Disaggregated planetary governance: Implications for the nexus of climate change and international migration

Viktor Friedmann[1]

Abstract

The nexus between climate change and migration has received increasing attention in recent years. Using a governmentality framework, this article analyses how global governance has conceptualised and addressed the relationship between these two phenomena. It will show that the planetary-level problem of climate-induced migration has been disaggregated into more manageable subsets slowly consolidating into a protection framework on the one hand and a resilience-focused development framework on the other. It argues that the selection of relevant causal processes and problem definitions is not an objective, neutral and technical question. While disaggregation has undoubtedly contributed to improved global governance in the issue area, it has also obscured the causal processes and responsibilities that can only be identified at the planetary level.

Keywords: global governance; climate migration; responsibility

Introduction

In 2015 European politics was dominated by growing social and political tensions emerging around an increasing, and seemingly unmanageable, flow of migrants towards the continent. According to data from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), over a million migrants arrived in Europe over the course of the year. More than two thirds of them fled conflict-ridden Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, and 3,771 among them lost their lives while trying to reach Europe by sea. In the meantime, arguably the most outstanding question of the year at the global level was whether developed and developing countries would finally reach an agreement at the 21st United Nations

---

[1] The author holds a PhD in Political Science from Central European University, and is College Associate Professor at Budapest Metropolitan University. His research interests lie at the intersection of China's role in world politics, global governmentality and the history of international political thought.

Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP21) negotiations in Paris which would make it possible to prevent climate change from reaching catastrophic levels.

In the context of these parallel challenges, policy entrepreneurs, scientists and journalists did not miss the opportunity to point out links between the two developments. In the warm-up to COP21, Prince Charles of the UK noted in an interview that civil war in Syria – which had by that time produced over four million internationally displaced people – can be linked to a six-year drought period between 2006 and 2011 (Press Association, 2015). The scientists, whose work he was making reference to, had established a link between falling rates of precipitation and anthropogenic climate change, and argued that the ensuing internal migration pressure and scarcity of food contributed to rising social tensions, thus facilitating the onset of conflict (Kelley et al., 2015).

This research joined other, earlier works, including an influential collection of essays in which researchers claimed that the impact of climate change on global food supplies and, consequently, on rising price levels of basic food items, contributed to the Arab Spring of 2013 (Werrell & Femia, 2013). The instability and conflict that often grew out of this upheaval was, in turn, a major factor behind increasing international migration as well. Such findings received detailed coverage in mainstream media, with one article claiming that climate-induced mass migration constitutes "a new paradigm" or "new normal" to which all societies need to adjust (O'Hagan, 2015; Baker, 2015; Bawden, 2015; Sinai, 2015).

A similar discourse dominated the world of international organizations. António Guterres, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, centred his opening remarks at the Dialogue on Protection Challenges in December 2015 on the necessity of understanding the complex interaction between climate change, conflict and mass displacement (Guterres, 2015). At around the same time, the climate change – migration nexus was on the agenda of the COP21 negotiations. During the event the coordinator of the Advisory Group on Climate Change and Human Mobility emphasised that climate-related displacement is a present reality, and as such a "threat multiplier" that contributed to more than 22.5 million people displaced per year on average since 2008 (UNDP, 2015). The COP21 Paris agreement, adopted on December 12, for the first time formally included in its Preamble the problem of migration, and requested a task force to be set up

within the Loss and Damage component[2] of climate change policy to "develop recommendations for integrated approaches to avert, minimise and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change" (UNFCCC COP21, 2015: 2,7).

The sense of simultaneously occurring environmental and migration crises focused attention on the interlinkages of these issues. The connection between them has in fact been noted at least as early as the mid-1980s. The increasing salience of the challenges posed by global warming raised the possibility that climate change might join the list of "root causes" of migration, alongside – or perhaps even in a position of primacy over – poverty, underdevelopment, and protracted conflict (Castles & Van Hear, 2011).

The goal of the present article is to analyse how and with what effects global governance has addressed the nexus between climate change and migration. Although the large majority of climate-induced displacement is expected to take place within state boundaries (Laczko & Piguet, 2014), the focus here will be on international migration, i.e. cross-boundary displacement, as this issue takes the problem of human mobility directly to the international/global level. Moreover, the discussion presented here is implicitly dominated by the theme of migration from the global South to the global North.

International migration is defined here as cross-border mobility involving a change in the location of a person's livelihood, and global governance as a non-hierarchical, problem-oriented activity coordinated by shared epistemic, normative and practical standards in which both state and non-state actors might participate. Agents of global governance (or "global governors") are understood as all those "authorities who exercise power across borders for purposes of affecting policy," where power might include the setting of agendas, the definition and creation of issues, the implementation of policies as well as the evaluation of outcomes and of other actors (Avant et al., 2010: 2). These authorities can be individuals, states, intergovernmental or civil society organizations as well as business actors. Of the two major "global governors" in the context of this article, for instance, the International Organization for Migration is an intergovernmental organization, whereas the Nansen Initiative on disaster-induced cross-border displacement is led by Norway and Switzerland.

---

[2] Global climate change policies are made up of three components: mitigation, adaptation and „loss and damage." Mitigation refers to measures aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions in order to minimise the extent of climate change. Adaptation aims at reducing vulnerability to the consequences of climate change. The actual losses resulting from climate change – those not prevented by mitigation or adaptation efforts – are addressed under loss and damage.

The structure of the article is as follows. The ensuing section discusses how the causal relationship between climate change and migration has been conceptualised and concludes by arguing that identified causal links underlying actual policy approaches are better understood as intersubjective constructs than as direct representations of an overly complex objective reality. Accordingly, the article proposes to investigate the existing epistemic and normative frameworks (governmentalities) within which the nexus at issue has been picked up, problematised, and made available to rational management within global governance. The next section describes how the general landscape of international migration governance is organised around a distinction between voluntary and forced migration. The third section then turns to mapping the current governance framework of the climate change – migration nexus, arguing that it is consolidating around a two-tiered system of a rights-focused protection framework and a resilience-focused understanding of development. This system accords with the distinction between forced and voluntary migration despite the ways in which the link to anthropogenic climate change transgresses these boundaries. The final section presents the argument that while there is a clear relationship between climate change and migration at the planetary level, in actual international/global governance initiatives the issue is disaggregated into lower-level systemic frameworks. While this facilitates the effective management of the identified problems, disaggregation itself – and not only the discourses of particular frameworks – contributes to depoliticizing the nexus of climate change and migration, and to reifying the state system and the contemporary economic order.

The problem of causality

Global climate change is considered today to be the "highest profile emerging issue" in the field of migration and refugee policy (Koser, 2013). More alarmist voices even argue that – by contributing to state fragility and related security threats – climate change-induced migration poses a threat that demands resources for international action on a par with those for the management of peace and war (Werz & Hoffman, 2015). The link between the two phenomena has, however, come under increasing scrutiny in recent years, at least in terms of its usefulness for policy-making (Mayer 2015).

Prominent in the early stages of migration studies in the 19th century, the idea of environmental migration faded out of fashion after the Second World War as being too deterministic and overly pessimistic about the force of human progress over nature, and a negligible factor compared to the economic determinants of migration (Piguet 2013). In

the mid-1980s the concept was resuscitated in the context of climate change advocacy, as a way of stressing the deleterious impact of unbridled greenhouse gas emissions (McAdam, 2011: 158). Consequently, the concept today exhibits an inherent bias, referring only to migration resulting from the negative effects of climate change (push factors) affecting the global South the most, and thus it is rarely taken to include human mobility in search of better environmental circumstances (e.g. suburbanization) in general.

Several causal pathways have been identified linking atmospheric changes to population displacement (McAdam, 2011). Climate change is expected to increase the frequency and magnitude of weather-related disasters, such as hurricanes and floods, leading to abrupt population moves. Other links operate through more slowly unfolding processes: the gradual disappearance of the territory of small island states as a result of increasing sea levels, or other slow-onset forms of environmental degradation, such as water scarcity, that destroy livelihoods and force people to migrate. Planned relocations in anticipation of these processes add a further source of displacement. Finally, environmental degradation is also understood to lead to competition over increasingly scarce resources, potentially contributing to the onset of violent conflicts and, thus, indirectly to migration (Nordås & Gleditsch 2007). This latter pathway has been identified as being at work in Syria.

The 1990s produced a number of apocalyptic predictions on the basis of this as to the anticipated scale of displacement. The prospect of large-scale migration due to unstoppable natural forces contributed to an increasingly securitised and dehumanised image of migration in the 1990s (Hammerstad, 2014: 270). By the early 2000s, however, this presentation of the link between climate change and migration came under increasing fire from migration research (Black, 2001; Martin, 2010). Some of the criticism was directed at alarmist images, revising downwards the predicted magnitude of the problem and pointing out that the overwhelming majority of displacement will be short-term and will either not involve crossing borders or will remain short-range.

Furthermore, while the emphasis on a direct link and the idea of "climate refugees" may have been an effective tool for norm entrepreneurs (Mayer, 2015), in the hands of migration experts the causal links began to seem more and more tenuous. Although it is generally accepted that climate change exacerbates patterns of displacement (current predictions running between 200 million and 1 billion people displaced in the next 40 years), linking actual instances of migration directly to climate

change is seen as almost impossible (and even undesirable), because environmental factors are always mediated by a wide range of social variables (Laczko & Piguet, 2014; Pachauri & Meyer, L.A., 2014: 16; GMG, 2011). Economic disparities, the availability of infrastructure or the lack thereof, access to political power and representation, class-structures, gender relations, economic policies, etc. all deeply influence how particular communities and individuals are affected by climate change. Thus, whereas the Netherlands might have the resources to defend itself from climate change-related sea level rise, the same is not true for a poor developing country such as Bangladesh. Similarly, although climate change contributed to the drought in Syria between 2006 and 2011, the concomitant internal migration and social tensions were just as much the results of the government's agricultural policy being directed at cash crop production (Sinai, 2015).

The seemingly apolitical relationship between environmental push factors and migration has thus become the target of growing criticism, and the emphasis shifted towards complex, multi-causal frameworks in which disaggregating individual causal factors is thought to be nearly impossible (Zetter & Morissey, 2014: 343). Instead of trying to identify something like "climate migration" and developing a related set of policies and global institutions, researchers suggested looking at how climate change affects existing drivers of migration (Collyer, 2014: 117) or how migration is transformed in the context of climate change and environmental degradation (Faist & Schade, 2013:4). Others further argued that causal reasoning is in fact pointless in such complex systems, and problems are much better addressed by focusing on how to effectively allocate resources, or on identifying and responding to human rights violations irrespective of their causal background (Betts, 2010a: 378; Nicholson, 2014). The multi-causality and multi-dimensionality of climate-induced migration has become a taken-for-granted starting point for global governance (IOM, 2014).

It is, however, precisely such difficulties with pinning down a straightforward causal link between climate change and international migration that bring the social construction of policy problems into the foreground. Challenges for global governance are never simply objectively given: the objects of government must always first be identified, and problems then need to be defined and goals selected. Identifying causal links – deciding on which causal relations are more relevant than others and on which shall thus occupy the centre of attention (Betts, 2011: 23) – is part of the contested construction of policies, since the rational government of problems relies on

understanding their nature and the opportunities it presents for intervention and management. This process involves selectivity and simplification, and brings to bear on the outcome a range of political, ideational and normative influences. Furthermore, the intersubjective process of causality-attribution simultaneously – and necessarily – identifies relations of power and, thus, of responsibility (Guzzini, 2009; Lukes, 2005; Connolly, 1993: 85–137).

Accordingly, the rest of the paper will investigate how the relationship between climate change and migration has been taken up in various ways within global governance. What governmental rationality (or governmentality) can be identified in these frameworks (Pécoud 2013; Kalm 2012; Geiger & Pécoud 2012a)? I.e.: How is migration understood? How are causal relations, problems and goals defined and solutions identified? What shared theoretical principles, forms of knowledge and norms inform them, providing a taken-for-granted basis and justification for exercising government? What categorization and conceptual distinctions are used to represent the issue for the purpose of devising policies?

The governance of international migration

International migration is part of a broader field of global mobility that excludes those crossing borders only for short-term travel [tourists, business travellers, etc.] (Samers, 2009; Koslowski, 2011). Its two major categories, refugees and the rest of international (economic) migrants are co-constituted with the system of sovereign, territorial states that continue to dominate world politics. The concept of refugee implicitly contains the idea that every person should be under the protection of the state to which he or she belongs. If that state is unable or unwilling to provide that protection, an anomaly appears that we call a refugee (Betts, 2014). More broadly, control over population mobility is at the core of modern state sovereignty, and hence cross-border flows of people are, from such a systemic perspective, a problem or a threat (Geiger, 2013: 16–18).

Taking the above considerations into account, it is not surprising that states remain the primary actors in global migration governance (Koser, 2010). No formal and coherent multilateral institutional framework is currently in place to regulate international migration; instead, mostly non-binding bilateral and regional agreements, customary and soft law, and indirect governance through other areas of global governance (health, development, travel, human rights, security, etc.) characterise the field (Koser, 2013;

Koslowski, 2011; Betts, 2010b).[3] The well-developed institutional framework and relatively strong state obligations of the refugee protection regime provide the strongest exception to this general picture. It is a fairly limited one however, outside of which migration governance remains fragmented and informal.

The distinction between refugees or forced migrants and voluntary migrants is a fundamental element of the prevailing governmentality of international migration governance, which is also manifest in the existing institutional framework. In terms of their basic normative structure, the two systems are quite distinct: the regulation of voluntary migration is understood to fall almost completely – with the exception of fundamental human rights provisions – under the discretion of sovereign states, who make their decisions on the basis of economic calculations or other considerations. In contrast, forced migration is a realm of morality: it is identified in terms of rights violations to which individual states and the international community have a responsibility to react (Betts & Loescher, 2011). The central norm of the refugee regime is *non-refoulement*: once stepping onto the territory of a receiving state, asylum-seekers should not be returned to their country of origin (or to any other territory where they would suffer persecution as defined above) before determining their refugee status. Beyond providing asylum, states are also expected, although not required, to share the burden of refugee protection in major receiving states (Betts, 2014: 66).

The category of forced migration accommodates a broad range of phenomena, including state persecution, conflict-induced displacement, environmental displacement or displacement resulting from the implementation of large-scale development projects (Betts, 2009). Much of this migration remains within borders, but civil wars and persecution by the state in particular require action on the international level. In contrast with such a broad understanding of forced migration, however, the actual legal category of refugee is a fairly limited one. Based on the 1951 Geneva Convention, which was universalised in 1967, a refugee is defined as a person persecuted by his or her own state for reasons of race, religion, ethnicity, political opinion or being member of a social group who therefore seeks protection outside the borders of the state concerned. Political human agency is thus a constitutive factor in the idea of the refugee. Such a restrictive definition is at odds with the broad range of protracted, life-threatening conditions that force people to leave their countries. State practice and regional arrangements consequently often

---

[3] For detailed overviews of the institutional system, see Martin (2011) and Newland (2010).

handle refugee status in a more expansive manner to include at least some of those who have been characterised as "survival migrants" (Betts, 2010a), especially people fleeing conflict zones (Popp, 2014).

During the Cold War, the refugee regime was dominated by political considerations in the context of the ideological conflict between the "free world" and the Communist bloc, and was generally reactive in nature. The refugee flows triggered by the dissolution of states in the 1990s then prompted a more proactive attitude with an emphasis on prevention, especially by means of reforming and strengthening institutional capacities in fragile states of the global South, thus linking the refugee regime more closely with security and development (Gottwald, 2014).

In contrast with the humanitarian concerns of the refugee regime, the governance of voluntary migration was from the beginning focused on calculating economic benefits and on the necessity of controlling a potentially threatening flow of migrants (Geiger & Pécoud, 2012a; Kalm, 2012). At the most basic level, voluntary migration is generally conceptualised as an "economic response to the gap in income" between more and less developed countries (Collier, 2013: 38). From the perspective of the receiving states, immigration can offer economic advantages by providing an additional and cheap source of labour force. Simultaneously, however, inward migration is also considered to have potentially significant costs in terms of the social security system, social and cultural cohesion, security and political stability (Watson, 2009: 6–7).

Consequently, international migration was traditionally governed on a strict national, intergovernmental and mostly bilateral basis. It was only in the 2000s that the management of populations rose to the global agenda with the emergence of a new approach called "migration management" (Geiger & Pécoud, 2012b). At the centre of this approach stands the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which is not part of the UN system and generally serves as a provider of services for states. More broadly, different agencies related to migration management (including the UN High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], the UN Development Program [UNDP] and others) are united under the umbrella of the Global Migration Group (GMG), a forum for discussion, coordination and the exchange of best practices.

In contradistinction with the earlier approaches to migration, which focused on legal instruments and on stopping what was perceived as an ongoing and threatening crisis of migration flows, migration management conceives migration as a normal state of affairs: an intrinsically human activity which, if steered adequately, can be a positive

process for all involved. Migration management operates in a form of "regulated openness," a liberalised but managed movement of populations driven by the exigencies of the market (Geiger & Pécoud, 2012a: 3; Kalm, 2012). Instead of curbing migration, this new approach seeks to put it to work and to optimise it on the basis of cost-benefit calculations. It promises a predictable and orderly circulation of people between the global South and the global North, which at the same time is supposed to contribute to global development in both regions (Pécoud, 2013).

The circular migration (fluid, mostly temporary labour migration between countries) that is at the centre of migration management is thought to provide resources for the economies of the North, to ease social tensions associated with permanent migration, to address concerns about brain drain from the global South, and also to help the improvement of economic conditions in the source countries through generating considerable remittance flows (Kalm, 2012). The UN's Sustainable Development Goals, announced in September 2015, now also incorporate "the positive contribution of migrants for inclusive growth and sustainable development." The document names the facilitation of "orderly, regular and responsible migration" and of remittance flows as central policies to reduce global inequality (UNGA, 2015: 8, 21).

Migration is hence presented no longer as a problem but as a solution to a range of challenges (ageing populations in the global North, development in the global South). In fact, by reducing international inequality, over time managed migration is expected to lead to reduced South-to-North migration. Through its links with development it is also supposed to contribute to the preventative elements of refugee protection by propping up the resources of weak states and by increasing the resilience of communities against certain causes of forced migration (e.g. natural disasters, famines and other complex emergencies).

This is not the only way in which the two elements of the governance of international migration have converged over the years (Koser, 2013). Because of practical difficulties in distinguishing between refugee and other migration flows as well as between economic and survival motives (well demonstrated in the current European crisis), these two dimensions have long been difficult to separate in practice. In the 1990s a discourse on security provided the encompassing framework (Hammerstad, 2011: 242), largely replaced by the framework of development by today.

Governing the climate change – migration nexus

The entry of climate change among the factors driving migration raised new questions about the framework described above. At a minimum it added another item – climate change governance, with the UNFCCC at its centre – to the long list of regimes involved in migration governance. More fundamentally, however, this new association cast further doubt over the distinction between economically-driven voluntary migration and rights-focused refugee protection challenges (Koser, 2013: 668). Although climate change faces those affected by it as an environmental factor, its anthropogenic sources are recognised by the UNFCCC. It is further admitted in the basic norm of "common but differentiated responsibility" that industrialised countries bear a larger responsibility – and should bear a larger share of the burdens of managing the problem – because climate change is the outcome of the accumulative impact of the same historical development that made them prosperous. Thus a systemic force is identified on a planetary level which is expected to have a negative effect on livelihoods all over the world, but more so precisely in societies of the underdeveloped global South that contributed the least to bringing about the problem.

This at least partly throws into question the distinction between voluntary and forced migration as well as between pull and push factors, both constitutive of current migration governance (Kalm, 2012). Even in the domain of economic development it is arguably the case that man-made global institutional structures contribute significantly to maintaining global inequalities (Pogge, 2010), but there the relationship is not officially recognised and is largely obscured by a naturalization of market forces. In the case of climate change, in contrast, differentiated human causal responsibility is clearly accepted, opening a path towards establishing relations of moral and legal responsibility. Another consequence of this is that climate change not only adds stronger moral and "push" considerations to the idea of voluntary migration, but it also becomes difficult to contain within the conceptual boundaries of the refugee regime. Whereas refugees are supposed to flee from their state, which not only does not protect them but is a perpetrator of the violation of their human rights, in the case of climate-change-induced migration people might be conceived as fleeing precisely to the perpetrator states in the global North (McAdam, 2011: 165–6).

Such lines of reasoning informed calls for the recognition of a new category of "climate refugees" or "climate migrants" (e.g.: Biermann & Boas, 2010), although broader considerations of effective climate change advocacy also played a major role. In

the 1990s no framework was available to address this new issue in a straightforward manner. Extending the refugee regime to include those displaced by the consequences of climate change encountered serious difficulties. On the one hand, as mentioned above, the category of the refugee is restricted to those affected by protracted and life-threatening (political) push factors that force them to cross borders, and this covers only a limited circle of people affected by climate change (Lister 2014). On the other hand, there has been no willingness on the part of the most developed states to extend their special responsibility as major emitters of greenhouse gases (GHGs) to include an obligation to admit climate migrants onto their territories (McAdam, 2014).

Instead of developing a new framework around the particular categories of "climate refugee" or "climate migrant", global governance responded to the climate change – migration nexus in a way that worked around the novelty of the problem: by drawing distinctions among forms of migration on the basis of their different immediate causes, i.e. the effects of climate change. This way it also reasserted the existing categories of governance with complementary policies for covering the major gaps left by them. Today the governance of the nexus seems to be consolidating in a dual structure: a rights-based protection framework and a managerial development framework.

This structure is based on disaggregating migration into the following major categories:

a) migration resulting from climate-induced conflict;
b) temporary displacement induced by sudden-onset disasters;
c) permanent migration due to slow-onset disasters (sea level rise, desertification, etc.);
d) temporary voluntary migration in the context of climate change.

Of these four strands, the first remains managed within the general framework for conflict-induced displacement, with its partial extension of the category of the refugee and its emphasis on preventative state-building. The second and the third have become part of the protection agenda, crystallizing around the Nansen Initiative, and the last was effectively incorporated into the system of migration management.

International action on climate migration was catalysed by the Cancún Adaptation Framework adopted at COP16 in 2010, which for the first time recognised climate-change-induced migration as a part of the adaptation agenda (UNFCCC COP16 2010:

para.14(f)). It was the UNHCR that first tried to address the lack of protection in international law and governance for people displaced across borders as a result of natural disasters, including those related to climate change. Due to state opposition to the agency's role, the issue was later transferred to the Nansen Initiative, which was launched in 2012 as a state-led, multi-stakeholder consultative process (McAdam 2014). The aim of the initiative is to develop a common conceptual framework and to identify effective practical measures that states and other actors can share and voluntarily adopt in this policy field.

In October 2015 the first phase of the Nansen Initiative closed as 109 governmental delegations endorsed the Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change – in short: the Protection Agenda (The Nansen Initiative, 2015). The specificity of the Nansen initiative is its focus on the problem of protection, i.e. on facilitating the creation of a legal and practical tool-box that would specify and guarantee the human rights (and responsibilities) of people displaced across borders. It encourages states and regional actors to develop legal instruments for admitting environmentally displaced people to their territories, as well as to extend the principle of non-refoulement to such migrants already on their territory. UNHCR (2014) also provides guidelines for temporary protection in such circumstances. Although slow-onset disasters rarely lead to cross-border displacement, in extreme cases (such as whole island-states disappearing under rising sea levels) the Nansen Initiative also promotes the option of permanent migration. Although rights-based protection is at the centre of the Nansen Initiative, recently its agenda has been extended to incorporate broader measures to prevent and manage displacement (The Nansen Initiative, 2015: 44–52). These include, among others, two areas that make up the development framework of climate migration governance: facilitated migration as an adaptation mechanism, and policies to improve the resilience of affected communities. By reducing the vulnerability of populations, these measures are expected to prevent cross-border displacement. Facilitated migration in this context is understood both as a form of adaptation itself and as a mechanism supporting the adaptation and resilience agenda. Although the Nansen Protection Agenda calls for facilitated temporary migration, the central actors in this field remain the IOM and the major development agencies.

The reconceptualization of climate migration in the development framework, from being a problem to offering a potential solution, is the most significant change to have

taken place in the governance of the climate-migration nexus in recent years (Vlassopoulos 2013). Foresight (2011), a report commissioned by the British government on this issue, has been identified as the turning point when the approach of migration management – described above – began to incorporate the problem of climate change (Ransan-Cooper et al., 2015: 113; Methmann & Oels, 2015: 59–60). As a consequence, migration in the context of climate change is no longer approached primarily as a problem created by failed mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change, but as a strategy of adaptation, including as a mechanism for generating resources for adaptation (Martin, 2013; Felli, 2013). Migration is now understood as a normal and, if well managed, potentially beneficial human activity that can be mobilised in order to address problems caused by climate change, thus complementing national adaptation strategies.

Circular migration is thought to allow communities to diversify their livelihood by not depending only on local economic resources. It also reduces population pressure on scarce environmental resources. As an extension of the development context, remittances by migrants can provide resources for "trapped" – immobile – communities to develop the infrastructure, skills and other instruments necessary for adaptation and for achieving increased resilience in the face of climate change (Martin, 2013). Moreover, circular migration itself is also understood as a form of resilience: the expression of an entrepreneurial ethic that allows individuals and communities to better take care of themselves in emergency situations in a context of limited global resources (Felli, 2014; Gottwald, 2014: 532–5).

Conclusion: Disaggregated planetary governance and its discontents

This article has argued that the definition of problems, causal relationships and solutions offered is a deeply social and political process. Accordingly, it looked into how the relationship between climate change and international migration has been conceptualised in global governance for the purpose of making it amenable to policy interventions. It is suggested that we are witnessing the consolidation of a complex set of instruments that address the nexus through disaggregating it into smaller and more manageable categories focusing on more direct causal links (e.g. natural disasters and displacement, slow-onset resource depletion and displacement, etc.) and distinct rationalities (rights-based vs. economic-calculations-based). People displaced by natural disasters are included into a protection framework. It is hoped that by improving the resilience of affected communities in a development framework such forced migration can be minimised. The

remainder of migration is understood as voluntary mobility based on economic calculations, not as a rights issue prompting international responsibility, and is mobilised in the service of this latter framework.

Disaggregating issues as complex as the impact of climate change on human mobility has many advantages. It brings the scale of problems to a manageable level, allowing the identification of concrete points of intervention. It gives actors more options: they can address different sub-sets in different frameworks so as to develop acceptable frames for global cooperation (Geiger & Pécoud, 2012a: 4). Furthermore, by breaking down a complex issue to specific aspects fitting the profile of already existing regimes or institutions, it facilitates their incorporation into global governance (Vlassopoulos, 2013). By easing cooperation, disaggregation has contributed greatly to protecting some of the most vulnerable.

Nevertheless, it does not follow from this that the choice of "relevant" causal links, problem definitions and categorizations of objects of governance somehow reflect an objective reality. Such selective simplifications are always for someone and for some purpose (Cox, 1986). Furthermore, to attribute causal force to human actors is to attribute responsibility, even if such responsibility can be qualified by circumstances (e.g. justified lack of awareness of one's power). To move from one understanding of the problem to another is to shift, erase or highlight such relations of responsibility.

Many authors have already drawn attention to the depoliticizing effects of the way in which the climate-migration nexus has been taken up in global governance. Both sides of the dual structure described above are implicated in removing the question from the realm of political contestation by presenting it as a purely economic or moral issue to be decided by the relevant experts (Schmitt, 1995). The protection agenda handles climate migrants in terms of human rights violations, thus evoking the universal moral and legal responsibility of the international community. Migration management, on the other hand, promises a completely neutral solution in which everybody (the receiving state, the communities of origin and the migrants themselves) wins, and where there are no power asymmetries, divergent interests or contested problem-formulations (Kothari, 2014; Geiger & Pécoud, 2012a; Pécoud, 2013). From being understood as victims, migrants become perceived as the empowered, adaptive agents of circular migration, who use their entrepreneurial spirit to provide resources for the global South while being incorporated in the system of global neoliberal capitalism (Ransan-Cooper et al., 2015; Methmann & Oels, 2015; Felli, 2013; Felli, 2014). Such discourses contributed to removing or

obscuring the responsibility of the developed countries for the effects of climate change, and to shifting efforts from the mitigation of climate change (including significant cuts by the biggest GHG emitters) to adaptation and resilience-building in the global South.

In conclusion, one may complement these depoliticizing effects with a further element. Whereas the above-mentioned analyses tend to handle climate migration governmentality as a relatively unitary phenomenon with clearly discernible shifts in one particular direction, this article wishes to draw attention, instead, to the complexity of the institutional structure offered. Over and above the shift from victimhood to adaptive agency, from "migration threat" to "managed migration", from mitigation and traditional adaptation policies towards neoliberal resilience, there also continues to develop a parallel system addressing those cases of forced migration that cannot be subsumed under the former framework. Migration is not simply depoliticised but is disaggregated and depoliticised. What is at issue here is the scale of analysis: the choice, between systems thinking at the level of national and community resilience on the one hand, and systems thinking at the global or planetary level on the other, is not a neutral one (Gottwald, 2014: 533–5).

Climate change is at the centre of what scientists have begun to call "the Anthropocene," an era in which humanity becomes a geological force so that it is no longer possible to clearly distinguish the natural from the human (Crutzen, 2002). As critical voices have emphasised, the term "the Anthropocene" is deceptive as it suggests that it is mankind, or human nature, that is responsible for the way we change our planet (Malm & Hornborg, 2014). Most of mankind, however, is the victim rather than the agent of the so-called Anthropocene. Climate change is the outcome of a geographically uneven historical social development beginning with the Industrial Revolution, thus it is sociogenic rather than anthropogenic. A crucial part of these social relations is the system of sovereign states and the limits it places on human mobility. State control over migration is a major reason why much of the world population has not benefited from the economic development the externalities of which now threaten foremost precisely communities in the global South.

Fixing our gaze at the planetary level, the causal relationship between the prosperity of developed countries, climate change, and the growing environmental challenges of developing countries appears with clarity, and may even amount to "a persecution that we are inflicting on the most vulnerable" (Gemenne, 2015: 71). When we move down from this systemic level in order to identify concrete causal processes that

can be managed we lose sight of an overall picture of power and responsibility. The special responsibility of the developed countries for externalising their costs of development and engaging in activities that impact the life of many outside their sovereignty (Nawrotzki, 2014; Gibney, 2014: 52) is lost between a universal moral responsibility for human rights violations and the technical cost-benefit optimization of migration management. In the process of disaggregating – for policy purposes – this sociogenic, planetary problem stemming from our economic model and principles of global political order, the transformative potential inherent in confronting this problem is tamed as the very same systemic conditions are reified as being the natural framework within which problems must be addressed.

References

Avant, D.D., Finnemore, M. & Sell, S.K. eds., (2010): *Who Governs the Globe?*, Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Baker, A. (2015): How Climate Change is Behind the Surge of Migrants to Europe. *Time*, 7 September 2015. Available at: http://time.com/4024210/climate-change-migrants/ [Accessed: January 13, 2016].

Bawden, T. (2015): Refugee crisis: Is climate change affecting mass migration? *The Independent*, 7 September 2015. Available at: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/refugee-crisis-is-climate-change-affecting-mass-migration-10490434.html [Accessed: January 13, 2016].

Betts, A. (2009): *Forced Migration and Global Politics*. John Wiley & Sons.

Betts, A. (2014): International relations and forced migration. In E. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al., eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*. Oxford University Press, pp. 60–73.

Betts, A. (2011): Introduction: Global Migration Governance. In A. Betts, ed. *Global Migration Governance*. OUP Oxford, pp. 1–33.

Betts, A. (2010a): Survival migration: a new protection framework. *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations*, 16(3), pp. 361–382.

Betts, A. (2010b): The refugee regime complex. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 29(1), pp. 12–37.

Betts, A. & Loescher, G. (2011): Refugees in international relations. In A. Betts & G. Loescher, eds. *Refugees in International Relations*. OUP Oxford, pp. 1–22.

Biermann, F. & Boas, I. (2010): Preparing for a warmer world: towards a global governance system to protect climate refugees. *Global Environmental Politics*, 10(1), pp. 60–88.

Black, R. (2001): Environmental refugees: myth or reality?, UNHCR. Available at: http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/search?page=search&docid=3ae6a0d00&query=environmental%20migrants [Accessed December 11, 2015].

Castles, S. & Van Hear, N. (2011): Root Causes. In A. Betts, ed. *Global Migration Governance*. OUP Oxford, pp. 287–306.

Collier, P. (2013): *Exodus: How Migration is Changing Our World*, Oxford University Press.

Collyer, M. (2014): Geographies of forced migration. In E. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al., eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*. Oxford University Press, pp. 112–123.

Connolly, W.E. (1993): *The Terms of Political Discourse*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Cox, R. (1986): Social forces, states and world orders: beyond International Relations theories. In R. O. Keohane, ed. *Neorealism and Its Critics*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 204–254.

Crutzen, P.J. (2002): Geology of mankind. *Nature*, 415(6867), pp. 23–23.

Faist, T. & Schade, J. (2013): The climate - migration nexus: a reorientation. In T. Faist & J. Schade, eds. *Disentangling Migration and Climate Change*. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, pp. 3–25.

Felli, R. (2014): Adaptation et résilience : critique de la nouvelle éthique de la politique environnementale internationale. *Éthique publique. Revue internationale d'éthique sociétale et gouvernementale*, vol. 16, n° 1. Available at: https://ethiquepublique.revues.org/1371 [Accessed: January 15, 2016].

Felli, R. (2013): Managing climate insecurity by ensuring continuous capital accumulation: 'climate refugees' and 'climate migrants'. *New Political Economy*, 18(3), pp. 337–363.

Foresight (2011): Migration and global environmental change - final project report., London: Government Office for Science. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/287717/11-1116-migration-and-global-environmental-change.pdf.

Geiger, M. (2013): The transformation of migration politics: from migration control to disciplining mobility. In M. Geiger & A. Pécoud, eds. *Disciplining the Transnational Mobility of People*. Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 15–40.

Geiger, M. & Pécoud, A. (2012a): The politics of international migration management. In M. Geiger & A. Pécoud, eds. *The Politics of International Migration Management*. Palgrave Macmillan UK, pp. 1–20.

Geiger, M. & Pécoud, A. eds. (2012b): *The Politics of International Migration Management*, Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Gemenne, F. (2015): One good reason to speak of 'climate refugees'. *Forced Migration Review*, (49), pp. 70–71.

Gibney, M.J. (2014): Political theory, ethics, and forced migration. In E. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al., eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*. Oxford University Press, pp. 48–59.

GMG (2011): Statement of the Global Migration Group on the Impact of Climate Change on Migration. Global Migration Group. Available at: http://www.globalmigrationgroup.org/sites/default/files/uploads/english.pdf [Accessed January 4, 2016]

Gottwald, M. (2014): Burden sharing and refugee protection. In E. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al., eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*. Oxford University Press, pp. 525–537.

Guterres, A. (2015): High Commissioner' Dialogue on Protection Challenges: Understanding and addressing root causes of displacement - Opening Remarks by António Guterres United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva. UNHCR. Available at: http://www.unhcr.org/567139aa9.html [Accessed: January 15, 2016].

Guzzini, S. (2009): On the measure of power and the power of measure in International Relations. DIIS Working Paper, (28). Available at: http://subweb.diis.dk/sw87342.asp.

Hammerstad, A. (2014): The securitization of forced migration. In E. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al., eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*. Oxford University Press, pp. 265–277.

Hammerstad, A. (2011): UNHCR and the securitization of forced migration. In A. Betts & G. Loescher, eds. *Refugees in International Relations*. OUP Oxford, pp. 237–260.

IOM (2014): Outlook on Migration, Environment and Climate Change, International Organization for Migration. Available at: https://publications.iom.int/books/iom-outlook-migration-environment-and-climate-change [Accessed: January 4, 2016]

Kalm, S. (2012): Liberalizing movements? The political rationality of global migration management. In M. Geiger & A. Pécoud, eds. *The Politics of International Migration Management*. Palgrave Macmillan UK, pp. 21–44.

Kelley, C.P. et al. (2015): Climate change in the Fertile Crescent and implications of the recent Syrian drought. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 112(11), pp. 3241–3246.

Koser, K. (2010): Introduction: International migration and global governance. *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations*, 16(3), pp. 301–315.

Koser, K. (2013): Refugees and migration. In T. G. Weiss & R. Wilkinson, eds. *International Organization and Global Governance*. Routledge, pp. 668–678.

Koslowski, R. (2011): Global Mobility Regimes: A Conceptual Framework. In R. Koslowski, ed. *Global Mobility Regimes*. Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1–25.

Kothari, U. (2014): Political discourses of climate change and migration: resettlement policies in the Maldives. *Geographical Journal*, 180(2), pp. 130–140.

Laczko, F. & Piguet, E. (2014): Regional perspectives on migration, the environment and climate change. In E. Piguet & F. Laczko, eds. *People on the Move in a Changing Climate. Global Migration Issues*. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, pp. 1–20.

Lister, M. (2014): Climate change refugees. *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 17(5), pp. 618–634.

Lukes, S. (2005): *Power: a Radical View*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Malm, A. & Hornborg, A. (2014): The geology of mankind? A critique of the Anthropocene narrative. *The Anthropocene Review*, 1(1), pp. 62–69.

Martin, S. (2010): Climate change, migration, and governance. *Global Governance*, 16(3), pp. 397–414.

Martin, S. (2013): Environmental Change and Migration: What We Know, Migration Policy Institute. Available at: http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/environmental-change-and-migration-what-we-know [Accessed December 22, 2015].

Martin, S. (2011): International cooperation on migration and the UN system. In R. Koslowski, ed. *Global Mobility Regimes*. Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 27–49.

Mayer, B. (2015): Climate migration governance. In W. L. Filho, ed. *Handbook of Climate Change Adaptation*. Springer, pp. 823–838.

McAdam, J. (2014): Creating new norms on climate change, natural disasters and displacement: international developments 2010-2013. *Refuge*, 29(2), pp. 11–26.

McAdam, J. (2011): Environmental migration. In A. Betts, ed. *Global Migration Governance*. OUP Oxford, pp. 153–187.

Methmann, C. & Oels, A. (2015): From 'fearing' to 'empowering' climate refugees: Governing climate-induced migration in the name of resilience. *Security Dialogue*, 46(1), pp. 51–68.

Nawrotzki, R.J. (2014): Climate migration and moral responsibility. *Ethics, Policy & Environment*, 17(1), pp. 69–87.

Newland, K. (2010): The governance of international migration: mechanisms, processes, and institutions. *Global Governance*, 16(3), pp. 331–343.

Nicholson, C.T.M. (2014): Climate change and the politics of causal reasoning: the case of climate change and migration. *The Geographical Journal*, 180(2), pp. 151–160.

Nordås, R. & Gleditsch, N.P. (2007): Climate change and conflict. *Political Geography*, 26(6), pp. 627–638.

O'Hagan, E.M. (2015): Mass migration is no 'crisis': it's the new normal as the climate changes. The Guardian. Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/aug/18/mass-migration-crisis-refugees-climate-change [Accessed January 13, 2016].

Pachauri, R.K. & Meyer, L.A. eds. (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, Geneva: IPCC.

Pécoud, A. (2013): Introduction: Disciplining the transnational mobility of people. In M. Geiger & A. Pécoud, eds. *Disciplining the Transnational Mobility of People*. Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1–14.

Piguet, E. (2013): From 'primitive migration' to 'climate refugees': the curious fate of the natural environment in migration studies. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 103(1), pp. 148–162.

Pogge, T.W. (2010): *Politics as Usual: What Lies Behind the Pro-Poor Rhetoric*, Polity.

Popp, K. (2014): Regional policy perspectives. In E. Piguet & F. Laczko, eds. *People on the Move in a Changing Climate*. Global Migration Issues. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, pp. 229–254.

Press Association (2015): Prince Charles: climate change may have helped cause Syrian civil war. *The Guardian*, 23 November 2015. Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/nov/23/prince-charles-climate-change-may-have-helped-cause-syrian-civil-war [Accessed: January 15, 2016].

Ransan-Cooper, H. et al. (2015): Being(s) framed: The means and ends of framing environmental migrants. *Global Environmental Change*, 35, pp. 106–115.

Samers, M. (2009): *Migration*, Taylor & Francis.

Schmitt, C. (1995): The Age of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations. In *The Concept of the Political*. University Of Chicago Press, pp. 80–96.

Sinai, A. (2015): Aux origines climatiques des conflits. *Le Monde diplomatique*, August 2015. Available at: https://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/2015/08/SINAI/53507 [Accessed: January 5, 2016].

The Nansen Initiative (2015): Global Consultation - Conference Report, Geneva: The Nansen Initiative.

UNDP (2015): Climate Negotiators Discussing Warming and Migration Links. UNDP Office in Geneva. Available at: http://www.europe.undp.org/content/geneva/en/home/presscenter/articles/2015/12/09/climate-negotiators-discussing-warming-and-migration-links.html [Accessed January 15, 2016].

UNFCCC COP16 (2010): The Cancun Agreements: Outcome of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention. Decision 1/CP. 16, FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add. 1. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Available at: http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf [Accessed: January 15, 2016]

UNFCCC COP21 (2015): Adoption of the Paris Agreement. Proposal by the President, FCCC/CP/2015/L.9/Rev.1. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Available at: http://unfccc.int/documentation/documents/advanced_search/items/6911.php?priref=600008831 [Accessed: January 15, 2016].

UNGA (2015): Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, A/RES/70/1. United Nations General Assembly. Available at: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E [Accessed: January 15, 2016]

UNHCR (2014): Guidelines on Temporary Protection or Stay Arrangements. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Available at: http://www.unhcr.org/5304b71c9.html [Accessed: January 12, 2016]

Vlassopoulos, C.A. (2013): Defining environmental migration in the climate change era: problem, consequence, solution? In T. Faist & J. Schade, eds. *Disentangling Migration and Climate Change*. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, pp. 145–163.

Watson, S.D. (2009): *The Securitization of Humanitarian Migration: Digging Moats and Sinking Boats*, Routledge.

Werrell, C.E. & Femia, F. eds. (2013): The Arab Spring and Climate Change: A Climate and Security Correlations Series, Center for American Progress; Stimson; The Center for Climate and Security. Available at: https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/report/2013/02/28/54579/the-arab-spring-and-climate-change/ [Accessed December 6, 2015].

Werz, M. & Hoffman, M. (2015): Climate change, migration, and the demand for greater resources: challenges and responses. *SAIS Review of International Affairs*, 35(1), pp. 99–108.

Zetter, R. & Morissey, J. (2014): The environment - mobility nexus: reconceptualizing the links between environmental stress, (im)mobility, and power. In E. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al., eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*. Oxford University Press, pp. 342–354.