



New York, Ellis Island, neg. No. 3163E

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# WHO IS COUNTING AND WHO IS BEING COUNTED?

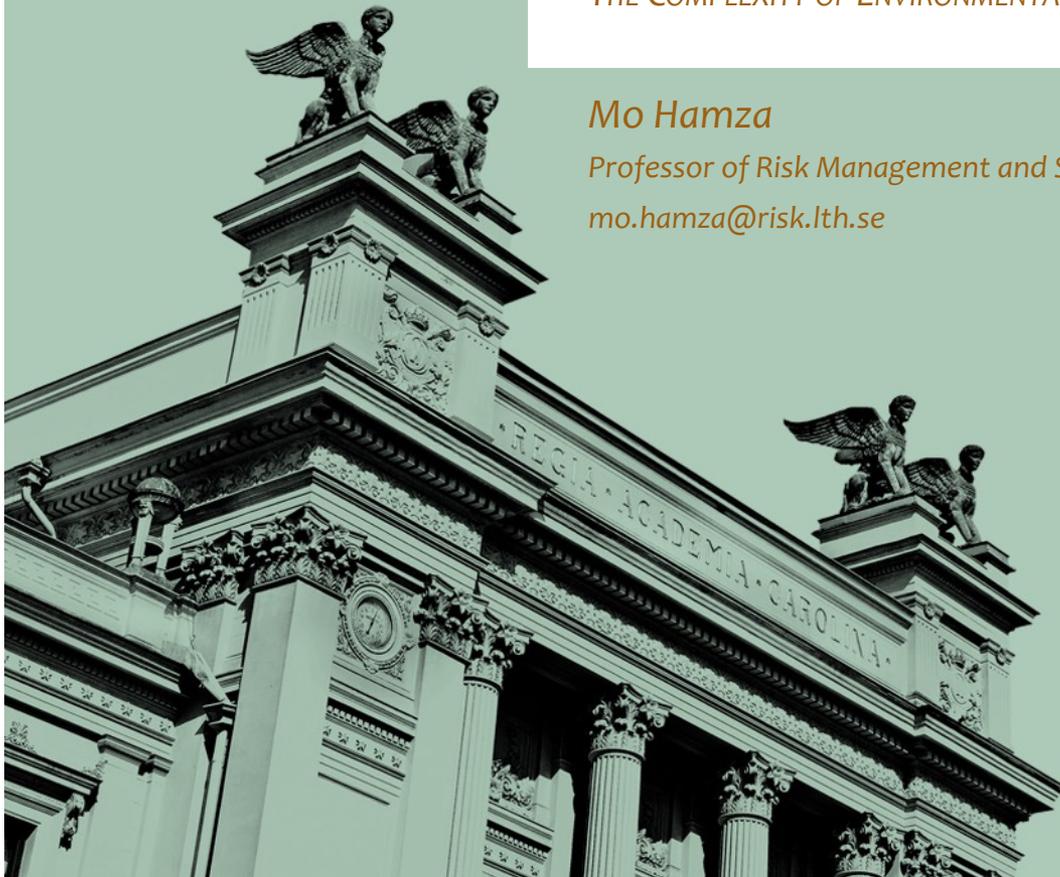
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THE COMPLEXITY OF ENVIRONMENTAL MIGRATION AND DISPLACEMENT

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# 1. Complexity

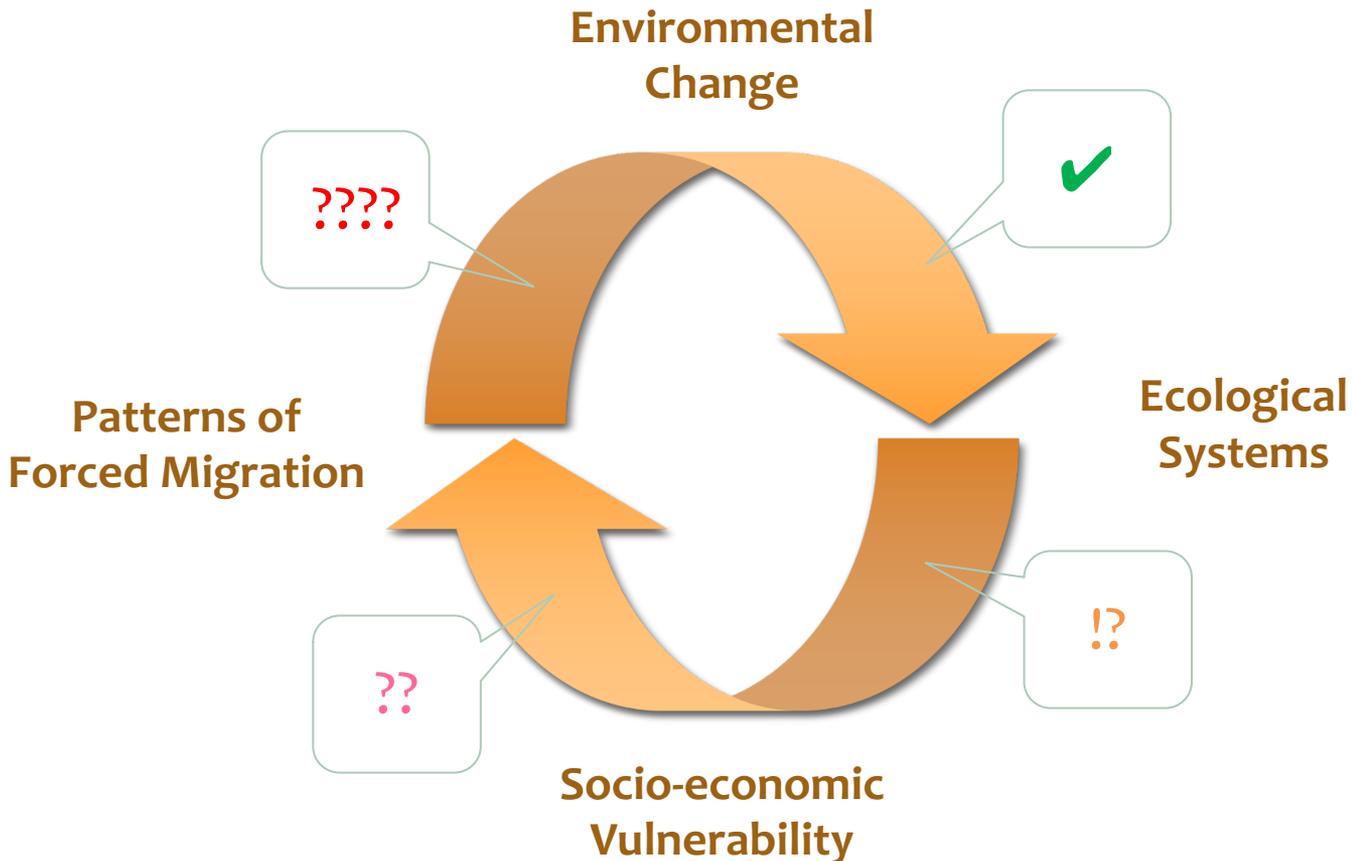
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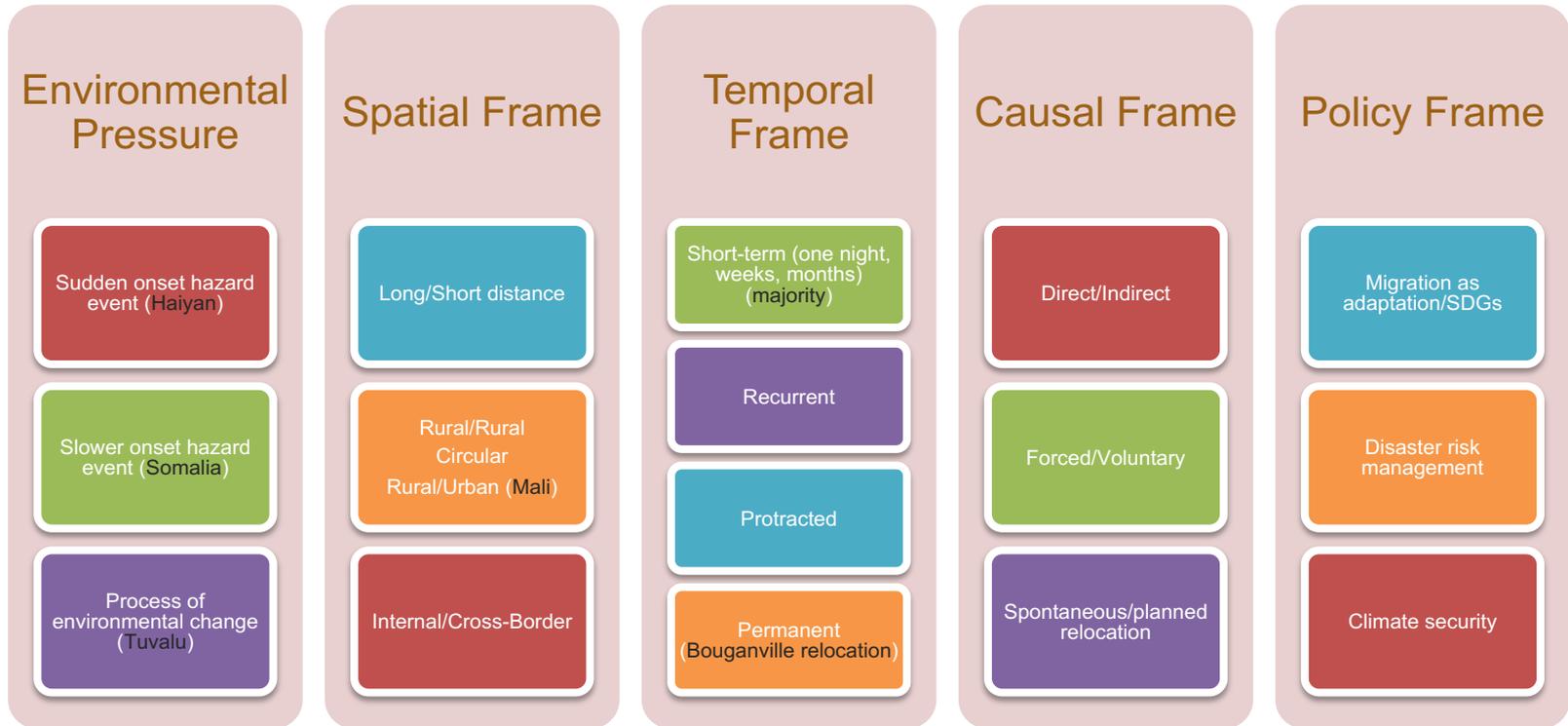
# Context

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We know very little about the interplay between:



# The Phenomena is not Monolithic



# The Definition and Labels Game

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Environmental Refugee

Forced Environmental Migrant

Environmental Migrant

Climate Refugee

Environmentally Motivated Migrant

Climate Change Refugee

Disaster Refugee

Environmentally Displaced Person

Environmental Displacee

Eco-refugee

**Ecological Displaced Person and Environmental Refugee-To-Be (ERTB)**



# The Numbers Game

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UNHCR (2002):	24 million
El-Hinnawi (1985):	50 million by 2050
The Almeria Statement (1994):	135 million
Myers (2005):	200 million
The Stern Review (2006):	200 million by 2050
Nicholls (2004):	50-200 million by 2080
Friends of the Earth (2007):	200 million worldwide by 2050 50 million in Africa alone by 2050
Christian Aid (2007):	250 million by climate change 645 million by dams and projects



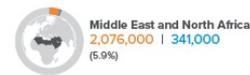
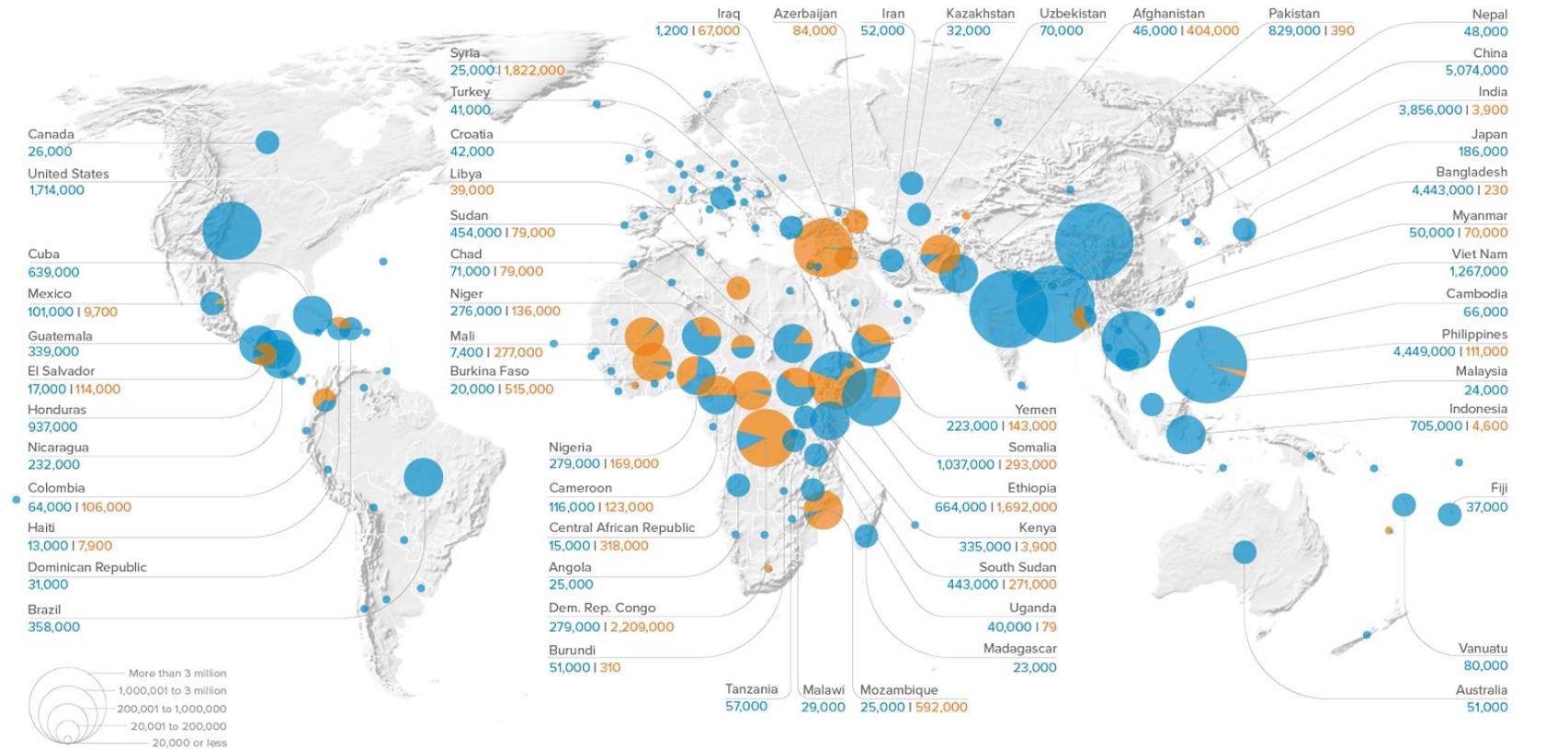
# The Numbers Game

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“Water scarcity, increasing ocean levels, desertification, the decreasing productivity of arable lands and the demographic boom in certain regions will definitely result in additional massive migration flows, even at the intercontinental level... According to estimations and predictions, by 2050 approximately 200 million migrants will have taken to the road owing to environmental causes... That is why border protection will be the most important factor for ensuring security in the future” (Hungarian representative to the UN Security Council 2019 meeting on climate change)

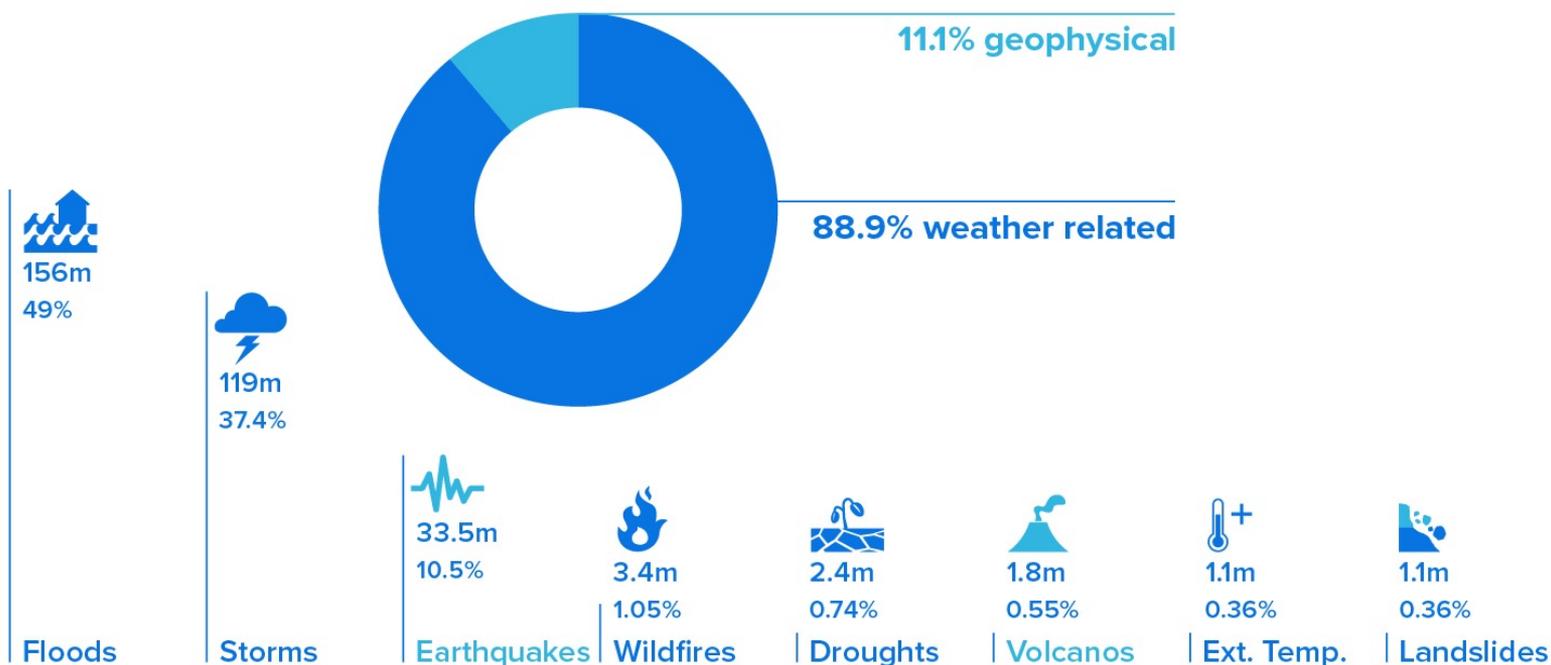


# New displacements by conflict and disasters in 2020



The country and territory names and figures are shown only when the total new displacements value exceeds 20,000. Due to rounding, some totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures. *The boundaries and the names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IDMC.*

# New displacements by disasters: breakdown by hazards (2008-2020)



# Migration. Failure or Effective Adaptation?

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- Estimates are based on the assumption that migration is failure to adapt.
- Equating exposure with vulnerability with a decision to move.
- Migration is an autonomous adaptation strategy rather than an organised process.
- It is shaped by and dependent on individual circumstances, specific context and the risk-trade offs involved.



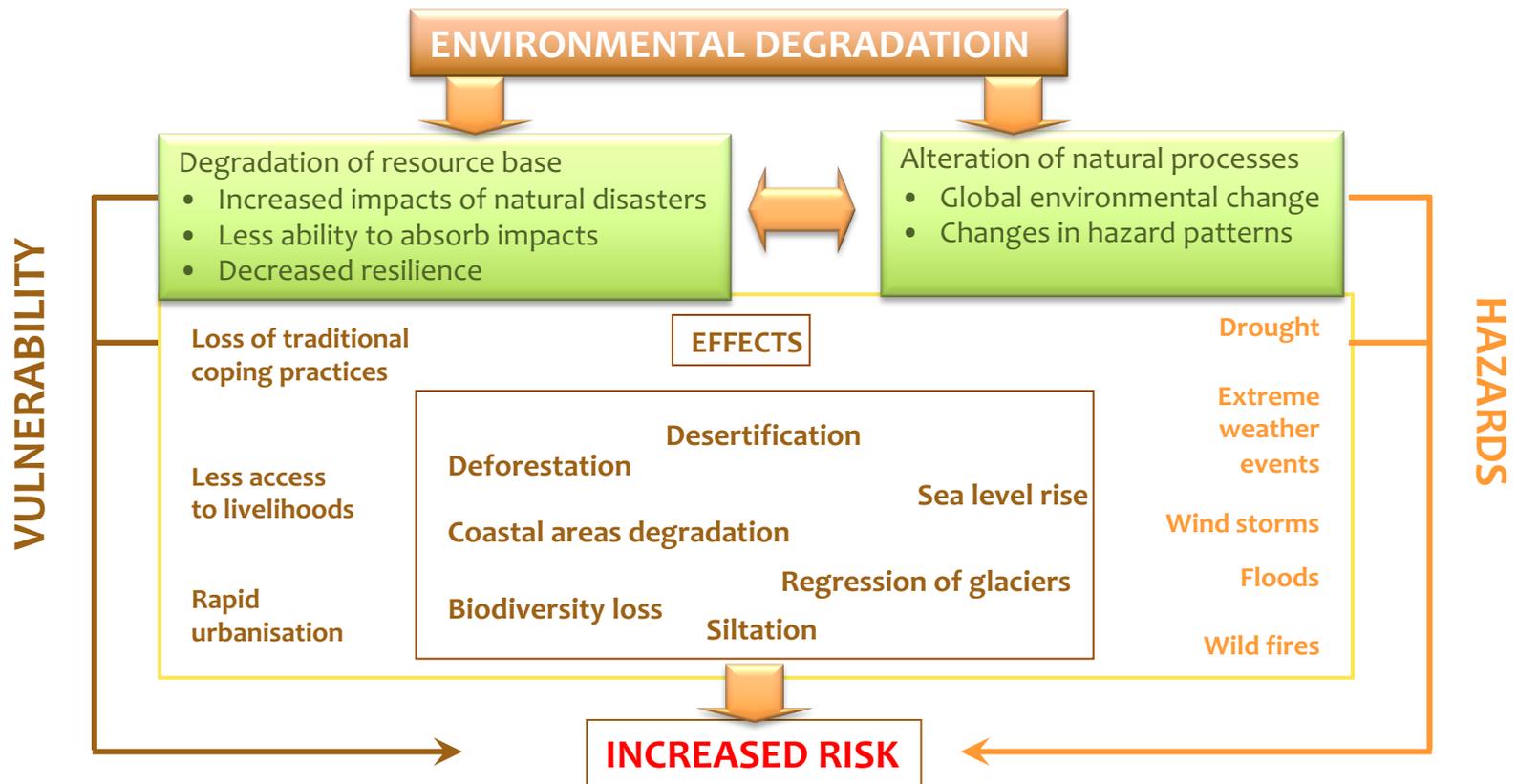
# Migration: Drivers and Mechanisms

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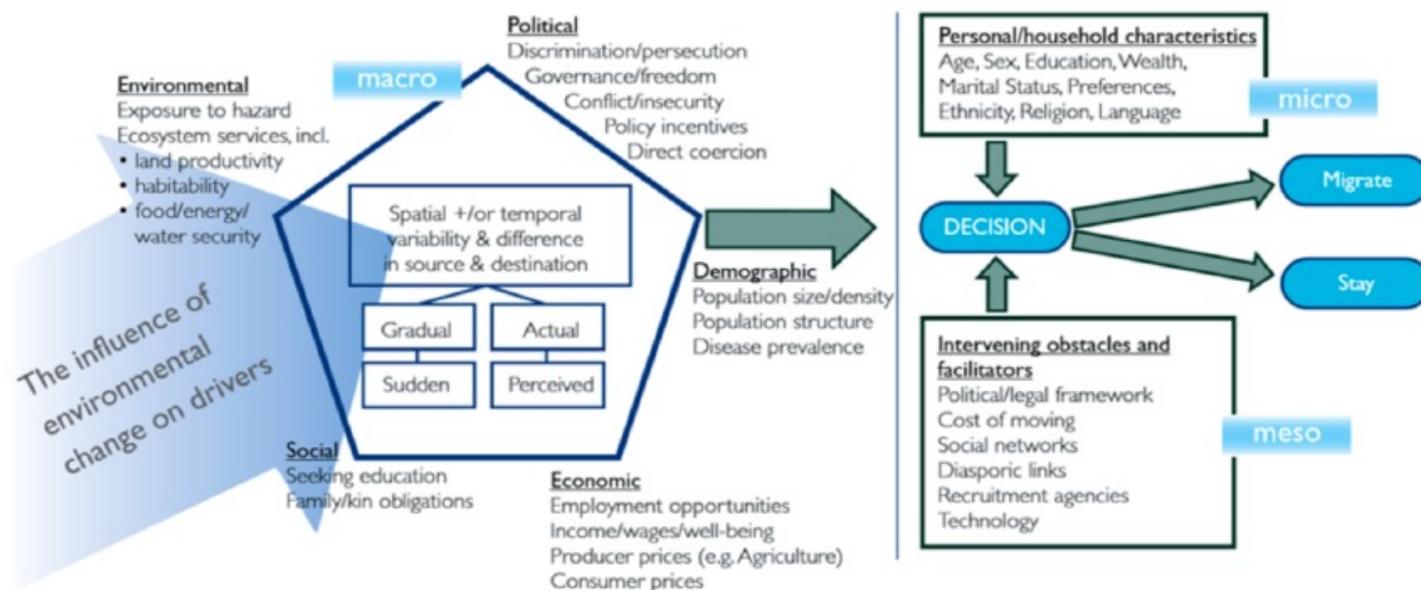
Psychologists	Rationality and risk aversion or risk trade-offs
Human Geographers	Space-distance or gravity models
Economists	Monetary push factors (poverty) and pull factors (opportunity)
Physical Scientists	Key drivers, triggers and mechanisms in terms of ecosystems degradation

- Environmentally induced migration falls between these disciplines
- Individual circumstances, characteristics, perception and institutional factors
- Race, ethnicity, wealth, home ownership, education, age and gender
- Economic viability
- Legal and political frameworks (e.g. Global Compact, EC New Pact of Migration and Asylum)

# Pathways of Linkages



# Conceptual Framework – Drivers of migration and the influence of environmental change



# Multi-Causality

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Environmental change does not undermine human security in isolation of broader factors:

- Poverty.
- Governance.
- State support to communities.
- Access to economic opportunities.
- Effectiveness of decision making processes.
- Social cohesion within and surrounding vulnerable groups.



# Responses

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- Facing severe environmental degradation people can:
  - Stay and mitigate the effects.
  - Do nothing and accept a lower quality of life.
  - Leave the affected area.

Control - Adapt - Flee



# Counter Phenomena

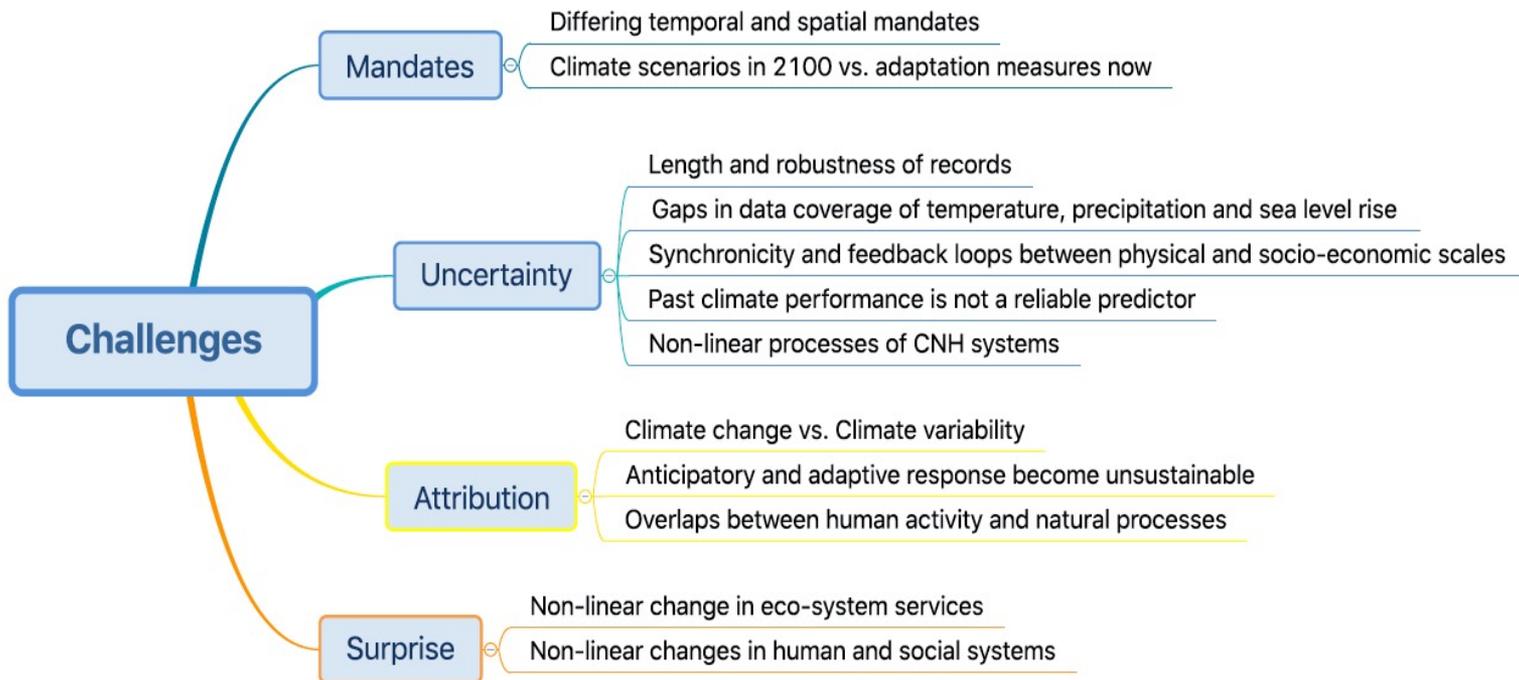
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- Increased environmental stress does not necessarily lead to increased out-migration.
- Environmentally induced migration tends to be short distance, cyclical or temporary and rarely crosses international borders.
- It is not the poorest of the poor who migrate overseas or cross into neighbouring countries.



# 2. Challenges

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# 3. And so what?

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# Mobility vs. Immobility

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Caroline Zickgraf

“Climate mobility and immobility are not separate things; they are two sides of the same coin”

“While most policymakers are focused on the ‘problem’ of climate migration, we’re still trying to convince people that the presence of immobility doesn’t mean the absence of vulnerability”

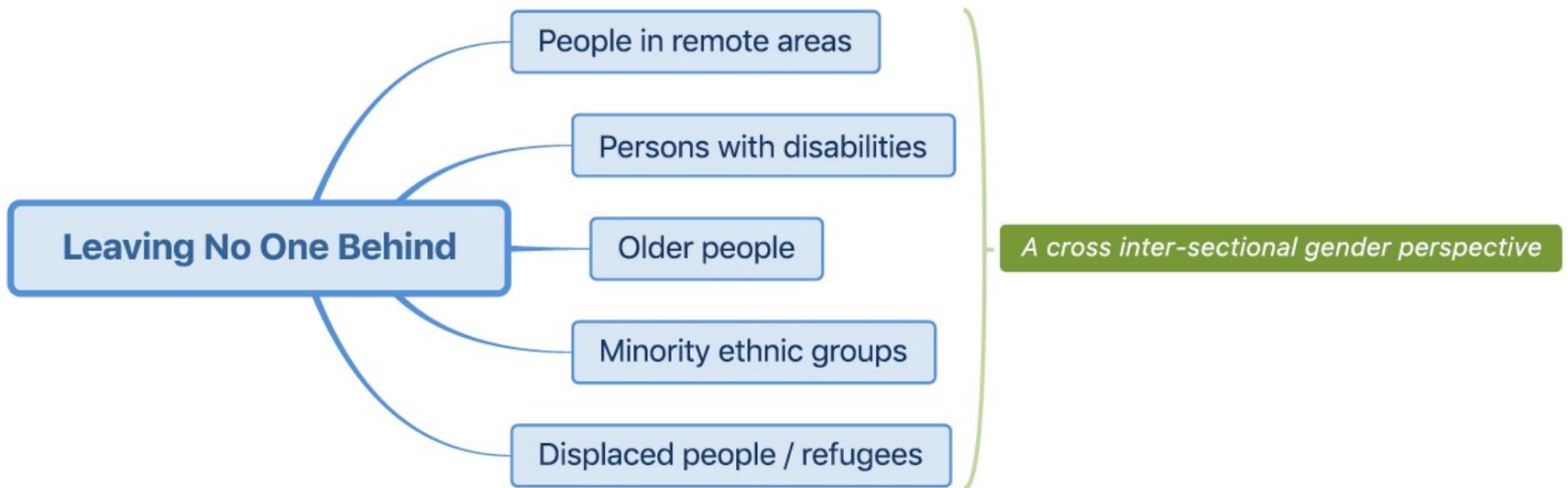
“We don’t have statistics about climate immobility like we do for migration”

“Involuntary immobility is a policy concern because these are people who need to go, want to go, but who are unable to do so. They’re effectively trapped.”



# Leaving no one behind!

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# Solutions?

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# Adaptation and Protection

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- Move away from equating those at risk with those who will actually move.
- No use in attempting to establish any direct causal pathways.
- Less obsession with numbers and more focus on where migrants might go in the future and why.
- Research on a local rather than a global scale is needed.
- See climate change as a risk modifier rather than having a multiplier, additive or synergistic effect on migration.
- Avoid framing migration as a security concern.
- Apocalyptic narratives depoliticise climate governance, stigmatise migrants and detract from looking at root causes and policy alternatives.
- Shift the discourse away from migration as a “threat” to human security to migration as a “means of achieving it”.





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1. <http://www.irishtimes.com/blogs/generationemigration/2011/11/02/traditions-of-emigration-the-irish-habit-of-going-away/irish-immigrants-ellis-island/>
2. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/jews-rescued-from-the-nazis-believe-in-helping-muslim-refugees-a6742326.html>
3. <https://www.lensculture.com/projects/389640-the-surviving-frame>
4. <https://www.dw.com/en/hungarys-viktor-orban-sends-eu-a-border-fence-bill/a-40319972>

