

## Reducing Unemployment through Informal Fishing in the Urban Commune of Toliara, Madagascar

Andrianjafy Philippe Patrick<sup>1</sup>, Andrianjary Myriam<sup>2</sup>, Rahajamanana Jasmin<sup>3</sup>, Razanadrasoa Vololonome Bodomalala<sup>4</sup>, Ratiarimanajatovo Narindra<sup>4</sup>, Robijaona Rahelivololoniaina Baholy<sup>5,6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Antananarivo, Madagascar

<sup>2</sup>Higher Education Institute of Antsirabe –Vakinankaratra, University of Vakinankaratra, Antananarivo, Madagascar

<sup>3</sup>Higher Education Institute of Soavinandriana, University of Soavinandriana, Antananarivo, Madagascar

<sup>4</sup>Higher Normal School, University of Antananarivo, Antananarivo, Madagascar

<sup>5</sup>Industrial, Agricultural and Food Process and Systems Engineering, Doctoral School, University of Antananarivo, Antananarivo, Madagascar

<sup>6</sup>Polytechnic School of Antananarivo, University of Antananarivo, Antananarivo, Madagascar

Email: [baholy.robijaona@univ-antananarivo.mg](mailto:baholy.robijaona@univ-antananarivo.mg)

### Abstract

*This article aims to analyze the informal sector in Madagascar to determine whether it truly constitutes an effective solution for reducing unemployment. To this end, a representative survey was conducted in the Urban Commune of Toliara focused on the fishing industry. This sector has gradually become a key part of the overall economic organization, evolving into an element of balance and a factor of social stability, forming the basis for territorial dynamics. At the national level, it accounts for 7% of the gross domestic product, provides approximately 1.5 million direct and indirect jobs, and represents 6.6 percent of exports, making it a fundamental sector of the economy. Through various theoretical and empirical analyses, this article seeks to offer insights into the real contribution of the informal sector to employment integration and the economy of fishing households, both in Madagascar at large and specifically in the Urban Commune of Toliara. The results of research conducted with a sample of 250 fishermen from this capital of the Atsimo-Andrefana region shed light on the informal sector's capacity to complement or strengthen the formal economy of households in terms of creating stable jobs and income.*

### Keywords

Unemployment; Income; Employment; Fishing; Informal Economy;



## I. Introduction

In developing countries like Madagascar, job opportunities in the modern, so-called formal economy are no longer able to meet the demand. Traditional, unstructured activities are diverse and practiced daily. They serve as a source of food, employment, and income for the majority of the population (Charles-Dominique, 2008).

The current rise in unemployment leaves little room for anything but varying degrees of pessimism (Lautier, 2013). In 2022, according to statements from Razafimanantsoa, Secretary General of the Ministry of Labor, Employment, Public Service, and Social Laws, statistics revealed a very low rate of formal employment in Madagascar. The youth employment rate barely exceeds 3% to 4%, while for the country as a whole, it stands at just 1.5%. The unemployment rate in Madagascar has reached alarming proportions, with up to 80% of the population affected, especially in coastal areas (Habboul, 2022). In the case of the

city of Toliara, the number of unemployed individuals continues to grow at an alarming rate, while job opportunities in the labor market are becoming increasingly scarce, as most of the companies that once made the region famous have disappeared. According to survey results from young observers (OBS Mada), 60% of the population in the Atsimo Andrefana region do not have decent work, according to Studio Sifaka in 2023. Decent work, as defined by the International Labour Organization, encapsulates the aspirations of individuals in their work. It includes access to productive and adequately paid employment, workplace safety and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for individuals to express their concerns, organize, and participate in decisions that affect their lives, and equality of opportunity and treatment for all, men and women alike (Farache, 2016).

Due to the unemployment situation, the population increasingly turns to the informal sector for subsistence. This concerning reality raises the question of how the informal sector absorbs unemployment while generating income for its members. In the absence of formal employment opportunities and with the persistence of unemployment, in addition to agriculture and livestock farming, coastal populations rely on natural resources and marine and coastal activities that can be practiced year-round, such as fishing. Therefore, this research focuses on fishing activities to analyze the role of the informal sector. Furthermore, when addressing the issue of unemployment, it is crucial to consider the income dimension. Consequently, this problem raises two key questions: How does informal fishing ensure continuous activity for households? What role does informal fishing play in household finances?

The objective here is to understand the real contribution of the informal sector to job creation while generating income. Based on the two research questions, this objective is divided into two specific goals: first, to analyze the relevance of informal fishing activities, and second, to identify the contribution of informal fishing to the income of fishermen. To better guide the analysis, this research is based on two hypotheses: that the informal sector provides stable activities for the region's fishermen and that the income from informal fishing covers the daily expenses of fishermen's families.

Thus, the results of this research will provide insights into the informal sector's ability to supplement or strengthen the formal household economy in terms of job creation and income generation.

## **II. Research Method**

### **2.1 Literature Review**

The notion of the "informal sector" was first introduced 50 years ago by anthropologist Keith Hart (Hart, 1973) in his study on income-generating activities among poor households in Accra, Ghana. At the time, this term described the "activities" of poor workers, which were unregulated and did not provide protection in terms of social security or labor rights (Fourie, 2017)

In 1993, during the 15th International Conference of Labor Statisticians (ICLS), the International Labor Organization (ILO) adopted a new, more precise, and illustrative

definition of the informal economy: "A set of units producing goods or services primarily aimed at creating jobs and income for the individuals involved. These units, characterized by a low level of organization, operate on a small scale and in a specific manner, with little or no distinction between labor and capital as factors of production. Employment relationships, when they exist, are primarily based on casual work, kinship ties, or personal and social relationships rather than on contractual agreements that provide formal guarantees..." according to the ILO in 2013. In Madagascar, the informal sector is defined as all units of merchant production that lack a statistical number and official written accounting (Rakotomanana, 2011).

In the literature, several terms are used to refer to the informal economy: informal sector, unstructured sector, underground economy, gray economy, black economy, illegal economy, parallel economy, etc. (Lautier, 2004, 2013). The term "informal economy" may not represent the same reality in developing countries as it does in developed countries. These terms fundamentally differ in their purpose, objectives, rational motivations, and the public policies directed toward them. Pénouil (1992), in his study dedicated to the informal sector in Africa, develops a more refined version by distinguishing two types of informal activities: those that appear to be a response to the structural factors of the African crisis (Assogba, 2000) and those induced by cyclical difficulties.

For developing countries like Madagascar, in the face of social problems (job losses in the formal sector, rising unemployment, increasing poverty, and erosion of purchasing power) exacerbated by adjustment policies, the informal sector appears as a genuine means of survival for large segments of society affected by the crisis. In this context, the informal sector is seen as both a response and a factor of adaptation to the crisis. Indeed, job losses in the formal sector (public administrations and enterprises) are offset by job creation in the informal sector. This sector also provides many households with the opportunity to compensate for the decline in their primary income through the phenomenon of multiple activities. It is also defined as the set of production units that do not possess a statistical number or, in the case of employers and self-employed workers, do not keep accounts.

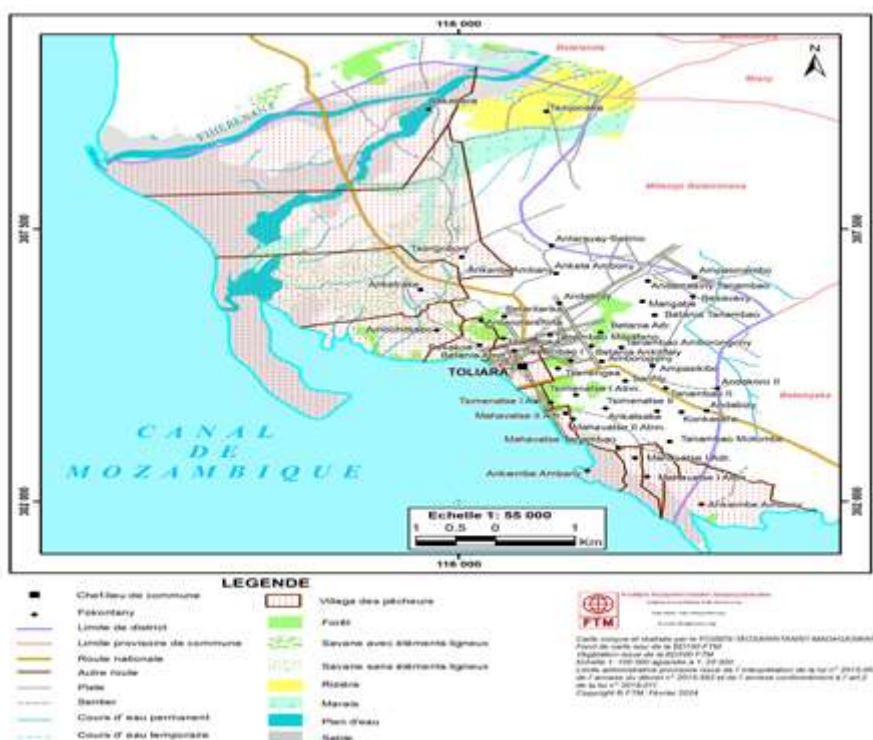
In 2022, Madagascar's unemployment rate reached 80%. This rate is very low because the productive sector cannot provide enough jobs to meet demand, not to mention the mismatch between job seekers' training and experiences and employers' expectations. Given their age, young workers face the most significant challenges when entering the job market, as their lack of experience and qualifications leads to rejection by the modern workforce. This situation drives them toward informal work.

Unemployment has become a major societal issue. Today, for many, unemployment refers to the idea of individuals who do not have work and are seeking it; the term "to be unemployed" is used when a person is not working due to a lack of job opportunities or technical reasons. Unemployment, an indicator of tensions in the labor market, reveals the disparity between "supply" (those who wish to work) and "demand" (the jobs offered) and is defined as an individual without employment who is actively seeking work and is available to take a job in the very short term, according to INSTAT in 2011. Due to this unemployment problem, the population turns to the informal sector to ensure their survival. Unemployment may be the result of an increase in the total population (demographic pressure), an increase in the potential active population (activity rate pressure), or an insufficient increase in jobs (Teulon, 1996b, 1996a). The growth of urban unemployment, a logical consequence of the economic and political crisis of 2009 and the subsequent removal of the African Growth Opportunity Act (AGOA), has been accompanied by the rise of the informal sector in

Madagascar. Furthermore, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic led to a recession in 2020 comparable to that caused by the 2009 political crisis and erased nearly a decade of progress in poverty reduction.

## 2.2 Study Area

The choice of the urban commune of Toliara as the study area is justified by the fact that this region exhibits a very slow economic development pace, which is often attributed to the geographical context of the area.



**Figure 1:** Map of the Fishing Villages in the Urban Commune of Toliara in the South-West Region of Madagascar

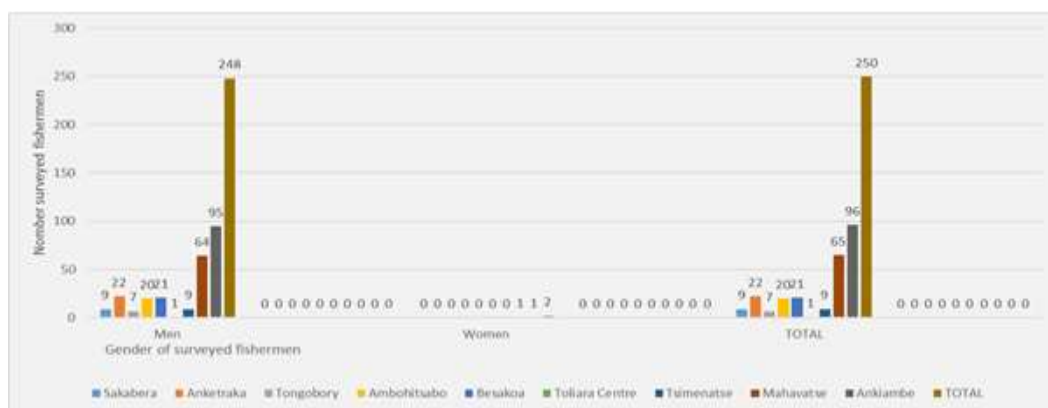
Toliara is the largest city in southern Madagascar. It serves as the capital of the Atsimo-Andrefana region (South-West), having previously been the capital of the province of Toliara. This port city is located 540 km from Fianarantsoa and 951 km from the capital, Antananarivo, via the national road RN7. The population of its urban area was estimated to exceed 250,000 inhabitants in 2014. It stretches along the Mozambique Channel and is close to the Tropic of Capricorn. Toliara has approximately 19,500 fishermen and 15,000 canoes, according to FAD in 2005.

## 2.3 Data Collection and Processing

The quantitative approach makes the external validity of the results more easily achievable and generally brings a less subjective character to the results. The rigor of statistical treatments particularly explains this advantage, as the objective of quantitative research is often to draw statistically measurable conclusions, unlike qualitative studies.

We opted for a survey, a study technique that uses a questionnaire to collect data in the study area. The goal is to gather quantifiable data on the financial situation of fishing

individuals. We chose to conduct a comparative approach, a rational and scientific approach, which presents in this study a comparative analysis of the financial situation at time t0 compared to time t1 in order to ensure the quality and relevance of the information obtained from the survey. However, it is only possible to survey the study population if it is very large and beyond our human, financial, and temporal means. Therefore, the actual survey is limited to a sample of 250 fishermen from the urban commune of Tuléar, whose distributions are presented in the following table.



**Figure 2:** Distribution histogram of fishermen by area.

The collected data is then processed using statistical data analysis software. The Sphinx software was useful for data entry and observations, as well as for descriptive statistics. Then, statistical tests, correlation analyses, and econometric modeling are conducted using the SPSS software. These statistical programs were chosen among others because they are the most widely used internationally for data analysis, and the results obtained are particularly reliable and significant. It should be noted that these two software programs each have their specific features.

### III. Results and Discussion

Following the health crisis, the balance in the labor market tends to deteriorate, and the number of unemployed individuals is increasing. At the same time, the informal sector is gaining momentum to address this situation and becomes a direct response to the employment problem faced by those who are unemployed. The informal sector appears to mitigate the effects of declining purchasing power caused by unemployment, assuming, on the one hand, that this sector provides a second chance for the unemployed to find work and, on the other hand, that it offers a source of income to its members. The results presented in this section will verify these hypotheses.

#### 3.1 Fishing activity in Madagascar

Fishing is one of the three main driving sectors (along with mining and tourism) on which the Malagasy government relies for the country's economic development. Fishing has developed to the point of becoming the country's main source of foreign currency. 97.6% of the fishermen surveyed claim to be engaged in traditional fishing, and the vast majority of them, 93%, are under 21 years old. However, it should be noted from our results that the remaining 2.4% of fishermen fall into the category of artisanal fishing, of which 66.7% are in the modal age group of under 21 years.

### a. Unemployment Situation

Our study sample primarily consists of fishermen from the Toliara coastline. At time  $t_0$ , 94% of them were unemployed before adopting fishing as their main activity. As Forgeot et al. (1993) state, unemployment is not a stationary and stable state; it is a process rooted in prior trajectories: it is essential to consider "life paths." Indeed, the tendency towards objectivity in these results is confirmed by Pearson's chi-squared independence test, which provides a p-value of 0.008, well below the error risk of 0.05. Cramér's V of 0.768, close to 1, highlights the intensity of the dependence on fishermen's opinions according to their age groups.

**Table 1:** Distribution of fishermen's ages based on their situation before becoming informal fishermen.

		Which age group do you belong to?					Total
		Under 21 years old	21 - 30	31 - 40	41 - 50	Over 50 years old	
Were you unemployed before becoming a fisherman?	Unemployed	2.0%	14.8%	16.8%	34.4%	26.0%	94.0%
	Employed	0.4%	2.4%	0.8%	1.2%	1.2%	6.0%
Total		2.4%	17.2%	17.6%	35.6%	27.2%	100.0%
Chi-square Tests and Symmetrical Measures							
		Value	df	Sig.			
Pearson's Chi-square		13.788	4	0.008			
		Value		Sig.			
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	0.814		0.008			
	Cramér's V	0.768		0.008			

### b. Activity before becoming a fisherman

Long-term unemployment affects nearly 72% of all unemployed individuals. This figure should be interpreted more as the duration during which the unemployed have yet to have access to a genuine job (De Vreyer & Roubaud, 2013; Roubaud & Torelli, 2017).

The majority of current fishermen along the coast of Toliara were unemployed before becoming fishermen. However, based on the field survey, we find that 78.7% of respondents report that their duration of unemployment (from  $t_0$  to  $t_1$ ) is relatively short, at most six months. This situation reflects the informal economy, which mitigates the growth of unemployment during the economic cycle (Deléchat & Medina, 2022). As Pesquet states: "the informal economy is constructed as a response to high prices, delays (a quick response characterizes it), and the (in)availability and (in)accessibility of goods and services" (Pesqueux, 2021).

**Table 2:** Distribution of unemployment duration according to their situation before becoming informal fishermen.

Were you unemployed before becoming a fisherman?		Frequency		Percentage	
		Unemployment duration			
Unemployed	Less than six months.	185		78.7	
	6 to 12 months	10		4.3	
	More than 12 months	36		15.3	

	Total	231	98.3
Employed		15	100.0

Moreover, our study reveals that more than the majority of informal fishermen who were previously active—specifically, 68.8%—report having been employees, with 6.3% being state employees who have transitioned to fishing. This reintegration into the fishing activity can be justified by the fact that they provide them with maximum profit. Indeed, fishermen are also considered homo economicus (Kirchgässner, 2008). Following modern theory, the primary objective of an economic agent is the pursuit of profit (performance); for instance, workers seek jobs that can provide them with higher wages (Parker, 2004).

**Table 3:** Distribution of the professional status of active respondents before becoming informal sector fishermen.

Professional status	Percentage
Employed	<b>68.8</b>
Liberal	12.5
Civil servant	<b>6.3</b>
Others	12.5
Total	100.0

The consistency of these different percentages revealing the trend result is justified by the Chi-square test generating a significant sign of 0.008.

### c. Criteria for Choosing Fishing as an Activity

As the Vezo community uses non-motorized pirogues, their fishing is classified under the official Malagasy category of "traditional fishing" (Laroche and Ramanarivo, 1995, cited by Chaboud et al., 2007; Grenier, 2013). The Vezo group is part of the indigenous communities of western Madagascar. This term represents a set of populations living along the western coastal area engaged in marine fishing, which has significantly influenced the traditions and cultures of those who have lived there. The Vezo have belonged to various historical formations (Veriza et al., 2018).

Our study results support these findings by indicating that 97.6% of the fishermen surveyed claim to be engaged in traditional fishing, with a significant majority of 93% being under the age of 21. Furthermore, among the Vezo in the urban municipality of Toliara, social ties (family and ethnic belonging) are strong. The practice of traditional fishing has become embedded in their socio-cultural foundation. This fulfills the conditions for categorizing them as Homo Africanus (Perinbam, 1977). As a result, due to their socio-cultural ties and the absence of entry barriers, it is easy for them to adopt fishing as their primary activity. Consequently, Cessou (2015) concludes in his analysis that the vitality of the informal sector is also explained by the immersion of its practices in the socio-cultural aspects of each country—proximity, solidarity, strong social ties, and a sense of family, ethnic, and clan belonging, etc. However, it is worth noting from our results that the remaining 2.4% of fishermen fall into the category of artisanal fishing, with 66.7% being in the modal age group of under 21 years.

**Table 4:** Age Distribution at the Commencement of Fishing Based on the Type of Fishing Practiced

What category of fishing do you belong to?	At what age did you start practicing fishing?	
		Percentage
Traditional fishing 97.6%	Under 21 years old	93.0
	21 - 30	3.3
	31 - 40	1.2
	41 - 50	1.6
	Over 50 years old	0.8
	Total	100.0
Artisanal fishing 2.4%	Under 21 years old	66.7
	21 - 30	16.7
	31 - 40	16.7
	Total	100.0

### 3.2 Informality Situation

Informality is a consequence of the cumbersome administrative processes, both in terms of the costs associated with registration and the various steps required for that registration. In 2010, over 77% of unemployed individuals surveyed cited the difficulty of administrative procedures for starting activities aimed at escaping unemployment, according to INSTAT in 2013. For this research, the criteria for formalization taken into consideration include possession of a license, tax registration, registration with local authorities, and possession of a NIF STAT.

#### a. Position Regarding Formalization Criteria

The administrative situation of fishermen is linked to the criteria of non-formalization. According to our surveys, 99.2% of respondents reported not having received an operating permit, 99.6% did not pay taxes or duties, and 99.6% did not statistically register their fishing activities with local authorities. As a result, they lack a statistical number, are not affiliated with the National Social Security Fund, and have no bank account to deposit their earnings. The persistently low banking rate indicates the significance of the informal sector, according to the World Bank (Cessou, 2015). However, 96.8% reported that they belonged to an association that had no administrative character. The significance of the dependence of opinions is reflected in the parameters of the chi-squared test:  $\chi^2 = 936.81$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $1-p = >99.99\%$ .

**Table 5:** Administrative Situation of Fishermen According to Formalization Criteria

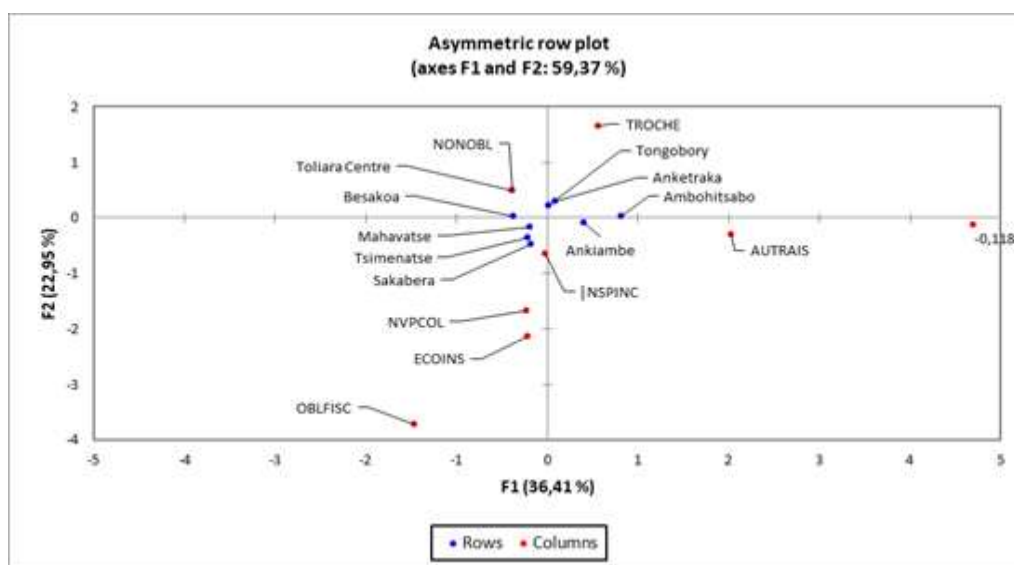
Administrative situations / Formalization criteria	Yes(%)	No(%)	TOTAL(%)
Authorization / operating license	0.8	99.2	100
Payment of taxes or duties	0.4	99.6	100
Registration with the local authority and coverage by the CNAPS (National Social Insurance Fund)	0.4	99.6	100
Membership in an association	96.8	3.2	100

Set	24.6	75.4	100
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### b. Reasons for Non-Formalization

The analysis of the results in the figure below reveals, through the chi-square test with parameters  $\chi^2 = 601.08$ ,  $df = 8$ ,  $1-p = >99.99\%$ , a dependency between the variables informality and the reasons for non-obligation. The majority of fishermen, regardless of the survey location, remain informal primarily due to the lack of obligations for formalizing their fishing activities. Consequently, many of the conclusions align precisely with our intuitions: the state's policy toward the informal sector fluctuates between a laissez-faire approach, reflecting its inability to offer a genuine alternative for creating productive jobs, and the desire to bring it under its jurisdiction in order to address the revenue shortfall posed by an informal sector it does not control (Paillaud and al., 1998). Similarly, microenterprises operating within this economy in developing countries are not in a “hidden and repressed illegality” but rather in a “tolerated illegality” (Lautier, 2004; Mbaye & Diagne, 2020; Nelson & De Bruijn, 2005).

The following perceptual map better illustrates the correspondence of fishermen's opinions regarding the reasons for non-formalizing their administrative situation. We can thus observe the proximity of their statements concerning the reasons for non-mandatory formalization across the survey areas.



**Figure 3:** Illustration of the Reasons for Non-Formalization According to Survey Locations

Legend: DTCOMP: Too Complicated Procedures; TROCHE: Too Expensive; ECOINS: In the Process of Registration; NONOBL: Not Mandatory; NSPINC: Unsure if Registration is Necessary; NVPCOL: Does Not Want to Collaborate with the State; OBLFISC: Tax Obligation; AUTRAIS: Other Reasons.

However, it is important to note that the conversion of fishermen into the formal sector could be achieved through appropriate strategies and policies. Indeed, 62.4% believe it is possible, and 8.8% believe they can engage in the formalization of their fishing professions, compared to only 10.8% who oppose this normalization. The difference from the reference

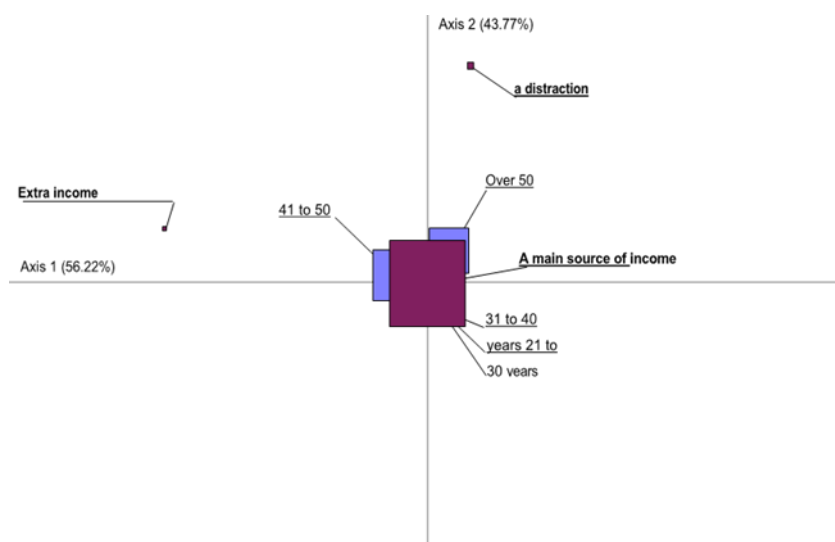
distribution is highly significant:  $\text{Chi}^2 = 294.20$ ,  $\text{df} = 4$ ,  $1-p > 99.99\%$ . The chi-squared value is calculated with equal theoretical frequencies for each modality.

### 3.3 Evaluation of Income Generated by Informal Fishing

#### a. Utility of Fishing

Source of Income for nearly 1.5 million Malagasy people: the fishing sector accounted for nearly 7% of the national GDP and represented 6.6% of exports, according to the World Bank in 2018. The results from our analyses corroborate this assessment issued by the World Bank, highlighting that regardless of age, fishing remains a primary source of income for informal fishing households. 98% of respondents confirm this.

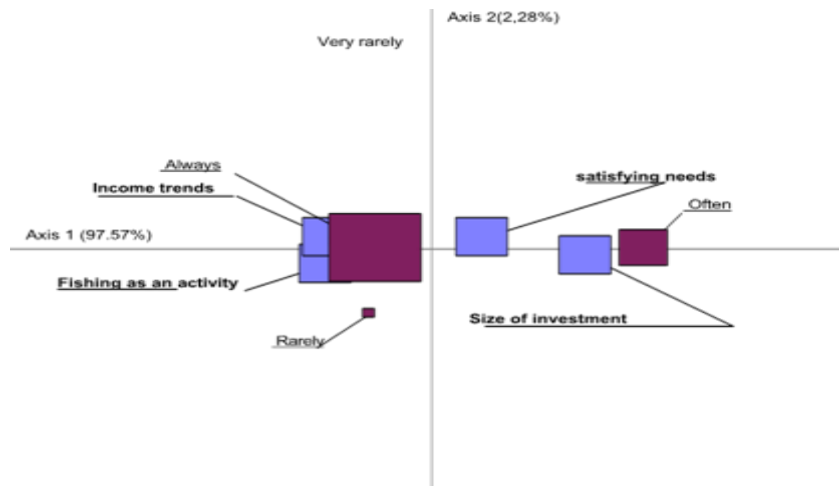
This assessment is reinforced by the graph resulting from the correspondence factorial analysis, indicating the significance of fishermen's opinions segmented by age regarding the utility of fishing. The dependence is not significant:  $\text{chi}^2 = 23.77$ ,  $\text{df} = 8$ ,  $1-p = 99.75\%$ . The aggregation of all age groups of fishermen under the primary source of income as the utility of fishing validates our assertion.



**Figure 4:** Utility of Fishing According to Age Groups of Respondents

#### b. Profitability of Fishing Activity

The traditional informal fishing activity is profitable for fishermen along the coastline of the urban commune of Toliara. 91.6% of respondents confirm this benefit. 69.5% report that they have profited in terms of meeting their essential needs, 70.0% believe they have often or always experienced an increase in their income, and 77.4% recognize the importance of investing in the sector when they entered the informal fishing industry. The chi-square statistical test on the independence of these two variables—specifically the opinions of fishermen regarding the profitability of informal fishing—reinforces the trends above. The dependence is highly significant, with  $\text{Chi}^2 = 167.04$ ,  $\text{df} = 9$ , and  $1-p = >99.99\%$ . The null hypothesis of independence between the two characteristics is rejected. The factor map resulting from the correspondence factor analysis of the modalities of the two studied characteristics clearly illustrates the specificities of the profitability of this fishing activity.



**Figure 5:** Factor Map of the Profitability of Informal Fishing

However, the incomes of traditional fishermen are highly variable, depending on the targeted products, the number of fishermen in the village, the presence and number of collectors, and the availability of transportation. According to these parameters, the selling price at the level of the fisherman for the product on the beach can vary significantly, sometimes tenfold, according to the FAO and BAD in 2003, as well as MAEP UPDR and Ocean Consultant in 2004.

Our survey reinforces these observations. According to the statistics from our analysis results reported in the table of estimated monthly earnings, based on the respondents' perceptions of the utility of fishing, just over half of them (57.2%) attest that their monthly earnings range from 200,000 Ar to 300,000 Ar or from \$44 to \$66. Among those who consider fishing as a pastime, 64.2% and 57.6% who declare it as their main source of income also report this estimated monthly income. This income is similar to the agricultural minimum wage (SME) 1 set in Madagascar, which is 242,200 Ar or \$54.

Concurrently, the situation is quite critical for fishermen who engage in this activity merely for supplementary income, as almost all respondents in this category (98%) report that they earn less than 200,000 Ar or \$44 per month. The dependence of the fishermen's opinions on the two studied variables, according to the chi-square test, is minimally significant ( $\chi^2 = 9.60$ ,  $df = 6$ ,  $1-p = 85.75\%$ ). However, remarkable successes remain exceptional, with 14% and 10%, respectively, reporting net monthly incomes that fluctuate between 300,000 Ar or \$66 and 400,000 Ar or \$88, and 400,000 Ar or \$88 and above. We can consider their incomes as "substantial," as they exceed the SME by 45%.

In this regard, these results corroborate those of authors like Hugon (1980), asserting that the incomes generated by certain informal activities are equivalent to or even exceed those of the modern sector.

**Table 6:** Utility of Fishing and Estimated Monthly Earnings

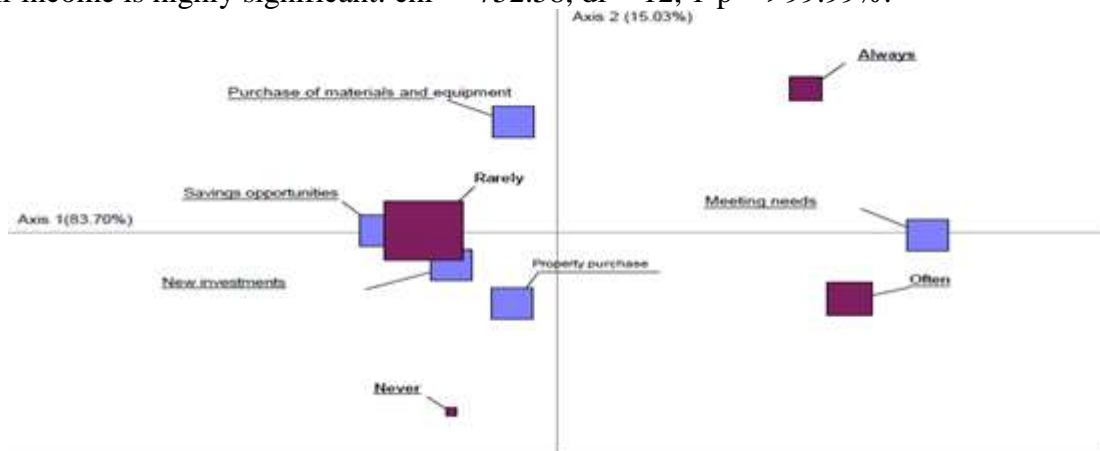
Estimated monthly income Usefulness of fishing	Less than 200,000 Ar <sup>1</sup>	200,000 Ar – 300,000 Ar <sup>2</sup>	300,000 Ar – 400,000 Ar <sup>3</sup>	Over 400,000 Ar <sup>4</sup>	TOTAL(%)
An additional income(%)	98	2.0	1.0	1.0	100
A distraction(%)	30.0	64.2	1.3	2.5	100
A main source of income(%)	18.4	57.6	14.3	9.8	100
TOTAL(%)	19.2	57.2	14.0	9.6	100

### 3.4 Importance of Income from Fishing

#### a. Allocation of Fishing Income

Regarding income allocation, the majority of respondents, specifically 63%, express that income from fishing often allows them to meet their essential needs. However, according to the statements of the surveyed individuals, more than three out of four fishermen (over 75%) report that this income rarely enables them to save or make purchases of equipment, tools, and property, as well as to undertake new investments.

This significant trend in fishermen's opinions regarding the allocation of their income is highlighted in the perceptual map resulting from the correspondence factor analysis. According to the chi-squared test, the dependence of researchers' opinions on the allocation of their income is highly significant:  $\chi^2 = 752.58$ ,  $df = 12$ ,  $1-p = >99.99\%$ .



**Figure 6:** Illustration of Fishermen's Opinions on the Allocation of Their Income

<sup>1</sup> Or less than 44\$ US  
<sup>2</sup> Or from 44\$ US to 66\$ US  
<sup>3</sup> Or from \$66 to \$88 US  
<sup>4</sup> Or from \$88 US and above.

## b. Accessibility to Essential Needs through Fishing Income

Jointly, our analyses clearly indicate that at time t1, when the unemployed became fishermen, they frequently expressed having access to essential needs. More than 75% confirm that they can consistently provide food for their families, educate and care for their children, and secure housing thanks to the income generated from informal fishing. This objectively demonstrates the significant role traditional fishing plays in absorbing unskilled, illiterate labor, effectively excluding them from the formal society and consequently improving their lives in the coastal area of the Urban Commune of Toliara.

**Table 7:** Distribution of Frequencies of Fishermen's Opinions on Access to Essential Needs at Time 1 for Unemployed Individuals

Opinions Access to essential needs	Never	Very rarely	Rarely	Often	Always	TOTAL
Access to food time 1(%)	2.1	3.4	1.6	10.2	82.7	100
Access to education time 1(%)	3.4	2.8	3.6	10.5	79.6	100
Access to health time 1(%)	2.0	3.2	4.0	13.4	77.4	100
Access to housing time 1(%)	4.4	2.4	4.0	10.8	78.4	100

In summary, these various findings confirm that the informal sector provides financial security and employment for its members due to the stability of their work and the income generated, which allows them to meet at least their basic needs. This hypothesis is supported on one hand by Pesqueux (2014): *"The informal economy helps alleviate poverty as it serves to increase household income while providing flexible working hours that allow individuals to combine different types of activities, thus multiplying their means of subsistence and enriching their lives with significance and interest."* On the other hand, Azzabi and al. (1991) state that *"the informal sector is seen as a source of considerable income for many individuals in society."*

## IV. Conclusion

The economic situation in Madagascar favors the creation of jobs necessary to absorb the growing demand in the labor market. The excess demand for labor compared to supply in the formal sector pushes some workers towards the informal labor market, which absorbs a significant portion of the surplus workforce. The relatively large coastal area of the island promotes fishing activities; however, survey results in the urban commune of Toliara indicate that the majority of fishermen in this area operate in the informal sector. In fact, according to the same results, this informal fishing activity has provided unemployed individuals in the area with both a profession and a stable financial source. Thus, the informal economy serves as a social "buffer," as Cessou noted in 2015.

In the urban commune of Toliara, resorting to informal fishing is not necessarily due to available employment but rather to the inability to find it. This situation is explained not only by the lack of job offers but also by the generally low education levels. Furthermore, fishing is a family tradition that offers employment opportunities.

However, the fishermen's choice to operate informally is justified by their ignorance of the formalization procedures, as the survey indicates they are willing to formalize their activities if necessary.

Through Madagascar's global development strategies, it is evident that the Malagasy government has not yet clearly defined the role of the informal sector. It is largely overlooked as a potential means to elevate the economic, social, and technical development of a poor country like Madagascar, even though it could be regarded as a way to reduce rising unemployment and poverty.

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