**Epilogue: Vulnerabilities and Responsibilities in Forced Migration: Direction for further research**

*Why an integrated framework on migration?*

Migration is complex and migrants are diverse groups of people. The chapters in this book capture well these characteristics of shifting populations within a vulnerability framework. The literature on forced migration and movement show that clear-cut distinctions between different types of migrants, such as refugee and economic migrant, are difficult to discern. Migrants are part of a complex migratory phenomenon in which political, ethnic, economic, environmental, and human rights factors combine and lead to population movements (Crisp 1999).

This book combines the academic study of migration and forced migration. By focusing on the social forces that produce vulnerabilities of movement this book problematizes the theoretical binary of voluntary and involuntary. All the chapters in these book go beyond the question of absolute force or absolute choice in movement to the multiple and complex nature of the decisions that produce movement. Moreover, the chapters of the book help to highlight the broader implications for theory and policy-making when migration is conceptualized through the frame of what produces vulnerabilities of movement.

The book focuses on migration patterns and dynamics *within* the global South and specifically from South and Southeast Asia. This edited volume addresses migration patterns and dynamics on a continuum of migration, ranging from migrant workers, internally displaced peoples, trafficked peoples and refugees, including environmental refugees. Most empirically driven texts tend to focus on one type of migration. By focusing on the range of existing migration types within an internal and international domain, this book allows a more comprehensive insight into the complexity of migration dynamics and processes. The chapters herein are a collection of perspectives from multiple disciplines including law, sociology, psychology, political science, economics, demography, philosophy and development. The authors also combine perspectives from academia, policy-makers and practitioners.

We would encourage researchers in migration to continue this effort by actively designing research that takes a comparative approach to the various kind of migrations, examining the relationship between migration and non-migration, while looking at the interactions at the micro- to the macro- level that produce people on the move.

*Policy and Legal Frameworks: Cross-linkages at multiple levels of decision-making*

Migration patterns and dynamics are affected by not just the environmental, socio-political or other type of change, but also by the type of policy that exists locally and internationally. Policy to a large extent will determine who is able to leave and who is forced to stay behind. Within a vulnerability framework, policy has a significant impact on people’s ability to choose to leave or to stay. It also has an impact of what people who move are able to do in terms of livelihoods and survival.

Moreover, migration is almost always a gendered experience. Migration affects men and women differently in terms of vulnerability and safety, accessibility to resources and opportunities, and mobility. Whether it is a relief or emergency policy or a welfare policy, these need to be gender-sensitive for any success or effectiveness in implementation. Any research or scholarly work that is undertaken on understanding migration need to have this consideration. As pointed out in the introductory chapter, policy and legal framework will also determine what risks and vulnerabilities migrants will face when they move. The chapters, especially those on policy and legal frameworks, highlight the loopholes and limitations within existing mandates and the need for more thoughtful and inclusive criteria. Any type of migration, whether it is international or local will require a keen understanding of key basic criteria including gender, culture, identity, language, age, and class.

Not all policy is limited. This book also highlights that some policies, such as migrant policies in Kerala on health care and migrant rights, recognise the difficulties and problems migrants encounter and have taken impressive strides to address some of those. Policy should safeguard people’s right to move as well as the right to stay, giving the choice to the people so that they are not forced into moving or staying. Within a vulnerability framework this is about minimising risks and maximising opportunity.

Just as it is insightful to have a linkage between humanitarian action and development policy, there should also be a clear linkage between legal framework and policy. The chapters highlight this with empirical evidence.

Legality is not always a guarantee that rights, welfare, and safety are protected and safeguarded. The discussion on policy also highlights that accountability is a criterion that needs to be inbuilt into legal frameworks. Having impressive policies are useless if they are not appropriately implemented. Mechanisms for monitoring and accountability for states and nations need to be inbuilt into policy frameworks in order for their effectiveness to be strengthened. This aspect is clearly highlighted in a number of chapters. This remains one of the greatest responsibilities for governments and protection agencies and we would argue it would be beneficial for migration research if scholars paid attention to the extensive research on policy-making and legal studies.

*Agency and Resilience: Bringing the individual back in.*

Agency and resilience are two other themes that emerge from this volume. It is easy to collapse migrants and migration into statistics and theories and easy to forget that migrants are human. They have agency and the ability to manage, and sometimes manoeuvre, resources, networks, and systems. This is one way of regaining some control over lives and livelihoods, especially when movement has been sudden or forced.

Papers in this book have, we hope highlighted the insights we can gain when we look to the men and women displaced by political violence, floods, tsunamis and dams and to the migrant workers who move from villages to cities to across borders. Their perspectives challenge reductionist and essentialist tendencies to think of people on the move as either pure victims or freely-choosing agents. Their perspectives highlight how the family, the household and the individual negotiates the structures producing vulnerabilities, how they hold certain actors accountable, how they co-opt and utilize services targeting them, and how they make decisions to manage their vulnerability.

If we are to understand what policies should be implemented, who they should target, and how they can be effective, it is important that we combine a top-down perspective with a bottom-up approach. Therefore, bridging the divide between research that looks to the state and international actors and research that looks to the people on the move is an important task worthy for future research.

Historically, migrations have produced new nations, pushed out populations and cultures, and catalyzed transformations and social change in both the “origin” and the “destination” communities. There is no reason to think that migrations of our times will not do the same. The migrations of our times are going to shape in important ways our world for the future. However, these migrations are occurring in different contexts and producing new encounters. We would like to hope they are occurring in a more humane context, producing more positive encounters. But there is no guarantee of this and the chapters in this book show the special challenges migrants face, challenges wrought about by legal, political, cultural, environmental and gender structures. This book has attempted to highlight these challenges with the goal of not only showing what is difficult and lacking but also what is possible in addressing these challenges and the many actors involved in trying to make migrations occur in a context that reaffirm human rights.