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Addressing Climate Induced Displacement: An Analysis of Protection Policies for  
Environmental Migrants

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An Honors College Project Presented to  
the Faculty of the Undergraduate  
College of Arts and Letters  
James Madison University

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by Meredith Rose Lawing

April 2021

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Accepted by the faculty of the Department of Justice Studies, James Madison University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Honors College.

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PUBLIC PRESENTATION

This work is accepted for presentation, in part or in full, at the James Madison University Honors Symposium on  
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### **Executive Summary**

One of the fastest growing populations of displaced people are those forced to migrate because of climate change, but under current international legal agreements they receive no protections or support. In response to the lack of security and stability provided to climate displaced populations and host countries, supplementary agreements have been proposed at the international level to address the gaps in existing policy. The purpose of this analysis is to identify policy agreements intended to support environmental migrants during times of displacement, evaluate the policies' effectiveness, and determine what issues they address regarding climate induced displacement. All of the policies are evaluated on their ability to provide individual protections to refugees and develop support systems for host countries that assist in burden sharing while also holding signatories accountable for their actions through credible commitments. Policies examined in this paper include the Nansen Initiative, the Global Compact for Migration, and the Cartagena Declaration. The analysis finds that there is no clear policy that provides both strong protections and support systems. Rather a combination of the agreements is necessary to develop an international migration system equipped to manage climate induced displacement. The conclusion also argues the need for humanity to find an effective way to adapt to the effects of climate change to survive.

## Introduction

Forced human migration has occurred since nomadic populations roamed the Earth and occurs for various interrelated reasons. Push factors for migration can include politically driven violence, socioeconomic insecurity, state fragility and systems collapse, or major environmental change. Since the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century an increasing number of studies have examined the impact of climate change as either a primary driving factor or amplifying force that causes movement of people. Leading scholar on the effects of climate change on migration, Jane McAdam (2017) explains that migration is a multi-causal phenomenon and environmental change magnifies the risk of displacement. The natural climate and environmental conditions of Earth has a major impact on the living conditions of every human being and when these conditions change, it can have a multitude of adverse effects such as competition for resources, irreparable damage to housing or land, breakdown of state sponsored social systems, and long-term loss of income (McAdam, 2017). Ultimately climate change intensifies a number of different social, political, and economic issues that forces human movement. While humans have tried to control the natural world for centuries, the effects of environmental deterioration will result in the need for populations to develop adaptive migration strategies for survival. The worsening impacts of climate change will continue throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> century and force people to migrate to adjust to the effects of environmental degradation to keep living safe and productive lives. Climate change induced migration is one of the fastest growing issues surrounding human movement which presents the need for effective policy designed to protect those displaced by climate change and the host countries that accept populations forced to migrate.

The goal of this policy analysis is to determine feasible and realistic solutions for providing protections and support systems to address environmental change as a push factor for migration. The construction of this paper first provides a background on the intersection of climate change and migration. Section 1 discusses the development of the term climate refugee, the history of environmental change as a migration driver, and the current shortcomings of existing international legal agreements. Additionally, the first section of the paper addresses the discussion of how climate induced displacement is related to justice because the effects of environmental change on different populations is unequal. Section 2 then examines three policy agreements intended to expand the concept of forced migration and apply those broader ideas to climate induced migration. This section includes an analysis of the three policy agreements by using a criteria-based evaluation model that determines whether each agreement receives a low, moderate, or high measure of success in best serving refugees and host countries. The analysis will then conclude by discussing the best policy agreement or combination of agreements in order to create a strong global system focused on supporting those forcibly displaced by climate.

### **Section 1: Climate Change and Migration**

#### **1a. Worsening Impacts of Climate Change**

As time progresses, climate change is slowly becoming more understood as a threat to humanity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Ahmed, 2018). The reason that climate change has begun to become a major political concern is because natural disasters have the tendency to accelerate the collapse of struggling state systems (Ahmed, 2018). The effects of climate change are becoming increasingly more obvious as environmental degradation worsens on Earth. Carbon emissions have been increasing at an accelerated pace throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> century because CO<sub>2</sub> rates have been steadily increasing due to cities becoming centers of human specific contributors (Ahmed,

2018). The increase of carbon emissions has resulted in thinning of Antarctic and Arctic ice, creating a connection between emissions and the rise of sea levels which leads to increase in frequency and severity of hurricanes, cyclones, and floods (Merone & Tait, 2018). These extreme weather events occur when ocean water warms and the amount of moisture on the surface retains water vapor, consequently causing an increase in the temperature of the ocean (Obha & Sugimoto, 2019). All these weather events in conjunction result in increased food insecurity, drought or degradation of drinking water, and increased spread of infectious diseases throughout the world (Merone & Tait, 2018). Flooding can increase the spread of waterborne diseases such as cholera, while drought can contribute to reduced crop yields which can result in loss of food sources, clean water, and agricultural production (Shuman, 2010).

Additionally, these climate disasters fall into two categories, gradual or on-set disasters, and sudden disasters (Aragonés Castañer, 2017). Gradual or on-set disasters are climate events that lead to drought, desertification, and water shortages whereas, sudden disasters constitute a temporary extreme weather event that leaves severe climate impacts, such as flooding or a heat wave (Aragonés Castañer, 2017). Both gradual and sudden climate disasters have equally detrimental impacts around the world. Between 1900 and 2007, a total of 450 global climate disasters were reported, affecting 300 million people across the world (Marshall, 2011). And the rates at which these disasters occur is accelerating, it is likely that by 2080 a temperature increase of 1 or 2 degrees could result in severe sea level rise that has the potential to affect 103 million people living in coastal areas (Biermann & Boas, 2008). Additionally, after these events people will not be able to return to their former homes, because land destroyed by extreme weather events allows little opportunity for recovery while also the climate disasters will likely resurface cyclically (McNamara, 2011).

### Case Study 1: Socioeconomic Vulnerability and Climate Change in Mexico

A prime example of the multidimensionality of migration is in the rural regions of Mexico. The drivers behind migration in Mexico primarily come from an intersection between changing climate, socioeconomic vulnerability, and cultural conditions (Nawrotzki, Hunter, Runfola, & Riosmena, 2015). Populations in rural Mexico depend heavily on agricultural outputs as a steady source of income, so when the crop yields experience disruption, people are left with no ability to generate any income. Rise in temperatures in arid and mountainous climates can significantly reduce the crop yields; flooding in low-lying areas causes excess moisture which diminishes plant growth and increases the risk of insect infestation (Nawrotzki et al., 2015). Specifically, the shift in the agricultural landscape in northeastern areas of Mexico exacerbated loss of crop yields, which has resulted in more economic insecurity for highly vulnerable families.

The current state of agriculture in Mexico revolves around the use of maize-based monocultures that are the product of long-term patterns that formed due to a combination of natural and farmer-driven selection through various genetic drift techniques and mutations (Mercer, Perales, & Wainwright, 2012). Because of limited access to capital, low-income households are unable to implement the necessary systems to prevent negative impacts of climate thus, migration begins to appear to be only option (Nawrotzki & DeWaard, 2016). San Luis Potosí and Zacatecas are two regions in Mexico significantly impacted by climate

change which has left the region reeling in economic stagnation. These two regions are two of the primary maize production areas of Mexico but are suffering from severe socioeconomic vulnerability that is becoming heavily amplified by changes in the environment (Aragonés Castañer, 2017). The loss of crop yields has left many people in the region without jobs with livable wages to reduce their risk of poverty (Aragonés Castañer, 2017).

In addition to the effects of climate change, these two regions have already been suffering from economic instability for decades since the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which left the regions in ruin due to unfair subsidies placed on Mexican agricultural imports (Aragonés Castañer, 2017). Then, in 2011, the regions experienced major crop loss during a drought that devastated 80% of the country's agricultural regions, with San Luis Potosí and Zacatecas being part of the 40% of territory that experienced severe drought (Aragonés Castañer, 2017). This drought has left rural Mexico in a major decline in economic productivity and without any government funding provided for recovery, families have no choice but to consider migration as an option. The worsening economic conditions coupled with the impact of climate change has resulted in financial pressure, lack of employment, and decreased access to food leaving populations with no option but to flee to somewhere with better opportunities (Aragonés Castañer, 2017).

#### 1b. Climate Change Influencing Displacement

One of the fastest growing and largest groups of refugees are people displaced by climate change, but they remain unprotected and receive almost no aid (Marshall, 2011). According to

the International Federation of the Red Cross, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, climate related disasters are causing more displacement than conflict or oppression (Marshall, 2011). In addition, estimates state that by 2050 there will be 200 million people that will lose their homes forcing them to migrate due to climate change (Biermann & Boas, 2008). Those who are displaced by environmental change and extreme weather events are commonly known as ‘climate refugees’. The term was first used in 1985, when United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) researcher, Essam El-Hinnawi developed the term in a UNEP report (Marshall, 2011). The formal definition of climate refugee most widely recognized today is, “persons or group of persons who migrate for compelling reasons of sudden or progressive change in their environment as a result of climate change that adversely affects their lives or living condition in their habitual homes either temporarily or permanently within their country of nationality or abroad,” (Gibb & Ford, 2012). Unfortunately, there is no formal recognition of this definition in any form of policy because there has been no explicit connection found between climate change and sudden displacement to motivate international actors and states to create a legally binding agreement (Gibb & Ford, 2012). But due to the narrow definition of refugee that currently exists, state signatories also have no compulsion or requirement to provide protections to those forcibly displaced by climate change (McNamara, 2011). Moreover, the term climate refugee frequently receives criticism for oversimplifying the numerous factors that drive displacement to only identifying environment as a single driver for migration (Hartmann, 2010). Also, the phrase climate refugee only acknowledges those who migrate across international borders, but there are still groups of people displaced within their country of citizenship not considered climate refugees (Hartmann, 2010). Throughout this paper the usage of the term climate refugee intends to respect the understanding that migration is multidimensional and climate change is one of

many drivers behind forced movement that can exacerbate other factors. Additionally, this paper is only analyzing policies developed to address climate induced movement across international borders, as internally displaced climate refugees require a separate set of protections.

## Case Study 2: Impacts of Flooding and Climate Change in Bangladesh

A much more clear-cut example of climate induced migration is evident in Bangladesh with the inundation of the country with flooding on coasts and river plains. Presently, Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change and environmental stressors, it frequently experiences cyclones, floods, and consistent land erosion (Martin, Kang, Billah, Siddiqui, Black, & Kniveton, 2017). Because of the unique geography of Bangladesh between the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean, the majority of the country is highly prone to flooding (Naser, Swapan, Ahsan, Afroz, & Ahmed, 2019). Roughly 80% of the land in the country is on river floodplains such as the Ganges, Brahmaputra, Megha, and others (Brouwer, Akter, Brander, & Haque, 2007). The Bay of Bengal in particular is the origin of many extreme weather events which leaves the northwestern region of the country vulnerable to environmental hazards (Naser et al., 2019).

Populations that live in the northwestern region of Bangladesh have experienced displacement on average 4.6 times due to riverbank erosion (Martin et al., 2017). By 2030 estimates state that 20% of the country will be submerged under water (Stojanov, Kelman, Ullah, Duží, Procházka, & Blahútová, 2016). Additionally, environmental exposure risk has a strong relationship with income inequality, as higher levels of climate exposure primarily effects those suffering in poverty (Brouwer et al., 2007). Poorer segments of society live closer to river plains and therefore are at higher risk of displacement by flooding (Brouwer et al., 2007).

The consistent flooding of riverbanks also contributes to long-term destruction of farming lands and loss of crops through salinization of soil. When soil is contaminated by increased amounts of toxins, the salinity levels render the land unusable and can no longer grow crops (Chen & Mueller, 2018). Additionally, the erosion occurring on riverbanks pushes the salinity line further North which not only reduces crop yields but can contaminate drinking water (Chen & Mueller, 2018).

Currently Bangladeshi citizens have to grapple with the concept of adaptive migration to be able to survive. In this lens, migration is viewed as an effective and preferred strategy in order to manage the sudden shocks and stressors of climate events (Martin et al., 2017). Rural communities in Bangladesh are disproportionately impacted by climate disasters, which has a significant impact on the socioeconomic development of the area as well. Slow-paced development in rural areas leaves many communities in extreme poverty and these areas experience the effects of climate change related disasters more than other regions (Martin et al., 2017). The combination of environmental shocks and high rates of severe poverty has had negative impacts on the overall economic conditions of Bangladesh. Between 1997 and 2016 Bangladesh suffered damages of 2.31 billion US dollars and 0.67% in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) due to natural catastrophes (Naser et al., 2019).

### **1c. Failures of the Existing International Refugee Support Agreements**

Currently the only existing document designed to support refugees is the 1951 Refugee Convention and the subsequent 1967 Protocol on Refugees. The only legal definition of a refugee is a person who is fleeing their country of origin due to the “well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a certain social group, or political opinion,” (Convention and Protocol Relating to Status of Refugees, pg. 14, 1951). The understanding of the broad term refugee was first developed in 1951 primarily in response to the beginning of the Cold War. Due to the document’s time of conception, migration is viewed primarily from the perspective as an avenue of escape from oppressive regimes, specifically stemming from international perspectives of Soviet communism (Koser, 2016). The current refugee system is extremely discriminatory and excludes millions of people forced to flee their homes for a multitude of reasons such as economic insecurity or environmental factors, in addition to politically driven motivations.

The traditional definition of a refugee, as constituted by the 1951 Refugee Convention, fails to address the intersectionality and complexity of several factors that drive migration. Decisions regarding policy discourse over developing a new definition focus on three main questions: who is classified as a refugee, is their need for protection measurable, and who is responsible to provide protection (Marshall, 2011). Only towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century did the concept of climate-induced migration enter discussion on the international policy stage. There is no formal recognition of the term or definition of climate refugee in the 1951 Refugee Convention. One of the primary reasons that climate change has been not accepted as a push factor for migration is because there is a popular movement in modern politics that climate change is not a real phenomenon (Parsons & Nielsen, 2019). But climate change is not a

subjective idea, it is a proven scientific change in the environment that has detrimental impacts on the earth and its inhabitants. The idea that climate change cannot drive migration is a construction based off of social denial (McNamara, 2011). Additionally, the reason the definition has not expanded is due to the fact that push factors of migration are extremely difficult to discern because there is not one singular driver for migration (Gibb & Ford, 2012). Because of the lack of information on the intersectionality of migration drivers, the discussion of environmental change as a push factor for movement is noticeably absent in most of the literature regarding migration.

#### **1d. Environmental Change as Historical Driver of Migration**

While there is little existing research for climate change causing sudden displacement, understanding changes in the environment as a gradual driver of migration is not a new phenomenon. Environmental change has been one of the longest standing push factors for migration. Causes such as soil fertility and movement of animals helped geographers develop a knowledge of both animal and human movement (Piguet, 2013). According to Moritz Wagner's and Charles Darwin's *Theory on the Law of Migration of Organisms*, "competition of all beings for space, food, and reproduction, or the 'struggle' for life gives the first impulses to migration," (Piguet, 2013). This pattern is evident in the movement of animals since mammals, birds, fish, and amphibians that experience the effects of climate change have the freedom to move because there are no de-lineated borders to prevent them from migrating (Ahmed, 2018). Animals have the ability to move freely, whereas humans do not due to the restrictions created by borders (Ahmed, 2018).

As time progressed into the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries the understanding of push factors for migration began to transition away from an environmental approach to a much more economic

and political phenomenon. Migration scholars began to take a behaviorist approach to migration instead of considering the influence of environmental factors (Piguet, 2013). The behaviorist view of migration primarily focuses on stressors that are governmental policies, economic conditions, and transportation infrastructure (Piguet, 2013). Scholars attribute the growth of the behaviorist perspective to two other changes outside of the behaviorist approach. These ideas include the western belief that it is the purpose of humanity to conquer nature in order to economically succeed and environmental determinism (Piguet, 2013). Environmental determinism pertains to the relationship between humanity and environment, the primary goal of which was to attribute a country's development trajectories to their geographic locations and physical environment (Judkins, Smith, & Keys, 2008). The concept of environmental determinism intended to separate the influence of nature and society in order to allow high-income countries to absolve themselves from their economic success and any obligation to support low-income countries. But ultimately the concept of environmental determinism legitimized racist and colonial tendencies implemented through economic sanctions and policies (Judkins, Smith, & Keys, 2008). The exploitation of high-income countries on low-income countries played a larger factor in low-income states' economic struggle than the environment did.

Climate change and environment as a push factor for migration was not recognized again till the 1970s (Piguet, 2013). By 1996 the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR), working in conjunction with UNEP, had an international symposium to discuss the phenomenon of climate driven migration because organizations were working to develop an expansion on migratory studies to incorporate environmental changes as push factor for migration (McNamara, 2011). But despite all of this progress towards understanding migration in

a new light, state pushback in international organizations such as the UN halted the development of concrete policy surrounding climate induced migration. In 2004, the UN conducted interviews with 45 ambassadors and senior diplomats resulting in a decision to de-centralize the UNHCR's role in environmental displacement response, which would mean no support would be given to climate migrants (McNamara, 2011). This decision derives from the ability of states to externalize their responsibility to protect citizens that are not their own, which has morally protected states from requirements to intervene during humanitarian crises (Chimienti, 2018). This externalization denies the transnationality of the world that connects all people despite the existence of borders and renders the 1951 Refugee Convention ineffective because it has little accountability measures to broaden understandings of migration (Chimienti, 2018).

### **1e. Relationship between Justice and Forced Environmental Displacement**

All people in the world are at risk of becoming climate refugees, but not all people are equally at risk (Dwyer, 2020). Marginalized populations experience the effects of climate change disproportionately which causes intersectional discrimination, some of the groups which this occurs across include temporal risk, geographic location, society type or structure, and societal position (Dwyer, 2020). Temporal risk assigns a person to a generation, with younger and future generations being at higher risk (Dwyer, 2020). Geographic location focuses on the physical features of a region, those who live in coastal areas or plains, island states, and river deltas are at higher risk (Dwyer, 2020). Society type or structure differentiates the risk between a higher income country and a lower income country because a high-income country is more likely to have access to resources to adapt (Dwyer, 2020). Finally, societal position delineates the difference between those who are wealthy and can protect themselves versus those who do not have the ability to do so (Dwyer, 2020). The difference between high-income individuals who

can adapt and low-income individuals who are unable to is frequently caused by the economic success of a country. This phenomenon is evident because low-income countries disproportionately feel the impact of the effects of climate change. High-income countries have a stronger ability to mitigate risk and therefore consume more resources which has an immensely unfair impact on low-income countries. Populations that live in high-risk countries have a significantly lower carbon footprint than minimal risk countries (Dwyer, 2020).

### **Section 2: Policy Developments to Address Climate Induced Migration**

As environmental degradation continues to progress at an alarming rate in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is becoming increasingly more obvious that climate related displacement will only grow in its scale and severity. The current definition and protections provided by the 1951 Refugee Convention blindly views forced movement as a purely political phenomenon which is an ignorant way to view involuntary migration in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. With a lack of legally binding policy and the rate climate induced migration is increasing, a number of international organizations and state coalitions proposed ad hoc policies in order to address the intersectionality of migration. The goal of these ad hoc policies is to provide protections to those forcibly displaced for reasons other than political persecution, which includes climate change induced migration. All of this is necessary because there is no singular factor that drives displacement, rather the convergence of many issues such as socioeconomic vulnerability, state system collapse, and climate change which results in a multi-faceted approach to forced movement.

The following discussion will examine three policies designed to assist those forcibly displaced by climate where the 1951 Refugee Convention fails to provide support. A politically focused definition of involuntary migration is no longer adequate in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as science

surrounding environment and human movement continues to indicate that climate change is driving significant numbers of people to migrate. The primary goal of this paper is to identify policies developed to address climate induced migration, how the policies are intended to be implemented, and what issues they address regarding forced climate displacement. In order to execute these goals, the subsequent sections will examine three supplemental policies designed to address the gaps of the 1951 Refugee Convention in order to provide support for populations forcibly displaced by climate events. Supplemental policies are necessary because refugees are one of the most vulnerable populations and even those displaced that fall under the 1951 Refugee Convention definition receive little support, leaving climate refugees in an even more volatile position. The policies examined in this paper are the Nansen Initiative, the United Nation's Global Compact for Migration, and Central America's Cartagena Declaration. The evaluation of these agreements intends to best understand the impacts of these policies on how well they supplement gaps in the 1951 Refugee Convention to address climate change as a driving force for migration. Throughout the remainder of this paper, these three policies will be both described and analyzed to understand their benefits and shortcomings to address the problem of disaster induced displacement and guaranteeing rights to those affected by these environmental shifts.

### **Methodology and Evaluative Criteria**

Addressing the various impacts of migration is a multi-dimensional challenge arising from multiple interrelated factors. As addressed in this paper, migration is an intersectional issue with various push factors that amplify one another. Thus, the evaluation of the effectiveness of the policies in this paper is not an easily quantifiable assessment to execute. In order to develop an informal but comprehensive understanding of all the policies and their impacts, four criteria were developed to best analyze the policies. This evaluative process focuses on assessing the

rights protections, focus on autonomy, burden sharing suggestions, and credible commitments that each policy proposes. Table 1 outlines the various benchmarks to achieve a measure of low, moderate, or high-level of each criteria component. The goal of this criteria is to attempt to assess the policies' ability to support both individual refugees and host countries or governments during times of mass migration. Both of these components are essential for developing a just and functioning system for migration that does not perpetuate discrimination, human rights abuses, corruption, and unequal financial strains. The creation of low, moderate, and high marks categorizes the agreements on their capability to execute an effective policy for either individual refugee support or host country and governmental support. Though the policy evaluation section of the analysis is subjective in nature, climate induced migration is an extraordinarily complex issue with a number of intersecting factors. The boundaries for achievement of low, moderate, and high are blurred because of the intricacy of these policy documents. Finally, it is important to note that all of the evaluation of the policies against the criteria in this paper is based on personal assessment by the author.

## **2a. Rights Protections**

Ensuring legal rights is a minimum requirement for adequate protection of refugees, therefore rights protections is a necessary category. In the view of Jane McAdam (2017), rights protections to climate migrants provide the most scope for prevention of unsafe return and cruel or inhumane treatment. The primary right guaranteed to refugees in the 1951 Refugee Convention include the right to non-refoulement which prohibits involuntary return of a refugee to a country where a person will experience danger or threats to their livelihood (The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, pg. 4, 2011). Other rights promised to refugees include the right to not be punished for illegal entry, freedom of movement,

to be issued travel documents, as well as the rights to work, housing, education, public assistance, freedom of religion, and access to judicial courts (The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, pg. 4, 2011). But as this paper has examined, those displaced by climate related factors do not receive classification as refugees in the current legal international arena. All three of the policies examined aim to expand and address the concept of migration to incorporate the various push factors behind migration including climate change. A low measure of rights protections would be only affirming the existing 1951 Refugee Convention and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) with only rhetorical rights suggestions for policy improvements. To achieve a moderate measure of rights protections the agreement needs to affirm both the 1951 Refugee Convention, the UDHR, and labor rights of refugees while also implementing concrete rights policy. High measures of rights protections support the 1951 Refugee Convention, UDHR, labor protections, minority population protections, while also making the guaranteed rights of refugees a core goal of their policy through detailed mechanisms.

## **2b. Autonomy**

The primary focus of autonomy is to ensure that there is respect for the dignity and individual choice of refugees. Living a fulfilling life is far beyond just having access to basic rights, it is deeply rooted in the agency over one's decisions regarding their own life (Straehle, 2020). Autonomy is essential to protect the understanding of refugees as individual human beings that have improvements to bring to society as both economic contributors and people with their own emotional capacities (Straehle, 2020). To be able to achieve a low measure of autonomy a state would only have to rhetorically recognize the importance of the need for self-sufficiency in a dignified life for a refugee. For a moderate achievement of autonomy, a state or

organization would need to recognize refugees as financially independent individuals that have the right to generate their own incomes in addition to developing policy directives that support self-sufficiency for refugees. Finally, a high measure of autonomy constitutes not only creating policy that supports self-sufficiency directives but also including refugees in the development of that policy, while also valuing refugees as economic contributors guaranteed the right to work.

**Table 1: Definitions and Measures of Evaluation Criteria**

	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>Rights Protections</b>	Providing adequate human rights and protections to refugees throughout their migration and resettlement process within the agreement.	Affirms the 1951 Refugee Convention and the UDHR for all refugee, primarily focused rhetoric but suggests some rights-based policy	Adopts and accepts labor rights in addition to UDHR, and the 1951 Convention, implement some policy.	Sets specific goals to provide protections, labor protections, minorities receive protections, in addition to UDHR and the 1951 Convention, creates a core goal of rights protections.
<b>Autonomy</b>	Allowing refugees make their own decisions regarding their lives and families within the agreement.	Specifies self-sufficiency as a key requirement for living a dignified life.	Believes that refugees should be able to provide their own incomes and should not be reliant on a system in addition to self-sufficiency.	State self-sufficiency recognizes refugees as contributing individuals especially pertaining to economic value, incorporates refugees in policy development process, creates more roles for migrant self-support.
<b>Burden Sharing</b>	Mechanisms that equally distribute the burden of supporting refugees among states that are signatories on the agreement.	Minimal outlined burden sharing mechanisms.	Develop communication mechanisms between states and external organizations.	Developed functioning system to create support for host countries and control flows of migration equally.
<b>Credible Commitments</b>	Legally binding policy agreements with enforcement mechanisms that monitor effective participation with agreement and holding countries accountable for their actions.	Minimal outlined credible commitments.	Developing forum to discuss potential solutions and suggests accountability measures.	Binding enforcement with accountability measures that ensure states are supporting refugees and host countries via external organizations/other states, when breaking binding enforcement loss of privilege as punishment to take things out of the hands of political leaders.

## **2c. Burden Sharing**

Burden sharing among countries to support refugees is the collective effort through a combination of research, communication through diplomacy, funding, and external organizations in order to ensure states are equipped to both support refugees and themselves during periods mass migration. Overall burden sharing focuses on using the current resources of the international community in order to prevent one region or group of states from having to provide for a disproportionate number of refugees while other countries elude the responsibility to support refugees (Schuck, 1997). This philosophy primarily focuses on resource maximization and developing administrative transparency to create regional and international systems (Schuck, 1997). The main goal of these systems is to assure that states equally experience and address the effects of migratory flows while also working to fully support refugees with the best possible approach. Low measures of burden sharing characterize a minimal amount of proposed of burden sharing mechanisms and no communication between countries to develop any future systems. A moderate measure of burden sharing focuses on developing communication mechanisms between states and external organizations in order to equally distribute aid and physical support systems such as refugee camps. Finally, a high measure of burden sharing develops a functioning system within states or a region to create support for host countries and control migratory flows equally.

## **2d. Credible Commitments**

One of the most important components of a credible commitment is maintaining accountability for executing the goals of an agreement. Credible commitments need to have accountability measures in order to function, this can be reporting requirements from states or organizations involved (Fariss, 2014). The tool of a reporting requirement is frequently an

unreliable measure, thus there needs to be some sort of accountability tool to ensure timely submission of reports and consequent punishment if there is no compliance. Ultimately the goal for commitments to global agreements is that they are motivational which means that states focus on honoring the pledge they made rather than being imperatively committed which means a state's compliance is rooted in coercion (North, 1993). A low measure of credible commitments would be having no systems in place in order to hold states accountable to the agreements they create to support refugees and lack of developing any aid systems for refugees. The moderate measure of credible commitment establishes a forum to discuss potential policy solutions for refugees and host countries. High measures of accountability in credible commitments would include developing a legally binding commitment that when broken could result in economic sanctions when engaging in non-compliance or direct punishment of political leaders who are evading compliance. Specifically placing restrictions on political leaders could include the freezing of assets, restricting of travel, or suspension of passports (Wallenstein & Helena, 2012).

### **Section 3: Policy Analyses**

#### **3a. i. Brief Background on the Nansen Initiative**

The Nansen Initiative was created in October of 2012 from a series of sub-regional consultations and meetings regarding climate change to develop a nuanced understanding of how environmental degradation affects regions around the world and drives migration (McAdam, 2016). This policy was later rebranded as the Platform on Disaster Displacement in May of 2016 as an extension of the initiative (referred to here as the Nansen Initiative) (McAdam, 2016). The goal of the Nansen Initiative is to provide a broad framework of policy, but focuses primarily on a consulting process that concentrates on creating support structures for climate refugees and developing preventative mechanisms for when disasters occur (McAdam, 2016). But in addition

to those ideas, the Nansen Initiative does not want to create new global legal norms or standards, but instead to develop an intergovernmental collaboration process to both consolidate and enhance the use of effective policies to mitigate the effects of climate change on forced migration (McAdam, 2016). The collaborative group originally started when Norway and Switzerland pledged at a UNHCR conference that they would be taking action to address climate induced migration and resulted in a response to create an external organization to encourage states to work towards creating a global framework (McAdam, 2016). By creating this collaborative group and broad policy suggestion framework, the Nansen Initiative is working to address the gaps in international law that currently exists by emphasizing the need for expansion of current legal definitions and creating space for discussions regarding climate change and migration (McAdam, 2016). The current chair of Nansen Initiative is Germany, with the Vice Chair being Bangladesh; other members include Australia, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, France, Kenya, the European Union, the Maldives, Switzerland, and others (McAdam, 2016).

To build consensus among states that more protections are necessary for those displaced by climate factors, the Nansen Initiative has three core pillars. The first focus for the organization is maintaining international cooperation and solidarity among states, the second focus is to develop standards for treatment of those affected regarding admission to other countries and the duration of their stay, the third focus of the Nansen Initiative is to propose operational responses ranging from funding mechanisms to developing new responsibilities for global humanitarian and development actors (Nansen Initiative, n.d.). To execute these goals, the Nansen Initiative created a document known as a protection agenda to be able to best address gaps in protections provided to climate refugees. In the document, the protection agenda is defined as,

any positive action (whether or not based on legal obligation) undertaken by states on the behalf of disaster displaced persons or people at risk of being displaced that aim at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual. The three objectives of the protection agenda include developing preparedness plans prior to a disaster event or displacement, providing protection and assistance during displacement, and finding durable solutions in the aftermath of a climate related disaster, (Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda Vol. 1, pg. 7, 2015).

### **3a. ii. Evaluation of the Nansen Initiative**

The Nansen Initiative is defined as a broad framework that predominantly focuses on providing consulting initiatives regarding climate change driven movement and using soft law tactics to create support systems and preventative measures for climate induced disasters. The organization primarily focuses on working in conjunction with governments to develop support networks rather than provide individual rights and autonomy to refugees during their migration process. The Nansen Initiative scores low in terms of rights protections because it only reaffirms the importance of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the UDHR, but the majority of the document's discussion of rights is purely rhetorical. There is no attempt to make the rights of the refugee a priority during or after displacement-inducing events. Regarding autonomy of refugees, the Nansen Initiative achieves a low measure in this category as well because there is barely any mention of respecting refugees' rights to self-sufficiency and independence. The document only references a refugee's right to autonomy once, stating that an individual should be treated with dignity but does not state what dignity would entail for personal autonomy.

But where the Nansen Initiative struggles to provide protections and autonomy to individual refugees, it provides promising potential to create strong commitments to developing

better systems for states experiencing mass migration. The Nansen Initiative achieves a high measure for burden sharing because of its collaborative consultation with various states and regions to develop preventative and risk management systems related to climate change and migration. The primary function of the Nansen Initiative is to research potential environmental risks, develop plans to support those displaced by the disasters, and help states develop their capacity to deal with migratory flows. Finally, the Nansen Initiative achieves moderate measure for credible commitments, because the organization provides yearly reports on various regions to develop risk management systems, but it has no accountability measures to ensure that states or regions are executing these mechanisms. There is no punishment or action taken if a government or political leader chooses to continue to let climate disaster occur without implementing support systems which are necessary to ensure that the most successful mechanisms are used to support both refugees and host countries.

The Nansen Initiative could not provide enough coverage or support for refugees on its own because of its lack of protections on the individual level, but it contains potential in the mechanism of state or region support. Many states are heavily strained when large influxes of migration occur and cannot manage the amount of people entering a country requiring support. The consultative process specifically focusing on climate change that forces movement is a necessary mechanism because it produces research that can not only develop regional agreements for the future, but it can influence other migration policy initiatives to further expand their understanding of displacement. Overall, the Nansen Initiative's consultative process provides the most potential for development of burden sharing mechanisms and credible commitments, making it a strong agreement to provide state and regional support systems regarding climate change and consequent migration.

### **3b. i. Brief Background on the Global Compact for Migration**

The Global Compact for Migration is the first ever UN global agreement to develop a common approach to international migration with an attempt to address the intersectionality of human movement. The Compact was proposed by members states and the United Nations system for adoption during General Assembly in 2018 (Pécoud, 2021). Overall, the primary goal of this framework is finding a way to overcome the fragmentation of the current global refugee support system, address the intersectionality of drivers for migration, work towards cooperation between both state and non-state actors, normative aspiration, and to propose a programmatic vision of what real migration looks like (Pécoud, 2021). The document attempts to develop a system of support structures and suggestions for countries that receive refugees. The Compact is not trying to fundamentally change world systems, but rather re-align them (Pécoud, 2021). The Global Compact for Migration has a non-legally binding perspective and soft law approach while also respecting the values of state sovereignty, responsibility, non-discrimination, and protecting human rights (Pécoud, 2021). The four key objectives the Compact aims to accomplish are easing pressure on host countries, enhancing refugee self-reliance, expanding access to support for third world countries, and improving conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity (Pécoud, 2021).

The Global Compact for Migration highlights 23 objectives for managing migration at the local, national, and international levels (Global Compact for Migration, n.d.). The document begins by re-affirming all of the rights afforded to refugees in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and encourages states who have not ratified international conventions protecting the rights of migrants to do so (Global Compact for Migration, n.d.). After stating the importance of acknowledging rights, the Compact goes on to address the complexity of migratory flows and

the disproportionate burden placed on specific geographic regions as host countries, warranting more support (Global Compact for Migration, n.d.). After this portion, the agreement then states that all participatory countries are bound to international law and recognizes the importance of the coordinated efforts by countries to support affected states (Global Compact for Migration, n.d.). The agreement then calls for the need to develop a safer and more cost-effective way to support both refugees and host countries while also addressing the importance of recognizing the technical skills that forced migrants can bring to employment opportunities in their host country (Global Compact for Migration, n.d.). Finally, the document concludes by also recognizing that women and young girls, account for half of all international refugees and that addressing human trafficking issues is necessary to support these women (Global Compact for Migration, n.d.). The Global Compact for Migration closes by re-affirming the commitment of all member states to protect the safety, human rights, and fundamental freedoms of all migrants.

### **3b. ii. Evaluation of the Global Compact for Migration**

The Global Compact for Migration is a legal document that is primarily based in human rights law that intends to create an understanding of the intersectionality of migration, cooperation between states and non-state actors, and development of new programmatic visions regarding migration. Additionally, a component of the Global Compact for Migration is to improve the understanding of climate change as a displacement driver and develop adaption strategies to address both sudden and on-set environmental disasters. This document is the broadest framework of the three policies analyzed, but it is also the most detailed in its intentions to protect the rights of refugees. In terms of rights protections, the Global Compact for Migration accomplishes a high measure because of its detailed and specific commitments to providing protections to refugees. Not only does the Global Compact for Migration affirm the 1951

Refugee Convention and UDHR, but it also encourages states who have not ratified those documents to agree to them, as well as the labor rights of refugees and migrants. Additionally, it identifies the importance of protecting women and girls as a vulnerable subpopulation of refugees who experience gendered violence in refugee camps and throughout their migration process and that all refugees have the right to legal documentation. This agreement focuses specifically on making the rights and protections of refugees a core goal of the policy initiative, making it the most rights focused document of the three agreements.

Regarding autonomy, the Global Compact for Migration accomplishes a moderate measure because it does view autonomy as a key component of treating migrants with respect as individuals. The document explains the importance of treating refugees as individuals who have work skills, who are also fully capable to make economic contributions, and have the right to access employment opportunities. Also, the Global Compact for Migration emphasizes the importance of refugees retaining their ethnic identities through support for multicultural centers and facilitating social cohesion of those who migrate into their host communities. But ultimately these measures in particular do not have any specific accountability mechanisms to ensure rights protection or a guarantee of autonomy. Making the policy strong if put into practice, but ultimately is only theoretical ideals regarding migration.

The Global Compact for Migration then provides a moderate measure of burden-sharing due to their attempts to make a collaborative fund with the World Bank as well as enhancing cooperation between states and external organizations in supporting migratory flows. While the document does emphasize capacity building mechanisms at regional or international levels, there is no specification of what those systems would be. In terms of credible commitments, the Global Compact for Migration achieves a moderate level of credible commitments due to the

lack of enforcement measures for the 23 objectives it proposes. The agreement only suggests that stakeholders such as states, external philanthropies, and others can contribute to a fund on a voluntary basis. The fund is highly motivational in its intentions but has no repercussions in the event a stakeholder breaks the agreement. In addition, the only accountability measure is the requirement of the Secretary-General to report the status of implementation of the Compact on biennial basis (Global Compact for Migration, n.d.).

The Compact is one of the largest efforts to reform the existing refugee system, but because it is all-encompassing and broad, it makes these accountability mechanisms difficult to implement. The Global Compact for Migration provides a strong theoretical framework for improving existing systems regarding global migration but does not define any accountability measures which makes it difficult to discern its tangible effects. Because of the soft law approach and non-legally binding nature of the document, it is unclear that when states enter the agreement if there is a legal requirement to uphold the tenants since all of the policy recommendations are based in human rights law (Pécoud, 2021) The Compact has been characterized as a “catalog of actions described as policy instruments but have not been fully implemented at any level,” (Pécoud, 2021). Because the policy outlined in the Compact does not specify how execution of the recommendations should occur, the agreement develops a narrative that intends to solve issues but ultimately ends up contradicting them (Pécoud, 2021). Despite all of these criticisms, the Global Compact for Migration is one of the newest and all-encompassing agreements to make an attempt at both expanding and reforming the existing migration system while providing a strong theoretical framework to strive towards.

**Table 2: Policy Achievement Measures**

	<b>Credible Commitments</b>	<b>Autonomy</b>	<b>Rights Protections</b>	<b>Burden Sharing</b>
<b>Nansen Initiative</b>	<b>Mod.</b> – Provides yearly reports on regions in order to help them develop preventative and risk management systems.	<b>Low</b> – Little mention of providing refugees any self-sufficiency, focused on governmental action.	<b>Low</b> – Reaffirms the importance of protection through 1951 Convention and the UDHR but does mention the importance of recognizing IDPS.	<b>High</b> – Has developed systems in order to create preventative plans for states or management plans, could be expanded to entire regions in order to help share the burden of resources.
<b>Global Compact on Migration</b>	<b>Mod.</b> – Developed 2018 Conference on Migration but this was the only long-term goal the agreement set for itself.	<b>Mod.</b> – Sees autonomy as a key component of the experience and that refugees are capable individuals with ability to improve economies of host countries through employment opportunities.	<b>High</b> – Document is grounded in the UDHR and human rights, so while also paying specific attention to the human rights also focuses on the protections of women and girls as a vulnerable population.	<b>Mod.</b> – Does not provide any mechanisms on how to burden share, briefly mentions having a cooperative fund with the World Bank in order to provide funds.
<b>Cartagena Declaration</b>	<b>Mod.</b> - Developed the Cartagena Colloquium to study the burdens placed on host countries and research on migratory flows and make decisions for the 10 states involved in the Cartagena Declaration	<b>Mod.</b> – Emphasizes importance of self-sufficiency and that refugees should have equal access to employment opportunities. Also focuses on keeping families together as they are forced to flee or migrate.	<b>Mod.</b> – Specifies the importance that the original rights of the refugees be protected as well as creating protection for refugees through stable camps and trained military personnel	<b>High</b> – Proposes an inter-governmental communication system in order to support both refugees and host countries.

### 3c. i. Brief Background on the Cartagena Declaration

The Cartagena Declaration is a regionally based document designed to support refugees and migrants in Central America. Originally written in 1984, at its inception it was considered one of the forefront documents addressing forced migration and inter-regional movement at the time (Fischel de Andrade, 2019). The Cartagena Declaration includes 10 Latin American

countries including Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, and Venezuela (Cartagena Declaration, 1984). The Declaration led to Latin America's depiction as a leader in human rights and refugee legislation during the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries (Blouin, Berganza, & Freier, 2020). This declaration was one of the first developed regional agreements and recognized that the majority of Latin American countries already have some form of statutes regarding human movement in their constitutions (Fischel de Andrade, 2019). The Declaration was designed as a non-binding regional instrument that does not eliminate the traditional definition of refugee proposed by the 1951 Refugee Convention but instead works to extend the definition to protecting people on additional grounds (Blouin, Berganza, & Freier, 2020).

One of primary goals of the Cartagena Declaration that makes the document unique is its attempt to understand forced migration through a peaceful, non-political lens and as a humanitarian issue, and ensure that all countries develop a minimum standard of treatment for all refugees. This minimum standard of treatment includes creating safe and protected refugee camps, while also working to provide protection, assistance, and emphasizing the importance of self-sufficiency of those who were forcibly displaced (Cartagena Declaration, 1984). The Declaration also seeks to re-think the concept of a refugee and to expand the definition to incorporate an idea in conjunction with the existing 1951 Refugee Convention (Cartagena Declaration, 1984). Ultimately, the ideas of expanding the definition of a refugee led to some signatories incorporating a much more inclusive definition of refugee in their constitutions (Blouin, Berganza, & Freier, 2020).

Another key component of the Cartagena Declaration is the development of inter-governmental communication and creation of a colloquium known as the Cartagena Colloquium

which is comprised of representatives from each state involved with the Declaration. The Cartagena Colloquium functions as an acting body that makes decisions that constitute norms applied to the 10 participating states and observes execution of those norms (Cartagena Declaration, 1984). But in addition to being a monitoring body, the Cartagena Colloquium functions as a research organization as well, that publishes documents and reports that function as policy recommendations, specifically focusing on studying countries that are experiencing a disproportionately larger burden of refugees (Cartagena Declaration, 1984). In addition to the Cartagena Colloquium, the Cartagena Declaration explicitly states the importance of working in conjunction with external organizations such as the UNHCR to be able to provide support to refugees (Cartagena Declaration, 1984). One of the final components of the Cartagena Declaration is training officials in each of the 10 states to act responsibly in order to guarantee the protections of refugees when they experience displacement (Cartagena Declaration, 1984).

### **3c. ii. Evaluation of the Cartagena Declaration**

The Cartagena Declaration can be summarized as a regionally based agreement designed to support refugees in Central America through the development of a colloquium, intergovernmental communication, and support systems collectively invested in by 10 states. This agreement focuses on creating a mutual understanding of migration in a region and how to maximize existing systems in order to best address migratory flows while protecting the rights of refugees. Regarding the measurement of rights protections, the Cartagena Declaration accomplished a moderate level of guaranteeing the rights of refugees during displacement. The document specifies the importance of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the UDHR, but also explains there is a minimum standard of treatment that refugees should receive during displacement which respects their rights to safety and living space. Additionally, the Declaration

calls for the training of military and humanitarian personnel in order provide adequate support for refugees while also emphasizing the importance of protected refugee camps. In terms of autonomy, the Cartagena Declaration achieves a moderate measure because of their emphasis on treating refugees as individual beings with varied experiences that are contributors to their host country. Also, the Declaration recognizes the importance of the independent family unit and emphasizes keeping families together when they experience forced migration.

The Cartagena Declaration reaches a high measure of burden sharing because it provides one of the most detailed and concrete examples of how the 10 signatories can create regional support systems. In the Declaration, it states the importance of the development of an intergovernmental communication system between the 10 states and working with external organization such as the UNHCR in order to coordinate aid efforts without any potential political bias. In addition, the development of the Cartagena Colloquium, to provide research reports on migratory flows, provides data and evidence on how to improve systems and adapt as migration causes change. Finally, the Cartagena Declaration achieves a moderate level of credible commitments because of the creation of the Cartagena Colloquium which is a functioning body of representatives from each signatory state that makes decisions and provides research reports. The intention of this body is to meet and support countries in making adaptations to migration flows or provide support to host countries. Unfortunately, there has been little use of the Cartagena Colloquium for this purpose and the organization as an accountability structure, so states could still defer from the Declaration without any interference from the Colloquium.

Also, the document was developed in 1984, and has since then rendered itself slightly irrelevant because of its influence on development of other legal documents. As discussed, the Cartagena Declaration influenced a number of state constitutions, which resulted in more

acceptance from states to develop more inclusive definitions of refugees in their constitutions (Fischel de Andrade, 2019). Because of the states' decisions to develop their own definitions for their constitutions there is still variation of the conception of refugee in the region, whereas the Cartagena Declaration intended to create one regional definition. This loss of relevance could be due to the document's success, but it also reduces the original goals of the Declaration which was to have the Central American region work as a group to develop a broader definition, not individual states (Fischel de Andrade, 2019). The Cartagena Declaration is potentially the best model for addressing forced migration in regions around the world, but because it is so specific it is difficult to execute. The specific policy initiatives do not change the fact that state capacity may not be prepared to execute the motivational aspirations of the document. Due to this difficulty the Cartagena Declaration is another example of an amazing supplemental document in theory but struggles to hold its participants accountable which has led to most of the policy suggestions becoming purely rhetorical.

### **Discussion**

All three of the policies examined in this paper in their current forms have contributions and shortcomings in providing a singular policy to provide protections and support for those displaced by climate change. But when all three documents work in conjunction with one another, they provide a much more comprehensive supplemental policy for climate migrants in addition to the existing 1951 Refugee Convention. Table 2 above shows the contrasts among the various documents in providing meaningful improvements and where the agreements are lacking. The Nansen Initiative could provide broad-scale burden sharing mechanisms through consultative processes and furthering research examining the intersections of climate change and migration, whereas the Global Compact for Migration is much more focused on developing

rights-based initiatives designed to protect refugees and respect their autonomy as human beings. Finally, the Cartagena Declaration serves as a model for regional cooperation to develop burden sharing and intergovernmental communication through the development of a governing body that works to provide research and decisions on how to effectively manage support for migratory flows. All three of the documents do require more accountability measures in order to develop binding credible commitments that ensure that signatories are properly executing the agreement they must comply to.

An important consideration to take into account with all three of these agreements is that they all do provide a consensus on addressing climate induced migration, but many of the policies suggested have failed to achieve successful implementation. Without effective compliance measures, especially regarding credible commitments, the agreements act as purely rhetorical policies that provide excellent models for global cooperation but no real impact. These agreements theoretically provide support systems, but many countries that are signatories with intentions to improve the current global refugee system do not have the capacity to be able to implement the policies discussed. A final broad critique of these agreements is that they are primarily reactionary policies only developed when a migration crisis begins to occur. In order to fully prepare for the impacts of major migratory flows there must be pre-emptive discussion of policies for regional, transnational, and international support systems. Thus, when a crisis does occur, the international community is prepared to take action and support refugees as well as host countries throughout the event.

The development of these policies opens the door for even further analysis of the intersection of climate change and migration. Environmental change is a phenomenon that will continue to displace people, not only over international borders but within many people's

country of citizenship. Internally displaced people are one of the fastest growing populations affected by climate change, but their needs remain unmet because they do not qualify as a refugee because they have not crossed international borders. There is still a need for significantly more research in order to comprehensively understand how environmental deterioration affects migratory flows, but unfortunately a number of political obstacles prevent further analysis of the issue. Many international governments have yet to ratify the 1951 Refugee Convention and even those who have ratified the document frequently fail to meet the standards and solutions that it proposes. The lack of consensus over an already internationally recognized treaty, creates a major obstacle for understanding climate induced migration and implementation of potential policy. But by working to find policy objectives that support populations displaced by climate change provides the opportunity to understand the intersectionality of migration even more. As this paper examines, socioeconomic vulnerability as well as lack of state social services and support are major factors in driving migration. Citizens of lower-income countries frequently experience amplified socioeconomic vulnerability that forces them to leave their country of origin because the state government is unable to support its own citizens. By expanding the lens of migration in international policy to include factors that are not purely political there is potential to understand how to improve global systems as a whole.

Finally, the creation of these three policies does not begin to address the true impacts of climate change not just on migration, but also on all of the world's political, economic, social, and cultural systems. While these agreements do provide some benefits, they are only built on a system that is deeply flawed. Throughout the majority of the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries humanity has been on an endless pursuit to conquer the natural world to make space for modernization and civilization. But this attempt to harness the earth's environment and

manipulate it into an easily conquered obstacle is a futile pursuit. As climate change shows us, the environment has more control over the plight of humanity than humans do. Ultimately, mankind has to adapt to the shifting changes of the environment and cannot force the earth to change for the will of society. The earth existed prior to the rise of humanity and will continue to exist even if mankind is pushed to the brink of extinction. Without any international response to mitigating climate change, issues such as displacement and resource insecurity will continue to worsen which consequently will have adverse impacts on international political, economic, and social systems. Climate change is not an issue to ignore, it is a critical concern that requires significant action if humanity intends to not only succeed on Earth, but also simply survive to see another century.

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