

## Climate Change and Migration: Exploring the Gender Dimensions



Lori M. Hunter

Prepared for seminar "The Demographic Factor in the Contemporary Environmental Crisis"  
co-sponsored by El Colegio de México, UNFPA, and CONAPO, Dec 2009

## Outline



- Background
- Livelihood-Environment Migration:
  - Gendered Aspects
- Disasters and Migration:
  - Gendered Aspects
- Challenges
- Conclusions

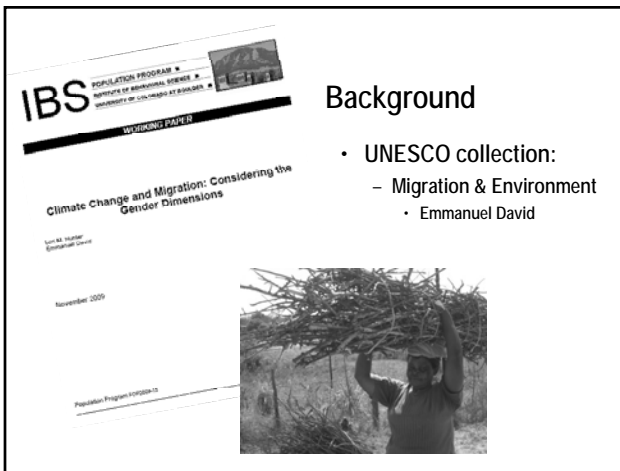
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## Background

- UNESCO collection:
  - Migration & Environment
  - Emmanuel David



Draft

**PART 1: Evidence on the migration – climate change relationship**

- Climate, environment, population and migration in history
- The main climate change forecasts which might cause human displacements
- Climate change, desertification, and migration in West Africa
- Migration and environment in Nepal
- Sea Level Rise, Local Vulnerability and Involuntary Migration
- Environment, Forced Migration and Social Vulnerability. A synthesis of the EACH-FOR project

**PART 2: Policy responses, normative issues and critical perspectives**

- How did 'climate refugees' emerge in the public debate and how did states react?
- Lessons from Past Forced Resettlement for Climate Change Migration
- Migration and climate change: the UNHCR perspective
- Climate change, displacement and forced migration
- Critical views on the relationship between climate change and migration
- Conceptual issues raised by the migration and climate change relationship
- Climate change, migration: gender dimensions
- Desertification, displacement and human rights
- Legal norms to protect environmental migrant
- The legal implications of environmental migration
- Environmental migration and international responsibilities
- Perspectives on the climate change – migration nexus



**Less science! – but it's coming!**

*Call for Papers*

**Human Migration and the Environment**

Special Issue of *Population and Environment*

Deadline: December 11, 2009

**Guest Editors:**

- Susana Adamo, CIESIN, Columbia University, USA
- Haydea Izazola, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Xochimilco, Mexico



**NEWS FEATURE**

**Report dispenses migration myth**

New research highlights the need for climate refugees to be negotiations. Anna Barnett reports.

The first global survey of human migration driven by climate change suggests that most relocation will be regional rather than international in scale. The research, published 10 June as part of a report titled *In Search of Shelter*, dispels a common myth that the majority of climate refugees will arrive on the doorsteps of developed nations.




**In Search of Shelter**

Mapping the Effects of Climate Change on Human Migration and Displacement

This report was written by Koko Warner, the United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security; Charles Ehrhart, CARE International; and Alex de Sherbinin, Susana Adams, and Tricia Chal-Onn, Center for International Earth Science Information Network at the Earth Institute of Columbia University.

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**Gender ?**

*Mapping Gender and Migration in Sociological Scholarship: Is It Segregation or Integration?*  
 Sara B. Curran  
 Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington  
 Steven Shalizi  
 Department of Sociology, Princeton University  
 Katherine M. Dunne  
 Department of Sociology, Rice University  
 Vella Gasp  
 Department of Sociology, Princeton University  
 IMR Volume 40 Number 1 (Spring 2008)


*Environmental Hazards*  
 A. Hunter  
 Program on Environment and Development, Department of Sociology, Colorado State University  
 March 2005

*Geographies of Gender and Migration: Spatializing Social Difference*  
 Rachel Sibery  
 University of Colorado  
 IMR Volume 40 Number 1 (Spring 2008)

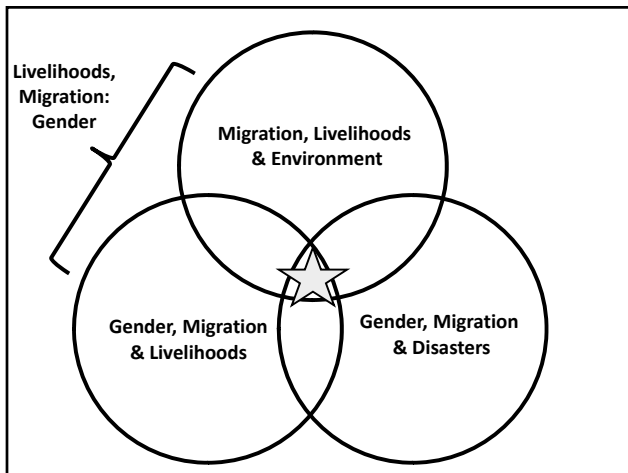
**Yet, little research brings gender to climate change and migration.**

**“Discussions within public, policy and academic realms regarding climate change and migration are often gender neutral (WEDO 2008).”**

**“Yet, gender-influenced cultural expectations, policies, and institutions intersect to shape migration’s causes and consequences.”**



**“Climate change will, therefore, yield different migratory experiences and impacts for the world’s women and men. This chapter explores these potential gender dimensions.”**



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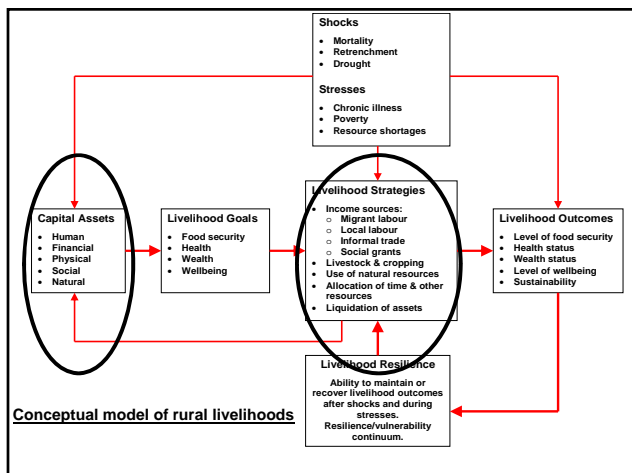
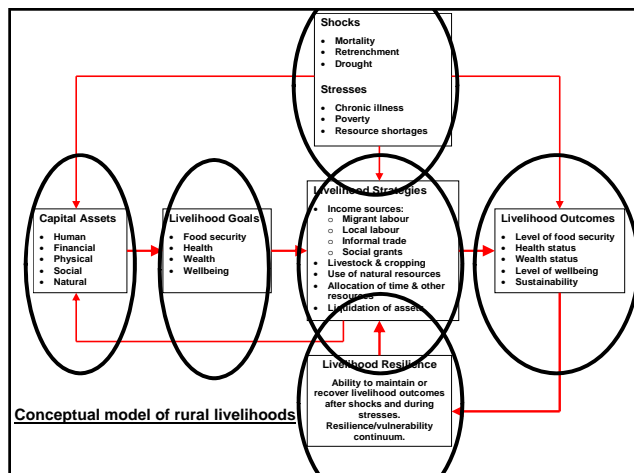


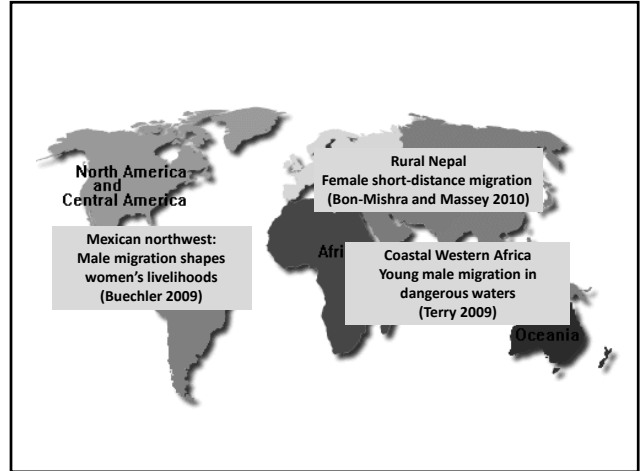
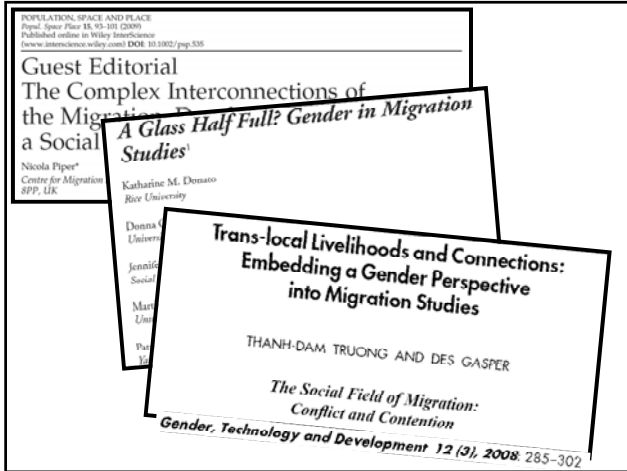
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### The feminization of global migration

- Women approximately 1/2 of global migrants;
  - Not dramatic proportional change
- Difference is type of moves
  - Solo, labor
  - Philippines prime example: female labor migration as livelihood diversification



*"Any dramatic and unplanned change to the environment will present practical challenges to how people make their livelihoods, and this in turn will challenge or reaffirm women's and men's roles, and power, in their families, communities, and wider society."*

Sweetman, 2009



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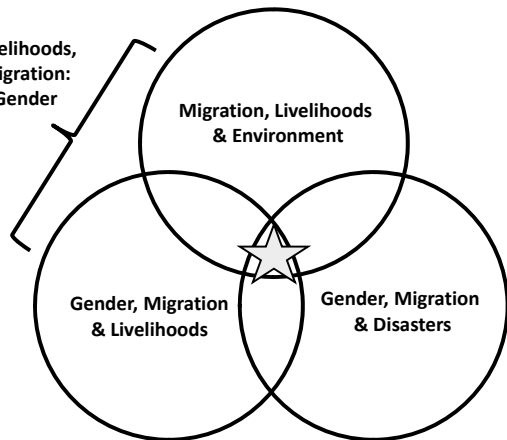
Sweetman, 2009

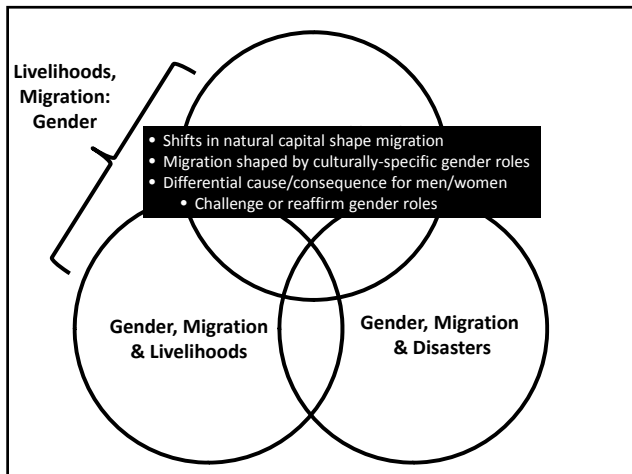
### Gender role impacts

Reaffirm

Challenge

Livelihoods, Migration: Gender





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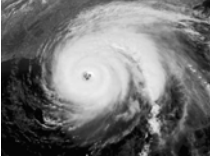
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### Climate Change and Natural Disasters

- Increased occurrence and severity of extreme weather events, sudden onset disasters as well as chronic disasters including drought and recurrent flooding (IPCC 2007).
- A 2009 Oxfam report forecasts a 54% increase in the number of people affected by climate-related disasters such as floods and droughts.

Expected change	Regions to be affected	Potential effects on global migration patterns
Decreased snow and sea ice cover	Arctic	Disruption of livelihoods in aboriginal settlements; influx of economic migrants to north
Increases in annual average river runoff and water availability	High latitudes and some wet/tropical areas	Risk of flood displacements in riverine settlements; may facilitate expansion of agricultural settlements
Decreases in annual average river runoff and water availability	Mid-latitudes and dry tropics	Out-migration from populated river valleys in Asia, Australia, Middle East, continental North America, South American west coast
Increased extent of areas affected by droughts	Regions already susceptible to drought	Out migration from agricultural regions in dryland Africa, south Asia, and South America; urban drought and displacement in dry regions of Asia, Australia, Europe, North America
More intense precipitation events	Will vary by region	Risk of flood displacements in riverine settlements, coastal and island communities
Reduced water availability in regions dependent on mountain snowmelt	South Asia, China, western North America, western South America	Increased rural-urban migration in exposed areas; increased potential for urban drought and consequent population displacement
Increasing number of plant and animal species at risk of extinction, increased potential for significant ecosystem disturbances	Globally	Out-migration from communities dependent on small range of resources
Decreasing crop productivity; more frequent impacts of drought and floods on crop production	Lower latitudes, dry tropics, seasonally dry regions	Increased rural-urban migration in exposed areas
Increased risk of erosion, flooding and extreme storms	Coastal regions, especially those already exposed to such risks	Abandonment of settlements in coastal plains, deltas and small islands

McLeman and Hunter, forthcoming 2010




## Gender & Disasters


- **Overviews:**
  - Fothergill 1996; Enarson, Fothergill & Peek 2006
- **Focus on social vulnerabilities as they shape exposure;**
  - Blaikie et al. 1994; Cutter 1996, forthcoming
- **Social vulnerabilities reflect the “global distribution of power and human uses of our natural and built environment” (Enarson, Fothergill, and Peek 2006:130) and are responsible for gendered nature of disaster impacts.**

### Gendered Vulnerability Broadly Captured Through Lens of Poverty

- **Global feminization of poverty: women and girls comprise ~ 3/5 of world’s one billion poorest people (UNFPA 2008).**
- **Disasters disproportionately affect impoverished (Fothergill and Peek 2004), therefore disproportionate effects on women**



- **At all phases of a disaster --- before, during and after --- women and men respond to risk differently, not because of biological sex differences, but because of location in social structures (Fothergill 2004).**



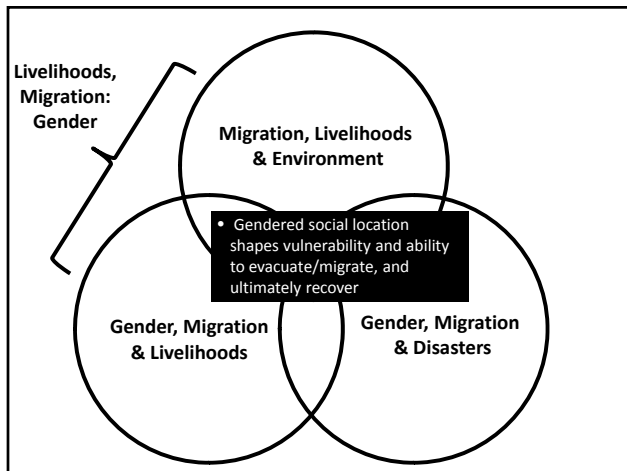
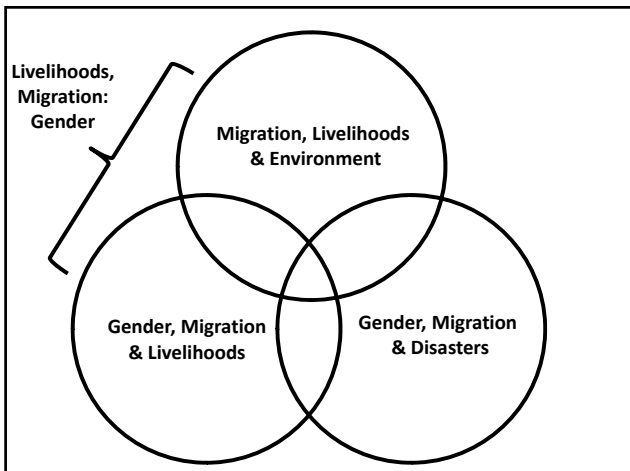
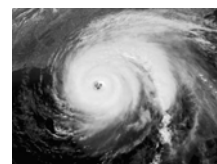
### Risk Perception & Evacuation Pattern

- Red River Flood: Women perceived disaster and disaster threats as more serious than men because of social location: “women have less control over their lives, have less power in the world, and therefore must take risks more seriously than men do” (Fothergill 2004:43)
- Katrina: gendered access to automobiles impacted evacuation and ability to find work afterward (Laska et al. 2008)




### Gender & Immobility

- Exposure to warnings
  - Warning signal did not reach in Bangladesh cyclone (Ikeda 1995)
- 2004 Indonesian tsunami, women 3 times more likely to die (Hyndman 2008)




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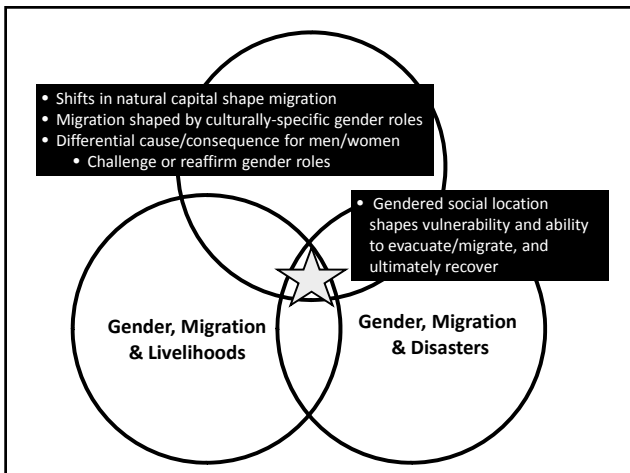


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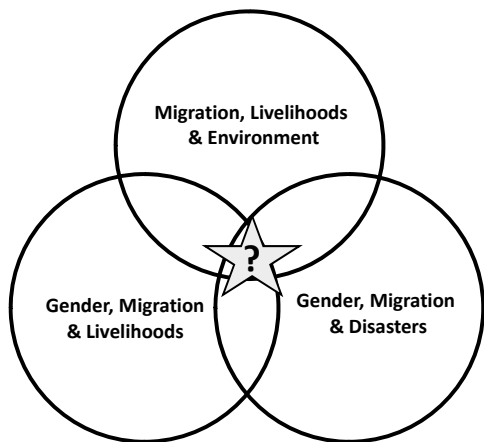
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