

Community participation in decentralized management of natural resources in the southern region of Mali

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Key messages

- ✓ Decentralized governance of natural resources is considered one of the key strategies for promoting sustainable management of natural resources at local level.
- ✓ Local institutions governing natural resource management can serve as viable policy instruments to promote equitable and sustainable use of natural resources, and reduce conflict if strengthened through appropriate and inclusive processes involving the local communities and the State agencies.
- ✓ Strengthening local conventions management of natural resources is essential to maintain a healthy natural resource base for sustainable intensification of crop and livestock production systems.

Objectives and approach

- **The purpose of this study** was to document and analyze the existing local conventions in mixed crop-livestock systems of southern Mali and to examine the factors that influence the level of participation of farmers in elaborations of local conventions.
- **Research approach** – Qualitative research approach such as group discussions and individual interviews of key stakeholders were used to gather information on local conventions governing natural resources in southern Mali.

Key results

- Local conventions governing natural resources management exist in all study sites mainly in an informal (oral) form. They govern natural resources use (land access and acquisition, harvesting wild fruits, fishing, grazing, forest, water management).
- Men had a higher knowledge of local conventions compared to women (figure 1)
- Participation of community members in elaboration of local conventions was very low, and age, gender, and ethnicity appeared to influence the level of participation of the community (Table1)
- Weakness of existing local natural resource institutions : Lack of formalization of most of the existing rules and norms governing NRM; lack of effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the local rules governing NRM; poor participation of community members in the elaboration of local conventions.

Significance and scaling potential

The results illustrate that local conventions governing natural resources are weak, mainly due to low participation of community members in their elaboration and lack of their formalization. Community should promote the participation of community members in decision making over natural resources, this will increase the accountability of each natural resource user for the better use of these resources. **About 10 000 farmers and herders can be reached by the intervention on local conventions governing natural resources in Mali.**

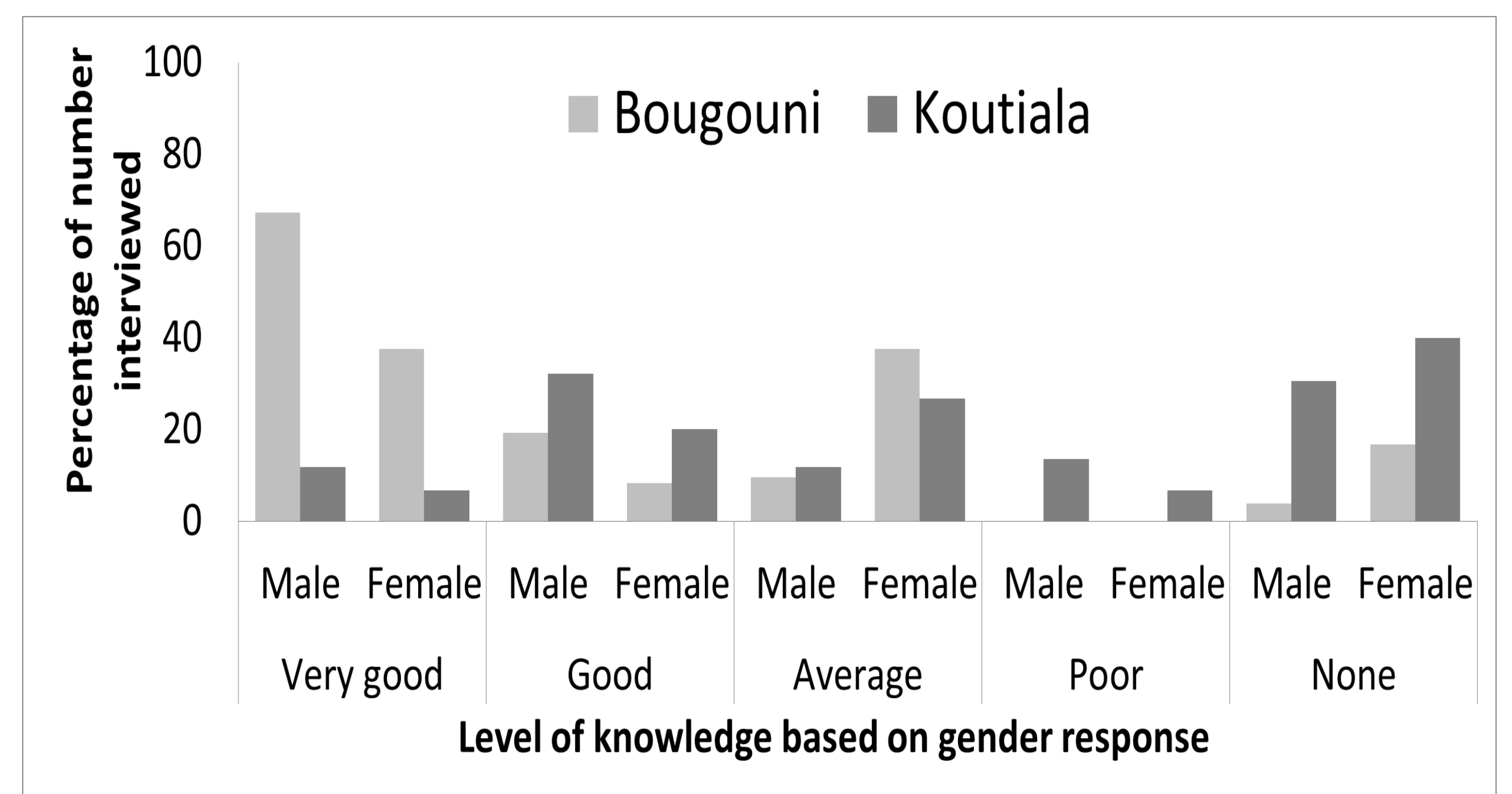


Figure 1. Level of knowledge of local rules or norms governing NRM according to gender in Bougouni and Koutiala



Photo1. Community participation in elaboration of local conventions

Table 1: Results of the regression analysis of the level of participation of community members in the elaboration of rules and norms governing natural resources use

Independent variable	Bougouni	Koutiala
Age	0.029***	0.004
Residence	-0.023***	0.010
Female	-0.575***	-0.389**
Herder	-1.098	0.189
Farmer-herder	-0.093	0.026
Formal education	-0.411**	0.340*
Koranic education	0.206	0.035
Non land owning lineage	-0.280	0.282
Constant	0.188	-0.258
R ²	0.317	0.117