

Suggested Discussion Questions

Chapter 1: People on the Move in a Changing Climate

1. Describe the key differences between migration and displacement. Why might it be important to differentiate between the two?
2. Why do the authors choose to use the term “climate-related migration” rather than simply “climate migration” (see Box 1.1)? Do you agree with their rationale? Why or why not?
3. Think about a time that you or a member of your extended family migrated (i.e. moved from one place to another). What kinds of factors influenced the decision?
4. How and why do we differentiate between weather and climate?
5. In general, what are the differences between exposure, vulnerability, and adaptation? Can you name an example for each, other than those mentioned in the text?
6. Consider the place you live, the place where you went to high school, or some other place that is familiar and important to you. What kinds of climate change risks exist in that place? Consider the four elements of risk: hazards, exposure, vulnerability, and adaptation (Section 1.2).
7. Can you explain the differences between voluntary immobility and involuntary immobility, and why the distinction is generally important?
8. What challenges might a potential climate migrant and their family face around the decision to move or to stay in place? What factors would influence this decision?

Chapter 2: Migration and Displacement Associated with Extreme Weather Events: Tropical Cyclones, Severe Storms, Heavy Rainfall, and Flooding

1. What characteristics make weather events extreme? Have you ever experienced an extreme weather event? If so, try describing that experience.
2. How have human modifications to the landscape influenced exposure to floods? To extreme storms?
3. What options are available to us to reduce exposure to extreme storm events and floods?
4. What options are available to help communities adapt to extreme storms?
5. How does extreme weather interact with social inequality and the vulnerability of individuals, households and communities?
6. What are the implications of increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events for future social justice (consider implications locally, regionally, and globally)?
7. Consider the example of Hurricane Katrina presented in the text: what individual, institutional, and infrastructural characteristics contributed to the severe damage and human suffering caused by the storm?
8. Discuss the multi-stage dimensions of cyclone-related migration and displacement. How does the movement vary across stages (from evacuation to recovery)?
9. Why do people continue to rebuild and return to places that have experienced repeated extreme weather events? Can you empathize with this?

Chapter 3: Migration and Displacement Associated with Aridity, Drought, Heat, and Wildfires

1. What are the different ways scientists classify droughts? Which one do you think is the easiest for the general public to understand?
2. In general terms, how do migration responses to droughts differ from migration/displacement in response to extreme storms?
3. How might chronic water insecurity contribute to changes in migration patterns?
4. Discuss the general linkages between water availability, agriculture, and migration.
5. Discuss the linkages between drought, conflict, and migration. What possible pathways exist between them? Why is the pathway difficult to determine?
6. Some people move towards hot weather (Box 3.6). Should we consider this to be climate-related migration? Why or why not?
7. How does home ownership influence whether or not someone will return to an area that has experienced a wildfire? What issues does this raise?
8. As average temperatures rise, some scientists worry that some locations may become too hot to be habitable by people. What non-temperature factors might determine whether people can successfully continue to live in very hot locations?
9. Have you ever experienced extreme heat? Do you recall the approximate temperature at the time? What factors contributed to you feeling uncomfortable due to the heat and what could you do as an individual to find relief? Would those options to find relief be available to everyone in your community? Do poor and/or unhoused people have sufficient options to find relief during times of extreme heat?
10. Although it is not discussed in this chapter, do you think extreme cold might affect migration decisions? If so, where and for whom?

Chapter 4: Migration and Displacement Risks Associated with Mean Sea Level Rise (MSLR)

1. The processes that cause sea levels to change are multifaceted and complex. How would you communicate the causes of MSLR to a friend?
2. Even though low-lying coastal areas are so highly exposed to hazards, why are so many coastal cities currently growing in population?
3. As MSLR risks increase, do you think that more people will move away from coastal cities? Why or why not?
4. If you were an engineer or planner looking to invest in *in situ* adaptation options for MSLR in a town or city, what would you consider in your cost-benefit analysis? Are there other factors that are not easy to measure in monetary terms that you would consider?

5. If you were in a community considering managed retreat/ planned relocation due to MSLR, what questions would you have for public authorities? How would you think about this decision?
6. Who do you think should pay for pre-planned relocations in your home country? What about post-event relocation?
7. Do people living in wealthy countries have an obligation to people living in small island states to try reducing greenhouse gas emissions and slow the rate of MSLR? If a small island state becomes uninhabitable due to MSLR, what should the international community do?
8. The government of the Maldives is actively building artificial islands to house people in locations high enough to keep their homes above future mean sea levels. Should wealthy countries be paying for poorer island countries to do the same?

Chapter 5: Data and Methods for Modeling Climate-Related Migration

1. What are potential benefits of being able to model and possibly predict climate-related migration? What are potential pitfalls or limitations?
2. What are some of the challenges associated with data for studying climate-related migration? Can you think of ways that these challenges could be overcome?
3. Who might be left out of datasets used in climate-related migration research? Why does this matter?
4. What modeling methods seem especially promising to you? What are some of that method's strengths and weaknesses?
5. How might AI influence the way that researchers study and/or model climate-related migration?
6. Why do you think more researchers don't use mixed methods? What are possible pros and cons of such an approach?

Chapter 6: Policy Considerations

1. What are the key international agreements that are intended to the causes of climate change?
2. Can you name and explain the differences between key international agreements that exist and might be relevant to managing climate-related migration and displacement?
3. Do you think we need a new international agreement to address climate-related migration & displacement? Or are existing agreements sufficient? Should the requirement to help climate migrants or displaced people be legally binding?
4. Are international agreements generally effective for dealing with climate change and/or climate related migration & displacement? Is there any way of enforcing them?
5. How could the Fund for responding to Loss and Damage be used to address issues related to climate-related migration? How might this work?

6. As mentioned, the term “climate refugee” does not exist under international law. Should climate-related migrants and displaced people be included in the existing legal definition of a refugee? Why or why not?
7. How can human rights frameworks help strengthen protections for climate-related migrants?
8. What level of policy (international, regional, national) do you think is likely to be most effective to address climate-related migration? In what ways?

Chapter 7: Emerging Issues and Future Directions

1. How would you describe your identity using the intersectional approach shown in Box 7.2? How might an intersectional approach help us understand climate-related migration, in terms of who migrates and why? What dimensions of identity do you think are important to consider?
2. How could climate change and climate-related migration impact health? How could health challenges differ and change across stages of migration (in origin locations, throughout the migration journey, and in destination locations)? What health services are needed to respond?
3. Do you think there is such a thing as a “climate haven”? Is this a useful concept or not?
4. How is the term ‘threshold’ used in the book? Why is the identification and understanding of thresholds potentially important to understanding climate-related migration? Can you think of a specific example of a threshold that might be important?
5. What are some known unknowns and unknown unknowns that you can imagine in the future that might influence climate-related migration?
6. What questions do you still have after reading this book? What more do you think researchers should try to understand?