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<https://doi.org/10.1177/09562478221149863>

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# People move, policies don't: discursive partition against climate-impacted dwellers in urbanizing Bangladesh

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1. See the evidence for global mismatch in Althor et al. (2016).
2. Roberts and Parks (2006).
3. Porter et al. (2020).

**ABSTRACT** In Bangladesh, internal climate displacement will continue pushing millions to the urbanizing centres where migrants make homes in informal settlements. These settlements, too, are sites for climate hazards such as heat stress and flooding, affecting climate-displaced and economic migrants alike. The demands of growing migrant populations and long-term informal settlement dwellers converge around rights to secure land and housing, acknowledged in policies at both national and urban scales. Yet, settlements continue to face evictions, revealing a significant mismatch between policy aspirations and concrete urban planning strategies. Based on our ongoing research in the informal settlements of Dhaka, Bangladesh, we point to a structural condition we call *discursive partition* which continues to exclude climate-impacted dwellers from urban resilience policies despite their formal recognition in national climate policies. Based on evidence of how climate-impacted dwellers themselves lead urban adaptation, we point to three critical revisitations for just climate adaptation plans.

**KEYWORDS** climate migration / discursive partition / epistemicide / global South / urban adaptation

## I. INTRODUCTION

One of the wettest days this century was 18 June 2022, when more than 1,000 millimetres of rain fell in Mawsynram in India. Just across the border, north-eastern Bangladesh was inundated by one of the worst floods in the country's history. People were stranded in shelters or moved to urban centres from flood-affected areas, a familiar pattern of rural-to-urban movement in post-disaster situations. Many of these highly densified urban centres are also adversely impacted by climate change effects such as extreme heat events. The scientific consensus is clear: climate change's worst effects are often in places farthest from the global centres of excessive consumption with the largest share of emissions.<sup>(1)</sup> This disproportionate burden of climate change impacts on low-emission communities has long been highlighted as global climate injustice.<sup>(2)</sup> Climate justice, a framework emerging from grassroots mobilizations, highlights the connection between human rights, uneven development, neoliberalism, intersectional social inequities, structural violence and climate change from global to local scale.<sup>(3)</sup> Although much of the climate justice discussion focuses on the asymmetries between developed and developing nations, a climate justice frame also highlights the endogenous

structures of power and privilege within nations, particularly in the case of internal climate migration and adaptation.

Around the world, climate-related internal displacements and climate-inflected hazards continue to intensify existing inequalities shaping our cities.<sup>(4)</sup> The latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report stated that climate change led to extreme damage and displaced more than 13 million people across Asia and Africa in 2019,<sup>(5)</sup> while the World Bank projects that 216 million people in six regions could move within their countries by 2050 due to climate change.<sup>(6)</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic, too, continues to unfold along already existing fissures of profound social, spatial, political and economic inequalities in a globalized and urbanizing planet. One-hundred-and-twenty million people have fallen into extreme poverty, the class of the “new poor” is swelling, and the multiplying effects of the global recession are yet to be fully understood. Meanwhile, half the world’s wealth is reported to be in the hands of eight men.<sup>(7)</sup> Despite the momentary out-migration during the lockdowns, cities of the global South are perceived as sites of opportunities and draw migrants to expanding informal settlements.<sup>(8)</sup> According to the latest UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) report, more than one billion people live in informal settlements with inadequate housing, services and infrastructure.<sup>(9)</sup> The number is predicted to grow as migration into cities continues. Urban informal settlements (so-called slums) are exposed to hazards such as heat stress and flooding that are further exacerbated by climate change. Under these prevailing and overlapping crisis conditions, existing urban inequalities and climate injustices will continue to mutually reinforce the marginality, deprivation and exclusion of climate and economic migrants in the city.<sup>(10)</sup>

Global South governments and international development partners invested in tackling climate migration and vulnerability have formulated agreements and deployed resources, albeit insufficient, to ensure adaptation and resilience. Research on the institutional complexities and political contingencies of implementing adaptation and resilience policies has also grown.<sup>(11)</sup> Building on that crucial body of scholarship and particularly exploring the inter-scalar dynamics of urban climate adaptation and resilience, we ask: how do climate policies *move* (or not) across national and urban scales as people move across geographies? How do adaptation policies land (or not) in the informal settlements where climate migrants and economic migrants live side by side? Inspired by critical and ethnographic policy analysis approaches,<sup>(12)</sup> we combine our ethnographic observations with policy content analysis to examine how structural inequities persist through policies in Bangladesh’s climate adaptation context. This paper focuses on internally displaced climate migrants and settlement dwellers enduring urban climate vulnerabilities in Bangladesh, drawing on empirical research from one informal settlement in Dhaka and investigation of Bangladesh’s urban and national adaptation policy landscape. From our ongoing scholarly and activist engagement with climate and economic migrants in urbanizing Bangladesh, we see that climate policies promising support often have no material implications for climate-displaced migrants and pre-existing dwellers, both of whom face urban climate vulnerabilities.

In the next section, we review the scholarship on the intersection between urban inequality and climate justice in informal settlements and establish the definitions and terms of reference for the rest of the

4. There are few cases where climate change is the primary driver of migration (perhaps with the exception of the submerged Pacific Islands). In most cases, economic and political drivers together with climate change shape migration.

5. See IPCC (2022).

6. See the World Bank report by Clement et al. (2021).

7. See Oxfam International (2018).

8. To be clear, informal settlements include non-migrants and natural population increase.

9. See UN SDG report by Sachs et al. (2021).

10. Following Vlassopoulos (2013), we understand “climate migrant” to be an evolving concept that policymakers construct and reconstruct to claim relevance and recognition from the international community, to promote specific policies, attribute responsibility differently and reallocate authority for intervention. In this specific sense, we accept the Bangladeshi government’s use of the term “climate migrant” and focus on the overlap between housing and climate policies. We use the term cautiously in the beginning of this paper in order to enter the broader conversation on climate migration before we introduce our own term, “climate-impacted dwellers”.

11. See Coaffee et al. (2018).

12. Bacchi (2000, 2010) gives us critical epistemological insights, while Pacheco-Vega (2020) informs our methodology.

paper. In section III, we provide a background of Bangladesh's climate policy landscape, further contextualize our site of active engagement – the informal settlement of Korail in Dhaka – and elaborate our methods, which integrate policy analysis and ethnography. In section IV, we discuss the role of a particular form of climate injustice – what we call *discursive partitioning* – in the informal urban settlements of Bangladesh. In section V, we reflect on our field experiences in Korail in light of the earlier discussions. Finally, we end with implications for policymakers and planners in advancing climate justice for climate-impacted dwellers in Dhaka and beyond.

## II. INTERSECTIONS AND DEFINITIONS

### a. Intersecting urban inequality and climate justice in informal settlements

Mutually interlocking dynamics of urban inequality and climate injustice shape informal settlements that receive climate migrants and are exposed to growing climate hazards. A wide body of research has documented the multiple dimensions of urban inequalities. Pre-existing social inequalities disproportionately increase the exposure of marginalized groups to hazards, making them more susceptible, and reducing their ability to cope and recover from injuries.<sup>(13)</sup> Stephens has highlighted the health implications of unequal distribution of basic needs such as housing and sanitation.<sup>(14)</sup> Dwellers in informal settlements are often at higher risk of infection, injury and health risks.<sup>(15,16)</sup> A growing body of urban climate justice and adaptation scholarship has documented the differential impact of climate vulnerability on marginalized and impoverished urban communities, particularly flood and disaster risks.<sup>(17)</sup> Urban climate vulnerability unfolds along multiple axes of societal oppression. Studies in places like Dar es Salaam, Tanzania<sup>(18)</sup> and Khulna, Bangladesh,<sup>(19)</sup> for example, highlight the gendered differences in spatialized vulnerability and adaptation. Adaptation interventions themselves can be complicit in furthering climate vulnerability. Based on their work in eight cities, Anguelovski et al. have shown how land-use planning for climate adaptation negatively affected poor communities or prioritized the benefits of urban elites.<sup>(20)</sup> Exclusion can also manifest at the city level when smaller cities are sidestepped in favour of larger ones because of their access to finance, symbolic capital and political power in developing adaptation policies.<sup>(21)</sup> Thoughtful participatory experiments attempting to include multiple actors such as experts, planners, residents and politicians in dynamic urban adaptation planning processes do exist.<sup>(22)</sup> But given the evidence of maladaptation possibilities, Shi et al. have called for a greater focus on equity and justice in the context of climate adaptation policies.<sup>(23)</sup> Particularly, the need for inclusive processes in adaptation decision-making is often highlighted in adaptation research.<sup>(24)</sup> Equitable outcomes of adaptation (distributive justice) or fair processes for engagement during policymaking (procedural justice) are not enough. Chu and Michael argue that policy must also attend to recognitional justice.<sup>(25)</sup> Scale, as we show in this paper, can be critical for determining the consequences of recognition. Earlier climate justice and adaptation research remained bound to cities or international and national policymaking. Lang cautioned against this risk of “limiting

13. UNDESA Report (Islam and Winkel, 2017).

14. Stephens (2018).

15. See comprehensive review by Sverdluk (2011) and Ezeh et al. (2017).

16. Among the urban poor, children suffer higher death and disease rates than their counterparts born to wealth and security (Thynell, 2018; Stephens, 2018; Meilä, 2018).

17. Gran Castro and Ramos de Robles (2019); Hambati and Yengoh (2018).

18. Schofield and Gubbels (2019).

19. Jabeen (2019).

20. Anguelovski et al. (2016).

21. Geldin (2019).

22. For example, in cases of small to mid-sized cities in Latin America (Hardoy et al. 2019), and Durban, South Africa (Williams et al. 2019).

23. Shi et al. (2016).

24. See for example Chu et al. (2015); Anguelovski et al. (2014).

25. Chu and Michael (2019) shows how migrant workers in Surat and Bengaluru, India are excluded as they are not recognized as urban citizens.

research on urban and regional change and adaptation to internal regional properties” such that the political-economic processes of globalization stay hidden.<sup>(26)</sup> Increasingly, climate justice and adaptation scholarship shows multi-scalar concerns<sup>(27)</sup> but still, empirical inter-scalar investigations of climate injustice are needed.<sup>(28)</sup> Particularly, the scalar differentials that perpetuate climate injustices remain less explored and understood, with exceptions such as Goh.<sup>(29)</sup> Policy differentials across national and urban scales, as we argue in this paper, further entrench injustices towards climate-impacted dwellers in the city.

Alongside highlighting the complex mechanisms that perpetuate vulnerabilities and injustices, the climate justice and adaptation scholarship has also put forward approaches for more equitable policymaking. Central to justice-oriented climate adaptation planning is *recognising “subaltern forms of knowledge”* and grassroots resilience practices.<sup>(30)</sup> For instance, with reference to Pacific Small Island Developing States, Trundle et al.<sup>(31)</sup> proposed that “*endogenous*” practices of resilience need to be incorporated into institutional climate adaptation. Whether community- or city-led, informal settlement upgrading has also been emphasized as a sustainable solution to making informal settlements resilient to climate change impacts.<sup>(32)</sup> We provide further evidence of grassroots practices that produce and sustain liveable neighbourhoods. To continue challenging climate injustices, we need a greater understanding of inter-scalar policy dynamics and fine-grained studies that explore the situated dynamics of tenure, infrastructure, spatial mutations and organization in informal settlements.

## b. Definitional plurality and a case for climate-impacted dwellers

It is important to clarify our usage of terms.

We find terms such as *economic migrant* and *climate migrant* limiting in our case. *Internal climate migrant*, as defined by the Government of Bangladesh,<sup>(33)</sup> focuses on displacement from the origin and erases the arrival placemaking among climate-displaced people. Focusing solely on climate migrants in adaptation policies overshadows the lived experiences of climate change among economic migrants in informal settlements and vice versa. We need a term that contains the wide variation of climate experiences that residents, advocates and policymakers have to grapple with. From our shared Southern vantage point, in this paper, we use the term *climate-impacted dwellers* to refer to all residents who engage in the daily struggle against the adverse impacts of climate vulnerabilities in their original place and their arrival destinations – urban informal settlements.<sup>(34)</sup>

Several national and international efforts, including the MDGs and SDGs, have aimed to reduce urban poverty in the global South. Researchers and community organizations have pointed to pathways for adaptation and resilience in the settlements.<sup>(35)</sup> Although “solutions” exist, they are often not implemented, indicating the inequities and power differentials that shape urban governance and planning processes. Extending and building on the insights of climate justice scholarship for informal settlements would mean making visible the asymmetrical responsibilities, burdens and broader historical and political structures at play in the governance

26. Lang (2018), page 151.

27. Barrett (2013); Ryder (2018).

28. Mohtat and Khirfan (2021).

29. Goh (2020) traces the flow of adaptation ideas across institutions and cities such as New York, Rotterdam and Jakarta.

30. Olazabal et al. (2021).

31. Trundle et al. (2019).

32. See Collado and Wang (2020).

33. The Government of Bangladesh defines internal climate migrants as “*persons, group of persons, households, or an entire community who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence temporarily or permanently or who have been evacuated as a result of disasters caused by sudden and slow-onset climatic events and processes, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border*”. See more in the National Strategy on the Management of Disaster and Climate Induced Internal Displacement (Siddiqui et al., 2015).

34. *Climate-impacted dwellers* aims to capture the porousness of socialities and lives that frustrate the polarized classifications such as climate migrants vs economic migrants where one group is pitted against the other despite their partially shared and protracted predicaments in informal settlements. Although there have been no reported instances of conflict between climate-displaced and economic migrant/ existing communities in Korail, policies that separate one migrant from another will increase potential for conflict

through heightening perceived differences (Castellano et al., 2021). We understand that critics may argue our composite term flattens the differing realities of climate and economic migrants.

Definitional debates, perhaps irresolvable, in the arena of environmental migration have continued for decades (see Vlassopoulos, 2013; Popovski and Mundy, 2012). Although we appreciate the rigour of such debates, we believe definitional debates embedded in sectoral policymaking processes can also play into the politics of delaying meaningful action towards alleviating the undeniably real circumstances that climate-impacted dwellers face in informal settlements.

35. Dodman et al. (2019); Satterthwaite et al. (2020).

36. Kashwan and Ribot (2021); Harlan et al. (2015).

37. Sverdluk et al. (2019); Tran and Krause (2019).

38. Because of such policies around the world, climate-impacted dwellers living in informal settlements are perceived as criminals, polluters and unwanted occupiers. They face police intimidation and harassment. Settlements are burnt, bulldozed and evicted leading to dwellers living in “*in-situ displacement*” and a state of “*citizenship in wait*” (Huq and MirafTab, 2020).

39. Hasina (2021).

40. Fricker (2007).

41. Westman and Castán Broto (2021).

42. These everyday practices show solidarities, adaptation, community-planned retreat from risk zones and collective infrastructure building to battle climate change hazards.

of informal settlements and the exclusion of climate-impacted dwellers in the city.<sup>(36)</sup> The decades of effort in policy and scholarship have led to changes at national and international level. Several multilateral initiatives and landmark agreements – from the Paris Agreement to UN-Habitat to UNRISD<sup>(37)</sup> – now emphasize the need to recognize and upgrade informal settlements to meet climate change challenges. As discussed in this paper, national plans are often progressive, drafted to support the integration of informal settlements into urban planning. In alignment with climate and spatial justice scholarship, international policies and initiatives now emphasize the three pillars of redistributive, recognition and procedural justice in adaptation and resilience projects. However, as we show here, recognition of informal settlements at international and national levels can still fail to deliver justice on the ground.

Despite the global “progress” among and within nations, exclusionary urban policies and practices can persist locally.<sup>(38)</sup> For instance, the Government of Bangladesh routinely highlights its disproportionately impacted global position to emphasize global victimhood (“*we are facing disasters because of you!*”).<sup>(39)</sup> Yet, the national recognition of climate migration does not lead to improvements in the informal settlements where climate-impacted dwellers find themselves unsupported in securing lives and livelihoods in the city.

So we ask, how does climate injustice persist despite national recognition of climate migrants and climate vulnerabilities in informal settlements? We aim to advance the literature’s diagnostic inventory of climate injustices, particularly by exploring how inter-scalar discursive differentials condition climate injustice in informal settlements. In addition, climate injustice is undergirded by “*epistemic injustices*” against dwellers in informal settlements,<sup>(40)</sup> whereby their claims and experiences fail to register at the policy table. Climate-impacted dwellers are not perceived as credible holders of knowledge in the urban planning process. Their experiences, insights, practices and voices are left out of decision-making that affects them and to which they could meaningfully contribute. As Westman and Castán Broto contend, good adaptation plans do not always lead to actions, and the actual adaptation work might be overlooked by planners and policymakers.<sup>(41)</sup> Adaptation measures proposed in the national plans are often actually implemented, no matter how partially, by climate-impacted dwellers themselves.<sup>(42)</sup> However, instead of including these situated practices and enabling cross-learning, urban resilience plans fail to recognize them. Attention to dwellers’ practices exposes another aspect of climate injustice, whereby city planning authorities ignore and delegitimize on-the-ground perspectives and knowledge that make the city resilient for its majority.

### III. LOCATING KORAIL AND OUR “DIRTY” METHOD

In this section, we provide background on Bangladesh’s climate policyscape at a broad scale and then zoom into Korail (where we are involved in research and community organizing) to understand the dynamics from the ground up.

#### a. Bangladesh’s climate policyscape

Bangladesh faces an increased risk of natural disasters under climate change, including more frequent and severe cyclones, heavier and more

erratic rainfalls leading to more riverbank erosion, droughts in the northern and western regions, and salinity intrusion up coastal rivers and into groundwater aquifers.<sup>(43)</sup> With its location in the Ganges–Brahmaputra delta, it is one of the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world.<sup>(44)</sup> According to multiple reports, millions of Bangladeshis have been and will continue to be displaced due to climate-related hazards<sup>(45,46,47)</sup> – the country is consistently highlighted as an “internal migration pressure cooker”. Predominantly, people move from coastal districts and mainland areas along major rivers where flooding, storms and erosion risks are higher.<sup>(48)</sup> Although comprehensive statistics are lacking, it is clear that the spatial trend of rural-to-urban migration exceeds any other movement pattern in Bangladesh.<sup>(49)</sup> The specific moment of transition from environmental migration to climate migration in Bangladesh is hard to determine. Soon after COP7 (2001), Bangladesh formed the National Steering Committee on Climate Change and created its first plan to tackle climate change, the National Adaptation Programme of Action, in 2005. With the evolving global articulation of environmental migration and adaptation to climate vulnerability, environmental hazards such as river erosion, drought, storms, landslides, floods, etc., have been woven into the frame of Bangladesh’s climate change policy discourse.<sup>(50)</sup>

In Bangladesh, climate injustice manifests as both the displacement of climate migrants from their origins and the increased vulnerabilities in urban destinations where low-income migrants (economic and climate-displaced) make homes.<sup>(51)</sup> Instead of assuming migration as a straightforward adaptation strategy, climate adaptation and resilience have to be seen as a “sociopolitical process” involving contestations over authority, knowledge, identities and meaning in resource-scarce situations where climate migrants cannot be disaggregated from economic migrants without potential conflicts and critical implications for urban climate governance.<sup>(52)</sup> Governance decisions are also shaped by Dhaka’s global position as a ready-made garments export capital. With a growing consumer and service sector tied directly or indirectly to its manufacturing sector, Dhaka’s urban land value is rising and reinforcing existing exclusions.<sup>(53,54)</sup> Moreover, the government’s drive to diversify by expanding hi-tech and information sectors has exacerbated aggressive urban policies that cyclically displace informal settlements. The informal settlement of Korail now faces eviction, as its 90 acres have been slated for an IT park development. Urban climate adaptation has surfaced as a priority for city authorities as new plans are proposed to create eco-parks, beautified lakes and flood buffer zones by removing “encroaching” informal settlements, including Korail.<sup>(55,56)</sup> In the globalized political economy of Bangladesh’s urbanization, the policy differential across national and urban scales highlighted here undergirds that exclusionary urban development and adaptation paradigm.

A contradiction is self-evident in terms of the national (and international) narrative around Bangladesh’s climate policy. Intriguingly, while urban climate-impacted dwellers face aggressive displacement through fire and evictions, Bangladesh is celebrated in the international arena and media as a “climate success” offering a “model for climate migration” and an “example to follow”.<sup>(57)</sup> The United Nations awarded *Champions of the Earth 2015* to Bangladesh’s Prime Minister for addressing climate change.<sup>(58)</sup> Bangladesh led the Climate Vulnerable Forum to represent nations undergoing climate vulnerability in 2020 and, before

43. See Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (2013).

44. Ayers et al. (2014).

45. The Association for Climate Refugees reported that climate hazards displaced six million people in Bangladesh. See report by Displacement Solutions (2012).

46. The latest IPCC (2022) reported 4.1 million climate-displaced people in Bangladesh as of 2019, and the World Bank report by Clement et al. (2021) stated the numbers are projected to grow to 19.9 million by 2050.

47. Between 2008 to 2021, IDMC reported, 15.5 million Bangladeshis were internally displaced due to natural disasters. See the displacement data from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (2022) Bangladesh page.

48. See Displacement Solutions (2012).

49. See Jones et al. (2016).

50. Evaluating the reality of climate change in Bangladesh is not the focus of our paper. We take the widely accepted and reported statistics on climate change in Bangladesh as our premise.

51. In other words, the risk factors of informal settlements replace the set of risks migrants experienced in rural areas. See McNamara et al. (2016); Rana and Iliina (2021).

52. Eriksen et al. (2015).

53. The state-approved minimum land ceiling excluded the poor by default from the land market. See the World Bank report by Baker (2007).

54. As publicly developed land ends up in the hands of the politically connected elites, urban planning agencies have effectively left urban land for private sector profit-making and speculation. In addition, several researchers have documented how illegal private housing development has expanded with impunity. See Morshed (2014); Alam and Ahmad (2010).

55. Islam (2021).

56. At times, benevolent rationale, i.e. creating affordable housing, has also been used to displace informal settlements. Informal settlements have been removed in the name of creating affordable housing which have ended up, through clientelist networks, in the hands of state bureaucrats, politicians and their relatives (Huq, 2020).

57. Roy (2021); Lowenkron (2021); Cooke (2018).

58. UN (2018).

59. Kazi (2022).

60. See for example the lack of attention to urban informal settlements among the adaptation projects mapped by weADAPT (2022).

61. For instance, esteemed scholars editing volumes such as *Confronting Climate Change in Bangladesh: Policy Strategies for Adaptation and Resilience* do not draw attention to the significance and marginalization of informal settlements for climate-impacted dwellers (Huq et al., 2019).

62. Khan et al. (2021), page 1290.

63. Fattah and Walters (2020).

64. Our argument is not against decentralization and de-densification policies per se. Current discussions on decentralization prioritize directing new migrants from coastal/rural areas into smaller urban areas and deprioritize addressing the needs of millions who are already in the larger Bangladeshi cities. We are concerned here about such collateral implications of decentralization proposals for climate and housing justice. See recent project in Ahmed and Choat (2022).

65. Latest figures are from World Population Review (2022).

66. Dalsgaard and Ahsan (2020).

67. As more climate migrants permanently settle in urban areas, urban climate vulnerability cannot

any other South Asian country, it formulated a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, which now serves as a blueprint for other nations.<sup>(59)</sup> Bangladesh also gave climate protection a firm legal status through a 2011 constitutional amendment. Even adaptation research in Bangladesh positions the country as advancing resilience, yet ignores the centrality of urban informal settlements in the displacement trajectories of climate-impacted dwellers.<sup>(60,61)</sup> When urban climate-impacted dwellers do get attention in adaptation research, it tacitly justifies evicting them from the city. For instance, to make Bangladesh a “*model of disaster management, adaptation, and resilience*”, some have proposed the creation of migrant-friendly satellite towns outside major cities.<sup>(62)</sup> Over-densification and over-population are cited as the reason, but only those at the margin of the society are proposed for such a move. Many politicians and state bureaucrats have long held that climate-impacted dwellers do not belong in the city and must be sent away. Based on ethnographic work in two informal settlements in Dhaka, Fattah and Walters show how city authorities justify evictions and exclusion from urban services by framing dwellers as migrants, where “migrant” connotes temporariness, undeservingness and illegality.<sup>(63)</sup> Climate-displaced people in informal settlements become subject to the territorial stigmatization that is the lot of all informal settlement dwellers. This narrative is reflected in the way publicly elected officials talk about migrants and the overall municipal neglect towards informal settlements. Instead of challenging this institutional bias, trending approaches now tacitly validate that exclusionary perspective in the name of decentralization.<sup>(64)</sup>

## b. Bridging policy analysis with situated knowledge from an everyday settlement

With a burgeoning population, Dhaka, Bangladesh’s capital, has been the major focus of economic growth. The latest population figure is estimated to be 22 million, around 15 per cent of the country.<sup>(65)</sup> In addition to its own climate-related challenges (e.g. unpredictable rainfall, waterlogging, flooding and extreme heat), Dhaka receives climate migrants from around the country, thus connecting it to the difficulties faced by the rest of the country. Although urban “climate migrants” remain un-enumerated in the census, policymakers and advocates operate under the understanding that “climate migrants” *are* moving to Dhaka and that economic and environmental drivers together shape climate migration.<sup>(66,67)</sup>

Around 24.39 per cent of Bangladesh’s urban informal settlements are located in Dhaka, and 37 per cent of Dhaka’s population live in these settlements.<sup>(68,69)</sup> Korail, the largest of Dhaka’s informal settlements and located adjacent to upper-class neighbourhoods, is representative of other low-income settlements in terms of insecure land tenure. Korail expanded in the 1990s and now has around 200,000 residents,<sup>(70)</sup> almost all migrants, whether long-term or recent. The settlement has inadequate infrastructure for water, gas, electricity, sewerage, drainage, waste and other civic amenities. However, in collaboration with NGOs, dwellers have constructed or negotiated access to limited services over the years. Despite widespread reporting of climate migration to Dhaka’s informal settlements,<sup>(71)</sup> few studies focus on the lived realities of climate migrants in the city.<sup>(72)</sup>

In Korail, we have observed first hand the lack of any effect of the international award-winning national climate policies. We have also witnessed the everyday resilience tactics and planning by the climate-impacted dwellers. The lived realities of Korail allow us to press the point that such forms of grassroots knowledge are unacknowledged in formal plans, strategies and narratives.

As regards our methodology, we apply a qualitative mixed-method approach to examining climate change policies at national and urban levels in Bangladesh. Decades of critical approaches to urban policy showed how policy language legitimizes certain pathways over others and limits possibilities for action and imagination.<sup>(73)</sup> Approaching policy as discourse unveils the multi-scalar effects, which Bacchi categorized into discursive, subjectification and lived.<sup>(74)</sup> *Discursive* effects delineate the boundaries of relevance within policy discussion; *subjectification* refers to the subject positions offered within the discourse (e.g. climate migrant); and *lived* refers to actual real-life consequences of policies on people's daily experiences. Taking inspiration from this critical scholarship, we try to understand how "solutions" to climate migration and climate impact are conceptualized and represented in Bangladesh's climate policymaking across national and urban levels. We use content analysis of policy documents to identify the discursive constraints (or *discursive effect*) limiting what is considered possible within the climate adaptation policy landscape. Combining content analysis with our ethnographic approach within the settlement and policy advocacy circles (where adaptation discourses are disseminated and defended) allows us to observe the *lived* and *subjectification* effects of the adaptation policies. Combining ethnographic observations with content analysis allows us a clear view of how discursive effects tie into lived effects, leading us to posit what we call discursive partition,<sup>(75)</sup> which frustrates attempts to address a just and welcoming integration of climate-impacted dwellers in the city.

To analyse the national level framing of climate migration to informal settlements, we reviewed five documents: *Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100*, *7th Five Year Plan 2016*, *National Strategy on the Management of Disaster and Climate Induced Internal Displacement 2015*, *Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2009* and *National Housing Policy 2016*. At the urban level, we reviewed two much-debated new documents: *Dhaka Structure Plan 2016–35* and *Dhaka Detailed Area Plan 2016–35*. All seven documents were reviewed and coded to address three primary questions: (1) What are the primary urban adaptation strategies proposed in each plan? (2) How does each plan frame climate-impacted dwellers? and (3) What do the plans propose for informal settlements vis-a-vis climate-impacted dwellers? In the analysis stage, we looked for "silences" and "missing" proposals across urban and national plans. We considered the effects (discursive, lived and subjectification) these incongruences may produce (particularly by triangulating our interpretations with our ethnographic observations, whether in the settlement or the policy advocacy processes). We were guided by the overarching question: How does the framing of climate-impacted dwellers and the proposals for informal settlements differ or converge across these seven documents? Throughout this process, we used MAXQDA 2022 (a qualitative analysis software) for content analysing, coding and compiling our findings.<sup>(76)</sup>

Our analysis couples the textual investigation with direct ethnographic engagement in the settlements and urban policy discussion

be disentangled from the worsening economic inequality despite Bangladesh's economic growth (measured in GDP). See Titumir (2021); Cities Alliance (2009).

68. Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2014).

69. Angeles et al. (2009).

70. It is difficult to have an accurate determination of the population in Korail. See Rahman and Ahmed (2016) for a figure of 200,000 which is corroborated by our personal communication with local leaders.

71. See Bloomberg (2022).

72. As an exception, Adri and Simon (2018) found statistically significant differences between climate-displaced migrants and economic migrants in Korail, Dhaka.

73. Bacchi (2010); Jacobs (2006).

74. Bacchi (2010).

75. This is a deliberate allusion to the colonial partition's historical injustice in the subcontinent, see Zamindar (2007).

76. We searched the documents for predetermined words (e.g. migration, migrant, poor, housing, urban, city, Dhaka, adaptation, resilience, climate change) and words that emerged from reading the documents (e.g. households, community, encroachment). One of the documents was in Bengali, so we had to read it entirely to find relevant sections. From the discovered text segments, we identified how the plans frame migrants, informal settlements and their proposed solutions to reach our findings.

77. Huq: July 2017, June and July 2018, July to November 2019; Shafique: January to June 2019, December 2019.

arena. Both authors were present in Korail from 2017 to 2019,<sup>(77)</sup> when we mapped land uses and conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews (120 hours with 60 interviewees), three focus group discussions and participant observations (at least twice and up to four times per week for 6–8 hours during fieldwork periods). As our research at the time focused on community-led placemaking processes within informal settlements, we did not seek out climate migrants. Yet, 40 per cent of our interviewees turned out to be people who had moved due to extreme events (cyclones, floods) or slow-onset processes (land loss) now ascribed to climate change. Two evolving situations drove our investigation. Dwellers' experiences of climate injustices in their original place and in Korail over the past decades repeatedly surfaced in interactions, motivating us to redirect our scholarship and activism towards the intersection of climate and housing justice. At the same time, our engagement with lawyers and anti-eviction activists compelled us to investigate the adaptation policyscape. Advocates and organizers wanted to learn about potential areas where the struggle for housing rights could be advanced.

The materials and insights we share in this paper draw extensively from our collective and tacit understanding based on these long-term relationships and struggles for housing justice. For instance, our choice of the seven documents we reviewed was guided by the observation that these texts surface consistently across conferences, seminars and discussions in law and development sectors. We collaborate with Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), which has an established history of providing various services and advocating against evictions in Dhaka's informal settlements. Our work with a community organization of climate-impacted dwellers, the Community Town Federation, has continued into 2022. Since 2019, we have both been organizing the Platform for Housing Justice to convene architects, planners, lawyers, advocates, settlement dwellers and activists in advancing the rights of climate-impacted dwellers. This paper is a result of all that ongoing "*dirty research*"<sup>(78)</sup> – situated, reflexive and reciprocal – that actively seeks to illustrate key inequalities, and that will simultaneously strengthen on-the-ground activism.

78. Recio and Shafique (2021).

#### IV. DISCURSIVE PARTITION

Bangladesh appears to be making strides in climate adaptation. Plans span multiple government ministries and agencies, with directives for rural and urban adaptation, notwithstanding the injustices of global climate finance. As polluting countries repackage development aid as climate finance, commit insufficient funds, and mobilize even less, Bangladesh has progressively allocated more funds for climate adaptation. The Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund (BCCTF), primarily funded through the government, allocated US\$ 447 million between 2009–10 and 2019–20 and proposed US\$ 2,850 million for 2020–21.<sup>(79)</sup> Bangladesh also draws from diverse international sources, including the UK's Department for International Development (DFID, now part of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, FCDO), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the Global Climate Fund (GCF), the Climate Investment Fund (CIF) and the Global

79. Huq et al. (2019); Munira et al. (2021).

Environment Facility (GEF). This bilateral and multilateral financing has at times been fraught with tension as donors alleged corruption within the state bureaucracy.<sup>(80)</sup> In 2010, the government created a Climate Change Unit under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change to manage the funds and establish cross-sectoral links between agencies and a shared knowledge base to guide adaptation. Bangladesh's climate funds have been aimed at financing environmental protection, knowledge management, institution strengthening, food security and renewable energy issues. What does all of this mean for addressing climate-impacted informal settlements?

The five national plans and two urban plans we analysed *recognize* that climate migrants will move to urban areas and concentrate in informal settlements, the only places they can find affordable housing and work. Three of the five national plans propose in situ upgrading for informal settlements, along with promoting collective tenure rights. The 7th Five Year Plan, for instance, promotes collective tenure security through "*group tenure arrangements, whereby [a] block is registered under a lease agreement to the group or a local authority*" (page 488). Where possible, the plan aims to create special zones for the "*regularization of tenable informal settlements*" (page 488). The National Housing Policy proposes "*incremental construction/transformation and gradual up-gradation of all prevailing slums towards progressive improvement of infrastructure*" (page 35). The National Strategy on the Management of Disaster and Climate Induced Internal Displacement 2015 recommends that "*Khas land . . . be allocated for cluster climate resilient housing and livelihood for potentially displaced people*" (page 18). The plan goes on to propose the creation of "*legally binding Common Pool Resources*" such as land "*with the provision of access*" to poor climate migrants (page 18). Such common pool land can be community managed in ways that share benefits among the dwellers. In post-displacement scenarios where people cannot return, the plan promotes in situ informal settlement upgrading and community land trusts to lend, rent and sell land (page 23). In case of eviction for legitimate reasons, all three plans provide guidelines for proper rehabilitation of informal settlement dwellers, compensation and facilitation of appropriate low-cost housing. Clearly, these proposals, if implemented, would have significant impacts for all climate-impacted dwellers living in "*permanent temporariness*" in informal settlements.<sup>(81)</sup>

Beyond their recognition of climate migrants as an urban reality, the urban and national plans diverge significantly. The urban plans pick up none of the policy threads on informal settlements laid out in the national plans. The Structure Plan 2015–35, which precedes and provides broader level guidance for the Detailed Area Plan, cites Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2009 and National Housing Policy. Yet ironically, it frames informal settlements as causes of "*environmental degradation*" and implicitly climate-impacted dwellers as agents of said degradation. The Detailed Area Plan 2016–35 (DAP) aims to create low-income housing in the urban peripheries while ignoring existing informal settlements. When the participatory processes for DAP were opened in 2020, we worked with BLAST and a group of architects, planners, economists and urban scholars to submit expert suggestions to the planning authorities, highlighting the crucial blindspot of the urban plans on the plight of climate-impacted dwellers. These suggestions did not make it into the approved DAP, which has now been gazetted. Our

80. See Alam et al. (2011).

81. Huq and Miraftab (2020).

experiences confirm the claim that open participation in the planning process does not ensure climate justice.

This incongruence between the national and urban plans means the climate “progress” at the national level has no counterpart in the ordinary lives of climate-impacted dwellers in informal settlements. In our fieldwork and organizing with Korail dwellers, we repeatedly heard stories of “climate displacement” that led migrants to the city between the 1990s to the present day. But as displaced citizens, they found little to no support. Instead, they faced evictions in the informal settlements where they made homes in the city. Salma, who recently arrived in Korail, shared her experience:

“We moved from Bhola. Our house was close to the river. We had to move two times because of the river. I lived with my in-laws and my husband worked in Dhaka . . . The first time the house came down, the chairman gave us tin, bamboo, and another piece of land to live on. But that land was close to the river too. And that house came down after 4–5 months. It was scary – the sounds of the river. You could see big trees falling in. Then we went to the [union] member and he let us stay in his guest room for 2–3 weeks. He fed us too. But he didn’t want us there, we could tell. We can’t demand too much from them [union council]. They say, ‘Are you the only ones facing this? There are so many others we have to look after.’ We all moved to Dhaka then. That was five years ago. What’s the point of building homes with children close to the river and moving over and over? In Korail, I live with my husband, a nine-year-old child, and my mother-in-law sometimes stays with us. I took an NGO loan to buy a house here but the fire burned it down. I couldn’t rebuild the house and still have to pay the loan. Now I live on the lakeside and when it rains, the place is waterlogged. Who wants to live in the city? We lived through two fires already, and have a debt to pay.”

The cyclical experiences of displacement are shared across generations. Momtaz, a long-term resident of Korail, shared similar experiences:

“We lived in Madaripur. With my mother and brother, I used to work our land. We grew rice and vegetables. We lived by the Arial Khan River. Over the years, we kept losing our land to the river. Finally when we lost our home to the river, we asked the [union] member what we should do. He told us to live in the school building. At night we would sleep in the classrooms and in the morning we would stay outside the school, working the land for other people. After some weeks, they told us to leave the school building. My cousin took us into his homestead. We worked his land in return for a year and a half. Then he told us to find our own house. We had nothing. We travelled to Dhaka and set up shacks in Korail in 1996. Life hasn’t changed here. We live through evictions, fire, floods. Life hasn’t changed.”

The lives of migrants in the settlements reflect a host of climate-related stresses. In particular, water scarcity has worsened in recent years due to increased heat waves, resulting in higher costs and difficulty in acquiring water.<sup>(82)</sup>

Our dataset is not statistically significant and cannot speak for all climate-impacted dwellers in Bangladesh’s informal settlements. However,

82. Tahsin and Murshed (2020).

the stories of Momtaz, Salma and many others raise critical questions about national and urban plans' role in realizing climate justice in urban Bangladesh. How can climate injustice persist despite their recognition that climate-impacted dwellers are indispensable to urban economies? What gaps in these policy proposals structure climate injustice against climate-impacted dwellers?

The national plans, by singularly focusing on internal climate migrants and their displacements, erase the complex social reality of informal settlements and the climate hazards in places where climate-displaced people settle. Although all seven plans, national and urban, recognize the reality of climate migration, the urban plans exclude the collective land tenure and in situ upgrading propositions made in the national plans. All climate-impacted dwellers face the silent damage of exclusion from land tenure proposals. All of them deserve equitable resettlement but find little to no support in the city and experience a spiral of deepening climate vulnerability. We term the discrepancy between national- and urban-level plans on land tenure for informal settlement a *discursive partition* that adversely impacts climate-impacted dwellers in urbanizing Bangladesh. In deploying this discursive partition, (1) the climate adaptation state can garner international legitimacy and access funds as the champion of climate victims because national plans support the integration of climate migrants through settlement upgrading; (2) at the same time the state at the urban level can ensure the redevelopment of urban land by displacement through planning and also a flow of precariously housed climate-impacted labour to the export industries in the city.

Planning discourses – as materialized through plans, maps and other official productions – are ways of crafting knowledge instrumental for building urban futures. The discursive partition we show here is a structural condition of dominant Bangladeshi climate planning that *nationally promotes but locally excludes* climate-impacted dwellers' experiences, practices and knowledge. More specifically, in this age of inclusion and equity rhetoric, both national and urban plans recognize climate-impacted dwellers and their contribution to the city – neither can be faulted for not recognizing climate migration *to* and climate vulnerability *in* informal settlements. Yet, the in situ and tenure-specific inclusion promoted in the national plans are ignored in the urban plans. Therefore, while planning authorities and political visionaries portray climate justice success at the national level, there appears to be no accompanying material change in everyday urban reality. These gaps between national and municipal plans<sup>(83)</sup> are often explained as a lack of coordination among agencies. We theorize the gaps differently, highlighting the legitimizing role they play in the global political economy. "Lack of coordination" implies an unintentional side effect of managing complexity. We suggest, rather, that the inter-scalar discrepancy is manufactured to accommodate desires to redevelop land by displacement and maintain a precariously housed labour flow, while still accessing multilateral funds, and sustaining international legitimacy. Discursive partition ensures that many urban planning practices that defy the basic rights of climate-impacted dwellers can be blamed on an accidental lack of coordination and resources. Repeated over at least two decades and shaping millions of lives, discursive partitioning is a structural determinant of the adaptation state's functioning within a neoliberal global order.

83. Araos et al. (2017).

Operating within this discursive partition, urban adaptation practices impact the actual lived reality of climate-impacted dwellers. City-level adaptation practices (for example, replacing settlements with eco-parks) are essentially premised on an “*epistemicide*”, i.e. destruction of the knowledge and practices of these dwellers.<sup>(84)</sup> When dominant adaptation policy and knowledge pose dwellers as vulnerable and their settlements as sites of intervention, they, in Nagar’s words, “*obliterate the ways that hungry people actively create politics and knowledge by living a dynamic vision of what is ethical and what makes the good life*”.<sup>(85)</sup> To redress such structural violence and inequity, planning authorities need to unlearn and relearn from the practices and utterances of subordinate communities. By valuing the situated perspectives of climate-impacted dwellers, planning practitioners and policymakers can repair the harm of discursive partition and reappropriate national plans as an opportunity for implementing equitable climate adaptation through low-cost settlement upgrading for all. In the next section, we document dweller practices that prefigure possibilities for climate justice. Planners and policymakers must turn to these as credible, just ways of implementing participatory urban adaptation.

## V. MAKING SETTLEMENTS UNDER EPISTEMICIDE

Bangladesh’s climate-affected communities spend enormous amounts to deal with the damage. Rural communities, for instance, spend twice as much on climate damage as the government and 12 times more than international aid.<sup>(86)</sup> Although not enumerated in monetary amounts, the practices of urban climate-impacted dwellers also show a disproportionate pattern of grassroots initiative in tackling climate impacts, in contrast to the neglect from municipal and national authorities. The informal settlements created through such activities are part of the “*emerging geographies*” of climate justice, where migration justice meets housing justice to challenge urban climate planning for the affluent.<sup>(87)</sup>

These “*subaltern forms of knowledge*” show solidarity, adaptation and collective placemaking to battle climate change hazards.<sup>(88)</sup> Dwellers engage in adaptation practices with or without the support of municipal and planning authorities. Attention to these practices exposes a foundational aspect of climate injustice, namely the epistemic injustice whereby, far from learning from them, city planning authorities do not even *consider* the claims, on-the-ground perspectives and knowledge that make the city resilient for its majority.

Household-level adaptation patterns documented elsewhere are also visible in Korail – houses raised on stilts, doorways raised to prevent flooding, elevated furniture. In the case of Korail, dwellers’ adaptation planning also shows a temporal trajectory.<sup>(89)</sup> At the settlement level, the spatial morphology of the settlement has expanded its carrying capacity and developed sophisticated functioning over time. For instance, the 1998 flood and 2004 fire led to settlement-level adaptation changes spearheaded by dwellers. In the early 1990s, the first houses were all made of bamboo mat walls which lacked structural support. The major flood in 1998, which affected some parts of Korail, swept away these walls, and dwellers subsequently began using wooden poles or bamboo frames to create the structural framework for the mats. These upgrading strategies

84. See De Sousa Santos (2015).

85. Nagar (2019), page 213.

86. Al Jazeera (2021).

87. Fisher (2015).

88. See reference 30.

89. See Shafique (2021) for an analysis of how self-organization has changed in Korail.

were carried out not only by those affected by the flood but slowly spread, making the entire settlement more resilient to flooding.

The next major adaptation happened in response to the fire that broke out in Korail in 2004. Although it affected only some parts, many people started changing the very flammable bamboo mat and sack walls for CI sheet walls. This was when NGOs started operating in Korail on a large scale, facilitating the upgrading process with access to capital. After fires in 2007, 2016 and 2017, entire parts were rebuilt, lanes widened, roads paved, even in areas not affected by the fire. These practices show a learning network in operation, with rapid diffusion of strategies and technical innovations percolating to the entire settlement. The diffusive capacity of dweller knowledge and practices is key to the settlement's resilience.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, lockdowns repeatedly shut down the informal economy, and people lost their livelihoods. Community organizers in Korail pooled resources to support hungry families, in the absence of sufficient state support. Since 2020, many unemployed and impoverished families have migrated back to their districts of origin, particularly as they could not pay rent. But both long-term and recent climate-impacted dwellers with no land to return to live in hunger and homelessness. One community organization, Community Town Federation, raised funds locally and transnationally among the Bangladeshi diaspora to provide food support to over 1,800 such households.

The infrastructure building and rebuilding efforts of Korail's dwellers concretely counter the climate injustices of discursive partition. Despite how temporary the results may be, they insist on in situ upgrading and collective tenure, approaches made to seem unfeasible under discursive partition. Community leaders have been working with legal advocates to challenge the proposed eviction in court and are negotiating resettlement conditions should it proceed. Thus, the anti-eviction and resettlement policies proposed in national level plans are being realized through community organizing at the settlement level. For the past 12 years, community savings groups in Korail have organized to purchase land on higher ground to the north of Dhaka. Climate-impacted dwellers have been able to build equity towards land in this community-planned retreat from potentially hazardous zones. In so many ways, dwellers materially contest discursive partition and reduce their collective climate risks.

## VI. CONCLUSION: REVISITING ADAPTATION POLICIES IN THE CITY

With COP27 ending in disappointment, some critics continue to perpetuate the narrative of the geopolitical injustice – the reluctance of the “rich developed polluting nations” to pay smaller nations that bear the brunt of climate change impacts, and the way neoliberal privatization seeps into these cracks to monetize the adaptation process.<sup>(90)</sup> While not disagreeing with this critique, we extend our analysis beyond a simple “victim's tale” at the national scale. The discursive partitioning and its pairing with epistemicide within the lived urban grain implies a polycscape in which simply adding resources (grants, compensation or more loans) will not translate into actual on-the-ground change for the most vulnerable in the climate-affected spectrum. Rather, incongruence

90. Kabir and Kamruzzaman (2021).

in adaptation policymaking across scales and climate injustices against climate-impacted dwellers are designed into the technicalities of multi-scalar inclusive governance even as it recognizes climate risks in and beyond the city.

In light of these findings, we call for three revisitations.

First, in terms of our specific focus on informal settlements as porous sites where climate and economic migrants live with existing dwellers under climate-impacted realities, we add our voices to those of activists, scholars and practitioners who call for revisiting the neglect of such places within the discourse of climate adaptation. In addition, adaptation approaches focusing solely on climate migration are bound to fail ethically and politically. For years, scholars and activists have argued that developmental informal settlement upgrading cannot be seen as separate from urban climate adaptation and the city's overall resilience. Yet, even when climate plans acknowledge upgrading as crucial for adaptation, discursive partitioning can design out that possibility with severe real-life implications for climate-impacted dwellers. We must look at multi-scalar processes and move beyond sectoral planning and policy to realize climate justice. In the context of Bangladesh and Dhaka in particular, this could mean reopening urban land governance questions about ownership, tenure and social value of land across multiple agencies, sectors and scales so that informal settlements can be materially integrated into the urban fabric. It is well understood that once urban land is secured, dwellers can collectively organize and build settlements with that security.<sup>(91)</sup>

Second, in terms of settlements as sites of learning, we need to squarely address the epistemic injustices of planning processes that ignore, erase and delegitimize the practices and knowledge of climate-impacted dwellers in informal settlements. The provider model approach, whereby housing is built and delivered (through rent, lease or title handover), may not address the millions of dwellers who need to be meaningfully integrated into global South cities. Planning entities must actively work to learn from those communities' spatial and collective practices, allowing for more nuanced policies and actions. Planners can preemptively support newer informal settlements to be more resilient through such processes – an alternative paradigm for humane urbanism.<sup>(92)</sup>

Third, at a more structural level, advocates, planning professionals and organizers must interrogate the relationship of national centralized planning policies and urban implementation strategies. Contextualizing discursive partition within broader historical processes is crucial for appreciating the structural contours of climate-impacted dweller exclusion. Rather than continuing with strictly hierarchical modalities of planning knowledge production, it is urgent now to equitably de-partition policies across national and urban scales.

Finally, as reflective academics situated within an ongoing struggle in informal settlements, we are taking these findings back to climate-impacted communities to organize actions, to speak, write and stay with the troublemaking. While our attempt here has been to highlight structural features of injustice within the climate policy landscape, we firmly believe intellectual efforts are not enough; academic efforts may even perpetuate the old extractive approach to knowledge production. So far in our work, we have focused on recognizing Bangladesh's informal settlements as the fundamental target for achieving climate and housing justice. But our findings indicate a need to organize to counter discursive

91. Handzic (2010).

92. Gouverneur (2014).

partition. This gives us a practical focus for talking with those on the ground, showing how local planning authorities have failed to translate progressive national policies (the right of any citizen) into actions. These insights allow new investigations from spatial justice perspectives and the possibilities of new imaginations for climate-impacted dwellers in urban Bangladesh and beyond.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are thankful to the anonymous reviewers of this paper for their useful comments, as well as the presenters and discussants at the 2021 ACSP panel on Exploring the Connection between Housing and Climate Justice (Tisha Holmes, Hugo Sarmiento, Bala Balachandran, Sowmya Balachandran and Santina Contreras). Responsibility for the shortcomings of the paper, however, remains with the authors.

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