction of the works, final acceptance, etc.);
- Bring residents and users to fully adhere to the project in order to facilitate its realization.

Those objectives of the communication strategy are in full congruence with a communication of acceptability.

The methodology of the communication strategy is based on the different actors concerned and presents the communication objectives, the media and means of communication and the nature of the actions to be implemented



The media and means of communication provided for this strategy are in the table below. Table 1 below presents the project's actors, the objectives in terms of communication with these actors and the communication supports adapted to each actor.

**Table 1.** Summary of the communication strategy of the project

Actors	Objectives	Support of communication
The technical partners ( Company of realization, offices of control, other direct or indirect technical participants for carrying out the works)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow different technical actors to be at the same level of information;</li> <li>• Evaluate the impact of communication actions on the evolution of the works and produce the technical support necessary for communication.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting room,</li> <li>• Publishing of reports,</li> <li>• Means of diffusion of reports,</li> <li>• Video and photographic report,</li> <li>• Realization of the documentary film,</li> <li>• Realization and animation of the website and the facebook page,</li> <li>• 3D modeling.</li> </ul>
The Financial partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To allow a good flexibility of the financial operations in the execution of the works</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edition and diffusion of the reports</li> </ul>
The governmental structure (Ministry in charge of the Infrastructures, of the Opening up and Transport, Prime Ministry, other institution of the state)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To allow the various governmental structures to be at the same level of information with the technical structures of realization of the works ;</li> <li>• To reassure the government on the supervision of the construction works and the keeping of the deadlines.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report of the various visit ; Coffee break and brief exchange with the authorities and the press if necessary;</li> <li>• Media coverage (National and private radio and television) des</li> <li>• Various visits and official ceremonies (launching and inauguration) ;</li> <li>• Official ceremony inauguration :</li> <li>• Speech of presentation (economic and social benefits of the work ) and thanks ;</li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribution of a film on the important stages of realization of the work;</li> <li>• Giant cocktail on the different compartments of the interchange ;</li> <li>• Live broadcast by national and the private press.</li> </ul>
The social and political partners (traditional and religious leaders, young people and women's associations in the sectors concerned by the works, town halls and other political structures of the sectors concerned).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise awareness and inform the religious and traditional leaders, young people and women's associations, mayors and other political structures of the sectors, on the realization of the interchange ;</li> <li>• To bring residents and users to fully adhere to the project in order to facilitate its realization.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create meetings with the various social actors ;</li> <li>• Disseminate information films on the realization of the project ;</li> <li>• Produce and disseminate information and awareness flyers ;</li> <li>• Organize training sessions on the operation of the work (how to circulate on the interchange) ;</li> <li>• Communicate the website and the facebook page of the project.</li> </ul>
Resident populations and users (general public)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get local residents and users to fully adhere to the project in order to facilitate its realization ;</li> <li>• Inform and raise awareness about safety measures related to the execution of the work ;</li> <li>• Train on the operation of the work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publication in press organs (newspapers, radio-TV programs, online press, etc.);</li> <li>• Establishment of a communication office on the site ;</li> <li>• Advertising poster of 4*3 giant posters on the main roads on the city of Ouagadougou ;</li> <li>• Animation of web pages and facebook;</li> <li>• Design and dissemination of an image spot on the interchange</li> </ul>



### 3.2. Issues of communication of acceptability between a modern a modern construction company and populations.

From the communication strategy viewpoint provided by the project, we assessed its effectiveness on the ground as this strategy relies on the communication of acceptability. This is due to the fact that large-scale construction projects are exposed to the risk of refusal by the population (Koeberle and Geoffroy 2015).

*“The communication of acceptability is a communication of a sensitive nature, aimed at obtaining the agreement of a population on the occasion of the construction of a work having a heavy environmental impact. Its object is an enlarged population, sometimes not directly concerned by the work in question”* (Libaert 1998). It is in this way that the communication strategy in the context of the North Ouagadougou Interchange tends to have the consent of the population and the different actors to carry out the project. Obtaining funding or permission to build are no longer the precious keys to ensure the successful realization of a project because the fields of communication and of opinion often remain virulent, when they do not redouble when the first gears arrive on the site. Therefore, the communication of acceptability becomes a key factor in the success of settlement projects and, in cascade, an object of first importance for innovation and development of territories (Koeberlé and Geoffroy 2014).

Therefore, social acceptability of the construction project of the Northern interchange depends on the communication between the different actors. These are not heavy variables that affect the acceptability of the project, but rather a complex system of perceptions and travel practices (THE BRANCH and CHARLES 2012).

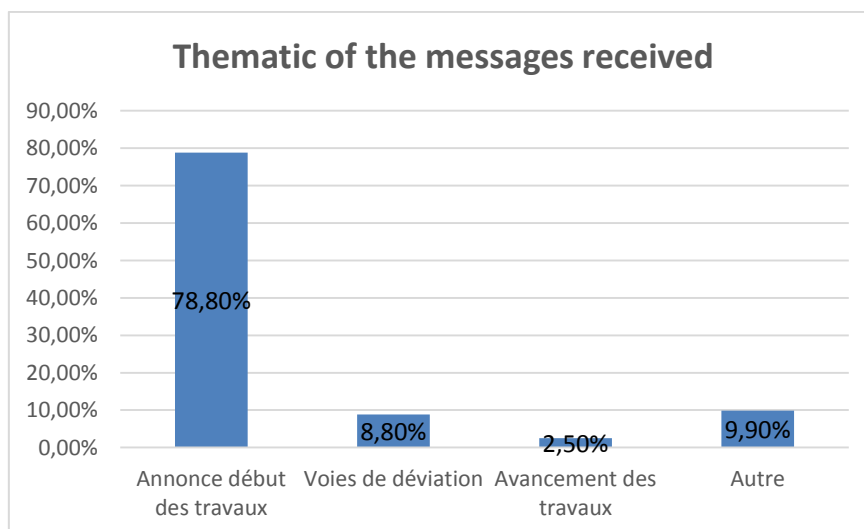


Figure 3. Thematic of the messages received by the people assigned to the project.



Thus, the construction company undertook communications with the population and from our study it appears according to the populations and market gardeners that the major thematic was centered on the announcement of the beginning of works (78%) (fig 3). That has the merit of informing the populations on the changes which will carry out; however, this communication should also be emphasized on the theme of the works to be done and the progress of the work, which only represents 2.5%. That will effectively manage the risks to those affected during the works (Debia and Zayed 2003, Libaert 2011).

Furthermore, the communication made by the project team was more felt by the affected populations at the beginning of the project than during the project.

Considering the scale of the project, communication actions should be as much felt by the population during the project implementation phase as in the beginning of works (Lehmann, Colomb and motulsky 2013). Indeed, during the realization of the works, many factors such as the blocking of the roads, the institution of deviation have impacts on the daily life of the populations.

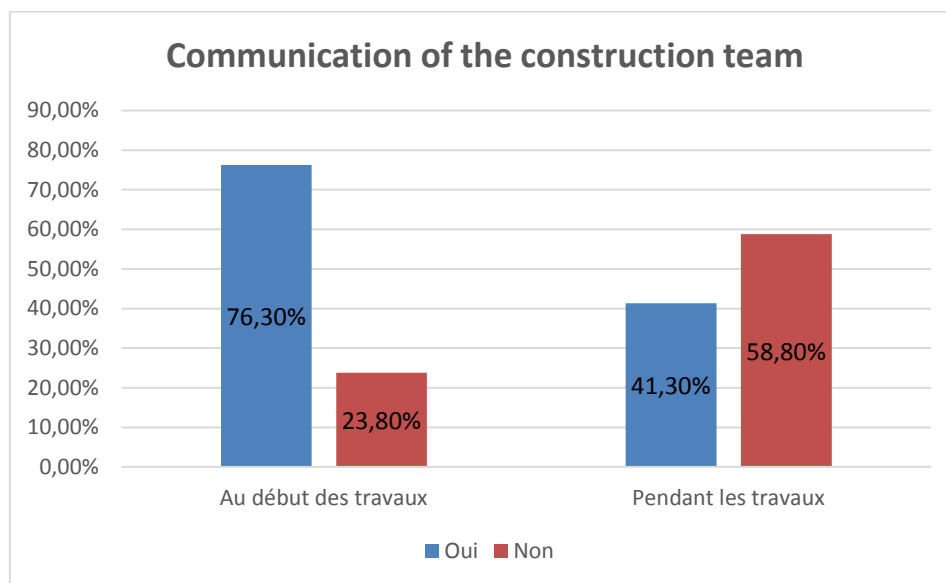


Figure 4. Communication period of the construction team.

Moreover, it was revealed that the main communication channel through which the people affected by the project are informed is word-of-mouth followed by the radio. That is due to the fact that information passes on before the fait accompli. When a lane is blocked, it is then that users seek the right information through word-of-mouth. Word-of-mouth is an effective channel of





message dissemination if the message conveyed does not lose its original value (Becerra and Peltier 2011; Compaore 2017a).

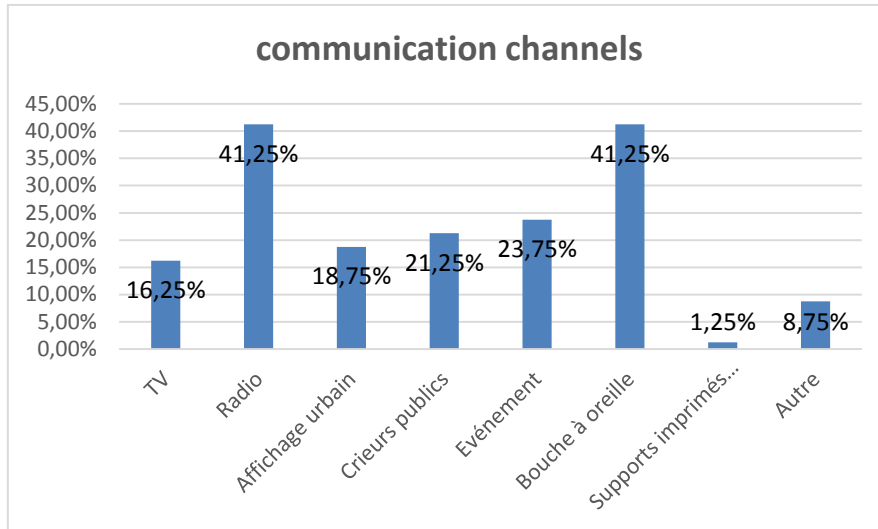
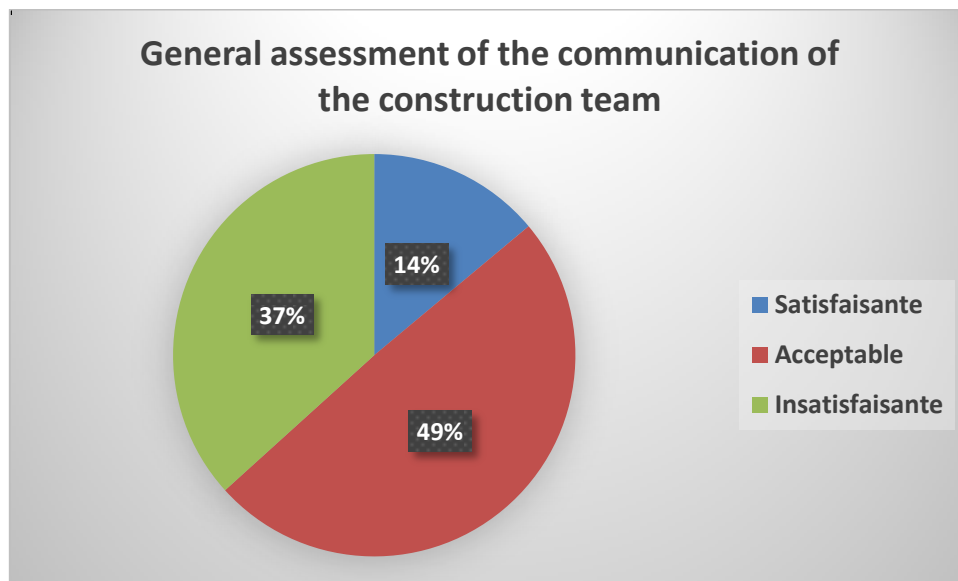


Figure 5. communication channels used by the project team

Moreover, the radio holds the second place because the study on mediametrie carried out in 2013 by the Superior Council of Communication (CSC in French), in the urban area of the province of kadiogo, it appears that 82.20% of inhabitants have a functional radio station (CSC and INSD, 2013). That justifies the importance of radio 41.25% in fig 5 but us we said in our previous studies the “preference of the communication channel depends on the theme discussed” (Compaore 2017b).

Of these different communication channels, this study reveals that 58% against 42% of the population of the people affected by the project consider messages broadcast useful. Therefore, the general appreciation of the communication of the construction team is appreciated in various ways as illustrated in the graph below. The degree of satisfaction of the communication impacts the acceptability of the project (Corinne 2014; Gagnebien and Bailleul 2011). With 37% of people finding communication unsatisfactory, the project team has to improve its communication strategy taking into account the community dimension (Bailleul 2008; Le Moëne 1998).



**Figure 6.** General assessment of the communication of the construction team

### 3.3. Channels for a communication of acceptability in an urban mobility project.

The urban mobility projects are submitted the different social constraints imposed by the populations. It is imperative to adopt effective communication channels for a communication of acceptability on a community scale (Raufflet 2014).

The main communication channels through which people obtain information about the project are word-of-mouth, radio and events\_public character (cf figure 5).

During that study we evaluated the adaptability of the communication channels for a communication of acceptability. It appears that radio is the first adapted channel followed by listening and exchange executives and public criers.

From these results view point we notice that the social and implementation dimensions because the populations favored besides the radio, the listening and exchange frameworks. Those frameworks are community gatherings where the people will be able to interact with the team in charge of communication. The communicative dimension becomes bilateral and not unilateral as the case of radio or other Channels where we simply broadcast the information without listening to the people affected by the project. That form of communication is participatory and has the advantage of having a better impact in terms of acceptability of the project (Bessette 2004).

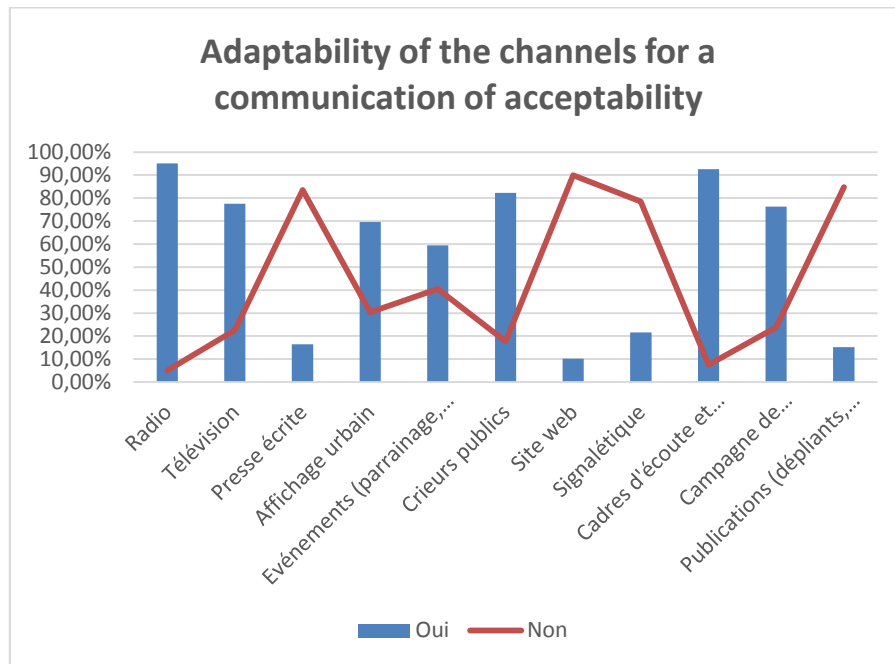


Figure 7. Adaptability of the channels for a communication of acceptability

Moreover, it appears that website, followed by the publications (leaflets, etc.) and the written press, are the least adapted channels according to the populations. The acceptability according to figure 7 of the websites is 10%, publications 15% and the written press 16%. We notice that all these 3 channels have one thing in common to access the information: it is about literacy. Without literacy, it is difficult to read a website, a leaflet or press newspaper. That means that the channels for a communication of acceptability must be oral (radio, town crier, exchange executives) than visual (written press, website, leaflets) in the context of a building project in a country like Burkina Faso.

Furthermore, we collected the opinion of the people on the communication channels desired for a similar project. It appears that the 3 main channels of communication desired are: radio, animations/awareness and television. These 3 channels include the oral aspect which is corroborated with the acceptability of the channels proposed by the project.

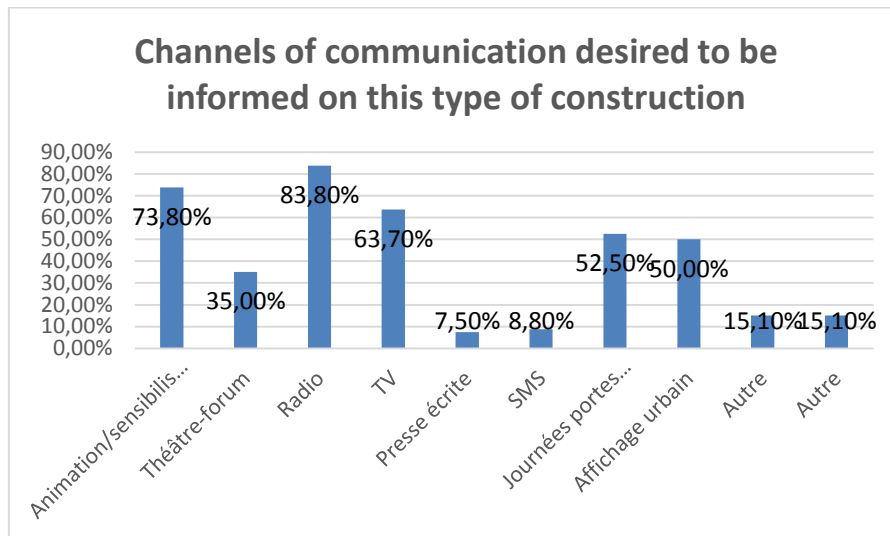


Figure 8. Channels of communication desired to be informed on this type of construction

### 3.4. The problem of market gardeners displacement.

The construction of the Northern interchange mainly affects markets gardeners near the Baskuy dam. Thus, during the study, we wanted to know the status of the exploited plots. It turns out that 60% of market gardeners exploiting the plot are owners against 40% who rents the plot.

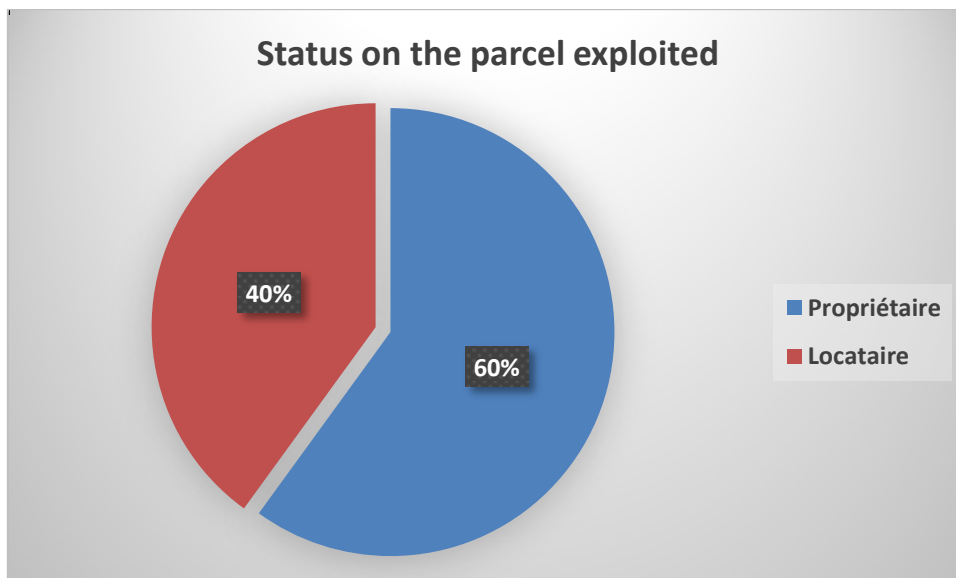


Figure 9. Status on the parcel exploited by market gardeners

Concerning information on the eviction, the majority of market gardeners (76.67%) were informed about it. This shows that the communication on this subject has been successful.

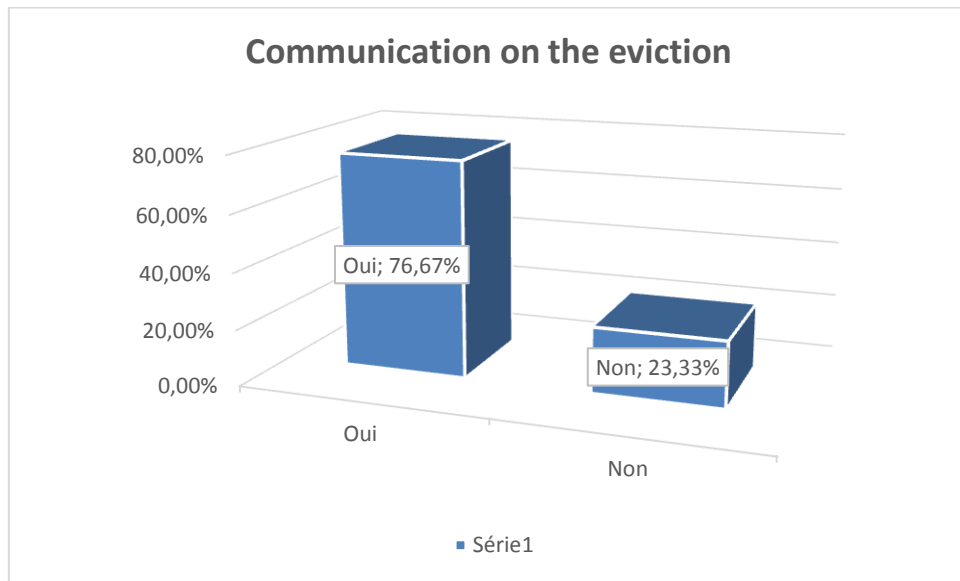


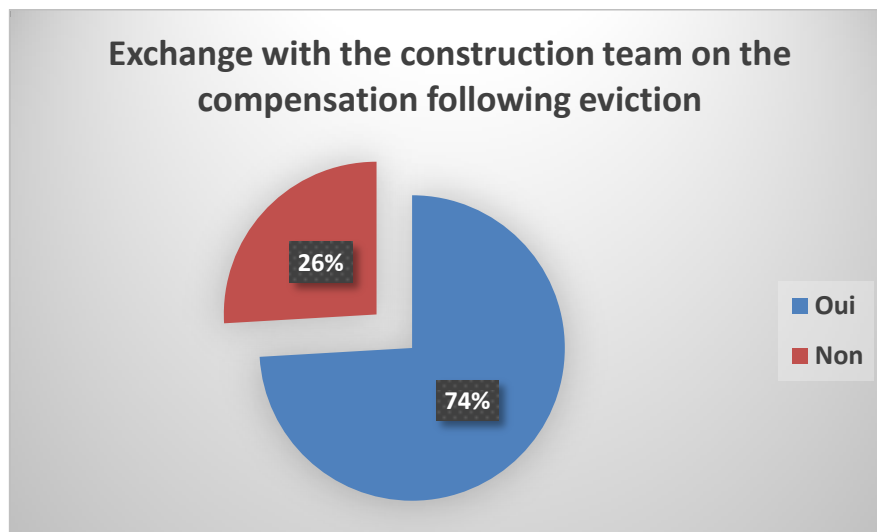
Figure 10. Communication on the eviction

Furthermore, the question of the compensation of market gardeners and people affected by the project was the subject of debates. In fact, market gardeners and other people affected by the project met several times to claim an increase in compensation costs. Indeed, the compensation proposed by the project team is 300 CFA francs per square meter while market gardeners claim 1500 CFA francs per square meter of land (KOANARI 2017a).

*“Indeed, Djipo Pousga having received 1001750 CFA francs as compensation, for his land of about a hectare and a half, said that the maraicher-culture of his land provided him about 3 million CFA francs in one year” (KOANARI 2017b).*

From that large context view point, we are interested in exchanges between the construction team and market gardeners on the issue of eviction. It appears that 26% said they did not have an exchange on the issue with the project team.





**Figure 11.** Exchange with the construction team on the compensation following eviction

Considering that figure and being in the context of a titanic project with a strong social impact, every effort should be made to establish a dialogue with all the people affected by the project. The lack of communication is sensitive and can contribute to social discontent (Libaert 2011).

### **Conclusion**

In this article, we observe the importance of the communication of acceptability around the major urban infrastructure projects in Burkina Faso and particularly the realization of the Northern interchange in Ouagadougou. We have analyzed the importance of the communication of acceptability in the participation of inhabitants in large urban project; we will observe more specifically, the modifications which relate, in this context, to the nature and status of this communication. Analyzes were made on the inadequacies of the communication of acceptability in this project and on the adapted tools for a communication of acceptability of a similar project. Thus the tools of oral communication have emerged as suitable for an awareness of people working in the informal such as market gardeners.

In short, we can say that the new communication and information techniques that have been used in recent years can make it possible to renew citizen participation in urban infrastructure development projects to the extent that they are needed. This is possible to the extent that radio is a good channel for disseminating information because the majority of the population has it. In addition, the participation of the populations will be able to ensure compliance with the instructions and facilitate the relocation of the people affected by the project.



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