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**How to Save a Disappearing Nation? Discourses
on How to Address the Consequences
of Climate Change Induced Migration and
Examples from Kiribati**

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Abstract

Migration induced by the impacts of climate change is a complex phenomenon that consists of various concepts. It also consists of various perspectives about the cause and the effects of such migration. Regardless of these debates, however, some atoll island nations are under a threat of disappearance due the impacts of climate change, especially the rising sea levels. Migration remains the only option for these island nations. Consequently, there are numerous perspectives on how to address the arising problems due to such migration. By utilizing argumentative discourse analysis, this thesis identifies three dominant discourses that address these consequences of climate change induced migration and explores how the island nation of Kiribati, although seemingly follows the lead of these dominant discourses, manages to shape and transform the discourses for the best interest of the Island Nation.

Key Words

climate change, migration, Kiribati, small island states, argumentative discourse analysis

Bio Notes

Akinalp Orhan is a former UNHCR consultant. He defended his master's thesis "How to Save a Disappearing Nation? Discourses on How to Address the Consequences of Climate Change Induced Migration and Examples from Kiribati" in 2018. His areas of interest are climate change induced migration and environmental politics.

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INTRODUCTION

Picture the following scene: You wake up one day in your room and the whole house is filled with water. You might think this is because you forgot to turn off the tap after taking a long bath, but there are water shortages in the country. Besides, this is not drinkable water but the salty ocean. This has become a common experience for many people living in the Small Island States (SISs). Studies in the field show that the SISs are vulnerable against the various impacts climate change brings, including sea-level rise (SLR), salination of drinkable water, drought, extreme cyclones and storms, and changes in weather patterns (Barnett 2001; Barnett & Campbell 2010; Kelman & West 2009). One of the important consequences of these impacts is migration. In fact, as early as in 1992, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) pointed out that migration will be one of the most important impacts of climate change and the literature has witnessed a growing number of research in the field ever since (IPCC Secretariat 1992, p.89). Moreover, the inundation of these island nations due to rising sea levels threaten their territorial integrity, therefore, before the end of this century some of these nations might disappear. The SISs have two options; they can protect their territories, or they can get ready to leave their homes. However, for the countries with little resources, protection of their lands is too expensive and how they are going to leave their homes presents many more challenges.

Regardless, the citizens of the island nation of Kiribati prepares for the worst, to leave their islands for good. In this regard, the literature has witnessed a rise on the number of studies that aim to explore what would happen after the islanders move out and how the problems arising from such relocation could be solved. This study takes these researches under investigation by using argumentative discourse analysis to explore what are the main problems that are argued to arise from such relocation, what solutions are proposed, and how the island nation of Kiribati approaches to these identified problems and solution proposals. I want to discover first, what is argued to be the key issue and how these issues are formulated. Secondly, I want to see how a small state with little to no resources make sense of an issue that threatens their existence. Consequently, in this study I ask,

- What are the main discourses that address the consequences arising from climate change induced migration?
- Which discourses are materialised in the case of Kiribati?

Starting from a brief introduction of the method and materials used, I will illustrate what climate change induced migration means and how it has been contested. Following this, I will present the three main discourses and storylines I identified in the literature. Lastly, I will talk about Kiribati and how the country makes use of these discourses.

METHOD & MATERIAL

The main method I relied in this thesis is *argumentative discourse analysis*, and I particularly relied on Hajer's analytical concepts of *discursive storylines* and *discourse institutionalisation*. Hajer describes discourse as "a specific ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorisations that are produced, reproduced, and transformed in a particular set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities" (1995, p.44). One of the main aims of argumentative discourse analysis is to identify how different perspectives of a problem impact policy-making (Nielsen 2016, p.41). Consequently, there is an emphasis on the interactions between the discourse and practice. In line with my aim, relying on this kind of discourse analysis allows me to identify the key arguments that impact the policy-making process in Kiribati. Moreover, argumentative discourse analysis also underlines the construction of meaning by identifying argumentative structures and detecting linguistic regularities (Nielsen 2016, p.41). Therefore, relying on these concepts and analytical tools allow me to identify which particular understanding or a "storyline" of a problem gains dominance and others are discredited through identification of recurring rhetoric and argumentative structures.

WHAT IS CLIMATE CHANGE INDUCED MIGRATION?

Given the complex relationship between climate change and migration, it is not surprising the topic is highly contested. Before the analysis and the case study, it is important to refer to the debates of the CCIM, which are concerned with two questions. First, what is climate change induced migration; and second, what causes such migration.

Resulting from different "intellectual histories, paradigms, methodologies, and interests" (Klepp 2017, p.2), there have been many attempts to define CCIM. As Black highlights "an initial difficulty with this phenomenon, there are perhaps as many typologies as there are papers on the subject" (2001, p.1) and Boano et al. list more than ten different concepts that define the affected population, including "environmental refugee, environmental migrant, forced environmental migrant, environmentally motivated migrant, climate refugee, climate change refugee, environmentally displaced person, disaster refugee, environmental displacee, eco-refugee, ecological displaced person, and environmental refugee-to-be" (2008, p.4). Especially among the academic and governmental policy documents, it is common to see the employment of these words interchangeably. However, following El-Hinnawi's definition of *environmental refugee* in 1985, (el-Hinnawi 1985, p.4), the term has become a "catch-all term" and gained a mainstream attention (Boano et al. 2008, p.2; Kibreab 1997; Cited in White 2011, p.21). Many others followed his suite and came up with their own definitions (See for example, Myers 2005, p.1, Biermann & Boas 2010, p.67, Docherty & Giannini 2009,

p.350). Moreover, IOM called them *environmental migrants* (IOM 2009, p.23) and UNHCR labelled them as “*environmentally displaced persons*” (Gorlick 2007, cited in Boano et al. 2008, p.8). The avoidance of using the term “*refugee*” is not coincidental. *Environmental/climate refugee* only serve as descriptive terms, they do not oblige states on any duties (Keane 2004). From a legal perspective *refugee*, *migrant*, and *displaced persons* have limited and distinct meanings and despite the wide use of “*refugee*”, environmental degradation is not a reason for asylum in the Refugee Convention (UNHCR 1951). Moreover, “a well-founded fear of persecution” in terms of the Convention only exists when there are serious human rights violations perpetrated by state agents (and sometimes by non-state entities). Climate change is indiscriminative, it impacts people regardless of their background and international protection is given when there is a failure of state protection.

Another important dimension of CCIM is concerned with the cause of such migration. In the early waves of climate change and migration research a so-called *maximalist/alarmist* school of thought was born arguing for a direct, mono-causal relationship between climate change and migration. By contrast, a minimalist approach stressed that migration was a result of a multiple causes and environmental reasons could not be singled out (See for example; Morrissey 2009; Morrissey 2012; Piguet 2013; Suhrke 1994).

The maximalists proposed “a direct and simplistic link between environmental change and migration” (Klepp 2017, p.7) and argued there could be more than 200 million refugees before 2050 (Myers 2002, p.609; Myers 2005, p.1). On the other hand, the sceptics argued that migration decisions are influenced by social, economic, political, and demographic factors, and individual characteristics such as age, gender, education, personal skills and traits can play an important role. Although environmental reasons can also influence the decision to migrate, the sceptic school argues that, the conceptualisation of environmental reasons as a primary cause of displacement is unhelpful and intellectually unsound (See, for example, Black 2001; Castles 2002; McAdam 2011b; Nicholson 2011; Piguet 2008).

Although, the maximalist studies were often criticised for their lack of empirical data, being inconsistent, impossible to check, (Kolmannskog 2008, p.9), methodologically incorrect, and outdated (Nicholson 2011, p.12), the narratives as such that urge policy makers to “do something about the situation” (Klepp 2017, p.7) gained an international attention and maximalist scholars have been more prominent to change the direction of the policies (Also See, Felli 2013, pp.338–339). The early debates about CCIM and studies and reports on “drivers of migration” allowed emergence of a second wave of CCIM research in which, migration perceived in a more sophisticated theoretical basis. Moreover, climate change’s ability to accelerate or disrupt the existing migration patterns (for example, rural-urban or circular domestic) started to be more highlighted.

Is Migration a Failure or a Form of Adaptation?

Looking back at the studies on CCIM, we can see that initially, migration was perceived as a failure of climate change adaptation schemes and “a negative phenomenon” (Barnett & Campbell 2010, p.171). As a response to this negativity, there have been some policy proposals to utilise migration to reduce vulnerabilities and enhance capabilities of the people (Fiske et al. 2014). The paradigm shift that perceived migration as “an opportunity for development” (Barnett & Webber 2010, p.19), and a positive strategy allowed increasing public and scholarly attention, which led to several large-scale projects. As further research showed the relationship between climate change and migration and the evidence has become more compelling than ever to point out that climate change is, rarely only, but one of the causes of migration (White 2011, p.19), finally Cancún Adaptation Framework (CAF) called countries to take measures in regard to “climate change induced displacement, migration and planned relocation” (UNFCCC 2010, para.14).

CAF “marks a shift in contemporary international law and policy from being almost solely focused upon the causes of climate change towards a broader platform that includes planning and managing for its consequences” (Gogarty 2011, p.2). It has been an important turning point for the research of CCIM as it gave a legal recognition and legitimation in the international fora¹. Furthermore, it also provided a recognition for the understanding that migration is not a direct consequence of climate change, but a part of the adaptation schemes.

The debates of CCIM are important to show two important matters. First, they show how discourses of CCIM managed to shape the public opinion and paved the way for an international recognition of the phenomenon. Second, how the problems are framed, and the issue is conceptualised in the literature. As these debates continue to be brought up while discussing other matters related with CCIM.

¹ However, it must be noted that in regional level CCIM has had some sort of recognition, for example, in Kampala Convention, which calls parties of the convention “to take protection measures and assist people who had been displaced internally due to natural hazards or caused by man, including climate change”(African Union 2012, sec.5 (4)). Niue Declaration of Pacific Islands Forum also acknowledges climate change induced human mobility (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2008).

Consequences of Climate Change Induced Migration

The consequences of CCIM is highly depended on the definitions and categorisations I laid out above. In any type of migration, consequences greatly depend on both sending and receiving societies, and social and ecological context from which people move and to which they move (Locke et al. 2000, p.26). Considering how contested CCIM is “to make reasonable speculations about the magnitude, patterns, and consequences of this type of movement” is quite difficult (Barnett & Webber 2010, p.2). Despite this, the literature has an abundance of identified and possible consequences of migration induced by climate change.

Most of the consequences of CCIM are concerned with the security implications. In the cases where people must cross borders the problems due to climatic reasons, this would also “generate problems of political, social, and economic sorts” (Myers 2002, p.611) and the erosion of social order in one region can spread into greater regions and destabilise global and regional governance structures (Brauch & Scheffran 2012, p.8). Especially *maximalist/alarmist* school argues that climate change will cause mass migration movements from the global South to North and create conflicts in “so-called hot spots” (Klepp 2017, p.9) such as the SISs, the Arctic, African and Asian mega deltas, and tropical forested regions, areas that are less adaptive to environmental stress due to lack of institutional capacities. Competition for already scarce resources may increase the possibility of conflicts and instability (Carballo et al. 2008, p.22) and increasing usage of water in drought zones may cause diseases (Carballo et al. 2008, p.32). There are also concerns over the pressure over the urban services due to the increased rural to urban migration caused by climate change.

Some scholars argue, migration from vulnerable regions to other regions that are prone to similar vulnerabilities may also create “trapped populations” (Adger et al. 2015, p.1). Trapped populations can also occur when impoverished people are unable to move away from environmental threats (Bettini 2017, p.35; Black et al. 2011, p.449). There is a growing literature on the reduced mobility and immobility due to climate change (Bettini 2017, p.35).

Despite these security concerns, however, the studies in the field show that the climate change-related relocation would resemble current migration patterns and would mostly become internal, rather than a sudden, large-scale, cross-border migration (Campbell 2010a, p.35; McAdam 2011a; Park 2011, p.2). Moreover, the size and volume of migration as well as geographical distribution depend on the adaptation measures taken by different societies and overall political and economic developments (Boncour & Burson 2010, p.14).

On the other hand, many scholars criticise similar narratives that underline security threats caused by CCIM (See, among others, Kibreab 1997; Suhrke 1993; White

2011). White, for example, argues, these narratives raise doubts about border security and the needs of tightening asylum regimes (White 2011, p.10). He highlights that, whatever their intentions might be, “analysts unwittingly give fuel to security-minded officials and electorates” (2011, p.11). According to Oels, the “climatization” of the security and defence sector contributes to the securitisation of migration in general (Oels 2012, p.199). Finally, Suhrke points out these narratives cause fears in the public that has already been “suffering from ‘compassing fatigue’ towards refugees” (Suhrke 1993, pp.6–7).

In conclusion, it appears in the literature and among the traditional security institutions, there is a concern over the impact of climate change related migration on the security and conflicts. These narratives overshadow other possible consequences of CCIM, including the possible positive consequences that are highlighted by *climate migrants* discourse.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

In his research regarding the CCIM research and how discourses shaped it, Felli identifies two dominant discourses (2013, p.344). In times when migration is perceived to be a failure of climate change policies, the concept used was “*climate refugees*” in contrast to some other studies that use “*climate migrants*” (Similar arguments can also be found in Dreher & Voyer 2015; Piguat 2013). *Climate refugees* discourse underlines the responsibilities of the global North in terms of climate change and often frames CCIM as a matter of security (Felli 2013, p.345; See also, McNamara 2007, pp.21–23). *Climate migrants* discourse, on the other hand, focusses on the emphasis of migration as an adaptation strategy.

Due to the changes in the discourse in the second phase of the CCIM research, in this study I did not rely on the *maximalist/alarmist* vs. *minimalist/sceptic* discourses. Instead, I prepared an analytical tool based on Felli’s model (Felli 2013), which is based on adaptation-migration nexus and the existence of climate change induced migration is no longer a question. I made adjustments and modifications on the tool based on my elaboration of the contemporary developments in CCIM research.

My study is not unique in its sense that Felli (Felli 2013) and McAnaney (McAnaney 2012) also identify two forms of laws that are utilised to solve the problems related with CCIM, namely, *new international convention* and *soft laws*. I argue this is because of their premise that the problems can only be solved through legal means, which is itself based on the lack of legal recognition; “if the international community recognised such migration and affected population, then we could have worked out for a solution”. Such arguments overlook the impact of CCIM on sending and receiving societies and left out other perspectives that offer a wide range of possibilities for the states and affected populations. Based on my method, while analysing, I tried to identify

what exactly the proposal targets. Does the proposal try to prevent climate change related migration? Does the proposal aim to prevent a specific issue arising from climate change related migration? Mapping storylines helped me to answer these questions. Because they have a role to facilitate a complex issue (Hajer 1995, p.63), they appeared across different texts in different contexts.

Surprisingly, although the literature claimed *environmental refugee* is the most used term to refer the population my research identified *climate refugees* to be the mostly utilised word. Among the discourses I identified, there is often a special emphasis on the forced nature of this migration. Hence, the word “*refugee*” is often employed to highlight this forced nature as well as “to underscore the lack of an agency” (Blitz 2011, p.436).

Addressing the Consequences of CCIM

Referring back to Hajer’ definition of discourse, “a specific ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorisations that are produced, reproduced, and transformed in a particular set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities” (1995, p.44), CCIM contains specific ensemble of ideas (e.g. environmental degradation is not a reason for migration), concepts, (e.g. climate migrants, environmental refugees), and categorisations (e.g. White’s typology of environmental refugees). CCIM also contains different discourses about how to address the consequences and the issues arising from this type of migration. These discourses offer a new perspective and present a specific issue as the key problem to be solved. What makes discourses valuable is their ability to shape the public opinion. By offering a solution to an identified problem, they also present their own perspectives as “truth”. They produce, reproduce, and transform these identified problems and try to give meaning to a social reality.

Previously some studies also identified two main discourses that address the consequences of CCIM (McAnaney 2012; also see, Felli 2013). In short, these two discourses frame the issue either in the international or state level. In my research, however, I identified three distinct discourses dealing how to approach the issues arising from CCIM, each containing several storylines that address the issues. Although there are certain similarities among these discourses, mapping the storylines helped me to identify and categorise these different discourses. Using *argumentative discourse analysis* allowed me to go further than the previous studies and uncover a previously untouched perspective.

Not surprisingly, the main difference among these discourses is how they perceive and frame the problem. Consequently, the offered “solution” refers to this particularly identified problem. However, one key similarity among these discourses is their emphasis on the lack of legal and political recognition of climate change induced mobility and the consequences arising from that. This is an expected outcome, because

the previous discourse analyses also focus mainly on the problems arising from the lack of legal recognition (McAnaney 2012; also see, Felli 2013).

One of the most addressed aspect among the discourses is the nature of migration. Whether it is perceived voluntary or forced, all three discourses address this aspect. There are concerns over the *forced* nature of migration. Consequently, an underlying assumption is that migration is the problem, because it is not voluntary. However, by mapping the storylines, I managed to identify various identified problems.

Another common characteristic among the discourses is the responsibility assignment. All three discourses assign some form of global responsibility with slight differences.

Although I did not aim to identify a key dominant discourse, I noticed slight changes in dominance over time, especially between the first two discourses. The last discourse, however, has been utilised as a supportive mechanism for the first two discourses and has a constant presence throughout the timeframe (2008-2018).

A NEW CONVENTION

When it comes to how to address the problems arising from CCIM, one of the major discourses identifies *failures in the current international legal framework* to be the key problem area for the CCIM. The underlying key problems is argued to be the insufficiencies of the current legal regimes. In short, it is argued that the current international legal framework fails to address these people and there is a need for a new global convention specifically designed to protect the people. In some cases, extension of the Refugee Convention or the UNFCCC is also proposed. The UNFCCC is presented as the key organisation to facilitate and organise the establishment of the convention and relevant agencies.

The discourse describes the current refugee and humanitarian protection regimes as well as the global climate change framework often as “*inadequate*” and following with the words used to describe the Refugee Convention, such as, “failure”, “gap”, “ill-suited”, “limited”, and “restrictive”.

Failures in the Current Regimes storyline argues the problem is current international protection regime that was created during a certain period, for certain people. An international convention designed and tailored specifically for the needs of these people, supported by required institutional arrangements and funds is argued to be the key to solve the problems of the affected populations. The storyline constantly refers to the empirical studies that highlight most of the climate related human mobility resembles the current migration patterns. Because, the previous regimes were prepared for certain people, none of the existing regimes can solve this newly emerging phenomenon.

Fair and Equal Share of Responsibilities storyline identifies climate change a global responsibility and calls for a global action to solve the issues. However, this global

responsibility is not equally distributed, but differentiated among the states, and intergovernmental or regional organisations on the bases of their political and economic strength. There is a call for distributing the “burden”, involvement of civil society organisations, individuals, and communities on both sending and receiving societies, especially for the establishment of the convention.

A New Convention Discourse heavily invokes the security concerns that were utilised previously by the *maximalist/alarmist* circles. Phrases such as “*millions of people are on the move, mass migration from the affected regions*” and “*security implications of large-scale migration*” are often used. There is also an emphasis on the *urgency* of this issue. *Danger of Refugees* storyline highlights these security concerns repeatedly and argues that with the newly added numbers of *climate refugees* to already existing refugee numbers, the current legal protection regime and institutions would be overwhelmed by the burden. It calls for a more holistic approach to solve the issues and asks international community to prepare for this “*urgent*” matter.

Surprisingly, although it is argued that the refugee status does not apply here, there is a tendency to utilise *refugee* (either in the form of *climate refugee, environmental refugee*) while referring the people. This is often justified by arguing, this type of migration is not voluntary, similar to the conventional refugee definition. Moreover, this discourse also highlights the needs for using an official, accepted, and general definition for the people. Consequently, different actors utilising this discourse often use their own definitions, adding more definitions to already-exhausted number of definitions.

Considering the paradigm changes in research on CCIM mentioned above, it is not surprising most of the articles relying on this discourse were published between 2008 and 2011 and gradually, the discourse has lost its attention. However, as one the earliest discourses that address the consequences of CCIM it also managed to attract the international scholarly and institutional attention on the aftermath of the climate induced human mobility. Calls for *urgent action* also helped political and academic developments within the field.

Creation of a new international framework specifically for the territorially dispossessed however, has been criticised by some for shifting the main focus of international policy development from “the more immediate, alternative, and additional responses that may enable people to remain in their homes for as long as possible” (McAdam 2011b, p.5). Some of the slow onset impacts of climate change offer a rare opportunity to plan for responses, rather than relying on a universal, general remedial instrument. It might also lead into “*inaction* on climate change” (McAdam 2011b, p.6 Italics in the original).

REGIONAL COOPERATION AND BILATERAL AGREEMENTS

Regional Cooperation and Bilateral Agreements discourse captures a set of storylines often critical to *A New Convention*. In this regard, the key storyline invoked argues that

the previous discourse fails to grasp the global political, economic, and social realities. In formulation of this storyline, examples such as *the problems in climate change negotiations in Kyoto, Copenhagen, etc.* are often mentioned to highlight *the lack of commitment in the international community*. Adding to this lack of commitment, it is also often argued that there are increasing calls for tighter immigration regulations and greater border security in the global North, which would prevent any calls for changes in the Refugee Convention. The discourse points out that despite the existence of a refugee convention, different soft laws relating to refugees, and an international agency (UNHCR), the displacement of millions of refugees remain unresolved. This shows problems stem from a lack of political will, rather than absence of law. This does not mean, however; the situation needs no attention. Rather, the *Protection Gap* in the international law should be addressed in a confined, small-scale way, using different forms of law including refugee law, humanitarian law, and human rights.

The solution for these problems is given as regional cooperation and bilateral agreements. Countries that share historical, economic, political and social ties are called upon to act together for the territorially dispossessed. The UNFCCC is often suggested as a facilitating institution to open the way for regional talks.

Moreover, in *Win-Win Strategy* storyline, migration is offered as a strategy for development for both sending and receiving societies. Consequently, it is not surprising this discourse relies on concepts such as *adaptation, resilience, development* as well as *relocation* and *resettlement*. Migration here is often presented as a positive and natural phenomenon in respond to environmental and climatic changes. However, the forced nature of climate change induced migration is often highlighted and therefore using regional and bilateral mechanisms is argued to prevent this forced nature.

One key difference between the two discourses is the Regional Cooperation and Bilateral Agreements discourse often refers the SISs as *sinking/disappearing islands* and CCIM in the SISs as a *matter of survival*. These terms are often criticised for being “sensationalist” (Betzold 2015, p.483), representing the islanders as “helpless victims” (Barnett & Webber 2010, p.24), taking away their agency (Farbotko & Lazrus 2012, p.1), and downplaying community level resilience (Baldacchino & Kelman 2014, p.13).

Although Regional Cooperation and Bilateral Agreements discourse has some merits when it comes to highlighting difficulties for reaching a universal agreement, relying on the UNFCCC to tackle issues such as migration and displacement is argued to be unrealistic and international community’s inaction in the face of the so-called migrant crisis in the Mediterranean must be remembered when we consider “solutions” both in regional and global levels (Bettini 2017, p.36). Moreover, there are also certain concerns over whether displacement can be managed on a comparable small regional scale (Gogarty 2011, p.3), as some studies show these attempts in the past have failed (Gemenne 2011; de Sherbinin et al. 2011).

ETHICAL AND MORAL CONCERNS

The last discourse I identified heavily relies on more normative solutions comparing to the other two discourses. The Ethical and Moral Concerns discourse puts a greater emphasis on the *responsibilities, duties, and obligations* of different actors, and the solutions are presented with a larger concern over the moral aspects of such migration. For example, in *Climate Justice* storyline, the key problem is pointed out to be the enormous burden put on the shoulders of certain parties (individuals, communities, or states that have heavily influenced by climate change impacts) in contrast with their little contribution to climate change and particularly the greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions. This storyline calls for solutions that address these disparities and asks for more *fairly distributed responsibilities and duties* to overcome the impacts of CCIM. In a similar manner, *Fair and Equal Share of Responsibilities* storyline identifies the problems through the means of moral concerns. Words such as *unfair burden* and *unfavourable circumstances* are often used to highlight the problems of the territorially dispossessed. Moreover, a special attention is often given to the SISs, highlighting their common characteristics in terms of economic, political, historical, and social development and their vulnerabilities vis-à-vis climate change.

The emphasis on *responsibilities, duties, and obligations*, or in other words, the normative structure of the discourse, also resonates itself through a focus on compensation. Consequently, in the storylines, the expected outcome of the offered solution is often described as a form for compensation of the climate change impacts. Words such as “*a moral duty or right, corrective justice, rectification*” are often used for the positive outcomes of such proposals.

One major difference of this discourse, comparing with the other two is that it brings up a set of consequences of CCIM, including person’s ability to form life plans, self-identify, self-respect, social and cultural life, traditions and customs, language, economy, political representation and so on. Hence, there is an emphasis on the vast problems that CCIM can cause. Consequently, the storylines often rely on multiple problems, solution and expected outcomes. For example, in the *Probability of Statelessness* storyline, the key problem of CCIM is argued to be the permanent relocation of certain communities and especially the territorially dispossessed. Although, the core problem identified is the probability of statelessness, many side problems follow this core issue, including people’s loss of identity, self-determination rights, loss of effective protection of a state, and loss of environmental familiarity.

Due to the moral structure of this discourse, the storylines here are often formed in a way to evoke compassion and sympathy. By using personal stories and narratives, those who utilise this discourse aim to humanise the issue and approximate the readers to the subject. The impacts of climate change and migration are often conveyed with

these personal narratives. In many cases, certain individual's life stories, their experiences with climate change and migration are often shared.

Despite this emphasis on the various impacts of CCIM, however, the Ethical and Moral Concerns discourse also relies on *the Danger of Refugees* storyline and uses terms such as “*millions of people on the move*” and “*large-scale migration*”. Like the other discourses, there is also an emphasis on the future-burden for some humanitarian organisations and states due increasing numbers of displaced people.

CLIMATE CHANGE INDUCED MIGRATION & KIRIBATI

Kiribati is a small, underdeveloped, and geographically isolated country. It is highly vulnerable to natural hazards (Yamamoto & Esteban 2017, p.4), suffers from high population increase (Campbell & Warrick 2014, p.15; McAdam 2011b, p.9), sanitation is poor, and pollution is high (McAdam 2011b, p.9). Kiribati has always been greatly susceptible to coastal erosion, floods from tidal surges, land degradation, and land losses due to increasing sea levels. Climate change contributed to increasing numbers of tropical cyclones with greater magnitude, biodiversity losses, extreme rainfalls as well as droughts and many other disasters (Barnett 2001; Betzold 2015; Elliott & Fagan 2010). There are also concerns over fresh water availability due to the increasing pressures over water reserves under the islands, which may impact livelihood security due to both reduced crop production and coral reef degradation (Campbell & Warrick 2014, p.15). Climate change has increased the magnitude, intensity, and frequency of these events, and has reduced people's ability to adapt. Consequently, the government projects and policies related with CCIM in the country often target these climate change impacts, while simultaneously aim to target the overall development of the country. This is not surprising giving the fact that how CCIM is closely intertwined with other types of migration. Moreover, unlike the *maximalist/alarmist* discourse that highlights a probability of mass migration and greater need for border protection, most of the governmental projects aim to achieve a greater human security and prevent territorial dispossession due to rising sea-levels and emigration. The government has built walls surrounding the main capital island. In some regions, mangrove trees are also planted on the shore as a way of preventing coastal erosion. The country also considered buying floating islands to relocate its citizens, (Stoutenburg 2013, p.63) and controversially bought land in Fiji (The Office of the President 2014). Yet, most of these governmental programs, especially the large-scale infrastructure projects, need constant maintenance, something the country cannot afford due to its small economy.

In term of migration, Pacific Islanders are traditionally known to be prone to mobility. “Mobility has been driven by a search for greener pastures, access to education, health, and employment. But an underlying feature that has always shaped these movements has been the surrounding natural environment” (IOM 2018). In other

words, “migration, either circular, permanent, internal, or international is a regular part of everyday life for many Pacific Island Communities” (Campbell & Warrick 2014, p.10) and Kiribati is not an exception. In fact, as part of their effort to combat the impacts of climate change, the government also promoted internal migration as a way of enhancing governmental services by decreasing the diffusion of the island populations (Barnett & Webber 2010, p.33).

Although, migration is a part of the culture in Kiribati, the climate change impacts have added “another layer for decision to migrate” (Elliott & Fagan 2010, p.75) and recent shifts in the climate exceed people’s “ability to adapt within local resilience capacity” (Locke 2009, p.172). Indeed, the case of Ioane Teitiota gained an international attention as “the man who would be the first climate change refugee” (McDonald 2015), when Teitiota and his family applied to be “recognized as a refugee on the basis of changes to his environment in Kiribati caused by the rising sea-levels associated with climate change” (*AF (Kiribati) [2013] NZIPT 800413* 2013, sec.2). However, his case has since been rejected first by the immigration office, then by the lower courts. Finally, the Supreme Court upheld the previous decisions on the grounds that “environmental degradation, whether associated with climate change or not, can never create pathways into the Refugee Convention or protected person jurisdiction” (*AF (Kiribati) [2013] NZIPT 800413* 2013, sec.55). The case of Teitiota is striking in terms of how CCIM is perceived both by the legal jurisprudence but also by the public. It is also an important case to highlight how climate change and the other drivers of migration are intertwined and how difficult it is to distinguish one another.

Consequences of Climate Change Induced Migration in Kiribati

As highlighted above, the consequences of CCIM are highly dependent on how and where the islanders move to. Yet, although it is very difficult to estimate the volume and geographical distribution of the migration, given the size and altitude of the islands, only a small portion of relocation can be handled domestically and for a certain period (Campbell & Warrick 2014; McAdam 2011b). However, the increasing internal migration has already putting more pressures for the state services in the urban atolls (Barnett & Webber 2010, p.12).

The literature often relies on the SISs to show the impacts of climate change and migration. Studies increasingly focus on the consequences of probable migration of communities and the whole islands on the “spiritual, psychological, cultural, social, demographic, political, economic, and environmental dimensions” (Campbell & Warrick 2014, p.22). Many of these consequences are closely related with the territorial dispossession. By the inundation of their lands many scholars argue the SISs might lose their statehood status, which in turn might mean statelessness for the islanders (See, among others, Heyward & Ödalen 2016; McAdam 2010; Park 2011; Stoutenburg

2013). Moreover, the implications of climate change on the nationhood and citizenship are often highlighted (Klepp 2017). Similarly, sovereignty implications of climate change on the island states take an important part of the research on migration and climate change. In this line, there are also questions about state's right to exist (Vaha 2015), people's right to self-determination (Klepp 2017, p.20), and also whether the disappeared states would have a right over their exclusive economic zones after the people migrate (Ödalen 2014).

The implications of climate change induced migration against the people take a vast place in the literature. For example, there are concerns over the self-identity of the people (Kolers 2012) as well as on people's capabilities and functioning who has to relocate (Byravan & Rajan 2010). Many scholars highlight the human rights implications of CCIM (Corendea 2017; Corendea 2018; Knox 2009). Finally, there are some studies on the gender implications of CCIM. Blitz, for example, points out that land has historically played an essential role in the organisation of clans and in determining the social structure of community life in the South Pacific Islands (2011, p.440). In some islands, "land is owned by women and is passed down from mother to daughter; the status of women is therefore linked to land ownership" (2011, p.441). However, gender implications of CCIM in the SISs is understudied.

Addressing Climate Change Induced Migration in Kiribati

Because of the above mentioned impacts of climate change, Kiribati is often shown as a warning for the global community and sometimes deemed as the "canary in the climate change coal mine" (Roman 2013, p.169). On the other hand, surveys in the field show that islanders have taken the issue upon themselves to combat the impacts of climate change by utilising various methods and seeking governmental support (Allgood & McNamara 2017, p.378). In this regard, the state's main policy, so-called "migration with dignity" has gained an attention after the former president, Anote Tong remarked the predicament of his people in many occasions. President Tong laid stress the importance of long-term planning and announced his government's plan of "a long-term, merit-based relocation strategy" (Tong 2011, p.3). He broadly explained the plan as (Tong 2011, p.3):

This strategy involves the upskilling of our people to make them competitive and marketable at international labour markets. We want to target labour markets where skills or labour gaps exist and provide potential new homes for our people. The strategy provides our people with an option so that when they choose to migrate, they will migrate on merit and with dignity. They will be received by their adopted countries not as burdens, but as worthwhile members of the community.

In short, *Migration with Dignity* is comprised of four aspects. A *long-term planning* in which rights and duties of the host communities, cost-sharing for planning and relocation and the measure to prevent discrimination are considered. A *merit-based* view to improve the citizens' competitiveness in the international market via establishing education and training programs. Kiribati has already have agreements with New Zealand and Australia which enable such opportunities (Campbell 2010b, p.94). A slow and planned migration is also suggested to allow the *establishment of communities of network* in the host societies. By sending early-movers to the developed countries, the country aims to form networks and increase remittances. Finally, migration with dignity aims to form *community-level interaction* between the countries that would allow the involvement of both sending and receiving communities in the planning and implementation of the policies.

All these aspects of Migration with Dignity show how environmental degradation and the other drivers of migration are intertwined and how it is difficult to identify a core driver for migration. These four aspects re-occur throughout the speeches, interviews, and other official material by the leaders. Does Migration with Dignity aim to prevent the problems arising from climate change induced migration or is it a type of economic migration scheme aimed to enhance economic growth? I argue the answer is both. By a brief first look at the strategy, it is easy to argue this is solely aimed to protect the islanders from the problems arising from CCIM, however, the more we dissect the scheme, the more we see there is more to that. Migration with Dignity shows how migration has been politicised and offered in a way to overcome various problems the country has been facing.

MATERIALIZATION OF DISCOURSES IN KIRIBATI

Which discourses are materialised in the case of Kiribati? In my research, I identified some aspects of the discourses have been transformed and utilised and some of the storylines have been played out to better reflect the country's interests and goals. Kiribati combines a set of strategies and practices to shape, re-shape, and transform the identified problems and offered solutions. Some discourses gain more public attention than the others and the dominant discourses are constantly in change. Kiribati also plays with these discourses and makes appropriate changes within the discourses to be able to better make use of the them and effectively control the narrative.

Institutionalisation of “a new convention” Discourse in Kiribati

The institutionalization of the *A New Convention* discourse in Kiribati clearly highlights how the country utilises the existing discourses. In line with the discourse, in Kiribati, there are calls for a new global governance regime as well. However, unlike a convention that targets the specific needs of the islanders, the call for a new governance aims to

combat climate change and its implications on the islands. Consequently, there is not a call for climate refugee convention, but rather a legally binding regime that aims to cut GHG emissions. The Former president even argued “there is no right to sovereignty over GHG emissions” (Tong 2010). Similarly, the discourse also changes its shape from failures in the current humanitarian regimes to failures in the climate change regimes as the main subject. As the leader repeatedly laid out, they would rather not leave their islands, this change in discourse is in line with the overall aims of the country.

Similarly, *Fair and Equal Share of Responsibilities and Duties* storyline has also been shaped, re-shaped, and transformed in the country. There is a strong emphasis on the impediment that has been caused by climate change on the country’s efforts to achieve sustainable development. The leaders and representatives of the country often argue that the reason why Kiribati falls behind the goals is the impacts of climate change and the efforts to mitigate these impacts. Therefore, there are calls to change the traditional ways of “*doing business*” and to create more inclusive global climate change and development governances and involving different actors including the civil society organisations, women, the youth and so on. The leaders also call for better-tailored climate action aids from the international community

On the other hand, although security concerns arising from CCIM are often criticised in the literature, especially in the UN General Assembly statements, the country representatives highlight these security concerns and call for global efforts. Apart from relying on phrases like “*security implications of large-scale migration*”, there is tendency to count security challenges arising from climate change together with “terrorism, conflicts, transnational organised crime, cyber-crime, non-communicable diseases, health of oceans, and the mass movements of refugees in Europe”. This is arguably used to highlight the global implications of climate change and CCIM and security implications are promoted as a warning for the international community to act.

The only storyline that does not get any attention is *The Danger of Refugees* storyline. Considering the surveys in the field that show the overall negative perspective towards concepts such as climate/environmental refugees (See, for example, Allgood & McNamara 2017; Roman 2013), it is not surprising this storyline remains untouched.

In conclusion, *A New Convention* discourse takes another form in Kiribati while simultaneously keeping some of its features. Given the size and the economic means of the country, calling for a global responsibility of climate change and its impacts is not surprising. What might be surprising is the remarks about the security concerns of climate change and climate change induced migration. In certain speeches the security in terms of human security of the relocated population is more prevalent, but in general, security is referred in a more general way, which might arguably increase the calls for border security and migration management. Although, seemingly this could work against the country’s overall goals, I argue the emphasis on the security implications are

expressed for three reasons. First, to highlight the urgency of the issue, which is also a prominent aspect of *A New Convention* discourse. Second, to highlight the scope of CCIM. By using security narratives, what is highlighted here is that, climate related migration is an issue as threatening as terrorism and many others. Finally, this is done to highlight the dimension of CCIM. CCIM is a global issue, which is also in line with the *A New Convention* discourse.

Institutionalisation of “Regional Cooperation and Bilateral Agreements” Discourse in Kiribati

Considering the importance of “Migration with Dignity” in Kiribati, it is not surprising, Regional and Bilateral Agreements discourse has been actively institutionalised in the country. The country’s regional and bilateral efforts often highlighted by the leaders and there is a constant emphasis on the country’s efforts to combat climate change impacts. Consequently, the leaders make use of the *Protection Gap* storyline. Especially after the major climate change conferences, the leaders often express their disappointment in the international community and highlight the lack of global commitment to tackle climate change.

However, the key storyline within this discourse that resonates itself in Kiribati is *Win-Win Strategy*. Not surprisingly, “Migration with Dignity” is often portrayed as a positive sum policy that would benefit not only Kiribati but also the receiving countries. New Zealand and Australia often appear due the already existing schemes and agreements between these countries. The leaders of Kiribati also often emphasise the role of GHG emitting countries on the predicament of the people and they call these countries (China and the US are often called upon, together with Japan and the EU) to help to mitigate the country’s efforts to tackle the impacts of climate change.

Institutionalisation of “Ethical and Moral Concerns” Discourse in Kiribati

My research identified ethical and moral concerns as a prominent discourse throughout the climate change and migration debate in Kiribati. The former President Tong even calls “climate change as the greatest *moral* challenge of our time” (Tong 2009, p.1). However, in terms of discourse institutionalisation, Ethical and Moral Concerns do not translate into concrete policies, rather it is used as a supportive mechanism for other discourses.

One of the important characteristics of this discourse is its reliance on the personal narratives. Not surprisingly, the leaders often utilise very personal experiences to express their concerns over climate change and migration. For example, both the former (See, for example, Tong 2009) and current presidents (See, for example, Maamau 2017) refer to their grandchildren when they emphasise and illustrate the various

impacts of climate change and migration. Moreover, Tong visited the Arctic in 2014, and in 2018 a documentary named Anote's Ark also released depicting his efforts for the country.

The intergenerational justice and burdens of the next generations are often expressed through these personal narratives. Through these narratives a set of areas that CCIM has impact on are pointed, including person's ability to form life plans, self-identify, self-respect, social and cultural life, traditions and customs, language, economy, political representation and many others. However, unlike the literature, there are no references for the *Prevention of Statelessness* storyline.

As I laid out before, *Climate Justice* storyline argues, the key problem about climate change and migration is the fact that the most affected countries are the ones that have contributed the least to climate change. This is a prominent storyline that resonates itself in various areas in Kiribati. The country's leaders in their speeches and during interviews as well as people living on the islands in the surveys and studies conducted in the country express similar arguments. Similarly, the emphasis on the global responsibilities and duties together with compensating damages are often utilised.

CONCLUSIONS

Throughout the thesis I laid down the complexities of studying climate change's relation with migration. It consists of knowledge from various disciplines and methodologies. The lack of an agreed definition and international recognition continue to be important core issues. Moreover, simplistic claims such as "climate change causes migration" can be very problematic in certain contexts. Identifying the causes, effects, and the consequences of such migration plays an important role to conceptualise the phenomenon of people migrating due to the impacts of climate change.

However, there are some parts of the world, climate change's impacts are so enormous, *migration is not a choice but a matter of survival* and climate change's influence over migration decision is very clear. What is remaining, on the other hand, is to decide how to approach to this type of migration.

What we see as the main problem differs partly due to how we perceive the world. Discourses shape the public opinion and determine available policy alternatives. With this ability of the discourses, we come to a revelation that the problem was, in fact, that particular thing the discourses point out, and the only solution is the other thing the discourses offer. Considering this, it is not surprising Kiribati follows the dominant discourses, but Kiribati's ability to shape, transform, and direct the discourses despite the country's little to no resources is quite remarkable.

With these in mind, it is up to the states and international community to decide how to manage this type of migration. Given the problems in the climate change talks in the international arena and the increasingly negative attitude towards migration, however, there is not much hope for the most affected populations to get the help they need. In this regard, shaping the discourses for the best interest of the Islanders, playing its cards cleverly, and combining different methods, tools, and arenas seem to be the best possible option for Kiribati.

ANNEX I: LITERATURE USED FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE DISCOURSES

(Biermann & Boas 2008)

(Biermann & Boas 2010)

(Byravan & Rajan 2010)

(Caney & de Shalit 2011)

(de Sherbinin et al. 2011)

(Docherty & Giannini 2009)

(Gogarty 2011)

(Heyward & Ödalen 2016)

(Hodgkinson et al. 2010)

(Kolers 2012)

(McAdam 2011b)

(McAnaney 2012)

(Nine 2010)

(Prieur et al. 2008)

(Risse 2009)

(Williams 2008)

(Wyman 2013)

(Yamamoto & Esteban 2017)

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