

2. The discourse of climate migration

Unravelling the politics of ASEAN's environmental policies

Abstract: Climate change has inevitably created impacts globally ranging from regulatory changes to affecting social communities. Among these impacts, climate migration becomes the unprecedented and significant one. Millions of migrants are environmentally displaced and the Southeast Asia region is noted as one critical hotspot of the movement. This issue presents challenges for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as there is a need to enlighten and signify the urgency of the problem, knowing that climate-induced migration is still under-discussed within the regional body's policy-making. Thus, this article aims to analyse why climate migration is under-discussed in ASEAN's environmental policies and how the ASEAN regional framework lacks preparation to overcome challenges coming from climate change primarily on the issue of climate migration. In doing so, qualitative research method and discourse analysis will be used with data collection obtained from publications, academic journals, articles, and official reports. This article found that environmental communication and climate politics are the main elements that construct the discourse of climate migration within the policy-making of ASEAN. Moreover, a reflection on the discourse of climate migration in other regions such as the Pacific will be delivered.

Keywords: ASEAN, climate migration, climate geopolitics, climate refugees, discourse of environment, environmental communication, Indonesia, Kiribati, Pacific, policy-making

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Introduction

CLIMATE change has disrupted many aspects of human lives, including migration. Changing and extreme climatic conditions such as sea-level rise, floods, and droughts are among the causes of environmentally induced migration. This type of human migration caused displacement of 18.8 million people in the world in 2017 (IDMC, 2018, cited in Ober 2019, p. 1). If there is no significant improvement in global climate mitigation, it is predicted

that there will be around 143 million of internal climate migrants worldwide by 2050 (World Bank, 2018, p. xxi). Southeast Asia is noted as a ‘hotspot’ of climate change due to the increasing climate change impacts on the region’s high population and archipelagic geography. The Global Climate Risk Index stated that the Philippines, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam are included in the category of the world’s 10 countries most affected by climate change (Overland et al., 2017, p. 1). A 70 cm sea-level rise by 2100 for Southeast Asian countries such as Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam—thus highlighting the potential of future settlement crisis especially for coastal and highly populated regions including Jakarta, Manila, Bangkok, and Yangon (ASEAN, 2015, cited in Overland et al., 2017, p. 2).

The so-called ‘climate refugee’ term in the media worldwide has been politically contested and debated. This, according to Myer (2015, p. 344) is due to ‘conceptual difficulties’ about climate migration. These difficulties include ‘the diversity of scenarios of climate migration, the fact that climate change exacerbates pre-existing migration scenarios but does not create new forms of migrations, and the indistinctiveness of individual climate migrant’. Until now, there is still no international consensus on the definition of climate refugee—even the United Nations does not define climate refugee as a legal type of refugee. Myers (Myers, 1995, cited in Hartmann, 2010, p. 235) tried to legitimise and popularise the term by stating that ‘environmental refugees are persons who can no longer gain a secure livelihood in their traditional homelands because of environmental factors of unusual scope, notably drought, desertification, deforestation, soil erosion, and water shortages, also natural disaster such as cyclones, storm surges and floods’. In responding to such a politically contested term, this article recognises the sense of urgency by media, government officials, and academicians on the portrayal of environmentally displaced people as climate refugees which often describes the situation of cross-border displaced people. Nevertheless, this article will be limiting the scope of analysis into two types of climate migration, 1) internal/within the border, and 2) external/cross-border.

This article argues for the analysis of climate migration in the context of ASEAN’s policy-making and on the promotion of the importance of a stronger regional framework in ASEAN. This article found that the issue of climate-induced migration is still under-discussed within the agenda of ASEAN policy making. In answering the research question ‘why is the issue of climate migration in Southeast Asia still under-discussed primarily in the regional body of ASEAN?’, discussion about ASEAN’s environmental communication and climate politics is essential as they are the key elements in the making of the discourse of climate migration. The role of policy makers and journalists is also crucial in the dynamics of climate politics and environmental communication. Moreover, just like other normative studies, this article argues that ASEAN needs to take further action in order to prevent future conflicts or crises.

Literature review

By mapping existing literature sources, it is found that political environmental writing offers several major approaches to analyse the issue of climate migration, such as but not limited to human rights approach, security approach, and ultimately post-structuralist approach (discourse analysis) that this article uses.

Human rights approach

Prioritising human rights is believed to be how this issue should be approached. Through embracing resistance and political debate in the term climate refugee, O'Neill emphasises how advocates have been enforcing environmental protection for basic international human rights (O'Neill, 2009). This underlines the linkage between environmental discourses and human rights issues at the global level. Similarly, Jaswal and Jolly (2013) argue that the issue of climate refugee is not only rooted in environmental matters but stems from the issue of human rights where poor citizens in developing countries could become disproportionately affected by current international law. The lack of clear legal instruments for climate refugee mitigation prolongs the issue. McAdam & Limon applied the human rights approach for the analysis of climate migration issues where they argued effective and just solutions should derive from the protection of migrants' rights for the mitigation and adaptation policies (McAdam & Limon, 2015).

Security approach

To some extent, the way climate migrant is being portrayed by the 'traditional security approach' is similar to how refugees in general are seen as a threat to the stability of a nation's security. Political contestation and securitisation too often accompany this approach to underline cautions of the existence of climate migrants. Hartmann's article underlines this idea of how climate policy could be distorted by such portrayal of security threats that climate refugees could bring (Hartmann, 2010). By analysing it through the US national policy, she found it harmful if climate refugees keep being portrayed in a 'neo-Malthusian' way where they become a security threat that needs to be solved through military operations (Hartmann, 2010).

However, the branch of 'human security' takes into account the importance of human lives and intersects with the human rights approach. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1994 introduced the human security concept where it does not deal with weapons but with human life and dignity (UNDP, 1994). An article from Ruppel & van Wyk (2013) underlines this approach from an African perspective to see how climate change-induced migration would impose conflicts, pressure on human security, and especially challenges for vulnerable societies. Thus, this phenomenon requires immediate actions to protect human lives for the sake of human security.

Post-structuralist approach (discourse analysis)

Post-structuralist approach within the environmental study is linked to ‘governmentality’ and ‘environmentality’. This originated from Foucault’s work on governmentality in cementing the technology and power/knowledge for state and social control coming from governing. The emergence of subjects then becomes internalised, created into regulations under the system, and circulated as a discourse that constitutes knowledge. Agrawal, following Foucault’s view, deepened the post-structuralist approach by highlighting environmentality through understanding how environmental politics could emerge with its characteristics that are affected by ‘transformations in knowledges, politics, institutions, and subjectivities’ (Agrawal, 2005, p. 202).

While human rights and human security approaches are needed to further progress climate migration as a larger discussion, discourse analysis offers deeper looks on how the issue has or has not been constituted in the global, regional, or local governance to take part in the needed actions. The gap that this article aims to fill is in the analysis of ASEAN’s politics in regard to climate migration through the assessment of its Foucauldian governmentality and environmentality in order to achieve the goal where Southeast Asia can protect its human security from the worsening climate. By understanding its politics, institution, and identity, the production of climate-induced migration as an environmental subject is needed to be included in the ASEAN’s institutional framework.

Methods

Drawing on secondary data from academic works, journals, articles, and official reports, this article uses a qualitative research design in processing the collected data and discourse analysis in analysing the data. The use of qualitative research is in line with this article’s aim of bringing up the normative value of climate mitigation on human migration in Southeast Asia. With strong emphasis on the question ‘why?’, the qualitative approach is expected to provide causal analysis in answering this article’s research question which focuses on the factors behind the under-discussed climate migration topic within ASEAN policymaking. Discourse analysis is used in analysing the role of verbal language (political statements, meetings, debates, campaigns) and non-verbal language (policy documents, written news, academic writings) in the construction of the discourse of climate migration in ASEAN. These forms of language exist within ASEAN’s environmental communication and climate politics.

By analysing the climate politics and environmental communication of ASEAN, several key findings related to the connection between climate migration and environmental policies are generated. First, although climate activism by the media is increasingly growing in ASEAN countries, climate politics still provide challenges to some extent. Second, at the regional level, institutional weaknesses

such as the bureaucracy of ASEAN hinders the process of creating climate migration as a discourse subject. Third, existing ASEAN's framework, working groups, and cooperation too often focus only on urgent matters such as haze or forest fire without giving much room to introduce, arrange, and establish in-depth discussion for possible environmental threats such as climate-induced migration. Fourth, there is comparatively weak commitment to refugee protection and little contribution to climate mitigation by ASEAN members.

This article also explains the implications of climate migration in ASEAN by dividing the discussion into internal and external climate migration. The results show that the performance by ASEAN member state governments and media is unsatisfying. Research findings also imply that a sense of urgency within the discourse of climate migration among ASEAN members is still lacking, unlike in other regions such as the Pacific where climate migration is one of the most discussed topics within regional policy-making.

Climate journalism in Southeast Asia

In Southeast Asia, environmental journalism has been showing a growing contribution to the subject of climate migration. In *ASEAN Today*, Martinus (2020) offered an analysis that climate change in Asia could trigger a higher migration influx. In the Southeast Asia region, Chen Chen Lee in an op-ed at the *Bangkok Post* demanded that ASEAN make decisive responses in order to tackle the issue of the Mekong River that previously had not been dealt with holistically (Chen, 2020). In the IMF's magazine *Finance & Development*, Prakash highlighted that a dual challenge is faced by Southeast Asia—in that it needs to arrange climate change adaptation and its development strategies related to global warming. He acknowledged Southeast Asia's heavy lean on oil and coal, then added with its deforestation, that made ASEAN member states 'undermining national pledges to curb emissions and embrace cleaner energy sources' (Prakash, 2018). For Asia-Pacific, Randall wrote in *The Diplomat* about Asia-Pacific's climate migration and how Pacific Island nations had limited choices about relocations (Randall, 2017). *The Diplomat's* article, written by Fetzek and McGinn (2020), also suggested that the Asia-Pacific area needed to prepare for the upcoming challenges from climate security by coming up with precautionary and preventive initiatives to keep its region's stability.

Although climate activism by the media is increasingly growing in ASEAN countries, climate politics still presents some challenges. Reporters Without Borders (RSF) published a 'red alert' as reporters who have covered environmental issues worldwide met staggering hurdles with 10 being murdered in the past five years and 'more than 50 press freedom violations linked to environment journalism have been registered' (RSF, 2020). A high percentage (66 percent) of the cases come from the Asia and America regions, with Southeast Asia having the

cases of Muhammad Yusuf being killed in Indonesia, Pratch Rujivanarom being killed in Thailand, and a murder attempt on Brandon Lee in the Philippines (RSF, 2020). Also acknowledged by Carthew and Linnarz (2012, p. 10), their report explicitly stated that ‘increased risks of intimidation, violence and, even in some cases, deaths are increasingly encountered by Asian environmental journalists.

Journalism reportage contributes to the discourse about the climate migration issue. As Dijk (1985) wrote about media and discourse, ‘discourse is no longer just an “intervening variable” between media institutions or journalists on the one hand, and an audience on the other hand, but also studied in its own right, and as a central and manifest cultural and social product in and through which meanings and ideologies are expressed or (re-)produced’. This reproduction of knowledge is displayed through various media reports and coverage on media channels and academic writing, boosting the urgency of this issue. Tze Ni Yeoh in *ASEAN Today* highlighted that in a diverse region like ASEAN, it was necessary for global and regional coordination for sharing of knowledge and resources. (Tze, 2020). In response to COVID-19, an article by Farajalla (2020) in *The ASEAN Post* underlined the need for actions in facing climate change as it was argued that this was more threatening than the pandemic itself.

Robie and Chand have acknowledged that there is a need for a ‘greening of media initiatives’ and capacity improvements in order for news media and journalists to be able to engage deeper into environmental communication (Robie & Chand, 2017, p. 199). As RSF mentioned in the Copenhagen Summit 2009 (COP15), the media holds a ‘crucial role in helping decision-makers to adopt policies and rules that will lead to the desired changes’ when it comes to climate change (RSF, 2010). Looking at this case through environmentality, journalism and academic writing have contributed to the spread of knowledge for the general public.

The institutional dimension of ASEAN

Discourse analysis, as Howarth defines it, derives from ‘linguistic and non-linguistic material’ whether it is written or spoken, intended to add the objects, words, or practice experience for the subjects involved (Howarth, 2000). Understanding institutional dimensions of politics and changes also corresponds with post-structuralist discourse theory (Panizza & Miorelli, 2012) and in the case of ASEAN it should be noted that the tendency of climate migration being under-discussed here stems from bureaucracy politics and identity in its governmentality and environmentality. As noted by Agrawal, environmental political studies has ‘conceptual building blocks of power/knowledge, institutions and subjectivity’ that he defined as ‘environmentality’ (2005, p. 216). Applying Agrawal’s environmentality concepts on the issue of climate migration in Southeast Asia, ASEAN has *power/knowledge* as a regional *institution*

that governs environmental regulations and frameworks, and it comprises *subjectivity* that comes from the representatives of member states to ASEAN politics. This incorporates the production of limited environmental identities that ASEAN upholds. The slow process of creating climate migration as a discourse in this regional body is analysed through the ASEAN's formal policies, ideas, and actions.

In the climate change and migration issues, ASEAN has been criticised due to two factors: its members' limited contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and its members' reluctance in committing to the international law on refugee protection (only Cambodia and Philippines, which ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention). Looking at the low performance on climate mitigation and weak commitment to refugee protection by most of ASEAN members, it is visible that the urgency level of the climate migration issue within the region is strengthening and the institutional role of the regional body on such issues is getting more challenged. Bringing this issue in advance is needed before ASEAN member states experience noticeable loss of its sovereign land, resources, and primarily its citizens' lives due to climate change that would increase the number of climate migrations. Geiger argues that the future will be uncertain and filled with difficulties if states and institutions only aim to 'simply manage' the challenges without addressing the governance for global environment-induced migration. At the regional level, Cristani et al. argue that regional institutions play a big role in facing this challenge, however ASEAN as a regional institution has shown its hesitance to develop clearer rules for the climate refugee issue (Cristani et al., 2020). ASEAN's existing governmentalisation of its environment is found to be too limited to the production of knowledge based on major urge and acceptance by its representatives on deciding which issue remains a priority. The perplexity of arranging environmental priorities within this institution is too often affected by the severity of repeated environment issue cases. On the issue of haze or forest fire, the severity of the problem becomes pushed annually to be tackled by creating coherent frameworks, such as the ASEAN Haze Agreement on Transboundary Air Pollution. However, the reluctance to underline some other environmental issues is shown in its frameworks and policy making.

A survey by Elder and Miyazawa (2015) exhibits three positive factors and five challenges over ASEAN's decision-making process for regional environmental cooperation. To some extent, ASEAN has shown its progress in devoting its effort towards more progressive environmental identity such as through ASEAN Haze Agreement on Transboundary Air Pollution, ASEAN Programme on Sustainable Management of Peatland Ecosystems (2014-2020), and the ASEAN Declaration on Heritage Parks. However, its achievement is limited to a few topics, and the topic of climate migration still has not received its spotlight compared to the others. This links back to Elder and Miyazawa's findings that ASEAN still faces

challenges such as bureaucratic and fragmented organizational structure that result in slow decision-making process and lack of substance in its Working Groups (Elder & Miyazawa, 2015). As ASEAN has the power to decide which issues matter and which do not, it could act as an institution that enables the emergence of certain environmental issues as discourses where state and social control are reflected in some of the frameworks of ASEAN's climate efforts. Meanwhile, environmental cooperation in the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint is written in point D10 for Climate Change and the ASEAN Working Group on Climate Change (AWGCC) has been established under the ASEAN Environment Ministers Meeting's formulation. However, the issue of climate migration has not been considered yet. ASEAN's technology to regulate and form the environment identity of the region needs to consider this issue to break a pattern of 'business as usual' within ASEAN policies in handling regional crises.

Internal and external migration in Southeast Asia

Prolonged floods in Muara Baru settlement in the coastal area of North Jakarta researched by Triarko Nurlambang (2012, p. 74-83) is the major reference for this article's section on internal migration. The research found that despite the high vulnerability of Jakarta to climate migration, there is still weak capacity of the local government and weak knowledge by the local people on climate mitigation.

Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia, is predicted to have many displacement areas, especially in the northern part of Jakarta by 2035 due to climate change (Susandi, 2009, cited in Nurlambang, 2012, p. 79). As a coastal and highly populated region, Jakarta is geographically vulnerable to climate change as sea-level rise has been related to prolonged flooding—the most frequent disaster in Jakarta. Climate conditions in the city are also worsened by high intensity of gas emissions coming from transportation and manufacturing activities. The impacts by floods on the region have been quite severe due to government weaknesses such as undelivered early warnings to most of the local people and comparatively little assistance (in comparison with NGOs) to the impacted population (Nurlambang, 2012, p. 79).

Another area in Southeast Asia that has a potential to be the origin of both within and cross border climate migration is Mekong Delta. It has been noted as an area that is vulnerable to changing climate conditions such as rising sea level by scientists and international organisations (Tuan & Chinvano, 2011, p. 214). Research by Padilla (2011) provides several environmental characteristics of climate change issue in the Mekong Delta. Since 1981 until 2011, Mekong Delta has experienced a 30 percent annual increase in rainfall, shifting rainfall patterns, an average temperature increase of 0.5 C in Can Tho as the largest city in the Mekong Delta and an average sea level rise of 3 mm per year in the waters

around the mouth of the delta, and it is also predicted that there will be a rise in the average level of Vietnam's seas 'by 28-33 cm by 2050 and by 65-100 cm by 2100 as compared to the 1980-1999 period' (Padilla, 2011). Moreover, while most of the Mekong Delta area already has a high risk of flood, the melting of Tibetan Plateau glaciers near the Mekong River's headwaters caused by climate change could increase the threat of flooding.

The economic aspects and demographic setting of the Mekong Delta have been considered as the key factors that can lead to not only internal but also cross-border migration. According to Padilla's research, Mekong Delta is well-known for its agricultural output that provides 46 percent of national food production and 80 percent of total rice exports—which makes Vietnam as the world's second largest rice exporter. Therefore, the Mekong Delta has a significant economic value for not only the livelihoods of the Vietnamese population but also other countries. Furthermore, NIC Conference Report (cited in Padilla, 2011) noted that 'the decimation of the Mekong Delta will push millions of Vietnamese north into Ho Chi Minh City and beyond into the Central Highlands, as well as over the border into Cambodia'. The highly populous and geographical location of the Mekong Delta can result in the flow of Mekong Delta refugees and potential ethnic conflict based on socio-economic factors.

Responses to climate migration

According to Nurlambang (2012, p. 79), a survey on the population of Muara Baru during the flood hazards in 2007 showed that '64 percent of respondents never participated in any training seminars on climate change or natural hazards' and 'almost all respondents said that they had no traditional knowledge of disaster management'. Frequent floods in Muara Baru might have also been caused by other factors such as changing climate conditions and environmental degradation caused by human activities. However, it is clear that a more proactive role by the local, national, and regional government could have mitigated and reduced the impacts resulting from the urban floods in Muara Baru and other parts of Jakarta. Looking at the role of government and the understanding by the local people on climate change, climate mitigation measurement in Jakarta is still problematic. The issue of climate change and migration is still uncommon among the local policymakers and academics (Nurlambang, 2012, p. 76). Governmental instruments on environmental and spatial management do exist but such measurement has not been understood comprehensively among the local policymakers and not implemented consistently (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2009, cited in Nurlambang, 2012, p. 81).

Research by Wahyuni (2017) analysed the role of Indonesia's journalism education in the media coverage on climate change issues. In Indonesia, the coverage of climate topics in the mainstream media is still relatively lower than

other political topics such as corruption and election. While this is considered as the internal factor within the country's media journalism on climate change, the external factor mostly comes from the way climate politics mediate the media coverage. Cronin and Santoso (2010) explain how climate politics influence the media coverage on the 'reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+) issue in Indonesia. The research shows that although REDD+ politics is increasingly covered in the media, the clash of interests by powerful political actors are still inevitably creating impacts on the media coverage, making the discourse of REDD+ politically driven.

In Vietnam, according to Pham and Nash (2017), several adaptive measurements to climate change exist such as 'the National Strategy on the Prevention and Disaster Reduction, the National Target Programme to Respond to Climate Change, the Decision 380/QD-TTG on the pilot payments for forest environmental services, the National Strategy on Climate Change and the National Programme on REDD+'. Nevertheless, more detailed and comprehensive plans seem to be absent on many sectors that are impacted by climate change. They further argue that although the government, NGOs, and the media share the same stance that climate change is one of the most serious problems to the country, there are still substantial and political problems in the media coverage on climate issues. The mainstream media is limited by its capacity in understanding and delivering substantial and sufficient knowledge about the implications of climate change. Government as one of the main significant sources for information in the media also provides political challenges to media freedom in Vietnam.

In the discourse of climate migration in ASEAN's policy-making, this research paper found that ASEAN's legal and policy framework has maintained the weak status of climate migration issue within the problem definition process and priority list of policy making among member states. Research findings by Petz and Rum (2020) on the current progress of climate-induced migration management by ASEAN show that there are two main problems: absence of comprehensive law on climate-induced internal migration by member states and absence of regional measurement on climate-induced cross-border migration among member states. ASEAN has indeed law and policy instruments on climate mitigation but none of their documents directly address environmental-induced migration. Moreover, the research also provides a comparison between ASEAN and other regional bodies such as African Union (AU) specifically on the importance of a regional convention as a starting point in addressing the issue of climate change migration. The progress made by AU has been highlighted by its 2009 Kampala Convention which aims to protect and provide assistance to internally displaced people with certain criteria referring to the types of migration caused by natural disasters. On the other hand, lack of political will and initiation among ASEAN members have resulted in the absence of a regional convention—a crucial

platform and starting point in constructing and strengthening the urgency level of climate change migration. Going back to the discourse of climate migration within the scope of ASEAN policy making, these problems have exacerbated the under-discussed climate migration topic.

Climate migration in the Pacific: The case of Kiribati

In low-lying island states such as Kiribati, migration is adopted as a measurement or strategy in responding to climate change (Gunawansa, 2015, p. 321). Kiribati and other countries in the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) are considered as one of the most vulnerable areas to climate change and predicted to be ‘the origin of the first climate change refugees’ due to several ‘implications: (1) coastal effects of sea-level rise (including erosion inundation); (2) reduced quantity or quality of water resources; (reef degradation; (4) reduced agricultural productivity; and (5) impacts on human health (eg, changing disease vectors, heat-related diseases, water-borne diseases’ (Campbell, 2014, p. 2-3).

In the developing of discourse of climate migration in Kiribati and other PICTs, not only the media and international organisations, but the regional governments and scientific groups, also play a key role. They share a consensus that climate change is the number one problem that the region needs to address (Titifanue et al., 2017, p. 136). The government of Kiribati has been actively implementing adaptive measurements to handle climate change and pushing for stronger mitigation efforts to the international community.

In many UN general assemblies and conferences, there is a common agenda shared by Kiribati and other PICTs: addressing the impacts of climate change on the people of PICTs. The continuous meetings about climate change at the international level have indeed influenced climate diplomacy by states, including PICTs who are aware that international coordination is important (Carter, 2016, cited in Titifanue et al., 2017, p. 140; 142). Although PICTs failed to defend its climate interests during the Copenhagen climate change conference in 2009 known as the COP15 (Bedford & Bedford, 2010, p. 89), good news came from Fiji which publicly announced that it would arrange the admissions of climate migrants originating from Kiribati and Tuvalu. A big leap was made by PICTs during the COP21 in 2015 where PICTs strongly contributed to the negotiation process that has led to the Paris Agreement (Robie, 2017, p. 42).

One controversial event that highlights the discourse-making of climate migration in Kiribati is the ‘migration with dignity’ policy advocated by former President Anote Tong. It stresses the idea that the neighbouring countries such as Australia, one of the biggest polluters in the world (Tiffen 2010, cited in Robie, 2014, p. 69) and New Zealand should see climate migration as a legitimate action by the population of Kiribati, who have little choice other than to ultimately

migrate and prepare working skills in order to adapt to new places (Walsh, 2017). Another event that has strengthened the legitimization of climate migration is the case of Ioane Teitiota, who sought a ruling by the UN Human Rights Committee about his family's claimed status of 'climate refugee' that was not accepted by the New Zealand courts (UN Human Rights, 2020). Although he and his family were deported to Kiribati, his case was the first of an individual who had requested human rights protection on climate change-induced migration to the UN body. Moreover, despite the progressive climate advocacy by former President Anote Tong that has been altered by his successor, Taneti Maamau, Kiribati still actively pushes for a climate change agenda at the international level, including at the 25th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change where the president challenged and urged developed countries to have a more proactive role in mitigating the changing climate conditions (Woonton, 2019).

While the PICTs' leaders are in line with the stance of the media on climate change advocacy, the local population also has a prominent role. Robie (2014) elaborated on how Pacific communities could promote climate change advocacy by using information communication technology (ICT) and enforcing 'bottom-up regionalism'. Social media as one form of ICT has been used by organisations and individuals to spread awareness on climate change and has been seen as a potential key factor to strengthen 'citizen journalism' and 'climate activism'. Furthermore, one phenomenon that shows the bottom-up regionalism or grass-root movement in the Pacific is the 'Warrior Day of Action' climate campaign by the Fiji-based chapter of 350.org with the theme: 'We are not drowning. We are fighting'. This message aims to empower Pacific peoples, delivering the idea that the people of PICTs and the international community should focus more on mitigating climate change rather than putting pessimistic, hopeless views about the future for the Pacific.

Concluding considerations for ASEAN climate migration policies

Agrawal observed environmentality through the creation of shifts in the practice and consciousness on the emergence of a new political and environmental subject. Discourse, in the Foucauldian view, competes for social influence in the construction of a subject and the meaning and interpretation of it (Sharp & Richardson, 2001). So far this competing of influence has been displayed in ASEAN by what has and has not been initiated in the policies. According to Burr (1995, cited in Sharp & Richardson, 2001) there are four characteristics in the approach of discourse analysis: 'critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge; historical and cultural specificity; and knowledge is sustained by social processes; knowledge and action go together'. Reflecting from the characteristics, the knowledge that has been circulated by journalists and academicians will yield no result if the actions for this issue are not taken by the government's technology in

advancing ASEAN's preparation for climate change and climate-induced migration phenomenon.

By acknowledging the knowledge/power relations of ASEAN as a regional government body, the formulation of thorough framework to prepare itself and look after this issue will lead to potential prospects and benefits such as but not limited to improvement of interstate relations in ASEAN on economic, political, and social aspects and the creation of climate migration agenda by implementing regional framework and leadership that promote 'humanitarian assistance, the rights of the migrants, climate change cooperation, and international security' (Mayer, 2015, p. 348). However, it still remains a challenge for ASEAN to further overcome its politicisation of which issues remain important. ASEAN member states are still dependent on fossil fuel (Overland et al., 2017, p. 11; Mayer, 2015, p. 356) thus complicating their efforts on creating more environmental discourses.

The use of language in communicative interaction contributes to the social construction of an object to become a discourse. The way the media outlets and public discussions articulate the issue of climate migration creates a sense of new knowledge and building bricks for the issue itself. By using the discourse analysis, this article could also contribute to the discourse itself by providing texts and further policy discussions to be considered by ASEAN's power and technology to bring further environmental issues as a subject in policy discourse especially in regard to climate-induced migrations in Southeast Asia.

Kraemer (2017) noted that climate migrants were not the only people directly affected by climate disasters, because the movement could be driven by conflict, instability, destabilisation, and economic factors that are aggravated by climate change triggers. Understanding this, ASEAN should consider the various triggers of climate migration and creating the needed mechanism. Reflecting from the discourse of climate migration in the vulnerable Kiribati and other regional bodies such as AU, the current policy frameworks of ASEAN seem to undermine the urgency of climate migration. There are different geographical aspects between the region of Southeast Asia and other regions but initiations such as convention among ASEAN members could be a starting point for the making of the discourse, then of communication and coordination in managing the impacts and preventing the risks from climate migration. In the Pacific, there is a strong connection between government leaders and media on the same acknowledgment of climate migration. While in ASEAN, the circulation of texts have not yet reached into governmental texts, thus underlining the gap between media and government. A stronger sense of regionalism could be one method in promoting political will among ASEAN policymakers and initiating further regional policies.

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