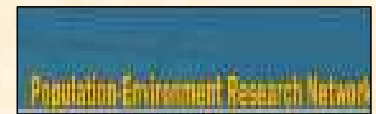


Environment, Forced Migration & Social Vulnerability
International Conference 9-11 October 2008 Bonn, Germany
www.efmsv2008.org



Environmentally-induced Population Displacements: Conclusions from PERN's Online Seminar

Susana B. Adamo
CIESIN – Columbia University



Outline

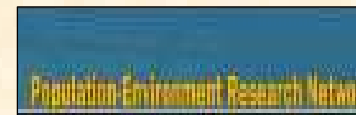
- About PERN
- About the online seminar
- Suggested discussion topics
- Expert opinions
- Topics discusses during the seminar
- Conclusions: some proposals for moving forward

About the Population and Environment Research Network

- Open and free Internet-based network for all those interested in population environment research.
- Mission: to facilitate scientific analysis and dialogue about population environment relationships.
- Launched in 2001 by the IUSSP, co-sponsored by the (IHDP) on Global Environmental Change.
- In-kind support from the Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN) at Columbia University, which hosts the website.
- Activities:
 - (a) Collects and disseminates ongoing, new, and classic work in the population-environment field in an online eLibrary;
 - (b) Facilitates global dialogue between scientists by holding regular cyberseminars on selected topics, and by promoting and archiving (on the Internet) real-time workshops and conference sessions;
 - (c) Collects syllabi on population-environment courses from around the world and makes them easily available;
 - (d) Provides member services such as a regular What's New with upcoming conferences, workshops, job and grant opportunities, and a keyword-driven searchable member database.



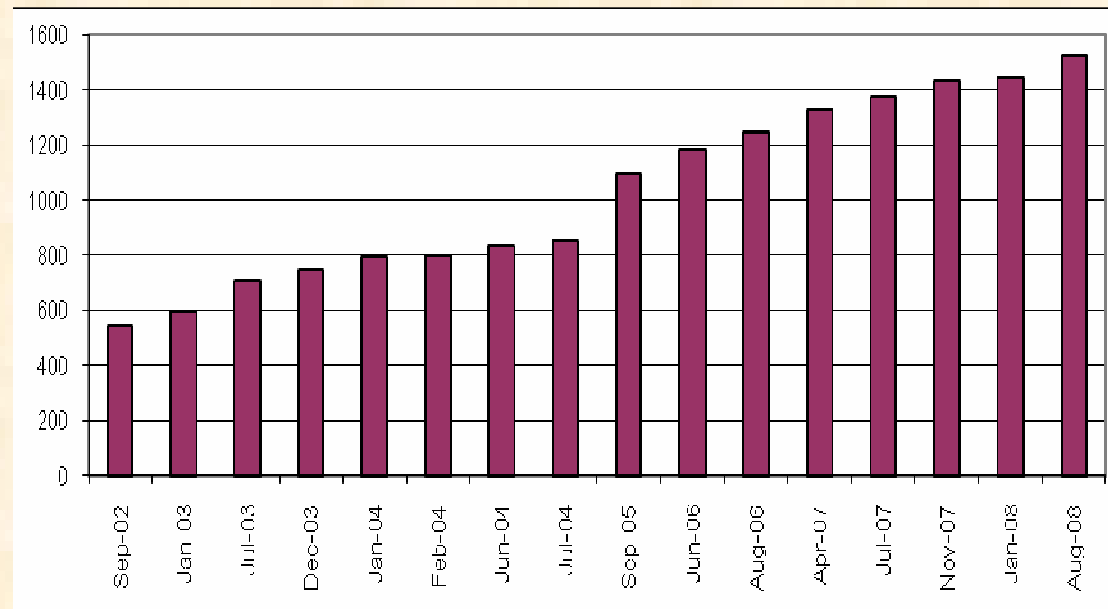
<http://www.populationenvironmentresearch.org>



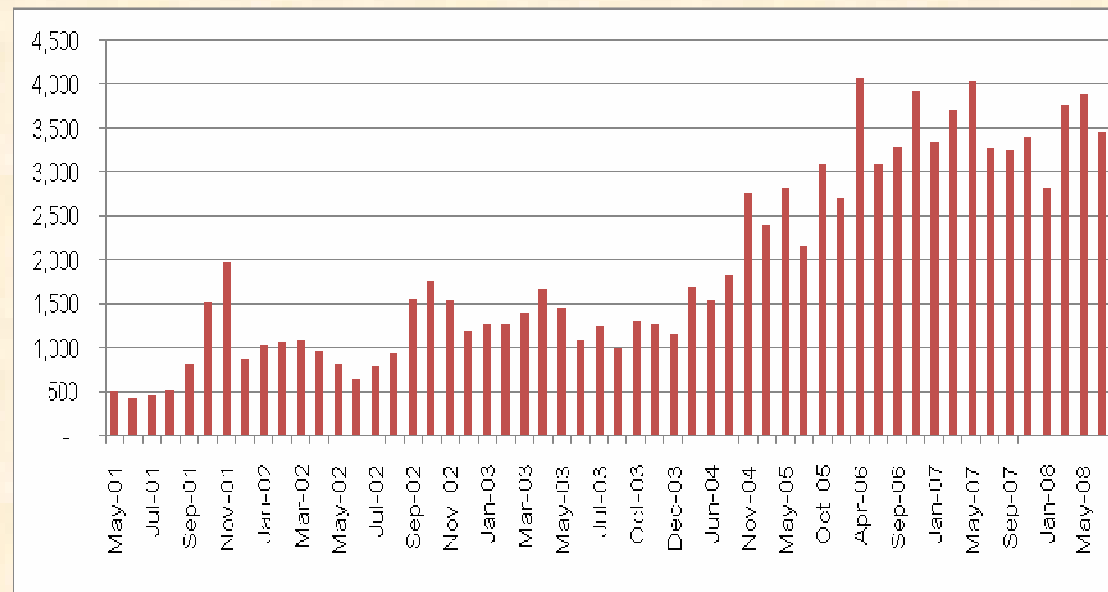
About PERN (cont.)

- Evolution of PERN membership
- Number of unique visits to the website.

Graph 1

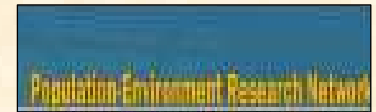


Graph 2



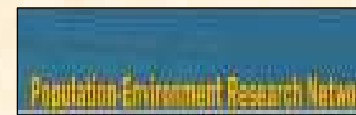
About the seminar

- Objective: to advance discussion on environmentally-induced displacements by highlighting the experiences, views and concerns of the members of the population-environment research community in different countries.
- Co-sponsored by the Environmental Change and Security Program of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
- Run from 18 August to 1 September, 2008.
- Average number of participants: 513, postings: 56
- Background paper: a concise review of relevant topics, aiming to serve as “navigation” tool and to build common ground to foster brainstorming and discussion
 - Topics included: (a) definitions (who and what are we talking about?); (b) some key measurement issues; (c) mechanisms linking environmental change and population mobility; (d) methods for disentangling environment-migration interactions; (e) security concerns and policy issues in the context of global climate change; and (f) regional variation (what does the evidence show from regional studies regarding the relative weight of environmental versus other factors in displacing populations?)



Expert Opinions

- Theory:
 - Complexity of addressing the influence of environmental factors on migration behavior
 - Complex and multidirectional relationships between internal and international migration, environment and development
 - Limitations of traditional theories (particularly the livelihoods approach)
- Data and methods:
 - Potential of new directions in data collection and methodology
 - Methodological issues involved in the study of environmental change and population mobility in rural areas of developing countries: increasing sophistication (multi-scale, multi-level).
- Topics:
 - Migration and environment in urban areas, including health, slums, and the role of non-economic factors
 - The need for a gendered approach to environment-migration issues
 - The implications of growing levels of population movement between countries for the environment and development



Discussion points during the seminar

- Multiplicity and complexity of conceptual frameworks due to the multilayered and multifaceted character of environmentally driven displacements, including their contextual and institutional factors
 - Usefulness and limitations of migration theory frameworks
- Discussion about the relative merits of different research and data collection methods (e.g. ethnographic techniques, survey-based research, qualitative approaches, longitudinal and multilevel techniques, GIS environments) to address and assess environmentally driven migration.
 - Use of census data?

Discussion points during the seminar (cont.)

- Land degradation as stressor
 - Taking advantage of the richness of research on drylands
- Environment, migration and development
 - Poverty/impoverishment as factor
 - North-south relations
- Increasing availability of case studies results
 - SIDS, Bangladesh, drylands and desertification.
 - ECHO-FOR project applying common approaches and methodologies for comparability of results.

Discussion points during the seminar (cont.)

- Policy priorities and social sciences research in relation to the determination of future magnitudes for climate-induced migration
 - Apparent mismatch between climatology and social-sciences in terms of uncertainty?
 - Different scales of intervention, observation and analysis matter as uncertainty increased at higher resolutions
 - Understanding, measuring, modeling

Conclusions: proposals for moving forward

- Improving the usefulness of census data by adding specific questions about motivations, including environment
 - Timely issue → 2010 round of population censuses
- Multiple/mixed methods approach for data collection and analysis: ethnographic, quantitative, GIS
- Focus on the contextual factors (including level and style of development) that could be affected by climate change events.

Conclusions: proposals for moving forward (cont.)

- Understanding how humans respond to climate-based uncertainty and disasters (including migration) before talking about ways to avoid exposure to or to mitigate the effects of catastrophic events.
- Thinking about scenarios of adaptive capacity and its multiple factors focusing on scenarios of potential flows of people considering movers and stayers more than in scenarios of stocks.
- Enhancing communication with policy makers.
- Enhancing true interdisciplinary research.

Thank you