



CHAPTER 8

Political Attention in a Creeping Crisis: The Case of Climate Change and Migration

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Abstract This chapter discusses the creeping crisis of rising human displacement induced by environmental degradation and natural catastrophes. Sea-level rise, droughts, and the increased occurrence of hurricanes and floods already have, and increasingly will have, drastic effects on migration patterns. Climate-induced displacement already outnumbers displacement from war or violence. Nation states and the international community have consistently failed to properly address this phenomenon. Only recently has political attention begun to increase. This chapter argues that our understanding of climate-induced migration can be improved with the help of the creeping crisis concept. In addition, climate-induced migration may provide insights to the underlying mechanisms of creeping crises. More to the point, this chapter explores the rise and fall of political attention in this case, offers insights on what

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lies behind this and reflects upon the broader implications for the literature on creeping crises.

Keywords Creeping crisis • Climate change • Climate-induced migration • CIM • Global migration

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Climate change is one of the most severe crises facing humankind. Climate change is a label that covers a number of multifaceted and interconnected changes taking place as the result of CO₂ emissions and a warming climate. Those changes have destructive effects, from shortages in food and water to decreased biodiversity, from air pollution to mortalities from heat waves, from increasingly intense forest fires to—the focus of this chapter—rising human displacement.

Climate-induced displacement now outnumbers displacement from war and violence. In 2019, nearly 25 million people left their homes as a result of various kinds of natural disasters (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre [IDMC], 2020). The risk of being displaced by disasters has more than doubled since 1970 (Ginetti, Lavell, & Franck, 2015). The World Bank predicts that over 140 million people will be internally displaced in 2050 as a result of climate change (Rigaud et al., 2018).

Despite clarity on the existence of the problem, much uncertainty remains. The scale of the problem depends on the severity of climate change consequences, on whether households and societies can adapt, and on how many of those living in exposed areas can or will leave. Moreover, research shows that climate-induced displacement is deeply intertwined with other types of migration, not only with economic migration but also with migration from climate-induced conflicts (see, e.g., The Government Office for Science, 2011).

The effects of climate change differ across the world. Climate-induced migration involves persons being forced off their South Pacific island as sea levels rise, just as it can include persons losing their home in the Bahamas after a tropical storm, an evacuation of an Australian town threatened by bush fires, or farmers in Tanzania leaving their villages after years of drought making land uncultivable. Common to these diverse types of forced mobility is that they relate to—and are exacerbated

by—different kinds of natural disasters which are becoming more frequent and more intense following increasingly severe climate change. Lost housing or land, threatened food or water security, and decreased income resulting from failed crops are typical examples of climate-related drivers of human mobility. Like all types of migration, mobility induced by climate change is primarily within-state but increasingly cross-border.

Our understanding of climate-induced migration can be improved with the help of the creeping crisis concept. Moreover, climate-induced migration as a case provides new insights about the underlying mechanisms driving creeping crises, as first presented in the introduction to this book. Climate-induced migration is the result of a complex interaction of “facilitating” factors, including climate change itself but also disasters and destruction generated by climate change. Multiple developments, and occasional interactions between them, combine into long chains of deeper problems; for instance, movement stems from flooding, flooding from climate change, and climate change from certain societal choices. Additional problems emerge “downstream” from migration flows. Uncontrolled migration can cause social unrest in receiving societies. Poor migration management and uncoordinated border closure force migrants to take dangerous journeys or may trap them in limbo, creating unsafe camps and exacerbating poverty (Lustgarten, 2020). Unplanned migration can also increase population density and put even more pressure on ecosystems (IOM, 2009).

The next section of this chapter sets the scene, describing the threat potential as well as the “pace and space” of the climate-induced migration phenomenon. Section 8.3 traces the political discussion and moments of attention regarding climate-induced migration, mainly at the international level. Despite repeated expert warnings, and clear manifestations, policy makers have failed to address climate-induced migration in any substantial way, whether through legal protections or even adaptation and resilience. Section 8.4 briefly reflects upon the synchronicity between precursor events and political attention. The fifth and final section formulates insights for research on creeping crises.

8.2 THE PACE AND SPACE OF THE CRISIS

Environmental change has always been a driver of human movement. Most types of environmental degradation—sudden or gradual—worsen people’s living conditions to some degree. At a certain point, degradation

requires changes in lifestyle and even forced migration. The increased frequency and intensity of such events paint a grim picture of the human consequences of climate change and forebode even worse events.

Recent disasters have given us a preview of future events. In October 1998, Hurricane Mitch hit Central America, the worst hurricane to strike the area in over a century. The event killed thousands of people and displaced over 50,000 persons. In Nicaragua, one of the most affected countries, households exposed to heavy rainfall during Hurricane Mitch experienced a 50% larger risk of displacement compared to less exposed households (Carvajal & Pereira, 2010; Kniveton, Smith, Black, & Schmidt-Verkerk, 2009; Westhoff et al., 2008). The Indian Ocean earthquake and Tsunami in December 2004 caused extreme devastation. Approximately 1.7 million people were displaced as a result of the tsunami, mainly in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and India (Inderfurth, Fabrycky, & Cohen, 2005). Hurricane Katrina forced over one million people from their homes in the U.S. Gulf Coast in August 2005, and tens of thousands of those remained displaced years after (Kromm & Sturgis, 2008). In May 2009, Cyclone Aila forced about 2 million people from their homes in Bangladesh. Damaged houses and lands, together with loss of working opportunities and reduced food and water security, were the main factors driving people from their land (Islam & Hasan, 2016). 2019 was a particularly bad year for disasters and disaster-related displacement, hitting a range of countries and communities hard. Cyclones Idai and Kenneth displaced 2.2 million people in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe (Wachiaya, 2020), while major moves in human settlements were accelerated by Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas. Widespread wildfires in California, Australia, and the Amazon have had similar effects.

On top of all these dramatic examples, we should not forget the gradual and indirect disasters that are also major drivers of displacement: sea-level rises in low-lying island states, for instance, or the incremental movements caused by drought. This kind of movement may take a pre-emptive form; for example, preventative evacuations take place and populations sometimes never quite recover. A large part of the disaster displacement figures for 2018, for instance, come from typhoon evacuations in the Philippines (IDMC, 2019).

Systematic data on disaster displacement is scarce, especially before 2008. Today, the most advanced dataset on disaster displacement comes from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). Their data shows that displacement from slow-onset disasters is generally much more

difficult to capture than sudden-onset disasters. For instance, only since 2017 has the IDMC included drought in their calculations, and while the number is not insignificant (approximately 764,000 in 2018), these figures are heavily underestimated (IDMC, 2019). In addition, research shows that it is generally difficult to measure displacement in situations where climate change is a driver or contributing factor. Most climate-related displacement may be disguised as, or perhaps intertwined with, a variety of other compounding factors, including urbanization, work migration, starvation (i.e., searching for food or water), or flight from climate-induced conflict.

Persons living in areas severely affected by sudden- and slow-onset disasters, and which are already vulnerable for other reasons, have the most difficulty in adapting to environmental changes and are therefore most at risk of being displaced (Kolmannskog, 2008; Piguet, Pécoud, & de Guchteneire, 2011; Swing, 2008). When people are forced to move, the displacement itself is a crisis to the individual. From a broader perspective, however, there are other consequences of large migration flows. Poverty, insecurity, marginalization, social unrest, and further ecological degradation can result (Ionesco, Mokhnacheva, & Gemenne, 2017; Rigaud et al., 2018). If properly addressed, however, through aid, assistance, management of flows, migration can come with multiple benefits to the receiving community and may be an effective way for persons and societies to adapt to a changing climate (Jakobsson, 2018; UNHCR, 2011). The potential benefits, in short, are there to be had if adequate attention and response is given.

When applying the definition of a creeping crisis to this case, climate-induced migration appears to conform closely. First, large-scale uncontrolled climate-induced migration can be seen as a threat to societal values and life-sustaining systems. This is true for the displaced persons, of course, whose livelihoods are threatened. It also holds for the potential to destabilize societies and redraw the world's population settlements in relatively short periods of time.

It is important to note here that, if using the creeping crisis concept to identify a "threat agent," that agent here not be climate migrants as such, but rather the chain of phenomena that include environmental changes, disasters, and the resulting circumstances that force displacement. Moreover, one should be careful when speaking of migration in crisis terms, as there is a risk of framing vulnerable groups of people as "threats" to (primarily) western societies. This chapter underlines that the potential

full-blown crisis lies in the societal (social unrest, destitution) and ecological pressures that may result from an inadequate response to these increasing migration flows—apart from the individual crisis experienced by those displaced. The scale of this threat, though, depends highly on a variety of factors and will further vary based on whether governments respond effectively. A failure to “bend” the emission curve will see temperatures likely rise significantly over decades (IPCC, 2014b), but effects will be incremental and may appear less than catastrophic. Such dynamics play into the threat framing problem addressed further below.

Second, the climate migration crisis adheres to the creeping crisis concept because it evolves over time and space. It has a long incubation time, “an epochal character” without a clear beginning (as mentioned, the relationship between mobility and environmental changes has always been present) and no clear end. It manifests itself in different locations, around the world, and damage differs considerably. Even though the circumstances may escalate to the point where it constitutes a full-blown crisis to all societies, it is difficult to say in advance when such a tipping point might be reached.

Third, as we have seen, no one is in the dark about the contours and seriousness of this problem. There are regular occurrences of the crisis that, while perhaps paling in comparison to what is ahead, already draw attention and some degree of response. Fourth, as we will see below, the existing and potential climate migration crisis has attracted varying degrees of attention over the past decades. Attention comes and goes, sometimes but not always in relation to actual precursor events. Few coherent and collectively held framings (amongst global leaders, for instance) of climate-induced migration as an existential threat can be found.

This leads to a related issue: that climate-induced migration as a policy issue thus far remains insufficiently addressed, the fifth and last criteria of the creeping crisis definition. If climate-induced migration would have been properly dealt with through climate change mitigation or effective protection and relocation measures, it could have been treated as a regular crisis and managed accordingly. But a lack of action, as returned to in the conclusion below, propels the creeping nature of the problem. Climate-induced migration continues, and even deepens in severity, with every precursor event that takes place. Such events are dealt with, and then attention fades. The notion of a creeping crisis helps to disentangle this growing problem’s component parts, outline its dynamics, identify its key challenges, and suggest opportunities for action.

8.3 POLITICAL ATTENTION AND CLIMATE-INDUCED MIGRATION

The story of climate-induced migration as a creeping crisis is one of gradual and growing political attention that, while notable, has not yet reached a tipping point. Moreover, while migration responses are initiated at the national level, very few receiving countries in the world have discussed changing asylum or migration legislation to include climate-induced migrants or displaced in any real sense. Instead, political attention in this case primarily comes from international organizations (IOs) and international NGOs.

In 1985, researcher Essam El-Hinnawi at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) presented a report titled “Environmental Refugees”—one of the first uses of the concept and the moment when it first made its way into the minds and onto the agendas of policy makers. The report warned of how environmental degradation could drive large numbers of people, especially in poor countries, on the move, creating a new category of refugees (El-Hinnawi, 1985). From there, attention to the issue grew in academic circles while any sense of ownership was found only amongst smaller groups of engaged individuals, often within large IO secretariats. For instance, the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) made repeated announcements about how they increasingly saw environmental-related factors as a driver of overall refugee movement during their operational work in the field. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees at the time, Antonio Guterres, started an awareness campaign, informally including climate-induced displacement under the UNHCR’s mandate. The argument was that the circumstances of displaced persons resembled those of refugee-like situations (Guterres, 2009).

Several reports of the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) also drew attention to the effects of climate change on human migration. In their 1990 assessment report, the IPCC stated that: “migration and resettlement may be the most threatening short-term effects of climate change on human settlements” (IPCC, 1990, chap. 5, pp. 5–9) and that “forced migration and resettlement would be the most severe effects of climatic change as a result of natural disaster and loss of employment” (IPCC, 1990, chap. 5, pp. 5–10). The 1992 report stated that “the gravest effects of climate change may be those on human

migration” (IPCC, 1992, sect. 5.0.10). Such sentiments continued to be expressed over the years. An IPCC report from 2007 noted displacement as one of the central consequences of climate change (IPCC, 2007) and a working group contribution to the 2014 IPCC report stated that “climate change over the 21st century is projected to increase displacement of people” (IPCC, 2014a, p. 20).

In 2007, climate-induced migration climbed further up the international agenda. This was not the result of a particular displacement event but rather of an active and successful connection between displacement and issues of climate security at large (Jakobsson, 2018)—a popular topic in the UN at the time (Mobjörk et al., 2016) and one promoted by policy entrepreneurs. For instance, the British Foreign Secretary, Margaret Beckett, warned the UN Security Council that climate change could result in migration on an unprecedented scale (UN Security Council, 2007). Two specific ways of framing the issue contributed to increased political salience of the issue. One framing was the impression, buoyed by press attention and visual imagery, of climate refugees as a security threat (Boas, 2015; White, 2012). The other was the use of climate migrants as “the human face of climate change” (Gemenne, 2011; Warner, 2011). Both narratives, which originated and evolved in the period 2007–2009, facilitated the inclusion of climate-induced migration in the UN Security Council, the UNHCR and ultimately in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (Jakobsson, 2018).

The leap in political attention paved the way for the issue’s inclusion in the UN climate negotiations. UN humanitarian agencies joined forces to send a strong message with regard to the issue’s relevance to gathering climate change negotiators (McAdam, 2014; Warner, 2011). The strengthened legitimacy brought by the involvement of the humanitarian community, alongside tireless work from advocates and entrepreneurs (not least the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, IASC), led to the formal recognition in the 2010 Cancun Adaptation Framework of climate change induced displacement, migration, and planned relocation. This major step included calls for all countries to undertake “measures to enhance understanding, coordination and cooperation in this area” (UNFCCC, 2011, sect. 14f). While this formulation appeared rather weak and non-binding, it signaled a jump in attention, international attention, and provided a stepping-stone for advocates to demand further political attention (McAdam, 2014). The inclusion in the Cancun Adaptation

Framework also clearly connected this issue to climate change politics, leading to an increased politicization of the issue (Jakobsson, 2018).

In 2011, Guterres again boosted attention for climate-induced displacement, this time as part of the 60th anniversary of the Refugee Convention. In parallel, a UNHCR expert meeting drew attention to the existing legal gaps for climate and disaster-related displacement, noting the lack of legal protections in current international law. However, both the proposal for the UNHCR to lead the charge on protection for disaster displacement and the proposal to fill the existing protection gaps were blocked by the UNHCR Executive Committee and its ministerial conference later that year. This made it difficult for the UNHCR secretariat to further advocate and enhance protection mechanisms for climate-induced displacement during that year. Disagreement amongst national governments over the effect of adding climate-induced migration to existing refugee issues slowed the process. There was also a feeling among stakeholders that there was still too little research on the issue (McAdam, 2014), that the UNHCR already had too much on its plate, and that there was a general fatigue associated with having to take on further responsibility for refugees (Interview with practitioner October 9, 2017).

The difficulties surrounding the UNHCR's ownership of this issue inspired the Norwegian and Swiss governments to establish the Nansen Initiative, a platform in which states could meet to discuss cross-border disaster displacement and exchange best practices. The Nansen Initiative helped to anchor the issue on the international agenda following the UN breakdown discussed above. It also became clear that efforts to spur political attention must be more broadly targeted toward the "right" people (Interview with practitioner October 9, 2017). While the inclusion of migration into climate change politics helped provide a spot on the international political agenda, over the years it became clear that the parts of governments represented there were not the ones that could take measures to address the rights of refugees and migrants. One interviewee explained it as follows: "If you are looking at who the actors are there, then there are ministries of environment and finance and foreign affairs. They are not ministries dealing with migration issues. So, the real specialists are outside the UNFCCC process" (Interview with practitioner October 13, 2017). In short, national governments needed to take more responsibility.

A major step was the COP21 meeting in Paris on climate change, in late 2015. That agreement established the Task Force on Displacement

(TFD) to “develop recommendations for integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change” (UNFCCC, 2015, sect. 49). The fight to include that language was hardly easy; opposition emerged and, at times, that particular text was even dropped from the draft (Interview with practitioner February 19, 2016).¹ Another advance was that lobby groups began pushing for its inclusion in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in the beginning of the year (Interview with practitioner October 9, 2017). Advocates believed it was important to establish climate-induced migration in a disaster risk reduction policy because the latter is seen as more technical and less political than the more controversial question of refugee rights associated with the UNHCR (Interviews with practitioners February 2, 2017; March 16, 2017 and March 28, 2017). Furthermore, climate-induced migration earned a prized reference in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (goal 13 on climate action). Finally, 109 governments endorsed the Nansen Protection Agenda, an unbinding yet symbolically important blueprint for how to exchange and make use of best practices on cross-border disaster displacement.

In recent years, issues of climate change, migration and displacement have received renewed political attention. The Nansen Initiative was succeeded by the Platform for Disaster Displacement (PDD) with the aim to promote implementation of the Nansen Protection Agenda. The newly established Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) (and to some extent the Global Compact on Refugees) from 2018 clearly mentions disaster displacement and acknowledges that climate change can be a driver of migration. Moreover, the framework suggests possible solutions such as humanitarian visas, temporary work permits, and planned relocation. In doing so, it reflects both the language and suggestions of the Nansen Protection Agenda and the TFD recommendations from 2018. The TFD had a renewed and stronger mandate from the UNFCCC: to guide capacity building and to promote the issue within the new Global Compact, mentioned above, and global platforms for disaster risk reduction (UNFCCC, 2019).

¹ Moreover, in the UNFCCC context, issues of climate change and migration are discussed under the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage (WIM), which adds to the issue’s sensitivity since that connects it to matters of compensation.

Climate-induced migration thus gradually rose on international agendas, propelled by policy entrepreneurs, issue linkages, and inclusion in wider agreements on climate change. The issue, one might surmise, was able to ride the wave of climate change attention more broadly. Yet, there was no global groundswell of support for the issue as an impending crisis. Crucially, an insufficient number of national governments have given sustained, political-level attention to climate-induced migration.

8.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR SYNCHRONICITY

The political attention dynamics outlined above took place largely in isolation from the precursor events that revealed deep problems associated with a changing climate. In the crisis literature, along with public policy research, disasters and extreme events are seen as external shocks that generate attention and shake up policy systems. Opportunities for change thus emerge (Birkland, 1997; Sabatier, 1999). In the case here, though, attention does not seem clearly linked to actual events. Analysis in Jakobsson (2018) shows that advocates were more successful using issue linkages and “strategic framing” (Rhinar, 2017) than exploiting shocks (e.g. disasters) to drive the issue up the policy agenda. This is consistent with research showing the effectiveness of linking new issues to previously held norms—defined as widely accepted standards of behavior (Florini, 1996; Rost Rublee, 2009). For instance, the largest single boost in attention came in the period 2007–2009, mentioned above, when climate-induced migration was presented as a security threat, and as part of the climate and security agenda that was popular in UN discussions at that time.

This suggests that attention-related tipping points, to the extent they exist, are not necessarily linked to the accumulation of evidence, knowledge, or a plethora of worsening precursor events. Those factors are all present in this case, but no massive, global shift in attention has taken place. What shifts can be found are the result of policy dynamics. It may be more useful to think of attention, synchronicity and creeping crises in relation to traditional theories on “windows of opportunities” (see e.g., Kingdon, 1984) or “attention cycles” (Downs, 1972). Creeping crises play out over long periods of time, meaning that event-driven dynamics and policy cycle-driven dynamics may intermingle to drive attention forward (or backward) at specific moments of time, but rarely in a linear way.

How is attention related to response? As Boin, Ekengren, and Rhinard (2020) have pointed out: “attention is one thing, but what really counts is a response” (p. 125). In the case of climate-induced migration, the response has been faltering at best. There is an almost complete lack of concrete, meaningful national responses to this creeping crisis. At the international level, too, some aspects of the response to climate-induced migration are worth highlighting.

One is that decision venue matters. Where the issue “lands” for consideration—the institutional setting within which the issue can be discussed—determines whether it is acted upon. When framed as a climate change issue, the problem falls under the UNFCCC; when framed as a refugee issue it falls under the UNHCR; when framed in other ways, other institutional venues become relevant. These venues are more or less sympathetic to addressing the issue. The UNFCCC venue, focused on climate change, was occasionally more sympathetic than the UNHCR, in which proposals to help refugees in urgent situations (at a time when Europe was struggling with a migration crisis of its own—see the chapter by Landström and Ekengren in this volume) dampened political interests in strengthening protection mechanisms. At the same time, the UNFCCC was not equipped to handle issues of refugee and migrant rights. We can also note that xenophobic discourses crept into *all* migration-related discussions during these times. This case thus teaches us that it is not only important to trace political attention when studying creeping crises. It is of equal importance to investigate what underlies “active neglect”—efforts to keep the issue off the agenda.

Another notable dynamic in this case is the effects of what might be called a “partial response” to this creeping crisis. During more climate-related disasters, the international community mobilizes a familiar, technocratic response: aid and assistance flow amply to address the immediate destruction caused by the disaster. That model of attention and response works well in the short-term, but a sense of resolution (along with agenda crowding) prevents longer policy discussions of root causes of the problem or its longer-term effects, such as displaced population. The world thus lacks a template for addressing climate-induced migration, in contrast to immediate disasters. Disasters receive wide attention and a full response, while climate-induced migration receives sporadic attention and virtually no meaningful, concrete response at all. The issue is not seen as particularly “pressing” (Interview with practitioner October 9, 2017).

8.5 CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

This chapter set out to explore the case of climate-induced migration through the lens of the creeping crisis concept. Like other creeping crises, this case shows that, despite repeated calls for adequate responses since the mid-1980s, very little substantial action has been taken. The potentially severe effects of climate change on human mobility have been known for at least 35 years, but thus far, political responses have been generally cautious, to say the least. A number of key factors can be identified as possible explanations for a sustained lack of attention and response.

First, as set out above, there is a general lack of political will to properly address this problem. This lack of will corresponds to (a) a general reluctance to finance adaptation, compensation and risk reduction abroad—even though some small measures have been taken; (b) the general difficulties in finding a political willingness to mitigate climate change at large; and, (c) a reluctance to tackle the politically sensitive issue of refugee protection. The last point stems from a rise in anti-immigration and populist parties, as well as a fear of renegotiating the international consensus on refugee rights. There is also a general reluctance to give more responsibilities to the UNHCR (which member states considered already overwhelmed by the responsibilities for conventional refugees) (Interviews with practitioners February 17, 2016 and October 9, 2017).

Second, this case demonstrates the difficulties of making policy makers act when there is a low sense of urgency and “pressingness”—capturing an essential problem with addressing creeping crises at large. One of the practitioners interviewed for this chapter said that some crucial stakeholders believe this is not yet a “real” issue, and that other issues are more pressing (Interview with practitioner October 9, 2017). Another aspect is that, apart from the clear manifestations of climate-induced displacement, other indicators are more subtle and complex and do not necessarily send urgent signals. For instance, empirical research shows that climate change often merges with other migration patterns related to economic migration or urbanization, especially in relation to slow-onset natural disasters such as drought.

Third, this case shows the lack of collectively agreed definitions and clear terminology surrounding the issue. Importantly, the victims of climate-induced migration are a diverse group, both in terms of causes of flight and pattern of mobility. This diversity results in confusion regarding the causality, scope, and responsibility assigned to this creeping crisis (Castles, 2010; European Commission, 2013; Piguet et al., 2011; Swing, 2008; Interviews with practitioners, February 16–17, 2016; October 10, 2017).

Fourth, previous research shows that once a policy issue gains salience, it needs to be “coupled” with a policy instrument or a solution; otherwise, a rise in issue attention risks stagnation (Kingdon, 1984). In this case, the policy response suffers from a lack of available and feasible solutions. There is no model of response akin to disaster management. In the times when political attention has been most intense, such as 2007, 2011 or 2015, there has been no concrete, comprehensive solution that would adequately mitigate climate-induced migration and protect those displaced. One reason for this is the lack of an agreed response. Our understanding of this major societal problem has deepened in the past 35 years, but it has also become increasingly clear that it cannot be handled through one solution or measure. Even in the specific field of refugee protection, it has been shown that displaced migrants constitute a wide and diverse group, requiring a huge array of different protection measures needed for different kinds of climate-induced movement (McAdam, 2011). Wildavsky’s (1984) insights on the obstacles to crisis response—“no solution, no problem”—appear relevant here. A low sense of urgency, the complexity of the problem, the lack of an obvious solution, and fleeting attention—all work against politicians’ motivations to tackle this increasingly worrisome creeping crisis.

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