

PhD Dissertation
Department of Environmental Science and Policy
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Title: Climate Adaptation and Agricultural Livelihoods: Public Irrigation Access In Northeastern Tunisia.

Dissertation Director: Dr. Susan Crate

Committee: Dr. Peter Balint, Dr. Todd LaPorte, Dr. Christopher Kennedy

ABSTRACT

This doctoral dissertation is based on an interdisciplinary study of the adaptive capacity and resilience of agricultural communities in northeast Tunisia, and the impacts that national economic policies and climate change have on adaptation. The analytical framework used is the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach to examine the linkages between adaptive capacity of farmers to environmental changes, and different types of water access. While much of the existing work on this topic asserts that farmers who are in public irrigation systems are more resilient to environmental stressors, this research suggests that as a result of government policies and incentives, as well as intensifying environmental constraints, public irrigation in this context might not lead to an increase in adaptive capacity. The project is based on eight months of field work conducted in Tunis and the Cap Bon peninsula of Tunisia using a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods and data analysis.