



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



## Decentralisation and citizen interest in local affairs management in Koudougou, Burkina Faso

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### Abstract

In Burkina Faso, the 1991 constitution enshrines decentralisation. Its objective is to promote local development and local democracy. However, citizens seem to have little interest in the management of local public affairs. Indeed, there is a problem of disinterest among city dwellers. This hinders the success of decentralisation. This article analyses city dwellers' interest in the management of the city of Koudougou. The methodological approach of this study is based on quantitative methods. To this end, primary and secondary data were collected from 396 households and from a literature review. The study reveals that city dwellers have varying degrees of interest in the management of local public affairs. Overall, 44% of new city dwellers take a keen interest in city life; 36.1% of city dwellers who have lived there for an intermediate length of time are concerned about the life of the municipal institution; and 29.3% of long-time city dwellers are interested in how the municipality functions. This low and variable level of interest among city dwellers in city management is influenced by socio-demographic and economic characteristics such as occupation, level of education, gender and age. An inclusion policy based on citizen engagement and effective communication will help to interest more citizens in the transformation of the municipality. The results of this study confirm the analytical theory of decentralisation, which advocates taking the local context into account.

**Keywords:** Decentralisation; Interest; Local Public Affairs; City Dwellers; Koudougou; Burkina Faso

### 1. Introduction

The first experiments with decentralisation in Africa date back to the 1990s with the adoption of policy documents and the first local elections in many countries [1-3]. These experiments were consolidated with full communalisation [4-5]. After several decades of implementation, the decentralisation process does not seem to interest citizens. Citizens' interest in the life of their city remains low [6]. Although the right to participation has been a reality and recognised by the international community, particularly in developing countries, since the 1980s [7], citizens show little interest in the life of their communities. This contrasts with the original objective of decentralisation, which is to bring the administration closer to citizens and promote local and popular participation [8-9]. The success of decentralisation and the advent of virtuous governance by municipal executives is therefore not possible without a strong interest on the part of citizens in the transformation of their communities [10]. Many authors have sounded the alarm about the need for strong interest in the decentralisation process on the part of citizens and all those involved in local government [11]. This article aims to analyse citizens' interest in local public affairs management in the city of Koudougou in Burkina Faso.

This study is part of the analytical theories of decentralisation. These theories are based on the premise that decentralisation does not always lead to popular participation, let alone the development of local communities. In many

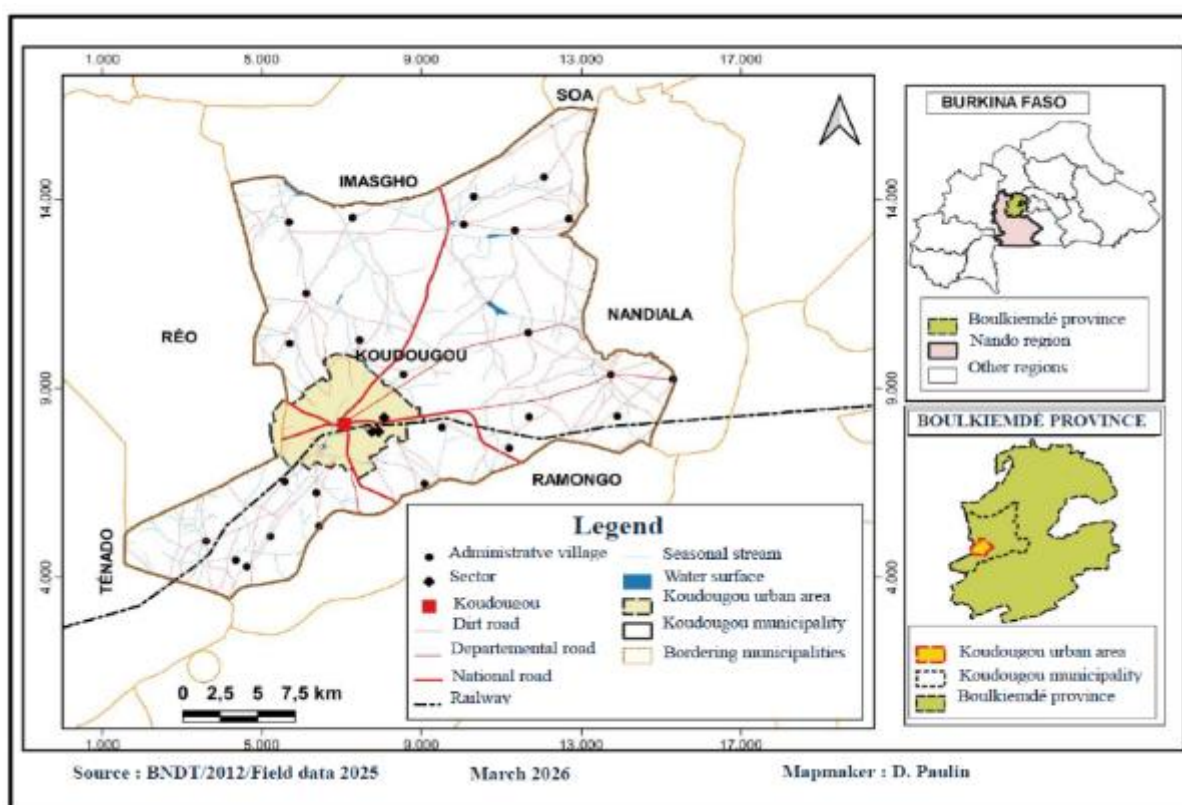
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cases, particularly in developing countries, it contributes to the confiscation of power by a minority elite and to growing corruption [12-14]. The main hypothesis of this study is that the citizens of Koudougou have little interest in the management of their community's affairs. This low level of participation contributes to the erosion of transparency and good governance rules in the management of their city's public affairs. Citizens' participation in the management of local public affairs concerns their interest in learning about the life of the municipal institution, their involvement in community and association development initiatives (management councils, school councils, community service projects) and their participation in public consultations (municipal councils, accountability day).

## 2. Materials and methods

### 2.1. Presentation of the study area

The city of Koudougou, the third largest in the country, is located in the Nando region. This city, classified as a medium-sized city [15], is also the capital of the region and the province of Boulkiemdé. It is bordered to the west by the urban commune of Réo, to the south by the rural commune of Ramongo, to the south-west by the rural commune of Tenado, to the east by the rural commune of Nandiala and to the north by the rural communes of Imasgho and Soaw. The town of Koudougou is located 100 km from Ouagadougou, the country's political capital, and covers an area of 720 km<sup>2</sup>, comprising ten (10) sectors.



**Figure 1** Location of the city of Koudougou

The choice of this city is justified by its greater experience in implementing decentralisation reform [16] and its recurring crises in local governance [17-19].

### 2.2. Materials

The material used for this study comprises a set of primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected from 396 individuals in the city of Koudougou. The sample of 396 individuals primarily concerns heads of households in the ten (10) sectors of the city of Koudougou. For the data collection, which took place from April to June 2024, the study used tools such as questionnaires, documentary sources and a direct observation grid. SPSS and Excel software were used to process the quantitative data.

**2.3. Methods**

The methodological approach of this study is based on quantitative methods and enabled the collection of quantitative data. Quantitative data collection techniques were used, including household surveys and direct observation.

From a parent population estimated at 40,688 households, a sample of 396 households was obtained using the formula developed by [20] and cited by [21].

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{40688}{1 + 40688(0.05)^2}$$

n= 396

n = Size of the population to be surveyed

N: Total population size (396)

e = Margin of error (5%)

The sample size is 396 households.

**Table 1** Sample structure (n).

Sectors	Number of households per sector (p)	Sample size by sector (n' = k*p)
1	4535	44
2	3530	34
3	3074	30
4	4219	41
5	5321	52
6	1825	18
7	3656	36
8	6345	62
9	4660	45
10	3523	34
Total	40688	396

Source. National Institute of Statistics and Demography, 2022

Table 1 shows the number of households per sector and the sample size per sector in the urban municipality of Koudougou. To obtain the sample of households per sector, a distribution key was introduced, namely a coefficient k. This coefficient allows the demographic weight of households per sector to be taken into account. We were thus able to obtain samples ranging from 18 households in sector 6 to 62 households in sector 8.

Citizens' interest in local public affairs is analysed according to age, gender, level of education, occupation of the head of household and length of residence in the city.

For comparative analysis purposes, the study area is subdivided into three sub-areas based on two criteria: length of residence in the city and the evolution of the city's housing development (new and old sectors). This grouping of sectors results in three classes of sectors, summarised in Table 2.

**Table 2** Sample structure by sector class

Classes	Sectors concerned	Number of households per class(p)	Sample size per class
Class 1	4, 8 and 9	15 224	148
Class 2	10, 5 and 7	12 500	122
Class 3	1, 2, 3 and 6	12 964	126
	Total	40 688	396

Source. Adapted from [22]

Table 2 summarises the sample by housing sector class. Data analysis and results are presented by class.

The analytical method used in this study consists of descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. This method mainly uses Pearson's chi-square test to analyse the existence of a correlation between city dwellers' interest in city management and explanatory variables such as socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, level of education, occupation of the head of household and length of residence in the city).

The principle of Pearson's chi-square test indicates two hypotheses:

A null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) which states that there is no significant relationship between citizens' interest in local public affairs management and the explanatory variables (age, gender, level of education, occupation of the head of household and length of residence in the city). This initial hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected if the p-value is less than 0.05.

An alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) stating that there is a significant relationship between city dwellers' interest in local public affairs management and the explanatory variables. This alternative hypothesis is accepted if the p-value is less than 0.05. The chi-square independence values are obtained from the following formula:

$$x^2 = \sum \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

Where:

$O_i$  indicates the observed number

$E_i$  the expected number in category i

In this analysis, Pearson's chi-square test is combined with Cramer's V index to measure the strength of the link between city dwellers' interest in local public affairs and each explanatory variable. It ranges from 0 to 1.

An index  $V \leq 0.1$  corresponds to a zero or negligible association force;  $0.1 \leq V < 0.3$  corresponds to a weak association force;  $0.3 \leq V < 0.5$  corresponds to a moderate association force;  $V \geq 0.5$  corresponds to a strong association force.

Cramer's V index is calculated using the following formula:

$$V = \sqrt{\frac{x^2}{n \times \min(k-1, r-1)}}$$

With  $x^2$  = the chi-square value;

n = the total sample size (396);

k= the total number of rows in the table;

r= the total number of columns in the table.

### 3. Results of the study

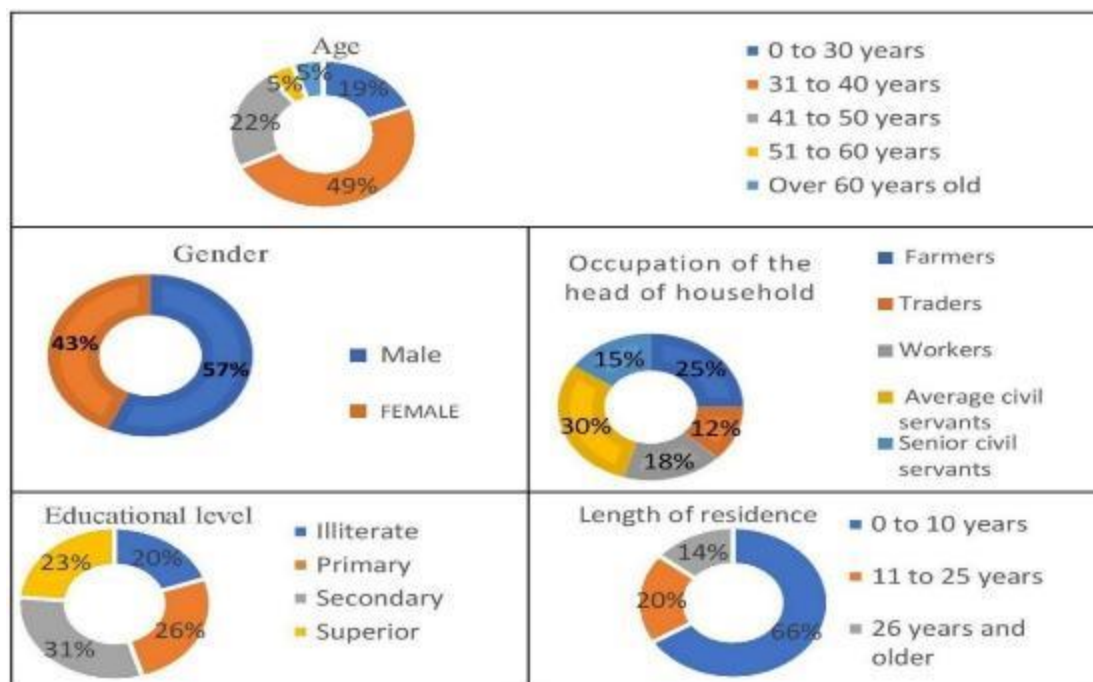
The results of the study are presented by class, ranging from class 1 to class 3.

#### 3.1. Class 1 or the new town: socio-demographic characteristics and city dwellers' interest in local affairs management

The new town consists of residential areas with new housing developments. It generally includes city dwellers who have lived there for less than 10 years.

##### 3.1.1. Sociodemographic characteristics

Class 1 consists of sectors 4, 8 and 9. The majority of city dwellers (66%) are newcomers to the city. The sectors in this class are new sectors resulting from recent housing developments. The analysis focuses on city dwellers' interest in local public affairs, which is likely influenced by socio-demographic characteristics such as age, gender, level of education, occupation of the head of household and length of residence in the city (Figure 2.).



**Figure 2** Socio-demographic characteristics of city dwellers in class 1

Figure 2 shows that 57% of respondents are men. It also shows that 19% are in the 0-30 age group, 49% are in the 31-40 age group, 22% are in the 41-50 age group, 5% are in the 51-60 age group, and 5% of respondents are over 60. In addition, 30% of respondents are middle-ranking civil servants, 25% are farmers, 18% are manual workers, 15% are senior civil servants and 12% are traders. Furthermore, the figure shows that 31% of urban respondents have secondary education, 23% have higher education, 26% have primary education and 20% are illiterate. Finally, 66% of the urban residents surveyed have lived in the city for 10 years or less, 20% have lived there for between 11 and 25 years, and 14% have lived there for at least 26 years.

An examination of the socio-demographic and economic characteristics of this class reveals a young population (61% are between 31 and 50 years old), fairly well educated (54% have a secondary to higher education level) and engaged in intellectual or administrative activities (45% of them are civil servants). The majority (66%) are city dwellers who have recently arrived in the city.

#### 3.2. City dwellers' interest in city management

Table 3 shows, based on the Likert scale, city dwellers' interest in the life of their city. An examination of this table reveals that 45.9% of city dwellers surveyed say they are not at all interested in the management of local public affairs in the city of Koudougou, 10.1% are not very interested, 37.2% say they are interested in the management of city affairs,

and 6.8% say they are very interested. Overall, there appears to be limited interest among city residents in the management of their city's affairs.

**Table 3** City dwellers' interest in city management

		Frequency	Marginal percentage
Interested in local public affairs management	Not at all interested	68	45.9
	Not very interested	15	10.1
	Interested	55	37.2
	Very interested	10	6.8
Total valid		148	100
Missing		0	0
Total		148	100

Source. Field data, May 2024

An analysis of the correlation between city residents' interest in city management and socio-demographic characteristics using the chi-square test reinforced by Cramer's v index gives the results shown in Table 4.

**Table 4** Results of the chi-square test and Cramer's V

Explanatory variable	Pearson's chi-square	df	p-value	Cramer's V
Gender	3.112	3	0.375	0.145
Age	9.704	12	0.642	0.148
Occupation of head of household	44.645	12	0.000***	0.317**
Level of education	37.411	9	0.000***	0.290*
Length of residence	8.812	6	0.184	0.173

Source. Field data, May 2024

In light of Table 4, there is a significant correlation between the interest that city dwellers have in the management of local affairs and two socio-demographic characteristics, namely occupation and level of education.

With regard to the profession of city dwellers, this correlation is revealed by the result of the chi-square test, which indicates a p-value = 0.000 lower than 0.05 (threshold value). This p-value = 0.000  $\leq$  0.005 allows us to reject the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>), which states that there is no correlation between city dwellers' interest in local affairs and their occupation, and to accept the alternative hypothesis H<sub>1</sub>, which affirms the existence of a correlation between these two variables. Cramer's V index = 0.317 (0.3  $\leq$  V < 0.5) indicates a moderate correlation.

With regard to educational attainment, the chi-square test also gives a p-value = 0.000, which is less than 0.05 (threshold value). This p-value = 0.000  $\leq$  0.005 allows us to accept the alternative hypothesis H<sub>1</sub>, which asserts that there is a correlation between city dwellers' interest in local affairs and their level of education. However, Cramer's V index = 0.29 (0.1  $\leq$  V < 0.3) indicates a weak correlation. The correlation between city dwellers' interest in local affairs management in this class indicates that more educated city dwellers (secondary education level: 31% and higher: 23%) are interested in city management. This can be explained by their ability to understand the issues involved in decentralisation and to access written documents both in paper form and on social media and networks.

These city dwellers also have the opportunity, through their understanding of local governance, to lodge complaints about the management of local public services and demand accountability in the management of municipal affairs. Better educated city dwellers are able to assess the impact of municipal action on improving their living conditions. As for the correlation between citizens' level of interest in city management and their profession, this can be explained by the fact that citizens with more skilled professions, particularly civil servants and, to a lesser extent, certain workers, are interested in the life of their city. This reality can be explained by the nature of their profession, which requires them

to be involved in local governance. This involvement is desired or even imposed by the profession. In this case, a civil servant, by virtue of their professional responsibilities, is required to collaborate with the municipality in the interests of their service.

Similarly, his concern for the quality of municipal public services requires him to keep an eye on municipal activities. This is made possible by his high level of education, which is a significant advantage in understanding and demanding sound management of municipal affairs. This opportunity to participate in and understand municipal governance requires him to constantly analyse the management of local public affairs. This constant monitoring of municipal management is justified by the interest that these citizens have in improving their living conditions. This creates increased interest in the quality of municipal public services and the public policies implemented by the local authority.

On the other hand, interest in local public affairs will be less pronounced among farmers, shopkeepers and labourers. This indifference on the part of farmers, traders and labourers towards city management can be explained by the lack of a direct link between their profession and local governance, but also by their low level of education, which constitutes a barrier to their participation in local community life.

Overall, 44% of city dwellers in class 1 are interested in the management of local affairs in the city. Their interest in the management of city affairs is determined by their professional status and high level of education. This class includes new sectors where the majority of city dwellers have at least a secondary education (54%) and where 42% are civil servants.

### 3.3. The In-Between City: Sociodemographic Profiles and Citizen Engagement in Local Governance

The in-between city is the part of the city made up of intermediate housing estates. It is home to city dwellers who have lived there for between 11 and 25 years.

#### 3.3.1. Sociodemographic characteristics

This class concerns sectors 5, 7 and 10. It is unique in that it is home to city dwellers with an intermediate length of residence, which can be explained by the evolution of the housing development. These sectors belong to the second wave of housing development. The analysis focuses on residents' interest in local public affairs, influenced by socio-demographic characteristics such as age, gender, level of education, occupation of the head of household and length of residence in the city (Figure 3.).

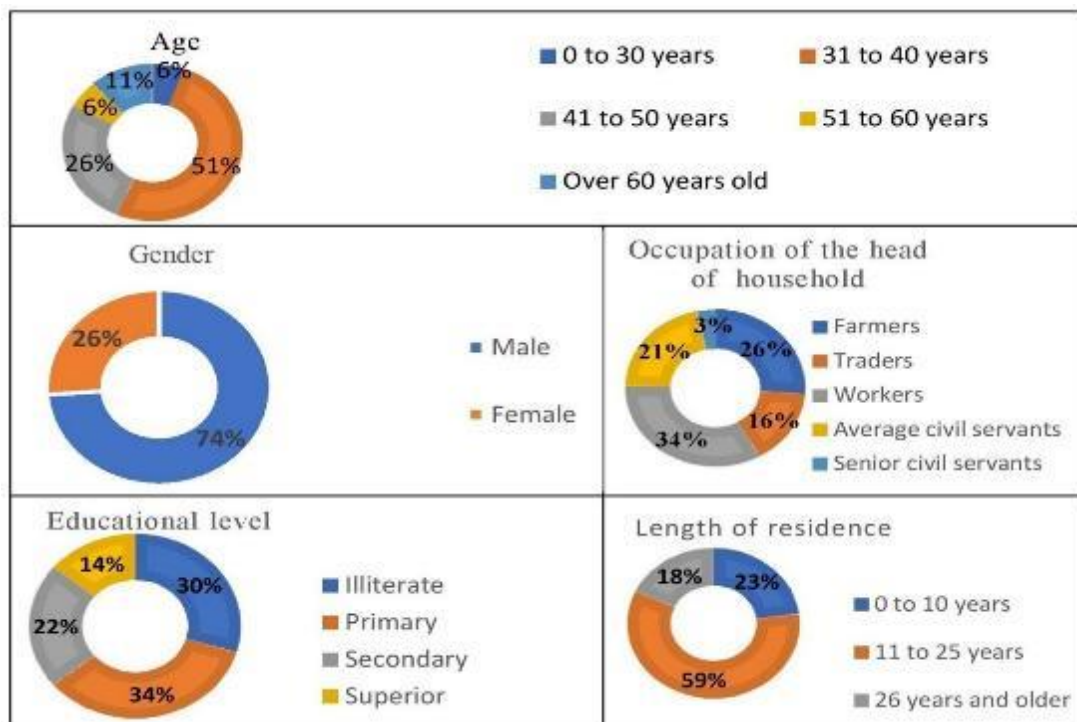


Figure 3 Socio-demographic characteristics of urban dwellers in the class

Figure 3 shows that 57% of respondents are men. It also shows that 6% are in the 0-30 age group ; 51% are in the 31-40 age group ; 26% are in the 41-50 age group ; 6% are aged 51-60, and 11% of respondents are over 60. In addition, 34% of respondents are manual labourers; 26% are farmers; 21% are middle-ranking civil servants; 16% are traders; and 3% are senior civil servants. Furthermore, the figure shows that 34% of urban residents surveyed have primary education; 30% are illiterate; 22% have secondary education and 14% have higher education. Finally, 23% of the urban residents surveyed have lived in the city for between 0 and 10 years; 59% have lived there for between 11 and 25 years; and 18% have lived there for at least 26 years.

An examination of this data indicates a young population (77% of city dwellers are between 31 and 50 years old) with, however, a significant increase in the number of elderly people (from 10% to 17%), with low levels of education (64% of city dwellers have primary education or are illiterate) and engaged in manual labour (60% of city dwellers are farmers or labourers). The majority of city dwellers (59%) have lived there for between 11 and 25 years.

3.3.2. Interest of city dwellers in the functioning of the city

**Table 5** Interest of city dwellers in the functioning of the city

		Frequency	Marginal percentage
Interested in local public affairs management	Not at all interested	70	57.4
	Not very interested	7	5.7
	Neutral	1	0.8
	Interested	28	23
	Very interested	16	13.1
Total valid		122	100
Missing		0	0
Total		122	100

Source. Field data, May 2024

Table 5 shows that 57.4% of city dwellers in class 2 are not at all interested in how the city is run ; 5.7% are not very interested, 23% are interested and 13.1% say they are very interested in how the city is managed. Overall, it appears that the majority of city dwellers in this class (57.4%) have no interest in the activities of the municipal authorities.

Statistical analysis of city dwellers' interest in city management using the chi-square test and Cramer's v index yielded the following results (Table 6).

**Table 6** Results of the chi-square test and Cramer's V

Explanatory variable	Pearson's chi-square	df	p-value	Cramer's V
Gender	7.629	4	0.106	0.250
Age	34.418	16	0.005**	0.266
Occupation of head of household	44.336	16	0.000***	0.301
Level of education	37.130	12	0.000***	0.319
Length of residence	7.246	8	0.510	0.172

Source. Field data, May 2024

Looking at Table 6, the interest of Class 2 city dwellers in city management is associated with three socio-demographic and economic characteristics, namely occupation, level of education and age.

The chi-square test between city dwellers' interest in city management and age gave a p-value of 0.005 <0.05. This confirms a correlation between these two variables.

Similarly, this test confirmed a correlation between city dwellers' interest in city management and their profession on the one hand, and their level of education on the other. The p-values are  $0.000 < 0.05$  for profession and  $0.000 < 0.05$  for level of education, respectively.

While the influence of occupation and level of education has already been analysed in the first class, the correlation between age and city dwellers' interest in local affairs is new. This correlation can be explained by the fact that city dwellers of a certain age are interested in city life. In class 2, the majority of citizens, i.e. 77%, are in the 31-50 age group. This stage of citizens' lives is a period of professional and family stability, which encourages them to become involved in city life in order to improve their access to local public services and to build their personal image in society. This participation takes place in their services, in the management committees of schools, health centres, secondary schools and colleges, and even within the municipality or watchdog associations and political parties. It also takes place through participation in public debates, where municipal authorities are called to account. On the other hand, young city dwellers (aged 0-30) and older people (aged over 50) are less interested in city life due to professional and family instability for the younger ones and bitter experiences or a sense of accomplishment for the older ones.

In summary, it should be noted that only 36.1% of city dwellers in class 2 are interested in city life. Interest in city life in this class is influenced by the professional status of city dwellers, their level of education and their age.

### 3.4. Class 3 or the the traditional City : socio-demographic characteristics and interest of townspeople in local affairs management

The *traditional City* represents the areas of the first wave of housing development, with residents who have lived there for at least 26 years. These residents constitute the city's indigenous population.

#### 3.4.1. Sociodemographic characteristics

This class concerns sectors 1, 2, 3 and 6. It is characterised by the fact that it is home to city dwellers who have lived there for a long time. These sectors belong to the first wave of housing developments. The analysis focuses on residents' interest in local public affairs, influenced by socio-demographic characteristics such as age, gender, level of education, occupation of the head of household and length of residence in the city (Figure 4.).

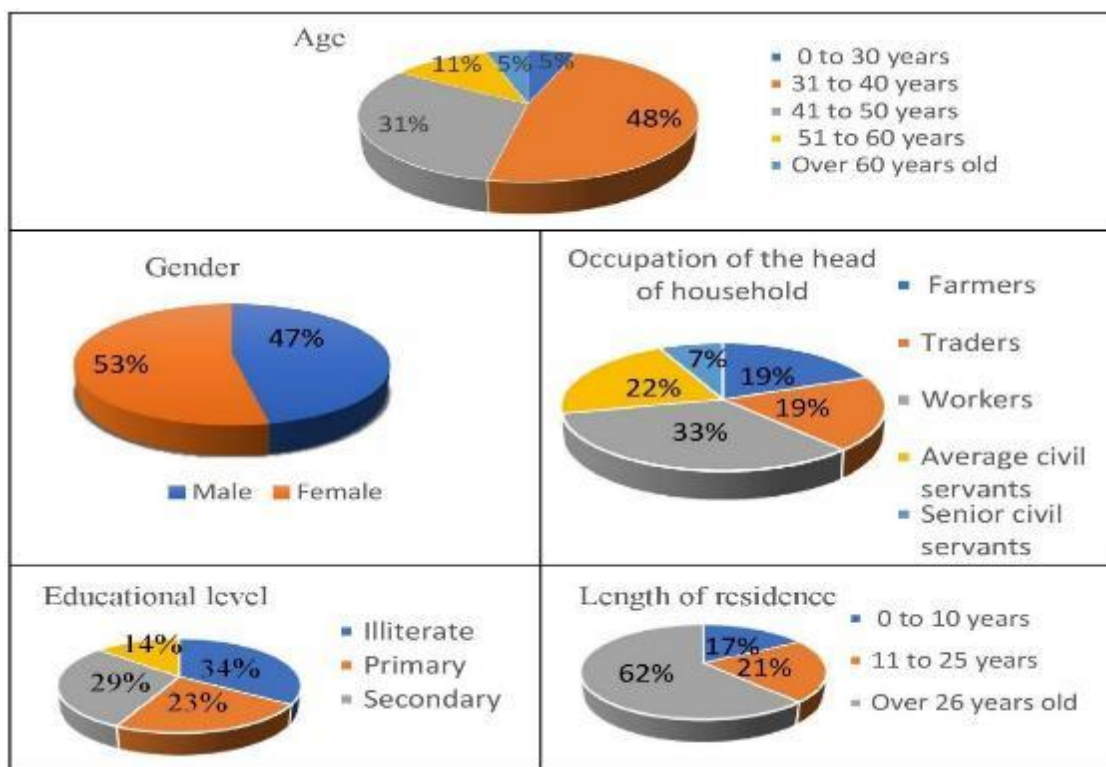


Figure 4 Socio-demographic characteristics of city dwellers in class 3

Figure 4 shows that 53% of respondents are men. It also shows that 6% are in the 0-30 age group; 47% are in the 31-40 age group, 31% are in the 41-50 age group, 11% are in the 51-60 age group, and 5% of respondents are over 60. In addition, 33% of respondents are manual labourers, 22% are middle-ranking civil servants, 19% are farmers, 19% are traders and 7% are senior civil servants. Furthermore, the figure shows that 34% of respondents are illiterate, 29% of urban respondents have secondary education, 23% have primary education, and 14% have higher education. Finally, the figure shows that 62% of urban dwellers in this class have lived in the city for at least 26 years, 21% have lived there for between 11 and 25 years, and 17% of those surveyed have lived in the city for between 0 and 10 years.

An analysis of Class 3 data reveals a young population (78% of city dwellers are between 31 and 50 years old), with very low levels of education (57% of city dwellers are illiterate or have only primary education) and engaged in manual labour (52% of city dwellers are farmers or labourers). It should also be noted that 62% of city dwellers have lived in the city for at least 26 years. The sectors in this class are home to the majority of the city's indigenous inhabitants.

3.4.2. Interest of city dwellers in the management of local public affairs

**Table 7** Interest of class 3 city dwellers in local public affairs management

		Frequency	Marginal percentage
Interested in local public affairs management	Not at all interested	77	61.1
	Not very interested	12	9.5
	Interested	29	23
	Very interested	8	6.3
Total valid		126	100
Missing		0	0
Total		126	100

Source. Field data, May 2024

Table 7 shows that 61.1% of city dwellers in class 3 are not at all interested in the management of local affairs in the city, 9.5% are not very interested, 23% of city dwellers say they are interested in the management of the city and 6.3% say they are very interested. Overall, these results reveal a very pronounced lack of interest among city dwellers in the future of their city.

3.4.3. Statistical analysis of the data using the chi-square test and Cramer's V index yielded the following results (Table 7).

**Table 8** Results of the chi-square test and Cramer's V

Explanatory variable	Pearson's chi-square	df	p-value	Cramer's V
Gender	11.916	3	0.008**	0.308
Age	26.571	12	0.009**	0.265
Occupation of head of household	52.720	12	0.000***	0.373
Level of education	33.687	9	0.000***	0.3
Length of residence	1.634	6	0.950	0.081

Source. Field data, May 2024

Table 8 shows that the interest of urban dwellers in class 3 in local affairs management is significantly associated with four (04) socio-demographic and economic characteristics, namely educational level, occupation of the head of household, age and gender. This association is confirmed by the results of the chi-square test of independence, which show a p-value = 0.000<0.05 for level of education, p-value = 0.000<0.05 for occupation of the head of household, p-value = 0.009<0.05 for age and p-value = 0.008<0.05 for gender. These values allow us to accept the existence of a correlation between the interest of class 3 city dwellers in city management and level of education, occupation, age and gender. Cramer's V index highlights a weak association for the age variable (Cramer's V = 0.265) and a moderate association for the variables occupation (Cramer's V = 0.3 <0.5), level of education (Cramer's V = 0.3 <0.5) and gender

(Cramer's  $V = 0.373 < 0.5$ ). However, the chi-square test does not confirm a significant correlation between city dwellers' interest in city management and length of residence. The distinctive feature of this class is the association between city dwellers' interest in local public affairs management and gender. This correlation can be explained by the fact that men are more interested in local affairs management than women.

This situation stems from the socio-cultural realities specific to Class 3, which is mainly composed of indigenous city dwellers, where men are given priority in a patriarchal system that relegates women to domestic activities with limited access to educational services, resulting in a very low level of education that constitutes a barrier to accessing written documents.

Overall, 29.6% of city dwellers in class 3 are interested in how the city works. Professional status, educational attainment and gender appear to be the key factors determining city dwellers' interest in city management.

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#### 4. Discussion of results

The interest of city dwellers in the management of local affairs has also been the subject of other research.

The results of this study highlight a differentiated interest among city dwellers in the management of local affairs in the city of Koudougou, depending on socio-economic characteristics. Overall, the study reveals low participation by city dwellers in the life of their community, in a context of gradual transfer of powers to local authorities and increased burdens on those authorities.

These results are consistent with those of [23], who found that despite the increased transfer of powers from central government to local authorities with the aim of encouraging citizens to participate in the transformation of their communities, citizens are not very involved at the municipal level. This low level of involvement is particularly noticeable during local elections. The authors show that this reality reflects 'a shift from "political" participation to participatory democracy.' They add that citizen engagement in local public affairs faces many challenges, including social diversity and high citizen mobility. As mentioned in this study, [6] also reveals a low level of citizen interest in community life in his study, which can be explained mainly by the illiteracy of local elected officials and socio-cultural constraints. However, the author adds the lack of infrastructure, namely meeting rooms. He points out that 65% to 75% of citizens in the Democratic Republic of Congo are unaware of their legal right to participate in local community life, particularly during municipal council plenary sessions.

reveals that since the implementation of the decentralisation policy in Côte d'Ivoire, no form of citizen participation has been put in place to involve citizens in the management of local authorities. The author shows that the presence of civil society representatives at municipal meetings at the end of the year is considered by municipal authorities to be the only form of citizen participation. [25], looking at the determinants of citizen participation in the city of Saida in Algeria, show that, in addition to educational attainment, age and gender influence citizens' participation in the management of community affairs. They reveal that 79% of Saida's citizens would like to be involved in the running of social services, which they consider to be very important. Their study highlights a lack of interest among city dwellers in city life and reveals the lack of effort on the part of city authorities to involve citizens. They propose an approach based on effective communication and branding of the city to significantly increase the participation of its citizens.

[11] also arrive at similar conclusions in Senegal, albeit with some nuances. In their view, although notable efforts have been made to implement various mechanisms for citizen participation in local government, particularly local consultation frameworks, local development committees and neighbourhood councils, citizen participation remains low. This low participation is mainly due to poor governance, the deterioration of local public service provision and leadership conflicts. These findings are similar to those of [26], who indicates that the disinterest of citizens in the city of Kikwit in the management of their city stems from their disenchantment with the municipal authorities, who have deprived them not only of means of control but, above all, of elections since 2006. This disinterest on the part of city dwellers in the management of their community, fuelled by the institutional context, is at the root of a crisis of confidence that is affecting the mobilisation of local tax resources. The findings of [27] reveal low citizen participation in West Africa. They show that citizen participation in local government in West Africa does not reflect the normative reality described in political discourse. It is a constant struggle between local elected officials, different socio-professional groups and traditional actors who set themselves up as the legitimate standard-bearers of the local community. This constant tension between the actors of decentralisation for participation in community life stems from the desire of the various actors to ensure that decentralised resources are not captured by a minority. For the author, citizen participation in local government is hampered by clientelism and information asymmetry. He believes that genuine citizen participation requires local elected officials to cultivate close ties with voters and go beyond the formal

frameworks for participation established in the context of decentralisation. The findings of [28] explain the low level of citizen participation in Cameroon by the legislator's own lack of engagement with the issue of citizen participation. This legislative vacuum gives free rein to the creation of various participation mechanisms by local actors. This comparison of results reveals, from every point of view, low participation desired and encouraged by local elected officials and the weakness of institutional frameworks.

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## 5. Conclusion

This article aims to analyse the interest of citizens in the city of Koudougou in the management of local public affairs. Ultimately, this study shows that citizens in the city of Koudougou have a varied and low level of interest in the management of local public affairs. The analysis tests reveal that interest varies according to socio-demographic and economic characteristics. Overall, 44% of new residents are interested in the management of local affairs in the city. Only 36.1% of residents in intermediate neighbourhoods are interested in the functioning of their community, and 29.3% of residents in older neighbourhoods are interested in the future of the city. The most educated city dwellers and those engaged in intellectual activities show a high level of interest in their community due to their high educational capital and professional status. City dwellers with stable professional and family lives are interested in demanding improvements in local public services or in building an image for themselves in society. On the other hand, the youngest and oldest city dwellers are less interested in the community, the former due to professional or family instability and the latter because they feel they have already done their duty. Native city dwellers show very little interest in the life of their city. They are generally less educated and work in manual professions.

The results of this study call for communication with specific social groups and in specific geographical areas of the city to ensure broad participation by all citizens in the city's transformation. It is urgent for municipal authorities to integrate vulnerable groups, particularly citizens with limited educational attainment and low incomes, into formal consultation frameworks and local development planning bodies. These results highlight that decentralisation does not always lead to popular participation and confirm the analytical theories of decentralisation, which call for local contexts to be taken into account in the implementation of decentralisation.

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## Compliance with ethical standards

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### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

No conflict of interest to be disclosed

### *Statement of informed consent*

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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