

What the Ivorian middle class looks like today?

Historical continuities and renewed challenges of an heterogeneous social group

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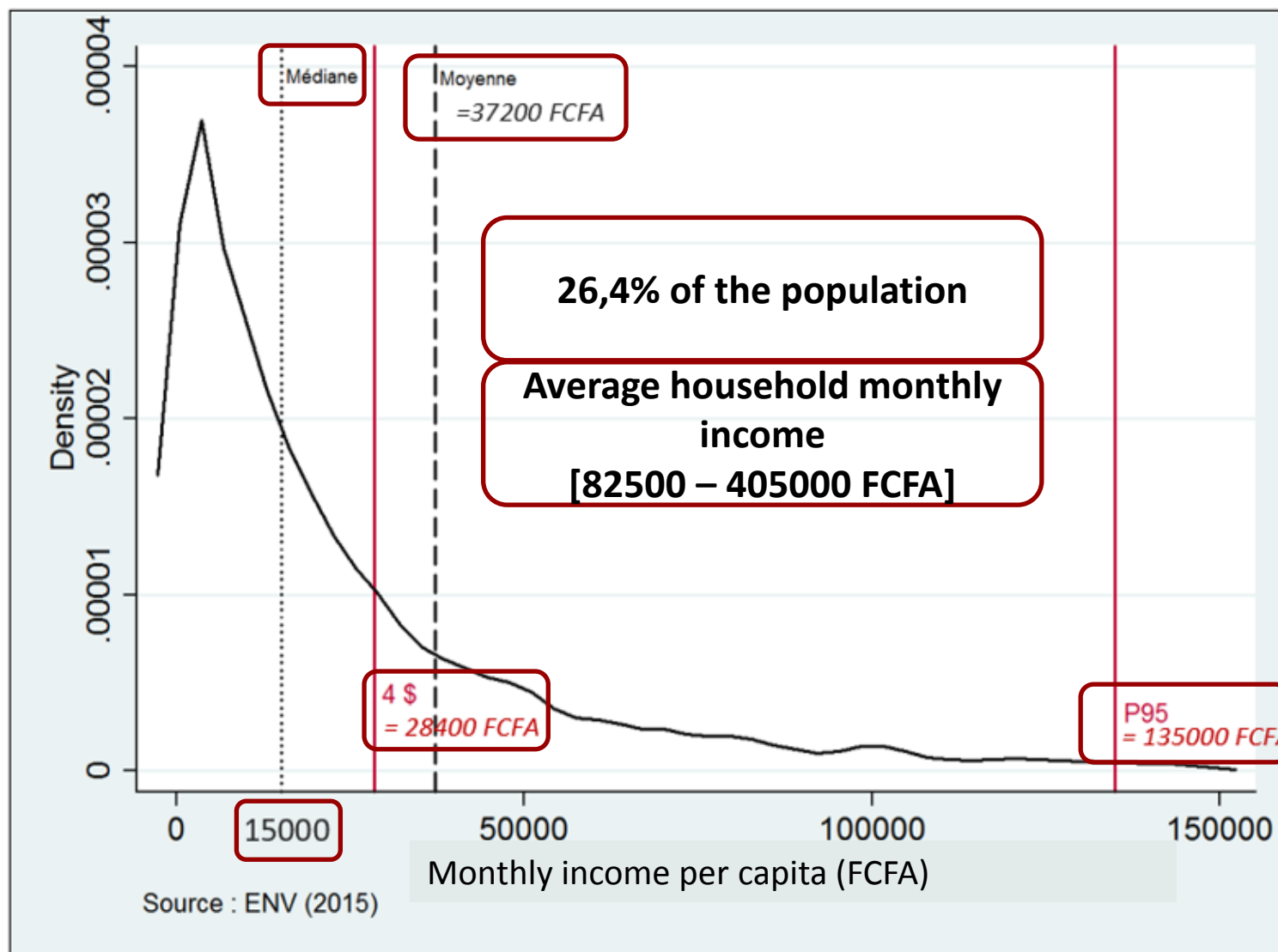
- **Beyond the buzz : important academic debates on African middle classes since AfDB report (2011)**
(Kroeker & al., 2017; Melber, 2016; Ncube & Lufumpa, 2015)
- **The case of Côte d'Ivoire**
 - Long history of social differentiation associated with the rise of intermediate social categories (the « Ivorian miracle », 1960-1980)
(Savina & al., 1985)
 - Strong instability of the country between 1980-2010
(Contamin & Memel-Foté, 1997; Cogneau & al., 2016)
 - **Economic renewal since 2011: (re)emergence of the "middle classes"?**
 - Economic, social and political issues: economic growth and emergence as a major instrument of the Ouattara's regime for the process of national reconciliation and the reconstruction of social cohesion
(Akindes, 2018; Miran-Guyon, 2017)

- **The data**
 - INS 2014-2015 household survey (living standards): nationally representative sample of 12 885 households
 - Qualitative interviews with 31 households representative of the different sub-groups identified
- **The method**
 - Combining quantitative statistical analysis with in depth analysis of semi-directive interviews

Identification and characterization of the middle class

“People in the middle” in Ivory Coast: a limited category of the population

Monthly income per capita distribution in FCFA (Ivory Coast, 2015)



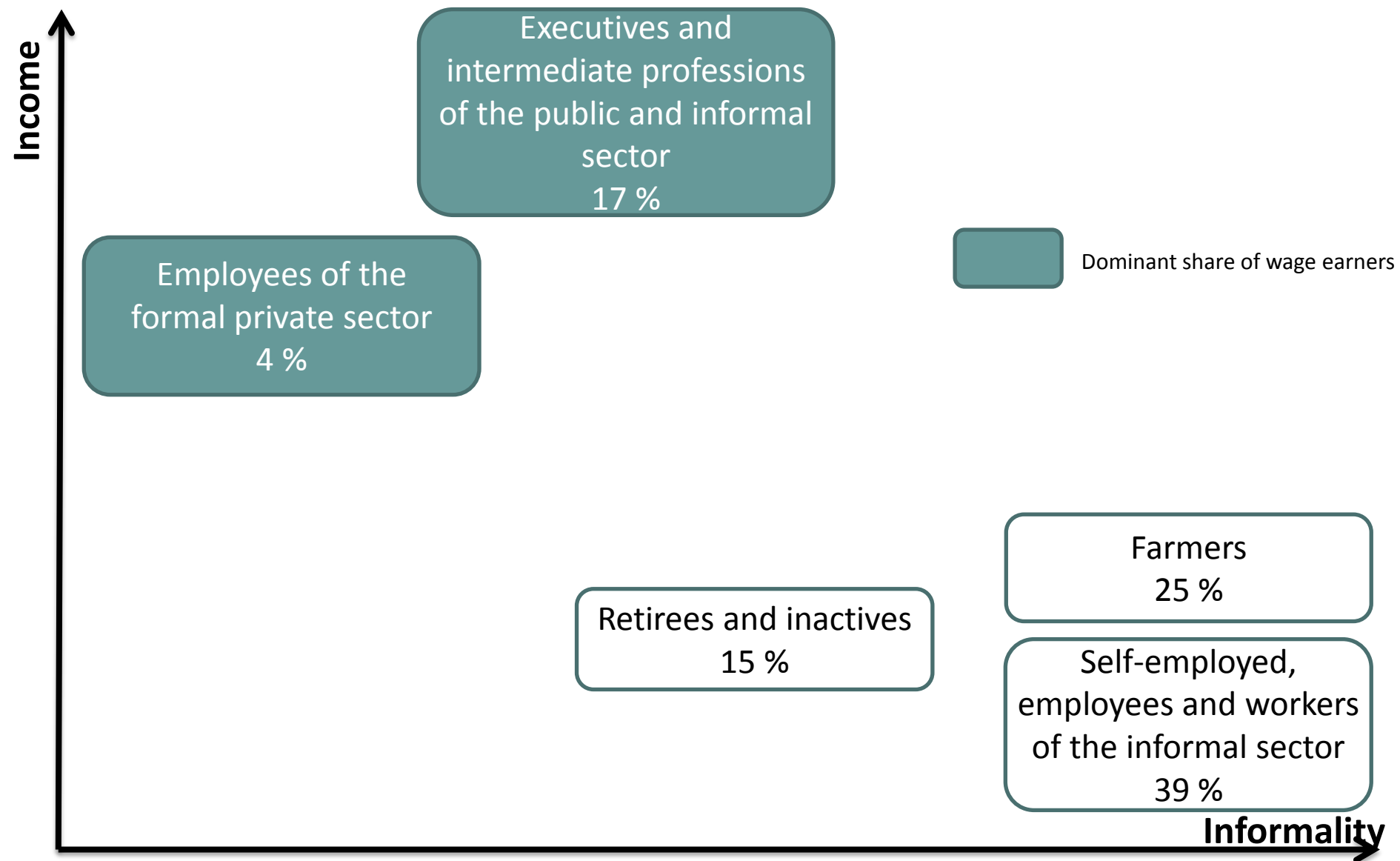
Identification and characterization of the middle class

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- **Main socio-economic characteristics of the middle class (quantitative data and qualitative interviews)**
 - 48,1% of households heads did not reach a primary level school
 - Mostly urban (60%) but only 16% live in Abidjan
 - Common behaviors and aspirations (from qualitative interviews)
 - Willingness for effort and merit: savings, education of children) (*"school is the poor cousin of Côte d'Ivoire!"*)
 - Denunciation of growing inequalities and corruption of elites (*"a two-tier Côte d'Ivoire"*)
 - A weak political commitment: rather individualistic and materialistic positioning (away from the state)

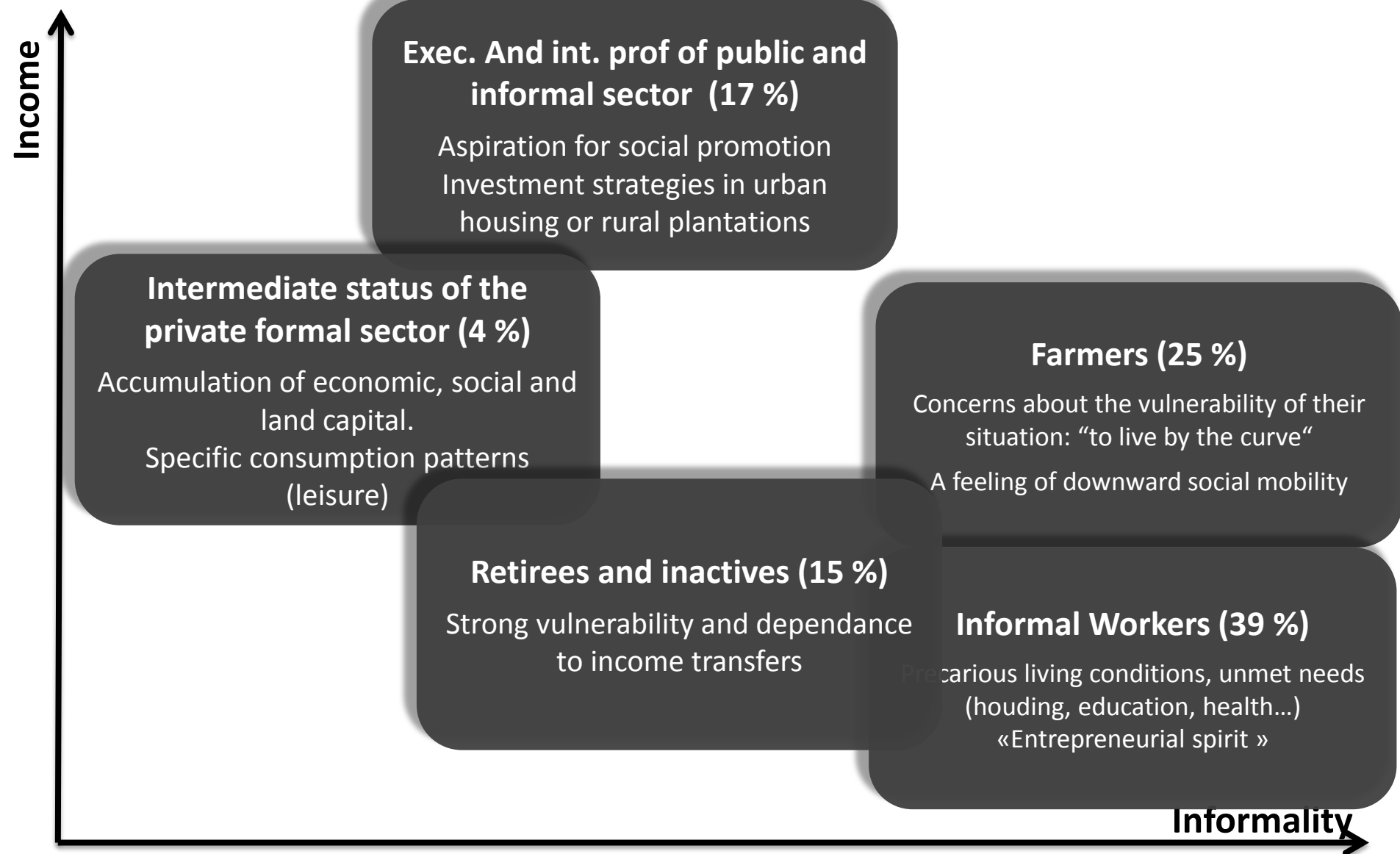
The heterogeneity of the ivorian middle class:

people from different social « milieu »



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Historical continuities and contemporary challenges of the middle classes in Côte d'Ivoire

- **The historical heirs of the “Houphoüetian” model**
 - Farmers: benefited from the renewed growth and a more favorable international environment. *But they feel more vulnerable and less recognized*
 - Employees of the formal sector (private and public): find the path of enrichment on bases quite similar to that of the “miracle” period. *But upset aspirations (education, future of their youth).*
 - Sociological heirs?
- **Urban informality as the main mode of social climbing?**
 - Informal at every stages : including in the middle and higher professions stratum; consistent with recent works on inequalities in Côte d'Ivoire (*Cazjka, 2017*)
 - From middle class to missing middle : are those informal entrepreneurs the famous “constrained gazelles”? (*Akinkugbe & Wohlmuth, 2016*)
 - Huge political challenge: A category that is partially built outside or even against the State

- **Ivorian middle classes are weakly politically structured...**
 - Socioeconomic heterogeneity limits their ability to collective action
 - Political demands are more based on socio-professional identities
- **... but with important expectations and aspirations in many sectors of public policy**
 - Education and health as core aspirations
 - Aspirations to comfort: jobs, income, housing, transport ...
 - Importance of stability and peace: common denunciation of inequalities, insecurity and corruption
- **A concept that still not very present in the political discourse and a very partial targeting**
 - Middle classes as collateral beneficiaries of some public policies