

ARTICLE OPEN ACCESS

Climate Migration

Terry Macdonald¹ | Stephanie Collins² | Luara Ferracioli³¹School of Social and Political Sciences, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia | ²School of Philosophical, Historical, and Indigenous Studies, Monash University, Clayton, Victoria, Australia | ³School of Humanities, The University of Sydney, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia**Correspondence:** Luara Ferracioli (Luara.ferracioli@sydney.edu.au)**Received:** 3 December 2025 | **Revised:** 10 March 2026 | **Accepted:** 18 May 2026

ABSTRACT

Climate migration raises difficult normative challenges for political philosophy. Existing scholarship largely applies theories of international rights and distributive justice to climate-induced mobility, focusing on refugee status and how the international community should allocate responsibility. We argue that although these approaches answer many important questions, they are also limited by their reliance on the constitutive norms of the current state-based international order. After reviewing rights-based frameworks, we highlight emerging debates that question how climate migration disrupts foundational ideals of territorial sovereignty and national self-determination. These debates underscore the need for normative analysis attentive to power hierarchies, cultural loss, and community-led adaptation practices. We conclude by discussing methodological innovations through “engaged” or “grounded” theorizing, which incorporates the perspectives of affected communities and addresses fragmented arenas of practice. This approach aims to guide more context-sensitive normative responses to climate migration.

1 | Introduction: The Normative Issues

One of the many significant impacts of anthropogenic climate change now attracting philosophical attention is the changes it causes to patterns of human movement—within and across state borders. Impacts of climate change on individuals' and communities' decisions to move are notoriously difficult to trace or quantify, given the complex chains of causation and mixed motives that are typically involved (Boas et al. 2019). At an aggregate or structural level, however, it is possible to identify many climate-related factors changing the environmental, social and economic circumstances that drive these decisions. These include not only direct threats to the habitability of certain land areas from sea-level rise, and increased risks from damaging storms and floods, but also indirect impacts on economic and social life from climate-related changes to water-supplies, agriculture, employment opportunities, cultural practices, and so on (Adger et al. 2013; Kaczan and Orgill-Meyer 2020).

Labels for this complex climate—migration nexus are analytically and politically contentious (Ferris 2020; Mayer 2016).

Concepts of “climate refugees” and “climate displacement” are often criticized for discounting the agency of people on the move (Boas et al. 2019; McAdam 2011), or overlooking the diverse directionalities (cyclical and static as well as linear), temporalities (temporary as well as permanent), distances (local as well as international), and associated cultural meanings, of climate-related movement (Boas et al. 2022; Draper 2024). For this reason, many now favor the more agentic and dynamic concept of “climate mobility,” which can arguably better capture these plural elements (Boas et al. 2019, 2022); and this concept is incorporated in some international instruments such as the Pacific Regional Framework on Climate Mobility (Thornton et al. 2021). “Mobility” can also capture involuntary or costly forms of *immobility*—where climate change imposes burdens on those who stay in place whereas others move, in ways that should also be normatively theorized. However, others have objected that this broad “mobility” concept “tends to under-emphasize the human rights violations inherent in” some climate-induced movements (Fry 2023, 3). In this article we use the concept of “climate migration” to mark out our topic, because it connects most clearly with the vocabularies of the

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established philosophical literatures we are engaging; but we do so with the intention of recognizing the diverse types of agency and (im)mobility involved in climate-related movement patterns. Moreover, we acknowledge that appropriate framings for this climate–migration nexus will vary across contexts, in accordance with the meanings assigned to it by impacted communities (Yumagulova et al. 2023); and philosophical concepts should remain open to accommodating such variation.

Established philosophical work on climate migration has so far engaged primarily with literature on the ethics of asylum (Gibney 2018)—addressing questions about how to characterize the moral values at stake in this policy space, and how to allocate responsibility for upholding these values. Our focus here will be on exploring how some normative contestations of state and international policy on climate migration within political practice can reveal the limits of such traditional philosophical inquiry centered on moral rights and duties—paving the way for richer forms of inquiry that take seriously the shifting relationships among self-determination, power, place, and culture in the context of climate migration.

More specifically, much existing literature centers on legal and moral principles developed to regulate the institutions of international order, developed through (Western and often also liberal) theories of international rights and justice. Particular attention has been paid to questions about the implications of climate migration for the scope and application of individual refugee and migrant rights, and just distributions among states of responsibilities for paying for the costs of mobility and other forms of adaptation, as well as compensation for the burdens experienced as a result of climate-driven movement. But an emerging body of philosophical work is now drawing attention to a new set of normative issues. These concern not (only) how regulative ideals of rights and justice should apply to climate migration policies and institutions, but further how climate migration may challenge constitutive ideals of territorial sovereignty and self-determining community membership, which shape the political institutions of the present international order itself. Our aim in this article is to map these shifts in normative debates about climate migration and point to some promising methods for developing the latter strands of philosophical inquiry on the topic.

In what follows we develop this analysis in several steps. We begin by surveying philosophical analyses of climate migration grounded in regulative ideals of international rights and justice, and highlighting their limitations. Next, we examine emerging areas of philosophical work which show how climate migration may challenge constitutive ideals of international order linked to territorial sovereignty and national self-determination—and we consider the implications of these challenges for normative thinking about global political relationships and responsibilities. We conclude with reflections on some methodological issues this raises for future philosophical work.

2 | The Limits of International Rights and Justice

Climate migration has been on agendas of international law- and policy-makers since the establishment within the United Nations system of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate

Change (IPCC)—when the first IPCC Impacts Assessment claimed in 1990 that future impacts of rapid climate change could include “widespread refugee problems” (IPCC 1990, chapter 5, 5). This framing has been developed through a range of proposals for new international legal and policy protections for “climate refugees” (Atapattu 2020; Biermann and Boas 2008, 2010; Docherty and Giannini 2009; Fry 2023), and tested further under established instruments of international refugee and human rights law (McAdam 2012, 2020). But much recent work has challenged this refugee framing, on the basis that it fails to capture the complex causes and plural experiences of climate-related mobilities (McAdam 2020; Wyman 2013). Now, most existing soft-law and policy instruments—across international, regional, and state levels—subsume climate-related movement under broader “displacement,” “migration,” or “mobility” frameworks, which incorporate varying rights-protection, coordination, technical assistance, and financing functions to support people on the move (Fry 2023, 13–18; McAdam 2020, 721–724). Some more specific provisions for climate-induced migration are incorporated within broader UNFCCC work-streams and mechanisms addressing climate change “adaptation” (Warner 2012) and “loss and damage” (Mayer 2017); though these still take the form of loose advisory principles lacking binding legal force or assured financial support. The most substantial body of philosophical work on climate migration has engaged directly with these evolving international legal and policy frameworks—drawing on normative theories of international rights and distributive justice to offer guidance on their future design and development.

One important stream of this philosophical work has focused on proposals for special categories of refugee or migration *rights* addressing climate-induced movement. This has included proposals to extend *legal* rights under the Refugee Convention to a subset of climate migrants facing severe and ongoing impacts. For example, Lister (2014) has analyzed the normative logic of the Refugee Convention, specifically its distinctive remedies of non-refoulement and durable solution, to argue for extending legal rights to the subset of climate migrants with moral need for these remedies. Challenging such proposals, Bender (2024) has appealed to “realist” normative grounds to argue that an extension of legal rights under the Refugee Convention would risk undermining state interests in supporting the Convention’s broader role in international politics, and further erode political recognition of the agency of climate migrants. Against this realist critique, Carnes (2025) has defended the inclusion of a sub-set of climate migrants as refugees—arguing that Ferracioli’s (2022) political account of asylum has the theoretical resources to address these important realist concerns. Contrastingly, Biermann and Boas (2008) have argued for a new global legal refugee protocol, rather than an extension of the existing Convention. This proposal may be less susceptible to realist objections (though see Ferracioli 2014), but it confronts the problem of distinguishing climate-displaced people from people displaced by other causes.

Other work has defended international rights for “climate refugees” understood not as legal rights under the Refugee Convention and as part of the broader refugee protection regime, but rather as a special set of moral rights held against

international society as a matter of justice. In such work the use of the “refugee” concept is intended to denote the applicability not of the specific legal remedies available under the Convention and associated instruments, but rather of equivalent moral grounds for recognizing rights to some (other) special forms of international protection or assistance (Eckersley 2015; Penz 2010; on refugees more broadly, Owens 2020). Defenders of such rights have appealed to a range of moral grounds that may warrant special protection or assistance for (some subset of) climate migrants: the distinctive harms climate change can cause to the autonomy interests of individuals (Straehle 2023); climate-induced deprivation of individuals’ basic needs (Buxton 2019) or morally important functionings (De Shalit 2011), which their own state institutions lack capacity to support; the distinctive moral wrongs committed through human causes of climate change, which call for reparation (Souter 2022); or the implications of climate change for just access to the space and resources of the Earth, which is understood as owned by all in common (Risse 2009), or owned by each subject to the “Lockean proviso” of leaving sufficient for others (Nine 2010), as a matter of natural right. Despite agreeing that some communities affected by climate change will be owed these remedies, Stilz (2025) has highlighted the importance of located lives and the responsibility that duty-bearers have to give priority to in situ adaptation over migration whenever possible.

Building on these moral grounds, justifications have been advanced for a range of international institutional instruments aimed at upholding the moral rights of climate migrants. Some such rights claims are quite abstract—such as the right to a livable locality, which Capisani (2020) argues is a fundamental international right grounding a range of more concrete institutional provisions for climate migrants. Other rights claims are more specific, including: special free movement passports for displaced individuals (Heyward and Ödalen 2016), or similar policy instruments giving displaced individuals rights to free choice in where to resettle (Eckersley 2015); territorial rights for displaced collectives, to enable ongoing participation in some shared cultural practices and collective political self-determination (Nine 2010; Wündisch 2022); and other policy instruments supporting temporary or cyclical mobilities functioning as adaptation mechanisms for people vulnerable to disruptive climate change impacts—such as special rights to international labor migration (Draper 2022).

Even when framed as moral rather than legal rights, however, serious difficulties remain with demarcating a set of individuals or groups who should qualify for such special moral entitlements. One is the principled concern that each of the general moral interests argued to ground these proposed international rights are shared by—and would apply just as robustly to—some sets of people displaced by causes other than climate change. Another is the empirical difficulty—noted above—of differentiating climate-related drivers of migration decisions from the other complex social and economic drivers with which they are typically intertwined. Both issues make it hard to differentiate the moral rights of “climate refugees” from other migrant populations with equivalent interests at stake—thus providing support for international policy responses that subsume rights-protection for climate migrants under broader “displacement,” “migration,” or “mobility” instruments.

In recognition of these issues, some new work has argued that the moral distinctiveness of climate migration should be located on the responsibility side, rather than the rights side, of just institutional responses. This work delineates the special distributions of political responsibility for supporting migrant populations that are required as a matter of justice where climate change is a significant driver of migration patterns. Bradley (2012) has argued that remedial responsibilities toward climate migrants should be distributed according to mixed principles of causal contribution, moral culpability, and capacity—thus differentiating state responsibilities in accordance with their varied roles in generating climate change. Particularly onerous responsibilities, Buxton (2019) has argued, should be allocated to those who have committed injustices in their contributions to harms from climate change, as a form of reparation (going beyond compensation); Holtug (2022) has similarly argued that wrongs committed by states which have violated others’ rights, through their morally culpable contributions to harms from climate change, may forfeit their own right to invoke a “demandingness objection” to these allocations. Others have further proposed institutional instruments through which such special international responsibilities for climate migration can be discharged—in the absence of corresponding special rights for individual climate migrants—through “insurance” rather than “tort” models of liability, which require responsible states to support governance systems which address migration patterns in the aggregate, in proportion to their differing degrees of moral responsibility (Draper 2024; Penz 2010; Thornton 2018).

This philosophical work has made significant advances in thinking systematically about how the moral challenges posed by climate migration may fit within the institutional practices of international society as it is currently constituted—and what specific rights and distributions of responsibility may be considered just within the normative logics of this established order. By taking the constitutive norms of existing international order as moral touchstones for arguments about rights and justice, however, these approaches risk overlooking some underlying normative challenges. First, they risk obscuring how constitutive international norms of territorial sovereignty and national self-determination, and the thicker international legal regimes built on these foundations, may themselves contribute to negative experiences of climate change and related migration, by entrenching neo-colonial boundaries and hierarchies that constrain opportunities for impacted populations to pursue diverse mobilities as empowering instruments of climate adaptation (Asafo 2021; Bordner et al. 2020; Sim-Sarka 2025; K. Whyte et al. 2019). Relatedly, these accounts of international rights and justice invoke problem-diagnoses and conceptual framings that cast experiences of climate migration in predominantly negative and individuated terms of harm, loss, and burden—with little attention to the positive and relational ethical conceptions of adaptability, care, dignity, neighborliness, and so on, which affected communities sometimes invoke as guiding ideals for navigating the changes involved (Kitara et al. 2024; Vaai 2025; K. P. Whyte 2013). These ideals do not necessarily outweigh or negate (and may sometimes be incommensurable with) conceptions of individual harm, loss, and burden; but the point remains that such ideals are overlooked in mainstream philosophical debates. While the agency of people

on the move is widely recognized in the abstract—with “autonomy interests” among those invoked as grounds for relevant rights and responsibilities—thicker philosophical frameworks would be required to assess the concrete relationships and instruments through which this agency may be harnessed and empowered in practice, with the aim of dynamically steering and legitimizing international institutional and policy responses (Grix and Watene 2022; Jayasuriya and Watene 2024).

These challenges point to the importance of considering not (only) what conceptions of rights and justice should regulate the institutions of international order as these are currently constituted, but further how climate migration may challenge some fundamental constitutive norms of international political order itself. To be sure, some of the above proposals (such as free movement passports) do stretch current international norms; but they do not challenge them wholesale. We will move next, accordingly, to examine some recent philosophical work that has considered normative questions of this kind.

3 | Challenges to Territorial Sovereignty and National Self-Determination

A growing philosophical literature has considered how circumstances of climate migration may challenge the justificatory grounds for fundamental norms of international order—particularly territorial state sovereignty and state-based national self-determination. Much of this work begins with reflection on familiar (and often vividly dramatized) future scenarios in which low-lying island states confront complete loss of habitable land due to climate-induced sea-level rise—raising questions about what rights of sovereignty and national self-determination may then remain. Other work considers more complex contemporary scenarios—in which states’ territorial land loss is partial not total, and where temporary, cyclical, or other more complex patterns of climate-driven (im)mobility transform collective cultural and political practices in varied (and often ethically contested) dimensions. Here questions are raised about whether and how established theoretical ideals of sovereignty and national self-determination can adequately capture those forms of institutional rule and collective empowerment required to achieve legitimacy under the dynamic social circumstances associated with climate change and associated mobilities.

Much of this philosophical work aims to establish how international society’s constitutive norms of territorial sovereignty and national self-determination may be redeemed or repaired to meet the challenges of climate mobilities—through adjustments to states’ territorial borders, or new institutional processes supporting national culture and self-determination—which leave unchallenged the statist structure of international political order. First, in response to challenges of climate-induced territorial loss, normative arguments have been advanced for new delineations of territorial borders, aimed at restoring the legitimacy of existing territorial sovereignty practices. Angell (2021) has argued that territorially displaced communities have a right to reconstitute their sovereign statehood on a new territory—with responsibilities borne by culpable greenhouse gas emitters to modify their own ways of life to accommodate this. Wündisch (2019) extends the case for territorial compensation

beyond total disappearance to partial territorial losses that compromise a community’s capacity for self-determination—arguing that where self-determination can be restored through territorial compensation, such compensation is owed. Dietrich and Wündisch (2015) develop normative criteria for selecting compensatory territories, taking into account continuity of culture, viability of economic life, and fairness to both recipients and donors. Kitara (2019) draws on political debates in Tuvalu to argue for enhanced international recognition of ongoing sovereign rights over ocean territories and exclusive economic zones, even after the loss of a state’s habitable land—thus challenging the primacy of land-based territory in the constitution of sovereign statehood. (See also Armstrong and Corbett (2021) on justice and maritime zones.)

Second, in response to transformations in national cultural practices driven by climate mobilities, parallel arguments have been advanced for new provisions to preserve national cultures—oriented toward restoring alignment of political practices with existing international ideals of national self-determination. Heyward (2014), for instance, argues that climate migration can cause “cultural injustices” by severing communities’ relationships to lands and undermining traditional ways of life. She proposes rectification through measures that enable displaced communities to sustain practices of remembrance, maintain continuity with cultural activities, retain collective control over cultural change, and have their experiences of loss publicly acknowledged. Rothe et al. (2024) assess the prospect, raised by Tuvalu’s government, of recreating lost sovereign territory as a “Digital Tuvalu”—in which the Tuvaluan Indigenous philosophy of *fenua* may be invoked to preserve linkages between land, sea, people, and culture within this alternative digital space. Zellentin (2010, 2015) focuses on conditions of resettlement within other states, arguing that the terms of new citizenship must acknowledge cultural difference and support ongoing rights to cultural preservation—so that the participatory rights associated with new memberships can preserve the dignity and self-respect of displaced groups, and establish new memberships on fair terms. Miller and Straehle (2025) highlight the myriad cultural costs associated with climate mobility, noting that the cultural interests of group members may sometimes pull in different directions, and that democratic procedures may be needed.

Third, in response to disruptions to practices of collective political self-governance caused by climate displacement, some have argued for new processes for political self-determination, which may restore alignment of practice with international ideals of national self-determination by reconfiguring authority structures within established state territories. Kolers (2012) advances a “positive-sum” conception of territory, according to which norms of sovereignty can be reconfigured to permit shared use of land by multiple self-determining communities—resisting the assumption that any gain in control by one group must come at the expense of another. Relatedly, Burkett (2011) proposes the creation in international law of a new category of *ex situ* nationhood, under which states that lose their recognized territory could retain sovereignty as members of the society of states and as governing institutions for a territorially dispersed population. (Although it must be acknowledged that these proposals may increase risks of violent

conflict.¹) Some have considered forms of de-territorialized collective identity and authority—enabling sovereign statehood to persist after territorial loss (Vaha 2015); though others have questioned the normative robustness of deterritorialized self-determination, on the grounds that it risks eroding independence from other political units, which remains important for sustaining legitimate statehood (Ödalen 2014). Combining a range of such considerations, and drawing more specifically on Brock's (2020) broader theory of international migration justice, Wilcox (2021) argues for “hybrid” bundles of political entitlements—combining elements of collective resettlement, ongoing self-determination, and territorial rights—as preconditions for the legitimacy of the international state system in the face of climate-related displacement.

Such approaches have significant merits. Insofar as norms of territorial sovereignty and national self-determination remain key ordering principles in international society, it is valuable to consider how all communities can secure equitable access to the distinctive forms of political empowerment that they provide. Intriguingly, the proposals enumerated above implicitly employ differing conceptions of “collective self-determination”—identifying varied conditions that must be met for a group to be self-determining. These proposals therefore offer fertile ground for advancing and pluralizing existing understandings of collective self-determination within normative political philosophy.² However, these approaches face normative challenges of two related kinds.

First, many features of the prevailing norms of sovereignty and self-determination are themselves products of colonial imposition, and sit uneasily alongside traditional cultures and practices of Indigenous and other communities whose lands and polities were historically subordinated or divided by state boundaries. On this basis, it can be argued that climate change and climate migration should be seen less as reasons to reinforce these norms and more as opportunities to contest them—restoring or reconstructing alternative ideals of community membership and autonomy. This argument resonates with a growing body of empirical work which highlights Indigenous ideas and practices of (im)mobility that challenge statist assumptions. These include traditional mobility patterns and relational conceptions of land and sea that cross-cut the rigid borders of territorial control and membership imposed by the state system (Caron 2022; K. Whyte et al. 2019; Yumagulova et al. 2023), and evolving normative visions of “Oceanic cosmopolitanism” articulated by Indigenous climate activists and artists as alternatives to neo-colonial state bordering practices (Suliman et al. 2019). Relatedly, some scholars warn that discourses of climate migration as empowered adaptation or virtuous resilience can depoliticize responsibility for climate change and its impacts—shifting attention away from the structural causes of harm (Methmann and Oels 2015). Along similar lines, Titifanue (2025) cautions against “justice-washing” discourses, in which liberal models of distributive justice are mobilized to rationalize new forms of environmental extractivism—such as deep-sea mining in the Pacific—as instruments of just adaptation, even where these face strong opposition from local communities.

Furthermore, even where their unjust colonial legacies are harder to trace, it is arguable that some inherited norms and practices of territoriality and self-determination are too institutionally rigid to accommodate the more dynamic demands of political governance and self-determination arising with many contemporary experiences of climate-related (im)mobility. Here it is crucial to recognize that valuable cultural identities and ways of life are not fixed rigidly by tradition; rather, they can be dynamically reshaped by the changing social and economic circumstances associated with climate change and mobility patterns (Enari and Viliamu Jameson 2021; Farbotko 2022; Farbotko et al. 2016). The challenge, then, is not merely to preserve or transplant pre-existing cultural or political forms, but to support the development of new, context-responsive modes of ethical and political engagement, membership, and governance that can respond legitimately to diverse and evolving climate mobilities. Along these lines, Grix and Watene (2022) argue for recognizing Indigenous and non-Indigenous “local practice communities” as the critical agents and drivers of climate adaptation—with scope to act politically at regional and international as well as local levels—rather than imagining legitimacy to derive principally from judgments made within nation-state governance institutions. Biasio (2025) similarly defends community-led processes as crucial for guiding decisions about what forms of (im)mobility are appropriate in particular circumstances, including whether—and on what terms—migration should feature as an adaptation strategy at all. This work resonates further with Táiwò's (2025) broader theoretical argument that climate reparations should not be conceived primarily as backward-looking compensation for past wrongs, but rather as inter-generational commitments to a “constructive politics” through which a more just global order can be built through the incremental empowerment and action of ordinary people experiencing the impacts of climate change and mobilities in their everyday lives.

This more critical approach to philosophical thinking about climate migration shows how experiences of climate migration may raise normative challenges not only for rights and justice within the international order, but also for some constitutive norms of the state-based international order itself. Norms of territorial sovereignty and national self-determination remain important vehicles for collective political recognition and empowerment for communities navigating the challenges of climate change and associated mobilities (including Indigenous and postcolonial communities); but where these norms function to entrench political barriers to dynamic community-led practices of climate adaptation—including, where appropriate, a range of (im)mobilities—more critical and reconstructive philosophical analysis of these norms can make valuable contributions to guiding the development of new political responses. While these norms of international order must be critically assessed, this is not to say that the outcome of this assessment is a foregone conclusion.

4 | Conclusion: New Methodological Directions

The preceding discussion suggests that climate migration presents not only new applications for established normative

theories of international rights and justice, but also new kinds of normative challenges that strain the resources of those theories. These challenges direct further critical attention to the constitutive norms of state sovereignty and national self-determination that structure the present international order.

In response to these challenges, one option may be to focus on forms of climate migration that do not intersect with international norms—for example, migration that is internal to a sovereign state. Recent work on internal and community displacement takes up these issues (Draper 2023, ch. 3, ch. 7; Draper and Owen (eds) 2024). However, even internal displacement will often be of international concern and therefore encounter international norms (Lister 2024). Another option may be to focus on in situ forced cultural change as a type of displacement of lives, which does not involve any physical movement that would implicate international norms. Such in situ cultural change may be especially confronting for cultures that are “strongly located” (Miller and Straehle 2025), giving rise to distinctive moral claims. This is an important avenue for future research.³ Again, though, adequately responding to these moral claims may involve not just domestic political institutions, but also international communities of practice (including diaspora communities, international non-governmental organizations, and so on) to whom international norms are relevant. Even in these cases, then, the international norms will need to be examined.

A key difficulty in doing so, however, is identifying where the normative grounds of critique and reconstruction can be found, if the constitutive norms of international order are not to be assumed as an authoritative starting point. This points to a further methodological challenge for philosophical work on climate migration.

Rather than treating climate migration simply as another case to which pre-existing normative theories of international rights, justice, legitimacy or order can be analytically applied, we suggest that it calls for the development of further engaged or grounded forms of normative philosophical work. By this, we mean normative reflection that is grounded in rich understandings of the political practices involved, and further in the dynamic normative self-understandings and commitments of the people with direct experiences of the impacts and opportunities that these practices produce (Ackerly et al. 2024; Wolff 2018; Zacka et al. 2021). This should not collapse into purely descriptive analysis: the central tasks remain conceptual clarification, normative evaluation, and critical reflection on institutional arrangements that shape experiences of and responses to climate migration in practice. But it should engage systematically with understandings of how these normative concepts, judgments, and principles are articulated, contested and transformed within affected communities in practice—and take the perspectives and insights of people on the front lines of climate (im)mobility as indispensable resources for normative theorizing on the topic.

Methodological approaches of “engaged” or “grounded” normative theorizing may face distinctive difficulties, however, when deployed in the context of climate migration. Established

methodological approaches of this kind typically appeal to relatively stable or consolidated cultural or institutional practices as sources of the values that provide starting points for normative analysis. But the practices bound up in shaping the drivers and impacts of climate migration are highly complex and dynamic: they function at the intersections of governmental and intergovernmental climate policies, highly institutionalized state migration regimes, global economic systems, and both local and diasporic community relationships and networks. As such, they do not map neatly onto established traditions or settled institutional or cultural orders.

Moreover, there are significant disjunctures between the sites where climate migration is politically problematised—international negotiations, regional policy fora, transnational advocacy networks, etc.—and the sites where its impacts are experienced—which are frequently dispersed across local communities whose political voices are not always well-integrated into influential public spheres. Unlike contexts of consolidated democratic states, in which engaged philosophers can situate their work within existing cultural and institutional practices of public deliberation, issues such as climate migration are experienced across fragmented and asymmetrical arenas of practice, in which affected communities may not share common languages, institutional frameworks, or other forums for collective normative reflection. This complicates straightforward extensions of established engaged-philosophical methods, which assume relatively integrated political communities as contexts for inquiry. These challenges suggest the need for some methodological innovation in developing a suitable philosophical approach to inquiry on this topic—incorporating multiple anchor-points across diverse and unevenly connected communities of practice. In this way, further progress can be made in the development of philosophical resources for guiding global political responses to the complex, evolving normative landscape shaped by the intersection of climate change and human movement.

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Endnotes

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