

Master thesis 'environmentally-induced forced migration'

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Harry Wijnberg (Ing.)

- Forestry Engineer
- 20 years experience with refugees/ asylum seekers
- Former member of Dutch Think Tank on Climate Change and Adaptation
- Chair Living Space for Environmental Refugees (LISER)
- MA student Migration and Integration, Erasmus University , Rotterdam, Netherlands



Contact:

Antoniestraat 19
2011 CN Haarlem
The Netherlands
T: +31 (0)23 5332892
info@liser.org

www.liser.org

- “An effective and humanitarian approach to the refugee issue must focus on causes as much as effects.”

Sadako Ogata, High
Commissioner for Refugees
(UNHCR), Refugees, march
1991)



Environmental induced migration
(LiSER)

Migration induced environmental degradation
(UNHCR)

"No conflict is too remote
to affect local environment", Kofi Annan, 2002

Pozo Negro, Islas Canarias 2005



"Is this person a political refugee, or an economic migrant? And this person? Is he an environmental refugee? And what about him!"

Research Questions

- How did the construct 'environmental refugees' develop over the years
- Do 'environmental refugees' exist? What are they? Definitions? Where? How many? What are there needs? Who has to protect them?
- Are there enough arguments to include 'environmental migration' within future mainstream migration research?
- Is it possible to create a scientific base for improving the plight of environmental refugees/migrants?

Punta Paloma, Spain, 2006



Milestones

- 1948 William Vogt
 - Ecological displaced persons
- 1985 Essam El Hinnawi
 - Environmental refugees
- 1995 Norman Myers
 - Sea Level rise, 25 million and more
- 1999 Serageldin
 - More than traditional refugees
- 2004 Toledo Initiative
 - Synergy, Movement, Assistance, Restoration
- 2007 IPCC
 - 'Population movement' of hundreds of millions
- 2007 Security Council session
 - 200 million displaced by 2050 because of sea level rise

3. Definitions

- Definitions 'migration'
- Definitions 'environment'
- Definitions 'disasters'
- Definitions 'fleeing' and 'refugee'
- Definitions 'environmental refugees'
 - 5 visions/ perceptions
 - Juridical (UNHCR)
 - Humanitarian (ICRC)
 - 3 definitions

Definitions 'Environmental Refugees' (A)

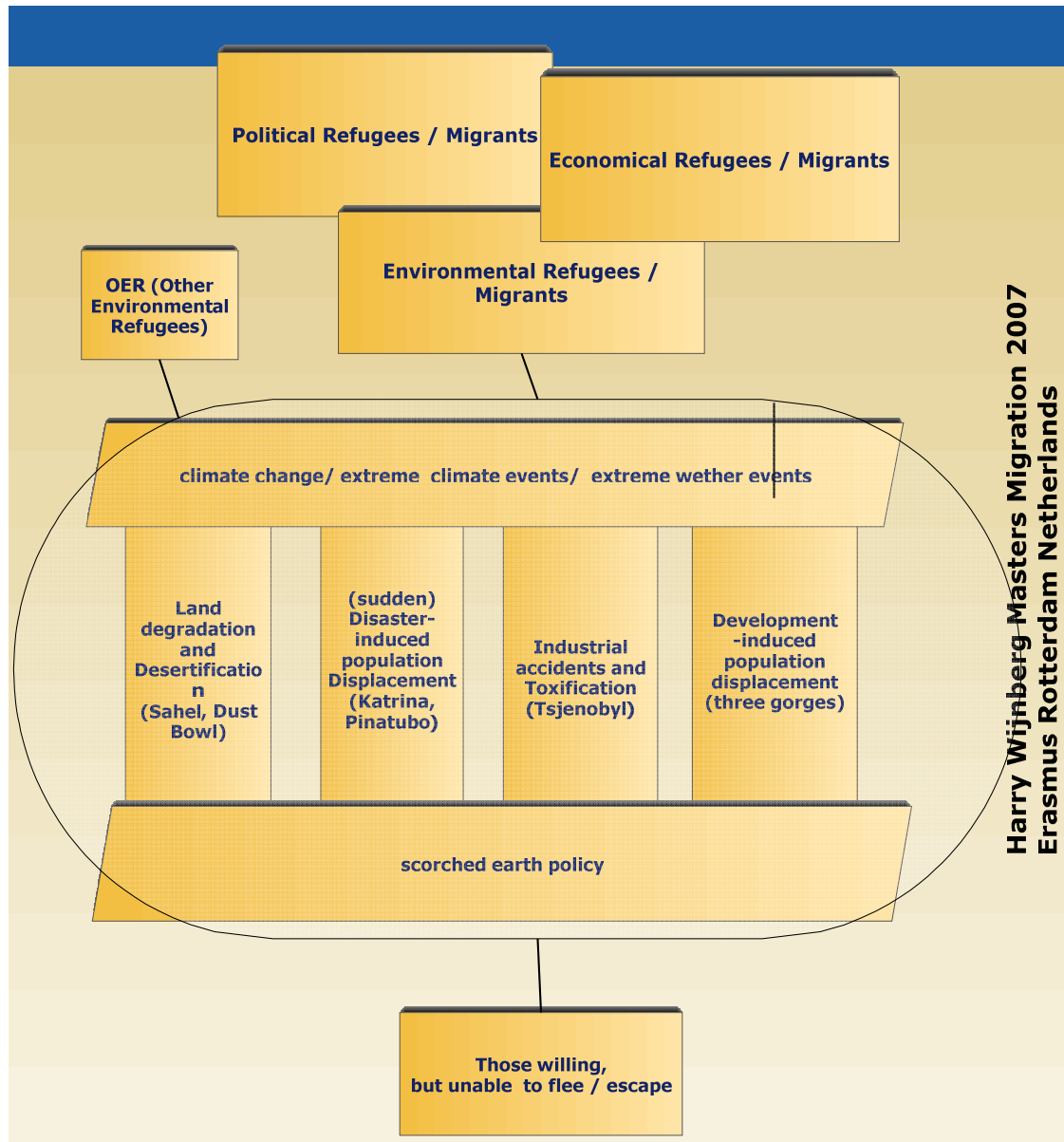
- El-Hinnawi (1985:4):
- "Environmental refugees are those people who have been forced to leave their traditional habitat, temporarily or permanently, because of a marked environmental disruption (natural and/or triggered by people) that jeopardized their existence and/ or seriously affected the quality of their life.
- By 'environmental disruption' is meant any physical, chemical and/or biological changes in the ecosystem (or the resource base) that render it temporarily or permanently, unsuitable to support human life."

Definitions 'Environmental Refugees' (B)

- Myers (Myers en Kent 1995)
- "Environmental refugees are persons who can no longer gain a secure livelihood in their traditional homelands because of environmental factors of unusual scope, notably drought, desertification, deforestation, soil erosion, water shortages and climate change, also natural disasters such as cyclones, storm surges and floods. In face of these environmental threats, people feel they have no alternative but to seek sustenance elsewhere, whether within their own countries or beyond and wether on a semi-permanent of permanent basis."

Definitions 'Environmental Refugees' (C)

- Crisp (UNHCR 2006:10):
- "People who are displaced from or who feel obliged to leave their usual place of residence, because their lives, livelihoods and welfare have been placed at serious risk as a result of adverse environmental, ecological or climatic processes and events. "
- Crisp distinguishes:
 - Processes: climate change, global warming, desertification, soil degradation, sea level rise etc.
 - Events: Earthquake, volcanic eruptions, hurricanes, floods, droughts, etc.



Research Theory and Results

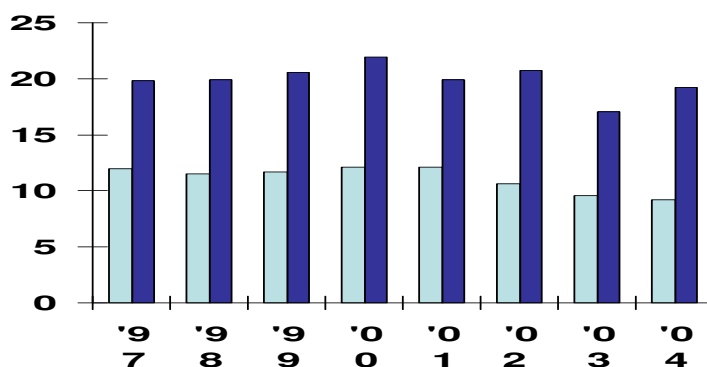
- More interest in subject by UNHCR
 - Negative
- More interest by public and journalists
 - Positive
- More interest by scholars/ scientists
 - Positive
- More interest by international politicians and leaders of state
 - Positive
- Per disaster different forms and flows of migration
 - Positive

UNHCR

- Core Mandate UNHCR
 - Money and Mandate
 - No prosecution, wrong fleeing motive, IDP
- Uncertain, inconsistent, unpredictable in approach to 'environmental refugees'
- Initiative Kofi Annan: 'Global Humanitarian Forum' research so called 'environmental refugees'

Refugees (light) and others of concern (dark) UNHCR 1997 / 2004

(UNHCR information 2005 June 17)



Humanitarian Law

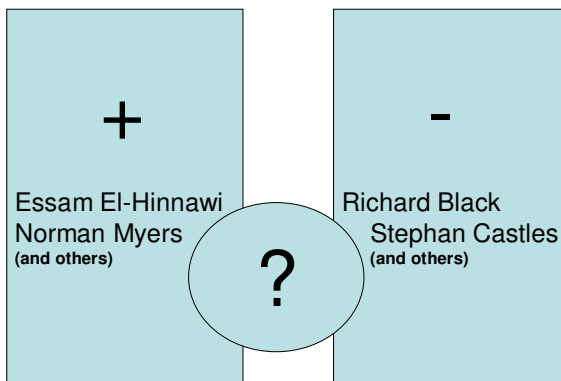
Unlike UNHCR, the ICRC (Red Cross and Red Crescent) does not base its activities on the 1951 Convention or the 1967 Protocol, but rather on international humanitarian law:

"It is the breakout of armed conflict, whether international or otherwise, that gives rise to the application of international humanitarian law (the Geneva Convention of 1949 and their Additional Protocols of 1977).

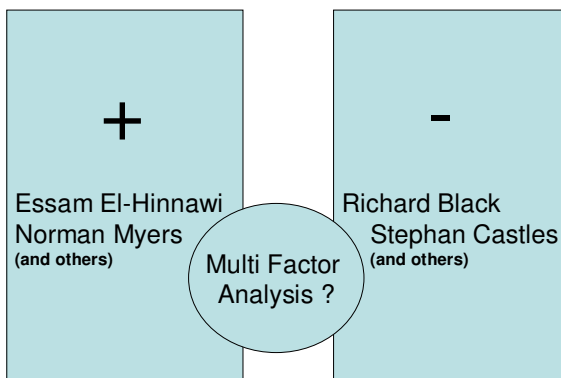
It is of no importance whether the refugees to be protected have crossed an international border because of well-founded fears of persecution or by reason of armed conflict, or whether they have moved from one part of their own country to another."



Scientific "Players"



Scientific "Players"



Other “players”

- UNHCR
- Red Cross / ICRC
- IPCC 2007
- Politicians / State leaders
- Corporate Business
- Security Council

Development construct 'environmental refugees'

- According to Saunders (1999): 25 authors delivered key elements to construct 'environmental refugees'
- Thereafter:
 - Oliver Smith
 - Insurance / reinsurance
 - Homer Dixon
 - Safety effects of environmental migration
 - Leiderman:
 - Mining
 - Ecological Restoration
 - Unrecognised link with 4R approach UNHCR (Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction)

Studied cases

- China 1660 to 1680
- Sahel drought mid 80s
- Chernobyl Russia
- Hurricane Mitch Central America
- Volcano Pinatubo Philippines
- Three Gorges Dam China
- Bangladesh
- Asian Tsunami
- Tuvalu Small Island State
- Katrina / Louisiana

Sahel

- Forest clearance contributes to desertification and drought as soil erodes and water supplies dry up.
- Ethiopia's highlands supported agrarian civilizations for millennia, but 90 per cent of its forests have been cut down since 1990.
- some 20,000 square kilometers of land in Ethiopia have already lost so much soil that they can no longer grow crops.
- As desertification – also caused by over-cultivation, overgrazing and poor irrigation practices – advances, one person in six in Mali and Burkina Faso has had to leave land turning to dust.
- **About 135 million people are in danger of becoming environmental refugees.**
 - INCCCD, 1994,1 -



Hurricane Mitch (2)

- Numbers of internally displaced persons: Honduras 1.482.659, Nicaragua 368.261, Guatemala 105.055, El Salvador 28.4523, Costa Rica 3.007, Panama 8.408:
Total: 1.995.842 IDP's
- International:
 - unknown number going to USA got stuck in Mexico
 - 100.000 Honduran refugees reached USA (estimate)
- Temporary Protection Status (TPS) in USA, and renewal of TPS proof of cross border migration and prolonged period of migration
 - [1] zie Grunewald F, Geoffroy V de, Lister, S.: 'Vulnerabilities in Central America and Hurricane Mitch and the disaster response', HPN Network Paper, 2000
 - [2] zie Mary Jo McConathay, M.J.: 'No place to call home', Sierra Magazine, pagina 2, 2000

Pinatubo (June 1991)



- Eruption of mount Pinatubo (Philippines) was the biggest and most powerful volcanic eruption of 20th century
- 847 casualties
- Timely evacuation order (7 april): Evacuation order 40.000 population within 10 kilometre zone.
- Later a further evacuation (june) of 331.000 people in 40 km zone around the volcano

Pinatubo (2)

Castles: "either this or that":

"In the Philippines, by contrast, many of the people displaced by the Mount Pinatubo eruption were still living in temporary camps or squatter settlements several years later. This points to the important role of the state: a strong, efficient state can deal with environmental problems much better than a weak and possibly corrupt state. The key problem then is perhaps not environmental change itself but the ability of different communities and countries to cope with it. This in turn is closely linked to problems of under-development and North-South relationships."



Blaikie "this and that"

Formula of Blaikie (et al): $R = H \times V / C$.

Meaning: **Risk = Hazard x Vulnerability / Capacity.**

"A disaster is not simply the occurrence of a natural hazard. Many floods, earthquakes, or other phenomena happen without resulting in a disaster. The risk that a disaster evolves, is the outcome of the combination of such a phenomenon with the vulnerability of population, communities, households or individuals that are affected. A disaster occurs actually at the interface of hazard and vulnerability. Both ingredients have to be present^[1]."

Multi factor analysis necessary for causal link

Asian Tsunami (2)

- 213.000 People died;
- more then 524.000 persons indjured (until Jan 4, 2005)
- 20.730 persons missing
- **More then 1.158.000 displaced persons**
- More then 1.124.000 homeless people

Bron: International Federation of Red Cross, operation update - 23, Period covered until 19 Jan 2005 <http://www.ifrc.org>

Summary Case studies:

- Ten case studies from which one historical and nine recent
- Almost always multifactor problem situations
- Complex cause – consequence relations
- Different level and quality of studies per disaster
- Almost always in combination with economic and or political causes (drivers)
- Causes purely human, purely natural and many in between
- Migration can last long
- Migration can be cross border
- Timely evacuation limits numbers of casualties
- $R = H \times V / C$
(Risk = Hazard x Vulnerability / Capacity)
- Risk for negative impact from measures taken against Climate Change (Co2lonialism)
- Almost never longitudinal studies
- These refugees are not yet in disaster statistics
- Can follow lines of historical migration
- Examples of Temporary Protection Status
- Minority groups, the landless, the poor are extra vulnerable
- Risk second disaster, expropriation
- Many disasters are water related
- Collapse of infrastructure
- Huge negative economic consequences
- Poor countries more vulnerable, but rich countries not at all invulnerable

Consequences for Migration studies

- The dominant theory in migration studies that 'environmental refugees' do NOT exist is no longer valid.
- The study of environmentally induced forced migration should be a key future area in migration studies.

Conclusion

- Since 1993 the UNHCR is not willing to help environmental refugees
- The UNHCR should have a more certain, consistent, predictable response to the Environmental Refugees
- The UNHCR does help (sometimes) victims of natural disasters IDP's (review of UNHCR's decision-making process), including IDP's for natural disasters/ environmental degradation
- The environmental refugees should be helped under a new Convention

– Děkuji vám
– Thank you