

KNOMAD

Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development



Vulnerability and resilience in West Africa: understanding human mobility in the context of land degradation

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Structure of the Presentation

- I) West Africa, Slow Onset Events and Vulnerability
 - Drought and reduced water availability
 - Sea-level rise and coastal erosion
- II) Resilience, Land-based Adaptation and Migration
 - Onsite Adaptation
 - Intercontinental, Regional and Internal Migration
 - Seasonal Migration vs. Relocation
- III) Unsafe Migration and Failed Adaptation

A Note on the Authors

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Climate Change and Slow-Onset Events

- Slow onset events: “*Insert short definition*”

Slow Onset Events in West Africa

- Increasingly common throughout the region
- They affect the livelihoods of a growing number of populations through:
 - ***Accentuating desertification and land degradation***

- *Insert nice picture of desertification + Talk about expansion of Sahara desert (semi-arid zones, drylands, etc. All in IPCC).*

Slow Onset Events in West Africa

- Increasingly common throughout the region
- They affect the livelihoods of a growing number of populations through:
 - *Accentuating desertification and land degradation*
 - ***Changing rainfall patterns and reducing freshwater availability***

- *Map of rainfall patterns or picture of crops ruined by extreme / unplanned rainfall and talk briefly*
- *Picture of Lake Chad Shrinking*

Slow Onset Events in West Africa

- Increasingly common throughout the region
- They affect the livelihoods of a growing number of populations through:
 - *Accentuating desertification and land degradation*
 - *Changing rainfall patterns and reducing freshwater availability*
 - ***Causing sea-level rise and groundwater salinization***

- *Picture of eroded coastal line + talk about sea water intrusion into coastal freshwater systems*
- *(look for a before / after picture of St-Louis area in Senegal)*

Vulnerability

- Exposure:
 - Definition:
- **Vulnerability** is influenced by the level of **exposure** to slow onset climate stressors
 - Slow onset events impact upon terrestrial and oceanic systems on which primary sector activities – agriculture, cattle breeding, and fishing – rely
 - ➔ Rural populations are the most exposed; their vulnerability is the greatest

Vulnerability

- The population of West Africa is mostly rural
 - Percentage of rural vs. urban
 - GDP of agricultural and livestock activities
- Unprecedented expansion of coastal cities

- Picture of peanut cultivation in Senegal (main product)
- Picture of Lagos slums

Resilience

- Can be broadly defined as a “remedy” to vulnerability
- Consequently entails measures that **reduce exposure**
- Can include:
 - Onsite adaptation
 - Temporary migration
 - Permanent relocation

Onsite Adaptation

- Conditions
 - Non-irreversible consequences
- Incentives
 - Knowledge and education
 - Economic enabling factors

- Picture of SWC techniques application, NGOs..

Onsite Adaptation Thresholds

- A variety of factors determine **thresholds** beyond which populations deem onsite adaptation to be unfeasible
 - In Burkina Faso, the third consecutive year of drought has been found to be the one triggering out-migration
 - In other cases, these thresholds are imposed by the irreversible consequences of slow onset events
 - *This is the case in Linguère, Senegal, where sea-level rise has eroded arable land, imposing relocation to affected populations*
- These thresholds are highly **context-specific**

- If available, picture waves on agri fields..

Resilient Migration (International)

- Intercontinental and Regional Migration
 - Only afforded to those possessing the **necessary financial capital to initiate migration**
 - *The bulk of environmental migration is thus **internal**, as most environmental migrants lack these financial assets*
 - Yet, **through the key role of remittances**, international migration impacts upon decisions to migrate in places of origin
 - *In Senegal, remittances finance the cheap wages of agricultural migrants from neighboring countries*

Resilient Migration (Internal)

- Internal Migration
 - Captures most environmental migration
 - Not accounted for by governments and international bodies

- It can be
 - Temporary / seasonal
 - Permanent

Seasonal Migration

Generally involves only one or few family members, not the entire household

- In certain contexts, seasonal (or circular) migration represents an **erosive survival strategy**
 - *E.g., Ghana and two rounds of seasonal migration*
- In others, it constitutes a **voluntary resilience mechanism, leading to successful adaptation**
 - *E.g., Senegal and new waves of migration dominated by women*

Permanent Relocation

- As in the case with temporary migration, relocation too can be either successful and voluntary, or erosive and forced

- *Quick example*



The relative levels of successful adaptation highly depend on the **context**, as well as the strategies employed

Unsafe Paths and Failed Adaptation

- Unsafe Destinations
 - *Slums of Dakar*
- Unsafe Routes
- Multiple Layers of Insecurity

- Pictures of Slums, Boko Haram and AQMI, MUJAO, ANSAR DINE....

Abandoned Populations?

- Migration routes and destinations are struck with high levels of political instability and insecurity
- However, places of origin too can see their vulnerability increase as a result of outmigration
 - This is the case for “**abandoned**” and “**trapped**” populations
 - *E.g., Tougou in Burkina Faso: reduced number of meals and potential to cause malnutrition*

- Pictures of abandoned villages

CONCLUSIONS

Thank you for your attention!

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