International Political Economy Series

Governing Climate Induced Migration and Displacement

IGO Expansion and Global Policy Implications

Andrea C. Simonelli

International Political Economy Series

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1
Introduction

Climate change is a topic most often broached by environmental scientists and its effects discussed in terms of animal populations and atmospheric events. The quintessential image accompanying this discussion is the sad-looking polar bear on a lonely iceberg. However, its direct effect on human life is yet to garner such attention. Many do not yet associate the consequences for wildlife with similar consequences for humanity. A changing climate will affect how people are able to use their environment as the locations of arable land and water supplies will shift. In some places, sea level rise and desertification will forcibly displace current human populations. How the world seeks to deal with this shift is yet to be seen. Climate change is also publically discussed in terms of sterile statistics. What tends to be missing is how climate change relates to humanity as a whole. What does a 2 degree Celsius rise in temperature mean in the life of the average person? Can that person conceive of what X tons of carbon in the atmosphere looks like? Without a direct relationship to its effect on humans, these estimates cannot be fully understood. They are vague descriptors at best and useless at worst. Gigatons of invisible gasses cannot be adequately internalized by the minds of most people; it is too abstract. In addition, a rise in temperature effects the whole globe, but with a wide variance across regions, longitudes, and zones of habitation. Thus, how can climate science be connected to the changes seen in individuals' daily lives? This is a difficult challenge and even more so in countries where climatic effects are less visible. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) provides a source intended to parse out these effects in the Working Group II Assessment Reports "Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability". Each report contains a "Summary for Policy Makers", which is an annotated version with more accessible language and summarized results designed

for those who are not scientists in the formal sense. Its language describes the risks and changes to the natural environment, but with minimal emphasis on how climate affects humanity. This means that any reader needs to be able to extrapolate in order to further connect how the likelihood of climate trends will affect specific human sectors. The report suggests generalities over regions and time which need to be specified further in order to completely connect the earth's physical and biological changes to human activity. Science can only estimate the future in general terms.

The Summary proposes some examples of major projected proposed impacts by sector. Table 1.1 presents an annotated version which focuses on climate trends that the IPCC identify and their likelihoods in both the Assessment Reports 4 and 5 (AR4 and AR5) from 2007 and 2013 respectively.

The trends explicated here are long-term changes to typical weather events based on two different time frames: early in this century and on the cusp of the next century. If the latest two Assessment Reports are considered, these trends are either stable or more certain over time. Additionally, the most recent report, AR5, shows that climate science models more strongly predict changes than do previous reports. For example, there are two trends that are described in more specific terms: drought and tropical cyclone activity. Drought had not been adequately projected in terms of changes in soil moisture for early in this century, but is deemed "likely" for late in the century in AR4. However, AR5 adds a generalized descriptor. For cyclones, we see the same low confidence early in the century, but it changes from "likely" to "more likely than not" later and even a specific location where this will be a consideration. This is helpful, in that it can more specifically designate where changes will occur, but again, a purely scientific explanation is still woefully vague. However, Table 1.2 is much more descriptive than Table 1.1. Below is a list of weather-related trends, again, but paired with effects on human health and (separately) industry, settlement, and society from AR4. These descriptions still need to be fitted to individual regions, countries, and localities, but begin to better define the impact of climate trends on human life and livelihoods.

Here, the effects on human health and industry, settlement, and society provide a much broader basis for understanding the impacts of climate trends. These effects vary, but relate to large-scale economic disruptions, personal livelihood issues, infrastructure, vulnerabilities, and potential for migration. Not every locale will be affected by all of these trends, but identifying how an intensification of tropical storms (for example) will

Table 1.1 IPCC proposed major climate change impacts

Direction of Climate Trends from Assessment reports 4 and 5		
Direction of Trend	**Likelihood of further changes: Early 21st Century (AR5)**	**Likelihood of further changes: Late 21st Century (*AR4* and AR5)**
Warmer and/or fewer cold days and nights over most land areas	Likely	*Virtually certain*, Virtually certain
Warmer and/or more frequent hot days and nights over most land areas	Likely	*Virtually certain*, Virtually certain
Warm spells/heat waves. Frequency increases over most land areas	Not formally assessed	*Very Likely*, Very Likely
Heavy precipitation events. Frequency increases over most areas	Likely over many land areas	*Very Likely*, Very Likely
Areas affected by drought increases	Low confidence	*Likely*, Likely (on a regional to global scale)
Intense tropical cyclone activity increases	Low confidence	*Likely*, More Likely than Not (in the Western North Pacific and North Atlantic)
Increased incidence of extreme high sea level (excludes tsunamis)	Likely	*Likely*, Very Likely

Note: For changes in the early 21st century the dates include 2016–2035 and for the late 21st century the dates include the years 2081–2100. Additionally, *Virtually Certain* refers to a likelihood of outcome greater than 99% probability and *Very Likely* refers to a likelihood of outcome 90 to 99% probability, and *Likely* refers to a likelihood of outcome 66 to 90% probability. Finally, there is low confidence related to areas affected by drought increases, because there is low confidence in projected changes in soil moisture specifically.

affect human habitation is a starting point for an assessment of how to govern and plan for such changes. It is not that climate science is uncertain, but that there is a need to combine the "hard" and "soft" sciences to further develop responses to climate effects. While those scientists who live in a world of computer models and atmospheric statistics can demonstrate how likely a region is to face certain trends, social scientists are needed to determine how vulnerable a location is to large-scale disruption, how resilient is the society/ecosystem to this disruption, and what kinds of adaptation will be needed. Social science researchers

Table 1.2 IPCC climate effects on humans

Direction of Trend	Human Health	Industry, Settlement, and Society
Over most land areas, warmer and fewer cold days and nights, warmer and more frequent hot days and nights	Reduced human mortality from decreased cold exposure	Reduced energy demand for heating; increased demand for cooling; declining air quality in cities; reduced disruption to transport due to snow, ice; effects on winter tourism
Warm spells/heat waves. Frequency increases over most land areas	Increased risk of heat-related mortality, especially in the elderly, chronically sick, very young, very socially isolated	Reduction in quality of life for people in warm areas without appropriate housing; impacts on the elderly, very young, and the poor
Heavy precipitation events. Frequency increases over most areas	Increased risk of deaths, injuries, and infectious respiratory and skin diseases	Disruption of settlements, commerce, transport, and societies due to flooding; pressures on urban and rural infrastructures; loss of property
Area affected by drought increases	Increased risk of food and water shortage; increased risk of malnutrition; increased risk of water- and food-borne diseases	Water shortages for settlements, industry, and societies; reduced hydropower generation potentials; potential for population migration
Intense tropical cyclone activity increases	Increased risk of deaths, injuries, water- and food-borne diseases; post-traumatic stress disorders	Disruption by flood and harsh winds; withdrawal of risk coverage in vulnerable areas by private insurers, potential for population migrations, loss of property
Increased incidence of extreme high sea level (excludes tsunamis)	Increased risk of death and injuries by drowning in floods and migration-related health effects	Costs of coastal protection versus costs of land-use relocation; potential for movement of populations and infrastructure (also see tropical cyclones above)

interested in the societal and political effects of climate change have to use a literature base that can parallel the types of risks that will slowly occur. Though one cannot study how an increase of temperature or storm surge occurrence will affect people, one can study the effects of high temperatures and storm surge from past events. This link will allow for a connection between scientific data, measures, and models to those who will inevitably experience them. The risks to humanity have begun to be described in terms of coastlines, buildings, and lost tourist revenue (Arifin, 1997; BBC News, 2009; Wright, 2009; Morton, 2009; Reuters, 2009). While these examples are mostly economic, increases in extreme weather events affect human settlements, health, and personal security, among other things. Thus, how climate change will influence humanity is still yet to be a lived reality for most. Scientific projections and probabilities only provide an ambiguous framework under which to begin to plan, prepare, mitigate, and adapt.

Migration as a form of adaptation to climate change needs to be addressed, because the nations with the highest carbon emissions are not doing enough to curb their global impact. Therefore, there is an increasing need to develop a governance structure to tackle the spontaneous and planned climate induced migration and displacement already occurring. A 2009 report by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Australia suggested that only three out of 20 industries are moving fast enough to deliver the transformation to the greener economy needed by 2014 to stay under a 2°C rise in temperature (Clarke, 2009). As of 2015, the goal of a minimum 2°C temperature rise is still elusive. If the global temperature rises beyond 2°C, certain nations currently facing growing climate-related pressures will have no recourse other than to migrate; this will be a sentence of extinction for some. As the pressures of a new Kyoto commitment period loom for the COP 21 in Paris, it is clear that in order to slow the need for migration, the deal has to make significant gains in the mitigation sector.

Meanwhile, the global governance of climate change induced displacement is currently at the stage of ad hoc development. Legal and conceptual categorization of this phenomenon has been difficult and slow moving. The mainstay of most research on the topic of climate induced migration and displacement has come from the field of international human rights and refugee law. In this vein is how/which current international legal norms and protections can assist those who will need to migrate or are already being displaced. Due the fact that there is no formal legal standard or even set of policies to guide action on this phenomenon, legal analysis mostly entails international soft

law instruments. Legal and non-legal scholars alike use inconsistent language to describe what is happening; many authors have begun to define those affected by climate change in terms of refugeehood; "climate refugee", "climate change refugee", "environmental refugee", "disaster refugee", and "ecological refugee" are most often cited. Legally speaking, the word "refugee" defines a very specific identification which carries with it certain rights and obligations; a concrete meaning and privilege. These rights do not apply equally to all persons fleeing their homes simply because the term "refugee" has been presupposed onto their condition. This grouping is also referred to as "climate change migrants", "climate migrants", "environmental migrants", and "climate displacees". These inconsistencies occur because there has been no common academic or policy-based consensus as to where this group fits into the current discourse on climate change or migration. While a case can be made for many of these labels, their varying use has been problematic for governance. To adequately place those being displaced under the most appropriate governance structure, what is needed is a concrete definition which can be applied through policy. If they are refugees, there is a place for them under the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). If they are migrants, they belong under the treaties of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). However, if they are not currently "refugees", should they be? Does "migration" adequately describe their predicament and its drivers? Or are they "displacees", those who are pushed out of their original environments? Being driven out of one's homeland by the actions of others can also be considered a humanitarian problem. If so, they can also find a home under the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA). Or rather, should their plight be governed somewhere else? With this phenomena being an unintended consequence of climate change, should the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) be involved? Thus, conceptualization of this phenomenon is crucial for adequate governance.

UNHCR, IOM, and UN OCHA currently handle many types of human migration, from assisting refugees to economic migrants to those affected by natural disasters. These structures have expanded their reach over time as drivers for migration continue to be identified; adding another group of migrants could be seen as a natural progression. Nevertheless, a major impediment to the addition of climate change induced migrants or displacees into current governance systems is determining who is responsible for them. Responsibility has been an essential component when dealing with other types of migrants. Specific protections and

statuses are based on either a nation's responsibility to its own people or the world's responsibility to those whose governments fail to assist them. Responsibility refers to those who caused the impetus to migrate and thus should pay for the assistance to the group which it has created. International governance structures are poised to assist when either a national government refuses to or cannot assist its own people. Their connections with member states and their negotiating power provide a forum to discuss, create policy, and implement agreements which have a much broader scope than individually negotiated regional treaties. While helpful, these bodies still face institutional and political constraints. Their ability to incorporate those displaced by climate change into current structures depends on political will as well as the flexibility of their mandates. This book presents a qualitative case study of the UNHCR, IOM, UN OCHA, and the UNFCCC's Loss and Damage work program. It provides a historical account of the development of each intergovernmental organization (IGO) from the beginnings of its regime to formal institutionalization, how and why each has eventually expanded, and how each has incorporated climate change into their work. A comparative structural analysis is then employed to evaluate the different institutional components which guide each IGO beyond their specific mandate. Finally, it will also question which, if any, of these IGOs are the appropriate places through which to govern such movement. It had been suggested that a case can be made for each IGO to be the one which *should* take on this new and growing challenge, but their abilities, desires, and appropriateness to do so are not equal.

This research represents a new foray into the study of those affected by climate change as a part of the global dialogue. This book will demonstrate that climate change displacement, as a form of forced migration, has yet to be brought into mainstream research and will pose a significant challenge to current migration/displacement frameworks – specifically frameworks that relate to governance. Analytic frameworks are fluid and tend to work well for academic inquiry. They can change over time with new information, but governance is different. Governance of such an issue needs concrete and thorough information as it is derived from policy and international cooperation. To govern an issue such as this takes governments, IGOs, and regional/local coordination. Policy which can connect these points needs to be concrete and systematically outlined with specific agreed upon responsibilities to those the governance is for. In this case, not only has no current migration/displacement-based IGO stepped up to take responsibility for this phenomenon under its current mandate, neither have individual

governments. Those being affected have called for action, but the international community has not decided to make this issue a priority. In some ways, doing so would force nations that have not wanted to commit to high levels of emission reductions to have to do so; admitting that their outputs are displacing people would indirectly force them to have to take responsibility for what they are causing. Additionally, this would be an expensive endeavor; thus, if a current governance structure were to take up the task, the IGO would need significant financial assistance to do something, but the responsibility would then be indirect to individual states using the IGO as a conduit.

In some ways, this is not a new challenge. When major environmental shifts happen, people have always had to choose whether to stay or to go. However, modern immigration policies have developed with closed borders, external processing centers, quota systems, and traffickers to sneak around all of these. Current policies make it very difficult to cross an international border. But moving within a nation is not necessarily an easier or safer endeavor. Many of the world's mega cities have significant slum areas being developed by individuals seeking better economic opportunities after leaving poor agricultural conditions. Not everyone chooses to migrate, and not all people have the resources to do so; individual choice is situated at the nexus of social, environmental, and economic conditions. When the impacts of climate change are increased, they weigh heavier on both the social situation and economic conditions of individuals and communities and its interaction effect on both is also larger. This interaction is important to keep in mind, since the decision to migrate or the reasons for displacement are never clear cut. When the phrase "climate induced migration" or "climate induced displacement" is used, either in the title or throughout this book, the implication of the phrase(s) is not intended as simplistic; any and every time these are used, it is under the consideration of other complex factors such as social and economic considerations. Individuals do not simply move because the climate is changing; they see the need to move because larger storm surges keep destroying ones' home or because changing monsoon patterns can no longer support ones' necessary crop yields. These short examples are not meant to be exhaustive, but to demonstrate that reasons to move are more complex, and this book (and its language) takes this into account. There are hot spots around the globe where these choices have already taken place. Their explication in the next chapter highlights some of these overlapping complications as they apply to each example. The book will proceed as follows:

Current state of affairs

Chapter 2 brings to the forefront a few of the examples of specific countries where people are already being displaced, highlighting both internal and external displacement. Examples include short case studies of the Carterets in Papua New Guinea, both Kiribati and Tuvalu in the Pacific, and the Maldives in the Indian Ocean. Each represents the difficulties many are facing in the attempt to navigate acquiring new land. The Carterets have been in the process of seeking a solution to their disintegrating islands for decades, and their process has been stalled due to a lack of funds, lack of land, and a looming vote for autonomy; these islanders are seeking to internally migrate. While it has already been shown that most movement due to climate change will be within national borders, the case of the Carterets demonstrates that internal migration should not be considered synonymous with easy migration. The cases of the Pacific and Indian Ocean islands will eventually necessitate the crossing of an international border. Similar geographies create some convergence between cases, but when these are layered over on top of other cultural and development-based issues they begin to exemplify the difficulty faced when an entire nation needs to relocate. Additionally, resettlement solutions will question how sovereignty can still be exercised when a nation is possibly nested within another. Lastly, the chapter will provide a brief overview of additional areas that are vulnerable to displacement, highlighting locations in both the developing and developed world.

Hyperbole versus fact

Chapter 3 outlines how well-known concepts and definitions are being challenged by this new phenomenon. In the media, those who are already being displaced by climate processes and those who will be are described in very colorful language. Being touted as the "canary in the coal mine", and representations of the "lost city of Atlantis" and "sinking islands" are becoming commonplace. However, these representations only serve to skew the much more complicated realities that most people face. This chapter begins with an evaluation of these commercial frames, to move from the overly dramatic characterizations to a realistic version of events. Each concept above has come to epitomize a certain level of futility and concrete proof of climate change. Their use in normative discourse evokes vivid imagery and some spectacle, but is not useful. The chapter deconstructs this idea and moves the reader beyond hyperbole and into the true thorniness of this phenomenon.

This serves two purposes: to disassociate the reader from any oversimplifications that journalistic accounts tend to provide, and to show that theatrical simplifications can do more harm than good. Once that is accomplished, the chapter demonstrates the larger implications of such lines of thinking. Poor characterization leads to a misunderstanding of human security issues as well as minimization of long-term adaptation measures. Finally, the chapter suggests a different language to discuss these vulnerable areas in a plural fashion that does not degrade the seriousness of their situation.

Academically understood context

The field of migration studies, both voluntary and forced, has a way to further deconstruct and classify movement due to climate change. Though helpful, they also serve to demonstrate many more levels of complication. Academic fields beget more specific subfields, and those who will need to relocate based on climate-induced phenomena can fall into many categories and yet still – in other ways – fall through the cracks. Chapter 4 situates climate induced migration and displacement in the field of migration studies, forced migration studies, refugee studies, and the subfields of environmental migration and survival migration. It also attempts to distinguish the different scenarios in which the agency of an individual can shift this interpretation. If one chooses to leave a location that is inevitably uninhabitable, is this voluntary migration or forced? In this chapter, climate change and its effects are seen as an additional layer over current understandings of migration and displacement, but one which challenges normative and legal understandings of causation. This culminates with both a descriptive and legal analysis of the label "climate refugee". By the end of this chapter, the reader can see how otherwise fairly demarcated concepts can overlap when new scenarios challenge our current understandings.

Institutional expansion

Chapter 5 situates climate induced displacement in the realm of governance. How a phenomena is labeled and conceptualized can affect how it is governed; Chapter 4 delved into these labels and understandings and Chapter 5 explains their implications. This chapter begins with an introduction to global governance; what it looks like and how it functions without a world government to enforce it. It provides a discussion of governance at the meta-level and then proceeds to incorporate specific structures at subsequent levels. Governance is also a type of international cooperation at the highest level; this chapter also provides

a short overview of how cooperation works between nations, as told through traditional international relations literature. Beyond cooperation, institutions of governance and their mechanisms come from specific mandates that eventually expand if the institution is to grow or change over time. This chapter provides several institutional expansion theories, from the general sense to more specific theories of neofunctionalist spillover and firm theory. It provides theoretical and functional explanations for institutional expansion.

Lack of expansion

Currently, there are three IGOs that govern several forms of migration and displacement – all of which have expanded over the years when the situation has demanded it. They are the UNHCR, the IOM, and the UN OCHA. Chapter 6 tells the story of their corresponding regime development, refugee, migration, and humanitarian, respectively, as well as the development of each IGO as the solution to a specific international problem. Subsequently, each has also gone through an institutional expansion beyond its original mandate when new situations demonstrated a further need. It also provides examples of how each IGO has related itself to the topic of climate induced migration and displacement and how each has significant challenges to additional expansion to govern this new group of displacees. This chapter is organized by each IGO to be examined.

Filling the governance gap

Chapter 7 contextualizes the institutional analysis of Chapter 6 into the topic of global governance. Reluctance to expand on the part of UNHCR, IOM, and UN OCHA has left a large gap in the general international governance framework. Alternatively, the gap is slowly being filled through the UNFCCC, which seeks to govern the mitigation and adaptation measures relating to climate change at the global level. In recent years, it began a new work stream to assess loss and damage beyond what both mitigation and adaptation can prevent. This chapter outlines the development of the modern climate regime and introduces the Loss and Damage mechanism as an alternative to the established IGOs that have been discussed until this point. The work stream has been extended multiple times and was codified as the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) at the COP 19 in Warsaw in 2013. However, where it is going is still in question, since its focus continues to be lopsided; it is supposed to consider both economic and non-economic loss, but economics has tended to be more of a focus thus far. The chapter will

evaluate what kind of mechanism it is, how it has developed until now, and its potential to fill the governance gap that currently exists in this realm – comparing this new emerging apparatus to the IGOs previously mentioned. The chapter also provides both a structural and political analysis of the three IGOs under investigation (against the WIM) in order to demonstrate where substantial challenges to expansion will lie and their implications.

Conclusion

Chapter 8 concludes with an overview of the main premises provided throughout the book, such as revisiting how the case studies reflect the issues brought up in earlier chapters. It evaluates if either of the expansion theories help explain each IGO's expansion to date and if these theories can assist in understanding why they have not expanded into the issue of climate induced migration and displacement. This chapter will also delve further into insufficient political and theoretical reasons for the main IGOs to be averse to expanding. Additionally, it will consider which, if any, of the governance institutions under consideration should be the space in which this issue is handled. With the slow loss of land and habitability in many areas simultaneously, there is need for concern in the realm of governance. Most considerations of migration and displacement have taken place under the umbrella of security and conflict. Without adequate measures to curb climate change, its progress will not slow, and without governance or assistance to those on the front lines, there is potential for security theorists to be right. However, sufficient measures to govern these consequences as they come can assuage this. The conclusion will suggest several policies and their global implications.