



Book Review of Krieger,
Tim, Panke, Diana and
Pregernig, Michael (eds.)
2020. *Environmental
Conflicts, Migration and
Governance*. Bristol: Bristol
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SAIJA NIEMI

The book *Environmental Conflicts, Migration and Governance*, edited by Tim Krieger, Diana Panke and Michael Pregernig, is intended to fill in a gap in literature by showing the interconnectedness between migration, environmental and resource conflicts and the roles of governance from an interdisciplinary perspective (pp. 7–8). The editors wish to make a significant and a novel contribution, which is not only scientifically but also politically relevant and timely. They claim that there are books available on topics of environmental conflicts, on migration and on national, regional and international governance, but that these three areas of research are seldom brought together (p. 8). The 19 contributors of the book represent disciplines such as sociology, political science, international relations, sustainability governance, political economy, law and migration and conflict studies. The contributors have different approaches to the topic, and they give different emphasis in their writings on the phenomena of migration, environmental and resource conflicts and governance.

The book includes 12 chapters and covers four main themes: environmental and resource conflicts; migration and role of migration governance on an individual level; national, regional and international migration governance; and effects of migration on conflicts and governance on migration and conflicts. The first theme, focusing on environmental and resource conflicts, is covered by Chapters 2, 3 and 4. Tobias Ide demonstrates in Chapter 2 that increased renewable resource scarcity is not likely to lead to inter-state conflict but rather, in certain contexts, increases the risk of low-intensity intra-state conflicts. Resource scarcity may not be the main driver for a conflict but may aggravate the other drivers that already exist. Due to conflicts being low intensity, migration is more likely to be within states and short distance. In Chapter 3, Indra de Soysa discusses the resource-curse phenomenon and shows how the abundance of non-renewable resources in a country with only moderately functioning institutions can lead to a serious failure of governance and corruption. De Soysa claims that (forced) small- and large-scale migration can occur directly through

BOOK REVIEW

HUP HELSINKI
UNIVERSITY
PRESS

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Saija Niemi

Senior Researcher in
ILMASI Climate Migration
Project, Migration Institute
of Finland, FI

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armed coercion, repression and civil war, and indirectly through economic hardship. De Soysa interestingly explains how political repression and economic freedom vary in oil-producing and non-oil-producing countries. Through the concepts of looting and uprooting, de Soysa discusses the role of poor governance performance and conflict in leading to out-migration. In Chapter 4, Lisa Thalheimer and Christian Webersik show with a case study of Somalia that conflict, rather than climate change, is the main reason for migration. They present how conflict exacerbates environmental problems as it affects traditional mechanisms to cope with natural disasters, and that it also changes traditional patterns of migration. Thalheimer and Webersik recognise that the drivers for human mobility in the context of climate change are complex and interrelated.

The second theme, which is covered in Chapters 5 and 6, brings forth how and under what conditions migration selection (who migrates) and sorting (to where), on an individual level, influence whether persons react to climate- and resource-related conflicts with a migration choice. It is also shown how governance structures impact where individuals move. In Chapter 5, Diane C. Bates considers environmental change as both a cause and an effect of migration. She describes the importance of the type of environmental change and the level of control that migrants have over their own movement. Bates writes about the effect of slow- and sudden-onset environmental events on how much power people have in determining where to move, and how push-pull factors have different importance in these events. She also shows the role of governments in facilitating and restricting movements. In Chapter 6, Tim Krieger, Laura Renner and Lena Schmid discuss sorting, which they consider to be the last link in a chain of migration processes. They explain that sorting and push-pull factors depend on the migration governance in receiving countries, which may not accept certain types of migrants such as low-skilled migrants.

For the third theme, the collective level is presented in Chapters 7, 8 and 9. Here, the national, regional and international aspects gain importance. Marc Helbling (Chapter 7) explains migration governance at the state level and bases his writing on the Immigration Policies in Comparison (IMPIC) dataset. He describes various types of immigration policies and how they have become liberal or restrictive in time, and how they have impacted migration. In Chapter 8, Federica Cristani, Elisa Fornalé and Sandra Lavenex state that regional environmental migration governance plays an important role. They show how Latin American governments have developed national and regional responses in relation to people moving for environmental reasons. In Chapter 9, Martin Geiger questions the role of global migration governance regime including the International Organization for Migration, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme. He also shares a critical perspective on the Global Compacts on migration and refugees.

The fourth theme, written about in Chapters 10 and 11, concentrates on explaining how forced migration affects conflict dynamics in host countries, and how natural resource governance regimes impact conflicts and migration. Seraina Rüeegger and Heidrun Bohnet argue in Chapter 10 that forced migration under some conditions may induce conflict in host countries. For example, they show that unequal treatment of migrants and local population can cause conflicts. Rüeegger and Bohnet conclude that there is a need for more research on displacement and violence to allow governments to understand that the actual risk for security from accepting refugees is far lower than is often perceived. In Chapter 11, J. Andrew Grant presents

how two natural resource governance regimes, the Kimberley Process and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, have managed to reduce conflict and migration in some countries. In Chapter 12, Günther G. Schulze concludes with explaining, for instance, the causality between environmental conflict, migration and governance.

It can be challenging to combine three such large phenomena as migration (environmental and natural resource), conflicts and governance in a book. This is evident in some chapters in which I felt migration and displacement aspects were addressed superficially. Also, I think it would have benefitted the book if the contributors had discussed in more detail the use of some widely used concepts already in Chapter 1 and in subsequent chapters of the book. For example, migration is defined in vague and broad terms as ‘permanent or semi-permanent change of residence’ (p. 4). At times, it is not clear if some of the contributors recognise the difference between migration and displacement as well as the related concepts such as ‘refugee’. Refugee concepts (such as ‘climate refugee’), and the debate around the concept-related challenges when talking about climate and environmental changes induced migration and displacement, are not explained properly. The use of concepts such as ‘economic refugee’, ‘environmental refugee’ and ‘short-term refugee’ in some of the chapters show some lack of understanding of displacement and its governance including the legal significance of concepts. Clarifying the use of these concepts and linking them to the ongoing conceptual discussion in migration and refugee research would have been appropriate.

As is recognised also in the book, there is no consensus among researchers on exactly to what extent climate and environmental changes cause conflict, and how much climate and environmental changes and conflicts drive migration and displacement. However, it is expected that the significance of these phenomena increases in the future. For instance, the Groundswell report (Rigaud et al. 2018) estimates that alone in three regions – sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Latin America – without concrete climate and development action, just over 143 million people are forced to move within their own countries to escape the slow-onset impacts of climate change by 2050. Competition for fertile land and water resources are only some factors that may cause conflicts. The idea of partnerships and cooperation, which can be recognised also in environmental peacebuilding, is gaining more importance in preventing and dealing with environmental and natural resources related conflicts. This can also influence the need for people to move. Proper governance of migration and displacement, climate and environmental matters, and conflicts is crucial in addressing the current and future challenges at local, regional, national and global levels.

The book approaches the nexus of migration, environmental and natural resource conflicts and governance from several interesting viewpoints. It also presents some of the shortcomings in research, such as the need for more empirical work and identifying different government arrangements, which should be taken into consideration in the future so that we can better understand the relationships and best practices in connection to the nexus. It is true that there are gaps in literature when talking about the interconnectedness of migration, environmental conflict and governance. Thus, the book can help us to understand how complex these phenomena are and how they are related to each other. I would recommend this book to anyone interested in these issues.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

AUTHOR AFFILIATION

Saija Niemi

Senior Researcher in ILMASI Climate Migration Project, Migration Institute of Finland, FI

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