UCL IRDR VIRTUAL EVENT:

Climate Change and Human Migration

Friday, 09 October 2020, 10:00 – 16:30 pm BST

UCL INSTITUTE FOR RISK AND DISASTER REDUCTION

RAPPORTEUR REPORT

Background

Human-induced climate change is responsible for temperature rise, glacier retreat, sea-level rise and rapidly changing extreme weather events. It is disproportionately impacting communities at risk, ecosystems, and livelihoods. The least developed countries and conflict-affected fragile states are more exposed and less able to cope with the effects of climate change. As a consequence, climate change is exacerbating existing social vulnerabilities, influencing disaster risks, and affecting how people migrate both internally and internationally.

The World Bank's flagship report on 'Groundswell - Preparing for Internal Climate Migration' projected that globally there would be around 143 million climate migrants by 2050 from South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America regions. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) recorded around 25 million internally displaced people across 140 countries in 2019 that were mostly linked to weather-related hazards. In July 2020, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs at the United Nations (UN) stated that the climate emergency is a danger to peace and advised the Security Council to address climate-related security risks more effectively.

At present, climate change-induced displacement is a highly debated topic. Some assume that climate change will create the world's biggest refugee crisis; others debate this statement on legal, moral, and empirical grounds. Climate change migrants are untraceable in most cases, and their deteriorating economic conditions and health hazards are sometimes said to be exceedingly greater than other migrants. Reasons discussed include wide dissemination of fake news, misconceptions about their existence, contrasting research conducted by a wide range of scientists, and negligence by the top-level global policymakers.

The event brought together experts from around the world to consider some of the critical topics and ongoing debates on climate migration using case studies from Africa, South Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific Islands.

Timetable of the workshop:

(in British Summer Time (BST))

Time BST	Topic
10:00 – 10:30	Conference digital platform login on Zoom
10:30 – 10:40	Welcome Speech by Professor Peter Sammonds, Director, UCL IRDR
10:40 – 12:00	Panel Discussion 1: Disaster-displacement and Climate Migration in South Asia [Moderator: Prof Saleemul Huq]
12:00 – 13:00	In-conversation with Professor Ilan Kelman [Moderator: Christopher Gunness]
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch break
14:00 – 15:00	Keynote Speech by Dr Kanta Kumari Rigaud, the World Bank Group [Moderator: Dr Bayes Ahmed]
15:00 – 16:20	Panel Discussion 2: Climate Migration in Latin America and Africa [Moderator: Dr Bryan Jones]
16:20 – 16:30	Closing Remarks [Dr Bayes Ahmed, Organiser]

Conference Recording URL:

Part 1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1UuvazAThP0

Part 2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vg2UsdxKGsU

Panel Discussion 1: Disaster-displacement and Climate Migration in South Asia

Moderator:

Prof Saleemul Huq, Director of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development, Independent University, Bangladesh

Speakers:

Dr Bina Desai
Prof Tasneem Siddiqui
Dr Azreen Karim
Dr Azreen Karim
Dr Bishawjit Mallick

The content of each speaker contains three parts, their presentation, answering questions and the prospects for the future study. The report combines the speech of these sections and generate the summary of each speakers.

Dr Bina Desai: Disaster displacement, a global phenomenon

Since 2008, the system of the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) has started monitored internal displacement caused by the disaster, and since then, the statistics figure has shown it is a truly global phenomenon. The vast number of emerging displacement population are the result of disaster rather than conflict. There are 33.4 million new displacements and among them, 24.9 million are disaster-related and 23.9 of them are weather-related. Globally in 2019, Asia has the most population that displaced due to disaster, 76.9% of the total displacement population is in Asia, and nearly half of them are in South Asia. Based on the collected data, Asia also concentrates risk. There are about 5 million Internal Displaced People at the end you 2019. There are three myths about displacement need to be clarified: Disaster displacement is not a short term sometimes, it depends on the rebuilding procedures of human society, such as infrastructure and livelihood. Secondly, the track of displacement sometimes remaining in the region or a country. Particularly in Europe, research needs to know how the displacement has been made of in order to address the vulnerability. Finally, disaster and impact of climate are not natural, researcher and policymakers need to focus on the disaster risk reduction, and climate change and resilience building, instead of focusing on system and response.

When asking about how does the IDMC collect data in the context of disaster event and reduce the data gap, she responses that government data are main resources but IDMC will maximum their valid data collection pathway. There are confidence assessments for the data collection and analysis for their data output. In addition to the data gap between UN agencies, government and NGOs, new technology and more partnership (like social media) will be employed to make the data more comprehensive. In the next few steps, IDMD will work on climate change and displacement, which a report will be generated recently, solutions will also be the favour topic in the research in the nearly future.

Prof Tasneem Siddiqui: Climate Change, Migration and Displacement – Locating the most vulnerable groups

Environment and climate change as sole independent variable driving household migration from ecologically vulnerable areas. Migration is a complex and multi-causal phenomenon. Climate change does not displace people directly, it exacerbates various forms of vulnerability which contributes to displacement, social-economic inequality generate generates more vulnerability to the marginalised groups. There are six reasons for disaster displacement: Geographic dimension, vulnerable groups in origin area, Gender difference, the vulnerability of the displaced in the cities, vulnerability to irregular migration, policies, and laws. There are more reasons and difficulties to pinpoint the specific reason that causes migration.

Further, she has discussed about the academia and their climate change migration approaching. She pointed out as the researchers, their lens to approaching the climate change migration approaching can always summarise some general reasons. However, apart from the angle of 'research lens' according to her recent research, there are many other reasons like birth, marriage or other livelihood related issues. Hence, the research is important for policy makers because many policies changes are based on the research and advocacy from people, who are the stakeholders of the policy. When asking about the willingness or the motivation of the movement, the finding suggested it is a personal choice. Their movement decision has been made based on their personal rational thinking, balance the consequence of each decision. Sustainable development is the key to balance human society, rural, and urban areas. The economic background of migrants determines their adaption. From the perspective of long-term adaptation, 10 years or 20 years to migrants could be more helpful in solving the livelihood of migrants.

Dr Azreen Karim: Climate Change and vulnerability migration, focusing of social-economic context

Climate migration is the migration and displacement that directly caused by climate-induced disaster events. In her studies about literature, she found there are some arguments suggests that migration should be taken as adaption strategies, but recent evidence found that it might not be an effective strategy for recovery. The longer-term recovery process in adaption in Bangel delta, after 10 years of the cyclone, the no migrants have more financial ability in expenditure than those migrants. Climate change is a longer-term phenomenon, the longer-term impact and development for the livelihood of migrants should be focusing on. The non- migrants have more coping measures and resilience power compare to the migrants, in this perspective, their migration is another adaption method in addition to the coping strategies of those non-migrants who may find another better coping and recovery measures. However, there are some literature argued there are better adaption strategies better than migration. More arguments will be needed for this discussion.

Moreover, she also discovered in the literature that preparedness needs to be active beforehand, especially for the household, there is a significant relationship between disaster preparedness behaviour and disaster displacement. Their experience of disaster, government initiations, and policies make the preparedness effective and important to local migration and development intervention as well. Climate change is a longer-term issue, hence, the policies and strategies for climate-induced migration

should also follow the timeline of climate change. The longer term impacts, recovery and development of climate changes induced migrations are perhaps more important in terms of the prospective of regional and localising policies making.

Dr Bishawjit Mallick, Understanding environmental non-migration in Bangladesh

Domestic migrants take 96% of the total migrants' population, which means there is a tremendous number of people (around 85% of the affected population) who chose to stay put. In Bangladesh, 90% of the country's population has never migrated before, and 75% of people who live around southwest coastal Bangladesh prefer not to migrate. In this scenario, livelihood takes a major account when they decided not to migrate. In his research, the diversity of their livelihood is strongly relayed on the local environment, like farming in rain-fed agriculture and fishing in the mangrove dependent and saltwater shrimp. Within this livelihood choice, mangrove dependence is in higher migration aspiration but the percentage is still insignificant. Migration is not an option to solve the problem, at least for those who live in the coastal of southwest Bangladesh. In their decision migration in the future, it is important for people to have their perception of their situation.

He acknowledged that migration is already an adoption strategy for some people. He also explain the different between two technical terms: 'mobility' and 'migration', for the former is a characteristic for the system, individual or personal, but migration is the process to address the system. Non migration describe the process that why people are being immobile. One of his studies is about household behaviours in the disaster preparedness stage in Bangladesh. In this study, climate knowledge and perception in public are very much correlated. Within his study, he will discover more on helping of understanding of the climate change in reducing climate change impact. There is no need to categorise the causes of the migration, what needs to collaborate is facing the risk domestically and internationally. History of the settlement in the past could help to understand and give more knowledge in future research and cooperation.

Professor Saleemul Huq, at the end as conclusion for the first part of panel discussion

As the moderator, he summarise some qualitative and quantitative discussion, there is much research focusing on numbers. It is also important to spend time with individual people, focusing on individuals and understanding them, where to go, what to do, or some other qualitative data. In the discussion about climate change migration, it is very difficult to attribute those people who are migrating because of climate change. 2020 is also the year that experiencing the transition of the climate in the world. Environmental factors could contribute more to human migration. Climate change migration will be a big issue to discuss under the UN conference agenda in the near future, as it has been categorised under the topic of loss and damage of failed preparation.

In Conversation with Professor Ilan Kelman

Moderator: Christopher Gunness

First of all, the moderator asked Professor Ilan about basic fundamental terminology questions about climate migrants and climate refugees. Ilan pointed out that according to international law, the term 'refugee' does not relate to the climate issue too much, but more related man made social disrupted like political reason or warfare. On the other hand, the climate is natural and climate change is a normal part of the ecological system of plant earth. Climate change can result in migrants but cannot create refugees. The link between migration and climate change are not direct, but migration can be the human result of the impact of climate change. When the moderator asking about the case of Bangladesh, Ilan says the coastline ecosystem is dynamic, it needs more evidence on arguing rising sea level in Bangladesh is the result of climate change. Talking about the numbers, the climate migrants' number currently living in the world, Ilan highlights the difference between climate change migrants and climate migrants, which the former could be more varied and includes travel and vacation because of the climate. The next question from Cristopher is about the categorising and labelling of the migrants when conducting the research. The only method is just listening and understand them, to ensure the research finding work for them. They are people, they have opportunities and rights to get access to their livelihood, and researchers have to respect their mobility. What the scientists and researchers can get approach are the causes of the migrations, going the realm beyond the human survivability. Attribution is important because their own situation could determine their own future. Further, he also argued the use of modelling in human migration, the number of estimated about the future is the pessimistic estimate at the upper end of the uncertainty interval. It has to be cautious that there are many accountable and reliable numbers within the report, and only one figure could not represent the huge amount of research work. When talking about government policies and science. As a development process, science discovers the dynamic of the development of the society, the modelling but not a fixpoint. As for policies, what media and governments can do is stop demonising the migrants and recognise the migrants are not the sources of the problem but the contributors to local economy. Treating migrants as normal people and respect their rights for accessing their livelihood. When the researchers contribute to the policy agenda, and evidence basis has to be ensured so there is no exaggeration to make issues of climate change prominent.

Q&A Summary

Some issues about climate change, like drinking water security, precipitation do play an important role, but appropriate water management is the key to keep the safe drinking water for their livelihood. Regarding the research approach, the bottom-up approach could help the experience and demand of local recipients to be heard by the researcher. Next issue is about the numbers of displacement estimates by modelling, there are more factors and qualitative data could be participated to make the model more comprehensive. People and governments have to accept the discovery of science and accept human behaviour that affect climate change. there is no evidence that could support that conflict is not environment-related or climate related, movement of the people is a method of seeking for life, conflict is caused by people rather than nature, even climate change does not cause a specific fire. Sometime, ideology could replace the evidence and science for their policy argument, which result will not be a

realistic strategy for solving the problem, as a scientist in the top university of the world, evidence basis could help to discover the uncertainties about the people and about every single individuals in the human community. Back to the labelling discussion in the end, Ilan admits the limitation of the research when selected certain groups as the target group, but the utility of this research is significant too, keeping the balance of the research and do the best to contribute in the real life.

Some key questions for Ilan

So, my question is to Professor Ilan, if you don't categorize the displaced people due to climate-induced disasters, how could climate justice can be ensured for these large number of climate migrants?

To Ilan: freshwater is already scarce in southern Bangladesh as both surface water and shallow groundwater are naturally saline. Frequency of cyclones is increasing and inducing increased storm surges and coastal inundation. These processes are making some of the remaining freshwater sources (e.g. freshwater ponds) saline with time. So, if some people in the southern Bangladesh migrate because of lack of freshwater, will we call them climate migrants? Thanks, Shams (University of Sussex, IRDR Honorary Research Fellow).

To Ilan: People design and model with numbers. But what about others? This is based on socio-cultural and political interactions in society. It is impossible to define and determine how people will respond innovatively to the effects of climate change. We estimate models and figures, but we also need to look at the detailed dynamics behind climate migration.

Why is there such a reluctance to equate Climate Change and refugees? People are on the move due to climate change induced conflict. After all climate change is a threat to International Peace and Security!

Thank you Ilan for being so clear. What is your opinion why policy-makers do not apply the precautionary approach to address the issue and create a proper protection framework?

Question for Prof Kelman on interdisciplinary research: From your comments about the agency and dignity of affected groups it is so clear that interdisciplinary research across science, social science and humanities (SSH), is needed. However, this is infamously hard to achieve. I have also heard many times how SSH research is neglected in policy decisions (especially if policy makers want to count the numbers of "climate migrants"). What are your thoughts on these two challenges and how to tackle them?

In the current policy context of rhetoric and exaggeration, is our bid for moral purism (and belief that ‘they will see the evidence and surely the policy will follow!’) actually prohibiting positive action for both migrants and in achieving justice?

If we don't categorize people, how do we choose people to talk to and interview? Don't we already give them a category by filtering certain people out that we should ask questions like "Are you thinking about moving?" etc.

Key Note Speech: Dr Kanta Kumari Rigaud

The potency of Climate Migration – Averting the crises

Increasing displacements due to weather and climate-related event in recent years as compared to conflicts or violations, but there is regional variation. The nature and scales of the issues are varying across countries. This speech has two propositions related to displacement, first is climate change is emerging as a potent driver of migration, the other one is climate migration will be a reality, but it does not have to be a crisis. According to the data, the global temperature has been systematically increasing form the past decades. Climate change amplifies some climate issues like water risk, food security, and livelihood of coastline residents, which increases the risk and stress on ecosystems and economies. What important is that the cascading impact ultimately affects the state of the entire human system. Movement is an outcome of the cascading impact on human systems, multiple factors like social, economic, environmental, and policy factors will affect the movement. When doing interviews with migrants, each individual has their own story and motivation for their movement. The research and stories show that mobility and movement is happening as a consequence of some of the environmental factors that have been amplified by climate change.

One recently published report, which called Groundswell Preparing for Internal Climate Migration, attempts to inform policymakers well prepared, understand areas of the greatest climate vulnerability. The finding shows that there was variation across the region about climate migration by 2050, due to the different vulnerabilities and capacities to cope with the impact. When making a comparison about the different case studies, there is a common feature that from pessimistic estimation, the migration number under more inclusive development and more climate-friendly is declined. Concrete climate & development action can reduce the scale by 80%. Preparedness is a better option than the ‘crisis’ for human society. Under a pessimistic scenario, the magnitude and trajectory of climate migrants will escalate by 2050, and the spread and the intensity will also follow that speed. The poorest and vulnerable and fragile area will be the hardest hit. Climate migration is a reality but taking action could prevent climate change from converting to a crisis. Embedding resilience and migration into development planning. This is one of the key strategies, inclusive development, stepping up the resilience of people, and enhance the adaption strategies for migration can all be used to prepare for the occurrence of the crisis.

Panel Discussion 2: Climate Migration in Latin America and Africa

Moderator: Dr Bryan Jones

Speakers:

Dr Musonda Mumba
Dr Ximena Flores-Palacios
Luíza Pallone
Dr Romola Adeola

Dr Bryan Jones: Modelling and projecting climate induced migration

Internal migration in response to climate change is already happening at scale and is expected to increase, and migration decisions are the products of complex decision processes. As an adaptation strategy, it has to face opportunities and challenges. Modelling migration is challenge and complex. The appropriate approach choose is depending on what the question is. The 'right' approach is often a function of the questions being asked. As for the Groundswell Model, which has been used for his project, it is a top-down, scenario-based, and gravity-based approach parametrised using a spatial autoregressive model. Estimation of the migrants are produced by comparing projected, spatially explicit population change under climate change against a 'constant climate' scenario. By doing the modelling, the result shows that climate change and migration do not necessarily result in a crisis if humans start taking action at this moment. In the end, he shares some thoughts about how the media could do a better job to accurately describe the impact of climate change and tread climate change and immigrants more responsibility. More engagement and information sharing between media and scientists could shape the narrative of climate change and migration.

Dr Musonda Mumba

Her research is focusing on the internal migration and spatial mapping of this mobility. She introduced her program called 'security and immobility' that are currently working for. The reason for conducting this work is understanding how pastoral communities move within the horn of Africa. Political issues, like political brooder, somehow split the pastoral community and their livelihood. Political concern about pastoralism is critical within this program, especially for the higher authority and parliament, they can hardly understand the struggle and impact to pastoral communities about climate change, and the policymakers need more information about the real scenario. Within their work, what they can find is the intersectionality of climate change and levels of degradation and desertification which have seen much compactness of land overgrazing of space. Conflict is another critical issue that affects migration in the horn of Africa. Small arms and battle wrestling are the lens which the policy makers was looking at. They will put the arm issue at priority and it create a confrontation rather than cooperation to deal with the issue of resilience and adaption. Conflict is the biggest issue under many regions Africa when finding solutions and engaging the local community into problem solving process. In the Q&A session, she acknowledged the data scientists could explore more information for the system and model, the engagement of data scientists is on cutting edge, younger people are also encouraged

to participate. The report for environment issue in Africa portrays and illustrate the negative stories and spread the pessimism to the public, especially for the youth.

Dr Ximena Flores-Palacios: How does climate change affect migration in the pacific

Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) rank among the most vulnerable in the world to disasters. There is evidence that climate change is causing population movements: people turn to migration as one strategy of adaption. In responding to climate change, families and communities are using a mix of traditional and modern knowledge to keep them resilient. Within PITCs, there are four types of population movements, Relocation inland (customary lands), rural-urban migration, prospects of migration overseas. There are 5 hotspots in the Pacific that are likely to become source areas for climate change-related migrants: urban areas, urban atolls, no urban atolls, coastal delta, and riverine communities and communities prone to drought. The climate change issue is very sensitive for Pacific residents, there are many social, economic, cultural, and psychological costs associated with this type of migration.

When asking about policy recommendations for the policy region, she especially highlighted the contribution of traditional knowledge and the voice of the policymakers. Further, it needs to contextualise the migration driver from the point view of people under their own social and geographical background. It is necessary a synergy of a different knowledge system in both research and policy making. Voices from different groups like elders and women need to be listened in different decision making level. Regarding the alarming headlines, she believes the people in the pacific who currently are fighting climate change should be listened to, they are stakeholders and they are also solutions.

Luíza Pallone: Human Mobility in Disaster Data, Insights from Brazil

The most severe environmental disaster recorded in Brazil until 2012, has been focused on the aftermath of a disaster. The catastrophic disaster impacted Rio de Janeiro in 2011 highlights the importance of preparedness nationwide. The integrated disaster information system-S2ID is for the recognition of situations of emergency, and the states of public calamity. The recognition is part of the process of the federal resources transfer to states and municipalities where the disaster impact. Hence, data collection and emergency data distribution are the two major functions of this system. The system will verify the human damage that related to disaster impact. However, there are few inconsistencies in this system that need to be improved in the near future. The legal framework does not adopt the concept of displacements. The data collection system does not include a category that fully captures a situation of displacement. Further, some disaggregated data are absent. Qualitative and quantitative are not balanced in the reports. The monitoring procedures are still absent, numbers of some function like ‘unhoused/unsheltered’ are not uploaded in the long run. She also introduced the data collection method related to the ‘natural disaster’, she explains about the how the disaster categorisation is structured. In Brazil, disaster has been classified as natural caused and technological caused, and that is why forest fire or other disaster caused by nature will be categorised as ‘natural disaster’. In the conclusion, talking about the social media, she illustrated that the media have the power to portray the perspective of the strategies and knowledge of the affected

population. In the post-disaster circumstance, the affect population probably lose visibility, and media sources fill such gap for residents.

Dr Romola Adeola: Climate Change Migration: Africa (Law and policy)

This speech focus on the law and policy challenges in the continent of Africa. Her speech narratively focuses on how the framework has been used under the regional context. First is the policy in relation to migration, Framework for Africa, and plan of action runs from 2018 to 2030 recognised climate change as a root cause of migration. Also, there are ongoing discussions on using free movement processes within various contexts for the furtherance of protection. Secondly, the conversation is in relation to refugee protection under the framework, as it shoulders some humanitarian work for humans who are displaced. There is also a durable solutions framework applied in the region of Ethiopia and Somalia, which incorporates protection for persons displaced by climate change. There are still questions around: how we actually protect the migrants, how do we reflect on the evidence, how do we convince the leaders, and how to build the relationship in the legal silos in terms of climate change strategies. When coming to the question about climate change and disorder in asylum, she especially highlighted the case that conflict and climate mixed driven migration flow from Somali region, it is significant issue because it is yet to be seen in terms of jurisprudence.

Conference URL:

https://www.ucl.ac.uk/risk-disaster-reduction/events/2020/oct/virtual-event-climate-change-and-human-migration

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