



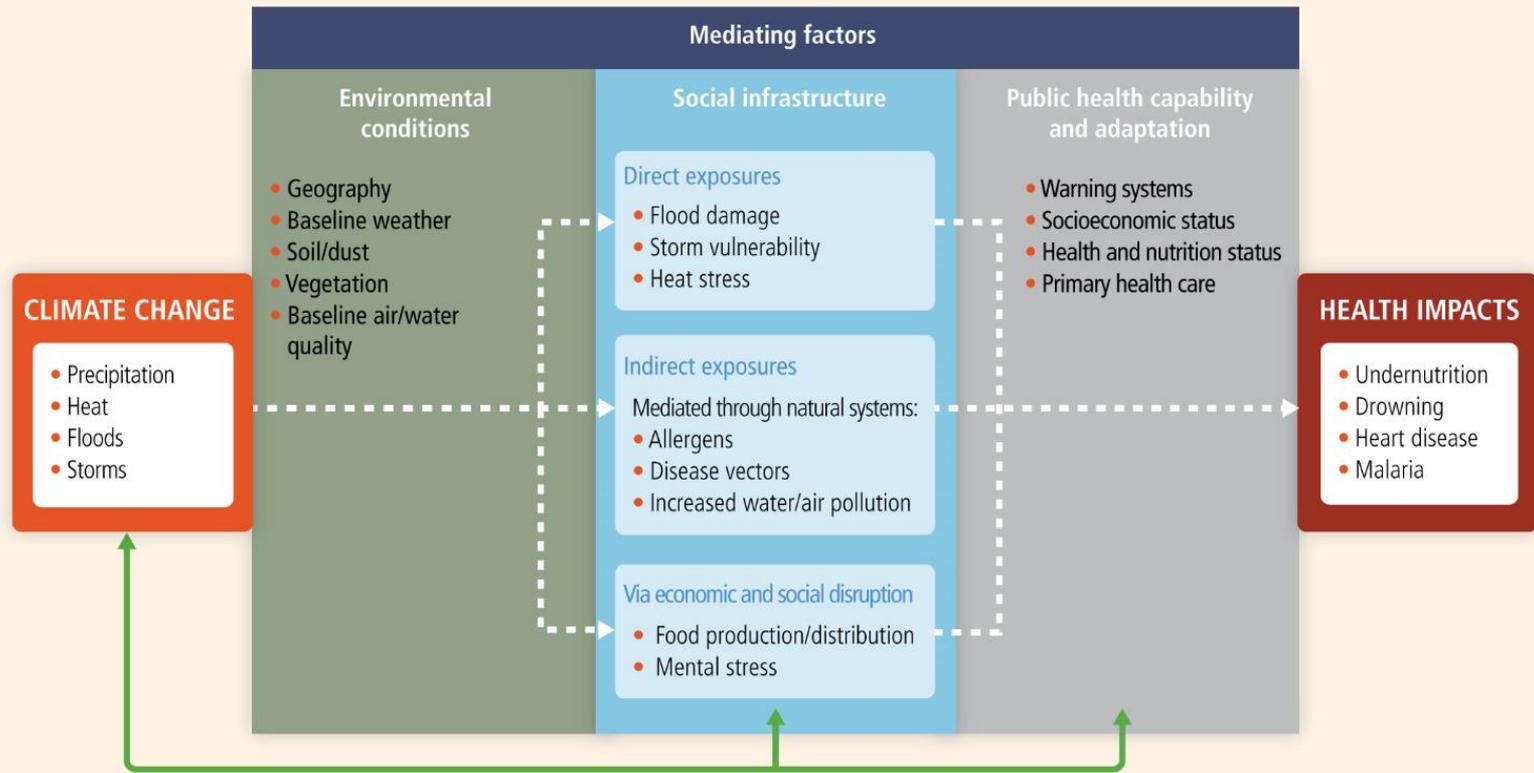
Global Warming as a Social Issue: The Impact on Humanity

By Grace Rowe



Introduction/Overview

- Climate change has caused extreme weather conditions, frequent major natural disasters, rising sea levels, and much more.
- Due to our inability to adapt to these changes, we see various impacts on the livelihoods of populations in different areas of the world.
- All of these occurrences have also caused the displacement of millions of people; over 24 million since 2008. This number is expected to rise along with the rise in temperature of the climate. (McDonnel, 2018)



This graph provided by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), gives an overview of all of the impacts climate change has on the environment and society (IPCC, 2014).



Research Question/Thesis

- RQ: Should climate change be reframed as a social issue rather than solely an environmental concern?
- Thesis: Climate change should be considered a social issue due to its social impacts on a global scale and, if classified as such, there would be a greater response to the issue from humans around the world.



Literature Review- 3 Schools of Thought

- **Climate Change: A Social Problem:** This school of thought argues that climate change should be a social issue due to the effects climate variability has on populations. It also explores the harm in taking the climate crisis out of a social context. (Norgaard, 2016) (Weissbecker, 2011)
- **Climate Change Refugee Rhetoric and Recognition:** This school of thought explores the rhetoric used to describe the climate issue and affected people. (UNHCR 2010), (Su, 2020), (Obama, 2015), (McCabe, 2012)
- **Attitudes Towards Social/Human Rights Issues:** This school of thought shows the relationship between social issues and engagement from the public. (Cohrs & Twose, 2015), (Hertel, et al., 2009)



Case Selection: Relationship Between Climate Change, Environmental and Social Impacts, and Migration

- “Climate-related risks to health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security, and economic growth are projected to increase with global warming...” (IPCC, 2018, p. 9).
- A study found that since 2014, migration from across the Mediterranean Sea has increased immensely and immigrants are arriving in unprecedented numbers. In 2015 alone, there were 1.5 million asylum applications to the EU that can be directly linked to climate change outcomes. This study also found that the effects of climate change also worsen the instability and conflict a population may already be experiencing. (Schlenker, 2017)



Case Selection: Relationship Between Climate Change, Environmental and Social Impacts, and Migration

- A study conducted in Indonesia over a 15 year period found direct links between increased temperatures and outmigration. Researchers found that with rising temperatures, more migration occurred and, based on their results, they predicted that as temperatures rose, migration would increase in Indonesia by up to 16% or more (Bohra-Mishra, et.al, 2014).
- Both of these studies demonstrate that climate change has a direct effect on humans all around the world and, as the IPCC suggests, it will get worse. Climate change has become a more pressing human issue and the research demonstrates that the world needs to regard it as such.



Analysis

- Social Issue: a problem that influences many citizens within a society. It is a common problem in present-day society and one that many people strive to solve
- To reframe the issue, the social implications of climate change need to be recognized and understand importance of putting into social context.
 - Various parts of the world experiencing food insecurity, huge influxes of refugees, insufficient water resources for all (United Nations)
 - Using social sciences to explain/address issue ensures a well-rounded understanding of problem and leads to educated responses/resolution that takes society and its functions into account (Norgaard, 2016)

Analysis

- Appeal to Social Issues
 - Reframing the issue as a social issue puts a human face to the problem; focuses on the individual (Bodansky, 2010, p. 517)
 - People are more inclined to act and engage in socially based issues (Cohrs & Twose, 2015) (Schmidt, et al, 2020)



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Conclusion

There is overwhelming data to confirm that climate change not only has a huge impact on the environment, but on humans and their livelihoods as well. With this knowledge, the climate crisis can be reframed into a social issue, resulting in more engagement and a greater response from the public.



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