

Governing Asia-Pacific Climate Refugees: Problems and Reflections

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Abstract

Given the “geographic environment” and “population distribution,” Asia Pacific region not only faces both higher risks of climate change and refugees due to the climatic catastrophe. 2012 ADB report indicated that natural disasters triggered by the climate change from 2010 to 2011 in Asia Pacific region had caused over 42 million people homeless, and it could get worse by times if the international society doesn't make any efforts. Ironically, although the main countries like China, Japan, India, New Zealand and Australia also face the potential threats of Asia-Pacific climate refugees, their economic development are fast enough to support them to adjust to climatic catastrophe. Therefore, they pay little attention to these governance problems. In this light, this article will first introduce the ideas of Critical Security Studies and illustrate the ways it is applied to research analysis. Secondly, this article will review the development stages of the Asia-Pacific climate refugee's problems, explaining the background of its formation, its influence and developing tendency. Finally, the author will give a reflection through the approach of Critical Security Studies, and formulate some contentions about relieving the threats of the Asia-Pacific climate refugees.

Keywords: climate change, climate refugee, Security Governance, Critical Security Studies, Asia-Pacific regional security

I. Introduction

The Fourth Assessment Report of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC AR4) in 2007 indicated that, with the acceleration of climate change caused by global warming, the frequency and scale of extreme climate events was on the increase, and thus caused damage and impact beyond estimation around the world (IPCC, 2007: 30-33).

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World Economic Forum also suggested in its Global Risks 2011 that in terms of the chance of climate change happening and its degree of influence, climate change has become the greatest threat for global development (World Economic Forum, 2011: 44). Among them, the migration problem due to abrupt climate change has gradually drawn attention. The term climate refugees even became the highlight of discussion, appearing on news reports and policy reports continuously.⁴

On account of two characteristics, "geographic environment" and "population distribution," Asia Pacific region not only faces the high level of fragility of climate change conflict but also high possibility of the appearance of climate refugees due to the climatic catastrophe. In recent years, with the increase of frequency and strength of extreme climate events such as typhoons, rainstorms, and droughts, much importance was attached to climate change – induced migration challenges day by day. "Climate Refugees Problem" thus becomes the non-traditional security threat that Pacific-Asia countries should face. Ironically, although the main countries like China, Japan, India, New Zealand and Australia also face the potential threats of Asia-Pacific climate refugees, their economic development are fast enough to support their necessary resources for adjusting to climatic catastrophe. Therefore, they pay little attention to the governance problem of the climate refugees.

Then, what is the background of the formation of the climate refugees? What kind of security threat does it pose to Asia-Pacific countries? And what kind of critical thinking do the initiatives about regional developments, effects and dilemma offer? In this light, this article will give a reflection on current governance of Asia Pacific region climate refugees through the approach of critical security, in hope that through the following discussions, why the related initiatives are hard to be realized are clarified. First, this paper will introduce the concepts of international critical security studies and illustrate the ways they are applied to research analysis. Secondly, this paper will review the Asia-Pacific climate refugees' problems, aiming at illustrating the background of its formation, its influence and developing tendency.

⁴ "Climate refugee" is derived from the conception of environmental migration/ refugee, and some scholars also regard it as one type of environmental refugees. Recently, the frequency, scopes and the intensity of the extreme climate phenomenon caused by the acceleration of global warming have more impacts on human society than the ones by the catastrophic events such as earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcano eruption. As a result, the climate refugee has gradually been independent from the discussion of traditional environmental refugee, and has become an urgent and important issue in our international world. Meanwhile, it is also helpful for researcher to exclude other natural or man-made environmental factors mentioned above, and focus on the impacts caused by climate change on human beings to add the word "climate" before the concept of "refugee" (Renaud, 2007: 20-21).

Lastly, the author will give a reflection on current governance of Asia Pacific region climate refugees through the approach of critical security, and conceive the possible direction of regional cooperation on climate security and its future prospect.

II. The application of critical theory in the security study field

"The critical theory" applied to the international security study could be traced back to the Frankfurt School founded by Max Horkheimer,⁵ and the critics of related international theory by Robert Cox's (Jones, 1999: iv, 1-6).⁶ Observed from the development in recent years, critical security studies could be roughly divided into two factions, the generalized one and the constricted one. They differ both in content and focus of critical security (Smith, 2005: 40-42).⁷ Among them, the narrow critical security study, which Booth and others promoted, inherits from Frankfurt School critical philosophy. It has more practical meanings for the agenda of deconstructing the traditional security concept to reconstruct security study, because it conforms to the main theme of this article, which reflects the problem of the climate refugee in Asia-Pacific (Booth, 2005d: 260, 269). Herewith the central ideas are described as follows:

⁵ Frankfurt School is an academic community made up of social science scholars from the social study center of Germany Frankfurt University. It is generally regarded as a branch of New Marxism. Horkheimer's Traditional and Critical Theory is the representative work of this school. Horkheimer's classification of Traditional and Critical Theory in social science not only influences the discourse of critical theorists like Cox, but also lays the foundation for the thoughts of critical security studies of Booth and other scholars.

⁶ Cox roughly divides international relationship theory into "problem-solving theory" and "critical theory". The former, aiming at using the methodology of empirical positivism, collects data selectively and summarizes the value-neutral "objective laws" which is based on national interest, characteristics and interaction pattern, etc., in order to meet the theory of "natural science paradigm", such as "neorealism" and "neoliberal institutionalism". The latter is expected to reflect on existing theory and its process of development, trying to offer other perspectives that is different from current analytical approach. Cox further pointed out that a theory is built for certain people or certain purpose. Therefore, "problem-solving theory" regards the real world as a kind of a product which is isolated from human creation and claims for a same thought (Instrumental rationality) to understand the International relations theory. It has the conservative tendency to protect the existing laws and benefits.

⁷ The broad criticism security, mainly based on the studies of Keith Krause and Michael Williams, aims at accommodating the multiple viewpoints of non-mainstream security study such as post-modernism, post-structuralism, Copenhagen School, constructivism and feminism in order to criticize the mistakes of contemporary security discourse. On the other hand, the narrow criticism security refers to the related studies mainly inherited from the Frankfurt School, which focuses on reconsidering the security concept, and concerns about how to achieve the goal of liberating human being. Steve Smith thinks that although the broad critical security study devotes to deconstructing the original frame of security concept, the result of widely intake of the non-mainstream theories is that it lacks consistent definition of security concept and hence makes it not as systematic and practical as the narrow critical security study.

I) Security deepening

Critical security study theorists emphasize that although security research has showed diverse developments in the post-cold war, there's no apparent difference to the substantive content due to the similar hypotheses on ontology and epistemology of different schools. In this light, the security concept that critical security study first reflects on is trying to jump out of the frame of traditional politics, philosophy and methodology, especially the ontology of state centrism and the epistemology of empirical positivism.

(I) Deconstruct the ontology of statism

The critical security study theorists point out that traditional security study would regard the state as the singular and the most important security unit of world politics, including the feature of ontology of "statism". However, state centrism is neither an essential condition of the better life nor the solution to the security problem. What's worse, it might become part of insecurity (Jones, 1995: 299-319; Jones, 1999: 96-99). From the experience of historical development, traditional security study places much emphasis on the role of state and the system level while it seriously ignores the impact of domestic factors and non-state actors.

As a result, when facing the significant change of international environment such as the end of cold war, it exposes the defect of its explanation and analysis on world politics. In addition, on the part of the normative value, traditional security research will view a state as a political community, and it presumes that individuals and a state have a homogenous interest. Individual security could be guaranteed as long as a state continuously strengthens military capabilities to withstand the security threat from other countries. However, when the problems of improper foreign policy decision-making, misperception of the international situation, and even ignorance of the rights of particularly disadvantaged groups appear in a state, the individual security might be threatened by the state (Linklater, 2005: 116-17).⁸ Therefore, the critical security study theorists assert that a state is just one of the means to pursue security. "Individual" is the key role that security problems refer to. What's more, the real security cannot be obtained at the cost of sacrificing individuals, groups or other actors (Booth, 1991: 319; Booth and Vale, 1995: 285-304).⁹

⁸ Link Hamlet quoted from Barry Buzan referring the relationship between a person and a nation as "unbreakable paradox".

⁹ Booth takes the racial segregation in South Africa for example. He thinks, to the ruling white minority at that time, the neighboring countries are the main threat to their national security. However, to most blacks who have been excluded from the powers for a long time, the harm caused by domestic unequal system is much stronger and urgent than the threat from the neighboring countries.

In other words, the real world is more complicated than the one which traditional security illustrates. Only by transcending the obstacles- statism which is the real obstacles to understanding, can we truly construct a comprehensive security study (Jones, 1999: 116-17).

(II) Jump out of the epistemology of empirical positivism

Traditional security studies adopted the epistemology of empirical positivism and emphasize that the clear distinction between fact and value, subject and object help to find out the objective knowledge that is not under the influence of the views and bias of an analyst. Stephen M. Walt is the one who advocated to taking scientific methods into security studies and claimed that science could make social theory more rigorous and impartial in its terms and measures (1991: 222). Especially when facing the challenges from non-mainstream theories in late 1980s, traditional security studies started developing more complicated theories to sustain their frames and made its epistemology more "scientific" (Laudan, 1996).¹⁰ This way, however, was suspected by the post-positivists of critical security studies.

They thought that the reality of international society, which were products of specific period_and social backgrounds, could not help to become totally objective and value-free, and not to mention exemplification simply by empirical methodology. The risk of adopting empirical positivism is that it is easy for researchers to ignore the embedded prejudice and preference when pursuing objectivism. Thus, the researchers chose the information that corresponded to the goals and standing of their researches unconsciously or they made effort to maintain the status quo of society (Smith, 1987; Jones, 1999: 94-100). In other words, all theories were products of a variety of historical settings, or even they served for certain people or for certain purpose. Therefore, the critical security studies purposely kept a kind of "critical distance" with existing theories. It aims to bring more realistic explanations of current world order through continuous introspection and reflection (Booth, 2005a: 5-8, 10-12).¹¹

¹⁰ Since social science experienced the behavioral revolution in the 1960s, the thought of positivism and the political science research have been linked closely, especially for the fields of comparative politics and the international relations. The positivism adopts the empiricist perspective, which emphasizes that the scientific research must be based on the empirical observation of the real world, and induces relevant information through the replicable methods such as record, measure, comparison etc. to conduct the causal reasoning of the generalizations.

¹¹ Booth thought that the way which critical security researchers kept themselves out of the way of current theoretical structure was different from the so-called "Objectivity" by traditional theory. Instead, they kept a kind of "critical distance" with existing theories. That is, by conducting the immanent critique of theories, they looked for any possibility that had already existed but hasn't been realized in the societies, and thus contributed to the goals of liberate the politics. Besides, criticizing classical realism/neorealism in his writing, Booth thought the theory mainly based on the views of middle-class male scholars in England and America was neither realistic nor misnomer. The

II) Security broadening

The second step to review the concept of security is the expansion of security concepts. Critical security study theorists propose that the traditional security which dominated the mainstream thought over the past half century is a kind of presentation of discursing hegemony of realism. These thoughts emphasize that a nation-state plays a monopolistic role in security matters, and encourage the states to maximize their military forces to defend the security threats from other countries to bring about a tendency of maintaining the existing order and the balance of power. However, after the Cold War, the traditional security thinking not only do little to eliminate the risk of war, but also can do little to respond to the non-traditional security threats (Smith, 2000: 72-101).

Therefore, with the changes of international security environment, security research agenda should also expand from the military field to other security issues related to human beings. In a word, after the intensifying process of ontology and epistemology beyond the traditional security study, critical security study theorists stress that military force is not the only security threat. Instead, the security research agendas should be expanded to fields such as politics, economics, society, gender, environment, immigration, race, human rights and so on. Most of these threats which come from sub-nation or trans-nation cannot be analyzed through the approach of traditional state-centered security.

However, the expansion of security field is different from the concept of securitizing proposed by Ole Wæver of Copenhagen School, which intends to bring all the security issues into the analysis of political theory rather than try to bring all political issues into the agenda of security discussion. In the meantime, through the process of expansion they aimed to discover the phenomenon of uneven distribution of power and resources in the existing security agenda to achieve the "politicizing" security (Jones, 1999: 108-112). What is worth paying attention to is that the critical security studies didn't completely deny the importance of the military issues in security agenda?

Instead, it had a new understanding of the concept of military force and the confrontation through critical perspective. Graeme Cheeseman pointed out that there were major changes about the concepts of force and confrontation in the post-Cold War world:

static theory cannot propose the comprehensive explanations about the complex development of the current status of international community.

The role of military power transforms from waging war with other countries in the past to implementing international peacekeeping, disaster prevention and rescue, and other security missions; the essence of military power also transforms from its original role as swearing loyalty to the country to the one as a form of multinational military force or private mercenary; finally, no longer limited to the state-to-state, the conflicts might appear within a country more often, and the relevant parties might be the non-state actors such as terrorisms (2005: 70-79).

III) Emancipation community

The critical security study is premised on deepening and broadening the security, and further regards "emancipation" as a practical approach to attain security. Booth considered that "emancipation" was to release people from the "restraints" of external environment and internal psychology, to choose their intended life on their own. Wars and the war-induced security threats such as poverty, poor education, political repression were the main sources that placed the above mentioned internal and external restraints on the human. As a result, there was an inseparable relationship between security and liberation. That is to say, Booth emphasized that "individual" was the very fundamental subject, and nation is just one of the means for people to attain security.

Other means included the human aggregations such as family, community, state and so on. When the threat infringed upon basic human needs: the basic material conditions of life, the aggregation which could protect individuals possessed the legitimacy. Hence, these aggregations had their instrumental meanings (Booth, 1991: 319). He further pointed out that when the relationship between security and liberation was clarified, the security could be regarded as means and liberation as its result. On one hand, we shouldn't decide means only by goals, or we might pursue our goal in violent or unfair ways. On the other hand, the relationship between the two might result in ethical cycle of security and liberation: pursuing security could result in liberation, while pursuing liberation could also lead to security (Booth, 2005c: 182-83). What's worth noting is that the "Liberation Community," advocated by Critical security study, is different from the one discussed by international relationship scholars. It asserts that individuals have the rights to express their own plural identity, and can also live in different communities at the same time. Eventually human equality can be realized (Booth and Vale, 1995: 290-91).¹²

¹² Among the discussions on "community" of scholars of international relations, Karl Deutsch's opinions about security community is the most influential ones. He assumed that actors can shape a security community through the mutual compatibility of main values, economic interdependence, more expectations, multifaceted interactions of social, political and cultural communication, promotion of the tightly institutionalized relationship, mutual enthusiasm, and predictable behavior.

Booth indicated that a liberal society should be equipped with a variety of differences and identity, and people can respect each other's culture and ideology. Furthermore, this community is characteristic of the universal morality or the cosmopolitanism, promoting that human beings should be treated equally and the moral differences should not be determined by the conditions such as nationality, gender, races and so on. Accordingly, the horizontal and vertical expansion of Liberation Community will help weaken the nation-state system and the negative impact of globalization, and hence gradually become the effective mode of global governance (Booth, 2005b: 109-110).

III. General Introduction to the Problems of Asia-Pacific Climate Refugees

I) The high risk of climate refugee threat faced by the Asia-Pacific

In December 2009, the representatives of International Organization for Migration in the Copenhagen Climate Summit indicated that there were as many as 20 million people being forced to migrate due to the sudden environment crisis in 2008. If international societies don't manage to slow down the speed of Global Climate Change, the number of climate refugees will increase by multiple as much to 200 million people in 2050. The number will be much larger than those of war refugees (Laczko and Aghazarm, 2009: 5). What's worth noting is that under the influences of the two factors of "geographical environment" and "population distribution", the Asia Pacific region faces not only the high level of fragility of climate change conflict but also high possibility of the appearance of climate refugees due to the climatic catastrophe.

When it comes to the aspect of geographical environment, the frequency of suffering from natural disaster in Asia-Pacific is much higher than those of other regions due to the factors of geographical location, the ratio of land to ocean area and so on. With the multiplication of the scope, scale and intensity of climate change, the impact of extreme climate on the Asia-Pacific region has been increasingly deteriorating in recent years. Related studies indicate that the impacts on the Asia-Pacific region which climate change has mainly include the rising surface temperature, the changing rainfall patterns, the variation of Monsoon rain, the sea level rise, flooding, strong tropical cyclone, etc. (Cruz et al., 2007). Take Cyclone Nargis in Burma in May, 2008 for example, this climatic catastrophe caused a death toll of 84,500, with 53,800 people missing. It had an impact on up to 2,400,000 people's livelihood (IFRC, 2011).

However, the basic unit of this kind of community is state, and it places emphasis on military affairs. It is different from the "Liberation Community" defined by Booth.

As for the population distribution, a study of the World Bank predicted that if sea level rose by one meter, there would be at least fifty-six million and three hundred forty thousand people needed to be resettled in the world. In the meantime, it would cause 1.3% loss of GDP, 1.02% destruction of urban area and 0.39% of farmland flooding (Dasgupta, et al., 2007: 10). In contrast with the research report of United Nations, we can know in this century the speed of sea level rise is about 2-3 millimeters around the world every year. Following this trend, it is estimated that the seaboard of Asia-Pacific countries will be submerged by seawater at the speed of 4-6 meters every year and move backwards by 500-600 meters in 100 years. This will influence up to 9.4 million people who live near the coast (Cruz et al., 2007: 484). Unfortunately, there are about 8-10 coastal cities with high population density in Asia-Pacific countries. Located in low-lying lands, those cities are vulnerable to the impact of climate catastrophe, and become the high-risk groups of climate refugees.

Moreover, most of these possibly flooding regions are the prime location of agricultural land in each country, so the problems of food and water shortages inflicted by the rising sea level must be taken into consideration as well. In this way, there will be an increase in numbers of migrating population induced by climate change. According to a study of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the hotspots in the Asia-Pacific region where climate refugee influx came about can mainly be summarized in table 1:

Table 1 Key Hot Spots of Vulnerability in the Different Regions

Region	Area	Major Cities
East Asia	Coastal areas of PRC Deltaic areas of Yellow, Yangtze, and Pearl rivers Southern Honshu Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau	Guangzhou Nagoya Osaka Shanghai Seoul Tianjin Taipei City
South Asia	Deltaic areas of Ganges-Brahmaputra, Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna, and Indus rivers Nepal's Himalayan region Most of Bangladesh Southern Pakistan	Chennai Dhaka Kolkata Mumbai Karachi
Southeast Asia	Deltaic areas of Mekong, Red, and Irrawaddy rivers	Bangkok Ho Chi Minh City Jakarta Manila Singapore
Central Asia	□□ Kazakhstan □□ Tajikistan	
Pacific	Kiribati, Tuvalu, Papua New Guinea	

Source : ADB, 2011: 26.

PRC = People's Republic of China.

Source: Generated by Graeme Hugo for ADB, 2009.

II) State Centrism tends to maintain the status quo of climate governance

Asian-Pacific region is faced with the above-mentioned urgent menace of the climate refugee problem, but little attention is paid to this problem owing to the recent political stagnation of global climate governance cooperation. If we look back on the past, the Bail Roadmap passed in the conference in Bail in 2007 requested main signatories to achieve new protocol of greenhouse gas emission by the end of 2009 so as to replace the Kyoto Protocol in 2012. However, the United Nations Climate Change conference in Copenhagen in 2009 simply passed the Copenhagen Accord jointly proposed by U.S., China, Brazil, India, and South Africa. The Copenhagen Accord not only set no timetable for carbon reduction and stage objectives, but also showed no constraint on the promises signed by signatories. After that, two Global Climate Governance related climate summits in Cancun and Durban were held. In the process the "Green Climate Fund" was successfully initiated and the validity of the Kyoto Protocol was extended from 2012 to 2017 by joining the second commitment period. However, Canada, Russia, and Japan expressed publicly that they wouldn't join it. After the meeting, making an excuse of protecting her domestic economy and energy industry, Canada officially declared that she would withdraw from Kyoto Protocol.

Furthermore, under the influence of State Centrism, the phenomenon of confrontation among the conglomeration of states emerges in the present Global Climate Governance, and it is led by the umbrella countries, EU, BASIC, 77 groups, and China. The central issue in the dispute between developed countries and developing/underdeveloped countries was that developed countries which didn't want to reduce the carbon emission at the risk of its economy growth declined the Reduce Carbon Emission Standard regulated in the Kyoto Protocol in terms of protecting economic competitiveness. On the other hand, the developing countries also worried about that the reduction of carbon emissions will have an influence on their rapid economic growth, so they emphasized the principle of "common but respective responsibility", requested the developed countries to bear more responsibility for the reduction of carbon emissions, and refused to propose any concrete commitment. This logic of politics of climate change places the Asia-Pacific countries with frequent climate disasters at high risk. Quoting the statistics from the Emergency Events Database, the Asian Development Bank indicated that there were more than 200 million people affected by natural disasters every year from 2001 to 2010, which amounted to 90% of the number of people affected by natural disasters around the world.

These natural disasters caused more than 70,000 deaths which amounted to 65% of global natural disasters' casualties (ADB, 2012: 20). The report also warned that the natural disasters caused by climate changes from 2010 to 2011 have led to more than 42 million people in that region homeless. If the international community didn't make effort to slow the speed of impacts of climate change, \$ 40 billion should be raised each year by the Asia-Pacific countries to cope with the threat of the disasters (ADB, 2012: 2, 60).

To be honest, no matter the Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar in 2008, the Typhoon Morakot which devastated south-central Taiwan in 2009, the rainstorm which led to floods in Pakistan in 2010, the flooding in southern Thailand, and Vasily typhoon in the Mindanao Island, Philippines, in 2011, it shows that climate change severely threatens the countries in the Asia-Pacific region (WMO, 2011: 2-6). Nevertheless, countries in the region pay little attention to this problem. The major Asia-Pacific countries like China, Japan, South Korea, India, New Zealand, and Australia even ignored the dire threat of climate change, choosing to take a favorable stance towards their own country's economic development in the international climate negotiations. Just as what critical security study theorists said the international reality under the state-centrism has severely undermined the effect of sub-national and multinational actors, and the global climate governance has gradually fallen victim to a political game of major powers which show a tendency of maintaining the status quo of international power structure.

IV. A reflection of the climate refugee governance through the perspective of critical security studies

In April 2009, the world's first climate refugees appeared in the outlying Carteret Islands of Papua New Guinea. With habitats flooded by sea water, five families were forced to move to the other side of the Bougainville Island. The Pacific island nation, Tuvalu Government, had also announced that because of the continual sea level rise caused by the greenhouse effect, the government and New Zealand authority had signed a bilateral agreement that 11 thousand people in the country would "move" to New Zealand successively. Apparently, if the "Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change, INC/FCCC" which was founded by United Nations conference in 1990 was regarded as a starting point of the global climate governance, the international community did not succeed in changing the migrating fate of these Pacific island nations after having tried hard in slowing down the climate change for ten years.

Through the perspectives of critical security study, this paper proposed the following reflections aiming at the governance dilemma of Asia-Pacific climate refugees.

I) Back to the multi-security agent governance

Under the restriction of "Statism", the current global climate governance is characterized by the Great Power Game. Obviously, the limited influence of the less developed countries can't be compared with those of the [Umbrella Group countries](#) and BASIC countries. Although OXFAM International, Greenpeace International, World Wide Fund for Nature and other non-governmental organizations were ranked as special observers of the United Nations climate negotiations, they virtually functioned as the critics on the rostrum. However, the problem of climate refugees mainly appears in underdeveloped countries such as those in the Asia-Pacific region. The people of these countries rely heavily on the natural environment, while the governments have weak capability in dealing with disasters and crises. What's more, they lack enough resources and technologies to get rid of the impact from deterioration of the natural environment (Myers, 2002; Africa Development Band, 2003).

Ironically, the developed countries such as Japan, New Zealand, and Australia, belong to the "[Umbrella Group countries](#)", which are headed by the United States and Canada, while developing countries such as China and India, are also the important members of the "BASIC". Although they are on the list of potentially threatened countries of Asia-Pacific climate refugees, their rapid economic development can afford enough resources to adapt themselves to the climate catastrophe. Hence, the climate refugee problems may be regarded as "future challenges" for the development of a country, but by no means a dire threat to jeopardize the survival of a nation. In other words, because current international climate negotiations don't really ponder the impacts of climate change from the perspectives of climate refugees, they lead to a sharp gap of recognitions between the major powers and underdeveloped countries towards the scope and scale of climatic threats. As a result, cohesion of norms and consensus among the major powers will only continue to strengthen the structure of climate governance which aims at "ensuring the economic development" and pays full attention to bargain for [greenhouse gas emissions](#).

However, for climate refugees, resolving the urgent need of lands, water, and food is even more important than the annual [greenhouse gas emissions](#) and the commitment period of Kyoto Protocol. Therefore, unless the global climate governance gets rid of the hindrance of "statism" and backs to the governance model of multi-security agent, it is hard for the relevant governance to touch the core problem of the Asia-Pacific climate refugees.

II) Cling to the analysis of human security

The migration caused by extreme climate change mainly contains two genres that are internal one and international one: the former generally moves from coasts to inlands, and villages to cities, while the latter shows the trend that people migrate from developing and underdeveloped countries to developed ones. As shown in Figure 1, the deficient in resources caused by climate change is the main reason for the migration of internal and international population. No matter what kind of migration it is, the competition for resources definitely will put the recipients (cities/developed countries) under pressure. This will cause conflict and confrontation among groups (Brown et al., 2007: 1148). However, if the migration problem is simply caused by domestic climate change, the government may deal with it successfully by promoting reconstruction, land consolidation, urban renewal and other measures through the coordination of the stakeholders. This will lead to the governance result as depicted in the “scenario one” in Figure 1. However, if it involves the problems of trans-borders climate refugees, the governance process will become quite complex. Possibly, it will turn towards “scenario two” in Figure 1 under the condition of governance failure, and results in a vicious cycle of resources competition as well as conflict and confrontation.

This is because the receiving states are not very willing to accommodate climate refugees based on the consideration of its domestic economy and social security. Therefore, most of the developed countries tend to take restrictive measures against immigration. In addition, it is prone to have friction among different races and groups, especially when the economic performance is poor in the receiving states. The natives tend to be hostile to and even attack foreign groups for defending their own interests and uncertain worries about their future.

Hence, it gives rise to more social problems and collective conflicts (Dupont, 2008: 40-41). In other words, what climate refugees face are not only the solution to the problems of food and habitat but also the issues of identification of culture and identity in a new environment (MacFarquhar, 2009: A4). To Asia-Pacific region where diverse races, cultures and religions coexist, it is actually the daunting challenges of regional security. The risks are that if receiving states mismanage the refugee issues, with the gap of ethnic, cultural and religious identification, any favor to foreign immigrants or natives will make the above mentioned collective conflict spread and become anti-government riots, which even may jeopardize the peace and stability of the neighboring states and regions. Therefore, considering the potential threats of climate refugees to Asia-Pacific region and international security, the governance of climate refugees which is together with political, economic, social and environmental problems is not only the individual obligation for receiving states but also the common responsibility of all human beings.

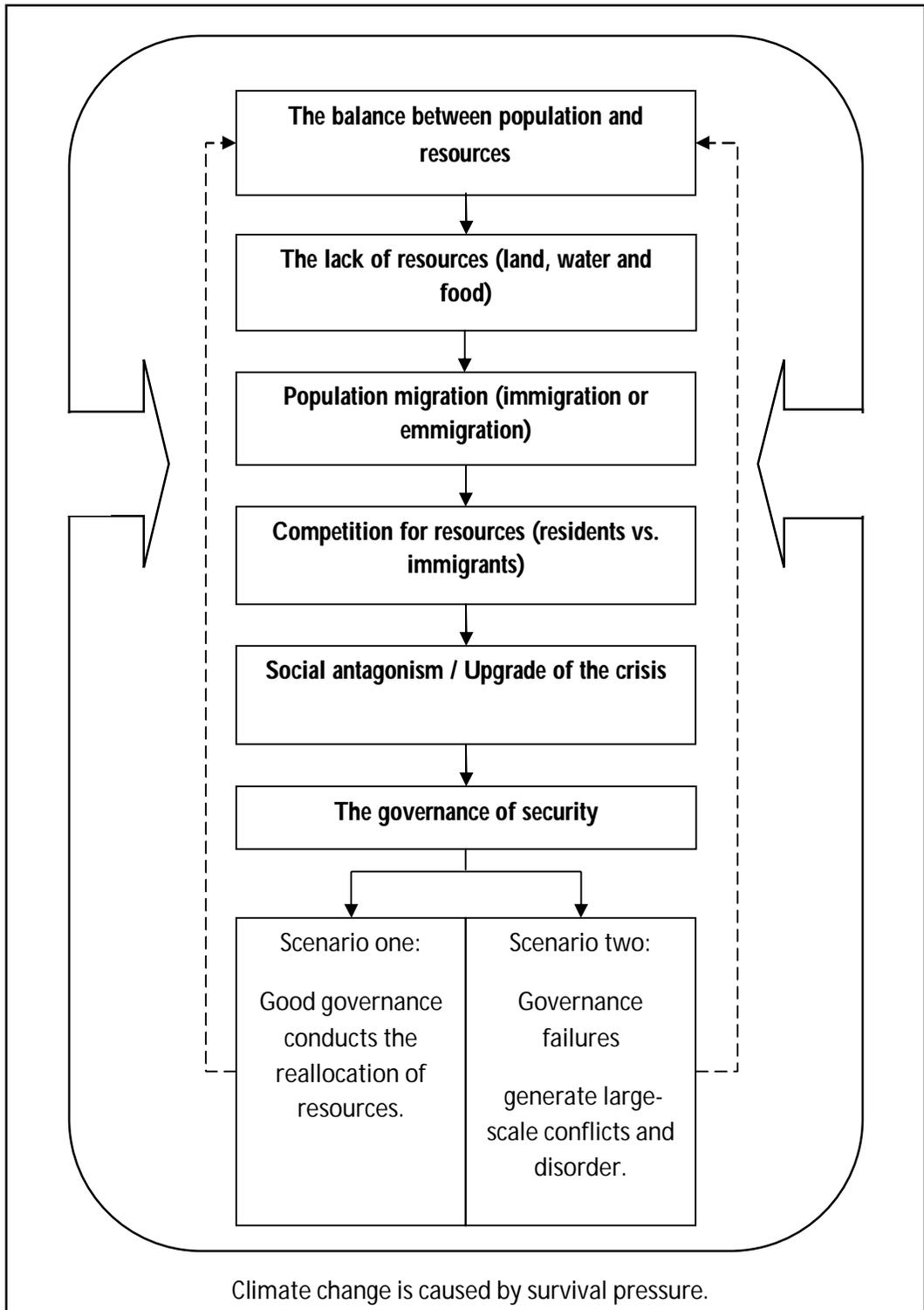


Figure 1: The schematic diagram of governing climate refugees.

III) The Liberation is regarded as the pronoun of “Good governance”

With restraining influence now, though the Climate Refugee problems pose no dire security threats to the developed countries such as the umbrella group, basic four countries, it is still an indispensable part of Global Climate governance. As a matter of fact, in spite of the fact that “Climate Refugees” are labeled as “Refugees”, they don’t conform to the subjective and objective definitions of “refugees” in International Law,¹³ so it can’t possess the rights and treatment of refugees stipulated by the International Law. They mainly rely on the limited humanitarian relief from UN High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR and International Organization for Migration, IOM (Zetter, 2007). Therefore, thinking about how to reconstruct the identification of climate refugees has become the responsibilities and challenges which the international community is bound to take (McLeman, 2011: 31-2).

In terms of this, although the “security community” which the international relations scholars have advocated for a long time does good to eliminate international conflicts, it does no help to improve the above mentioned identification problems of climate refugees. Thus, the qualified “good governance” which is equipped with liberty and equality can exist only by adopting the critical-security perspective that the “personal liberation equals to safety”, aiming at constructing a “Emancipation community” which helps the climate refugees to escape from the insecure and oppressed condition, and removing the external and internal limitations from political, economic, social, cultural, and physiological barriers which impede the free choice of lifestyle.

Observed from the evolution of global climate governance in the past few years, the mechanism of “Green Climate Fund” which was formally initiated during the Durban climate conference is a brand new starting point toward the “Liberation Community”. According to the design of United Nations Climate Change Conference, the Green Climate Fund would be managed by the board that consists of twenty four member states.

¹³ Both the “Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, United Nations, 1951” and the “Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, 1967” point out that the term “Refugee” is applied to the following two aspects: In the subjective aspect, it should be “on account of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular group, or political opinion.” In the objective aspect, it means “any person who is outside their country of origin and unable or unwilling to return there or to avail themselves of its protection” because of the fear that is mentioned above.

(UNHCR 2010) From the concept of “Refugees” defined by the above convention, it is absolutely hard to confirm that the reasons “Climate Refugees” leave their home are because they are oppressed by the above mentioned subjective factors. Also, most “Climate Refugees” appear in the interior of countries and rarely has the trait of crossing the frontier.

In order to maintain a balance among the board members, it was expressly stipulated that developing countries should take up more than half seats, which should include three seats for Asia-Pacific countries, Africa countries, and Latin America and Caribbean Sea countries respectively, one for fragile island country, underdeveloped country, and developing country except the above-mentioned areas respectively (UNFCCC, 2011). Apparently, the mechanism of "Green Climate Fund" still has a wide gap toward the goal of emancipating climate refugees, and there are some technique problems of operating the fund which nation groups need to overcome. Nevertheless, the mechanism that provides protection of seats of fragile island and underdeveloped countries in the board moves a step closer to the climate refugee governance, and it is worth paying close attention to its subsequent development.

V. Conclusion

This paper is a reflection on current governance of climate refugees in Asia Pacific region. It aims at analyzing the crux about why the international organizations have difficulty implementing the related initiatives through the approach of "critical security studies" and conceives possible directions of region cooperation on climate security and the its future prospect. This study discovered that the problem of climate refugees mainly appears in underdeveloped countries such as those in the Asia-Pacific region. The people of these countries rely heavily on the natural environment, while the governments have weak capability in dealing with disasters and crises. What's more, they lack enough resources and technologies to get rid of the impact from deterioration of the natural environment. On the other hand, the major Asia-Pacific countries like China, Japan, South Korea, India, New Zealand, and Australia pay little attention to this problem, and even ignored the urgent threat of climate change, choosing to take a favorable stance which benefits their own country's economic development in the international climate negotiations. This shows that "state centrism" is not only unhelpful in relieving the problem of climate refugees in Asia-Pacific region, but more likely to be the source of insecurity of the residents in developing countries in this region under the banner of the supreme national interest.

This paper pointed out that in addition to the basic needs such as food and habitats, what is more important is how to solve the identification problems of culture and identify under the new environment. To Asia-Pacific region where diverse races, cultures and religions coexist, it is actually the daunting challenges of regional security. Therefore, considering the potential threats of climate refugees to Asia-Pacific region and international security, the governance of climate refugees which is together with political, economic, social and environmental problems is not only the individual obligation for receiving states but also the common responsibility of all human beings.

In other words, the qualified “good governance” which is equipped with liberty and equality can exist only by adopting the critical-security perspective that the “personal liberation equals to safety”, aiming at constructing a “Emancipation community” which helps the climate refugees to escape from the insecure and oppressed condition, and removing the external and internal limitations from political, economic, social, cultural, and physiological barriers which impede the free choice of lifestyle.

It is noteworthy that there are some scholars advocating that critical security study is too abstract and ideal, and can only be regarded as a kind of observation method instead of a political theory. And it has a defect which is difficult to be put into practice (Eriksson, 1999: 320). However, what the critical security study would like to criticize is the realpolitik theory which was set up by traditional security scholars through “statism” ontology and “empirical positivism” epistemology, because this kind of theory claiming itself neutral and objective tends to maintain the current unequal political order and confine free and peaceful development of human beings. That is to say, through the deepening and broadening process of critical security study, the concept of security governance will not be confined to narrow concept of national interest or sovereignty anymore, and the way of solving problems will also not be limited to the realist thoughts of power politics. In sum, only by combining the opinions of critical security study, and backing to the Multi-agents and clinging to the issue of human security to go on the analysis, will the “liberation community” which meets all the human needs be constructed and make adequate response to the security challenges that issues of climate refugees pose to the Asia Pacific countries.

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