

## Yatching and Associated Activities in Assinie: Between Conflicts and Complementarities

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**Abstract:** The coastline of Assinie is the place of development for many activities in relation with the lagoon and the sea, particularly yatching, artisanal fishing, lagoon transport, agriculture, etc. But yatching, that has been imported there, has become essential in an environment already dedicated to the other activities mentioned above. The socio-economic development of Assinie faces the conquest of the lagoon space. Despite their different nature, these different activities coexist. The objective of this study is to analyze the types of relationship that exist between pleasure and related activities in Assinie. To provide an answer to this concern, interviews were conducted with pleasure clubs, the DGAMP and practitioners of side activities. Observations as well as a geo-referenced location of the zones where each activity occurs. Although there exist some conflictual relationships between yatching and side activities, both of them are complementary. Thus, the establishment of an organizational plan delimiting zones and periods for yatching and for fishing has been essential to regulate the situation.

**Keywords:** Assinie, yatching, related activities, conflicts, complementarity.

### INTRODUCTION

Like in developed countries, Côte d'Ivoire coastal territories are subjects to an economic and demographic pressure whose pleasure is one of the main determinants.

This touristic economy has an impact on natural areas or zones already dedicated to certain activities including artisanal fishing, lagoon transport, catering, hotels, etc. and vice-versa. Indeed, yatching was introduced in Côte d'Ivoire by French expatriates, who created the first pleasure club in Biétry in 1956 [1].

This activity has grown with the creation of the Grand-Béréby sailing fleet, but with the prosperity of Assinie tourism, boaters will settle there with motorboats and the creation of second homes. In addition, "the idea of creating a seaside resort appears in 1971 to meet this chance of the country[2]". That same year, the Ivorian state decrees Assinie as a tourist area. Yachting will evolve discreetly with the Mediterranean and Valtour clubs established respectively in Assouindé and Assinie Mafia. But, it is from 2008 that this activity will experience a real boom with the emergence of second homes [3]. The Assinie area has become a political, economic and socio-spatial issue, through "a scheme for setting into operation planning and development spaces that takes into account regional resonances [4]". The socio-economic development of Assinie faces the harsh conquest of the lagoon space. These different activities must therefore cohabit despite their different natures.

The main question of this study is: What types of relationships exist between yatching and related activities in Assinie? The objective of this study is to analyze the types of relationship between pleasure and related activities in Assinie.

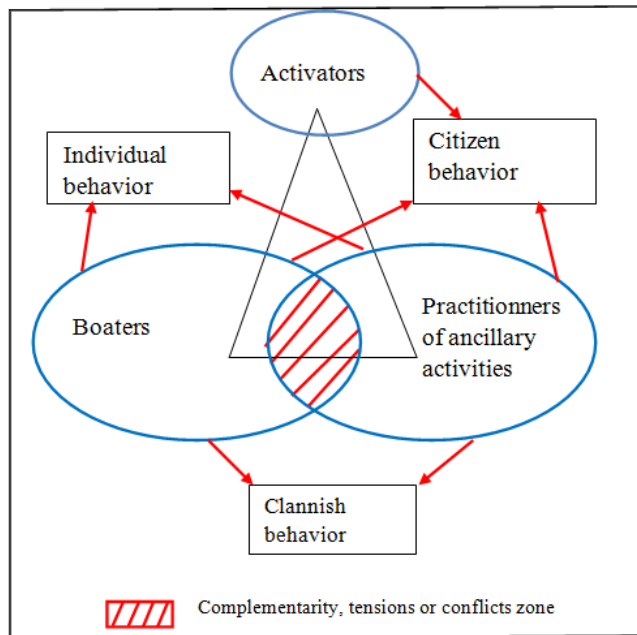
### METHODOLOGY

The search for information is based on a review of the literature, focus groups with the actors of the various activities involved and semi-structured interviews with traditional and administrative authorities. Following these operations was an observation of the progress of the various activities around the Aby lagoon as well as the location of marinas, car parks, fishing camps, crossing piers and conflict areas on a geo-referenced map, coupled with a Cartesian landmark with the Assouindé intersection as the origin of the landmark.

This study is based on the actors behavior theory of MARCHAND B. 1977. According to this theory, economic and social actors in the Assinie area, like all the actors of regional development projects, try to articulate their behavior on the objectives of the regional system, according to the social, economic and physical conditions of the receiving environment. The

whole question is to know the technical capacity and the psychological stimuli of the actors. Figure 1 models this

theory.



The different actors of the coastal system maintain triangular relations. They adopt divergent behaviors. Thus, one will have a behavior when the actor met defends a personal interest, a clannish behavior when the actor defends the interest of his group or behavior citizen when the actor defends a general interest. This generates complementarity, tension or conflict in areas where boating and related activities meet.

Conception and realization : TANO S., 2017 inspired by MARCHAND B., 1977, SONNIC E., 2005

Fig-1: Model for analyzing the behavior of yachting stakeholders on the Ivorian Coast

**RESULTS**

**Presentation of the Assinie space**

The city of Assinie is splitted by the Aby Lagoon and bordered by the Atlantic Ocean. This gives several islands (Assinie France, Sagbadou, Mabianéha) which are real recreational attractions (fig.2). The ocean

communicates with the Aby lagoon to the east by the Passe and westward through the Assinie canal, which represent the boating and tourism assets of the sector. Assinie also has a coastline that offers a sandy beach with a width of 40 to 100 m [2].

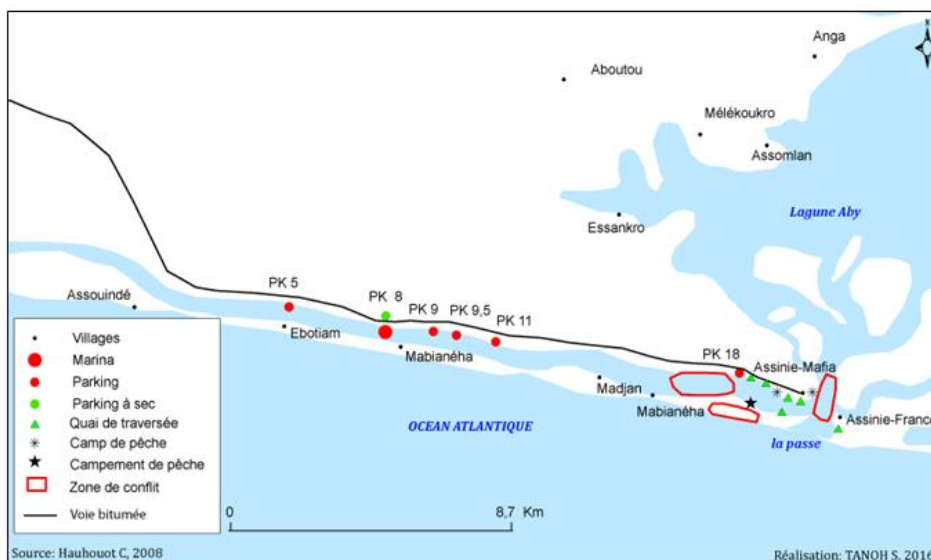


Fig-2: Presentation of Assinie space and coastal activities

Parking à sec = dry parking; quai de traversée = crossing pier; camp de pêche/campement de pêche = fishing camp; zone de conflit = Conflict zone; voie bitumée = Tarred road; la passe = the pass

The pleasure pool of Assinie includes about 240 nautical pleasure craft (boats and jets) distributed in

different sites (marina and car parks). This basin represents one of the highest concentrations of pleasure

equipment and boats, as well as the most intense tourist navigation flows of the Ivorian coast. As such, it is called an active pool. While at the national level, this same area also holds one of the highest proportions of artisanal fishermen, resorts, second homes, etc. It is easy to understand that the pressure on the Aby lagoon and its banks are particularly intense in Assinie.

Installed in Assinie as a simple tourist activity, yachting has progressively extended from pk 5 to pk 18; that makes a 13 km long sector of the lagoon Aby under its influence (fig.1). This sector includes a marina and five car parks. Recreational activities include the lagoon ride, pleasure fishing, speed races, ski jets and sand quads.

The yachting is developing with second homes of modern hotels but also traditional restaurants. Boating thus generates direct jobs in marinas and car parks and indirectly in ancillary activities (as custodians of secondary residences, cooks, etc.). The development of yachting on the banks also leads to the sale or lease of land to expatriates by the autochtones. This, to the detriment of coconut plantations that are abandoned because land leasing generates a better income (CFAF 50,000 / month for 600 m<sup>2</sup>).

#### **The usual conflicts of recreational boating in Assinie** *Conflictual relationships on the lagoon Aby*

The lagoon Aby is a theater of litigation even more frequent as most of the flows are concentrated between 'pk 5' and 'pk 18' (tourist area housing the marina and car parks) and the Passe, sector of the mouth of the lagoon also main area of fishing and population

crossing. This area is home to approximately 240 recreational vessels, 26 fishing canoes, 12 lagoon transport canoes and 40 quads crisscrossing it. However, the lagoon Aby is narrow in this sector, so, the combination between the narrowness of the lagoon and its high rate of frequentation will be directly explanatory of the number of conflicts between navigators. These conflicting relationships are generally between boaters and fishermen.

Artisanal fishermen disapprove the attitude of some boaters concerning the damage done to their fishing nets. Indeed, these nets, placed in the water and often unnoticed, are placed perpendicularly to the direction of the ships. So, they end up torn by the engine propeller. Sometimes, it is the boat engine that is damaged by the net. Reciprocal complaints between the two actors are the main conflicts that often lead them to the chieftaincy or marine police.

Other criticisms made to mariners are those of recreational fishermen who seek tranquility to fish. However, speeding sailors do not seem to take into account all this, they sometimes come too close to the fishermen, causing waves of bow that make the fish flee.

Fishermen, for their part, abandon in the water pieces of wood used as fish traps or for drying nets (photo 1), which represents obstacles to navigation. The risks are obvious because some pieces of insulated wood are not visible. This could cause accidents and thus the capsizing of boats

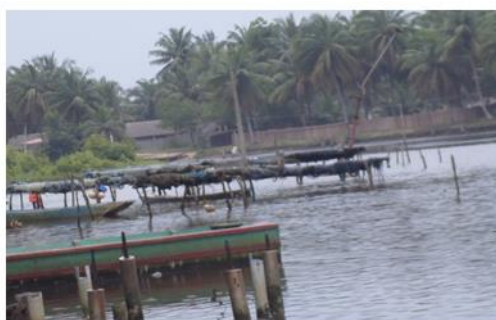


Photo TANO S, September 2014

**Photo 1:** Drying area for fishing nets

Nets rolled up and dried on woods planted in the water, other woods abandoned in the water are real obstacles to navigation.

#### **Conflictual relationships on the beach**

The conflicts coming from the beach are those between sea anglers and quad riders. Indeed, the fishermen returning from fishing abandon on the beach,

coconut trunks used as a springboard to drag their canoe at sea. These trunks represent obstacles to the movement of the quads, hence the complaints of boaters (photo 2).

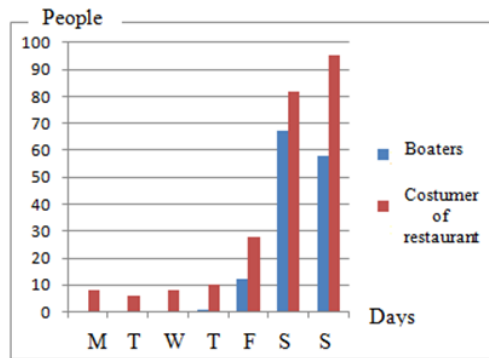
Photo 2: A quad prevented in his traffic on the beach of Assinie Mafia



Pieces of wood used to put in or remove canoes from the water are left in the sand, preventing the movement of quads

Photo TANOH S. 2014

**Complementary use of yatching**  
*The pleasure – restaurant complementary relationship*



One can notice that boaters arrive from friday to generally leave on sunday and it is at this time that the restaurant receives the most of its customers

Source: TANOH S., September 2014.

**Fig-3: highlighting the complementarity between the Marina Ivoire Loisir and the restaurant-bar of the hotel Coucoué-Lodge on the period of September**

Indeed, the restaurant-bar is the meeting place for boaters to have a meal and chat with friends or family. Under the stilt yards, they can also enjoy the

show offered by jet-skiers on the lagoon. This further accentuates the preference of this restaurant in the marina (photos 3 and 4).

**Photo 3: A weekend at the MIL**



Photo: TANOH S., September 2014

View of a stilt yard restaurant during a day of pleasure: The restaurant is full of customers, between 11 am and 14 pm

**Photo 4: A working day at the MIL Restaurant and Bar**



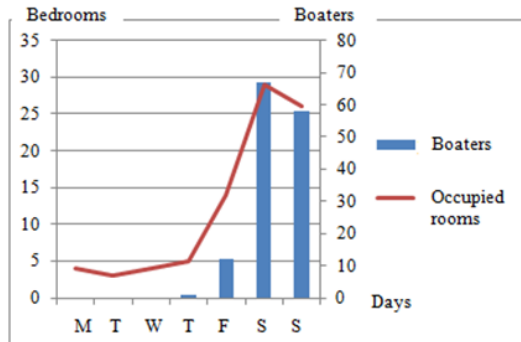
Photo: TANOH S., September 2014

The same restaurant, at the same hour (between 11 am to 2 pm, during a working day, without pleasure : It is almost empty

**Yatching-hotels complementary relationship**

The relationship is so close that nearly 80% of boaters have set up their second homes in Assinie. It

should also be noted that, during weekends, the hotels are stormed by customers (fig.4)



The number of guests of the hotel increases with that of the boaters, which explains the perfect combination between the marina and the hotel.

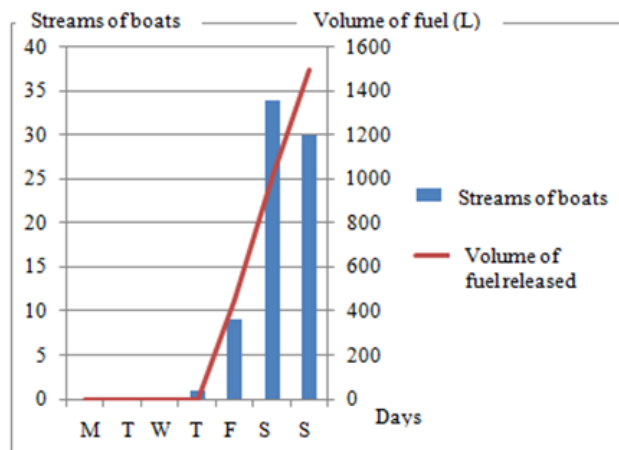
Source: TANOH, September 2015

**Fig-4: Highlighting the complementarity between the marina and the hotel**

From Monday to Thursday, boaters are almost absents in the Marina, meanwhile the hotel is home to a few customers (less than 5 guests). Boaters arrive at the Marina from Friday, with an exponential growth that reaches its maximum on Saturday (67 boaters) which corresponds to a saturation of the hotel with its 29 rooms occupied. Between Saturday and Sunday, the flow of boaters drops because boaters start going back to Abidjan. During this time, the rooms of the hotel are emptied.

**Recreational boating and fuel trading**

In Assinie, we have two fuel stations: the Assouandé service station from where the fluid is transported in cans to the car parks, or the nautical docks of second homes; but the main supply point of boats is the service station of the marina. This station is on the coast of the lagoon, on the main dock of the marina, so it can directly serve the boats, hence the densification of the flow of boats in the basin of this marina (fig.5).



Source: TANOH S., September 2015

One can easily notice that the average amount of fuel delivered increases with the average flow of boats over the period indicated

**Fig-5: Highlighting the complementarity between the fuel station and the marina**

Between Monday and Thursday there is almost no pleasure, boaters usually arrive from Friday and it is at this moment that the boats come out. The average amount of fuel output therefore increases with the average flow of boats over the period indicated.

#### ***Yatching and mechanical service***

Just like cars, boats cannot do without the mechanics. The collaboration between pleasure boating and mechanical services is therefore more than necessary. Thus, there are mechanical workshops in marinas and boat parkings, that provide maintenance, assembly and repair of boats or the manufacture of hulls for pinasse boats. This has made it possible to hire nearly 16 young people in pleasure clubs as mechanics and electricians who are at the same time pilots and boat washers.

#### ***Complementarity between yatching and artisanal fishing***

Contrary to what has been seen above, one can find that the relationship of cohabitation between yatching and fishing is more complementary than conflictual. In fact, tourist boaters take pictures of artisanal fishing scenes on the lagoon and on the beach. In return, they buy fishermen's catches even at higher prices than those offered by ordinary buyers. This increases the incomes of fishermen who, despite some discords with boaters, prefer to sell their products to them in order to maximize their profits.

#### **Boating-related conflicts prevention and management modes in use in Assinie**

As part of the socio-economic development of Assinie and for a peaceful cohabitation and a better fusion between yatching and other coastal activities, the regulation of the littoral space activities is necessary. One should notice that yatching is not administratively regulated. Conflicts are then managed amicably with the traditional authorities, supported by the maritime police. Thus, here are some regulations that have been established:

- For the management of conflicts between quad riders, jet skiers and hotels guests, activities concerning quads and jet-skis are not allowed during resting times (between 12.00 and 2.30 pm). When fishing at sea, it is advisable to keep the trunks of coconut trees at a minimum distance of 30 m from the water and place them parallel to the shore to free the passage to the quads.

To prevent conflicts between fishermen and boaters, it was decided:

- The fishing ban on weekends and formally in the tourist area.
- It is forbidden to navigate at a high speed on working days (between Monday and Thursday) outside tourist areas. However, any navigator outside the tourist area must lift the engine

propeller when approaching a fishing net; therefore, he is liable for damage to the net. Fishermen to report the presence of a net when a pleasure boat is approaching.

In the event of an incident, the settlement of the conflict is amicable, either by the belligerents themselves, or by the traditional authorities or by the agents of the maritime police force.

#### **DISCUSSION**

The reproaches made to yatching, are more related to the competitions and sometimes the delicate cohabitations between coastal socio-economic activities. As with most coastal activities, recreational boating conflicts are primarily related to its spatial reach and practices. With this, our results are consistent with those of LECOURT A. [5] who states that "*conflicts are the reflection of competition around a space or a resource*". Assinie is thus marked by coordination problems between boaters and fishermen who started on conflicts of use around the lagoon Aby. These conflicts involve boaters and fishermen or yatching and small-scale fishing competing for the occupation of the lagoon and its foreshores. This confirms the results of BOSSUET L. and BOUTRY O [6]. "*Water, as a collective good, is a resource increasingly coveted by multiple uses*". This conflictual situation stems indeed from the divergent interests between the different actors, according to the theoretical results of SONNIC E [7] who suggest that the conflicts of use arise from the different behaviors of the actors. These behaviors constitute three systems (individual, clan and citizen).

These results also confirm those of ALOKO-N [4] on the Buyo space which presents the image of a cosmopolitan and composite society whose members come from diverse horizons. "*Conflicts arise from the fact that its members have different motivations, different socio-cultural and ideological references: water and land, the supports of production, are perceived differently*". These same results were also demonstrated by ANOH K [8]. "*the Ivorian lagoons are marked by a multitude of conflicts of interest which stem from the diversity of uses*".

Indeed, regarding the conflictual relationships between the yatching and ancillary activities, the results of these different researchers are consistent with those of this study, but the relations of cohabitation between these different activities are not always conflictual. Belligerents are also complementary. Boaters are the best customers of the fishermen and yatching offers jobs to young people in the marinas and car parks. At the antipode of predecessors, NACIMA B-Y [9] had already developed this thesis of complementarity: "*In addition, the ship crew takes advantage of stopovers to go ashore and make expenses*". These results have also been

proven by PEUZIAT I[10,11]. "Tasting a cold drink or a dinner, is part of the pleasures of stops to which some boaters are very sensitive".

Regarding conflict management, the results of this study are consistent with those of PEUZIAT I[10]. "the management of conflicts between different users of the marine space is based mainly on zoning". Thus, the organized cohabitation between yachting and ancillary activities in Assinie, participates in the prevention and management of conflicts, since it promotes the coordination of different actors towards the search for a negotiated solution.

## CONCLUSION

This analysis shows that recreational boating has accelerated the socio-economic development of Assinie, in the coastal zone, through the creation of marinas and car parks, second homes, hotels, restaurants and jobs. However, beyond remarkable economic and urban performance, due to the merger between recreational boating and related activities, Assinie has some difficulties. Fishing, which is one of the main activities of the local population, is still artisanal and turned towards the lagoon where it is hampered in certain compartments by boating. However, the socio-economic development of Assinie remains of a central interest for all the concerned actors. Thus, the management of conflicts by the implementation of an organizational plan delimiting the areas, periods of navigation and fishing has facilitated a peaceful coexistence of the various activities, leaving a dominance to the relations of complementarity. A model that could be used by the DGAMP, the Ministry of Tourism and traditional authorities for the development of yachting on the Ivorian coast.

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