

Looking beyond imaginative narratives:

Environmental Change and Internal Migration

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- Environmental change has potentially profound effects on human lives, particularly in the Global South, where rural livelihoods are still largely dependent on ecosystem resources.
- One of the possible key responses to this worsening livelihood perspective is emigration to other locations. (Brown, et al, 2012; FAO, 2016).
- A focus on the influence on existing and new patterns of migrations can provide a better understanding of the nexus (Foresight, 2011).

Rather than a broader approach, narratives on the nexus, especially on climate change and migration, have often focused on international (irregular) migration.

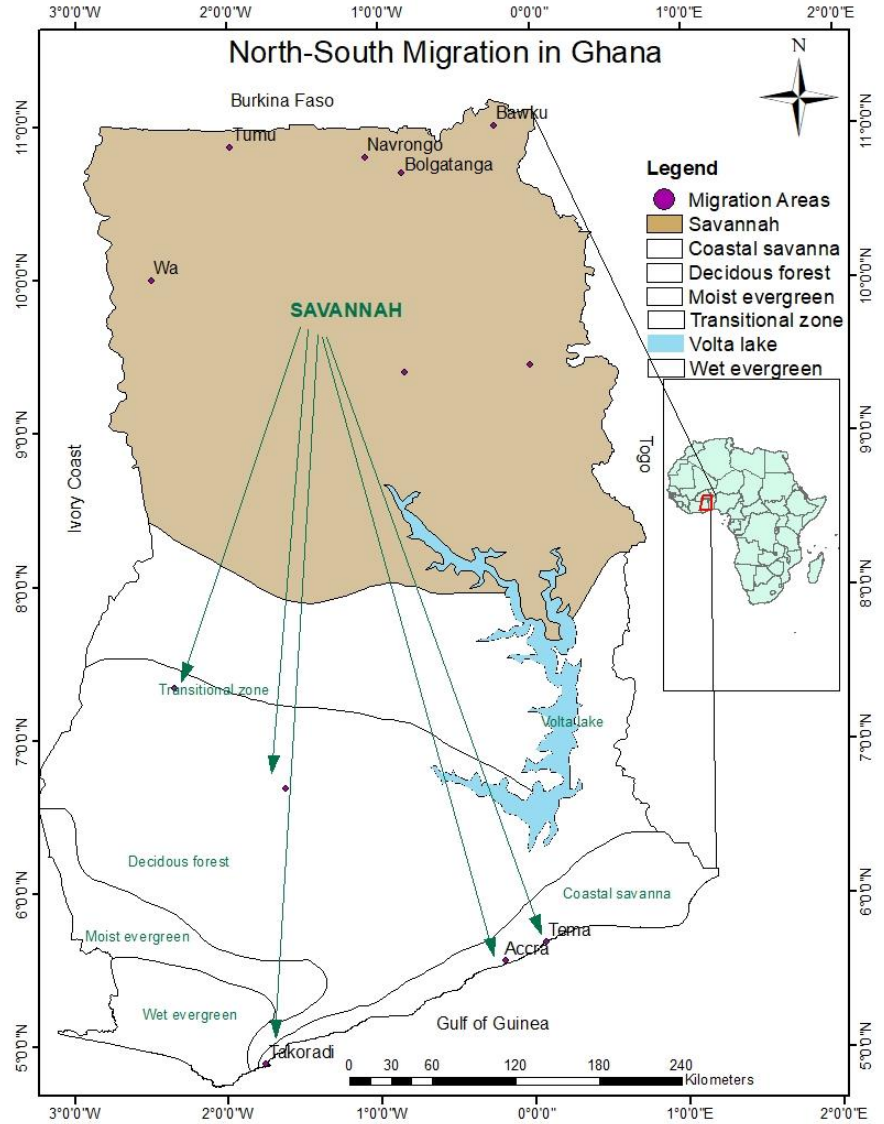
The focus has been on the affected moving to Europe and America (Foresight, 2011, Jarawura & Smith, 2015) and provided impetus to securitisation narratives (Joris, 2020).



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But most Africans are not crossing oceans but land borders within the continent. 94% of African migration across oceans takes on a regular form (Africa Migration Report, 2020). 80% of people with intention to migrate do not plan to leave the continent (IOM, 2017). African migrants move mostly within their respective sub-regions (IOM, 2019)

And When attention turns to internal migration, it has mainly focused on existing major **rural-urban patterns**. This is very evident in Ghana with literature and media focussing on cities as recipients of environmental migrants: **North-South migration – rural-rural migration is obscured.**



- My recent work has focussed on patterns of local migrations within the relatively less endowed Savannah of Ghana.
- My work and similar research highlight the general failure to conceive rural-rural forms of migration as a consequence of and potential adaptation strategy to climate change.



Villages of Hope? The Rural Savannah as a destination

Conclusions

- We need to move beyond simplistic narratives of mass African migration to the West from impacts of environmental change; rather intra-African and in-country, localised forms of migration are far more likely.
- Beyond a search for influence of environmental change on migration, questions of interest include:
 - Whether local forms of migration can represent potential, perhaps even more innovative and sustainable ways of dealing with future environmental changes among rural people.
 - To what extent do environmental policies, especially on climate change, ignore or include rural areas as (both origin and) recipients of ‘environmental migrants’.

**Not always the city, but also
about Villages of hope!!**

Thank you for your time