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# Routledge Handbook of Environmental Displacement and Migration

Edited by Robert McLeman and François Gemenne

# Routledge Handbook of Environmental Displacement and Migration

The last twenty years have seen a rapid increase in scholarly activity and publications dedicated to environmental migration and displacement, and the field has now reached a point in terms of profile, complexity, and sheer volume of reporting that a general review and assessment of existing knowledge and future research priorities is warranted. So far, such a product does not exist.

The *Routledge Handbook of Environmental Displacement and Migration* provides a state-of-the-science review of research on how environmental variability and change influence current and future global migration patterns and, in some instances, trigger large-scale population displacements. Drawing together contributions from leading researchers in the field, this compendium will become a go-to guide for established and newly interested scholars, for government and policymaking entities, and for students and their instructors. It explains theoretical, conceptual, and empirical developments that have been made in recent years; describes their origins and connections to broader topics including migration research, development studies, and international public policy and law; and highlights emerging areas where new and/or additional research and reflection are warranted.

The structure and the nature of the book allow the reader to quickly find a concise review relevant to conducting research or developing policy on particular topics, and to obtain a broad, reliable survey of what is presently known about the subject.

**Robert McLeman** is a former foreign service officer specializing in migration management and is presently Associate Professor of Geography and Environmental Studies at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Canada.

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“Environmental migration and displacement is a massive phenomenon, a new wicked universality whose political influence is felt everywhere. This book is important not only for those who document the pace and size of the phenomenon, but also for those in receiving countries who must learn how to cope with it.”

*Bruno Latour, sociologist and philosopher, France*

“This handbook allows us to anticipate impending disasters, such as the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami which was one of the first topics of discussion for my government, and the volume calls for rapid solutions. I am optimistic and I believe that we can save the planet, because the world has equipped itself with the knowledge and technology to do so. This is a most helpful guide for political parties who want to formulate responsible and vote winning policies. It’s a blueprint for NGOs interested in doing good. It’s the definitive guide on the subject and a good read.”

*Mohamed Nasheed, former President of the Maldives*

“This handbook is essential reading and a key teaching resource for everyone interested in an interdisciplinary approach to climate change and migration. McLeman and Gemenne succeed in bringing together a state of the art collection of articles that provide a comprehensive survey of current thinking, not only on the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of a quickly expanding field of research, but also on the available empirical evidence as well as current developments in the areas of law and policy.”

*Walter Kälin, Special Envoy of the Chairmanship of the Platform on Disaster Displacement*

“This handbook will be a resource for policy makers to identify the current state of the science on the impacts, responses and best practices relating to environmental migration and displacement.”

*Mary Robinson, President, Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice, Ireland*

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*Edited by Robert McLeman and François Gemenne*

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# Contents

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<i>Foreword by Robert McLeman and François Gemenne</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Foreword by Mary Robinson</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>xiii</i>
<i>List of figures</i>	<i>xiv</i>
<i>List of tables</i>	<i>xv</i>
<i>List of boxes</i>	<i>xvi</i>
<i>List of contributors</i>	<i>xvii</i>

## **PART I**

### **Existing knowledge, theories and methods 1**

1 Environmental migration research: evolution and current state of the science	3
<i>Robert McLeman and François Gemenne</i>	
2 Theories of voluntary and forced migration	17
<i>Etienne Piguet</i>	
3 Mobility, displacement and migration, and their interactions with vulnerability and adaptation to environmental risks	29
<i>W. Neil Adger, Ricardo Safra de Campos and Colette Mortreux</i>	
4 Environmental change and international migration: a review	42
<i>Luisa Veronis, Bonnie Boyd, Reiko Obokata, and Brittany Main</i>	
5 Immobility	71
<i>Caroline Zickgraf</i>	
6 Geospatial modeling and mapping	85
<i>Alex de Sherbinin and Ling Bai</i>	

## Contents

7	Modeling migration and population displacement in response to environmental and climate change: multilevel event history models <i>Jack DeWaard and Raphael J. Nawrotzki</i>	92
8	Estimating the population impacts of sea level rise <i>Katherine J. Curtis and Rachel S. Bergmans</i>	106
9	Qualitative research techniques: it's a case-studies world <i>François Gemenne</i>	117
10	Incorporating Indigenous knowledge in research <i>Tristan Pearce</i>	125
11	Gender, migration and (global) environmental change <i>Giovanna Gioli and Andrea Milan</i>	135
12	Environmental migrants, climate 'refugees' and sun-seeking expats: capturing the larger context of migration in a changing climate through appropriate and effective behavioural research <i>Dominic Kniveton, Sonja Ayeb-Karlsson and Christopher D. Smith</i>	151
<b>PART II</b>		
<b>Empirical evidence from regions</b>		<b>161</b>
13	Environmental change and migration: a review of West African case studies <i>Victoria van der Land, Clemens Romankiewicz and Kees van der Geest</i>	163
14	Burkina Faso: the adaptation-migration policy nexus in a drying climate <i>Nakia Pearson</i>	178
15	Fleeing from arid lands: pastoralism in the context of climate change <i>Julia Blocher</i>	188
16	Climate and risk of migration in South Africa <i>Rachel Licker and Marina Mastrorillo</i>	205
17	Deforestation, drought and environmental migration in Brazil: an overview <i>Erika Pires Ramos and Lilian Yamamoto</i>	216
18	Internal migration in Bangladesh: a comparative analysis of coastal, environmentally challenged, and other districts <i>Bimal Kanti Paul and Avantika Ramekar</i>	225

19	Environmental stressors and population mobility in China: causes, approaches and consequences <i>Yan Tan</i>	238
20	Environmental migration in Mexico <i>Daniel H. Simon</i>	257
21	Transnational approaches to remittances, risk reduction, and disaster relief: evidence from post-Typhoon Haiyan experiences of Filipino immigrants in Canada <i>Reiko Obokata and Luisa Veronis</i>	270
22	Population displacements and migration patterns in response to Hurricane Katrina <i>Elizabeth Fussell</i>	277
23	A community-based model for resettlement: lessons from coastal Louisiana <i>Julie K. Maldonado and Kristina Peterson</i>	289
24	Social and cultural dimensions of environment-related mobility and planned relocations in the South Pacific <i>Dalila Gharbaoui</i>	300
<b>PART III</b>		
<b>Legal and policy considerations</b>		<b>321</b>
25	Definitions and concepts <i>Benoît Mayer</i>	323
26	Human rights, environmental displacement and migration <i>Dug Cubie</i>	329
27	Climate, migration and displacement: exploring the politics of preventative action <i>Craig A. Johnson</i>	342
28	Environmental migration and international political security: rhetoric, reality and questions <i>Stern Mwakalimi Kita and Clionadh Raleigh</i>	356
29	Green grabbing-induced displacement <i>Sara Vigil</i>	370

## Contents

30	Climate-induced community relocations: institutional challenges and human rights protections <i>Robin Bronen</i>	388
31	UNHCR's perspectives and activities on displacement in the context of climate change <i>Marine Franck</i>	403
32	Environmental change and human mobility: perspectives from the World Bank <i>Susan F. Martin, Jonas Bergmann, Hanspeter Wyss and Kanta Kumari Rigaud</i>	408
33	Human mobility in the Anthropocene: perspectives from UN Environment <i>Oli Brown and Brian Wittbold</i>	415
34	Platform on Disaster Displacement, follow-up to the Nansen Initiative: addressing the protection needs of persons displaced across borders in the context of disasters and climate change <i>The Platform on Disaster Displacement</i>	421
35	A moment of opportunity to define the global governance of environmental migration: perspectives from the International Organization for Migration <i>Mariam Traore Chazalnoel and Dina Ionesco</i>	426
36	Where do we go from here? Reflections on the future of environmental migration and displacement research <i>Lori M. Hunter</i>	430
	<i>Index</i>	437

# Theories of voluntary and forced migration

*Etienne Piguet*

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## Introduction

No clearcut delineation can be made between voluntary and forced migration, but it is fair to say that most attempts at theorizing migration – in the sense of suggesting general frameworks of understanding based on regularities<sup>1</sup> – address cases where potential migrants retain a fairly high level of agency and are not “forced” to move. On the contrary, as stated by Zolberg: “The most obvious thing about refugee flows is [for most social scientists] that they are unruly” (Zolberg 1983: 25), and thus hardly suitable for theorization. However, with the growing salience of concepts such as “mixed migration” (Van Hear, Brubaker, and Bessa 2009) and “survival migration” (Betts 2013), and calls to go beyond the structure versus agency dualism in migration studies (Bakewell 2010), a promising perspective of investigation opens up for re-embedding forced migration within a more general migration theory framework or within the even broader framework of a theory of social transformation, development and crisis (Castles 2003; Lubkemann 2008; Van Hear 2010; de Haas 2014). As I have argued elsewhere, such a move would also be fruitful in the specific case of environmentally driven migration studies (Piguet 2013), a subfield which developed to a large extent in isolation but is marked by a shift from monocausal environmental “push” theories toward “a greater integration of context, including micro-level, meso-level, and macro-level interactions” (Hunter, Luna, and Norton 2015: 377). Achieving a full reconciliation of these schools of thought is beyond the scope of this chapter, but I will try here to pave the way by giving a brief overview of some of the main theoretical directions suggested by researchers of both voluntary and forced migration.

## Theories of voluntary migration

Why do people choose to migrate? For more than a century, the social sciences have been attempting to answer that question, which concerns geography as well as psychology, political economy and economics, sociology, anthropology and demography. As shown twenty years ago by Massey in his classic plea for theoretical pluralism in migration studies, one can consider each school of thought to have contributed valuable conceptual enlargements that are often complementary rather than antagonistic (Massey et al. 1994). These theories have led to unequal

but often quite satisfactory results in terms of simulation and prediction where “there is little room for exclusive theoretical truth claim” (de Haas 2014: 11). They allow us to draw a reasonably coherent picture of the different factors and causal mechanisms that are at play in relation to migration. The recent history of migration studies can be understood, in that perspective, as a progressive enlargement of the spectrum of explanation mechanisms, although it is clear that no unified and specific theory of such a multifaceted phenomenon will ever exist (Brettell and Hollifield 2014; Castles, de Haas, and Miller 2014).

Among the most used, the neoclassical school – not to be confounded with the much broader push-pull approach – points to the central importance of economic factors and to the process of utility maximization by individual agents that underlies migration decisions. The expectation of higher wages and better employment leads those people who are not averse toward risk and can afford the cost of displacement to consider migration, whereas others discard it (Harris and Todaro 1970). Behaviourist geographers acknowledged this general framework but added – among other things – that actors have only limited access to information and that their rationality is thus bounded, leading them to pursue their satisfaction in an incremental way by seizing opportunities rather than by targeting the unique move that would maximize their utility in absolute terms (Wolpert 1965). Considering the ways in which people are aware of migration opportunities and risk, and the ways in which they process this information, thus appears paramount. Both the neoclassical and the behaviourist conceptions fit nicely into Everett Lee’s famous, but very general, push-pull model (Figure 2.1), which mentions demographic, economic and political factors in the areas of departure and destinations, along with intervening opportunities and obstacles, as interacting to produce migrations:

No matter how short or how long, how easy or how difficult, every act of migration involves an origin, a destination, and an intervening set of obstacles. We include the distance of the move as one that is always present.

(Lee 1966: 49)

Although this has been forgotten by the many adherents and critics of the push-pull framework, one can note that Lee goes in the same subjectivist direction as Wolpert when he states that “it is not so much the actual factors at origin and destination as the perception of these factors which results in migration” (Lee 1966: 51).

Demographic approaches conceptualize the decision process as heavily influenced by the age (life-cycle) and family (life-course) status of the potential migrant: a young single student,

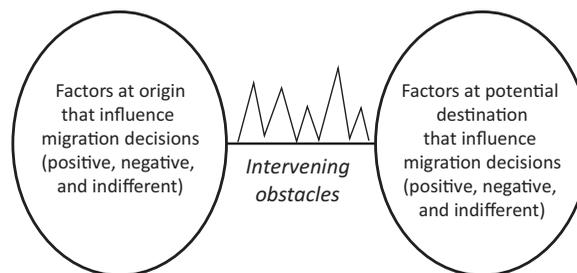


Figure 2.1 Origin and destination factors and intervening obstacles in migration, after Lee’s (1966) model

a family whose children are not yet in school or a recently divorced person will have much stronger incentives to move than people in other situations (Leslie and Richardson 1961; Plane 1993; Wingens et al. 2011). In the same vein, the human capital approach (Sjaastad 1962) stresses that the propensity to migrate varies according to a person's level of education and skills, and that migration itself can bring a significant contribution to the accumulation of human capital by allowing the migrant to acquire valuable degrees and experience. Numerous authors use a framework inspired by Bourdieu's distinction between forms of capital (Bourdieu and Passeron 1978) and stress the importance of social and cultural capital as both a determinant for and a consequence of migration (Findlay 2011), and more specifically environmental migration (McLeman and Smit 2006). More recently, mobility studies (Urry 2007) have contributed to the conceptualization of migration in connection with various forms of capital by emphasizing that the very fact of moving and "knowing how to move" can be considered as an asset in itself, that facilitates subsequent moves (Tarrus 1989) and forms a component of spatial capital (R  rat and Lees 2011). Other researchers stressed that understanding migration could not be dissociated from understanding the reasons that prevent migration and thus foster voluntary or involuntary immobility (Fischer 1999; Hammar et al. 1997; Carling 2002) a credo that found some echo in forced migration studies (Lubkemann 2008) as well as in research on environmentally induced migration with the notion of "trapped populations" (Black et al. 2013: S33).

A significant conceptual improvement in migration theory can be associated with the "new economics of labour migration" (NELM) (Stark 1991). Central to this approach is the idea that the household, rather than the individual, should be considered as the decision-making unit regarding migration. Phenomena that might appear irrational through the lenses of the preceding schools of thought can be understood as rational when viewed this way. It is possible, for example, that while the departure of one member of a household brings no absolute increase in earnings, it nevertheless makes sense as a collective risk-diversification strategy. Another important concept brought to the fore by the NELM is the importance of relative deprivation: the decision to move can follow a degradation of the situation of a person or household relative to the rest of society, without any change in its absolute purchasing power. This is a central element that complicates the relationship between migration and economic development and explains a possible migration hump where migration increases rather than decrease with growth (de Haas 2007).

Theories rooted in social psychology and especially in theories of motivation and decision have also made a significant contribution to the understanding of migration intentions. Tartakovsky and Schwartz (2001) distinguish three types of motives for moving (preservation of the self and the quest for security, personal development and materialism), whereas De Jong and Fawcett (1981) point toward seven categories of improvement expectations: material life, status, comfort, stimulation, autonomy, affiliation and morality. These motivations interact with social and cultural norms as well as individual characteristics such as gender and personality. The propensity to take risks and the locus of control (the extent to which an individual believes himself or herself to be in control of events that affect his or her life) are often seen as central psychological dimensions in this regard (Winchic and Carment 1989; Chirkov et al. 2007; Boneva and Frieze 2001); they interact with the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction and shape migration intentions (Stinner and Van Loon 1992).

Among recent contributions to migration theory, the network approach – rooted in older concepts such as chain migration and social capital – is of great relevance (Boyd 1989; Epstein 2008; Tilly 2007). Central here is the idea that contacts with already expatriated friends or members of one's close or distant family are significant assets that usually facilitate and encourage

migration (De Jong 2000; Epstein and Gang 2006). According to Haug (2008), five mechanisms explain the impact of networks on migration:

- affinities (the existence of relatives and friends at the place of residence/destination reduces/increases the tendency to migrate),
- information (the more information channels, the more influential such information is on the decision to migrate),
- facilitation (relatives and friends promote migration to their own places of residence by facilitating adjustment to the new location),
- conflict (intra-familial conflicts within the community of origin cause migration), and
- support (families may encourage members to migrate for work, e.g., as a strategy to secure the household income).

In addition to affinities at home, networks might also discourage the move by providing dismal information about opportunities abroad or by putting additional constraints on the potential migrant (Faist 1997; Collyer 2005; de Haas 2010). An interesting and yet under-researched question in that context is the respective impact of weak versus strong, and family versus nonfamily, networks (Herman 2006). Another issue is the impact of new technologies of information and communication (NTIC) on networks and the way they might significantly facilitate migration and reduce distances (Dekker and Engbersen 2014), and also more broadly transform aspiration of potential migrants through the circulation of norms and values.

The line of thinking pioneered by network theory stresses the linkages between expatriates and potential migrants and can be associated with the general paradigmatic shift that has occurred in migration studies, from a conception of migration as a once-and-for-all movement between two geographical spaces, to the conception of a transnational space of flow within which migrants move without losing contact with their region of origin (Palloni et al. 2001; Faist 1997; Vertovec 1999; Portes 2001). This idea is also central in contemporary theories of globalization, often inspired by the neo-Marxist world system theory (Nikolinakos 1975; Massey et al. 1993: 444). Applied to migration, such theories point toward the connections between different kinds of flows and different segments of social and economic life often previously considered as isolated from one another but that contribute to keep peripheral states in a situation that provides a “reserve army” of cheap labor to the core of the capitalist economy. Sassen shows, for example, how a change in the world flow of goods implies new opportunities for work for women, which modify gender relations and ultimately increase the incentive for migration for men (Sassen 1988). In more recent work, the same author puts less weight on the function of reserve army assigned to international migrants, but continues to connect migration to wider globalization processes. She explicitly links recent migration crises, in the Mediterranean, in the Andaman see and at the Mexico-US border, with a “massive loss of habitat” due to inappropriate international development policies, processes of land grabbing and soil privatization by multinational companies (Sassen 2016). Finally, many authors have advocated a “return of the state” in migration theory. They contend that even in times of globalization, migrations remain highly constrained by nation-state policies. Recruitment agreements, political partnerships such as the EU or MERCOSUR, colonial links, political antagonisms, asylum policies, visa policies and border control imply power relations between political spaces that have to be understood as major drivers of migration (Hollifield 2000; Cornelius, Martin, and Hollifield 2004; Cornelius and Rosenblum 2005). This obviously points toward a link between the traditional migration theories on the one hand and forced migration on the other.

## Theories of forced migration

What are the reasons which drive a person to flee his place of residence, and how does this person choose a destination? That simple question remained for a long time, and to a large extent still is, at the margin of forced migration studies. It seems obvious that, in a context of violence, emergency and danger, refugees are simply compelled to leave their home in hurry and move toward the first safe haven they encounter. The consequences for theory and empirical research are that the regularities necessary for theorization are lacking. Therefore, as stated by Zolberg:

Social scientists who theorize about the causes and consequences of international migration generally exclude refugee movements. (. . .). *They do so because of an inherent distinction between the two types of population flows. Migration is generally viewed as an economic phenomenon. . . .* By contrast, the most obvious thing about refugee flows is that they are unruly, in the sense that they result from events such as civil strife, abrupt changes of regime, arbitrary governmental decisions, or international war, all of which are generally considered singular and unpredictable occurrences.

(Zolberg 1983 :25)

This central idea was already well illustrated by Kunz (1973: 131) for whom “[Refugee’s] progress more often than not resembles the movement of the billiard ball: devoid of inner direction their path is governed by the kinetic factors of inertia, friction and the vectors of outside forces applied on them”. As noted by Black (Black 1991: 281): “Existing work has tended to view refugee flows separately as temporary, unique, one-off events”. In Lee’s conceptual framework, one could say that the push factor “violence” – and hence the fate of the state as regulating violence – overdetermine the displacement and saturate the explanation of the flight. Apart of that overdetermination, random factors then govern the fate of the refugees. Attempts at theorizing refugee flows are therefore scarce, and focus strictly on the role of the state in “making” refugees (Marx 1990; Hein 1993). In the 27 papers selected by Robin Cohen for his influential reader *Theories of Migration* (1996), only five: Kunz (1973), Zolberg (Zolberg, Suhrke, and Arguayo 1986; Zolberg 1983), Beyer (1981) and Adelman (1988) are concerned with refugees, and only the first three make an attempt at theorizing refugee movements (see also Black [2001]). Twenty years later, forced migration seems even less present in theoretical review books and papers (Brettell and Hollifield 2014 ; Bakewell 2010; Piguet 2013; Smith and King 2012; Skeldon 2012; Favell 2007; Geyer 2002).

Two pioneers – reprinted in Cohen’s reader – paved the way to theorize forced migration. The first, Egon F. Kunz, published papers in 1973 (Kunz 1973) and 1981 (Kunz 1981) which relied heavily on Lee’s push-pull model. The former dealt with displacement, transit and arrival in the host society, whereas the second extended the analysis to aspects preceding and succeeding flight. The second, Anthony Richmond, published his thesis in 1969, several papers and an ambitious book – *Global Apartheid* – critically linking migrations flows with social theory, where he contested the dichotomy between ‘voluntary’ and ‘involuntary’ (or forced) migration (Richmond 1988, , 1994, 2002).

One of the central contributions of Kunz is the distinction he made – along a continuum – between acute and anticipatory refugees: “The anticipatory refugee (. . .) leaves his home country before the deterioration of the military or political situation prevents his orderly departure. He arrives in the country of settlement prepared” (Kunz 1973: 131).

“Acute refugee movements arise from great political changes or movements of armies. The refugees flee either in mass or, if their flight is obstructed, in bursts of individual or group escapes, and their primary purpose is to reach safety in a neighbouring or nearby country which will grant them asylum. The emphasis is on the escape.

(Kunz 1973: 132)

The identification of an anticipatory component in refugee flight implies a more complex set of driving factors and justifies the attempt at theorizing. As stated by Johansson:

Pull factors are certainly more important for anticipatory than acute refugees as the former have more time to plan than the latter and are not immediately compelled to become refugees. In addition, anticipatory refugees typically have more information on possible countries of refuge and a clearer idea of their destination than acute refugees.

(Johansson 1990: 244)

Richmond goes in the same direction as he considers – relying on Anthony Giddens’ structuration theory – that, even under heavy constraint, a certain margin of choice remains for most refugees. For him, “Human agency implies an element of choice and ensures that some degree of uncertainty is always present, even when the choices in question are severely constrained by external conditions” (Richmond 1993: 9). Even in the case of refugees:

Under certain conditions the decision to move may be made after due consideration of all relevant information, rationally calculated to maximize net advantage, including both material and symbolic rewards. At the other extreme, the decision to move may be made in a state of panic facing a crisis situation which leaves few alternatives but escape from intolerable threats.

(Richmond 1988: 17)

On the bases of these premises, attempts at theorizing refugee movements were made possible. A closer look is warranted at three important contributions to forced migration theorization.

### ***The creation of nation-states as forced migration push factor***

Relying on Hannah Arendt’s *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Arendt 1973 [1951], pp. 269–290), Aristide Zolberg underlined how the creation of new states could become a refugee-generating process (Zolberg 1983). The process is actually twofold. On the one hand, the creation of a new state is often associated with violence, revolution or annexation. On the other hand, the creation of a nation-state relies heavily on a process of exclusion which aims at creating a national identity (Geertz 1973; Wimmer 2002). As Zolberg explains:

Imperial government generally requires only minimal involvement on the part of the subject population; its demands upon them are limited to obedience and material tribute. Cultural diversity does not matter much because the system of rule is largely indirect, with traditional elites of the various groups acting as go-between. (. . .) The organizational imperatives of the nation-state are much more demanding in this respect, since the persistence of relatively autonomous sociocultural communities negates its very existence. In order for the nation to come into being, the population must be transformed into individuals who

visibly share a common nationality; the process entails an actualization of the myth that they are quite literally “born together;” that they constitute a natural community.

*(Zolberg 1983: 36)*

Consequently, “Massive refugee flows are most prominently concomitant of the secular transformation of a world of empires and of small self-sufficient communities or tribes into a world of national states” (p. 30). This early work of Zolberg mainly saw refugees as byproducts of an historical process that might ultimately end. In a subsequent work, Zolberg, Suhrke, and Aguayo (1986) developed this model in a less historicist way. They insist on the relevance of international power relations in refugee generating processes and challenge the “internalist” vision embodied in international law that “the reasons for flight should be traced to conflicts, or radical political, social, or economic changes in [refugees’] own country” (Goodwin-Gill 1983: 18). Especially following post-World War II decolonization, during the Cold War and, in recent times, refugee-generating crises are the products of transnational conflicts of interests between superpowers even if other processes such as development aid and, more controversially, humanitarian and peacekeeping interventions sometimes have a mitigating effect on the necessity to flee. Zolberg’s insights were strikingly prescient when considering the refugee flows that followed the disintegration of Yugoslavia and recent attempts at creating new national entities such as South Sudan. They are also consistent with more recent attempts to link global processes to local displacement crisis as suggested by Sassen (see previous) and that of Stephen Castles.

### ***The political economy of forced migration***

Whereas Zolberg underlines through state formation a common feature of different historical episodes of flight, Stephen Castles considers the continuous growth of refugee flows, which characterized the end of the 20th century (Castles 2003). He sees this evolution in the framework of political economy, as the product of a general process of globalisation that created “a system of selective inclusion and exclusion of specific areas and groups, which maintains and exacerbates inequality” (p. 16). His statement that “Forced migration is not the result of a string of unconnected emergencies but rather an integral part of North-South relationships” (p. 17) leads to the necessity of considering a very general framework of explanations, loosely connected to world system theory, and which could be summarized with the label “social transformations”. In simple terms, globalization increases economic inequalities around the world, undermines traditional regulation mechanisms and fosters conflicts and human rights abuse, even as it simultaneously increases the level of connexion between the different parts of the world through a process of transnationalisation. This in turn leads to a massive surge in various forms of migration which, to a certain extent, “blur[s] the distinction between forced and economic migration” (p. 17).

### ***Exit instead of voice or loyalty***

The previous two lines of argument explain forced migration on a macro scale, but do not consider the possible agency of refugees themselves. In this sense, they do not depart from the old assumption mentioned previously that refugees are merely passive victims. A third line of thought suggests that in certain circumstances the flight and the direction of the flight can be an autonomous choice. Albert O. Hirschman’s “Exit, Voice and Loyalty” (1970) undertakes a

study subtitled “responses to decline in firms, organizations and states” that considers the triad of Exit (i.e. emigration), Voice (protest) and Loyalty as mutually exclusive alternatives available to citizens of an unsatisfactory state. Hirschman provides insights into the conditions under which emigration becomes the response when individuals face violence, insecurity or persecution that undermine their loyalty, while the authoritative control of the state on freedom of speech and political association makes the “voice” option too dangerous.

Hirschman refined his theory after applying it to the disintegration of the German Democratic Republic and the sudden outflow of refugees it generated in 1989. In the case of East Germany, the relation between emigration and contestation at home (voice) appeared to be that of a tandem where both “reinforced each other, achieving jointly the collapse of the regime” (Hirschman 1993: 13 in the reprint version). Other recent studies relying on Hirschman’s framework, such as Hoffmann (2004) on Cuban refugees, offer evidence that in other cases the inverse relationship suggested by Hirschman between exit and voice remains valid: some government have deliberately tolerated or even encouraged the exit of refugees in order to mitigate the contestation within the country.

In any case, although Hirschman’s contribution remains more “a conceptual framework” than an operational model or a grand theory (Hoffmann 2004: 35), it is of great interest for forced migration theory building because it underlines the possible margin of action of certain refugees and call for a global analysis of the alternatives which are open to potential migrants. A second, even more important contribution is that Hirschman reintroduces the role of the state of origin in the analysis of refugee flows. By opening or closing its borders, by actively seeking to curb emigration or on the contrary by encouraging it, the state of origin plays a central role in shaping refugee flows. This role was often neglected, under the assumption that the country of origin of refugee would be, by definition, in turmoil and unable to control the movements of its citizens.

### ***Toward an integrated theory of (forced) migration***

Although conflicts and violence remain central features of refugee flows and differentiate them from other forms of migration, they all have to be understood in the context of a global political economy (Castles/Zolberg) which considers emigration as one option in the relations between a State and its citizens (Hirschman) and gives back to individuals a certain amount of autonomy in their migration choices (Richmond/Hirschman). As stated by Castles et al.: “Even among those who are fleeing violence or persecution and are therefore in need of protection, there is evidence that some, although not all, asylum seekers have a degree of control over where they go and how they travel” (Castles, Crawley, and Loughna 2003: 29).

The logical consequence is that a theory of forced migration flows would encompass a multiplicity of factors at various scales in the region of origin, along itineraries of flight, in the regions of destination as well as at global level, what Richmond called a “Multivariate Model of Reactive Migration” (Richmond 1993: 11). This is a clear improvement compared to the idea of refugees flights as untheorizable reactions to unsustainable thresholds of violence and persecution. An idea that has – as noted at the beginning of this chapter – largely prevented the theorization of forced migration. A second consequence of these conceptual improvements is that it seems less and less justified to treat forced migration as incompatible with migration theory in general. As stated by Carling (2014: 7): “there is no categorical analytical distinction between ‘forced’ and ‘voluntary’ migration, since all migration involves both choices and constraints”. In the conclusion of this chapter we suggest a path to overcome this historical divide.

## Conclusion

The chapter has summarized a well-developed and structured, if not fully coherent, corpus of theories of “voluntary” and mainly economic migration, along with a much less developed and patchy corpus of attempts at theorizing “forced” migration. Going further and re-embedding forced migration within the main stream of migration theories or within an even broader social theory is beyond the scope of this chapter, but I believe this is a promising avenue. Migrations linked to environmental change, a topic that was long forgotten, but witnessed a spectacular comeback in research since 2007 (Piguet and Laczko 2014) is an interesting case, where attempts are made at suggesting new conceptual models. In that context, environmental drivers are mediated by economic, political, social and cultural interactions that lead people to move or, on the contrary, voluntarily or involuntarily, stay put (EACH-FOR 2007; Black et al. 2011; Kniveton, Smith, and Wood 2011; McLeman 2013). Elaborating on that premises to include other compulsions than the natural environment is a first perspective.

A second one, at a broader conceptual level, is suggested by de Haas (2014) within an aspiration/capabilities framework. This framework has the advantage of convincingly conceptualizing virtually all forms of migration and non-migration. Refugees, for example, are characterized by a desire to stay in their place of origin but – contrary to trapped populations – do have the capabilities to react to violence by fleeing. These capabilities are simultaneously constrained by structures such as states, NGOs, family and networks, which determine the social, economic and human resources that potential migrants are able and willing to use.

These are only two avenues for bridging the gap between theories; others may exist or may yet be developed. All are well worth exploring because, as stated by the aforementioned author (de Haas 2014 : 6), the divide between the study of forced and voluntary migration is among the reasons for the lack of progress of migration theory as a whole.

## Note

- 1 I define *theories* here, in Alejandro Portes’s terms, as: narratives about how things got “from here to there” including the multiple contingencies and reversals encountered in the process. At this level of analysis, it is possible to delineate, at least partially, the structural constraints and other obstacles affecting a specific individual or collective pursuit (Portes 2000: 13).

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