Urbanisation Shapes the Vulnerability of Farmers in the Decentralised Benin

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Tanson Nicole Sarah[1*], Georges Djohy[2], Ange Honorat Edja[2]
1. Faculty of Law and Political Sciences; University of Parakou, Dept. of Private Law, Benin
2. Faculty of Agronomy, University of Parakou, Dept. of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, Benin
**Corresponding Author: sanitah04@yahoo.fr*

Introduction

- Benin Republic has started the decentralization since 2003 inviting local collectivities to the exercise of democracy and governance at the basis .

- The resulted urbanisation process in the district of Banikoara (main cotton production area of Benin and one of the biggest producers of different food crops) is pointed out to be responsible for the exacerbation of the existing land access problems.

Objective

This paper:

- underlines farmers' vulnerability to climate risks in relation to the location of farms from farmers' ordinary dwelling place in rural Benin.

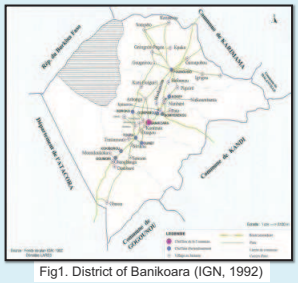

Fig1. District of Banikoara (IGN, 1992)

Methodology

- Study carried out in the district of Banikoara (Fig 1); Purposive sampling applied in four villages; 60 respondents supplied empirical data; Participatory workshop organised at the end of fieldworks; Sensitivity Matrix and Vulnerability Profile of farmers realised; Exposure and impact indexes calculated.

Results

The results show :

- The geographical remoteness of farms by preventing local farmers from cultivating more land. 85 % of farmers move to and fro between 10 km to perform farm works, 12 % commute daily over 45 km to reach their farms and only 3 % live on or closely to their farms (Fig 2).

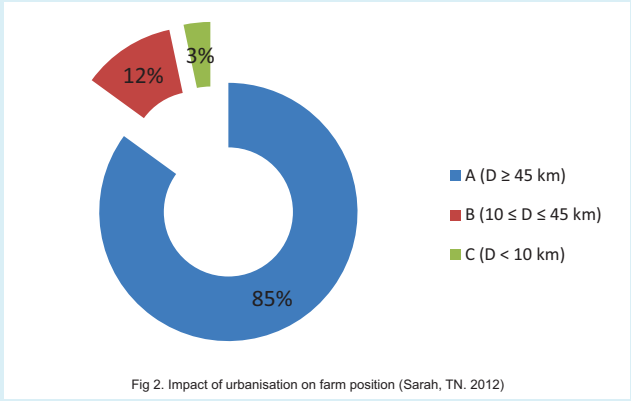

Fig 2. Impact of urbanisation on farm position (Sarah, TN. 2012)

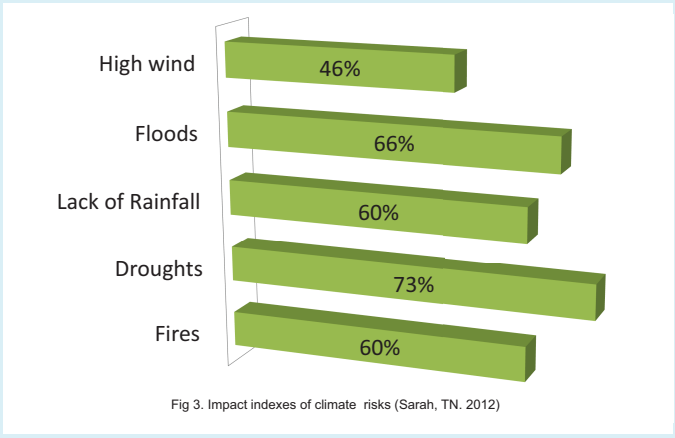

Fig 3. Impact indexes of climate risks (Sarah, TN. 2012)

- Five major climate risks with highly sensitive impact indexes affect agricultural production: drought (73 %), floods (66 %), fires (60 %), lack of rainfall (60 %) and high winds (46 %); and three resources having high exposure indexes are most damaged: soil (76 %), water (68 %) and vegetation (64 %)/(Fig 3).

- Three categories of vulnerable farmers: the "Waterist Farmers" (Agri-BF) shriveled up in valley bottoms and most vulnerable to floods regardless of their residence, the "Nearist Farmers" most vulnerable to droughts (Agri-CP) and finally the "Farist Farmers" (Agri-CE) most vulnerable to wildfires (Fig 4).

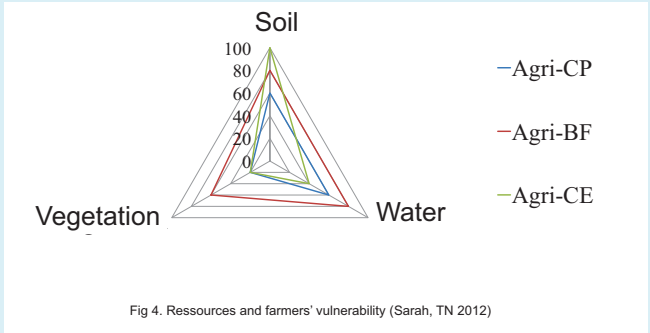

Fig 4. Ressources and farmers' vulnerability (Sarah, TN 2012)

Conclusion & outlook

This vulnerability is likely to affect the national economy which is dependent on agriculture and especially on Banikoara produced cotton. These findings should be used to reframe both environmental and agricultural policies in the context of climate change.

Acknowledgments

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