Climate and Migration Nexus

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Climate Change and Migration Drivers

Concept of a **migration driver**

Limitations of the data available

All very context-specific: migration as a result of climate change needs to be analysed as part of a broader framework

Many questions on how to disaggregate the factors that drive one to leave
e.g., nexus between climate and agriculture; climate and conflict

Key Facts:

1. **Displaced people rarely move far after climate disasters**

2. **Displaced people are more likely to migrate through a mitigation strategy to long-term changes**

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1. Natural Shocks: Limited Effect on Migration

Key fact: communities tend to avoid moving after natural disasters, if they can

- Rapid shocks (flooding, storms, earthquakes) rarely lead to important international migration
- Communities prefer to stay together, especially if they receive enough emergency support, **according to studies in South Asia and East Asia Pacific**
- **Migration tends to be internal** due to lack of resources

International migration = Last resort

Note: more research is needed in Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East, Central America, as findings may be specific to the studied contexts (Bangladesh, Nepal, Thailand)

What about returns?

- People displaced by natural disasters are **likely to return home**, and do so more rapidly than those displaced by other factors (e.g. conflict)
  - According to previous research, on average, 90% of affected populations relocated after a disaster returned
  - Factors impacting returns include: home ownership, household income, age, education level, employment opportunities, scope of the disaster and reconstruction efforts

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2. Gradual Changes and Departures

Examples of gradual changes due to climate change

- Prolonged periods of extreme heat
  - Could affect 10% of the population in Central and Eastern Africa
  - Has already caused a 90% reduction in the Lake Chad surface area
- Droughts
  - Affecting over 10% of the population in North Africa
- Desertification:
  - Significant loss of arable land annually

Long-term environmental changes impact migration aspirations and actual departures, especially as repeated shocks and other gradual degradation undermine efforts to build back:

- Households likely to **organize migration to secure regular streams of resources,** particularly in regions with low agricultural productivity
  - Critical role of remittances in relation to community resilience
- Migration decisions made at household-level, as part of wider strategies **to mitigate changes in the environment**, to oppose to the notion of "passivity" of communities
- But climate change may also **reduce ability to migrate**, trapping some populations

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Mitigation Strategies to Climate Change

3 main mitigation strategies related to migration when it comes to climate change:

- **Internal mobility** as the main strategy to adapt to climate change
- **Accelerated urbanization**: pressure on cities in the developing world
- **International migration**: limited correlation between climate change and international migration

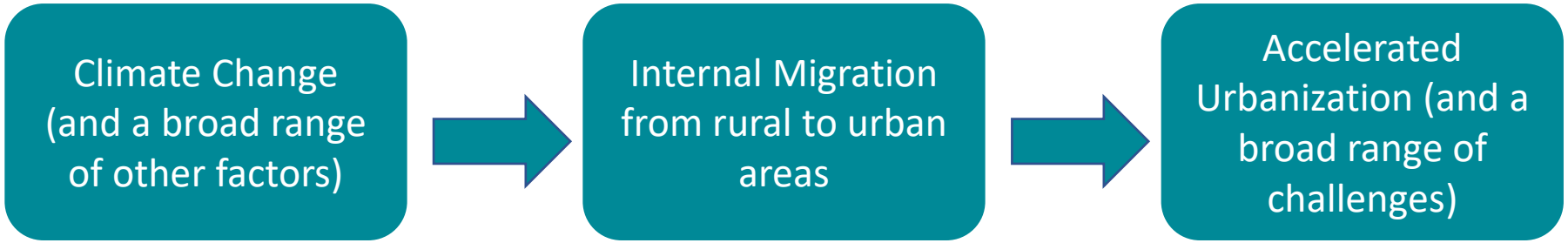
Mitigation Strategies: Internal Mobility as the Main Adaptation Strategy

People displaced by natural disasters are **most likely to move internally**

- Internal migration as a long-standing coping mechanism
  - 1960-2000: the majority of African migrants at the South of the Sahara only moved a short distance
    - Also due to lack of resources to move further
  - According to a study, by 2050, Sub-Saharan Africa could see as many as 86 million internal migrants,
    - Or as few as 26 million if the effects of climate change are better mitigated

- Studies conducted in a few different contexts (Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Asia) show a **preference for internal mobility**
  - Research conducted in several Asian countries have shown that declines in agriculture productivity & fewer green spaces have resulted in higher likelihood of moving internally

Mitigation Strategies: Accelerated Urbanization in the Developing World

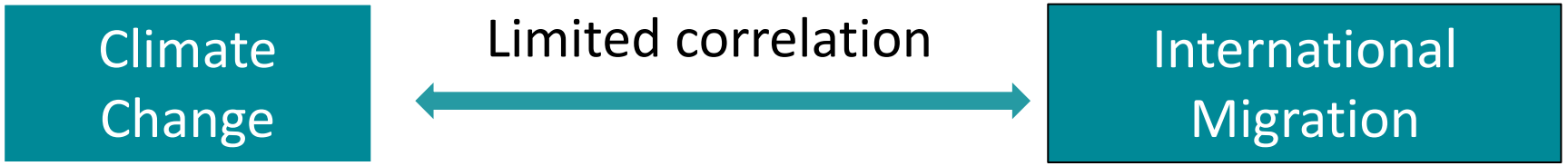


Number of people living in urban areas in Africa:

400 million in 2010 ⟷ 1.26 billion in 2050

Critical issues related to urbanization, urban planning

Mitigation Strategies: Limited International Migration



- No evidence of mass migration from Africa or the Middle East to Europe
  - (already acknowledged by European Commission in 2013)
- Only those with resources are likely to move towards Europe
- Migration due to climate change is not a linear process
    - But some unforeseen developments: Migration from Central America to the U.S. after the two hurricanes (2020), connected to a range of other factors

Thank you

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