

**Workshop on MIGRATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE**  
**In Preparation for the United Nations Summit on Refugees and Migrants**

# Population mobility and environment: from knowledge to policy

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September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016



# Introduction

- Sudden and slow onset environmental disasters displaced an estimated 19.3 million people in 2014 alone (IFRC 2012)
- Renewed concerns about the consequences of global environmental change for human well-being and population mobility
  - population displacement has the potential for triggering governance and security challenges and conflicts.
- Migration and other forms of mobility as demographic responses to stressful situations are not a new strategy;
- Changes in the geography of vulnerability increases uncertainty in projections.

# Multidimensional process

*Important distinctions / dimensions when considering environmental (including climate change) impacts on population mobility:*

- *dramatic sudden impacts vs slow onset change impacts;*
- *forced vs voluntary migration;*
- *moving as a result of perceived vs actual threats;*
- *movement as forced displacement vs movement as adaptation to environmental impacts;*
- *situations where the environmentally-induced mobility is channeled along existing corridors of movements vs those where new types and spatial patterns of movement are created;*
- *mobility within countries vs cross-border mobility*

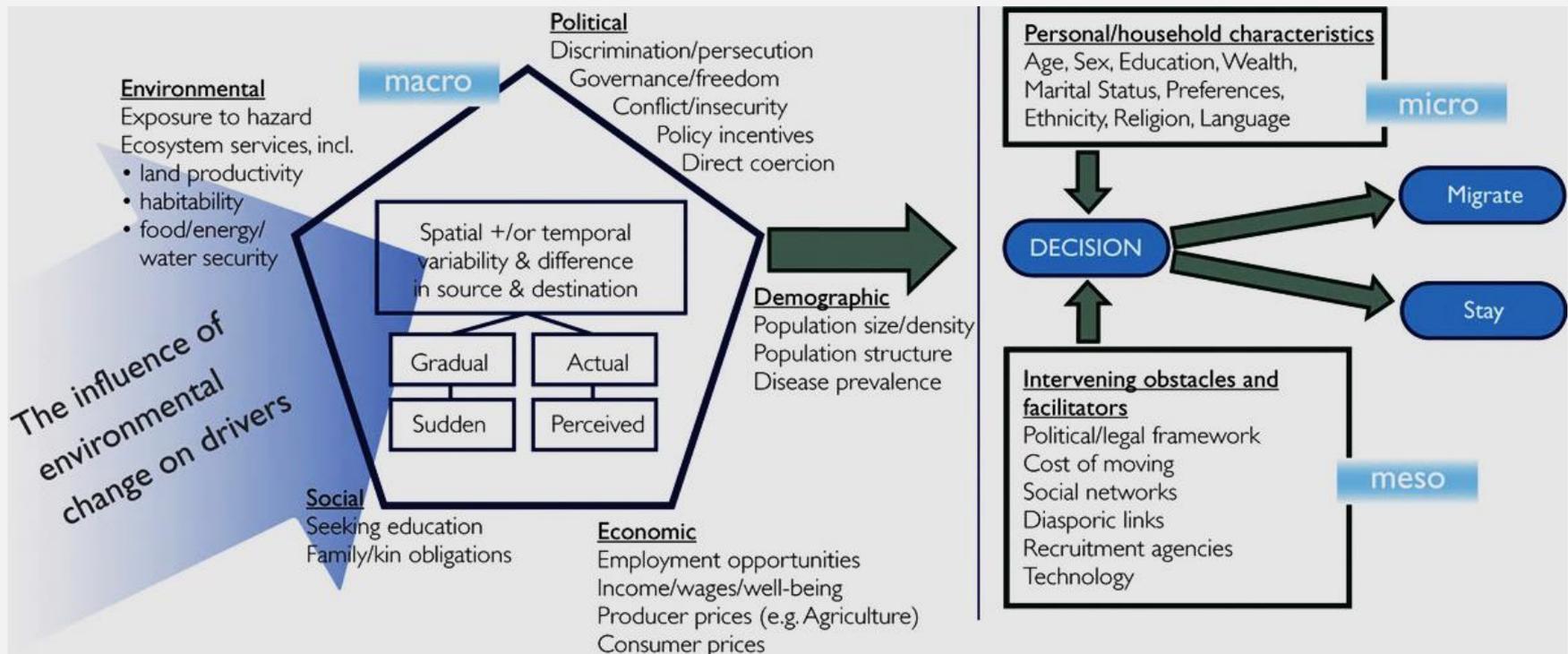
(Hugo, G. 2010. Climate change-induced mobility and the existing migration regime in Asia and the Pacific. In McAdam, J., ed. *Climate change and displacement: multidisciplinary perspectives*. Oxford, Hart Publishing. Pp. 9-35)

# Defining concepts

- **Environmental Migrants:** *persons or group of persons who, for compelling reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad* (IOM (2007). Discussion note: migration and the environment. [www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/microsites/IDM/workshops/evolving\\_global\\_economy\\_2728112007/MC\\_INF\\_288\\_EN.pdf](http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/microsites/IDM/workshops/evolving_global_economy_2728112007/MC_INF_288_EN.pdf) )
- **Cross-border displacement in the context of disasters and the effects of climate change:** refers to situations where people flee or are displaced across borders in the context of sudden- or slow-onset disasters, or in the context of the adverse effects of climate change (Nansen Initiative Definitions. <https://www.nanseninitiative.org/secretariat/>)

# A conceptual framework for migration and environment

- Human migration is potentially influenced by environmental factors, but ultimately shaped by **a complexity of forces** including social, economic and cultural processes.
- Framing the migration-environment discussion in terms of drivers of migration, including but not limited to environment



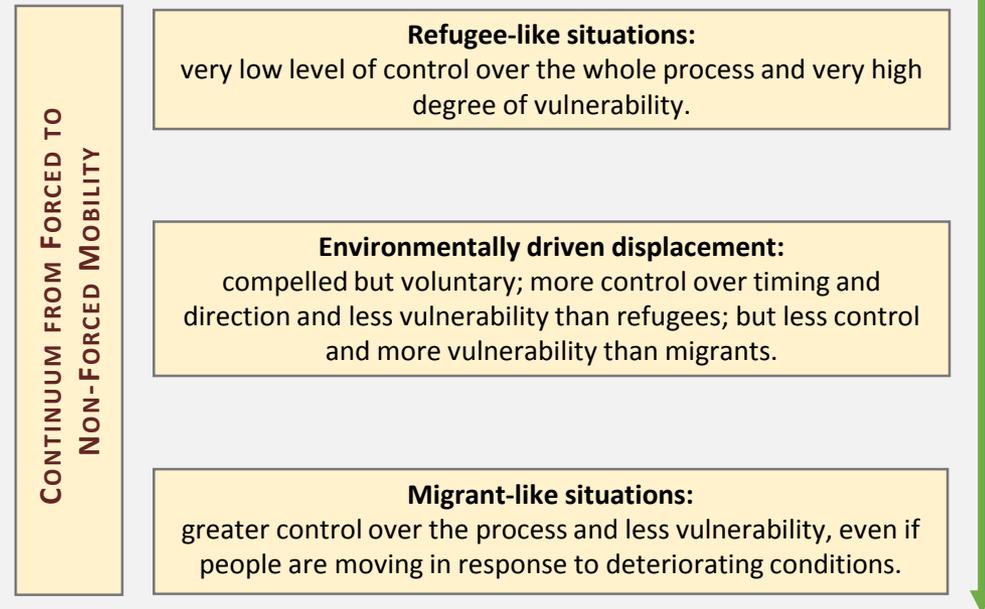
Source: Black, R., W. N. Adger, et al. (2011). The effect of environmental change on human migration. *Global Environmental Change-Human and Policy Dimensions* 21: S3-S11.

Based on Foresight: Migration and Global Environmental Change (2011) Final Project Report The Government Office for Science, London [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/287717/11-1116-migration-and-global-environmental-change.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/287717/11-1116-migration-and-global-environmental-change.pdf)

# Different forms of environmental migration and displacement

- Continuum or gradient between forced displacement and voluntary migration
  - Criterion: degree of control over the circumstances surrounding the decision to leave or stay
- Trapped populations
  - Migration could be an effective strategy but most vulnerable populations could not be able to use it.
- Immobile populations
  - people may actually (freely and knowledgably) decide to stay put despite the impact of environmental hazards (Adams, H. (2016). Why populations persist: mobility, place attachment and climate change. *Population and Environment*. 37(4):429-448)

## *The spectrum of population mobility along the forced-voluntary axis*



Source: Based on Bates, D. (2002). Environmental refugees? Classifying human migration caused by environmental change. *Population and Environment*. 23:465-477. Hugo, G. (1996). Environmental concerns and international migration. *International Migration Review* 30:105-131. Renaud, F., J. Bogardi, O. Dun and K. Warner (2007). Control, adapt or flee. How to face environmental migration? *InterSecTions*. (5) Note: Renaud et al. (2007:28) distinguishes the following categories: environmentally motivated migrants; environmentally forced migrants; and environmental refugees. Bates (2002:468-69) differentiates between environmental refugees (further subdivided by category of disruption: disasters, expropriations and deterioration), environmental migrants and migrants.

# Climate change as driver of migration and displacement

- Migration and resettlement may be the most threatening short-term effects of climate change on human settlements.
- People may decide to migrate in any of the following cases:
  - **loss of housing** (because of river or sea flooding or mudslides);
  - **loss of living resources** (like water, energy and food supply or employment affected by climate change);
  - **loss of social and cultural resources** (loss of cultural properties, neighborhood or community networks, particularly in the case of a devastating flood) (IPCC 1990 AR [www.ipcc.ch/ipccreports/far/wg\\_II/ipcc\\_far\\_wg\\_II\\_chapter\\_05.pdf](http://www.ipcc.ch/ipccreports/far/wg_II/ipcc_far_wg_II_chapter_05.pdf))
- Climate change impacts are likely to increase population displacement in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, directly or indirectly, particularly among those populations less likely to have the resources to resort to planned mobility (IPCC. 2014. *Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*)
  - Mobility could be an effective adaptive strategy;
  - Changes in migration patterns can be a response to extreme climate events, to climate variability, or to long term changes;
  - Mobility (migration) could be one of the factors that make it difficult to understand vulnerability and future response (coping) capacity, increasing uncertainty;
  - Low confidence in quantitative projections of changes in migration and mobility patterns due to its multi-causal and complex nature.
- **Impacts scenarios to vary substantially by geographic location**

# Some research results

- Displacement seems to be increasing:
  - historical models indicate that the probability of being displaced by a disaster was 60 percent higher in 2015 than it was 40 years before (Internal Displacement Monitoring Center-IDMC. 2015. *Global estimates. People displaced by disasters*. Geneva, IDMR and NRC).
- Recent results indicate:
  - Detectable effects of climate change impacts on population mobility, but with large uncertainties;
  - Climate change is likely to worsen living conditions of populations whose livelihoods depend on natural ecosystems, increasing out-migration from rural areas.
  - Cities (where mobility, climate change and urbanization trends coincide) are increasingly exposed to climate change impacts → outmigration to other areas;
  - As destination hubs, some cities could see an increase in in-migration because of the impacts of climate change in sending regions.

# Some research results (cont.)

- Vast majority of movements are internal, but international / trans-border movements has been recorded / observed.
- Incorporation of demography theory / empirical results in research on environmental migration:
  - Pre-existing migration systems and social networks could give clues about direction of future flows;
  - Complex models to deal with complex attribution / sequential causality;
  - Direct and indirect impacts of climate change.
- **Incorporation of research into integrated policy frameworks.**

# From knowledge to policy

- Research results as inputs for “tailored responses”:
  - “Tailoring” implies a clear understanding of the nexus between environmental change and population mobility (IOM 2007)
  - It requires a “redirection of research toward clarifying conceptual approaches and answering basic questions” (Oliver-Smith, A. 2008. *Researching environmental change and forced migration: people, policy and practice*. Position paper presented at the Research Workshop on Migration and the Environment, Bonn. Page 102)
- Use of the recent empirical evidence for policy design, risk management planning, and monitoring systems
  - To consider the selective character of migration and displacement
  - To consider the consequences for the displaced population, particularly in the cases of sudden displacement and displacements located toward the ‘forced’ end of the involuntary/voluntary continuum;
  - To consider the implications of environmentally induced displacement for the origin and receiving communities;

# From knowledge to policy (cont.)

- The International Organization for Migration suggested to adapt policy interventions to the stage of environmental degradation, or to the type of event or climate of impact (IOM. 2007. *Discussion note: migration and the environment*)
- Life cycle approach to policy:
  - Pre-migration: prevention, mitigation and adaptation to environmental hazards;
  - Migration / displacement: different types of movements;
  - Return or resettlement;
  - Integration into home or new location (Martin, S. 2010. Climate change and international migration. Washington, DC. GMF. Pp. 1-2 <http://www.ehs.unu.edu/file/get/7103>)

# Climate Change, migration and displacement in the COP21

- Included in the section on Adoption of the Paris Agreement:
  - *“Acknowledging that climate change is a common concern of humankind, Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, **migrants**, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity”*
- Included on the section on “Loss and Damage”:
  - *“49. Also requests the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism to establish, according to its procedures and mandate, a task force to complement, draw upon the work of and involve, as appropriate, existing bodies and expert groups under the Convention including the Adaptation Committee and the Least Developed Countries Expert Group, as well as relevant organizations and expert bodies outside the Convention, **to develop recommendations for integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change”***
- (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/10a01.pdf>)

# To conclude

- The use of knowledge for action is finally emerging:
  - Interdisciplinary research as well as collaboration and interaction between the research , policy, management and assistance/relief communities have increased substantially ;
  - Implementation and practical considerations are being included in research designs;
- However, problems remain on *how to increase awareness*, and on *how to design proactive policies within a human rights approach for all*.