

Perceptions of and Responses to Climate Change in Saint-Louis, Senegal

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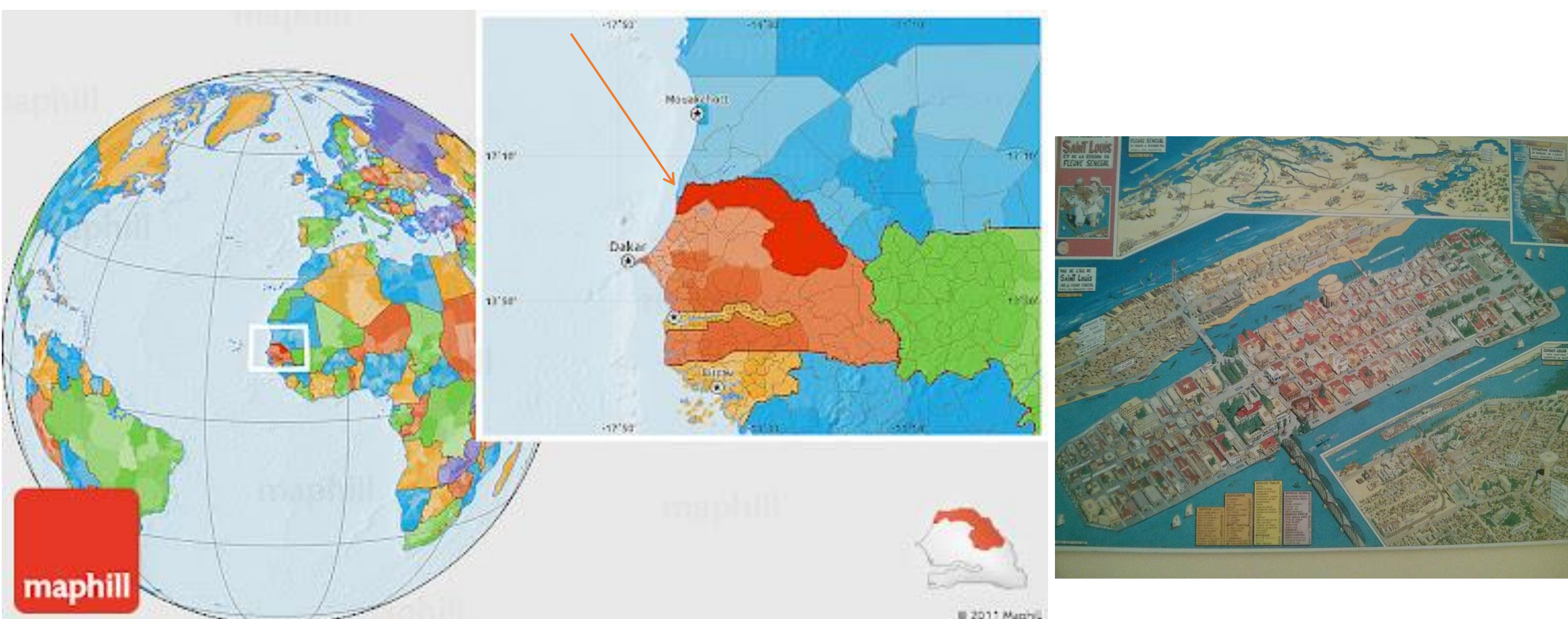
INTRODUCTION

Considering the anticipated impacts of climate change in the Global South, the international media predicts that climate change will result in an influx of African migrants to Europe. More than 80% of human migration occurs sub-regionally. Historically, Senegalese society is a mobile society. Rising sea levels in Saint-Louis has adversely impacted people's livelihoods and well-being. To make sense of human migration and climate change, this study engages with community members to understand their lived experiences of climate change and perceptions of human migration.

OBJECTIVES

- **Overall objective:** Enhanced understanding of community's perceptions of and responses to climate change.
- Enhanced understanding of drivers of human migration, and environmental change in Senegal.
- Better understanding of migrants' perceptions of rising sea levels and livelihood adaptation strategies.

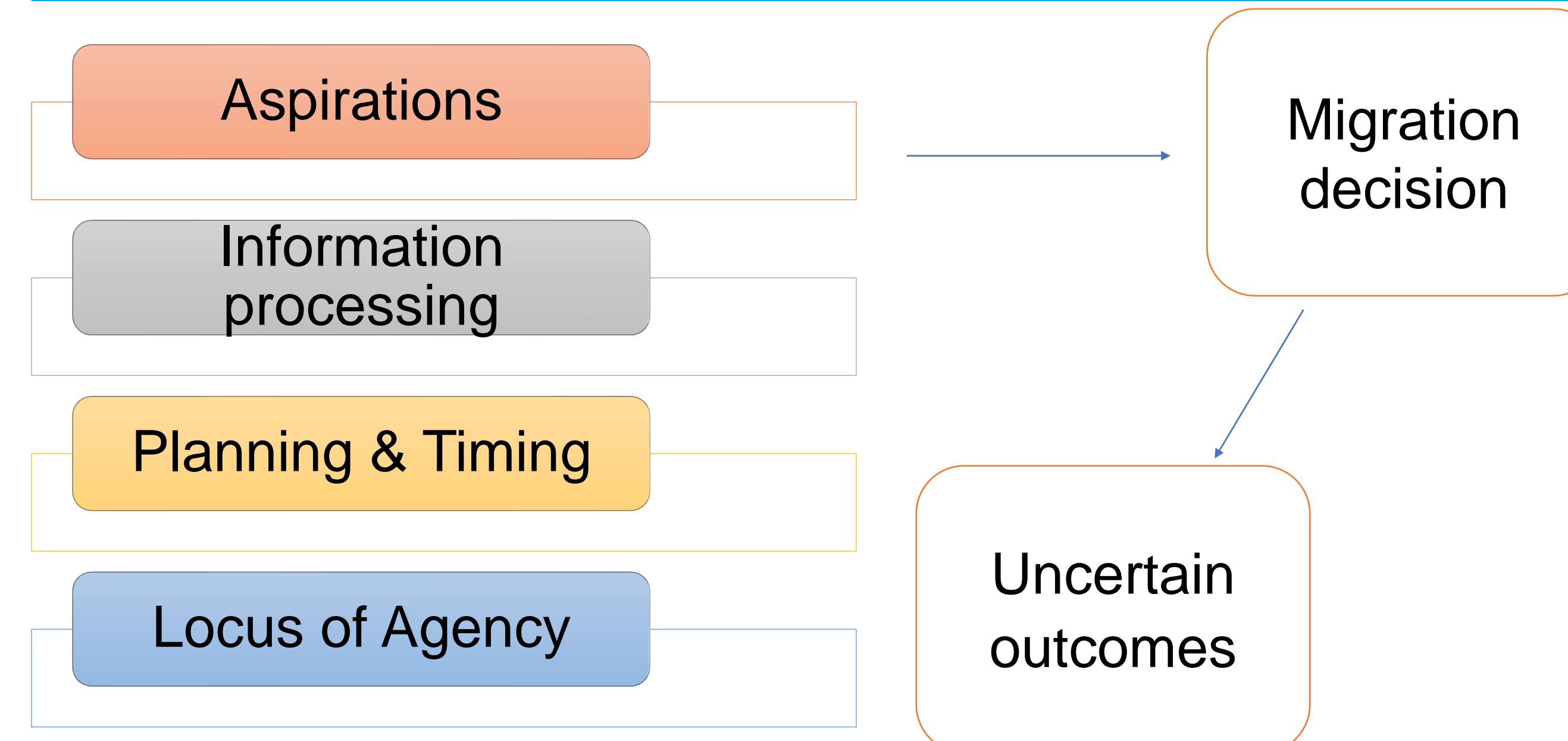
FIELD PRACTICUM SITE



PARTICIPANTS & METHODS

- In-depth, semi-structured interviews with key informants (researchers government employees, civil society actors).
- Qualitative research design.
- In-depth, semi-structured interviews with community members.
- Ethnographic observations.
- Grounded Theory.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



RESULTS

Climate change – all community members and key informants articulated their understanding and lived experiences of climate change. This was confirmed by key informants

“Climate change is, in part, the source of dwindling fish stocks, because certain types of fish can no longer withstand the heat. With rising temperatures, the heat has become unbearable. Previously, the sea was kilometers away”.

Artisanal fishing sector – community members and key informants expressed great concern for the future of the artisanal fishing sector. Artisanal fisherfolk amend practices.

“In the fisheries sector, we are always looking for fish and we always go where we hope to find them. If they were here, we would not need to go elsewhere to find them”

Human migration – Key informants and community members view human migration as an adaptation strategy. Human migration patterns are mainly circular.

“Beyond increasing scarcity of fish stocks, the sector [artisanal] is not what it used to be. Therefore, the youth are overcome by anxiety; the fear of what they are going to become tomorrow... They are willing to take the risk of seas in search of a better tomorrow”.



DISCUSSION

- Community members expressed how climate change has adversely impacted their lives and livelihoods.
- Human migration is perceived as an adaptation strategy to issues in the artisanal fisheries sector and a path to attain the good life, fulfil unmet aspirations (*Barça ou Barzakh*), and to make life easy for migrants' parents and themselves.
- Artisanal fishing involves migration along the West African Coast and/or working with foreign fishing companies.
- Community members express attachment to their land, community and way of life.
- Popular migration destinations include the Canary Islands, countries along the West African Coastline, and Morocco.
- Interviewees note that anti-irregular migration campaigns do not address their living conditions.
- Human migration and prolonged fishing campaigns place undue pressure on women who remain.
- Efforts to plant mangroves to combat the encroaching sea are underway.

