Family structure and labor migration.
A longitudinal study in rural Mali

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Background

• Large households

• Importance of the temporary migration

• Answers to the harshness of the living conditions

➡ Is there a link between family structure and migration behaviour?
Population (1)

- 7 villages, South-Eastern Mali, ethnic area of Bwa (3600 residents in 2004)
- Agricultural self-sufficiency, family-based production
- Little investment in cash crops and trade
- Low school enrolment
Population (2)

• First step of the transition:
  – Decrease of mortality: $5q_0 = 170\%$
  – No fertility decline: $TFR_{15-59\text{ ans}} \sim 8 \text{ children per woman}$

• High natural growth rate partly brought down by migration
  – Natural growth rate 1999-2004: 2,6%
  – Migration growth rate 1999-2004: -2,1%
  – Population growth rate 1999-2004: 0.5%
Data

• A follow-up survey since 1988, updated each 5 years (1994, 1999, 2004)
• With each update:
  – local census
  – matching with the data of previous censuses
• 7 censuses, local and national
  • Census 1976 (national)
  • Census 1987 (national)
  • Census 1988 (local)
  • Census 1994 (local)
  • Census 1998 (national)
  • Census 1999 (local)
  • Census 2004 (local)
A semi-longitudinal follow-up
Family Structure and Migration: general trends
Family structure

- Household, named « zû »: unit of production and consumption
- Large size and complex structure
Development of migration

Probability of individual migration: proportion of emigrants at t+10 among the residents at t
Family environment and labour migration
2 questions

• Is individual labor migration influenced by the household structure?

• Is individual labor migration influenced by the migration behaviour of other household members?
**Indicators**

- **Migration**: probability for a resident at the census \( t \) to be in migration at the census \( t+10 \)

- **Household:**
  - Formal structure at census \( t \):
    - size (nb of residents) at census \( t \)
    - structure mono- or poly-nuclear at census \( t \) (nb of married men)
    - indicator of labor force at census \( t \) (nb of men 15-59 years old)
  - Potential structure at census \( t+10 \)
    - potential labor force at census \( t+10 \): nb of men 15-59 years old who would belong to the household at census \( t+10 \) if no emigration and segmentation had occurred since census \( t \)
  - Nb of labour migrants in the zu: men (15-59) in labor migration at census \( t+10 \)

- **Focus on men 17-29 years old.**
First question:
Is individual labor migration influenced by household structure?
Labor migration and labor force of the household

Probability of labor migration according:

- The indicator of labor force
- The indicator of potential labor force

| Number of men residents at t | Probability of migration
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| Number of men at t+10       | Probability of migration
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Labor migration and size and structure of the household

Probability of labor migration according:

- The size of the zu:
  - Number of residents: 0-4 (45%), 5-9 (40%), 10-14 (35%), 15-19 (30%), 20 & + (25%)

- The structure of the zu:
  - Number of married men: 0 (50%), 1 (45%), 2 (40%), 3 (35%), 4 & + (30%)
Probability of labor migration for 6 months or more

- According to the size of the zu:
  - 0-4: 40%
  - 5-9: 30%
  - 10-14: 20%
  - 15-19: 10%
  - 20+:

- According to the indicator of labor force:
  - 1: 40%
  - 2: 30%
  - 3: 20%
  - 4+:

Number of residents

Number of men residents at t
Second question:

Is individual labor migration influenced by the migration behaviour of other household members?
Probability of labor migration according the number of labor migrants in the zu and the indicator of potential labor force of the zu.
Conclusion (1)

- Labor migration: a common behavior of young adults
- Probability of migration is high
- But significant differences exist according to the family environment of young men
Conclusion (2)

- Probability to migrate higher in small households

- Possible explanation: necessity for farms with low labour force, to find additional resources outside the village

- Pressure lighter for larger units
Conclusion (3)

• Existence of other migrants in the household enhances one’s probability to migrate:
  - availability of network for migration
  - share of commun experiences between peers
  - competition between peers

• Individual factors more effective determinants than family features

• Interindividual relations and individual behaviors are potentially more diversified in a large household