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# Use of climate predictions in Senegal: hybridation of conventional and ancestral knowledge in the Niakhar locality

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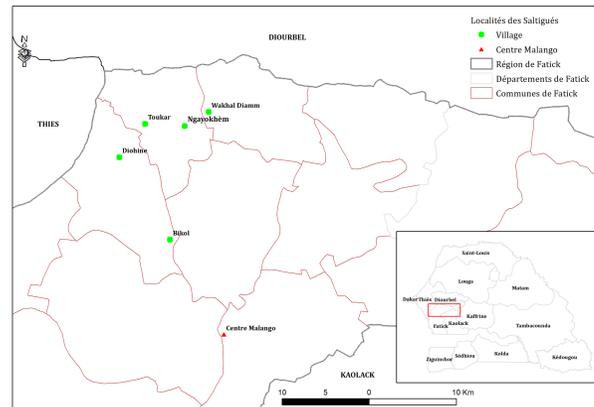
Adaptation futures 2023, Montral, Quebec, Canada



## Introduction

- Rainfed agriculture is the main source of food and income in Niakhar, Senegal (West Africa)
- Climate variability and climate change have a strong impacts on crop yields since the means to control the crop environment are largely unavailable to small-scale farmers .
- Climate predictions assist on-farm decision-making. It is crucial to provide information early enough to adjust critical agricultural decisions and build resilience to climate hazards.
- **Two sources of climate predictions in Niakhar:**
  - National Meteorological Agency (ANACIM) through Multi-disciplinary Working Groups (MWG)
  - Diviners (called Saltigué by the Sereer ethnic group living in Niakhar)
- **Research questions :**
  - What is the content of the climatic information circulating in farmers' villages?
  - Which actors facilitate the circulation of differents types of knowledge?
  - If and how is knowledge from two different sources hybridised?
  - What impact does this hybridisation have on people's agricultural decision-making?

## Methods



Villages location



Diviner – Sereer Saltigué



Weather technician

- Thirty semi-directive interviews with the saltigué and members of the GTPs
- Direct observations of GTP discussion committees
- Focus group with farmers in rural villages

## Results

- Several sources of climatic information in the villages



“I'm the one who denies predict the weather. When you go to their house, tell them it's the Saltigué who denies predicts it.”

« But for the 'divination', you can't research that. It's irrational. »



- Ancestral and mystical knowledge hybridised with information from ANACIM

« In any case, what the Saltigué have announced is almost identical with the weather forecast. So when we get rain in May, whether it's Saltigué or the technicians, after a little analysis, we can say that sowing in May is very early. This year we all predicted an early winter. » (Agricultural technician)

- Appropriation and use by local communities in agricultural practices:

- Choice of seeds
- Sowing period
- Harvest period

## Conclusions

- **Knowledge-brokers** are actors at the boundaries of the two worlds (ancestral and scientific)
- They are aware of local realities, understand scientific grammar and are able to translate them into audible and acceptable messages
- In this case, the intermediaries identified are *journalists, farmers' representatives* and *rural agricultural advisers*.
- There is a legitimacy of both sources of information, but the saltigué have the benefit of **traditional** and **charismatic legitimacy**.
- It is important for technical services and local authorities to go and meet the Saltigué for a *better understanding/harmonization of ancestral knowledge*.

## Bibliography

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