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From climate refugees to economic migrants:

EU's discursive framing of climate-induced migration and displacement

Master's thesis in European Studies

Supervisor: Carine Germond

Trondheim, May 2018

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Table of contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	I
ABBREVIATIONS	V
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 THE CLIMATE CHANGE-MIGRATION NEXUS: THE CONTEXT	7
2.1 Climate change as a cause of migration and displacement	7
2.2 A clear problem with no clear definition	8
2.3 Existing policies that address mixed-environmental migration.....	11
3 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS	15
3.1 Discourse analysis as theory and method	15
3.1.1 The power of discourse.....	16
3.1.2 Validity, replicability and generalization	17
3.2 Operationalization.....	18
3.2.1 Framing the analysis: an order of discourse	18
3.2.2 Intertextuality and monuments	20
3.2.3 Story lines	20
3.2.4 Sources and data	21
4 MIXED-ENVIRONMENTAL MIGRATION IN EU DISCOURSES	24
4.1 Environmental degradation and environmental refugees.....	24
4.2 The Commission gets involved.....	26
4.3 The 2015 refugee crisis and increased focus on migration.....	27
5 THE CAUSE OF MIXED-ENVIRONMENTAL MIGRATION ACCORDING TO THE DISCOURSES	30
5.1 Military activity and war as a cause of mixed-environmental migration	30
5.2 Anthropocentric over-exploitation of the environment	33
5.3 Direct consequences of climate change	34
6 SOLUTIONS PROPOSED IN THE DISCOURSES	38
6.1 Discourses on prevention	38
6.1.1 Utilizing the military to prevent mixed-environmental migration	38
6.1.2 Development and resilience-building as a method of prevention	40
6.1.3 Research is needed to prevent mixed-environmental migration	42
6.2 Discourses on protection.....	43

7	CONCLUSION AND CLOSING REMARKS	46
8	REFERENCES.....	50
	APPENDIX	57

Abbreviations

ACP	African, Caribbean, Pacific countries
AGIR	Global Alliance for Resilience Initiative
AU	African Union
CSWD	Commission Staff Working Document
EC	European Commission
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
GAMM	Global Approach to Migration and Mobility
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
RPPs	Regional Protection Programmes
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SHARE	Supporting Horn of Africa Resilience
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Ane Louise Toft Rud

1 Introduction

50m environmental refugees by end of decade, UN warns

[R]ising sea levels and the growing number and intensity of storms [...] is a recipe for a disaster, with enormous potential to create waves of environment-driven migration. [...] This new category of refugee needs to find a place in international agreements. (Adam, 2005).

Climate change 'will create world's biggest refugee crisis'

Experts warn refugees could number tens of millions in the next decade, and call for a new legal framework to protect the most vulnerable (Taylor, 2017).

The two media headlines and excerpts address the same issue, yet they were written more than a decade apart. Both warn of future refugee crises caused by climate change, and both call for the creation of legal protection for these refugees. Already in 1999, the European Parliament (EP) warned that by 2010, there would be 50 million or more “environmental refugees” worldwide. It also claimed that there were at the time 25 million “environmental refugees” in the world, compared to 22 million ‘traditional’ refugees (European Parliament, 1999, p. 5-6). Today, estimates vary. Some state that more than 21 million people have been displaced annually on average because of natural disasters or effects of climate change (Bilak et al., 2016, p. 12). Other researchers believe that “migration is driven by many interacting factors, and can rarely be reduced to the effects of just one form of change, such as climate change” (Castles, Haas, & Miller, 2014, p. 209). Although there is inconsistency in the numbers of people displaced by climate change, there is in fact a record high number of forcibly displaced people globally (65.5 million in 2016) (UNHCR, n.d.). Although there is little consensus on how to understand and define both the problem and the migrants (which is evidenced by the fluctuation in the aforementioned numbers), there *is* a general agreement among international organizations and states that this in fact is a problem, and that it needs to be dealt with. Because, as the most recent media excerpt above reveals, there is still no legal framework protecting the many people migrating because of climatic or environmental changes.

The EU acknowledges climate change and the challenges it imposes, and therefore has several policies addressing different aspects of it. It also has migration policies directed towards both migration-receiving countries in Europe, and countries of origin and transit in the neighboring regions such as Africa. Paradoxically, there is little focus on the so called “climate refugees” – the people that migrate *because of* climate change. If prevention in form of reducing vulnerability, implementing adaptation plans and building resilience fails, and people are forced to move because of either fast or slow climatic changes, then there is no direct EU policy in place to protect these people.

This is a multi-faceted problem of importance at both the individual and legal level. For instance, *climate* or *environmental refugee* is not a legal term and therefore these migrants would most likely be labeled as economic or illegal migrants if they were to reach the EU. If they wish to reside in the EU, they have to find other ways to legitimize their residence such as through labor or student visas or by applying for asylum (Valenta & Jakobsen, 2017, p. 34). Additionally, the EU hopes to reduce incentives for irregular migration and to address the root causes of migration. They also wish to prevent human smuggling and trafficking and save lives in the Mediterranean Sea while securing the external borders (European Commission, 2017). One can assume that for these policies to be efficient and address all challenges, migration should also be addressed in relation to climate and environmental change.

Due to the magnitude of the challenges posed by climate change¹ on vulnerable regions, and to the lack of legal tools addressed at climate-induced migrants, in this text I explore the research questions of *how does the EU understand climate-induced migration according to official discourses?* And more precisely, *what do they claim is the cause, and what solutions do they present?* As a derived question, I ask whether this says something about *what actions the EU might implement in the future to address the problem.*

I do not however, attempt to assess whether current EU policies are sufficient or not, nor do I ask *why* the EU is doing what they are (or are not) doing, but rather I set out to find the framed causes and solutions of climate-induced migration, according to EU discourses.

Many efforts have been spent by researchers to understand the link between climate change and migration (Black et al., 2011). Warner, Hamza, Oliver-Smith, Renaud and Julca (2010) claim that people have three options when faced with severe environmental degradation. These are; first, to stay and adapt to mitigate the effects, second, stay, do nothing and accept a lower quality of life, or third, leave the affected area. They then consider whether migration reduces or increases vulnerability. However, a common view is that migration can be seen as an adaptation strategy to climate change (See for instance Bardsley & Hugo, 2010; Black, Bennett, Thomas, & Beddington, 2011; Tacoli, 2009), and that migration can strengthen communities' capacity to adapt (Barnett & Webber, 2010). Felli (2012) argues that the terminology "climate refugee" previously was used when discussing migration as a failure to adapt. He

¹ In this paper I follow the CSWD's (2013) understanding of climate change, which is: long-term changes in climate directly and indirectly caused by human activities combined with those originating from natural climate evolution and variability. This is in line with the definition provided by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)" (CSWD, 2013, p. 3).

Introduction

claims a shift in discourses has happened and that “climate migration” now is often used instead. This implies that migration can be seen as adaptation to climate change (Felli, 2012).

Piguet (2012) has a different point of departure. He argues that the founders of migration studies considered the natural environment as an important determinant of migration. This factor, he argues, was forgotten or ignored during the twentieth century, as an explanation of mobility. The environment has only reappeared in recent times with warnings of future environmental migrants (Piguet, 2012). Bettini (2013) calls this recent type of research “dystopian narratives” which forecasts flows of climate refugees. He claims that while these narratives often are used to draw attention to the issue, they “are detrimental for an emancipatory approach to climate change” (Bettini, 2013, p. 1).

The literature shows that climate change can cause migration in many and different parts of the world. In the media, attention has often been given to small island states that are at risk because of rising sea levels. Venn (2017) draws on empirical research from Fiji and Vanuatu and argues that the international community must strengthen the protection of, and access to human rights for the people living there. She proposes actions that can be taken by the international community to do this, such as funding strategies and capacity building. Mortreux and Barnett (2009) on the other hand claim climate change is *not* a determining factor when people decide to move from the island Funafuti in the Pacific Ocean, and that the people living there would prefer not to move (Mortreux & Barnett, 2009). Roy (2013) too argues that it is too simplistic to only focus on sea level rise as a factor for migration, even at islands that are predicted to become completely uninhabitable within a generation because of sea level rise. He seeks to understand the multiple factors at play when island residents decide to relocate (or not) (Roy, 2013). Researchers have also investigated governments’ roles in planned relocation. For instance, in the Maldives (Kothari, 2013), but also in more northerner areas. Scholars have addressed the challenges Alaskan indigenous rural communities face because of climate change. They have considered what legal options or mechanisms are in place for governments to assist, when entire communities are planning to relocate (Ristroph, 2017; Marlow & Sancken, 2017). Some literature also attempt to map out what legal options are in place for countries that *receive* climate-induced migrants. Wyman (2017) argues that, contrary to what some studies say, the US has legal options in place that could be adapted to assist climate-induced migrants. Many researchers have investigated policies, institutions or funding mechanisms that are in place to protect migrants’ access to protection and human rights. They claim these are insufficient to deal with climate-induced migration and many have made suggestions for how international institutions and countries can improve how they deal with these migrants (Biermann

& Boas, 2010; Martin, 2010). Researchers have also been interested in the connection between climate change, migration and security. Barnett and Webber (2016) claim there is little reason to think climate-induced migration will increase the risk of violent conflict. However, other research says climate change *can* increase the risk of violent conflict and thereby the risk of involuntary migration (Raleigh, 2010; Brown & Crawford, 2009). For instance, in Syria, climate and environmental factors was a driver in the civil war, according to some scholars (Gleick, 2014).

When it comes to the EU, most of the existing literature focus on securitization and the security aspects of migration. (See for instance Trombetta, 2014; Methmann & Rothe, 2014; Youngs, 2015). Geddes (2015) assesses the EU's external migration governance and what effects climate and environmental change have on the nexus of migration and security, since the two are traditionally connected in the international political system (Geddes, 2015). Villani (2017) investigates how human security for people fleeing sudden natural disasters can be balanced with traditional concepts of state security, as well as the approaches taken by the EU towards climate-induced migration (p. 163).

Both the EP and the EC have published reports that address what policies are in place, what policies or instruments can be amended to address climate-induced migrants, and where there are policy gaps (European Commission, 2013; European Parliament, 2011). The Greens in the European Parliament have published similar reports (The Greens, 2013), as well as the Heinrich Böll Stiftung which is affiliated with the Green Party (Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2014).

However, no attempt has been made to examine how the EU understands and frames climate-induced migration by using discourse analysis as research method. Such an approach can be helpful in order to better understand the policies and mechanisms that are in place, but also to get an idea of policy changes that might come in the EU's approach to the issue. Discourse analysis can be used to attempt to understand social and political problems, or foreign policy. Although, it has not often been used to analyze actual political issues (Jensen, 2016, p. 1-2). However, Hansen (2006) used discourse analysis to understand the western response to the Bosnian war by analyzing discourses both from the media and governments (Hansen, 2006). Jensen and Skedsmo (2010) too analyzed government discourses in order to identify Norwegian and Russian understandings of perceived challenges in the Arctic. Hønneland (2003) addressed how environmental problems in the arctic were framed and how that then affected the politics executed by Russia and the West. Jensen (2016) demonstrated that the dominating discourses enables or disables what actions can be taken, with the case of Norway's foreign policy in the Arctic (p. 1). When it comes to the EU, discourse analysis has become a central approach. It

Introduction

has for instance been used to identify what is being said about Europe, as well as to investigate how discourses affect national politics and European integration (Crespy, 2015, p. 102). However, discourse analysis has not been used to understand how the EU perceives the challenge of climate and environmentally related migration and displacement. Nor has it been utilized to identify what *solutions* the EU perceive and frame to be the best to address this issue.

Climate-induced migration is a political topic with no apparent solution in the EU. The EC and the EP has presented different point of views, or *representations* of reality. There is no consensus on terminology or definition, neither in EU documents, nor in the literature. This means an ongoing battle is taking place in order to define the normal perception of reality. Because “discourses are involved with determining actual behavior”, and they can “shed light on political practice by defining the scope for action and which options are taken as politically feasible” (Jensen, 2016, p. 16), I have decided to use discourse analysis in this study. This means that the statements presented by the EC and the EP sets the rules for what actions and policies can be created to address the issue of climate-induced migration in the future. Therefore, using discourse analysis can help clarify how these EU institutions understand the issue, and therefore what actions they might take to address it in the future. I will focus on the time period between the first publication of an EP document in 1999 which explicitly discusses climate-induced migration, and until December 2017. The reason I can allow myself to focus on such a long time period, is because the EC and the EP has produced surprisingly few documents discussing the topic.

While many discourse analysts ask why something is being debated – why the topic is salient, I would argue that I am doing the opposite in this thesis. I am investigating a topic that for many years has been recognized as an enormous problem but is not being debated to a great extent. Neither does it have political salience compared to the other related topics such as migration and climate change (at least within the institutions I focus on). However, my attempt in this thesis is not to assess *why* the topic is not more frequently debated, or to assess the degree of salience. I simply aim to understand how the EU understands the phenomenon of climate-induced migration.

The thesis consists of seven sections. In the following chapter, I will account for how climate change can cause migration, then I will discuss the difficulty of defining these migrants, before I give a brief account of existing policies and mechanisms that are in place to address the issue. In the third section, discourse analysis as theory and method is introduced. Here I will also explain the operationalization of the study. Thereafter, in the fourth section, I will give an

account of the essence of the discourses produced within the frame of the analysis. Then, in section five, I will discuss and analyze the main discourses that discuss the *cause* of climate-induced migration. Then finally, I will discuss the discourses that propose a *solution* to the problem.

This analysis will demonstrate that the EC and the EP's understanding of the nexus of climate change and migration has changed through time. The differing estimates in the media excerpts in the introduction, are not the result of enhanced knowledge of the phenomenon of climate-induced migration, as the EU argues, but rather a changed definition and understanding of the word "environmental refugee".

2 The climate change-migration nexus: the context

The ways in which climate and environmental changes cause migration are complex. This is also why describing and defining the phenomenon of climate induced migration is challenging, which then also makes policy making that address the issue a challenge. In the following sections I will first discuss how climate change can cause displacement and migration. This will then help understand the lack of coherent terminology, which I will address thereafter. Finally, I will give a brief account of what related policies and mechanisms currently are in place that are relevant to the EU.

2.1 Climate change as a cause of migration and displacement

Climate change can cause migration in many, and complex ways. It is the least developed countries that lack the economy and ability to adapt to climate change that are most prone to experience climate-induced migration. Socio-economic circumstances, resilience and the resources of governing institutions will affect the ability of people and societies to adapt (McAdam, Burson, Kälin & Weerasinghe, 2016, p. 12). Increased competition over scarce resources might be a consequence of climate change, and already poor countries might experience brain drain and flight of capital as a consequence of the following migration (Buan, Inderberg & Rottem, 2010, p. 16). However, the majority of climate related migration happens within a country's borders. Only a minority crosses a border to a neighboring country, while an even smaller minority reaches developed countries like in Europe (ibid., p. 17).

Rising sea levels is one way climate change can cause migration. Island states are already struggling with sea level rise and must move settlements and populations to adapt (Buan, Inderberg & Rottem, 2010, p. 16). As McAdam, Burson, Kälin & Weerasinghe (2016) says; "Sea-level rise means that some coastal and low-lying areas will first become uninhabitable and may later disappear" (McAdam, Burson, Kälin & Weerasinghe, 2016, p. 13). Sea levels are rising at an accelerated rate, and scientists expect it to rise at faster than 2.0 mm per year over this century and into the next (McAdam, Burson, Kälin & Weerasinghe, 2016, p. 9). The main physical impacts of rising sea levels have been categorized into five groups. These are:

1. Increased flooding and inundation (from the sea and rivers);
 2. Erosion;
 3. Intrusion of saltwater into surface water and groundwater;
 4. Impeded drainage/higher water tables; and
 5. Loss and change of wetlands.¹⁸
- (ibid., p. 11)

Other consequences of climate change are ocean acidification and warming of surface temperatures, which have negative consequences for coastal ecosystems and thereby can affect people's livelihood and access to food. Extreme weather and heavy precipitation is also expected to increase in many regions. This means flooding and landslides are more likely to occur, which puts infrastructure, homes and properties in danger. Scientists further believe heatwaves will occur more frequently and last longer than earlier. In general, several aspects of human life are at risk because of these events.

A distinction can be made between sudden, or rapid-onset events such as natural disasters and storms, and slow-onset events like drought, sea level rise or desertification. In the case of sudden-onset events, people can be forced to migrate to save their lives. In these cases, temporary protection is often needed, and people will return home as soon as they can (European Parliament, 2011, p. 20). In the case of slow-onset events, like for instance salt water intrusion in the surface water (the fresh water) caused by sea level rise, the situation is different. In these cases, less people might be able to return. The link between slow changes and migration is hard to identify, and it is difficult to determine to what extent climate change is a factor in the decision to migrate. For instance, can water scarcity have negative economic effects because households will have a smaller ability to diversify income from for instance farming. This type of migration is more likely to be permanent but also short-distance since economically impoverished people do not have the means to migrate far (European Parliament, 2011, p. 22). Refugee flows can also have impacts on receiving areas. Often receiving countries are also vulnerable to climate change, and competition for resources can increase when they receive migrants, and environmental degradation can increase (European Parliament, 2011, p. 24).

The variables mentioned above; slow-onset or fast-onset climatic events, temporary or permanent movement, socio economic factors, and societies' ability to adapt all affect migration in different ways. The many variables make it difficult to determine to what extent it is actually climate and environmental change that forces people to move. The degree of voluntary or forced movement is also difficult to assess. This then makes it difficult to define the problem and agree on a terminology, which again makes policy making challenging.

2.2 A clear problem with no clear definition

There are many definitions and understandings of the different variations of climate-induced migration. There is however, no agreement among scholars or international organizations and states on a single definition or understanding.

As demonstrated above, slow-onset and fast-onset environmental changes affect migration differently. There have been attempts to come up with definitions that capture the complexity of the phenomenon. In a 2011 report, the EP for example stated that:

1. *Environmental migrants* are people who chose to move voluntarily from their usual place of residence primarily due to environmental concerns or reasons.
2. *Environmental displacees* are people who are forced to leave their usual place of residence, because their lives, livelihoods and welfare have been placed at serious risk as a result of adverse environmental processes and events (natural and/or triggered by people).
3. *Development displacees* are people who are intentionally relocated or resettled due to a planned land use change (Dun, Gemenne, & Stojanov, 2007 as cited in European Parliament, 2011, p. 29).

Similar attempts have been made by the UN that defined an *environmentally motivated migrant*, as “a person who ‘may’ decide to move because of an environmental stressor”, and *forced environmental migrant* as “a person who ‘has’ to leave his/her place of normal residence because of an environmental stressor” (As cited in European Parliament, 2011, p. 29).

The term *environmental refugee* was possibly first conceptualized in the frequently quoted paper with the same name by El-Hinnawi (1985), which was written for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (European Parliament, 2013, p. 14; Franklin & Cardy, 1994, p. 2; El-Hinnawi, 1985). El-Hinnawi defined *environmental refugee* as:

people who have been forced to leave their traditional habitat, temporarily or permanently, because of a marked environmental disruption (natural and/or triggered by people) that jeopardised their existence and/or seriously affected the quality of their life (El-Hinnawi, 1985, as cited in European Commission, 2013, p. 14).

Environmental and *climate refugee* have been popularly used by the media and NGOs to create attention around the problem (European Parliament, 2011, p. 28; European Commission, 2013, p. 14), but it has also been used in several EU documents (especially from the Green Party). The terms have however been criticized for being outdated and not reflecting current research on the topic and for not reflecting the complexity of climate-induced migration. It is also criticized for misusing the term *refugee* since this is a term with specific legal meaning which does not necessarily encompass people migrating due to climatic or environmental changes (European Commission, 2013, p. 14; Environmental Migration Portal, n.d.). Another frequently used term is that of *environmental migrant*. The IOM defines this as:

persons or groups of persons who, predominantly for reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their

habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move within their country or abroad (International Organization for Migration, 2011, p. 33).

However, when used without including an explanatory definition, *refugee* or *displaced person* implies someone who is forced to flee their home, while *migrant* implies someone who voluntarily migrates. While I could summarize several similar definitions used both in the literature and by the EU or IOM² I would instead like to include the concept of *mixed migration*, as this will prove more meaningful for the thesis. This a concept used by migration researchers to address the fact that people migrate for many and mixed reasons. In real life, the line between refugee (who is protected by international law) and voluntary migrant (who is not) can be blurred. Therefore, the concept attempts to illustrate that the legal visa categories created by states and the EU, often is not adequate to reflect the actual causes of migration (Linde, 2011, p. 1; Valenta & Jakobsen, 2017, p. 1). Valenta and Jakobsen describe the phenomenon and complexity of mixed migration as follows;

people who already have refugee status in one country may continue their “fragmented journey” and migrate to another country via other migration channels, as labour migrants, irregular workers, on student visas, through family reunion, or on visitor visas. This they do because the refugee status did not include proper rights to work, access to education, or other rights and opportunities needed by refugees in protracted refugee situations (Valenta & Jakobsen, 2017, p. 6).

In other words; people might migrate in anticipation of worsening conditions. Perhaps the move was originally intended to be temporarily, but due to instability or violence in their home country they cannot return as planned. Other people might be forced into different migrant statuses because of lacking variations in legal statuses (Valenta & Jakobsen, 2017, p. 6). A person seeking work as an economic migrant might for instance be forced to seek asylum in lack of other options in order to not have to return to his or her home country. This complexity which also has been demonstrated in the terminology mentioned above, is what the term *mixed migration* attempts to illustrate. It also illustrates that most legal migration statuses does not reflect the actual causes of migration, which also is the case when it comes to climate related migration. However, it is problematic for the use in this study, that there is a lack of emphasis on the climatic or environmental factor as motivation to migrate. At the same time, it is an issue that *environmental migrant*, or the other terms mentioned, do not properly illustrate the spectrum between *forced* and *voluntary* migration, or displacement. Adequate terminology is of course important to properly understand migration, and to be able to create policies that address

² See for instance European Parliament, 2011; International Organization for Migration, 2011.

it efficiently. However, in this study I do not attempt to analyze migration, but to analyze the EUs discourses on the topic. It is striking that there is no consistent term in the discourses I analyze regarding climate-induced migration. Words like *environmental migrant*, *climate refugee*, or *climate-induced migrants* are used interchangeably in EU discourses. There is also no appropriate term in the literature that encompass the different variations of climate related migration and displacement. Therefore, I propose to use the term *mixed environmental migration*. This term will both simplify and encompass the complexity of climate and environmentally-induced migration, because it draws on the term *mixed migration*, which reflects this but also adds the environmental aspect.

2.3 Existing policies that address mixed-environmental migration

Two ways in which mixed-environmental migration can be addressed are; first, to *prevent* it from occurring, second, to *protect* people once they migrate. Most of the EU's instruments in place aim to *prevent* migration from occurring. Once people are forced to migrate because of environmental or climatic changes, there is no legal framework *protecting* them (Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2014, p. 25; CSDP, 2013, p. 16). This is the case both for migrants outside of the EU, but also if they were to reach the EU. The topic is not high on the agenda of any EU institution (Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2014, p. 28), and the EC has been hesitant to take a leadership role (Heinrich Böll Stiftung, p. 26). It is not considered a pressing issue for EU immigration policy (ibid., p.32). Previously, the EUs approach to the phenomenon was driven by security concerns. Today the EC believes the issue should be addressed through development and humanitarian policies (ibid., p. 32), but the main focus is still to limit migration to the EU (ibid., p. 29 & 39). It is also unlikely that a new policy would be created to address the issue since there is a lack of political will and it would be a controversial issue (Heinrich Böll Stiftung, p. 28; European Parliament, 2011).

Firstly, regarding prevention, the EU refers to international environmental law which can be seen as a precautionary approach, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol. Additionally, it points to the “common but differentiated responsibility”, which recognizes that “developed nations have a responsibility to assume a leading role in global efforts to promote climate change mitigation and adaptation” (European Commission, 2013, p. 16). This is important since “least developed countries and small island developing countries are the most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change and have the least capacity to respond” (European Commission, 2013, p. 16). The EU also has agreements with regions in Africa in areas that are vulnerable to climate change. For

instance, the strategy for Supporting Horn of Africa Resilience (SHARE) aims to strengthen the populations resilience to future droughts, food insecurity and malnutrition (European Commission, n.d.d). There is also the Global Alliance for Resilience Initiative (AGIR) in the Sahel region which sets out to build resilience to food and nutrition crises in the region (European Commission, n.d.c). Further, there is an Africa-EU Partnership on Climate Change which aims to “strengthen African capacities for climate change adaptation and mitigation, including for reducing disaster risk and combating desertification and deforestation” (Africa-EU Partnership, 2013).

Secondly, regarding protection, the EU mentions soft law and legally binding instruments at national and international level which “might offer some form of status and/or protection to some types” of mixed-environmental migrants, in a report discussing the issue (European Commission, 2013, p. 16). Some of these are international human rights law and international refugee law. However, the definition of refugee according to the 1951 UN Convention³, does not apply to mixed-environmental migrants since environmental degradation and climate change cannot be seen as *persecution*. Additionally, one has to cross an international border to be defined as a refugee. Often, people affected by climate change lack the resources to do this and will instead be displaced internally within their own country (European Commission, 2013, p. 17). The EU also refers to the 1998 UN *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* as a framework for protection of those that do not cross international borders. However, the guiding principles of this framework are not legally binding, and it is uncertain whether mixed-environmental migrants can be included (European Commission, 2013, p. 17). There is also an EU Qualification Directive, which regulates who qualifies for international protection as a refugee, or for subsidiary protection. This is the EU-version of the so-called complementary protection based on general human rights obligations. This includes the principle of non-refoulement⁴, which should protect people from being returned to a country where their life is threatened, or where they will be at risk of “inhuman or degrading treatment”. It is unclear if mixed-environmental migrants would qualify for subsidiary protection. Another existing legal option is the

³ The definition of refugee according to the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol: “a refugee is a person who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country” (as cited in European Commission, 2013, p. 17).

⁴ Non-refoulement is defined as “the prohibition to expel a person to a country where she/he would face a real risk of a threat to her/his right to life or a real risk of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; it includes the prohibition to refuse entry if the person would otherwise face one of the risks mentioned” (as cited in Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2014, p. 30).

Temporary Protection Directive which can tackle urgent protection needs in the case of a “mass influx of displaced persons” (Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2014, p. 31). For the directive to be triggered, there must be a majority vote in the Council, upon proposal by the EC. The directive has so far never been applied (ibid.). Under the external dimension of the EUs approach to migration, the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM) is another important tool. This is the main framework for cooperation between the EU and non-EU countries on migration and asylum policy (European Commission, n.d.a), and includes the Regional Protection Programmes (RPPs). These were introduced in 2005 and include projects aimed at improving asylum procedures, reception conditions and voluntary resettlement (Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2014, p. 34). However, since current asylum frameworks do not include mixed-environmental migrants it is uncertain if this group of migrants would benefit from RPPs (ibid., p. 36). The EU also refers to the Kampala Convention for the protection and assistance of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Africa. The convention entered into force in 2012 and is the “first legally binding regional instrument in the world to impose an obligation on States to protect and assist IDPs, including persons displaced by natural or man-made disasters and development projects” (European Commission, 2013, p. 17). However, this instrument will not apply to people affected by slow-onset climatic changes.

Since 2015 there has been many new developments, especially regarding migration in general. The Protection Agenda was endorsed by more than 100 countries, and the Platform on Disaster Displacement was created, where the EU is in the steering group, as a successor to the Nansen Initiative. The Protection Agenda addresses cross-border displacement in the context of disasters and the effects of climate change, meaning “situations where people flee or are displaced across borders in the context of sudden- or slow-onset disasters, or in the context of the adverse effects of climate change” (the Nansen Initiative, n.d.). This is not a binding international convention, but it identifies measures countries voluntarily can adopt to protect and prevent mixed-environmental migration (the Nansen Initiative, n.d.). It addresses both protection and prevention. Additionally, in 2015, the Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development was adopted by the UN as well as the EU. Some of the agenda’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to combat climate change and its impacts, create sustainable agriculture, resilient cities, combat desertification and reverse land degradation (UN, n.d.). The SDGs do in other words indirectly address prevention of mixed-environmental migration. The same year, at the Valletta Summit, the EU and heads of state from African countries, agreed on a common Action Plan in the midst of the so-called refugee crisis. The first, out of five priority domains in the Action Plan addresses the root causes, or prevention of migration. Supporting resilience by

adapting to climate change and improving food security are some of the ways in which the EU and AU commit to address this (EU & AU, 2015).

In this chapter I have demonstrated that climate change can cause migration and displacement in many ways. For instance, can it be caused by sudden-onset events such as storms, or slow-onset events such as drought or sea level rise. This might affect whether people cross international borders, and whether they migrate or are displaced permanently or temporarily.

Section two showed that this complexity is reflected in the many definitions used by scholars, and can help explain why there is no consensus on terminology in the EU discourses. Therefore, the concept of mixed environmental migration was introduced, which reflects this complexity.

Finally, an examination of existing policies and legal options was conducted. This revealed that the EU has more policies in place that address *prevention* of mixed-environmental migration, rather than *protection* of the migrants. There is no clear instrument that offer protection for these migrants.

The following section introduces discourse analysis as theory and method. It then discusses how this can be a useful tool to address power relations within the frame that is analyzed, and how this then can affect the actual outcome of policies created. Since there is no agreement on how to understand mixed-environmental migration or how to address it, discourse analysis can prove to be useful to understand how it is perceived in the EU. As the next sections will explain, how an issue is understood in the dominating discourses, will define the understanding of what actions should be taken to address it.

3 Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis has become a popular research method during the last twenty years, and is now widely used within many different fields such as linguistics, political science and sociology, to mention a few. Although much research has been produced using discourse analysis, there is little general agreement among scholars on what *discourse* actually means and how one should analyze it. There also tends to be variations within each discipline and tradition (Jørgensen & Phillips, 1999, p. 9; Jensen, 2016, p. 13; Bratberg, 2014, p. 39). In other words, the concept of *discourse* seems to have different meanings in different contexts. I will however in the following subsections explain how discourse will be understood in this study and discuss the theoretical and methodological assumptions of discourse analysis. Thereafter I will discuss the operationalization of the study.

3.1 Discourse analysis as theory and method

Discourse has been defined in many ways. For instance, as “a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world)” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 1), or as “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak” (Foucault as cited in Neumann, 2001, p. 17). Discourse is language, but according to Foucault discourses expand beyond speech, writing and text (Jensen, 2016, p. 13). What the different definitions share is a constructivist assumption that the discourses do not reflect the physical world, but that they create and change the world as we perceive it (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 1). Truth, meaning, and knowledge is constructed through discourse (Jensen, 2016, p. 12), and they “define allowed and forbidden modes of thinking, living, and speaking” (Goyes, 2018, p. 14). In this thesis I share Jensen’s understanding of the discourses identified in this study as “lenses through which the world is perceived, and the ground on which thoughts and actions are built” (Jensen, 2016, p. 12).

Discourse *analysis* can be understood as an investigation of how social discourses shape the way we perceive the world and consequently think of and act in it (Bratberg, 2014, p. 50). The analysis directs our attention to how collective ideas are created, reflected, and maintained through language (Bratberg, 2014, p. 30). The point is not to discover cause and consequence, but to understand the human world; to analyze how we construct, maintain and challenge dominating discourses or understandings of reality (Bratberg, 2014, p. 52) and what room for action this understanding leaves.

For instance, Foucault claims that whatever is defined as madness is socially constructed. What is considered as “normal” or madness will change throughout time, and the borders for “normal” will move. This is regardless of new medical insight, but instead based on changing social constructions and dominating knowledge. According to Foucault, our understanding of different phenomenon in the world are subjective and shaped through language and the discourses (Bratberg, 2014, p. 47).

In other words, discourse analysis is not simply a method for data analysis, but a “complete package”, an “integrated theoretical and methodological approach to analysis” (Jensen, 2016, p. 13) where “*theory* and *method* are intertwined” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 4). Discourse analysis unites theory and method because it includes specific methods for qualitative analysis of texts while also building on theoretical assumptions of the meaning of language (Bratberg, 2014, p. 32). “Researchers must accept these basic philosophical premises in order to use discourse analysis as their method of empirical study” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 4). So, while discourse analysis can be used in different disciplines, it does have theoretical foundations which it should not be detached from (Jørgensen & Phillips p. 3-4).

3.1.1 The power of discourse

Discourse analysis is preoccupied with power (Jensen, 2016, p. 12). If discourses have social consequences in the sense that the dominating perception of reality sets the rules for what actions can be taken, then this means that the struggle for setting the dominating discourse is a struggle for power. Since the dominating discourse shapes the dominating perception of the world, this discourse also affects people’s opinions. Opinions are socially constructed and in flux, just like discourses, and the formation of opinion has social and material consequences, because opinion is a premise for action (Bratberg, 2014, p. 50). The wording or framing of a phenomenon affect people’s opinion of the issue, and especially so when the discourse is produced by an actor with power such as a government or the EU. For instance, have mixed-environmental migrants been called both *climate refugees* and *economic migrants*. *Climate refugee* implies a person in need who is forced to migrate, while *economic migrant* implies someone who migrates voluntarily to make money. The wording used by a government or the EU when discussing these migrants can affect people’s opinions and understanding of the issue and therefore also the politics that will be created to address it.

Successfully framing the dominating discourse means “the power to define a set of circumstances or a situation – the power to define what the discourse will engage with” (Jensen,

2016, p. 12). There is power in the dominating discourse and any “truth” means closing the door for further interpretation, according to Foucault (Bratberg, 2014, p. 48).

Opposition towards the prevailing discourse can occur in different forms. One can support competing discourses or create new ones. Silence, or withholding confirmation can also function as opposition (Neumann, 2001, p. 169). Political debates can be seen as a battle between different perceptions of reality which consist of different ideas and values, which actors deliberately or unintentionally use. Within different policy fields there can be different discourses that compete to be the prevailing discourse. In politics, the struggle for power is not necessarily about the discourses themselves, but the *outcome* of the leading discourse which is the one that is perceived as the true perception of the world – in other words, the room for action that is created.

3.1.2 Validity, replicability and generalization

Ensuring validity and replicability, especially in qualitative work, is always a challenge. This is because in this type of work small and context-specific data sets often are used (Jensen, 2016, p. 80). This also makes generalization challenging. However, the analysis can still be interesting and valuable, and can “say something of more general significance, despite the constraints on generalizability in a strict positivist methodological sense” (Jensen, 2016, p. 80). Some form of subjectivity is unavoidable in this type of research. However, that does not mean that the research produced cannot provide some foundation for reflection on cause and consequence (Bratberg, 2014, p. 52). In discourse analysis one seeks to analyze general social patterns, and to establish internal validity (Jensen, 2016, p. 80). While most researchers strive to be objective, and especially within a positivistic tradition (Tjora, 2012, p. 203), one can question if objectivity is possible and even desirable in interpretive work such as discourse analysis. The researcher will always affect the analysis and the results produced in this type of work. From a social constructivist perspective, one must acknowledge that the researcher is interpreting the reality, and it could potentially look different from another researcher’s perspective. When attempting to interpret language, or discourse, it is impossible not to be subjective (Bratberg, 2014, p. 52), and the researcher’s knowledge can actually be considered a resource (Tjora, 2012, p. 203). According to Neumann it is even a necessity for a good discourse analysis that the researcher has what he calls *cultural competence* (Neumann, 2001, p. 50). By this he means that general knowledge of the topic is needed in order to do a discourse analysis. For instance, when analyzing French discourse, he claims that the researcher must know the term *en principe*

to understand that the representation in the discourse is shared by the author of the discourse, but the author intends to deviate from it (Neumann, 2001, p. 50-51).

For these reasons it is important that I as a researcher am transparent about my knowledge and assumptions of the topic of the EU and mixed-environmental migration. Most of the knowledge I have on the topic is gained through different courses from my bachelor's and master's degree, from interviews with people in Brussels who have knowledge of the topic, from reading literature and previous research on the topic for this thesis, from reading different news articles, and from reading EU documents that address the issue. The discourses identified in this thesis are defined by me, but as mentioned above, it is possible that other patterns and distinctions also could have been made (Jensen, 2016, p. 80). For further clarification; I will in this thesis attempt to distinguish between the information that comes from the data and from my own analysis (Tjora, 2012, p. 205). Additionally, when the term *discourse analysis* is used in this thesis it will mean both the theoretical perspective and the methodological approaches.

3.2 Operationalization

A challenge in any type of research is limiting the empirical work (Tjora, 2012, p. 34). Jørgensen and Phillips (1999) understands limiting discourses as an analytical operation. In other words, the *selection* of discourses used in a study is not something the researcher can uncover, which already exists, but something the researcher herself has to extract (p. 149-150). A timeframe is also needed, since discourses change through time, which is something a discourse analyst usually would like to capture (Neumann, 2001, p. 57). Often, one can find that events has occurred which can function as a natural limitation for the timeframe. This is what Neumann calls a *watershed moment*⁵ (Neumann, 2001, p. 57). I will address these issues in the following sections.

3.2.1 Framing the analysis: an order of discourse

An *order of discourse* can be used to set the frame for the discourse analysis. This is a concept that is needed to encompass the different discourses that are competing within the same space. An order of discourse includes different discourses which cover approximately the same topic which they compete to form (Jørgensen & Phillips, 1999, p. 147). By framing the analysis with an order of discourse, one can more easily examine where discourses are conflicting, what

⁵ My translation from the Norwegian word “skjellsettende begivenhet” (Neumann, 2001, p. 57).

common-sense assumptions are shared, and where a particular discourse is dominant (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 142). When the discourses are sharing common-sense assumptions, and are not battling, they are stable. When discourses compete to depict the same phenomenon in different ways, they are unstable. When there is instability, social change and change in the discourses are more likely to occur (Jørgensen & Phillips, 1999, p. 148). An order of discourse can encompass the discourses within the same social field or institution, on a certain topic (Jørgensen & Phillips, 1999, p. 147). Sometimes an order of discourse can reflect an obvious frame for the analysis. The order of discourse can encompass several institutions such as the government of Norway, Denmark and Sweden, it can go across different institutions such as universities and employers, or different parts of an institution such as the EP and the EC within the EU (Jørgensen & Phillips, 1999, p. 147). Although an order of discourse not necessarily must be tied to institutions, I will do just that in this thesis.

When setting the frame, or order of discourse for the analysis, the researcher has to decide what actors to focus on. Discourses do not act, the actors creating them do. As mentioned earlier, I will focus on the EP and the EC in this analysis. By the EP I mean documents published by committees, and not political parties, since documents published by for instance the Green Party, cannot be considered representative for the entire EP. Setting the order of discourse here, will allow me to identify separate discourses that either battle to be the dominant one, or that exist peacefully. As the analysis will show, the EP and the EC frequently describe mixed-environmental migration in quite different ways, and the discourses also change through time. A *watershed moment* I will use to set the timeframe for this analysis is the publication in 1999 of the report on *the environment, security and foreign policy* by the EP. This seems to be the first document where the EP explicitly discusses mixed-environmental migration (Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2014, p. 24). I will therefore focus on almost a twenty-year period, from 1999, to December 2017. The timeframe ends at the end of 2017 of practical reasons, since this is when I started working on the thesis.

I will limit my data to what Hansen (2006) calls *primary texts*. These are discourses produced by actors that hold power. This can for instance be presidential statements or official policy documents (Jensen, 2016, p. 80). The texts I have chosen, represent the approach and official opinion of the EC and the EP. I have included an overview of these documents in chapter 3.2.4. In other words, these are documents that have the “formal authority to define a political position” (Jensen, 2016, p. 80). These texts “set the agenda and shape the issue at hand, they frame and produce representations of foreign policy” (Jensen, 2016, p. 81). The texts “can also have or acquire power by repeating, confirming, strengthening and/or qualifying a certain

ideological position, and by their context-specific appearance” (Jensen, 2016, p. 80). The documents I use are the ones I assess to be the most relevant from the EU during the set time period, which also fit these criteria. I base this assessment on the research I have done and the interviews I have conducted, as well as what the literature claim are important documents (Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2014; European Parliament, 2011).

3.2.2 Intertextuality and monuments

Fairclough uses the concept of intertextuality to examine how discourses are reproduced and change. He uses the concept to explain that discourses often build on each other and affect each other, and thereby the meaning of a discourse can change through time. For instance can traces of an older text often be found in newer texts (Jørgensen & Phillips, 1999, p. 144-145). An example of indirect intertextuality in this thesis is the term *climate refugee*, which has been used by many actors, usually with no concrete definition. An example of direct intertextuality is the text from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which is frequently referred to in the ECs documents. This is a text the EC heavily relies on in their discourse on mixed-environmental migration. An important document like this, which is frequently mentioned by different actors, can also be identified as what Neumann calls a *monument*. He defines this as texts that serve as nodes or anchor points for the general discourse on the topic (Neumann, 2001, p. 177). These are often texts that the general discourse relies on, and that carry the general discourse.

3.2.3 Story lines

Hajer (1995) looks at how environmental problems are framed in discourses, and how this again affects the policies that are created to address the problem (Hønneland, 2003, p. 10). He uses the concept of *story lines* which in short means a simplistic way of framing and understanding a more complex issue. According to Hønneland, “people draw on such simplified representations of ‘reality’ rather than complex systems of knowledge in creating a cognitive comprehension of a subject matter” (Hønneland, 2003, p. 10). Story lines can cause political change, which is why it is important for political actors to find the appropriate story line. “Once a story line has been established in a discourse, it settles as ‘the way one talks around here’” (Hønneland, 2003, p. 10). Therefore, even when a discourses objective is to cause change by challenging the dominant discourse, it is expected to not derive too far from the dominating story line (Hønneland, 2003, p. 11). This is also the case for the story lines identified in this study.

As the analysis will show, the story lines related to the different discourses are often quite similar.

3.2.4 Sources and data

In order to get an overview of the EP and EC's *official* discourses, I have mainly analyzed the final documents, or the texts that have been adopted, since these are the texts that reflect the actors' positions. The EU publishes drafts, minutes from meetings, debates and so on online, in addition to the texts that are adopted. There are in other words many documents that can be found online which discuss the topic of mixed-environmental migration. Additionally, I have included Parliamentary Questions. These are written questions by members of the EP where an answer is given on behalf of the EC.

The documents that are analyzed from the EC are two communications, one joint communication and one joint paper with the High Representative for foreign affairs (HR), two Commission Staff Working Documents, four fact sheets, three parliamentary questions, and the Action Plan from the Valletta Summit on Migration.

The documents from the EP consists of one report, nine resolutions, one study and one briefing paper. Although the report, study, and briefing can only be argued to be representative for parts of the EP, I have chosen to include them. This is because the report included is the first time the EP discusses "environmental refugees" and is therefore considered an important document for this study. It therefore also marks the beginning of the time-frame for the analysis. The briefing from 2013 is one of the few documents that discuss and elaborate on "climate refugees". It is an examination of the current challenges for international refugee law with a focus on EU policies and EU cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The study from 2011 explicitly studies "climate refugees" and legal and policy responses that are in place for these people. It examines to what extent the current EU policies in place can provide protection for these people, and how existing legal frameworks can be modified to include "climate refugees". These are in other words three important documents for this study, and due to the few documents published on the issue, I have chosen to include them.

To sum up, the analysis consists of 12 EP documents and 14 EC documents (including three parliamentary questions). This is not a large amount of data, but these are the only final documents that clearly discuss mixed-environmental migration according to my searches.

I used the search engines European Parliament Plenary and EUR-Lex which both provide public documents and adopted legislative texts. The same document often showed up in

both search engines. I started by searching for *climat* (as this would include climate and climatic) and *migration*. On Plenary this resulted in 986 results. The website allows you to read some excerpts from where the search words are used in the document, so I read through these excerpts and read the documents that seemed more relevant. When I decided a document was irrelevant this was for instance because *climate* was used in relation to *the political climate*, or *economic climate*, or other cases where it was clear that climate change and migration was not the topic. As many documents discuss both the climate and migration, it was a challenge to exclude documents. In order to not lose focus of the climate change and migration nexus (by for instance analyzing a document that has a general migration, or climate change focus), I chose to only analyze the documents where it is clear that mixed-environmental migration is discussed, because the migrants for instance were given a name like “environmental refugee”.

In EUR-Lex this search method is not possible since only the title of the document is visible. I therefore searched for “climate refugees” (21 results), “environmental refugees” (25 results), “environmental migration” (ten results), and “ecological refugees” (two results). The low amount of search results allowed me to read through all of them. By using quotation marks, only documents containing those exact words were shown in the results list.

I used Nvivo to collect and code the data. The aim of the coding was to identify the *causes* of mixed-environmental migration and the proposed *solutions*.

Although it was a challenge to find the documents that discuss the climate change-migration nexus, and not include those that discuss general migration, my opinion is that the documents analyzed are the most important ones. This is my opinion, not only from the searches, but also from reading the literature, and from the information gained from interviews.

I have conducted three semi structured interviews. These were with 1) someone who is a representative from a delegation to the EU who works among other things with the external dimension of migration, Northern Africa, and with humanitarian and development policies, 2) a researcher on migration who currently works in the EP, 3) someone who wrote their PhD on the topic of mixed-environmental migration and the EU, and who also was part of the team who wrote one of the major documents I use in the analysis. Two of them took place in Brussels on the 15th and 16th of February, and the third took place over Skype on the 22nd of February. While I will not base my analysis on these interviews (because I am using a discourse analysis based on primary texts), they helped me navigate the complex topic of the EU and mixed-environmental migration. The interviewees also confirmed my understanding of which documents are the key documents, and what are the key policies. They also verified my general understanding

of the EUs handling of mixed-environmental migration which therefore strengthens my arguments.

I used the same questionnaire for all three interviews, but I did not follow this rigorously since the intention with semi structured interviews is to create a natural conversation where the interviewee reflects on the topic (Tjora, 2012, p. 104). Digressions can be beneficial in semi structured interviews (Tjora, 2012, p. 105), and this was also my experience since my interviewees often had relevant information, even though they did not always have an answer to all of my questions. The questionnaire can be found in the appendix (in Norwegian).

In this chapter I have presented discourse analysis as theory and method. I have discussed how there is power in producing the dominant discourse, and how discourses compete to be the dominant one, and that discourse analysis can help reveal this struggle for power. I have discussed the challenges of subjectivity and validity in qualitative studies, and introduced the theoretical framework. Finally, I have given an account of the data used and coding.

In the following chapter I will start my analysis and introduce a general overview of the essence of the discourses discussing mixed-environmental migration.

4 Mixed-environmental migration in EU discourses

The following section contains a chronological overview of the essence of the discourses produced by the EC and EP within the order of discourse. The aim is to present an overview of how the debate has developed throughout the chosen time period, and to introduce some of the arguments that has been made. The chapter is divided into three subchapters. Each start with what Neumann called a *watershed moment* (Neumann, 2001, p. 57), or an event that affected the direction of the discourse. The first section starts with the publication of the EP's first document that explicitly discusses mixed-environmental migration (although some background information is also included). The second section starts with the EC's first document that explicitly discusses the issue and was published about ten years later. Then, the third section starts in 2015, when the refugee crisis peaked. This was a watershed moment because it affected EU discourses on migration, and therefore also on mixed-environmental migration.

4.1 Environmental degradation and environmental refugees

Representations from past discourses can affect the discourses of today (Neumann, 2001, p. 58). Therefore, in order to understand the development of the understanding within the EU and within the timeframe, it is necessary to look at some statements outside the order of discourse. As mentioned before, the term *environmental refugee* was most likely first used in 1985. Five years later, in 1990, the IPCC published their first assessment report. They reported that climate change could cause migration and displacement through the erosion of shorelines, flooding and agricultural disruption (Brown, 2007, p. 5). That same year, the then called European Community decided to establish a working group on the environment and environmental refugees "to investigate the causes of the fast-growing problem of people and the destruction of their environment, the mass movements of environmental refugees as a consequence of that destruction and the possible solutions to the problem" (European Community, 1990, p. 38). Although, as mentioned earlier, the EP was ahead of the EC to explicitly discuss mixed-environmental migration (in 1999), the EC did express concern about the phenomenon in 1996⁶. The year after the second assessment report from the IPCC was published. Here the EC described the phenomenon of mixed-environmental migration, but did not assign it name (such as

⁶ It is possible that both the EP and the EC have discussed the phenomenon indirectly at an earlier stage, but these are some of the oldest documents I found from my searches that clearly discuss the issue.

environmental refugee). In this document, which concerns the EUs relations with African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, a world is described “in the throes of far reaching changes” (European Commission, 1996, p. 2), in reference to the collapse of the iron curtain, the end of the cold war, and growing international cooperation and liberalization of markets. The paper expresses concern for growing inequalities in developing countries, and that soil degradation and water shortages may cause migration and armed conflict, which is considered a potential security threat for the EU (European Commission, 1996, p. 5).

Following the second IPCC assessment report in 1995, the EP started working on the first report that explicitly discussed environmental refugees. This was the report on *the environment, security and foreign policy* (1999) (by committee on Foreign Affairs, Security and Defence Policy). Here, concern is raised regarding “the human race’s methods of exploiting the earth’s resources” (European Parliament, 1999, p. 12). There were at the time, according to the report, more environmental refugees than traditional refugees in the world (namely 25 million compared to 22 million) (European Parliament, 1999, p. 29), and the number was expected to be doubled or more by 2010 (European Parliament, 1999, p. 6). Environmental refugees are here understood as people fleeing environmental problems possibly caused by climate change such as drought, sea level rise and storms, and who suffer from socio-economic problems (European Parliament, 1999, p. 14). As I will explore in more detail in section 5.1 and 6.1.1, a novel aspect of this document is the importance that warfare, nuclear and chemical weapons are given as a major cause of environmental refugees because of its destructive impact on the environment. Another originality is the argument that the military should clean up and protect the environment. The understanding of what causes the environment to deteriorate, and what causes mixed-environmental migration is in other words broader here, than it is in recent years, as the rest of the analysis will demonstrate.

The issue is then hardly mentioned, until seven years later⁷, in the EP resolution on *development and migration*. Here, environmental and *ecological* refugees are mentioned. The resolution calls upon the Union to clarify the concepts of *political, economic* and *environmental* refugees, and provide these groups with protection and assistance (European Parliament, 2006, p. 14). There is in other words uncertainty tied to the understanding of these migrants. The resolution further warns that within a few years there can be as many as 50 million ‘ecological’ refugees worldwide (European Parliament, 2006, p. 7).

⁷ The IPCCs third assessment report was published in 2001.

4.2 The Commission gets involved

The emphasis is placed on the EC's first report where "environmental migrants" are discussed in depth (published 2008), but the actual watershed moment was the IPCC's fourth assessment report which was published in 2007. There the IPCC noted that disentangling the environment from other drivers of migration is likely to be difficult because the factors leading to migration are "multiple and complex", and are not directly connected to climate change (IPCC, 2007, p. 365). This view is reflected both in the EC's first report on the issue, and in most of the discourses produced since. This IPCC report is in other words a *monument*. Another event that might have prompted the EC to produce its report was the first debate on climate change and its implications for international security in the UN Security Council in 2007 (European Commission, 2008, p. 1). The following year, in 2009, a paragraph stating the "connection between climate change, migration and development needs to be further explored" (Council of the European Union, 2009, p. 63) was included in the Stockholm Programme. The program provided a framework for EU actions on immigration, visa policy, security and development cooperation (among other things), and the inclusion of mixed-environmental migration has therefore been considered an important step by advocates for a solution (Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2014, p. 25). Around this time a few other solutions to the issue were also proposed. Such as taxing the international banking system and implementing "international levy on financial transactions to make the overall tax system more equitable and to generate additional resources for financing development and global public goods, including adaptation of developing countries to cope with and mitigate climate change and its impact" (European Parliament, 2010, p. 7). Another argument was that "renewable energy and energy efficiency have the potential to mitigate climate change, contribute to social and economic development, improve security of supply and provide environmental and health benefits" (although this was argued in relation to development, and not migration) (European Parliament, 2011a, p. 8).

In 2011, it is established that there is a protection gap and "no distinct instrument applicable to 'environmentally displaced individuals'", especially once they cross an international border (European Parliament, 2011, p. 49). This was the conclusion in an elaborate study commissioned by the EP in 2011 where the legal and policy aspects on climate and environmental related displacement, both internationally and at EU level, was examined. Although the study argues a protection regime is needed for these people, it also claims that it is unrealistic that a legal framework will be created to address this.

Another discourse providing a solution is established around the same time. This is the framing of migration as adaptation to climate change:

facilitating well-managed mobility and labour migration from environmentally degraded areas can represent an effective strategy to reduce environmentally-induced displacement, which is more likely to produce negative outcomes for migrants and host communities (European Commission, 2013, p. 26)

This argument is included in the Commission Staff Working Document (CSWD) on environmental degradation and migration. The CSWD is another *monument*, and it was produced following the request for more knowledge in the Stockholm Programme. Most of the views presented here are very similar to the views presented today by both the EC and the EP. A main argument in the CSWD is that the term “environmental refugee” reflects poor knowledge of the phenomenon and was in earlier years “used to raise awareness and focused on the forced nature of displacement” (European Commission, 2013, p. 14). It is also argued that the nexus of migration and climate change is complex, and it is difficult to state with certainty that a migrant is in fact a mixed-environmental migrant. The following quote is an example that is typical for this discourse:

The complex relationship between environmental factors and other processes at work in regions of origin and destination which may drive migration (e.g. economic restructuring) make it extremely difficult to clearly pinpoint the role of climate change and other environmental factors in individuals' decision to migrate (European Commission, 2013, p. 8)

In other words, the EC's opinion is that more research is needed in order to understand and properly address the phenomenon correctly.

4.3 The 2015 refugee crisis and increased focus on migration

Up until the publication of the CSWD in 2013, it was mainly the EP that engaged in the topic of mixed-environmental migration. However, as the civil war in Syria worsened, and the so-called refugee crisis peaked in 2015, the EC addressed the issue more frequently. However, the focus was mainly on general migration from third countries, and not specifically mixed-environmental migration. The EC's goals now seemed to be on building *resilience* in third countries and address the *root causes* of migration. There is in other words a greater focus on *prevention* of migration, rather than *protection* of mixed-environmental migrants.

As mentioned before, the Action Plan from the Valletta Summit was created towards the end of 2015. Mixed-environmental migration is not mentioned by any name in the document, but climate change is acknowledged as a root cause of migration, which the EU aims to address. The EU hopes to address “environmental and climate change issues in the most af-

ected regions” through “adaptation to climate change and development of sustainable and renewable energies” (EU & AU, 2015, p. 3). In relation to the Valletta Summit, an Emergency Trust Fund for Africa was also established. The aim of the fund was to:

help address the root causes of destabilisation, forced displacement and irregular migration, by promoting economic and equal opportunities, strengthening resilience of vulnerable people, security and development (EU & AU, 2015, p. 2).

The focus is in other words on the prevention of both general, and mixed-environmental migration. In 2016 the EC stated the “EU is committed to strengthening resilience worldwide” (European Commission, 2016, p. 1), and that they will “[i]mprove preparation for and recovery from natural disasters, such as tropical cyclones, to build up resilience against these occurrences” (European Commission, 2016a, p. 23). Mixed-environmental migration is not mentioned in these documents by any name, but it is clear that climate change and natural disasters is understood as a cause of irregular migration (which then is what I call mixed-environmental migration). This is verified by the EC when they claim that more people are “internally displaced by ‘natural’ disasters than by violent conflicts and civil wars” (European Commission, 2017a, p. 6). In other words, the EU, and in particular the EC, seem in later years to be more hesitant to call someone a mixed-environmental migrant (or to use any other name for these people), compared to the EP in the earlier years. An explanation for this is perhaps that it has become an established truth since the IPCC’s fourth assessment report (2007), that migration in relation to climate change is complex and difficult to assess. Since the CSWD’s publication (2013), the stricter criteria to be “qualified” as an “environmental refugee” has become another established “truth”. I will get back to this in the next chapters.

This chapter has given an overview of the discourses on mixed-environmental migration within the order of discourse. It has shown that there were three *watershed moments* within the time-frame that has affected the discourses. The first was the report by the EP in 1999 which was the first attempt to bring “environmental refugees” on the agenda in the EU. The second *watershed moment* was when the EC in 2008 for the first time explicitly discussed the problem as well. This happened after it was discussed in the UN and after the publication of the fourth IPCC assessment report. Then the third *watershed moment* that affected the discourses was the refugee crisis. 2015 was an eventful year when it comes to migration policies, and the EU acknowledged that climate change causes migration and displacement but did not call these people “environmental refugee” or give them any other name after 2015.

Mixed-environmental migration in EU discourses

The next sections demonstrate the main discourses that revolve around the *cause* of mixed environmental migration.

5 The cause of mixed-environmental migration according to the discourses

This section presents the causes of mixed-environmental migration, according to the discourses analyzed. The aim is to gather and systemize the different discourses that dominate the framing of what it is that cause this type of migration, within the order of discourse. To do this, I will use the theoretical framework presented in chapter 3. However, it is worth noting that when it comes to the story lines that are presented, these are – just like the discourses – selected and identified by me. The story lines represent the assumptions behind the arguments made in the discourses. The argument of the discourses relies on the assumptions, or the logic of the story lines, in order to make sense.

The following sections will demonstrate and analyze two main discourses regarding the cause of mixed-environmental migration. The analysis will reveal, simply put, that in the first half of the almost twenty-year period, direct human impact on the environment caused “environmental refugees”. In the second half, another discourse is dominant. According to this discourse it is strictly climatic changes (like sea level rise) that create “climate refugees”. However, the general understanding of factors that cause migration and displacement is the same. It is in other word the definition of the migrants or refugees, that has changed, and not the general understanding of migration and displacement. But first I will discuss another discourse, which has *not* been a dominating discourse. The purpose is here to demonstrate competing discourses, in the beginning of the timeframe of the analysis.

5.1 Military activity and war as a cause of mixed-environmental migration

This discourse establishes a link between war or military conflict as a cause for mixed-environmental migration. The discourse presented here was never reproduced, but I have included it because it demonstrates how another discourse won the competition to become the dominant discourse. This discourse was prominent in the EPs first report discussing mixed-environmental migration in 1999. Other parts of this document has been reproduced, but not the discourse examined here.

In this report, there is, as mentioned earlier, an understanding that there are at the time more “environmental refugees” than “traditional refugees”. The understanding of what causes “environmental refugees” is quite broad. The key trait of this discourse is that warfare and military activity is considered a major cause of “environmental refugees” because it ruins the environment, and by doing so, forces people to move. This is highlighted in the following quote:

Military activity is responsible for widespread environmental destruction in society. Military activities have a wide-ranging negative impact on the environment, in peace and in war, both intentionally and as an unintentional consequence. Destroying the environment has been an established method of waging war since ancient times (European Parliament, 1999, p. 14).

It is also claimed that because of warfare in large parts of Africa,

human and agricultural structures have been ruined and therefore the lands are now subject to environmental disaster in particular by deforestation and erosion leading to desertification (European Parliament, 1999, p. 7).

Other war- or military-related causes for mixed-environmental migration according to this discourse are chemical weapons and their environmental impact. The Chemical Weapons Convention entered into force in 1997, which meant that countries who ratified the agreement no longer could develop or export chemical weapons. While the use of chemical weapons – on purpose or by accident – was framed here as worrisome, the purposeful destruction of them was also listed as a danger, which could cause harm to the environment and create “environmental refugees”. It is stated that it is more expensive to destroy these weapons than it is to create them, and that few countries have facilities to do so. Accidental, unauthorized or authorized firing of nuclear weapons, radioactive fallout as well as mines are framed as a cause of “environmental refugees”. Mines are stated to be “enormously damaging to the environment”. “Mine-laying destroys large areas, often agricultural, which are rendered unusable far into the future” (European Parliament, 1999, p. 15). The understanding of what factors cause mixed-environmental migration, or “environmental refugees”, are in other words many and broad in this discourse. The factors mentioned here are also strongly interlinked with poverty and socioeconomic problems;

whereas the issue of 'environmental refugees' is merely a symptom of a humanitarian disaster (European Parliament, 1999, p. 29).

As mentioned in chapter 3.2.3, story lines that are established in the discourse settles “the way one talks around here” (Hønneland, 2003, p.10). They are simplistic representations of reality which justifies what arguments are used. Although this discourse is not reproduced, it still contains story lines. These are:

- The human race exploits the earth's resources.
- Nuclear and chemical weapons are dangerous and can ruin the environment.
- Already poor and vulnerable populations are under more pressure because of

climate change and environmental degradation.

The arguments made and the understandings of the causes of mixed environmental migration within this discourse builds and relies on these story lines. As the following sections will show, other story lines in different discourses create a different basis for what the causes of mixed-environmental migration are, and therefore also what solutions can be proposed.

The EP produced this discourse. Although the text is one of the earliest from the EU discussing the topic, as shown in the section above, past discourses can influence newer ones. Traces of older texts can be found in this document as well. An example of indirect intertextuality is the report's reliance on the UN institutions. For instance;

[a]ccording to the UNEP, landmines are one of the most widespread items of material war debris and may affect the ecological balance" (European Parliament, 1999, p. 15).

There are also reproductions of the IPCC report which was published a few years earlier⁸. For instance does the report reference predictions of temperatures rising, carbon dioxide emissions and sea level rise from the IPCC. A clear example of direct intertextuality in this case is the term of *environmental refugee*, which was used for the first time in a 1985 UNEP report, as well as briefly in a few EU statements, like the one from the European Communities in 1990 mentioned in section 4.1.

While these discourses build on each other, they also reveal that environmental refugees are framed with more certainty in 1999 than in 1990. More research was requested in 1990, and in 1999 environmental refugees are not framed as a phenomenon that is not understood, but as something that has now been researched. This is interesting because later in the time period, it is argued that there was at this point a poor understanding of the issue. A few examples that demonstrate this certainty are:

[A]ccording to *detailed international research* collated and published by the Climate Institute in Washington, the number of 'environmental refugees' now exceeds the number of 'traditional refugees' (25 m compared with 22 m)." [emphasis added] (European Parliament, 1999, p. 5-6).

Environmental refugees cross national boundaries to equally poor or even poorer nations" (P 12). And; "whereas the issue of 'environmental refugees' is merely a symptom of a humanitarian disaster (European Parliament, 1999, p. 6).

⁸ See chapter 4.

As the following chapters will demonstrate, this discourse that discuss environmental refugees with assertiveness, was *not* reproduced.

5.2 Anthropocentric over-exploitation of the environment

Throughout the almost twenty-year period, a common argument has been that over-exploitation of natural resources and degradation of the environment caused mixed-environmental migration. Human action was then seen as the phenomenon that indirectly, or directly, lead to mixed-environmental migration. This discourse was predominant especially in the first half of the time period that is studied. Drought, soil erosion and pressure on land was argued to cause migration and displacement. As were natural and environmental disasters like landslides and storms, and accidents caused directly by humans such as the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear accident. Climate change was then thought to be a factor that aggravated an already bad situation. In this discourse, it is in other words the alteration of the environmental conditions caused by human overexploitation and risky behaviour towards it, that cause mixed-environmental migration. The following quotes are typical examples of this framing in the discourse:

[W]hen communities make unsustainable demands on ecosystems, this may result in an ecological breakdown, which in turn leads to worsening poverty, tensions and even conflict” (European Commission, 2006, p. 3).

Excessive logging [...] [t]ogether with unsustainable agricultural practices, it leads in some cases to land degradation. This finally destroys rural livelihoods” (European Commission, 2006, p. 3).

Mixed-environmental migrants are in this discourse “refugees from drought, soil erosion, and other environmental problems” (European Parliament, 1999, p. 14), who “suffer from social, political and economic problems that may result in conflicts and violence” (European Parliament, 1999, p. 14). The understanding of what cause “environmental migration” is in other words quite broad, and includes a combination of a variety of factors. The main actors producing this discourse were mainly the EP, and to a lesser extent the EC. The discourse can be found in statements throughout the whole time period, but it was mostly common during the first decade. However, the discourse slightly changes through time, as the “requirements” to be labeled an “environmental migrant” grows stricter throughout the time period. While excessive logging and over-exploitation of resources were mentioned in the earlier years, climate change is listed as the main cause in the later years. This means the link from the action of humans to the displacement of refugees becomes weaker. Although climate change is caused by humans, it is then more difficult to find the responsible actor for the environmental refugees. This is

exemplified in the following example:

[H]uman mobility due to climate related disasters and environmental degradation, including such caused by climate change (e.g. land degradation, drought, desertification, rising sea level or climate-induced disasters such as drought, floods, extreme weather events, winter storms and heat waves). At present, most environmental disasters or degradation can be exacerbated by (if not certainly attributed to) climate change (European Commission, 2013, p. 3).

Story lines, or the taken-for-granted assumptions of the world which allow the discourses to make sense, are then, within this discourse:

- Unsustainable practices of communities such as unsustainable agriculture, excessive logging and deforestation can cause “environmental refugees”.
- Climate change enhances natural disasters and environmental pressures on communities and nature.

Regarding intertextuality, this discourse builds on early statements produced by the EP and the EC. Such as the ECs document from 1996 where they did not assign mixed-environmental migration a name, but described it, and also the EPs first document discussing the issue (which was discussed in the chapter above). Examples of indirect intertextuality is the reliance on estimates of “ecological refugees” from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (HCR) (European Parliament, 2006, p. 7). There are also references to UN predictions of “environmental” migrants. Although there is not made direct references to any particular document, it is clear that UN statements are being reproduced.

5.3 Direct consequences of climate change

The following discourse has become dominant within the second half of the considered timeframe. The discourse frames an “environmental refugee” as someone who is strictly displaced by climate change. For instance, the only clear example described in the discourse, where someone clearly is considered a mixed-environmental migrant, are inhabitants of islands that are disappearing because of sea level rise caused by climate change. An example from the discourse that explains this understanding of environmental refugees is:

If climate change continues, many islands in Pacific ACP countries will disappear and the region will face problems with environmental refugees (European Commission, 2006, p. 3).

Other examples describing mixed-environmental migrants are in relation to fast-onset events such as storms, which might be caused or exacerbated by climate change. However, as the following example demonstrates, the actors producing this discourse are more hesitant to call anyone an environmental refugee in these cases:

Displacement as a last resort solution to the adverse effects of environmental change, such as when catastrophic climatic events or extreme environmental degradation leave no option for persons to remain. Much displacement is likely to be only temporary, in particular when it is linked to sudden-onset events such as hurricanes (European Commission, 2013, p. 11)

Another argument used in this discourse reflects this reluctance to describe the migrants by a name. The argument is that it is difficult, if not impossible, to prove that climate change in fact causes migration. Therefore, when a storm cause displacement, it is difficult to claim that climate change caused this particular storm. The following examples demonstrate how this is argued:

It is rare that there is a direct clausal link between climate change and movement, it is climate specific events (such as a particular storm) which may cause movement but the link of the specific storm with climate change is not necessarily easy (European Parliament, 2013, p. 14).

The links between drought, desertification and migration are complex and difficult to identify because changes are slow and it is difficult to assess to what extent these contribute to migration (European Parliament, 2011, p. 10).

The story lines that construct reality within this discourse are:

- Climate change's effect on migration is complex and difficult to assess.
- People are displaced by unsustainable practices and over-exploitation, but these are not environmental refugees if climate change is not the main cause of the displacement.

While it is the EC that has been the most dominating actor in reproducing this discourse. The EP did restate this discourse after the CSWD of 2008, but have done so even more in recent years. An example of indirect intertextuality and a monument, is the fourth IPCC assessment from 2007. This discourse is to a major extent based on this assessment report. In the assessment report, it was noted that “reasons for migration are often multiple and complex, and do not relate straightforwardly to climate variability”, (IPCC, 2007, p. 365). This is quite similar to the ECs statements. Here follows a representative example of this:

Decisions to migrate are usually the result of multiple considerations that reflect a complex combination of environmental, economic, social, security and political factors. Economic and social factors are in most cases considered both by social scientists and migrants to be the most important drivers of migration” (European Commission, 2013, p. 7).

In other words, it is acknowledged that socioeconomic factors do cause migration within this discourse, as in the one above. However, within this discourse, these migrants are *not* considered environmental refugees or mixed-environmental migrants.

Within this discourse, there is also criticism of the discourse that was discussed in the former section. The former discourse is stated to present an

overly deterministic understanding of the relationship between the risk of environmental degradation faced by populations and the likelihood that they would migrate [emphasis added] (European Commission, 2013, p. 7).

While this discourse regards the nexus of climate change and migration as extremely complex and difficult to understand, the former, as seen in section 5.1, elaborated with quite certainty what factors caused “environmental refugees”. The criticism further states that the term (“environmental refugee”) is

especially associated with the early stages of reflection on the topic, before differentiation between types of environmental change and forms of mobility started (European Commission, 2013, p. 14).

However, I argue that the reason why the former discourse was *overly deterministic* was because it did not attempt to single out the cases where climate change was the *main* driver of displacement or migration, as this discourse does. Instead it acknowledged that many factors caused migration or displacement, including climate change, environmental degradation, along with other factors. This current discourse agrees with that, but differs on the definition and terminology regarding mixed-environmental migrants. Therefore, I would argue that it is not enhanced knowledge of the topic that cause different estimates of people affected, but rather a different definition of “environmental refugees”, or mixed-environmental migrants.

There is agreement between the two discourses on what causes migration, but there is not agreement on how to label the migrants. According to the EC the term “‘environmental refugee’ has been used in position papers presented by various NGOs, in the media”, and it “was used to raise awareness and focused on the forced nature of displacement” (European Commission, 2013, p. 14).

If this was a battle to create the dominating discourse, with the media and NGOs, or early EP statements on one side, and the EC on the other, then it is the EC that won the battle for power, and shaped how we understand reality. And by winning, the estimates of amounts of “environmental refugees” are lower than they were before, since less people “qualify”. While there was in 1999 more environmental refugees than traditional refugees, in 2013 discourses stated “any numerical estimation [is] highly questionable” (European Commission, 2013, p. 10). This discourse frames more migrants as economic or illegal migrants rather than environmental refugees. Therefore, presumably, there are less people the EU needs to protect and allow to stay within its borders. The winning discourse then justifies the fact that there is no protection

in place for mixed-environmental migrants, because of the complexity, and difficulty of stating what individuals are in need of this protection. There is however, as mentioned, still agreement that environmental factors in fact do cause migration and displacement, therefore policies that address *prevention* of displacement and migration are needed according to this discourse. As the following chapter will reveal, this is also what the dominating discourses regarding solutions propose.

This section has demonstrated two dominating discourses on what the causes of mixed-environmental migration are. The analysis shows that the discourse which was prominent in the earlier half of the eighteen-year time period framed many impacts of direct human action as a cause. For instance, was excessive logging and over-exploitation of natural resources mentioned. However, the discourse changed slightly throughout the timespan, and environmental degradation was then framed as the main cause. The second major discourse argued that only direct consequences of climate change caused mixed-environmental migration. For instance, storms and sea-level rise. I have also discussed a discourse that was *not* reproduced, and did *not* become a dominating discourse. This was the argument that military action and war cause “environmental refugees” by ruining the environment. The consequences of the fact that this discourse was *not* reproduced, are that the solutions proposed within the same discourse, no longer seem relevant or necessary. In the following sections I will discuss what solutions were presented within this same discourse. Thereafter, I will discuss the dominant discourses that frame different solutions.

6 Solutions proposed in the discourses

This section focuses on the discourses presenting solutions within the order of discourse. There are two overall ways of responding to mixed-environmental migration. The first is to *prevent* it from occurring, and the second is to *protect* people once they have been displaced or migrated. Accordingly, this chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section presents and analyzes the discourses presenting solutions to the problem by *preventing* it from occurring. The second section presents discourses that frame solutions to *protect* the mixed-environmental migrants. Presenting the discourses this way reveals that the dominating discourses, and responses from the EU are aimed at *preventing* rather than *protecting*.

6.1 Discourses on prevention

The following discourses on prevention are the dominant ones which presents solutions aimed at preventing mixed environmental migration from occurring. The first section discusses the same report from 1999 that was discussed in section 5.1. The next section presents a discourse that frames the solution to mixed-environmental migration as a broad approach that encompasses development aid and cooperation with third countries. Then, the third section demonstrates a discourse that argues more research is required to be able to solve the problem.

6.1.1 Utilizing the military to prevent mixed-environmental migration

As demonstrated in chapter 5.1, the discourse linking military conflicts and war to environmental migration disappeared over time but it is still important to consider the solutions it entailed. This is because the following discourse is closely interlinked with the one discussed in section 5.1, and again, demonstrates an early competition to create the dominating discourse. This is clearer when it comes to the solutions presented in this discourse than the causes. This is important since it affects the EU's approach to the phenomenon today, because of which discourse won the battle to construct the correct understanding of reality. Although the aim of this study is not to investigate competing discourses within the EP, it is clear from the document addressed here, that one committee's discourse won over another committee.

It was the committee on Foreign Affairs, Security and Defence Policy that produced the majority parts of the report on the environment, security and foreign policy from 1999. It is here that the military is presented as a cause of mixed-environmental migration. The solution proposed by the same committee, was to use the military to address the deteriorating environment in third countries. This is written at a time when there was "currently no direct military threat

to Europe, and the risk of a major war is non-existent” (European Parliament, 1999, p. 27). At the same time military budgets were still high as the end of the cold war was still not far in the past. The solution proposed then was to use “military resources for environmental purposes” by for instance “introducing training for environmental defence troops with a view to establishing a coordinated European environmental protection brigade” (European Parliament, 1999, p. 33). “Military personell on environment duty” was also proposed (ibid., p. 24). The purpose was for “the military defence sector to assume responsibility for, and pay for the investigation, clean-up and decontamination of areas damaged by past military activity, so that such areas can be returned to civil use” (European Parliament, 1999, p. 8). The committee envisioned that military personnel should help clear mines but also “assist in the events of forest fires, snowstorms, landslides etc” (ibid., p. 25).

However, in the same document, there is attached the opinion of the committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection. While this committee acknowledges the causes of environmental degradation and migration, it presents a different solution. Instead of using the military to protect and clean up the environment, they suggest

to switch budgetary resources away from the military defence sector to civil environmental protection measures, e.g. preventive measures to safeguard the environment, the decontamination of land and water, improved rescue and disaster relief services and increased international assistance in environmental matters (European Parliament, 1999, p. 28).

This last discourse is quite similar to dominating discourses today, while the former solution that suggests to use the military to prevent mixed-environmental migration, strays far from the assumed reality today.

Regarding intertextuality, this discourse builds on the same texts and story lines as the related discourse from 1999 do (discussed in 5.1), such as UN statements and estimates, as well as the IPCC report. The story lines mentioned there are:

- The human race exploits the earth’s resources.
- Nuclear and chemical weapons are dangerous and can ruin the environment.
- Already poor and vulnerable populations are under more pressure because of climate change and environmental degradation.

Additionally, it is assumed here that the military is guilty of ruining the environment, and are therefore responsible to clean it up.

6.1.2 Development and resilience-building as a method of prevention

A dominating discourse is the argument that the EU should fund development projects of different types in countries that are vulnerable to climate change, such as regions in Africa. The discourse has evolved throughout the twenty-year period, and in recent years the focus on addressing *root causes* of migration, and building *resilience* in origin countries has increased. A typical example of a statement reflecting this discourse is:

EU development aid should aim to eliminate the reasons for migration, such as poverty, climate change and hunger” (European Parliament, 2011b, p. 12).

Since it often is argued that mixed-environmental migration and migration in general is caused by many factors, the argument of this discourse then, is to address those different factors through various development policies and through cooperation. A typical example that demonstrates this argument is as follows:

Migration in the context of environmental change is a complex issue that requires comprehensive responses involving a broad range of issues and policies: climate change mitigation, disaster risk reduction, urban planning, education, social policy, asylum and migration policies, development policies and humanitarian and civil protection policies (European Commission, 2013, p. 15).

Especially since 2015 there has been an increased focus on, and use of the terms *resilience* and *root causes*. It is for instance argued that the EU needs “to tackle the *root causes* of conflict, fragility and vulnerability, addressing under-nutrition and poverty” [emphasis added] (European Commission, 2016, p. 1), and it is therefore “placing *resilience* as a central objective of development and humanitarian assistance” [emphasis added] (European Commission, 2016, p. 1). Resilience is not always defined, but frequently used. In 2016 it is described by the EC as improving;

preparation for and recovery from natural disasters, such as tropical cyclones, to build up resilience against these occurrences (European Commission, 2016a, p. 23).

Another typical statement within this discourse is the argument that it is;

necessary to tackle the *root causes* of irregular migration and forced displacement by applying sustained, short, medium-, and long-term policies, and to better use existing processes [emphasis added] (European Commission, 2016a, p. 11).

The root causes of migration should be addressed through “EU development cooperation” (European Parliament, 2017, p. 6). An example of EU development cooperation that addresses the root causes of migration is the new Emergency Trust Fund for Africa. It is argued that this fund:

Solutions proposed in the discourses

will help address the *root causes* of destabilisation, forced displacement and irregular migration, by promoting economic and equal opportunities, strengthening *resilience* of vulnerable people, security and development [emphasis added] (EU & AU, 2015, p. 2).

This fund and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) were both established in 2015. In statements produced after 2015 there are frequent references to international agreements such as the SDGs and the Paris agreement on climate change as a solution to tackle *prevention* of mixed-environmental migration through development cooperation. The following quotes provides typical examples of this type of argument.

The partnership [between the EU and AU] should therefore focus on reaching the relevant SDGs (e.g. clean energy, sustainable cities and communities and responsible consumption and production) and the implementation of the Paris Agreement on climate change. It should enshrine a commitment to pro-poor climate *resilience* policies, and scale up the transformation to inclusive green and blue economies [emphasis added] (European Commission, 2016a, p. 13).

the European Union is playing its part in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals to end poverty, protect the planet and to ensure prosperity and equal opportunities for all, thus also tackling the *root causes* of migration [emphasis added] (European Commission, 2016b, p. 1).

The EU therefore claims to address the prevention of mixed-environmental migration by relying on, and implementing international agreements such as the Paris agreement and the SDGs.

The story lines within this discourse are:

- Migration is complex and there is not a simple way to address it (especially mixed-environmental migration).
- The EU must address the root causes of migration by strengthening resilience, in order to limit migration to the EU.

As demonstrated earlier, in 1999 the committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection's opinion on addressing "environmental refugees" through development budget rather than military, became the dominating discourse. This can be seen as an example of indirect intertextuality, as that argument is reproduced in this discourse. This discourse has been produced by both the EP and the EC, and it has become particularly established as a "truth" since 2015. By this I mean that it has been continuously repeated in statements and documents since 2015 to a greater extent than it was before.

Two examples of direct intertextuality are *resilience* and *root causes*. The words are used more frequent since 2015, after they were used in the Valletta action plan on the EU's

relationship with the AU, and the latter also in the EU's Agenda on Migration (both of which were published in 2015).

6.1.3 Research is needed to prevent mixed-environmental migration

Another dominating discourse is the argument that more knowledge is needed in order to address the phenomenon of mixed-environmental migration correctly. In 1999 it was stated that “[u]p to two decades of intensive research into global climate change may be needed before more detailed decisions can be taken as to which measures should be adopted” (European Parliament, 1999, p. 14). Then, almost two decades later, the EC states that “[a]dditional research is required on the potential risks and appropriate responses to environmental displacement” (European Commission, 2017a, p. 6). This discourse has in other words been common throughout the whole time period. It is argued that little is known about migration caused by climate change, and that more knowledge on the topic is needed in order to act accordingly. For instance, it has been argued that more research is needed on “climate-induced South-South migration, including [research] into the number of people affected, vulnerable regions, migration movements and host countries’ capacities” (European Parliament, 2011b, p. 13). Another statement that is typical for this discourse is:

further investigation is required to determine the nature of the specific measures to develop to address environmentally induced migration compared to other forms of forced migration (European Commission, 2013, p. 14).

The EU is in other words not sure how mixed-environmental migration differs from traditional migration, and do therefore not know how to respond. Within the same discourse, there are statements that claim research *is* being done on the topic;

Several themes under the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (2007-2013) address natural and manmade hazards (European Commission, 2009, p. 5).

The central story lines of this discourse are:

- The connection between climate change and migration is complex.
- For policies to be developed, more research must be done on the topic.

The discourse has been reproduced by both the EP and the EC. Regarding intertextuality, this discourse too builds on estimates of the scope of the problem from the UN and IPCC. By this I mean estimates of how climate change will affect countries and regions, and how many people that are likely to be affected by it. It also builds on claims that more research is needed, which is also reflected to some extent in the IPCC report from 2007. There it was stated

that more research was needed on adaptation to climate change for instance (IPCC, 2007, p. 531).

6.2 Discourses on protection

Demonstrated in the sections above were the dominating discourses on how to *prevent* mixed-environmental migration. The following sections present the dominating discourse on how to *protect* the migrants. Many solutions have been proposed to prevent migration (only the dominating solutions have been presented above). When it comes to protection, however, there is only one main discourse; that protection should be established for “environmental refugees”. There are, however, some slight variations within this discourse. For instance, it is sometimes argued that an international protection mechanism should be established. Other times it is argued that the EU should provide some form of protection. It is also often argued that the 1951 Refugee Convention should be expanded to include “environmental migrants”. However, the calls for action are often vague and do not necessarily call for a specific action. The following quote demonstrates the ambiguity of some of these statements:

Calls on Member States to consider the issue of 'environmental refugees', migrants who cannot currently be regarded as economic migrants and who are also not recognised as refugees as referred to in the 1951 Geneva Convention (European Parliament, 2009, p. 14).

Often it is argued that the migrants must be properly defined (in other words more research is needed), and then provided with a legal status for protection. Below follows two typical examples of this argument.

Calls for the Union to support the initiatives of the international community aimed at clarifying the concepts of political, economic and environmental refugees and to provide each category with suitable protection and assistance (European Parliament, 2006, p. 12).

persons displaced by the effects of climate change should be given a special international protection status which takes account of the specific nature of their situation (European Parliament, 2017, p 11).

Very common claims are that “environmental refugees must be given official recognition” (European Parliament, 1999, p. 14). And that “it is necessary to establish an international status for climate and environmental refugees” (European Parliament, 2011, p. 2). This is verified by frequent statements that “existing law on refugees does not recognise the right of climate refugees to international protection” (European Parliament, 2011b, p. 4).

In some statements, more concrete suggestions are made in the discourse, and it has been debated if the 1951 Convention on Refugees should be expanded.

Essential story lines within this discourse are;

- Climate change displaces people and forces them to leave their homes.
- Climate refugees need to be protected by international law.
- It is the responsibility of the international community to help these refugees.

Both the EP and the EC have contributed to the discourse arguing that protection is needed for “environmental refugees”, but the EP has been the most dominant. The EP called for international protection throughout the whole time period – both in 1999, as well as in 2017.

It is also worth noting that the EU has participated in the Nansen Initiative and signed the Protection Agenda in 2015⁹. This Agenda is aimed at protecting people crossing international borders because of natural disasters caused by climate change.

Although, not a part of the main discourse, arguments have been made opposed to the arguments mentioned in this section within the order of discourse. The following quotes demonstrate that both the EP and the EC has argued that “environmental refugees” should *not* be included in the 1951 Convention on Refugees:

Although the extension of the scope of the Geneva Refugee Convention is often cited as one possible option to address the protection gap, there is growing consensus that it is neither a realistic nor a desirable scenario” (European Parliament, 2011, p. 12)

The Commission firmly supports the UNHCR position, i.e. that refugee law should not be interpreted in such a way as to cover also environmental migrants as the Geneva Convention is very clear on the conditions of individual persecution (European Commission, 2010)

This argument is additionally strengthened by another argument. Namely the claim that mixed-environmental migrants are not likely to reach the EU, but to remain in the regions of origin. The following quote demonstrates this:

the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on migration flows to the EU is unlikely to be substantial (European Commission, 2013, p. 11).

This logic then means that the EU has less responsibility to provide protection for mixed-environmental migrants. If the refugee convention had in fact been expanded, this would mean that the EU would have to provide refuge for these people within its borders. Without acknowledging this, mixed-environmental migrants that reach the EU are not eligible for refuge, but will be labeled economic or illegal migrants.

⁹ Discussed in section 2.3.

Solutions proposed in the discourses

The EC has been the more dominant producer of these counter-arguments, but the EP has also made them.

This section has demonstrated the different solutions proposed to mixed-environmental migration in the order of discourse. However, first, it demonstrated that the EP suggested in 1999 to use the military to protect and clean up the environment. This discourse was never reproduced. However, the opinion from committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection which argued development aid should be used instead, has been reproduced and become one of the dominating discourses. This is the second discourse that is presented in section 6.1.2. Towards the end of the time period there is an increased focus on addressing *resilience* and *root causes* within this discourse. The aim is in other words to *prevent* mixed-environmental migration and migration in general. The last discourse presented, frames an urgent need for protection for these migrants. However, as the analysis showed, the EP and EC also argues that it is unlikely that a form of protection will be developed.

7 Conclusion and closing remarks

The EP warned in 1999 that there would be more than 50 million environmental refugees by 2010. However, around the year 2010, the EP and EC argued that the estimates heavily vary and that more research is needed on the topic (see for instance, European Parliament, 2011; European Commission, 2013; European Parliament, 2011b). According to EU statements, the reason for the certainty with which the EU announced the initial figures is that there was a poor understanding of the issue in 1999. Inspired by these contradictory statements and the magnitude of the impact of climate change on displacement and migration, which clearly do not have a uniform understanding, the aim of this thesis was to answer the following questions. *How does the EC and the EP understand climate-induced migration (or mixed-environmental migration) according to official discourses? And more precisely, what do they claim is the cause, and what solutions do they present.* Additionally, I asked if *this says something about what actions the EU might take in the future to address the problem.* In order to answer these questions, I used a discourse analysis as methodological tool. Additionally, I introduced the analytical concept of mixed-environmental migration as an encompassing term to capture the many variations, such as environmental refugee, climate-induced migrant, environmental migrant etc., found in the documents analyzed and in the specialized literature.

According to the main findings in this thesis, it was not a poor understanding in 1999, or recent enhanced knowledge —as the EU claims— that caused the discrepancy in the calculation of “environmental refugees”. Instead, the discrepancy was due to a change in the understanding and definition of the concepts “environmental refugee”, or mixed-environmental migrant. The findings also show that the presumed meaning of the term included more people in the late nineties than it does in recent years. The “qualifications” to be considered an “environmental refugee” have become stricter and more limited throughout the whole time period. Bluntly put: the EC and the EP’s understanding of climate-induced migration (or mixed environmental migration) has changed throughout the time period. It went from a broad understanding in the late 1990s of “environmental refugees” as those displaced by any human action that ruined the environment, to a stricter understanding towards the end of the time period, where only clear and direct effects of climate change are framed as a cause of “environmental refugees”. For instance, in the narrower definition, only people living on islands that are disappearing because of the rise of the sea level caused by climate change, can be understood as “environmental refugees”.

Conclusion and closing remarks

Regarding the solutions proposed in the order of discourse, I identified three main discourses. Two of which deal with *prevention*, and one that deals with *protection*. Additionally, a solution is identified which was not reproduced. Inherent to this discourse is the idea that the military should clean up and protect the environment, because within the same discourse it is understood that the military has been responsible for causing environmental degradation through warfare, and thereby causing “environmental refugees”. However, this discourse lost the competition to become the dominating discourse. What is considered the *cause* of mixed-environmental migration will create the room for action, or the *solution*. In other words, the consequence of the discourse losing removes the responsibility from the actions of war, and onto the communities that over-exploit their resources. This is because the winning discourse argues that in order to *prevent* mixed-environmental migration, EU development aid should be used to address different aspects of what causes it. The causes are then environmental degradation which is enhanced by climate change. The discourse evolves between 1999 and 2017, and especially after 2015 there is an increased focus on addressing the *root causes* of migration, and on building *resilience* in countries vulnerable to climate change.

Another main discourse found argues that more research is needed to find a good solution to *prevent* the problem. The problem is framed in recent years as so complex and difficult to understand, that the EU cannot act or create policies to address it without gaining more knowledge first.

The discourse that argues for *protection*, proposes for instance, an expansion of the 1951 refugee convention. However, the EP and the EC contradict themselves by arguing that this is not a likely solution. When the discourses that are dominating today are combined, it seems logical to *not* provide protection for environmental migrants. At the core of these dominant discourses is that many and complex factors contribute to migration and displacement, but there is uncertainty tied to the nexus between climate change and displacement or migration, and more knowledge is needed. The difficulty of proving that climate change is the main cause of displacement, means that few people are actually identified as in need of this protection. However, it *is* acknowledged that many factors tied to the environment do indeed cause displacement and migration, but the people affected do not “qualify” as “environmental refugees” unless it clearly is climate change, which has directly caused their displacement. The consequential response is then to strengthen resilience in countries through development aid, rather than provide protection for unidentifiable people. Interestingly however, earlier in the time period, these people were in fact “qualified”, and identifiable “environmental refugees”.

The analysis demonstrated that it was the EP that first warned about “environmental refugees” in need of protection. From the analysis it seems the EC took this concept from the EP and then redefined it with a narrower understanding. The ECs understanding of the term then became the normalized and *correct* understanding. The new accepted understanding was then taken up by the EP that not only adopted it but also reproduced it frequently. In this sense, the EC “won the battle” between the competing discourses. By doing so, the EU’s responsibility for environmental migrants has been reduced in comparison to what it would have been according to the EPs early conceptualization. Additionally, the narrow understanding of who “environmental refugees” are, and the lack of options for protection mean that these people are considered economic or illegal migrants if they reach the EU. The discourses now appear stable, which means social change is unlikely to happen (Jørgensen & Phillips, 1999, p. 148).

These findings would ‘predict’ that it is likely that the EU will continue to pursue tackling the root causes of migration and building resilience in third countries through development cooperation. Meanwhile it is *not* likely that the EU in the near future will provide any additional protection for “environmental refugees”, for example, by creating a specific legal category for them. However, a sign that the topic is currently being worked on, is the recent signing of the Protection Agenda by more than 100 countries a few years ago. This could mean that developments regarding protection could occur through international initiatives.

With regard to the methodology, discourse analysis has been a useful tool in this study. Since the EU does not use consistent terminology in regards to mixed-environmental migration, a quantitative approach would not be possible. Through discourse analysis it became clear that certain texts, such as the IPCC reports were *monuments* in the EP’s and EC’s discourses. By building on certain statements from these monuments, the framing of the word “environmental refugee” changed throughout the time period. However, limitations to the method is that the researcher is blind to events that are not mentioned in the documents analyzed. Moreover, important texts may not be referenced in the data analyzed, thus it is possible to over-represent the importance of the texts considered. It is clear that the EUs discourses are affected by events such as the refugee crisis and the Chernobyl accident (the latter was referenced to in 1999 although it occurred before the relevant time period), as well as statements made by other international institutions such as the UN and the IPCC. It is also possible that other events and other texts, which are not mentioned in the data, has affected the discourses.

As is true for both case studies and qualitative studies, generalization is not necessarily possible using discourse analysis. This means that the findings presented here are not necessarily representative for all EU institutions. Neither can I argue that the findings from the EP

Conclusion and closing remarks

and EC are similar to discourses in other countries or institutions such as the UN or IPCC. A suggestion for further research is to focus on the internal discursive battle for power within the EU. For instance, when developing official statements in the EP or the EC, what committee or Member State wanted to include or exclude information. When conducting the search for documents, I found that the issue of mixed-environmental migration had often been discussed in the stages of creating a resolution, but the issue was shortened or removed in the text adopted. It could also be that discourse analysis is not necessarily the best choice of methodology for this.

Another suggestion is to widen the order of discourse to include new international actors, such as the IPCC and the UN. These are actors that undeniable have produced some monuments on which the EC and EP's discourses rely on. Thus, it is very appealing to identify the monuments for the IPCC and UN's discourses, in order to create a genealogy of the discursive history of environmental displacement.

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Appendix

Intervjuguide

- *Jeg er her for å lære! Fortell om prosjektet og hvorfor jeg vil snakke med han - Kommer kun til å bruke informasjonen til dette intervjuet - Kan kontakte han hvis jeg vil sitere han for godkjenning.*

Spørsmål

1. Hvor lenge har du vært i Brussel? Ett og et halvt år.
2. Hvor lenge har du jobbet med disse politikkområdene? Hva gjør du egentlig?

Oversikt

3. **I hvilken grad har du vært borti klimarelatert migrasjon i EU sammenheng?**
 - Er det et tema som blir snakket om eller arbeidet med?
4. **Hva er EUs mål med arbeidet med klimarelaterte flyktninger?**
5. **Hvilke EU-institusjoner er de viktigste i dette arbeidet og hvordan?** Institusjoner (som feks EEAS)/ DGer/komiteer eller lignende? *Evt. noen jeg kan kontakte?*
6. **Hvordan har EUs arbeid med klimarelatert migrasjon utviklet seg over tid?**
 - Er det noen viktige prinsipper eller hovedvirkemidler?
 - Er det konkret eller sammenhengende politikk? Finnes **det målkonflikter**?
 - Har det vært tydelige endringer i EUs tilnærming på feltet? Kan det deles inn i tidsfaser? Tidspunkter der det har hendt noe? (f.eks etter 2014)
(Mitt inntrykk er at det for det meste har vært høringer/konsultasjoner og utredninger om temaet, og enighet om at man må gjøre 'noe', og at man i stor grad lener seg på internasjonale avtaler gjennom FN. Har h*n inntrykk av at det er slik i dag også?)
 - Har man mest fokus på land der mange migranter reiser til Europa? Som Nigeria, Eritrea, Somalia?
 - Land som Sudan og DR Kongo er både blant de som er mest sårbare for klimaendringer og land med flest internally displaced people. Hva gjør EU der?
7. **I hvilken grad fungerer EUs politikk for klimarelaterte flyktninger etter målet?**

Avtaler

8. **Hvilke avtaler og reguleringer anser du som de viktigste** når det kommer til klimarelatert migrasjon? Hvorfor det?
 - Hva er formålet med dem? Arbeidsdelingen? Har de forskjellige funksjoner eller retter de seg bare mot ulike land? Hvilke verktøy brukes?
 - Hvor godt fungerer de etter formålet?
 - **Mobility Partnerships**
 - **Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility**
9. Relevante **fond**?

Eu har sagt

10. Federica Mogherini har sagt man skal bekjempe 'root causes of migration', og at en av disse 'root causene' er klimaendringer.

Syns du man gjør det? Hvordan gjør man det?

11. EU har sagt at det er viktig å sikre at migranters rettigheter (som menneskerettigheter) er ivaretatt når de krysser internasjonale grenser eller blir 'internally displaced'.

Hvordan gjør man det i praksis? Lykkes det?

- Hun nevnte dette skal gjøres gjennom Partnership Framework on migration.

- Lykkes det?

12. Hvordan jobber man med 'adaptation' og 'resilience'?

13. (kilde CSWD 2013) – respons må skreddersys til lokale behov og ulike forutsetninger – har du inntrykk av at dette blir gjort?

14. **Hvorfor** er det ikke en klarere politikk rundt denne problematikken?

- Forskningen og definisjonen av begrepet gjør det vanskelig? Uten god terminologi er det vanskelig å definere problemet og kanskje håndtere det?

- Tverrsektorielt? – vanskelig å finne ut hvor de jobber med det f.eks ut ifra nettsider.

- Mangel på politisk vilje

15. Syns du noe mangler?