

# Exploring the social impacts of climate migration in host communities

**Rajan Ghosh**

PhD Student

Centre for Sustainability | School of Geography  
University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand



# Outline

- Introduction
- Background
- Research Question(s)
- Methodology
- Preliminary Results
- Next Steps

# Introduction

- Climate-induced migrants
- Climate-induced migration
- Social impacts

*Changes to one or more of the following: people's way of life, their culture, their community, their political systems, their environment, their health and wellbeing, their personal and property rights, and their fears and aspirations.*

-Vanclay (2003) and IAIA (2018)-



A climate displaced person thinking about next destination  
Photographer: Probal Rashid, Bangladeshi photojournalist

# Background

- Why climate migration study is important?
- Why the Pacific?
- Why receiving/ host community?

Table 1: Community discussed in the literature

Discussed communities	No of publications	Percentage (%)
Displaced communities	34	42
Host communities	1	1
Displaced and host communities	46	57
Total	81	100

Source: Systematic review by Author

## ➤ Why social impact?

Table 2: Impacts of climate induced migration on places

Impact type	Origin	Destination	Both	Total	Percentage (%)
Social	5	2	1	8	12
Economic	9	1	1	11	17
Cultural	5	6	3	14	21
Political	2	2	1	5	8
Environmental	4	0	1	5	8
Health	4	2	2	8	12
Security	3	8	4	15	23
Total	32	21	13	66	100

Note: 48 publications has mentioned about impacts and multiple counting was considered here; Source: Systematic review by Author

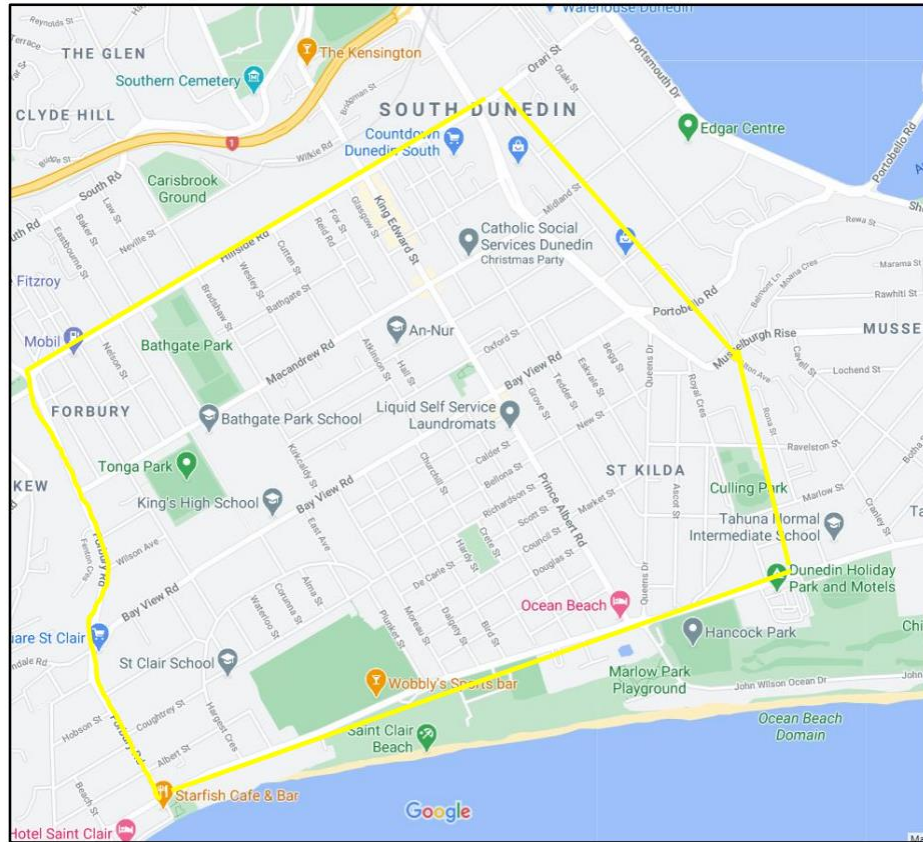
The NZ Govt. is also initiating an action plan to build a greater evidence base of the socio-economic impacts of climate-induced migration on New Zealand and Pacific Island nations (MoFA, 2018)

# Research questions

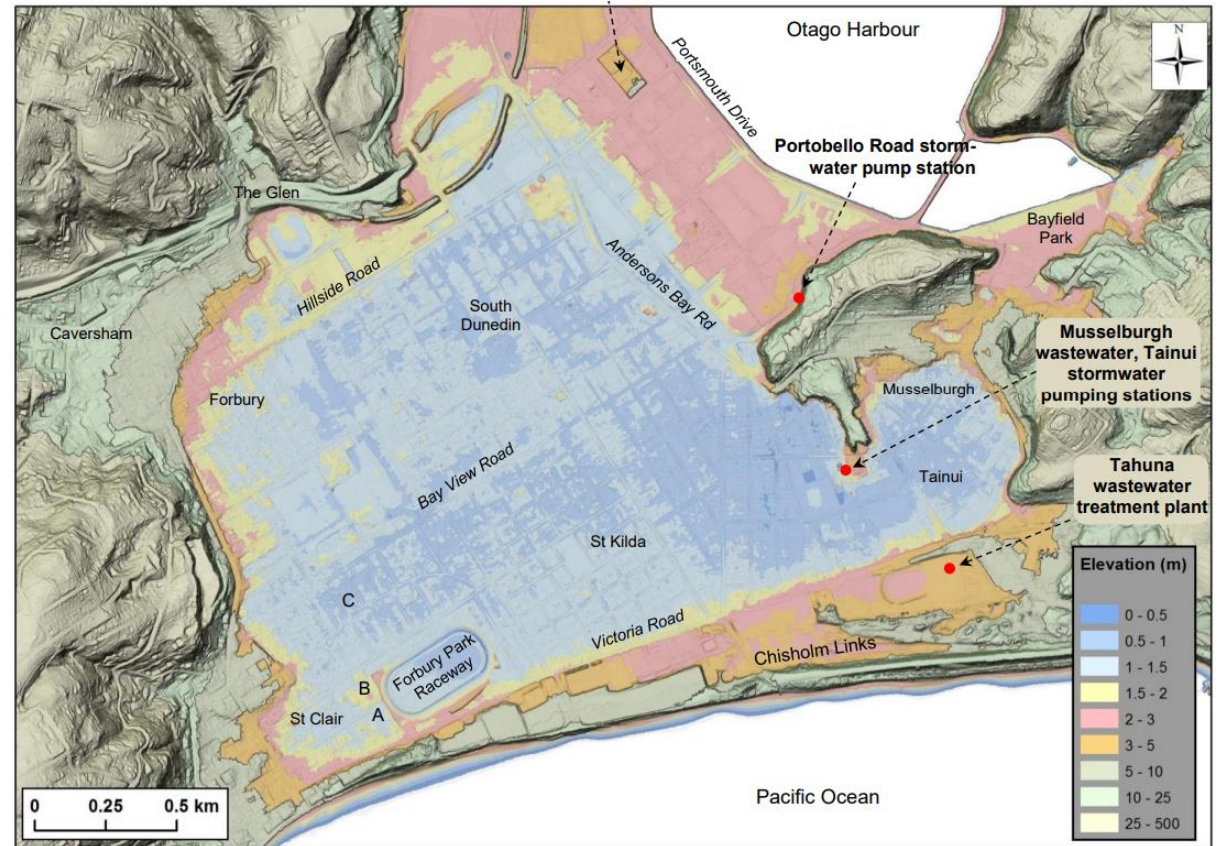
- What could be the social impacts of climate-induced migration on host communities?
- How these perceived social impacts of climate migration can affect the existing structure of host communities?

# Methodology

## Study area: South Dunedin (SD), Dunedin, New Zealand



Source: King, 2021



Source: Goldsmith & Hornblow, 2016

# Methodology

- Why interview?
  - The interviewer can pursue in-depth information around the topic.

(McNamara, 1999)



## Open-ended interview

- Sampling: Snowball
- Interview Duration: Around an hour
- Recording the conversation: Audio recorder
- Transcribe the conversation: Manually
- Analyze the data: Inductive



## ➤ Who were the interviewees?

Table 3: Interviewees from receiving community

Sl.	Description of interviewees	Number of people
1	Community Leader	2
2	Policy Maker	1
3	Community Advisor	1
4	Church Leader	2
5	Academic	2
6	Māori Academic	1
7	INGO Personnel	1
8	Local NGO Personnel	1
9	Emergency Management Officer	1
10	School Principal	2
11	Mauri Leader	1
12	Youth Leader	1
Total		16

Table-4: Duration of living/working in SD

Duration of living/ working (years)	Number of Interviewees
≤ 10 (not below 5)	4
11- 20	7
21≥	5

# Preliminary Results

## Types of impact

- Cultural and religious impact
- Impacts on social security
- Impacts on community infrastructure and services
- Impacts on employment sector and economic structure
- Impacts on political/ social leadership
- Impacts on individuals and family
- Conflict or violence
- Impacts on land use

## Cultural and religious impact

*“There will be the **enrichment of the cultural life of the community**. Because there will be different ways of thinking and doing things that will add fabric to the society or community”*. - **Community leader 1-**

*“There would be the **need for more space for worship** as the places are limited here. We might need some bigger venues for everyone to accommodate”*. -**Church leader -**

## Impacts on social security (i.e. employment subsidise, community card etc.)

*“If it happens in a broader scale, it will have impact. Because I think we should give them (climate migrants) the same as everybody else. There shouldn't be a distinction. Why would we punish people who have come here because their land has gone? And there's no justice in that. If we do so we **need to address it in the budget; likewise refugees are also getting some sort of benefits**”*. - **Community advisor -**

## Impacts on community infrastructure and services

*“Historically Dunedin has cheaper housing than other parts of New Zealand. Now, that’s changing. In some areas it's more expensive than Christchurch. If the number of climate migrants or overall population increase in future, it **would create more pressure on housing**”*. - **Maori leader** -

*“The health system would be also affected because each health clinic or medical center have a maximum number that they can support. What if they couldn't take more people? In that case we **need more medical centers and health service providers, and this means more money**”*. - **Emergency management official** -

*“It would impact the educational institutions because the student number will increase, and schools might **need to increase their facilities, student teacher ratio, and recruit some bilingual support teachers that will require more funding**”*. - **School principal** -

## Impacts on employment sector and economic structure

*“The number of people who will come here in New Zealand as doctors, or architects or whatever their professions are, they will contribute to the employment sector. If they're enabled in terms of language, and qualification recognition, they can contribute to economic structure”*. - **INGO personnel** -

## Impacts on political/ social leadership

*“You can see there are few people in our current government who were from the Pacific. However, who knows, it might not be so far. We *might get new leader from their youngers who comes and grows up here*”*. - **Youth leader**-

## Impacts on individuals and family

*“There's always some people who are quite racist and anti immigration. They can't adjust to other communities coming in. They always see it as an attack on them and they seem to get pretty upset. So, for sure they *might have emotional stress*”*. - **Community leader 2-**

## Conflict or violence

*“The more people you cram into a small space, the more possibility there is for tension and then with tension comes flare up and conflict. I think possibly the reasons why it happens is the cultural misunderstandings”*. - **Academic** -

## Impacts on land use

*“If we know that there's going to be more people coming in South Dunedin, where are we going to put them? We would have to obviously increase housing or building project, which requires changes in land use. But our community is also low to sea level, so how do we rezoning the residential land? incorporate new building standards? and new building policies? all that things need to discuss”*. – **Policy maker** -

## How these impacts can be minimized?

- *“We will need to monitor the situation in the Pacific. There are certain communities that are going to be impacted more immediately than others. So, keep monitoring and building plans around those communities”.*
- *“We have to think of developing infrastructure and education in NZ so that people understand what is going on, and how should we welcome and integrate those people”.*
- *“Resourcing the existing communities who are already here from different Pacific countries, helping them to build the communities that work for them and allow them to live authentically to their cultures. So that they can then lead and welcome anyone who may be coming as climate refugees”.*

## Next steps

- These are preliminary findings, and the immediate next step is to complete the qualitative analysis of all the interview data, and
- This research will contribute to long-term migration policy development considering both climate migrants and host communities



# References

- International Association for Impact Assessment (2018). Social Impact Assessment. *Overview and History*. Retrieved from <http://www.iaia.org/wiki-details.php?ID=23>
- Vanclay, F. (2003). International Principles for Social Impact Assessment. *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal*, 21(1), 5-12. <https://doi.org/10.3152/147154603781766491>
- IDMC. (2020a). *GRID:2020 Global Report on Internal Displacement*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203965436>
- Held, D. (2016). Climate Change, Migration and the Cosmopolitan Dilemma. *Global Policy*, 7(2), 237–246. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.12309>
- Perkiss, S., & Moerman, L. (2018). A dispute in the making. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 31(1), 166–192. <https://doi.org/10.1108/AAAJ-06-2016-2582>
- Ionesco, D., Mokhnacheva, D., & Gemenne, F. (2017). *The atlas of environmental migration* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315777313>
- Burkett, M. (2011). In search of refuge: Pacific islands, climate-induced migration, and the legal frontier. *Asia - Pacific Issues*, 98, 1–8.
- Apap, J. (2019). *The concept of 'climate refugee': Towards a possible definition*. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/621893/EPRS\\_BRI\(2018\)621893\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/621893/EPRS_BRI(2018)621893_EN.pdf)
- Kawajiri, K. (2018). Protection of Cross-border Climate Displaced Persons in the South Pacific : Case of Tuvalu and New Zealand. *International Public Policy Research*, 22(2), 21–43.
- IDMC. (2020b). *Pacific Response to Disaster Displacement Project*. <https://www.internal-displacement.org/pacific-disasters>
- MoFA. (2018). *Pacific Climate change-related displacement and migration: New Zealand action plan*. <https://apo.org.au/node/213946>
- Goldsmith, M., & Hornblow, S. (2016). *The Natural Hazards of South Dunedin*. Otago Regional Council. [www.orc.govt.nz](http://www.orc.govt.nz)
- King, S. (2021). *Community Profile: South Dunedin*. [www.redcross.org.nz](http://www.redcross.org.nz)
- McNamara, C. (1999). General Guidelines for Conducting Interviews. <https://managementhelp.org/businessresearch/interviews.htm>

# Thanks to...

**Supervisor**  
Dr Caroline Orchiston



If you are interested to know more about my research email me at:

[rajanghosh148@gmail.com](mailto:rajanghosh148@gmail.com)