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Topic of Research: **Climate Refugees in the Global South: Securitization,
Marginalization and Exclusion**

Findings

In terms of interacting directly with the academic gap, this study argues that climate change politics, being a phenomenon predominantly dealt with in international politics, often flattens the on-ground actualities on the local level and how the populations who have been impacted because of climate change remain at the margins of both the global north and global south perceptions. While climate politics emerged prominently in the Global North, it was symbolically traced here from the 1970 Earth Day in the United States. It evolved from “public commemoration” to “public demonstration,” as evidenced by events like the 1999 Seattle WTO protests. Despite this shift, domestic priorities and commercial interests have remained central, continuing historical patterns of resource exploitation rooted in imperial expansion and fossil fuel dependence.

Climate change has been highly securitised in Global North policymaking, where concerns often centre on resource scarcity and migration from the Global South. Policy discourses in the United States and European Union frame climate-induced migration as a security threat, reinforcing narratives of “imaginative geographies” that portray regions such as Bangladesh, India, and the Maldives as risk-prone “hotspots.” This produces what the study terms “emblematically tagged” spaces, shaping both policy and academic discourse while excluding affected populations from meaningful participation.

Engaging securitization theory, the study critiques both the Copenhagen School and its challengers, arguing that reframing climate change as “risk” does not sufficiently counter exclusionary practices. Through ethnographic research in Barpeta district, Assam, the study reveals how these global narratives translate into lived realities. Climate-induced erosion and

displacement in riverine (char) areas force marginalised Bengali communities into cyclical migration, precarious urban settlements, and repeated exposure to environmental risks.

The findings demonstrate that climate change exacerbates existing social cleavages, leading to resource competition, marginalization, and racialization of migrants—both in the Global North and South. As it is projected through the ethnography in this study, climate change in Assam shapes the daily lives of climate migrants, where marginalization and exclusion have been heightened due to their already marginalized identities. They are often labelled as outsiders, denied welfare, and subjected to political exclusion, thereby producing conditions of de facto statelessness. The study concludes that, despite international calls for climate justice, states often replicate exclusionary practices domestically, reinforcing inequality and vulnerability among people affected by climate change.

Keywords: Climate Change, Refugees, Securitization, Imaginative Geography, Global South, Barpeta-Assam.