



Date (optional)

A Qualitative Study of the Migration-Adaptation Nexus to Deal with Environmental Change in Tinghir and Tangier (Morocco)

Lore Van Praag

Centre for Migration and Intercultural Studies

MIGRADAPT project

Migration and environmental change discourses and policies

= emerging and polarizing themes characterize the 21st century

- 90s: environmental migration leads to mass displacement
- = seen as a global security challenge
- Environmental change is push factor for migration
- Fear of potential “climate refugees”

Where are all the Climate Refugees? Why we need to include climate change to the conversation about the refugee crisis

“During the Syrian drought many families moved to urban centres, angry unemployed men providing kindling for the revolution that led to years of bloody civil war, and supplied many of the refugees heading to Europe.”



Yazidis Fleeing ISIS in Syria (<http://www.commondreams.org/views/2015/08/28/call-it-what-it-global-migration-shift-climate-not-migrant-or-refugee-crisis>)

Migration and environmental change discourses and policies (2)

Gradual shift towards:

- “Migration as an adaptation strategy”
- Constataion interrelatedness environmental factors and migration
- Goal: to reduce the vulnerabilities of social or biological systems (or both) to environmental change
- Migration is one potential strategy
 - Reduces demographic pressures
 - Support/knowledge sharing from migrant networks
 - Together with other adaptation strategies
- Criticism:
 - Too much responsibility by actors
 - Imply governed approach, ignorance structural approaches

Present study

- How people living in specific highly-affected regions of environmental change view migration as an adaptation strategy themselves and how this relationship is embedded in a specific local social, political, environmental context
- Local perceptions and evaluations of migration as a form of adaptation to environmental changes
- Contribution to debates on how migration could be seen as an adaptation strategy for dealing with environmental change
- Morocco: Tangier and Tinghir

MIGRADAPT project

Making Migration Work for Adaptation to Environmental Changes: A Belgian appraisal

3 countries, 2 regions per country :

- Senegal
- DR Congo
- **Morocco: Tangier and Tinghir**

+ immigrants from these regions in Belgium

48 interviews in Morocco

https://www.hugo.uliege.be/cms/c_4866216/en/hugo-migradapt

Two sites of research in Morocco

Tangier

- International past and vibe
- Culture of migration
- Transit migration
- Growing industrial city

- 947,952 inhabitants

- 18 interviews

Tinghir

- High emigration rates
- Culture of migration
- Effects environmental change
- Importance of agriculture

- 42,044 inhabitants

- 30 interviews

Results

- Consequences of both migration and environmental changes are more pronounced in Tinghir than in Tangier
- Different climatic and socio-economic conditions
- Different impact of migration on adaptive capacity
- Differential impact on population

Migrant networks and remittances

- Use of remittances is seen as argument for migration as adaptation strategy
- Remittances shaped Tinghir and Tangier differently
- Not necessarily used to reduce impacts and risks of environmental change
- Lack of structural investments
- From family to family, not all individuals are included

Zakaria: “Some [people set up projects] when they have a lot of money, they keep half [of the money] for the project and half [of the money] to live with. Some of them, **they just send money, just to live, to pay the rent, light, water, clothes, or shoes**. If you are not ‘down there’ in the Rif, and if someone sends you money, for your son, for your daughter, you just keep it”.

Adaptation strategies at the individual/ household level

- Remittances are invested in initiatives dealing with the degrading environment when they immediately impact individual/household livelihoods.
- Do not benefit entire community
- Initial migration motives evolved along the way
- Hindrance knowledge sharing between migrant networks

Hasna (33-year-old female beauty specialist, Tangier) “The reasons we came here [Tangier] is that, before our father died, he decided to come and live here, as we were living in a small village where there was nothing to do, **there was no work**, and there were no big companies. It was a village, where there was only agronomy, **there was only agriculture**. Finally, to have a bright future, we decided to move to Tangier”.

Wadil (31- year-old male teacher, Tangier): “My grandparents started their life in ‘the drought’ (...) **Muslims know how to live like that**”.

Adaptation strategies at the individual/ household level

In Tinghir:

- wider variety of adaptation strategies are applied
- the input of migration networks and remittances rather disconnects environmental changes from people's everyday lives.

Chafik: “Nothing. Now, many **people leave the palm grove abandoned because it doesn't provide anything**. You have to do business, there are people who go in vegetables, there are people who do business, clothes . . . we leave. Not many people work now in the palm grove. **Because there is no water**”.

Interviewer: “And what do people do to adapt?”

Mouhcine: “They are obliged . . . they are obliged to . . .”

Mamoun: “**People migrate**. There are people who try to adapt, that’s it, and with an idea on their own, they make an effort, agriculture, because we do not have great fields. It’s just a small field like that, helps economically to live and to survive, only. It’s not a business agriculture. It’s just subsistence farming, just to live and eat (. . .) They apply new irrigation techniques, like drip irrigation, a modern irrigation technique to conserve water as water is scarce here (. . .) Before, there were canals that spill a lot of water in the fields, so they do not serve much in agriculture. Only peasants do that, so it’s limited. Most of them are ‘seekers’, most of them do not spend their time, they don’t waste their time doing things like that, they are moving to Europe or to big cities”.

Adaptation strategies at the community level

Many adaptive innovations require a community approach

Tinghir: communal systems of water management and land heritage rules

- Remittances and community development
 - Monetary and knowledge flows shape Moroccan life
 - Devaluation of agriculture and land degradation
- Remittances used for environmental adaptation
 - Big investment projects
 - Bottom-up initiatives (e.g. Project X)

Conclusion

- Migration cannot be seen in a straightforward way to facilitate climate adaptation
- Depends on context and how migration flows and remittances adjust to this context
- Lack of framing “migration as adaptation”, no development of such a framework
- At community level: more potential to coordinate and consider the context
- (Religious) solidarity could correspond to community level strategies, set up platforms to coordinate climate adaptation and the role of migration herein, in line with governmental initiatives

Questions?

Lore Van Praag (2021) A qualitative study of the migration-adaptation nexus to deal with environmental change in Tinghir and Tangier (Morocco), *Journal of Integrative Environmental Sciences*, 18:1, 1-17.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1943815X.2020.1869784>

Lore.VanPraag@UAntwerpen.be

MIGRADAPT:

<http://igeat.ulb.ac.be/en/projects/details/project/making-migration-work-for-adaptation-to-environmental-changes-a-belgian-appraisal-migradapt/>

