

Security vs. Adaptation

Competing Discourses on Climate Change and Migration in Bangladesh

API 6999 – Major Research Paper
Submitted to Dr. Matthew Paterson on 1 August 2011

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Abstract

Surging interest within academic and policy communities has given rise to an abundance of literature on the subject of climate change-related migration, which has in turn generated a wide range of views on the anticipated scale and scope of this phenomenon. As a result, diverging conceptualizations of this policy problem have led to markedly different recommendations on how governments, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and International Organizations (IOs) should address this issue. In recent years, these views have begun to solidify into distinct policy discourses.

This paper aims to identify and explore different policy discourses within current policy debates on the issue of climate change-related migration in Bangladesh by examining a collection of policy texts produced by a broad cross-section of NGOs, IOs and Think Tanks.

The first chapter examines the relationship between climate change and migration in Bangladesh by presenting a broad overview of how these impacts are expected to affect the lives and livelihoods of Bangladeshis over the coming century. Specifically, this section examines sea level rise, increasing glacial melt in the Himalayas, changing weather patterns, and increasingly frequent and severe extreme weather events.

The second chapter identifies and extrapolates key characteristics of the security and adaptation discourses that emerge from the literature examined by focusing on how five distinct themes – climatic drivers of migration; human security; state security; agency and identity; and policy and governance – are viewed within these discursive frameworks.

Finally, the third chapter seeks to explain the discursive positions adopted by the organizations authoring these texts by examining, in broad strokes, the unique characteristics of these groups, and the geo-political environments within which they operate. Furthermore, this chapter will also look at the influence of two pre-existing discursive frameworks – illegal migration and climate justice – on the security and adaptation discourses, respectively.

As the impacts of climate change are expected to become increasingly severe over the course of the twenty-first century, identifying and extrapolating the discursive frameworks that are being employed to highlight or marginalize specific policy outcomes will be increasingly important. By examining two key discourses emerging within current policy literature on the subject of climate change and migration, this analysis aims to shed new light on an emerging issue-area in climate change policy.

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Introduction

Surging interest within academic and policy communities has given rise to an abundance of literature on the subject of climate change-related migration, which has, in turn, generated a wide range of views on the anticipated scale and scope of this phenomenon. As a result, diverging conceptualizations of this policy problem have led to markedly different recommendations on how governments, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and International Organizations (IOs) should address this issue. In recent years, these views have begun to solidify into distinct policy discourses.

For the purposes of this analysis, discourse is defined here as a specific ensemble of “ideas, concepts and categorization(s) that are produced, reproduced and transformed in a particular set of practices.”¹ Discourses are not benign: they reflect a specific conceptualization of an issue that emphasizes some problems, possibilities, and solutions, while marginalizing competing alternatives.² As a particular policy discourse gains widespread acceptance, discussion of the issue becomes embedded in a “knowledge regime,” which imposes limits on the type of ideas, concepts, language, and policy solutions that are acceptable.³

In the context of climate change and migration there are two particular policy discourses that are reproduced throughout various policy documents on the subject, and

¹ Hajer, Maarten, *The Politics of Environmental Discourse: Ecological Modernization and the Policy Process*. London: Oxford University Press, 1995, 45

² Bäckstrand, Karin, and Lövbrand, Eva, “Planting Trees to Mitigate Climate Change: Contested Discourses of Ecological Modernization, Green Governmentality and Civic environmentalism,” *Global Environmental Politics* 6:1, 2006, 52

³ Milliken, Jennifer, “The Study of Discourses in International Relations,” *European Journal of International Relations*, 5:25, 1995, 229

generate significant polarization within policy communities examining this issue. In the following paper, these discourses will be referred to as the ‘security discourse’ and the ‘adaptation discourse,’ respectively.

In the most basic, fundamental terms, the security discourse frames migration as a *problem* that will arise when climate change impacts lead to the forced relocation of affected populations on a massive scale. In contrast, the adaptation discourse frames migration as a *solution* that will play an integral role in sustaining livelihoods and helping households to adapt to climate change impacts in the decades ahead. Again, these are mere sketches of two complex frameworks that diverge and overlap with a number of other discourses that have emerged from the literature examined in this analysis. This paper will also seek to explain these competing discourses by looking at related frameworks of analysis, and the specific characteristics and geo-political environments of the organizations that are imposing them – in whole or in part – within the policy documents that they produce.

Overall, the discourses examined in this paper are embedded in a plethora of ideas, values, resources, and relationships of power that influence the decisions of particular actors – in this case, organizations – to adopt and disseminate these views. It is hoped that by establishing the provenance of these discourses, it will be easier to evaluate future claims, assertions, and policy recommendations on the subject of climate change and migration.

Methodology

This paper aims to identify and explore different policy discourses within current policy debates on the issue of climate change-related migration in Bangladesh by examining a collection of policy documents – “texts,”⁴ in this analysis – produced by various NGOs, IOs and Think Tanks – organizations viewed as “authorized speakers” on this issue.⁵ The literature examined here is not an exhaustive list of policy briefings available on this subject, as the volume of documents that highlight the relationship between climate change and migration in Bangladesh is vast. For the scope of this analysis, however, this literature provides an adequate snapshot of this discussion, taken from a broad cross-section of organizations of different sizes, mandates, and geographic locations. (A full list of these documents may be found in Annex I.)

Before delving into a discursive analysis of these policy documents, this paper will first seek to present a general summary of current and anticipated climate change impacts in Bangladesh. To this end, the first chapter will explore current socio-economic trends in Bangladesh, as well as scientific and academic research on climate change impacts in the country that could influence patterns of human migration and displacement. These impacts include rising temperatures and changing weather patterns, sea level rise, and increasingly frequent and severe extreme weather events.

In the second chapter, this paper will seek to extrapolate the over-arching security and adaptation discourses by examining key themes that emerge within the documents

⁴ In discourse analysis, the term “text” refers to the written text that is the subject of analysis (as opposed to speech, for example.) See Fairclough, Norman, *Analyzing Discourses: Textual Analysis for Social Research*. New York: Routledge, 2003, 2-3

⁵ Milliken, “The Study of Discourses in International Relations,” 233

examined. The concepts, ideas, and language that each discourse applies to specific issues like human security, gender, and governance, among others, helps to reveal a distinct, broader narrative on the subject of climate change-related migration. Through a comprehensive analysis of these themes, this section aims to identify key tenets of these discourses, as well as the issue-areas on which they converge and diverge.

The final chapter will try to explain the discursive positions adopted by the organizations authoring these texts by examining, in broad strokes, the unique characteristics of these groups and the geo-political environments in which they operate. Subsequently, this chapter will look at the influence of two pre-existing discursive frameworks – illegal migration and climate justice – on the security and adaptation discourses. By shedding light on the linkages between these characteristics and the ideas, concepts, and policy recommendations advanced by these organizations, it is hoped that future reports put forward on this issue may be subjected to more rigorous and comprehensive scrutiny.

Chapter 1: Anticipated impacts of climate change in Bangladesh

Climate, defined by long-term regional patterns in temperature, humidity, rainfall and other meteorological phenomena, dictates where and how human populations live and, to a large degree, how they sustain their livelihoods.⁶ As anthropogenic global warming caused by the historical accumulation of greenhouse gases begins to generate wide-ranging climate change impacts, populations around the globe face significant challenges.⁷ Bangladesh, with its high population density, widespread poverty, flood-prone climate and low-lying geography, is especially susceptible to these impacts.

To provide some context about how such impacts may affect population movements in Bangladesh, this section will briefly review Bangladesh's current climate and socio-economic situation, and the anticipated local impacts of climate change in the region.

Socio-economic and climatic overview of Bangladesh

Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world, with an estimated 143 million people spread across roughly 143,998 km² – a population density of approximately 993.07 people per square kilometer.⁸ While poverty remains endemic, since Bangladesh attained independence from Pakistan in 1971, substantial progress has

⁶ "Climate." *The Encyclopedia of Climatology*, eds. Oliver, John E., and Fairbridge, R. W., Springer. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1987, 322

⁷ Climate Change is defined by the United Nations Framework Convention as "a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods." See United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Article 1(2). Obtained from http://unfccc.int/essential_background/convention/background/items/2536.php on 13 February 2011.

⁸ See Huq, Saleemul and Ayers, Jessica, "Climate Change Impacts and Responses in Bangladesh," Policy Department Economic and Scientific Policy, European Parliament, IP/A/CLIM/NT/2007-09 PE 400.990, 6; and *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision: Highlights*, Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat. New York: United Nations (2009). Obtained from http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/wpp2008/wpp2008_text_tables.pdf on March 22 2011.

been made to facilitate economic growth. Over this period the percentage of Bangladeshis living in poverty has dropped by almost a third, from 59 to 40 percent,⁹ while life expectancy has risen by almost 23 years to an average of 60.5.¹⁰

These increases are largely associated with economic growth, particularly with respect to Bangladesh's manufacturing sector, whose expansion has generated significant increases in rural-urban migration. For example, upwards of 12 million people reside in metropolitan Dhaka, nearly forty times the city's population in 1950.¹¹ But despite increasing urbanization, most Bangladeshis continue to live in rural areas, and some 63% of the national labour force work directly or indirectly in agricultural production.¹²

Agriculture is central to the history and development of Bangladesh, and continues to exercise "considerable influence on overall growth, the trade balance, the budgetary position of the government, and the level and structure of poverty and malnutrition in the country."¹³ Since the 1970s, improved irrigation infrastructure, increased fertilizer use, and access to credit and distribution networks has led to a three-fold increase in food production.¹⁴ The fact that these gains occurred in spite of Bangladesh's agriculturally difficult geography and acute climate variability makes this feat even more impressive.

⁹ Ministry of Environment and Forests, "Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2008." Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1

¹⁰ "2010 Human Development Report: Asian countries lead development progress over 40 years," United Nations Development Program, 3. Obtained from hdr.undp.org/en/media/PR6-HDR10-RegRBAP-E-rev5-sm.pdf on 3 February 2011.

¹¹ Davis, Mike, *Planet of Slums*. New York: Verso, 2006, 2

¹² Yu, Winston H. et al., *Climate Change Risks and Food Security in Bangladesh*. London: Earthscan, 2010, xiv

¹³ *Ibid.*, xv

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

There are three major Himalayan river systems that converge on Bangladesh's broad deltatic floodplain: the Ganges, the Brahmatpura, and the Meghan. In a normal monsoon season, one or more of these rivers will peak between July and September, overflowing their banks and inundating roughly a quarter of the national landmass.¹⁵ This low-intensity flooding can inflict infrastructure damage and loss of life, but it also plays a vital role recharging aquifers and distributing nutrient-led sediment across croplands.¹⁶

During years of exceptional rainfall or river flows, however, severe flooding can have a dramatic and detrimental impact. For example, major flooding in 1988 resulted in over 2000 deaths and the displacement of an *estimated 45 million*.¹⁷ While excessive monsoon precipitation and high volumes of Himalayan snow-and glacial-melt have a direct effect on the severity of flooding, the corresponding impacts of such events on Bangladesh's populations are dictated by a range of other factors.

First, the timing and duration of flooding is important. While Bangladesh's major river systems typically peak in a staggered sequence, atypical monsoons may cause them to peak simultaneously, dramatically increasing the area affected. Second, flooding that occurs outside the typical monsoon season (May-September) can seriously affect the productivity of crop cycles and agricultural livelihoods.¹⁸ Finally, storm surges along the coast of the Bay of Bengal can increase the severity of flooding in coastal areas, and along river shores upstream. Apart from their impact on seasonal flooding, tropical storms and associated storm surges also have direct impacts on coastal populations.

¹⁵ "Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy & Action Plan 2008," Government of Bangladesh, 8

¹⁶ Yu, *Climate Change Risks and Food Security in Bangladesh*, 10

¹⁷ Italics added. "Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy & Action Plan 2008," Government of Bangladesh, 9

¹⁸ Yu, *Climate Change Risks and Food Security in Bangladesh*, 10-12

According to the UNEP, Bangladesh's population is the sixth most vulnerable in the world with respect to flooding, and the single most vulnerable country in terms of its exposure to tropical cyclones.¹⁹ Low-lying geography, high population density and proximity to the cyclone prone Bay of Bengal are a few factors that contribute to the exceptional vulnerability of Bangladesh, which has incurred more cyclone-related fatalities than any other country.²⁰

Overview of anticipated climate change impacts

Given Bangladesh's history of climatic variability and extreme weather events, and the physical and economic vulnerability of its population to these impacts, there has been a tremendous amount of research into the social and economic impacts of climate change on the country. While a comprehensive examination of these issues extends beyond the scope of this paper, the following paragraphs will highlight three key dimensions of climate change impacts in Bangladesh: rising temperatures and changing weather patterns; sea level rise; and extreme weather events.

In the 20th century, global temperature averages have risen by approximately 0.74 C°, and are projected to increase by an estimated 1.1 to 6.4 C° by 2100.²¹ Over the short-term, rising temperatures are expected to increase Himalayan glacial melt and spring runoff into the Brahmaputra and Ganges rivers, enhancing the scope and depth of riparian

¹⁹ "A Global Report: Reducing Disaster Risk: A Challenge for Development." United Nations Development Program, 2004. Obtained from <http://www.undp.org/bcpr> on 2 February 2011

²⁰ "BRICs and N11 countries top Maplecroft's natural disaster risk ranking – France, Italy, and USA at 'High Risk'." Maplecroft, 26 May 2010. Obtained from http://maplecroft.com/about/news/natural_disasters.html on 7 March 2011

²¹ Solomon, S., D. Qin, M. Manning, et al. IPCC, 2007: Summary for Policymakers. In: Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Cambridge University Press (Cambridge, UK: 2007), 13

flooding.²² Concurrently, more intense and irregular precipitation events are expected to further increase the likelihood of extreme and widespread flooding, particularly in the South and Southeastern parts of the country. Over the long term, however, the reduced volume of glaciers is expected to diminish seasonal melt, leading to irrigation problems and higher instances of drought.²³ Overall, the IPCC estimates that increasing temperatures and changes in precipitation – in combination with increasing soil salinity – is expected to reduce rice and wheat production by 8% and 32%, respectively, by 2050.²⁴

Rising global temperatures are also expected to increase sea level by accelerating the melting of glaciers and major ice-sheets around the globe, and by increasing the temperature and volume of the oceans (a process known as “thermal expansion”).

According to the IPCC, global mean sea level is project to rise by 0.18 - 0.59 meters by 2100,²⁵ but more recent studies predict higher increases of up to 1-2 meters.²⁶

In Bangladesh, sea level rise is expected to generate a wide array of negative impacts. First, higher sea levels would increase the scale and scope of tidal flooding as well as the height of storm surges from cyclonic activities in the region, presenting an increased threat to exposed coastal populations.²⁷ This phenomenon would also be detrimental to agricultural production in coastal areas, which comprise roughly 30% of Bangladesh’s

²² Huq and Ayers, “Climate Change Impacts and Responses in Bangladesh,” 5

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Measured against a 1990 base year. Ministry of Environment and Forests, “Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2008,” 13

²⁵ This projection excludes any potential impact related to “rapid dynamical changes in ice flow” such as a massive breaking up of the Antarctic ice-shelf. IPCC, 2007: Summary for Policy Makers, 9.

²⁶ Rahmstorf, Stefan, “A New View on Sea level Rise,” *Nature*, 4, 6 April 2010. Obtained from <http://www.nature.com/climate/2010/1004/full/climate.2010.29.html> on 23 February 2011.

²⁷ Ibid.

total cultivatable land.²⁸ Second, higher sea levels would impede discharge from the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna river system. This would increase water levels upstream, affecting groundwater resources and fresh-water ecosystems upon which the income-generating activities of millions rural residents depend.²⁹ Third, there is a possibility that rising sea levels might one day inundate vast sections of Bangladesh's coastline, driving out coastal populations who cannot sustain their livelihoods over the long-term.

Lastly, potential increases in cyclonic intensity, which have been empirically linked to increases in sea-surface temperature,³⁰ are particularly worrisome because of their corresponding effect on storm surges and coastal flooding – the leading cause of cyclone-related casualties.³¹ The IPCC has projected that, across the globe, “future tropical cyclones (typhoons and hurricanes) will become more intense, with larger peak wind speeds and more heavy precipitation associated with ongoing increases of tropical sea surface temperatures.”³² The impact of these events in Bangladesh would be further magnified by increases in sea level and heightened water flow in Bangladesh's major rivers, leading to significant flooding up-river.³³

²⁸ Hossain, M.A., “Global Warming induced Sea Level Rise on Soil, Land and Crop Production Loss in Bangladesh,” Soil Resource Development Institute, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of Bangladesh, 78. Obtained from <http://www.iuss.org/19th%20WCSS/%5Csymposium/%5Cpdf/0419.pdf> on 15 March 2011; Huq and Ayers, “Climate Change Impacts and Responses in Bangladesh,” 7

²⁹ There are some 260 fish species in Bangladesh, all of which are sensitive to particular salt and freshwater conditions. See Huq and Ayers, “Climate Change Impacts and Responses in Bangladesh,” 6; and Ministry of Environment and Forests, “Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2008,” 13

³⁰ Several studies have found a strong correlation between sea surface temperature and cyclonic wind speed. See Emanuel, K., “The dependence of hurricane intensity on climate,” *Nature*, 326, 1987, 483–485, 48; and Evans, J.E., 1993: “Sensitivity of tropical cyclone intensity to sea surface temperature” *Journal of Climate*, 6, 1133-1140.

³¹ “BRICs and N11 countries top Maplecroft's natural disaster risk ranking,” Maplecroft, 26 May 2010.

³² In their most recent (4th) assessment, however, the IPCC has not been able to identify any clear trend regarding the annual number of tropical cyclones. See IPCC, 2007: Summary for Policymakers, 15

³³ A. Ali, “Vulnerability of Bangladesh to Climate Change and Sea Level Rise Through Tropical Cyclones and Storm Surges,” *Water, Air & Soil Pollution*, 92:1, 1987, 176

Conclusion

This overview has shown that the unique geography and climate of Bangladesh exercises a significant and ongoing influence on the lives and livelihoods of its people. Bangladesh's climatic stability, particularly the role that seasonal flooding plays in agricultural production, is of critical importance to the subsistence of the population, as most are directly or indirectly employed in that sector. The country's turbulent history of natural disasters also demonstrates that climatic vulnerability extends beyond economic subsistence, to the physical security of Bangladeshi citizens.

In the coming century, climate change is expected to have a profound affect on the livelihoods of Bangladeshis. Rising temperatures and changing weather patterns will increase – then eventually reduce – water flow throughout Bangladesh's major river-systems, and exacerbate both flooding and drought in different parts of the country. Sea level rise will lead to greater salt-water intrusion and water logging, affecting (and potentially inundating) much of Bangladesh's coastline. Finally, extreme weather events such as cyclones and flooding will become increasingly severe and frequent. The magnitude of these impacts, however, remain uncertain, and so too are the proposed policy solutions to these problems, which have become a significant source of disagreement within established policy communities.

The following chapter will seek to examine part of this debate, by looking at how different International Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, and Think Tanks view these impacts as a potential influence on population movement and displacement in Bangladesh.

Chapter 2: Security vs. Adaptation: Competing discourses on climate change-induced migration in Bangladesh

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Bangladesh is likely to experience significant climate change impacts in the decades ahead. It is also generally agreed that changing weather patterns, increased flooding and drought, rising sea levels and more frequent and severe storms are likely to have some effect on patterns of human migration and displacement in the country. In recent years, discussions about climate change-related migration within academic and policy communities have begun to produce specific, often subjective, narratives.

This chapter will use a discourse analysis approach to demonstrate how policy rhetoric within a collection of written documents on migration and climate change impose dialectic frameworks that emphasize certain policy options over others. These contested knowledge claims reflect real power struggles between policy communities, who seek to establish their respective narratives within the “knowledge regime” that determines the parameters of future policy debates on the subject.³⁴ In the dialogue that surrounds the relationship between migration and climate change, specific language, concepts, and comparisons are employed, both explicitly and implicitly, to establish normative limits to this policy discussion.

In this context, there are two over-arching discourses that permeate the literature examined in this analysis: security and adaptation. As we shall see in the proceeding section, these discourses encompass several complex and diverse issues. While there is some overlap between them, each is fundamentally defined by their opposition to the

³⁴ This framework has been a valuable tool in examining other related climate change issues. See, for example, Bäckstrand and Lövbrand, “Planting Trees to Mitigate Climate Change.”

other: the security discourse frames climate change-related migration as a potential threat to national and international security, while the adaptation discourse frames it as an opportunity to help populations in affected areas adapt to climate change impacts.

The following chapter aims to flesh out the content of these discourses by examining how they are reflected in five thematic issue-areas that arise across a collection of policy documents produced by IOs, NGOs, and Think Tanks. These themes include: (i) climatic drivers of migration; (ii) human security; (iii) state security; (iv) agency and identity; and (v) policy and governance. By examining how these issue-areas are discussed in the texts advanced by these organizations, the following analysis will seek to identify and extrapolate specific concepts, ideas, and language that contribute to these over-arching security and adaptation discourses.

Thematic issues within the climate change-migration nexus

Climatic drivers of migration

The literature unanimously conveys the belief that Bangladesh will experience some increase in human migration and displacement a result of climate change in the decades ahead. These impacts are not presented as drivers of migration in and of themselves, but as “stress-multipliers” that will increase migration by exacerbating existing drivers (ex. unemployment, loss of agricultural productivity, and natural disasters). Yet, while there is broad agreement within the literature examined about the relationship between climate change and migration, there is an implicit and explicit divide on the speed, scale, and context of this phenomenon.

One of the most noticeable discursive differences within the literature examined is the diverging emphasis that is placed on sudden, massive displacement, and conversely, on linear, gradual migration.

In the first instance, phrases such as “sudden mass movements,” “catastrophic events,” and “massive environmental displacement” play an important and consistent linguistic role in conveying a sense of urgency and disaster.³⁵ Likewise, Bangladesh’s historical record of natural disaster and displacement is accentuated, drawing attention to expected increases in the severity and intensity of cyclones and storm surges as a result of global warming.³⁶ Even migration related to slow-onset impacts like sea level rise and declining agricultural output are conceptualized as abrupt, large-scale events. The term “tipping points” in particular is used to frame gradual climate changes as a contributor to inevitable, sudden, and large-scale displacement. For example, one report states that

“...the least resilient communities... will be the first to experience tipping points in their life systems, so that the only livelihood option available to them would be to abandon their homes and search for better prospects elsewhere. As ever larger numbers of these people pass thresholds in terms of their ability to cope, societal tipping points will be crossed, resulting in sudden mass movements of entire villages, towns, and even cities.”

- Rajan, “Climate Migrants in South Asia: Estimates and Solutions,” Greenpeace India, 7

This emphasis on the large-scale, sudden nature of climate change-related migration communicates disaster, danger, and urgency. As such, this perspective serves as a key component of a security discourse that seeks to portray climate change-induced migration as a potential security threat.

³⁵ See Sudhir Chella Rajan, “Climate Migrants in South Asia: Estimates and Solutions – A Report by Greenpeace,” Greenpeace India, 2008, 7; Laipson, Ellen and Pandya, Amit, “On the Move: Migration Challenges in the Indian Ocean Littoral, Henry L. Stimson Center, 2010, 5; Titumir, Rashad Al Mahmud, “Climate Change and Flow of Environmental Displacement in Bangladesh,” Unnayan Onneshan: The Innovators Center for Research and Action on Development, 2010, 10

³⁶ Dalrymple, Sarah, and Rahman, A.B.M., “Climate change and security in Bangladesh: A case study,” Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies and SaferWorld, 2009, 7

In contrast, the adaptation discourse frames climate change-related migration as a predominantly gradual phenomenon, one that will help Bangladeshis adapt to slow-onset climatic processes that affect livelihoods, food security, and water availability.³⁷ The potential for population movements resulting from extreme weather events is not omitted from this discourse; rather, disaster-related displacement is framed as a temporary coping mechanism that helps to sustain livelihoods in periods of distress.³⁸ Similarly, gradual migration away from areas where livelihoods are under increasing climatic stress is presented as a process that is consistent with Bangladesh's migratory history. Whether it be a result of seasonal drought and food insecurity in the northwest, salt-water intrusion in coastal croplands, or the destruction of temporary "chars" (river islands) by monsoon flooding, migration has served as an important response to environmental change in the country.³⁹ In contrast to the alarmist views presented in the security discourse, the adaptation discourse asserts that "migration *as a form of adaptation* will be a more common response to the impact(s) of climate change than the displacement of entire communities," which will only occur as a last resort.⁴⁰

A second issue-area where there is a distinct difference between discourses is the manner in which the term "building resilience" to climate change impacts is presented.

In the adaptation discourse, migration is not presented strictly as an outcome of livelihood failure (though this is a discernable component of this framework), but as an

³⁷ Walsham, Matthew, "Assessing the Evidence: Environment, Climate Change and Migration in Bangladesh," International Organization for Migration, 2010, 5

³⁸ Dalrymple and Rahman "Climate change and security in Bangladesh," 24

³⁹ Poncelet, Alice, "Bangladesh Case Study Report: 'The land of mad rivers'," EACH-FOR Environmental Change and Forced Migration Scenarios, 30 January 2009, 9; and Walsham, "Assessing the Evidence," 8

⁴⁰ Hugo, Graeme, et al., "Climate Change and Migration in Asia and the Pacific," Asian Development Bank, 2011, vi-vii

integral component to building resilience to climate change. Where migration is planned and voluntary, “it can provide a social safety net for loss of income... through both financial and social remittances, and potentially help alleviate pressure on already degraded lands.”⁴¹ By having one or more members of a household temporarily migrate to pursue income-generating activities elsewhere, families are better able to cope with seasonal environmental insecurity. The importance of temporary migration as a mechanism for strengthening social networks is another important component of this discourse, as these networks play an important role in facilitating permanent migration for families if and when local livelihoods become unsustainable.

In contrast, the security discourse frames “building resilience” as a strategy that is necessary to mitigate migration, increasing the capacity of affected populations to subsist despite increasing changes in local environmental conditions.⁴² To this end, the security discourse employs terms such as “manage,” “contain,” and “preempt” to describe these efforts, presenting migration as an undesirable outcome that policymakers should seek to prevent.⁴³ Conversely, while the notion of strengthening local resilience to reduce environmentally-induced migration is present within the adaptation discourse, this strategy is framed as part of a larger, holistic approach to empowering local populations – one that also includes migration.

Finally, resource scarcity and environmental degradation is another key driver of migration that plays a prominent role in the literature examined. Across both discourses,

⁴¹ Walsham, “Assessing the Evidence,” 06

⁴² Mahajan et al., “Climate change induced migration and its security implications for India’s neighbourhood,” The Energy Resource Institute, 2009, 5; Laipson and Pandya, “On the Move,” 13

⁴³ Laipson and Pandya, “On the Move,” 11; Titumir, “Climate Change and Flow of Environmental Displacement in Bangladesh,” 13

there is a general belief that climate change impacts on natural resource systems will place local populations into increasing competition for dwindling resources. Many of the documents examined note that Bangladesh's dense population has already generated significant environmental stress, as so many people rely on agricultural or other related livelihoods that depend on natural resources and ecosystems. Thus, as the impacts of climate change enhance these stresses, it is believed that many Bangladeshis will inevitably be driven to other areas in pursuit of more fruitful, less competitive livelihoods.

Alternately, increased competition for natural resources is presented as a potential driver of violent conflict, creating new threats to the physical security of affected populations – particularly women –, and possibly generating further out-migration as a result.

Human security and gender

Human security is generally defined as “freedom from fear,” which is primarily concerned with issues pertaining to violence and crime, and “freedom from want,” which refers to issues of deprivation and capability (i.e. food security, health, etc.).⁴⁴ In much of the literature examined, the issue of human security is also intertwined with additional commentary on the gender-specific impacts of climate change-related migration.

One component of this issue that spans both the security and adaptation discourse is the assertion that women, particularly those living in woman-headed households, may be at an increased risk of sexual violence and trafficking due to the increasingly frequent and

⁴⁴ Dalrymple and Rahman, “Climate change and security in Bangladesh,” 1

severe natural disasters stemming from climate change.⁴⁵ In Bangladesh, cyclones and floods kill and injure a disproportionate amount of women – up to 90% of all casualties in some cases⁴⁶ –, but in the aftermath of these events women and their families are exposed to new threats. Those forced to live in temporary displacement camps, either by choice or because they lack the capacity or resources to migrate, are said to face a diminished level of privacy and protection that makes them vulnerable to sexual abuse.⁴⁷ Furthermore, whether they remain in displacement camps or migrate elsewhere, there is also a risk that they may be ensnared in some form of human trafficking – sometimes into prostitution.⁴⁸

A second gender-specific impact that emerges in the adaptation discourse is an emphasis on the disproportionate impacts that climate change-related migration has on “freedom from want” – specifically as it pertains to livelihoods. According to this view, climate change is likely to increase current trends of out-migration – either through slow-onset environmental degradation or in the aftermath of sudden onset events –, as (predominantly male) income-earners relocate to pursue alternative income-generating opportunities.⁴⁹ This leaves many women in a precarious situation, as they assume greater

⁴⁵ Hugo, et al., “Climate Change and Migration in Asia and the Pacific,” 61; Walsham, “Assessing the Evidence,” 06, 14

⁴⁶ This disproportionate fatality rate has been attributed to the fact that Islamic custom prevents women from leaving their home without a male relative, which inhibits them from escaping oncoming floods or storm surges. Also, many women drown during these events because, unlike their male counterparts, they have not been taught to swim. *See* Patwary, Obayedul Hoque, “Climate Change and Security,” Issue Brief, 7, April 2009, Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS), 7; Titumir, Rashad Al Mahmud, “Climate Change and Flow of Environmental Displacement in Bangladesh,” Unnayan Onneshan, 10; and Walsham, “Assessing the Evidence,” 26

⁴⁷ Laipson and Pandya, “On the Move,” Stimson Center, 12

⁴⁸ Poncelet, Alice, “Bangladesh Case Study Report,” 20

⁴⁹ Laipson and Pandya, “On the Move,” 12; Poncelet, Alice, “Bangladesh Case Study Report,” 19

household responsibilities, but also face cultural restrictions on property and legal rights that reduce access to credit, and limits their ability to secure their livelihoods.⁵⁰

Apart from the gender-human security nexus that pervades most of the literature examined in this analysis, there is a more general line of discussion on the issue that frames human insecurity as both a driver and a product of climate change-related migration.⁵¹

As a driver of migration, heightened environmental stress attributed to climate change can increase out-migration by generating insecurity over food and water resources, or physical insecurity resulting from violent conflicts over these scarce resources. While the security discourse endorses the view that increased insecurity resulting from climate change impacts is a driver of migration, the adaptation discourse cautions that migration must be viewed within a broader, “holistic approach” to human security.⁵² In the latter view, migration is not merely an effect of increased insecurity, but a mechanism that enables affected populations “to escape a dangerous situation, or to increase the resilience of vulnerable groups and households.”⁵³

As a product of migration, insecurities related to environmental degradation and resource competition arise in destination communities, where migrants displaced by climate change-related environmental degradation place increasing strain on their new habitat, bringing them into conflict, perhaps violently, with long-term residents. These

⁵⁰ Dalrymple and Rahman, “Climate change and security in Bangladesh,” iii, 1; Ahmed, Ahsan Uddin and Neelormi, Sharmin, “Climate Change, Loss of Livelihoods and Forced Displacement in Bangladesh: Whither facilitated International Migration?” Center for Global Change, 6

⁵¹ See Mahajan et al., “Climate change induced migration and its security implications for India’s neighbourhood”

⁵² Walsham, “Assessing the Evidence,” 26

⁵³ Ibid., 26

conflicts can arise directly over the use of local resources, but also indirectly, as long-term residences become frustrated with the increased competition for employment and lower wages that often accompany the arrival of migrant populations.⁵⁴

Aside from the general migrant-resident conflicts that may emerge, the security discourse also emphasizes the view that heightened tensions over livelihoods and material resources can manifest themselves across ethnic, religious, or socioeconomic fault-lines.⁵⁵ Apart from the inevitable strain that is placed on shared resources, services, and infrastructure,

...the demographic changes introduced by migration can alter the ethnic composition of a region, bringing culturally distinct groups into close contact. Where there are already divisions over the use of resources, the possibility of further tensions may increase exponentially.

- Laipson and Pandya, "On the Move," 10

The relevance of this issue extends beyond human security concerns, however, when climate change-induced migration spans across national borders.

State security

All of the documents examined mention the possibility of increased international migration flows from Bangladesh as a result of climate change impacts over the decades ahead, and in most this focus is almost exclusively in reference to India.⁵⁶ As the effects of climate change impacts are felt within vulnerable populations, many expect increases

⁵⁴ Dalrymple and Rahman, "Climate change and security in Bangladesh," 19

⁵⁵ Laipson and Pandya, "On the Move," Stimson Center, 10; and Mahajan et al., "Climate change induced migration and its security implications for India's neighbourhood," 3

⁵⁶ While the possibility of increased international migration to other states is mentioned in some reports, none have explored these scenarios in any detail. This paper has therefore chosen to focus on the Bangladesh-India dynamic of international migration related to climate change.

in migration to occur through existing social networks along familial, ethnic, and/or economic ties on both sides of the border.⁵⁷ The extent of cross-border migration, however, is dramatically exaggerated in the security discourse, which emphasizes that ‘most’ or ‘the majority’ of Bangladeshi climate migrants are expected to move into eastern and northeastern India.⁵⁸ One reason that the issue of cross-border migration is so central to the security discourse is that such ‘mass movements’ of people are viewed as both a domestic security threat to India and a potential source of international conflict between India and Bangladesh.

As discussed in the previous section, an influx of Bangladeshi migrants to India could lead to increased conflict over resources and employment opportunities. According to the security discourse, this would create domestic political pressure on the Indian government to respond by, for example, repatriating or denying entry of Bangladeshi migrants.⁵⁹ This phenomenon, it is also said, presents new domestic governance challenges for local and regional governments to supply adequate infrastructure and services to Indian citizens in destination communities.⁶⁰ Additional pressure on domestic political processes from migrant groups could further complicate this issue, and presents a potential threat to democratic governance in India.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Mahajan et al., “Climate change induced migration and its security implications for India’s neighbourhood,” 4; and Rajan, “Climate Migrants in South Asia”, Greenpeace India, 1.

⁵⁸ Laipson and Pandya, “On the Move,” Stimson Center, 6; Rajan, “Climate Migrants in South Asia”, Greenpeace India, 1; and Mahajan et al., “Climate change induced migration and its security implications for India’s neighbourhood,” 4

⁵⁹ Laipson and Pandya, “On the Move,” 13; Dalrymple and Rahman, “Climate change and security in Bangladesh,” 2; and Patwary, “Climate Change and Security,” 8

⁶⁰ Laipson and Pandya, “On the Move,” 3

⁶¹ Patwary, “Climate Change and Security,” 8

Aside from these domestic consequences for India, the security discourse also emphasizes the regional and international effects of this phenomenon, namely the potential for ethnic or religious conflict between migrants (Bangladeshi Muslims) and residents of host communities (Indian Hindus).⁶² This, it is said, could lend momentum to radical Islamic or other insurgent groups in South Asia, presenting an additional threat to regional and international security.⁶³ Furthermore, population movements along contested borders with China, for example, could also lead to conflict between India and its neighbours.⁶⁴

To emphasize the extent to which climate change-related migration from Bangladesh is viewed by the Indian government as a national security threat, some reports highlight preemptive measures that have been taken to address this issue. For example, one document notes that India's National Defense University, which is overseen by the Indian military, conducted scenario training on how to address a mass influx of refugees from Bangladesh following catastrophic flooding.⁶⁵ India's construction of a 4,095 km barrier along the length of its border with Bangladesh is also cited as a counter-measure to climate change-induced migration, despite the fact that construction began well before the effects of climate change on illegal migration issue were considered.⁶⁶

Overall, traditional statist security concerns are a key component of the security discourse on climate change-related migration in Bangladesh, which explains why the

⁶² Laipson and Pandya, "On the Move," 10; and Patwary, "Climate Change and Security," 14

⁶³ Patwary, "Climate Change and Security," 4, 14

⁶⁴ Ibid., 14

⁶⁵ Ibid., 10

⁶⁶ Dalrymple and Rahman, "Climate change and security in Bangladesh," 24

issue of cross-border migration so thoroughly permeates this framework of analysis. In contrast, the adaptation discourse asserts that cross-border migration is a marginal issue, and some reports contest the emphasis that is placed on this issue by security-oriented policy communities. This is the only issue on which the authoring organizations that apply an adaptation-oriented discourse directly engage their security-oriented discursive counterpart.

One report, for example, explicitly states that “it is important to ensure that 'alarmist' notions of 'waves of environmental migrants' – and the resulting securitization of the debate on climate change and its impacts – are challenged.”⁶⁷ Additionally, some reports also note that security-oriented organizations tend to ignore the complexity of migration patterns and typologies, choosing instead to portray all migrants as a monolithic, and problematic, security threat.⁶⁸ In contrast, the adaptation discourse asserts that climate change-related migration will be predominantly internal, following existing rural-urban channels.⁶⁹

Agency

Between the adaptation and security discourses there is a distinct divide in the level of agency that is attributed to the affected populations that lie at the center of the policy literature examined.

⁶⁷ Walsham, “Assessing the Evidence,” 31

⁶⁸ In Bangladesh, migration can take a number of forms: it can be temporary – either long-term or short-term – in response to natural disasters; it can be seasonal, as a means of persisting through traditional climatic periods of agricultural unemployment; and it can be permanent, as a mechanism that helps households adapt to accumulating and/or enduring economic or environmental pressures. Poncelet, “Bangladesh Case Study Report,” 15

⁶⁹ Poncelet, “Bangladesh Case Study Report,” 9

In the security discourse, migrant populations are generally presented as a singular, uniform group: a population of victims who are acted on by the forces of climate change, and migrate in reaction to these impacts. In several documents, climate change is described as a phenomenon that “compels” or “forces” climate migrants to relocate – their actions are determined by larger events that affect the population as a whole, rather than the outcome of decisions made by individuals and households based on their unique circumstances.⁷⁰ This emphasis is connected to the aforementioned role of “sudden” or “massive” displacement: migrant populations do not choose to migrate, but are compelled to move en masse as a result of climate change impacts. Thus, in the security discourse, migration is framed both explicitly and implicitly as an event that is forced rather than voluntary.

Conversely, in the adaptation discourse, migration resulting from climate change is predominantly framed as a decision taken by affected populations to adapt to particular impacts affecting their respective livelihoods.⁷¹ To this end, the agency of migrants is expressed through language that emphasizes choice, and planned migration rather than reactive forced migration. For example, affected populations may “seek to move” rather than be “forced to move.”⁷² One document explicitly calls for greater “agencification” of migrant populations in current policy discourse on climate change-related migration, stating that “while migrants may be forced to relocate, they do not exist only as subjects of natural calamities and state action.”⁷³

⁷⁰ See Rajan, “Climate Migrants in South Asia”, Greenpeace India, 3, 9; Mahajan et al., “Climate change induced migration and its security implications for India’s neighbourhood,” 3

⁷¹ Poncelet, Alice, “Bangladesh Case Study Report”

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Dalrymple and Rahman, “Climate change and security in Bangladesh,” 12-13

The competing descriptions of climate change-related migration within the literature examined are important components of the two discourses examined in this analysis, presenting opposing and sometimes overlapping lenses through which this phenomenon can be viewed. The following section will now seek to move beyond the descriptive nature of this process, to examine the normative framework that each of these discourses has sought to impose on the policy and governance of this phenomenon.

Policy and governance

As the literature examined is sourced from policy-oriented IOs, NGOs, and Think Tanks, each report inevitably, though in varying degrees, adopts a prescriptive tone when discussing potential policy solutions and governance structures that could be used to address climate change driven migration in Bangladesh. To this end, the normative component of the respective discourses examined advocate deeper integration between migration and security policy, on the one hand, and migration and climate change adaptation policy on the other. However, in advocating for greater national and international efforts to facilitate climate change-related migration, the adaptation discourse addresses some specific policy and governance issues largely ignored by its discursive counterpart.

The first of these issues is the broad notion that developed countries are, to one degree or another, largely responsible for the climate changes that may contribute to current and future increases in migration in, and from, Bangladesh. While this idea is acknowledged within the security discourse, only in the adaptation-oriented framework is

there an effort to assign responsibility to, and advocate compensation from, developed states. To this end, several reports argue that developed nations should transfer financial and technological resources that will allow Bangladesh to better cope with increasing internal migratory pressures associated with climate change.⁷⁴

There is also an implicit and explicit line of argument that developed states should consider “innovative long-term policies to support potential migrants from environmentally vulnerable regions.”⁷⁵ This may involve changing domestic immigration policies (for example, assigning ‘preferential migrant status’ to individuals from vulnerable regions),⁷⁶ or revising national and international legal and regulatory frameworks to provide better recognition and protection for these groups.⁷⁷ In either case, within the adaptation discourse, there is a distinct argument that climate change-related migration is an issue that “needs to be addressed as a global process, not just locally.”⁷⁸

A second major component of this theme relates to the emphasis that is placed on internal, rural-urban migration in the adaptation discourse. To address expected increases in urban migrant populations as a result of climate change impacts, many of the reports examined argue that the needs and rights of this group should be better incorporated into urban policy and planning efforts.

⁷⁴ Poncelet, Alice, “Bangladesh Case Study Report,” 21; Titumir, “Climate Change and Flow of Environmental Displacement in Bangladesh,” 4, 11, 13; Laipson and Pandya, “On the Move,” 14

⁷⁵ Walsham, “Assessing the Evidence,” 31

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Hugo, et al., “Climate Change and Migration in Asia and the Pacific,” 61

⁷⁸ Ibid., iiv

As “considerable internal migration may be unavoidable,”⁷⁹ it is recommended that the government of Bangladesh develop a more constructive urban resettlement and rehabilitation plan that will be able to better accommodate this increase.⁸⁰ In this perspective, migrant populations in major cities such as Dhaka are viewed with disdain rather than sympathy, and treated by the government as a problem population despite the vital role that they play in the country’s informal economy.⁸¹ Instead of destroying informal settlements to encourage slum-dwellers to return to rural areas, this discourse asserts that the government of Bangladesh should focus on facilitating migration by improving basic infrastructure and services in urban centers.⁸²

The final issue related to policy and governance that should be acknowledged is the fact that both the security and adaptation discourses converge on some specific proposals and recommendations that are featured across the literature examined.

The most prominent of these recommendations advocates the development of “hard” environmental engineering solutions to mitigate the impacts of climate change on vulnerable communities, particularly in disaster-prone coastal regions.⁸³ While the security discourse frames these solutions as a mechanism to contain climate migrants,⁸⁴ their contribution towards increasing resilience and reducing vulnerability is also noted

⁷⁹ Dalrymple and Rahman, “Climate change and security in Bangladesh,” 29

⁸⁰ Poncelet, Alice, “Bangladesh Case Study Report,” 17; Walsham, “Assessing the Evidence,” xiv

⁸¹ Ahmed, Ahsan Uddin and Neelormi, Sharmin, “Climate Change, Loss of Livelihoods and Forced Displacement in Bangladesh: Whither facilitated International Migration?” Center for Global Change, 3; Walsham, “Assessing the Evidence,” 25

⁸² Hugo, et al., “Climate Change and Migration in Asia and the Pacific,” 50; Walsham, “Assessing the Evidence,” 25

⁸³ Mahajan et al., “Climate change induced migration and its security implications for India’s neighbourhood,” 4; Poncelet, Alice, “Bangladesh Case Study Report,” 21; Titumir, “Climate Change and Flow of Environmental Displacement in Bangladesh,” 13; Walsham, “Assessing the Evidence,” 35

⁸⁴ Laipson and Pandya, “On the Move,” 8

within the adaptation discourse.⁸⁵ The adaptation discourse endorses this view, and also advocates additional “soft” policy solutions, in the form of government-sponsored alternative income strategies (ex. circular migration schemes).⁸⁶

Improved intergovernmental cooperation, between local, regional, and national governments – and also within ministries – in Bangladesh is another recommendation that emerges across both discourses.⁸⁷ In the adaptation discourse, however, a localized, consultative approach is favored, one that aims to strengthen local governance and incorporating indigenous knowledge into migration policy to better facilitate in-situ management of climate change-related migration.⁸⁸ In contrast, an opposing security-oriented view emphasizes macro-level regional cooperation between South Asian countries that may be affected by climate change-induced migration.⁸⁹ The perceived need for this over-arching governance mechanism stems from the fact that “international agreements, treaties, and systems in place at the international, regional, and national levels, do not... explicitly recognize the interplay between ecosystems and movements of people.”⁹⁰ Therefore, if climate change-induced migration occurs primarily across national borders, as the security discourse asserts, establishing organizational structures

⁸⁵ Walsham, “Assessing the Evidence,” 35

⁸⁶ Poncelet, Alice, “Bangladesh Case Study Report,” 24; Titumir, “Climate Change and Flow of Environmental Displacement in Bangladesh,” 4, 13

⁸⁷ Poncelet, Alice, “Bangladesh Case Study Report,” 22; Titumir, “Climate Change and Flow of Environmental Displacement in Bangladesh,” 4, 13; Dalrymple and Rahman, “Climate change and security in Bangladesh,” 27-28

⁸⁸ Dalrymple and Rahman, “Climate change and security in Bangladesh,” 29; Ahmed and Neelormi, “Climate Change, Loss of Livelihoods and Forced Displacement in Bangladesh,” 3

⁸⁹ Mahajan et al., “Climate change induced migration and its security implications for India’s neighbourhood,” 6-7; Poncelet, Alice, “Bangladesh Case Study Report,” 22

⁹⁰ Mahajan et al., “Climate change induced migration and its security implications for India’s neighbourhood,” 7

to facilitate international cooperation to address this issues will be a useful mechanism for mitigating any domestic and international tensions that may arise.

Overall, the policy recommendations and normative ideas expressed in the literature examined reflect a wide array of organizational views. As seen in the preceding three sections of this chapter, however, these ideas are distinctly aligned with specific features of the security and adaptation discourses. Unlike these sections, however, examining the normative component of these discourses shows that they not only shape the parameters of discussion on the issue of climate change-related migration, but present specific policy and governance alternatives.

Summary

The preceding analysis has sought to identify and extrapolate the overlapping and diverging positions of two distinct discourses that are discernable within a collection of policy literature on the subject of climate change and migration in Bangladesh.

Examining these thematic frames as components of a broader discourse, whether it be security- or adaptation-oriented, has allowed us to study both the descriptive and prescriptive narratives of a larger framework.

First, the urgency and scale of climate change-related migration that is conveyed within the security discourse emphasizes the belief that this phenomenon is a problem that must be mitigated or, failing that, contained. Conversely, the adaptation discourse frames climate change related migration as a gradual and useful process that should be viewed as an intrinsic part of the adaptation process rather than as a failure of adaptation.

Second, the role of conflict, as both a product and a driver of climate change-related migration, is another prominent issue in the literature examined. While both the security and adaptation discourses stress the importance of human security and the gender-specific impacts of migration on women, there are notable differences in how the relationship between human security and climate change-related migration is presented. As before, while the security discourse frames this phenomenon as an issue that increases insecurity, the adaptation discourse presents it as a mechanism that allows affected populations to escape threats to both their physical well being and livelihoods.

Third, the conceptualization of climate change-related migration as a national and international security threat is, perhaps, the defining component of the security discourse. The notion that “waves” of migrants could threaten the political, social, and economic stability of India, or bring it into direct conflict with Bangladesh or another neighbouring state, is largely grounded in the aforementioned belief that such population movements will be rapid and vast. In contrast, the adaptation-oriented discourse opposes this view – explicitly, in some cases –, and emphasizes that climate change-related migration will be predominantly within Bangladesh’s borders, and most likely towards urban areas.

Finally, exploring the prescriptive aspects of this literature, this analysis has found general agreement between discourses on many of the policy recommendations presented, specifically on issues such as intergovernmental cooperation and environmental engineering to increase community resilience. There is an alternative set of proposals within the adaptation discourse, however, that emphasize the responsibility of the international community to assist Bangladesh in adapting to the impacts of climate change and associated migration. Furthermore, the need to recognize the rights and

address the needs of climate migrants, both within Bangladesh (particularly in urban areas) and internationally, is also emphasized.

Taken as a whole, the policy documents examined in this analysis present a wide range of identifiable discourses, all of which exercise some influence – implicitly or explicitly – over how the issue of climate change-related migration is framed. While this chapter has chosen to focus on a small number of key themes, these issues speak to a broader division between security- and adaptation-oriented views on the relationship between climate change and migration in Bangladesh (summarized below in Table 1). Using the discursive views and principles identified and extrapolated in this section, the following chapter will now seek to explain the reasoning and provenance of these discourses.

Table 1: Summary of discursive positions in key thematic issue-areas

Thematic issue	Security discourse		Adaptation discourse	
	General frame	Key examples	General frame	Key examples
Climate as driver	Sudden mass migration, resulting from failure to adapt to climate change	“As ever larger numbers [are unable to cope with climate change], societal tipping points will be crossed, resulting in sudden mass movements of entire villages, towns, and even cities.” <i>(Greenpeace India, 7)</i>	Slow, gradual migration, valuable to tool to adapt to climate change	“...migration as a form of adaptation will be a more common response to the impact of climate change than the displacement of entire communities” <i>(ADB, 54)</i>
Human security/ gender	Migration increases insecurity (especially for women)	“Often women in (displacement) camps face sexual abuse, and the lack of protection and privacy adds to diminishing security.” <i>(Stimson Center, 12)</i>	Migration can increase insecurity (especially for women), but can also help reduce it	“[Planned migration] represents a means for individuals and groups to escape a dangerous situation or increase the resilience of vulnerable groups” <i>(IOM, 26)</i>
State security	Migration will be mostly international (to India), a threat to political stability and regional security	“Many of the displaced... seek to migrate abroad, which also has the potential to heighten political tension not only in South Asia but in Europe and Southeast Asia as well.” <i>(BIPSS, 14)</i>	Migration will be mostly internal (rural-urban)	“...the overwhelming majority of migration in which environmental factors play a role at present is internal rather than external” <i>(IOM, 28)</i>
Agency	Climate migrants are victims, who will be forced to move as a result of climate change	“The victims of the rise of sea level [in Bangladesh] naturally become environmental refugees in India...” <i>(BIPSS, 14)</i>	Affected households may decide to migrate to adjust to local climate change impacts on individual livelihoods	“Even if the causes of migration are very similar from one person to the next, we have seen that people opt for different strategies in terms of destination and timing for migration.” <i>(EACH-FOR, 13)</i>
Policy/ governance	Inter-gov cooperation, environmental engineering to mitigate migration	“[South Asia] may eventually need to put in place a comprehensive structure of rules and norms to govern migration induced by climate change” <i>(TERI, 6)</i>	Inter-gov. cooperation, support from OECD, better urban planning to facilitate migration	“Let the industrialized world welcome ‘facilitated migration’ and the adaptation fund under the UNFCCC create provisions to finance such facilitation” <i>(CGC, 7)</i>

Chapter 3: Discourse analysis: explaining the security and adaptation frameworks

The preceding chapter has defined the contours of two discourses, security and adaptation, that have a distinct presence within a spectrum of policy literature on the subject of climate change and migration. Now, after identifying and extrapolating specific characteristics of each discourse, this section will seek to explain how these particular discourses may have taken shape, and why they have assumed a prominent role in this ongoing policy debate.

To answer this question, we must first acknowledge that the production of discourse does not take place in a vacuum: it is built on the foundations of other narratives, on the axes of existing binary oppositions, and can even be constructed as an explicit counterweight to existing discursive frameworks. Beyond the intrinsic linguistic social forces that contribute to this process, the *context* within which these discourses are produced also exercise an influence.

Context, in discourse analysis, has a number of meanings. It can refer to the settings, circumstances, demographic variables, social roles, geographic location, or a variety of other extrinsic factors that affect how a discourse is framed and perceived.⁹¹ This analysis will focus on the unique features of authoring organizations, and the geo-political environment within which these texts were produced, to explain how and why they reflect the aforementioned security and adaptation discursive structures.

⁹¹ While there are several dimensions of “context” described in the literature on discourse analysis, this paper will focus on how the “relevant features of participants” influence the production and reproduction of discourses in their respective texts. See Wood, Linda A., and Kroger, Rolf O., *Doing Discourse Analysis: Methods for studying Action in Talk and Text*, London: Sage Publications, 2000, 127; and Brown, Gillian and Yule, George, *Discourse Analysis*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, 37

The following chapter aims to examine these organizational and environmental influences along two key dimensions. First, it will look at how existing discourses on illegal migration between Bangladesh and India have implicitly and explicitly influenced the security discourse on climate change and migration, particularly in the texts authored by India-based organizations. Second, it will examine how discourses on climate justice have influenced the development of the adaptation discourse on climate change and migration, particularly with respect to Bangladesh-based organizations and organizations with a broad intergovernmental membership.

Admittedly, the analysis presented in this chapter is representative of only one approach among many that could be used to explain how the issue of climate change and migration is framed in the texts of various speakers within this policy community. However, for the purposes of this paper, these potential explanations examined provide meaningful insight into the social processes that shape how these security and adaptation discourses are produced, and re-produced, and solidified.

Deconstructing the security discourse: the influence of securitized migration discourses and geo-political context

This section examines the role of existing ‘securitized’ discourses of illegal migration, both in general and in the specific geo-political context of migration flows from Bangladesh to India. Subsequently, this analysis will seek to examine how this discourse and context relates to the specific approaches adopted by the authoring organizations behind some of the texts examined.

‘Securitized’ discourses on illegal migration

In an international system based on sovereign states and defined territory, cross-border migration inevitably generates a wide range of concerns for government and society in receiving states. In recent decades, the ‘securitization’ of migration discourse has increasingly framed migrant populations as a security threat to the receiving state.⁹²

This threat is multi-dimensional, with migrants presented as a burden on national social and economic systems, a cultural threat to societal identities, and/or a political threat to governance structures and institutions.⁹³ These arguments are effectively used to create or reinforce a binary opposition between the ‘self,’ defined by economic, cultural, and/or political features of the receiving state, and the ‘threatening other’ that is represented by the migrant group in question.⁹⁴ The re-production of this “othering” process is now so omnipresent in migration discourses presented by politicians, academics, and the media that it is widely accepted, and largely unremarkable.⁹⁵

The threat is also collective: migration is framed as an existential danger for the receiving state and/or society.⁹⁶ Securitizing migration in this manner also re-prioritizes migration as a pressing political issue, with real implications for policy and practice. At a low level, where migration is viewed as a continuing and predictable problem, migration policy focuses on law and order: border policing, enforcement, deportation, and so on. At a higher level, however, where there is a perceived threat of an acute, disruptive, mass

⁹² Poku, Nana, and Graham, David T, *Redefining Security: Population Movements and National Security*, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing, 1998, 188

⁹³ Smith, Paul J., “Climate Change, Mass Migration, and the Military Response,” *Orbis*, 51:4, 2007, 629; and Poku and Graham, *Redefining Security*, 199

⁹⁴ Echavarría, Josephina A., “Migrants as Threats: How Security Discourses Define Self and Other,” submitted to The Shelter Project, Vienna, Austria, June 2010. Obtained from http://theshelterproject.files.wordpress.com/2010/05/echavarría_script_23-05-20101.pdf on 5 July 2011.

⁹⁵ Poku and Graham, *Redefining Security*, 199

⁹⁶ Bourbeau, Phillipe, *The Securitization of Migration: A Study of Movement and Order*, New York: Routledge, 2010, 1

migration event, the existential nature of this threat ascends to the realm of “high politics,” with implications for both foreign policy and national security policy.⁹⁷

In South Asia, the evolving discourse on illegal migration from Bangladesh to India reflects both the multi-faceted and existential nature of this securitized view of migration.

Geo-political context: the history of India-Bangladesh migration

Illegal migration from Bangladesh – India’s largest single source of migrants – has been a prominent political issue for decades. An estimated 15 million Bangladeshis have crossed illegally into India since 1971, predominantly into the Indian states of West Bengal and Assam.⁹⁸ West Bengal shares many cultural and ethnic ties with Bangladesh, but the situation is very different in Assam, where indigenous Assamese and smaller tribal groups have tended to view themselves as a population under siege. The “anti-foreigner drive” in Assam (1979-85) led to hundreds of deaths, as political elites led ethnic Assamese residents in a violent campaign against Bangladeshi migrants, who they blamed for “unsettling the demographic balance, swiping scarce resources and endangering social and economic security.”⁹⁹

At the national level, Bangladeshi migrants became a central issue in the political rhetoric of the Hindu Nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the 1980s and 1990s.¹⁰⁰ At this time in India, illegal Muslim migrants were widely viewed as a demographic threat to political sovereignty and also, due to the growing profile of Islamic

⁹⁷ Smith, “Climate Change, Mass Migration, and the Military Response,” 199

⁹⁸ “Enclaves between India and Bangladesh: the land that maps forgot,” *The Economist*, 15 February 2011

⁹⁹ Upadhyaya, Dr. Priyanka, “Securitization Matrix in South Asia: Bangladeshi Migrants as Enemy Alien” in *Non-Traditional Security in Asia: Dilemmas in Securitisation*, eds. Caballero-Anthony, Mely, Emmers, Ralf, and Acharya, Amitav. London: Ashgate, 2006, 9

¹⁰⁰ Shamshad, Rizwana, “The Politics and Origin of the Indian-Bangladesh Border Fence,” submitted to the 17th Biennial Conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia, Melbourne, Australia, 1-3 July 2008, 3. Obtained from <http://arts.monash.edu.au/mai/asaa/rizwanashamshad.pdf> on 7 July 2011

fundamentalism in Kashmir and Pakistan, as a potential security threat.¹⁰¹ The BJP was largely responsible for perpetuating this discourse, and framed migration flows from Bangladesh as “a serious strain on the national economy, a severe stress on the national society and withal a serious threat to the stability and security of the country.”¹⁰²

This popular discourse on illegal migration from Bangladesh to India clearly adopts many similar elements found in the ‘securitized’ migration discourse examined in the preceding section. This analysis will now seek to show that elements of this discourse are also discernable within the security discourse imposed on climate change-related migration described in the preceding chapter. Furthermore, this section will also examine geo-political context as a source of influence on the authors of some of the texts that reflect these frameworks.

The role of organizational and geo-political context in the security discourse on climate change and migration

Within several of the texts examined, the issue of illegal migration from Bangladesh to India emerged as a key component of the security discourse on climate change and migration. The emphasis on security within existing migration discourses undoubtedly played a role in bringing this potential threat to the forefront. However, it is also reasonable to assume that the geo-political and cultural climate within which the issue of climate change-induced migration is being examined also played a role – particularly with respect to the texts written by India-based organizations.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Gillan, Michael, “Refugees or infiltrators? The Bhartiya Janata Party and illegal migration from Bangladesh,” *Asian Studies Review*, 26:1, 2002, 77

In their respective policy documents, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) and Greenpeace India – both based in New Delhi – use specific language that parallels existing narratives on illegal migration.

The extent to which climate change-related migration is framed as a large-scale, sudden event, rather than a gradual process is one such element. As discussed earlier in this paper, migration that occurs in an unwanted, but gradual and predictable fashion (a law and order problem), is treated differently than disruptive, high-volume, rapid population movements (a national security problem). In both texts, anticipated climate-related migration from Bangladesh to India are described by TERI and Greenpeace using terms such as “large-scale,” “sudden mass migration” and climate change “triggered” migration (rather than “induced” or “related”).¹⁰³ Thus, using this language, the issue is presented as an existential threat to the political stability of the state.

A second parallel between the security discourse on climate change-related migration and existing discourses on illegal migration is the extent to which migrants are presented, in opposition to residents of destination areas, as the “other.” The text produced by TERI, for example, employs juxtaposing terms such as “insiders”-“aliens,” and “natives”-“immigrant labourers” to implicitly establish a ‘binary opposition’ between these two groups.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ For example: “the bulk of the people from Bangladesh are very likely to immigrate to India,” and “the bulk of the people from Bangladesh who are under pressure to move, would migrate to India.” *See* Rajan, “Climate Migrants in South Asia,” 7; and Mahajan et al., “Climate change induced migration and its security implications for India’s neighbourhood,” 6

¹⁰⁴ Mahajan et al., “Climate change induced migration and its security implications for India’s neighbourhood,” 6, 7

Apart from the role of illegal migration discourse, the influence of the geo-political context within which both TERI and Greenpeace India are operating is another possible explanation for the security-oriented discourse reflected in their texts. In this view, both organizations frame climate change-related migration from Bangladesh as a security threat to India because this is the lens that is generally applied to illegal migration from Bangladesh in Indian public discourse.

Alternatively, it may also be the case that this security-oriented discourse is being instrumentally employed by the authoring organization to make its argument more sensational and compelling. The text produced by Greenpeace is a clearly example of this phenomenon.

By presenting climate change-related migration from Bangladesh as a direct outcome of the Indian government's failure to adequately mitigate emissions, the author is effectively co-opting this securitized discourse towards their own ends. Playing on this familiar trope, the text frames climate change-related migration as a potential cause of "unprecedented social and economic damage," which can only be averted by reducing India's GHG emissions.¹⁰⁵ This type of framing is also chastised by the International Organization for Migration, which argues that the use of mass displacement narratives to highlight the long-term risks associated with GHG emissions can detract from adaptation efforts.¹⁰⁶

The instrumental re-production of the illegal migration discourse might also explain elements of a security-oriented migration discourse found within the text produced by the European Council. While the body of the document is presented as a study of the

¹⁰⁵ Sudhir "Climate Migrants in South Asia," 12

¹⁰⁶ Walsham, Matthew, "Assessing the Evidence: Environment, Climate Change and Migration in Bangladesh," xii

relationship between climate and migration in Bangladesh, it concludes by stating that “massive movements” of climate migrants could “pose a threat to regional security.”¹⁰⁷ Like the Greenpeace India text, the presence of a security-oriented discourse may reflect an instrumental shift in language designed to make the text more appealing for a European audience enmeshed in its own securitized public discourse on migration.¹⁰⁸

This analysis has shown how existing ‘securitized’ discourses on illegal migration – both in general and in the specific context of India-Bangladesh – have been reproduced within the broader security-oriented framework on climate change and migration. Analyzing the authoring organizations and the geopolitical environment in which they operate allows us to understand that the security-oriented discourse apparent in some texts may be due to cultural and political context, or instrumental motivation.

Deconstructing the Adaptation Discourse: the role of Climate Justice and North-South politics

This section will first examine, in broad strokes, the contours of a “climate justice” discourse that has emerged within broader discussions about the relationship between climate change and development. Subsequently, after discussing how this discourse has become engrained in the broader public and political discussion of climate change issues in Bangladesh, this analysis will compare and contrast the role of this discourse in the respective texts of international and Bangladesh-based authoring organizations.

¹⁰⁷ Poncelet, Alice, “Bangladesh Case Study Report,” 25

¹⁰⁸ See, for example, Barkin, Noah, “Anti-immigration wave spreads across Europe,” Reuters, 14 September 2010. Obtained from <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2010/09/14/uk-europe-immigrants-analysis-idUKTRE68D1Z520100914> on 11 July 2011; Huysmans, J., “The European Union and the Securitization of Migration,” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 38:5, 2000, 751-777

Climate justice discourse

Anthropological climate change is generating a host of environmental impacts across the globe, of which human displacement is only one of many potential consequences. Efforts to negotiate an international agreement that would avert these impacts have been ongoing for decades, with little progress, largely due to the gap between developed and developing countries that has evolved at UNFCCC climate change negotiations.

Fundamentally, the concept of “climate justice” speaks to three dimensions of inequality that exist between developed and developing countries with respect to climate change: responsibility for historical carbon emissions, vulnerability to climate change impacts, and the capacity to mitigate or adapt to these impacts.¹⁰⁹ This narrative asserts that industrialized countries should be held liable for climate change impacts across the globe, and invokes principles of both distributive and restorative justice to make this argument. The 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development has played a key role in shaping these arguments, particularly with respect to two ‘first principles’ that have become a common refrain in climate justice discourse.

First, principle seven of the Rio Declaration establishes the notion of “common but differentiated responsibilities” between developed and developing states, wherein all parties are encouraged to act according to their respective capabilities and capacities.¹¹⁰ In effect, this statement highlights the fact that it is primarily developed countries that possess the financial and technological resources to mitigate climate change and facilitate

¹⁰⁹ Roberts, J. Timmons and Parks, Bradley C., *A Climate of Injustice: Global inequality, North-South politics, and climate policy*, Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2007, 3

¹¹⁰ “Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,” United Nations Development Programme, 14 June 1992. Obtained from <http://www.unep.org/Documents/Multilingual/Default.asp?documentid=78&articleid=1163> on 8 July 2011

adaptation to its impacts. Therefore, in the discourse of climate justice, developed states have a unique responsibility to take the lead on both mitigation and adaptation.

Second, principle 16 of the convention states that “the polluter should, in principle, bear the cost of pollution.”¹¹¹ In the context of this discourse, countries that have historically relied on intensive greenhouse gas emissions for economic development accumulate an ‘environmental debt’ to nations left vulnerable to resulting climate change impacts.¹¹² This debt carries “both a financial and moral obligation” to compensate developing countries for the damage incurred as a result of climate change, and for costs associated with reducing vulnerability to current and future impacts.¹¹³

Conceptually, the idea that the ‘polluter pays’ and that states have ‘common but differentiated responsibilities’ speaks to underlying inequalities between developed and developing states. This binary of ‘wealthy polluters’/ ‘climate change victims’ is now well established in climate change discourse in many vulnerable nations across the globe. In Bangladesh, as well as some Pacific Island states, this discourse has taken on a new dynamic, wherein developed states are to be held accountable for the well-being (and potential relocation) of human populations displaced by climate change.

Climate justice and public discourse in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, climate justice discourse is entrenched in virtually all discussion about climate change issues within the public domain. In the media, developed nations are regularly blamed for climate change-related events – and other weather events loosely

¹¹¹ “Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,” UNDP (1992).

¹¹² Smith, Mark D., *Just One Planet: Poverty, Justice, and Climate Change*, Warwickshire, UK: Intermediate Technology Publications Ltd., 2006, 28

¹¹³ See Smith, *Just One Planet*, 28; and Vanderheiden, Steve, *Atmospheric Justice: The Political Theory of Climate Change*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, 68

attributed to climate change –, accusations that are explicitly and vocally associated with the provision of compensation.¹¹⁴ The Bangladeshi government has also been an outspoken advocate for greater compensation from industrialized nations – both monetarily and in terms of facilitating climate change-related migration.

At international climate negotiations, Bangladesh has continuously pushed for increased financial and technical compensation from developed states, and has also sought international recognition of the relationship between climate change impacts and migration.¹¹⁵ At an interview prior to the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) in 2009, Bangladeshi Finance Minister Abul Maahl Abdul Muhith explicitly urged developed countries to facilitate future migration from Bangladesh in order to accommodate the anticipated impacts of climate change in that country.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh herself has adopted climate justice principles in various speeches and statements. Take, for example, this excerpt from a speech in Dhaka in March of 2011:

"Since the rich and the developed countries are primarily responsible for climate change, so, justice demands that the climate problem should be addressed through common and differentiated responsibilities and capacities.... Unless the present trend of degradation of climate and environment is reversed, our next generations will have to face dire consequences, and for which, we as their ancestors will never be forgiven. This is not only difficult for them; this is also unfair and unjust. Why should some rich people's lifestyles threaten lives and livelihoods of poor communities?"

¹¹⁴ Reza, S.M. Shameem, "From Development Communication to Development Journalism: Agenda Setting on Environmental Issues in Bangladesh News Media," Submitted to the International Conference on Future Imperatives of Communication and Information for Development and Social Change, Bangkok, Thailand, 20 December 2010. Obtained from <http://203.131.210.100/conference/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/03-05-Reza-Haque-Agenda-Setting-on-Environmental-Issues-in-Bangladesh-News-Media.pdf> on 8 July 2011.

¹¹⁵ "Statement by Bangladesh at the High level segment of COP16/CMP6," 8 December 2010, Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC, Cancun, Mexico. Obtained from http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/cop_16/statements/application/pdf/101209_cop16_hls_bangladesh.pdf on 8 July 2011.

¹¹⁶ Hariett, Grant, Randerson, James, and Vidal, John, "UK Should Open Borders to Climate Refugees, Says Bangladeshi Minister," *The Guardian*, 4 December 2009. Obtained from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/nov/30/rich-west-climate-change> on 8 July 2011.

Apart from this political rhetoric, climate justice discourse has also taken a particularly assertive tone in Bangladesh civil society.

Atiq Rahman, current director of the Bangladesh Center for Advanced Studies, told developed countries at the 1995 UNFCCC Conference of the Parties in Berlin that “if climate change makes [Bangladesh] uninhabitable, we will march with our wet feet into your living rooms.”¹¹⁷ Several other development- and climate-focused civil society organizations have also begun to actively advocate the creation of a mechanism to address migration resulting from climate change – either through existing international organizations and legal structures, or through new bilateral agreements and policy changes in developed states.¹¹⁸ Other groups have emerged specifically to advocate for migration-related adaptation solutions.¹¹⁹

In some of the texts examined in this analysis, the influence of climate justice discourse is clear and present. In other documents, however, a more nuanced view has emerged that navigates a middle ground between the negotiating positions of developing and developed states. This analysis will now seek to examine how the institutional characteristics of some authoring organizations have influenced how elements of a climate justice framework are presented within the adaptation discourse identified in the previous chapter.

¹¹⁷ Roberts and Parks, *A Climate of Injustice*, 2

¹¹⁸ See, for example, Center for Global Change (<http://www.csrlbd.org/>) and The Bangladesh Development Research Center (<http://www.bangladeshstudies.org/Climate.html>)

¹¹⁹ See, for example, Displacement Solutions (<http://displacementsolutions.org/>) and the Association for Climate Refugees (<http://climaterefugeesbd.org/>)

The influence of climate justice and North-South politics within adaptation-oriented discourses on climate change and migration

Certain elements of climate justice discourse are present across most of the texts examined, but especially so in those that adopt a predominantly adaptation-oriented framework. However, between these texts, there is significant variance in the tone and vocabulary that is employed to address this issue. While the texts produced by organizations with an international membership and broad mandate still imply that developing countries such as Bangladesh need assistance in adapting to these changes, there is an explicitly nuanced approach in addressing this issue.

The Asian Development Bank's (ADB) policy briefing on "Climate Change and Migration in Asia and the Pacific," for example, makes a number of statements that draw attention to international assistance for developing countries to address climate change-induced migration. Consider the following statement:

Significant funding will be required to utilize migration as an adjustment or coping mechanism in the face of climate change. Migration-related adaptation within poorer countries will require transfer of resources – human, technological, and financial – from better-off countries and the international community. Bilateral and multilateral mechanisms will have to be developed, and soon, in order to facilitate orderly planning and to limit the negative social impacts of migration.

- "Climate Change and Migration in Asia and the Pacific," Asian Development Bank, 61

The language here implicitly advocates a greater role for developed nations in migration-related adaptation, but is conveyed as a passive, rational observation rather than an explicit call to action. This indirect, passive approach in discussions about the role of the international community – specifically developed states – in assisting Bangladesh to cope with climate change-related migration is also found in the IOM policy briefing:

“...while it is possible to state with some confidence that environmental factors do not play a significant role in overseas migration at present, it is important to note that this does not preclude the option for innovative long-term policies to support potential migrants from environmentally vulnerable regions....”

- Walsham, “Assessing the Evidence,” International Organization for Migration, 31

Implicitly, the IOM is stating that developed countries should consider domestic immigration policies that facilitate international migration from areas affected by climate change. However, this proposal is effectively negated in the same sentence that it is presented: because environmental factors “do not play a significant role” at present in international migration, these “innovative” policies are framed as a solution to a non-issue. The tone and structure of these statements contrasts significantly with those put forward by Bangladesh-based groups that also adopt this adaptation-oriented discourse.

In their report on rural livelihoods, the Center for Global Governance (CGC) asserts, both implicitly and explicitly, that developed states have a *responsibility* to assist Bangladesh in coping with and providing a decent living for climate migrants.¹²⁰ For example, in this excerpt from the CGC policy document, it is asserted that

Since [Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand] have been amongst the responsible countries to cause accelerated climate change, they should create legal instruments for ‘facilitated migration’ for lackluster people from the most vulnerable countries.

- Ahmed and Neelormi, “Climate Change, Loss of Livelihoods and Forced Displacements in Bangladesh,” Center for Global Change, 7

¹²⁰ Ahmed and Neelormi, “Climate Change, Loss of Livelihoods and Forced Displacements in Bangladesh,” 7

This sentence explicitly identifies developed states/regions as *responsible* for climate change, a label that carries a moral obligation to facilitate the migration of those affected. The document then advocates ‘preferential migrant statuses’ for those whose livelihoods are failing as a result of climate change, “for which they are in no way responsible.”¹²¹ This proposal is a more specific manifestation of the ‘innovative’ policies presented in the IOM document; however, instead of a passive, rational evaluation, the CGC employs an explicit and assertive moral argument to legitimate this particular policy action.¹²²

The text authored by Unnayan Onneshan provides a similar example of this type of morality-based argument:

Some argue that developed countries are responsible for environmental degradation in developing countries like Bangladesh. As a result to such degradation of human and animal life, it is the responsibility of the international community to provide enough assistance to these vulnerable people.

- Titumir, “Climate Change and Flow of Environmental Displacement in Bangladesh,” Unnayan Onneshan, 12

Here, the basic structure of the argument is essentially identical to that of the CGC: responsibility for climate change impacts is connected to responsibility for assisting those affected. This direct moral argument is decidedly absent from the texts presented by IOM and ADB, despite implicit similarities in the messaging.

One explanation for this difference can be inferred from the organizational structure, mandate, and geo-political environment within which the authoring organizations have produced these texts. Comprised, respectively, of 132 and 67 member states, the IOM

¹²¹ *ibid.*

¹²² “Moral evaluation legitimation is based on values, rather than imposed by some kind of authority without further justification.” van Leeuwen, Theo, *Discourse and Practice: New Tools For Critical Discourse Analysis*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 109

and the ADB have broad international memberships and offices around the globe.¹²³ Not surprisingly, this diverse group of developed and developing member-states often have diverging interests and opinions on climate change and migration. One basic way to categorize these states on a spectrum of positions on climate change issues is by cross-examining their membership with those listed as parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Signatories to the UNFCCC are divided into three basic categories: Industrialized countries and economies in transition (“Annex I”), developed countries committed to providing financial support to developing countries for climate change activities (“Annex II”) and developing countries (“Non-Annex I”). The memberships of both the ADB and IOM are predominantly comprised of non-annex developing states, however, every one of the 23 Annex II developed countries are also represented.¹²⁴

Contention between Annex I and Non-Annex I countries has been palpable and ongoing at international negotiations, and significant gaps remain between these groups over the parameters and mechanisms that should be applied to facilitate climate change adaptation. In this context, the texts presented by the ADB and IOM can be viewed as representative of an adaptation-oriented discourse – in line with their mandates – but one that must navigate a middle-ground between opposing groups within their memberships. Thus, these organizations are restricted in the manner that they present certain policy options and recommendations, as language and content must be constructed to avoid descriptively or proscriptively singling out any member or group of members. As a result,

¹²³ See “About ADB,” Asian Development Bank. Obtained from <http://beta.adb.org/about/members> on 7 July 2011; and “About IOM,” International Organization for Migration (IOM), obtained from <http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/about-iom/lang/en> on 7 July 2011.

¹²⁴ “Responsibility and Vulnerability,” UNFCCC background documents. Obtained from http://unfccc.int/essential_background/feeling_the_heat/items/2914.php on 11 July 2011

the texts examined both imply that developing states will need assistance from developed states to cope with the effects of climate change, generally, and migration-related impacts more specifically, but avoid explicit statements calling for action from developed states.

In contrast, Unnayan Onneshan and the CGC are based in Bangladesh, mandated to advocate for livelihood and resilience improvement for Bangladeshis, and are overtly slanted towards a framework of equality and justice. For example, in its mission statement, Unnayan Onneshan describes itself as a champion for “social transformation towards a world, free from poverty, injustice, gender inequality and environmental degradation.”¹²⁵ Similarly, the CGC is an advocate for rural residents along three key issue areas: agriculture, trade, and climate change. On this latter topic, the organization aims to “empower poor and vulnerable community and other stakeholders to raise their voices for equitable adaptation policies, compensatory fund and responses.”¹²⁶ The internal politics of these organizations generate a strong identification with Bangladesh’s ethnic-political position, and are therefore able to lobby explicitly and assertively on behalf of Bangladeshis that are directly affected by the impacts of climate change.

An additional explanation for this difference in discursive approach might also be inferred by looking at the geo-political environment within which these texts are created. As organizations based in Dhaka, Unnayan Onneshan and the CGC are, arguably, reproducing an adaptation-oriented framework that is permeated by popular climate justice discourses – even overt antipathy towards developed nations for their perceived

¹²⁵ “Mission,” Unnayan Onneshan. Obtained from http://www.unnayan.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=67&Itemid=173 on 11 July 2011

¹²⁶ “Goals and Objectives,” Campaign for Rural Sustainable Livelihoods. Obtained from <http://www.csrlbd.org/about-csrl/objectives> on 10 July 2011.

responsibility for climate change impacts. This is another factor that likely played a role in shaping how the issue of climate justice has been framed by these organizations within the broader adaptation-oriented discourse on climate change and migration.

Summary

Building on the characteristics of the security and adaptation discourses identified in the literature examined, this chapter has shifted focus towards the organizational, discursive, and geo-political context within which these discourses were produced.

Through this process, we have seen that the security-oriented framework on climate change-induced migration has its roots in the related ‘securitized’ discourses of illegal migration. Furthermore, to explain why this framework is adopted in certain texts and not in others, this analysis briefly examines the influence of anti-migration sentiment on India-based authoring organizations. It also, however, explores the notion that this discourse has been appropriated to increase the salience of arguments more closely related to the authoring organization’s mandate.

This chapter has also explored the role of climate justice discourses within the adaptation-oriented framework on climate change-related migration, generally, and in the specific geo-political context of Bangladesh. The influence of climate justice discourse was then compared and contrasted between international and Bangladesh-based authoring organizations, to explore possible linkages between the adaptation discourse and the structure and location within which these texts are produced.

Overall, this chapter has explored a number of potential explanations for why these particular discourses emerged, generally, and specifically from the organizations that produced them. While the contextual approach adopted in this chapter has examined a

number of institutional and geo-political explanations, it is clear that this analysis is representative of only a microcosm of this discursive approach. Nevertheless, this chapter provides some unique insight into the foundation that underlies of these two particular strains of thought.

Conclusion

The potential impact of climate change on patterns of migration and displacement in Bangladesh, and elsewhere, continues to be a popular subject in many academic and policy communities across the globe. The issue is arising with increasing frequency in academic journals, newspapers, political speeches, on public radio, and even on TV news segments, perpetuating interest and discussion of the subject in the process. In turn, each new text, speech, audio or video clip, also contributes to a broader public discourse on climate change-related migration that is shaped by the specific language, ideas, categorizations, and concepts that are emphasized or marginalized in these messages.

This paper has focused on two particular discursive strains, centered on security and adaptation, respectively, that have emerged in the policy documents on the subject of climate change-related migration authored by a diverse range of International Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, and Think Tanks. While these discourses present some overlapping views on issues such as human security and vulnerability, the policy approach adopted by each are based on fundamentally opposing views of migration: in the security discourse, it is a *problem* that must be *mitigated*, while in the adaptation discourse, it is a *solution* that must be *facilitated*. To illustrate the content and contours of these discourses, and to shed some light on potential explanations for these discursive structures, this analysis has examined the issue of climate change-related migration, and how the subject is framed, in three chapters.

The first chapter establishes the background for this discursive debate by examining the current climatic and socio-economic situation in Bangladesh, and the potential impacts that climate change may have on the lives and livelihoods of Bangladeshis.

As the majority of the country's workforce are involved in some form of agricultural production, climate change-related impacts on this sector could have potentially devastating consequences for rural livelihoods. Increasingly irregular and intense flooding in some parts of the country could wash out cropland, while, conversely, other areas may experience more intense and prolonged periods of drought. Increasing saline levels in coastal cropland and freshwater aquifers will significantly affect local populations, but sea-level rise may also have a direct impact on the physical security of Bangladeshis who are exposed to tidal flooding and cyclonic storm surges. Overall, while uncertainty remains over the specific impacts of climate change on the country, it is clear that the people of Bangladesh are likely to face significant consequences over the coming century.

The second chapter of this paper illustrates key tenets of the security- and adaptation-oriented discourses in detail through a review of five thematic issues found in a sample of ten policy documents on climate change and migration in Bangladesh: (i) climatic drivers of migration; (ii) human security; (iii) state security; (iv) agency and identity; and (v) policy and governance. This analysis found that, in discussing these themes, the two discourses use diverging language, and emphasize different concepts and categorizations to frame the issue within the parameters of their respective policy approaches.

To this end, the security discourse emphasizes that failure to adapt to climate change will generate urgent, large-scale migration from Bangladesh into India, presenting a threat to state security and generating new concerns for human security (particularly for women). In this view, policy solutions should seek to mitigate “waves” of forced migration through environmental engineering and intergovernmental cooperation to increase the resilience of affected communities to anticipated climate change impacts.

Conversely, the adaptation discourse states that climate change-related migration will be gradual, linear, and predominantly internal, providing a valuable mechanism for affected populations to avert livelihood failure and the potential dangers to physical security that may arise as a result of climate change. In this view, policy solutions also seek to increase resilience in vulnerable communities; however, in contrast to the security discourse, they should also involve national and international support – both in source and destination communities – for individuals and families that choose to migrate in response to climate change.

The third chapter seeks to explain these diverging discourses by examining their organizational and geo-political provenance, and, to this end, predominantly focuses on two key issue-areas.

The first centers on the influence of a pre-existing ‘securitized’ discourse on migration, and the role that this framework has played in shaping discussions on climate change-related migration from Bangladesh to India. In the texts produced by some organizations, such as Greenpeace India and the European Council, the use of language that reflects a security-oriented discourse can be viewed as instrumental: they are

employing this framework because it resonates more clearly with an audience that is already accustomed to a ‘securitized’ view of migration issues in general. Conversely, the texts produced by India-based organizations like Greenpeace India and The Energy and Resources Institute may also be viewed as a product of the securitized migration discourse that already exists with respect to illegal Bangladeshi migrants in India.

The second examines the influence of a pre-existing ‘climate justice’ discourse, and the role that this framework has played within the adaptation-oriented framework, particularly in the geo-political context of Bangladesh. In this section, an institutional explanation is presented in which the presence of developed states within the memberships of the Asian Development Bank and the International Organization for Migration may have influenced their respective texts to reflect a weaker version of this climate justice discourse. Conversely, the presence of a strong climate justice discourse within the texts produced by Bangladesh-based development organizations such as the Center for Global Change and Unnayan Onneshan is explained by the fact that their mandates and ethno-political position is much more conducive to this view.

As the anticipated impacts of climate change begin to take concrete form over the coming century, discussion within various policy communities about what types of policy actions are necessary and appropriate for dealing with climate change-related migration are also likely to become hardened and polarized. In identifying and describing the security- and adaptation-oriented discourses that emerged from the policy literature examined in this analysis, this paper has sought to shed light on two important discursive frames that are currently being applied to the issue of climate change and migration in

Bangladesh. Though limited by the scope of literature examined and a broad framework of discursive analysis, in attempting to identify and explain these two discourses, it is hoped that this paper will be the first of many to shed light on an important theoretical dimension of this emerging issue-area.

In conclusion, the discourses examined in this paper are embedded in a plethora of ideas, values, resources, and relationships of power that influence the decisions of particular actors – in this case, organizations – to adopt and disseminate these views. By identifying and establishing the provenance of these discourses, it may be easier to evaluate future claims, assertions, and policy recommendations that are made on the subject of climate change and migration.

Annex I: List of policy literature

Asian Development Bank

Hugo, Graeme, et al., *Climate Change and Migration in Asia and the Pacific*. Mandaluyong City, Philippines: Asian Development Bank, 2011.

International Organization for Migration

Walsham, Matthew, “Assessing the Evidence: Climate Change and Migration in Bangladesh,” International Organization for Migration, June 2010.

EACH-FOR

Poncelet, Alice, “Bangladesh Case Study Report: ‘The land of mad rivers’,” EACH-FOR Environmental Change and Forced Migration Scenarios, 30 January 2009. Obtained from http://www.each-for.eu/documents/CSR_Bangladesh_090126.pdf on 26 January 2011.

Stimson Center

Laipson, Ellen and Pandya, Amit (eds.), “On the Move: Migration Challenges in the Indian Ocean Littoral, Henry L. Stimson Center (2010). Obtained from <http://www.stimson.org/images/uploads/research-pdfs/deepti.pdf> on 06 March 2011.

Center for Global Change

Ahmed, Ahsan Uddin and Neelormi, Sharmin, “Climate Change, Loss of Livelihoods and Forced Displacement in Bangladesh: Whither facilitated International Migration?” Center for Global Change.

Bangladesh Institute for International Security Studies & Safer World

Dalrymple, Sarah, and Rahman, ABM Ziaur, “Climate change and security in Bangladesh: A case study,” Bangladesh Institute of International Security Studies and SaferWorld, June 2009, Obtained from http://www.saferworld.org.uk/downloads/pubdocs/Bangladesh_climat_change_June09.pdf on 1 March 2011.

Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies

Patwary, Obayedul Hoque, “Climate Change and Security,” Issue Brief, 7, April 2009, Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS). Obtained from <http://www.bipss.org.bd/images/Issue%20Brief%207.pdf> on 10 February 2011.

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