Notes From Meeting w/ Khatharya Um

September 29, 2023

# Initial Thoughts and Concerns

* Prof. Um’s initial thoughts on our topic: the world currently does not have any actual protocol or protective regime for climate refugees, so this is an interesting topic to focus on
* However, due to the time-sensitivity of our project, the narrower the scope, the better
  + Narrowing the scope comes with definitional clarity, i.e. how are you using these terms that you’re mentioning?
  + For climate refugees, there is no good definition – which gets in the way of them receiving official assistance
  + For example: what exactly do we mean by natural disaster?
    - “Natural disaster” could mean a lot of things
* When we say “movement,” are we mapping and focusing on temporary movement or permanent settlement?
  + Do people have a choice? Do they understand themselves as having a choice? What does choice mean in this context?
    - There is lots of propaganda and anti-propaganda in this space – there are people who want refugees to leave and others who want them to stay, which all influences the choices of these refugees
  + Departure is not necessarily because refugees wanted to leave, but more because they felt like they could not stay
  + Is there repatriation?
  + Where do people FEEL they CAN go and what are the factors that decide that?
  + A lot of people rely on their own networks (and not humanitarian aid), so how are decisions being made regarding where they go? What is important to the displaced people?
    - To help people, we need to know where they’re going and WHY
    - You only know what’s important to them if you talk to them, which brings us to the question of how will we collect data

# Data

* Data is politicized – how will you get around that? What are your sources and are they biased? How will you go about acquiring that data?
  + Particularly for internal displacement and state readiness, the data is significantly compromised
  + There are also lots of barriers aside from those set by the state, including linguistic, cultural, gender, and class barriers
    - Who has access to the climate refugee population? Who within that population did the data collectors talk to? Even, what language did they talk to the refugees in?
    - When we’re talking about vulnerable populations, language is a big one – we have to be able to understand their problems in the context of their language
      * Translators might be recruited, but what does that mean in the context of data collection? What are the implications of having translators?
    - How is the data compiled and acquired?
    - Does the data allow us to capture nuance, or is it too aggregated?

# Results of Project

* A question Robert asked Prof Um: Who will be using this information from our project? Who actually reads these papers?
  + Short answer: depends on your networks
  + Policymakers, policymaker staffers, etc.
  + Academics
  + For Prof. Um’s own research: targeted outreach to people who she thinks might need to read her work

# Final Thoughts

* Think about what is new and what our solution adds
* We can approach this project by starting with something specific (such as country-, case-, or time-specific) so that our focus is narrow enough
  + Find key factors and set of questions people should think about looking at other cases
  + We can think about what other people’s questions are regarding this issue
    - More specifically: for other climate refugee researchers, what are their questions and what do they want to know? What are they interested in? How can these researchers use our analysis and model to answer their own questions?
    - By thinking about what other researchers are looking for, we can make our model more generalizable and useful
    - For example, someone might not find a report or model on Bangladesh useful, but if the model is generalizable enough, they could derive value from it by applying it to some region that they’re actually interested in