

Migration, environment and climate: What risk inequalities?

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Inequalities, environmental change and mobility in the West African Sahel

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Research questions

- 1) What drives people's migration in the (West African) Sahel?
- 2) What is the impact of climate change and environmental factors on migration?
- 3) Who migrates for environmental reasons?



An aerial photograph of a village in a dry, hilly landscape. The buildings are constructed from mud-brick and are scattered across the terrain. There are many small trees and some larger, more prominent trees. The ground is dry and dusty. A semi-transparent white banner with the text "Study Areas & Methods" is overlaid on the center of the image. On the left side, there is a vertical green bar with a white arrow pointing right, and some decorative white lines.

Study Areas & Methods

Study areas: Bandiagara (Mali) & Linguère (Senegal)



Methods: a mixed methods approach

- ▶ Field research within the BMBF-funded micle project : 2011-2014
- ▶ Standardized survey (n=905) with people from the two study areas
 - ▶ Rural study areas (n=661), (quota sample)
 - ▶ Capitals (n=244), (snowball sampling)
- ▶ Qualitative semi-structured interviews (n=59)





Main findings

Livelihoods and migration in the study areas

- Agriculture as the main source of income for 67% of the survey participants and 93% of their families
- ➔ People are highly vulnerable to environmental stressors
- Main stressors on harvest and yields: highly variable and low levels of rainfall (3-monthly rainy season)

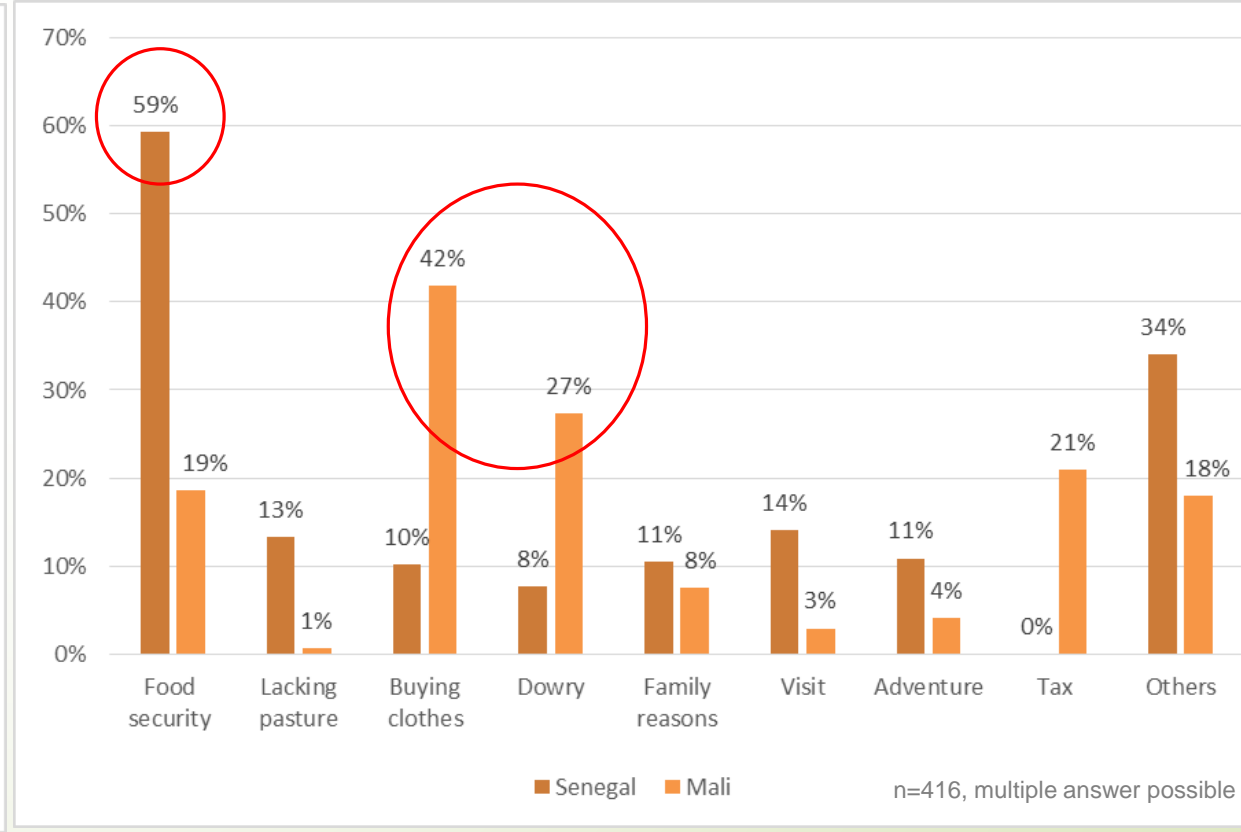
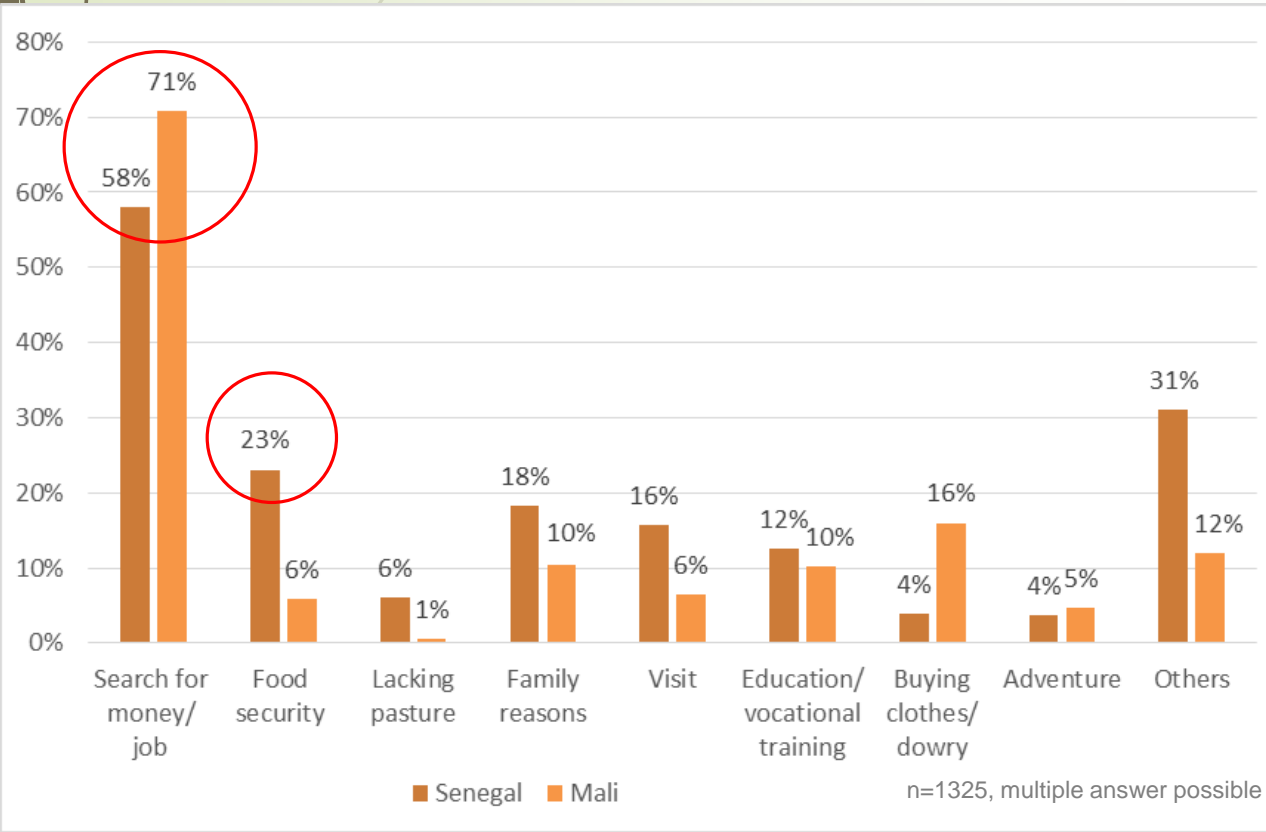
- Migration is common, circular (up to 5 years) and internal
- Migration is an important household livelihood strategy



1) What drives people's migration?

Main migration motive/s

Further migration motive/s




2) What is the impact of climate change and environmental factors on migration?

Migration motives		Country		Total (n=1336)
		Senegal (n=649)	Mali (n=687)	
Economic reasons as main motive	n	372	484	856
	%	58	71	65
- thereof: economic reasons with no environmental impact	n	106	421	527
	%	29	87	62
- thereof: economic reasons with environmental impact	n	266	63	329
	%	71	13	38
Environmental reasons (i.e. food security) as main and further motive	n	292	70	362
	%	45	10	27

3) Who migrates for environmental reasons?

- ▶ Inequalities: People are not equally vulnerable to environmental stress
- ▶ People's vulnerability to environmental stress and the impact of environmental changes on their migration differs by age, sex, level of education and economic activity
- ▶ Environmental reasons are more important for migration:
 - ▶ for men than for women (31% vs 19%)
 - ▶ for farmers than for other occupations (33% vs 22%)
 - ▶ for people with no or a low education level (30% vs 12%)
 - ▶ for elder (≥ 30 years) than younger people (37% vs 24%)
- ➔ Middle aged male farmers without formal education are the most likely to migrate due to environmental reasons.



Inequalities, social changes and the impact of climate change in the future

- Increasing level of education of young people in both countries
- Young people (increasingly want to) leave the agriculture sector due to low and uncertain revenues compared to non-agriculture activities and a preference for a “modern” lifestyle
- Young migrants were less likely to indicate environmental reasons for migration in recent years (2000-2012) compared to earlier decades (19% compared to over 30%)
- ➔ These social changes may reduce people’s vulnerability to environmental stressors and may mitigate the impact of climate change, despite worsening conditions.

Migrant typology

Character of migration	Impact of environmental factors on migration		
	none	weak	strong
voluntary	Type 1 The Well-Educated	Type 3 The Ambitious	
	Type 2 The Adventurous	Type 4 The Transformers	
forced		Type 5 The Supplementers	
			Type 6 The Deprived



Conclusions

- ▶ The impact of environmental factors on people's migration was lower than expected, particularly in Mali.
- ▶ The impact of climate change and environmental factors on people's migration differs along social characteristics such as age, sex, level of education and economic activity.
 - ▶ Middle-aged male farmers with no or a low level of formal education were generally the most likely to migrate due to environmental reasons in the region.
- ▶ Social changes (i.e. a higher level of education and increasing aspirations to leave agriculture) may mitigate the impact of climate change on people's livelihoods in the future, despite worsening climate conditions.

Thank you for your attention!

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References:

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