"Inevitable, Undesirable and Threatening": Uncovering the State Representation of Climate Migrants in Canada and Australia

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**Abstract**

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The expression "climate migrant" is increasingly used by policy makers, journalists and scholars to discuss the human impacts of climate change – with some authors evoking apocalyptic scenarios of mass displacement. Climate migration is frequently presented as a future or conditional phenomenon that will impact a variety of actors. States are foremost among these actors as they play a decisive role in legitimizing forms of migration. States decide who is permitted to enter and who is excluded from their territories. As both Canada and Australia have been tipped as potential strategic destinations for the resettlement of climate migrants, their respective governments have begun to discuss the political implications of climate migration. The term "climate migrants" is, however, ill-defined and empirically unsubstantiated. Moreover, it has been mobilized to evoke different meanings, often reflecting colonial and neocolonial biases. In other words, the use of the term reflects political undertones. Understanding how countries use the term is significant as it offers insights on these undertones. By engaging in a thick reading of state publications on climate migrants, I find that Canada and Australia represent climate migrants as an inevitable, undesirable and threatening consequence of climate change. Furthermore, I situate this representation within a broader hegemonic discourse on climate migration and human mobilities that views migrants as (racialized) "others" threatening to destabilize the Global North.

**Acknowledgements**

*"I'm born strong, the son of an immigrant*
*Struggling element*
*And I'll be here*
*I'll be here when your cities are sediment*
*And only your borders and fences are left*
*I'll be here when your banks stop selling debt*
*And all your leaders stop selling death*
*And you've lost all relevance*
*In the corner, check me reading a paper*
*Scribing your last will and testament"*

Hutchings Shabaka Akua Lumumba Kamau / Idehen Joshua

*"[…] no human being is illegal."*

Elie Wiesel

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM


At the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP), Tuvalu's foreign minister, Simon Kofe, called on the world to take action and recognize the imminent risk of climate displacement. Kofe delivered his speech knee deep in sea water, in an effort to show the effects of climate change already being felt in the South Pacific. He presented his plea not only on behalf of Tuvaluans - whose low-lying Pacific islands are slowly disappearing due to rising sea levels - but on behalf of all those who will be forcibly displaced by climate change. At COP26, Kofe was not alone in bringing attention to the issue of displacement. Climate induced displacement is now one of the most prominently discussed consequences of climate change. Seemingly everyone, from the World Bank to local media, is foreseeing the eventual mass displacement of people linked to climate change. These discussions make it clear that it is not a question of whether, but of when climate change will uproot millions of people, forcing them to move to escape the sudden and gradual effects of the warming climate. In its latest report on the issue, the World Bank estimates that up to 216 million people (close to 3% of the world's population) could be forcibly displaced by climate change over the coming decades[1].

Climate change is a phenomenon rooted in mobility. As Mimi Sheller points out in *Mobility Justice* (2018), climate change is both the consequence and instigator of mobility. From the consumption of fossil fuels for the transit of people and goods to the movement of bodies seeking to escape extreme weather, the consequences of human mobility are central to understanding our current epoch.

Yet, the question of climate displacement is not so clear cut. Human mobilities are typically far too complex to be linked to a single driver. People move for a myriad of reasons, such as poverty, conflict and the desire to improve their lives. It is therefore virtually impossible to identify isolated factors, such as climate, as primary drivers of mobility. As climate change acts to sharpen existing stressors, it is part of a constellation of compounding factors impacting on human lives. These impacts could well include dislocation and migration, but to understand human mobility solely in relation to climate is far too simplistic.

The expression "climate migrant" - and its associated concept, "climate refugee" - are reductive categories, as they function to erase the inherent complexity of human mobility. On this basis, these categories are also notoriously difficult to substantiate; how can we establish who is a bona fide climate migrant when climate alone cannot explain human movement? Furthermore, these categories tend to blur the social, political and economic forces that drive both climate change and migration. How then can we establish which forces are proximate and which are latent when they are mutually conditioned? In short, human mobility is a very often the result of a complex concomitance of factors. Attempts to understand it through specific drivers are too simplistic and reductive. In spite of this, "climate migrant" is an expression increasingly used by scholars,

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[1] Clement, Viviane; Rigaud, Kanta Kumari; de Sherbinin, Alex; Jones, Bryan; Adamo, Susana; Schewe, Jacob; Sadiq, Nian; Shabahat, Elham. 2021. Groundswell Part 2 : Acting on Internal Climate Migration. World Bank, Washington, DC. © World Bank. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/36248 License: CC BY 3.0 IGO

journalists and policy makers to discuss and illustrate the potential consequences of climate change.

This thesis studies the representations of the "climate migrant" as an emerging figure in Canadian and Australian state discourse. It argues that both Canada and Australia reproduce dominant discourses – and mobilize "debunked myths" – in their representations. This first chapter outlines the puzzle at the centre of this study, namely the enduring representations of climate migrants in Canadian and Australian state discourse. In it, I offer a brief contextualization to help the reader situate my research question. I also present the division of my thesis as a roadmap for what follows.

By representation, I refer to the meanings put forward by discursive practice. In other words, representations are constructed through the use of language, references, imagery, omissions and symbols. Moreover, as I employ a framework rooted in post-structuralist theory, my definition holds that meaning is created through social practice, which is theorized as discursive. For the purposes of this study, however, the representations analysed are those manifested through written texts. As a result, this thesis analyses the textual use of languages, imagery, references and omissions.

In this text, I employ the term climate migrant, to refer to common representations of human mobility linked to climate change. Despite recognizing that the relationship between human mobility and climate change is complex and unfixed, I employ this term for two reasons. The first is practical. I wish to avoid the confusion and imprecision derived from the synonymous use of terms such as climate migrants, climate refugees, environmental migrants and so on. Moreover, it is the most commonly used expression in scientific literature and in popular culture.

The second reason relates to ontology, as my object of inquiry is this amorphous expression and my aim is to explore how it is represented. I hence use the term in reference to the object of my analysis. The use of the term climate migrant should thus not be interpreted as an effort to define or substantiate this relationship through the lens of migration. Following Bettini (2013), I approach this object as "a situated problematization" that can be deconstructed through deep interpretation and analysis.

Finally, I employ the terms "discourse" and "narrative" throughout this thesis. Discourse refers to particular discursive patterns which communicate given meanings. In this study, I analyze multiple discourses. The term narrative refers to a woven script, or in other words, to a series of meanings which are mobilized concurrently to shape and order our understanding of the world. In simple terms, a narrative might include multiple discourses.

**Problem**

Climate mobility is a "narrative and material" phenomenon (Farbotko and Lazrus 2012, 382); it exists both as an empirical reality and as a discursive construct. In fact, conceptual confusion as well as empirical imprecision and inconsistencies mean that climate migrants currently operate primarily as discursive constructs. As Methmann (2014) puts it " [...] it is almost impossible to see climate refugees. Yet, for the casual observer, it is impossible not to see climate migrants or refugees," meaning that the concept's use (and visual depiction) is consistently mobilized to

discuss the human impacts of the changing climate.  Yet critical scholars agree that the term is, in fact, unsubstantiated, reductive and imprecise.

This doesn't mean that ecological changes are unreal or that displacement linked to environmental factors is purely fictional. Indeed human bodies are in fact moving in response to climate change. Rather, it means that this designation - as one which seeks to fix the relationship between human mobility and climate change - is nebulous, given it remains unclear to whom it might apply, and even, whether it holds any value to begin with.

Notwithstanding the absence of a clear conceptual definition and empirical cogency, the category is widely, and increasingly, used by scholars, journalists and policymakers. The widespread use of this "floating signifier" (Bettini 2013b) is puzzling and has led several scholars to problematize this discursive construction and to attempt to understand its purpose. These authors have explored the discursive representations of climate migrants, with a noted focus on media and institutional representations in a European context. Together, these studies constitute the bedrock of this thesis, which expands upon them geographically and theoretically, through the examination of state public political discourses.

Governments are among the actors that have begun to discuss the national and geopolitical implications of climate displacement. These discussions remain, largely, unexplored within mobility research. Most analyses have centred on representations of climate migrants outside of institutional systems of governance. These analyses largely conceptualize political discourse through post-structuralist approaches, which theorize a wide array of socially conditioned discursive practices articulated into structures of power. Institutional systems of governance, conceptualized here as national governments, produce an explicit form of public political discourse, one which is intimately linked to material forms of power. Through the adoption and enforcement of national policy, governments are determinant actors in shaping human lives. Examining state production of discourse is thus immediately relevant to understanding the material articulation of power.

Through the creation and control of borders and the principle of sovereignty, governments play a decisive role with regards to human mobility. They decide who is permitted to enter and who is excluded from their territories, thereby legitimizing and delegitimizing mobility drivers and motives for resettlement. The ways in which governments view the conditions under which people move dictate their responses to migration and, by extension, hold dire implications for the life and death of human beings. Given the immanence and scale of climate change and the noted increase in migration, these questions are of the utmost importance.

As it is generally assumed that countries in the Global South will bear accentuated effects of climate change due to geographic vulnerabilities, poverty and colonial legacies (this asymmetry is in fact already measurable[2]), many nations in regions such as Africa, South-West Asia, Oceania and Latin America are beginning to confront the likelihood of displaced local populations. For

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[2] Ahmed, B. (2018), "Who takes responsibility for the climate refugees?", *International Journal of Climate Change Strategies and Management*, Vol. 10 No. 1, pp. 5-26

countries in the Global North, discussions focus on the possibility of increased demands of entry and requests for refuge or else on the perceived duty to accept and resettle displaced persons.

**Research Question**

Historical settler nations Canada and Australia are among those tipped as future areas for the resettlement of climate migrants. Australia is strategically placed through geography to welcome displaced Pacific islanders, such as those from Tuvalu. An opinion published in the Financial Times[3] in the run up to the COP26 talks designated Australia as an eventual "protectorat" for fleeing Pacific islanders. Thousands of miles away, Canada's vast territory, wealth and perceived hospitality are seen as likely pull factors that will lead many to seek refuge within its borders. An article published by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)[4] in May 2021 suggested that Canada could, and ought to, resettle a significant number of climate migrants.

Both nations have, in fact, begun to examine the potential impacts of climate migrants. The Canadian and Australian governments have, over the last 15 years, produced a limited number of documents which deal explicitly with this question. Contained within each of these documents, is a particular discursive representations of climate migrants, which can show us how (and perhaps eventually to what end) these States are employing this ambiguous concept. It can further provide insight as to how these governments intend to respond to the human consequences of climate change.

My analysis takes these representations as its empirical focus, expanding on existing research through a study of an unexplored area: government discourse in Canada and Australia. I ask: How are climate migrants represented in Canadian and Australian state discourse?  To answer this question, I engage in an in-depth content analysis of eight selected documents. Published between 2005 (the year that the Kyoto Protocol entered into force) and 2021 (prior to the publication of the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's sixth assessment report), these documents contain discursive representations of climate migrants, constructed in identifiable discourses. This study delves into these representations, showing how states construct climate migrants as a future-conditional embodiment of the problematized effects of climate change.

My research reveals that Canadian and Australian discourse reproduces a hegemonic narrative which portrays climate migrants as a threatening future prospect. I engaged in a multidimensional content analysis of a limited sample of documents produced by the governments of Canada and Australia respectively. This approach enabled me to uncover the loaded terms, images and omissions used throughout the texts to define and describe climate migrants. These representations overwhelmingly presented climate migrants as an undesirable and potentially destabilizing phenomenon which could have significant repercussions for the Global North. In these documents, the movement of climate migrants is systematically problematized, and often pathologized - the

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[3] CBC, Why Canada needs to think about accepting climate change refugees, https://www.cbc.ca/news/science/what-on-earth-trees-climate-refugees-1.6034396

[4] Financial Times, Migration will soon be the biggest climate challenge of our time, https://www.ft.com/content/415f4a8c-cab4-4f95-99aa-b347bb510365

term "crisis" is frequently used to evoke this problematization. In short, climate migrants are linked to environmental devastation, instability and violence.

**Division of Thesis**

As research has shown, most discourse on climate migration can be grouped along narrative lines. Authors such as Bettini (2013, 2013b, 2014), Methman and Oels (2015) have identified four discourses which dominate the landscape. Through these discourses, climate migrants are seen as symptoms of natural changes, threats, victims or resilient individuals. In their review of scientific literature, these authors further showed how dominant discourses have evolved, with contemporary analyses favouring a resiliency-based perspective. Chapter 2 offers a review of these discursive theories, as well as an overview of the wider research on climate migration. Broadly, this research can be divided into two streams: research that seeks to substantiate the relationship between human mobility and climate change and research that critically interprets the discursive links between these dynamics. The review contained in chapter 2 presents the co-evolution of both scholarly streams, and situates my research within the latter. As such, chapter 2 also highlights the significance of discourse in constructing and defining the relationship between human mobility and climate change. It also ties these discursive actions to material forms of power, in this case, that wielded by national governments.

To conduct this research, I turned to Poststructural discourse theory (PDT). PDT provides a complete theoretical framework for my analysis, offering a conceptualization of discursive practice as constitutive of social reality and an epistemological route to deconstruct and uncover how meaning is constructed through it. For my purposes, operationalizing PDT led to a thorough and profound deconstruction of the terms used to discuss climate migrants in the selected documents. Chapter 3 discusses the theoretical grounding of my research in PDT, explicating the salience and value of this perspective. Chapter 3 also presents the methods chosen to operationalize PDT in the context of this study. In it, I describe my choice of approach which consists of mobilizing discursive logics - termed social, political and fantasmatic - elaborated by Glynos and Howarth (2007). Finally, this chapter serves to justify my choice of cases - Canada and Australia - and to explain my process of selecting documents.

Chapter 4 presents the results of my analysis, showing how discourse functions through each logic. Chapter 4 is divided between Canada and Australia, in an effort to show how these dynamics operate within each specific context. Broadly, the Canadian documents represent climate migrants as a potentially threatening phenomenon that will likely pressure the state's immigration regime. Climate migrants are, in fact, presented as uniquely problematic given that they are viewed as inadmissible to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. In the Australian documents, climate migrants are often absent as an explicit group. When the documents do reference climate migrants, they are viewed as a potential threat to national security. The Australian documents further suggest that climate migration might be avoided through the distribution of foreign aid. This chapter also presents an aggregated analysis of my findings, given the similarities noted in both contexts.

As I engaged with my research question, I somewhat expected that state discourse would also reproduce dominant representations. I further anticipated that there would be a shift, mirroring the

changes within the literature, from representations of threat to representations of resiliency. The results of this study partially confirm these initial expectations, though they also diverge in interesting ways. Chapter 5 discusses these results, relating them theoretically to PDT and to the scholarship on climate migration discourse. It explores how each logic functions in relation to each discourse and how these discursive patterns are articulated and co-articulated within the assessed documents.

**Contribution**

This study expands on existing research in an effort to elucidate how Canadian and Australian state discourse represents climate migrants. By focusing on an unexplored area, I aim to contribute to a growing body of literature which critically analyses the representation of the relationship between human mobility and climate change.

More generally, this study contributes to the research on the impacts of climate change on human beings. It also contributes to research on human mobility, a field which is of urgent relevance in an age of hardened borders and rising exclusionary rhetoric. The convergence of these phenomena holds dire implications for the lives of millions, potentially billions of human beings. As such, I have approached this project with the hope of contributing to fields of knowledge which capacitate challenges to existing structures of oppression and injustice. I further hope to contribute to a surge of critical scholarship which works to deconstruct colonial and neocolonial legacies and to empower broadened conceptions of humaneness.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

As human existence is confronted with the reality of climate change, the relationship between social life and the environment appears inalienable. We might expect, therefore, to find the significance of this relationship reflected within scientific literature. Further, we might assume that mobility, as a crucial dimension of human life, has been, in part, theorized in relation to ecology. We could expect an abundance of research on the relationship between to the environment, climate, and natural resources with which humans contend. However, what we find in practice is a historical lack of interest in ecology and the environment.

This historical disinterest for the environment is particularly notable in migration and mobility literature; only recently has it resurfaced as a dimension of interest. For much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, human movement was theorized solely as a product of social forces, including economic dynamics. Strangely, it seems that no one had conceived of climate migrants prior to the 1980s. Etienne Piguet (2013) describes this phenomenon as the "strange disappearance and sudden reappearance" of the natural environment in migration studies.

This chapter traces the genealogy of the social-ecological relationship in the scientific literature on human migration. It shows that, up until the mid-1970s, ecology figured little within scientific discourse on human mobility. It next situates its "sudden reappearance" with the introduction of "environmental refugees" – a designation later replaced by the expression "climate migrant" - in

migration and refugee studies and in policy discussions. I go on to show how this concept has come to occupy considerable and increasing space within scientific, popular and political discourse, and to trace how it has been conceptualized along shifting narrative lines. Doing so, I draw from authors who have worked to identify the main discursive patterns present in the literature. I then highlight the work of critical scholars who have questioned the empirical validity and theoretical value of this category, on the basis of a lack of conceptual salience and empirical substantiation, and subsequently link their critical scholarship to the wider field of political discourse studies.

## Literature Review

*Ecology and migration*

In 1907, Ellsworth Huntington put forth the idea that the fall of the Roman Empire had been in part caused by a hardening northern climate. He argued that this environmental shift pushed the Germanic descent to Rome (Piguet 2013). It is perhaps one of the earliest texts explicitly linking a changing environment to human mobility. Prior to Huntington, few authors expressed interest in the relationship between social processes and ecology.

As Bettini (2013a) and Piguet (2013) have shown, there are some notable exceptions to this generalized disinterest. Both Karl Marx (1867/1983) and Thomas Malthus (1798/1996) theorized human ecology through their dialectical writings on population and resource scarcity. Malthus, who wrote extensively on the potential consequences of overpopulation, theorized that population growth systematically outpaces subsistence production, leading to a scarcity of resources, the consequences of which are conflict, death, and displacement. Malthusian warnings against the dangers of "surplus populations" were contested by Marx, who asserted that resource scarcity did not derive from ineluctable natural forces, but from the socially orchestrated structures of production and resource distribution. In other words, Marx viewed scarcity as culminating from an inequitable distribution of the forces and fruits of production. Subsequent to this debate, Piotr Kropotkin (1902) argued that migration could constitute a means to avoid conflict resulting from environmental scarcity by redistributing populations. Malthus, Marx, and Kropotkin's writings thus link social processes to ecological notions. They remain an exception to the rule, however, and, as such, are seldom recognized as precursors to the scientific discussions on climate migration.

As Piguet notes "nearly all traces of the environment as an explanatory factor for migration disappeared from the growing body of research on migration over the course of the twentieth century" (Piguet 2013, 150). This is perhaps due to the Western belief that science and technology had freed humanity from environmental consequences. Indeed, Piguet argues that most Western scholars had come to view environmental determinism as archaic. Hence, scientific and technological "progress" meant that human beings were, in essence, liberated from their ecological bonds.

For most of the twentieth century, scholarship on migration adopted a narrow focus on specific push and pull factors. Push factors are defined as the factors that drive people to move from their homes, while pull factors are defined as the factors that attract people to move to a particular place.

Piguet (2013) relates this narrowing to two trends - the introduction of refugee studies, focused on the political dimension of forced movement and tied to the definition set forth by the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (CSR) and the adoption of an economic paradigm (accompanied by the rise of econometrics). As a result, conflict and economics came to dominate the field as explanatory factors for human mobility (*ibid*.).

It was not until the late 1970s that migration scholars began to reflect on the relationship between human movement and the environment. The first public use of the term "environmental refugee" is generally attributed to Lester Brown, a researcher at the World Watch Institute. Following his use of the term in 1976, United Nations (UN) researcher Essam El-Hinnawi employed it to warn of the potential consequences of environmental destruction. In his 1985 paper, El-Hinnawi offered what is considered to be the first formal definition of the concept, writing that environmental refugees are "[…] 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) […]" (El-Hinnawi 1985). In 1988, Jacobsen drew from El-Hinnawi's definition in her attempt to provide quantitative estimates of potential mass environmental displacement (Jacobsen 1988).

It ought to be noted that these initial definitions and predictions conceptualized environmental refugees as vulnerable people, inhabiting "fragile" areas in the Global South. As such, environmental displacement was foremost theorized as an issue that would affect poor racialized communities still grappling with the violent legacy of colonialism, though discussions on the enduring impacts of colonialism are conspicuously absent from these early analyses. As Andrew Baldwin (2014) notes, here the concept of "environmental refugee" acts as the "Third World Other", a figure presented as undefined yet threatening to Western ways of life.

By the 1990s, many scholars were attempting to substantiate the concept of environmental refugees by working to produce their own quantified estimates of the numbers of environmental refugees. In 1995, Myers and Kent predicted an exodus of people fleeing the Global South, further predicting resulting conflicts and wars (Myers and Kent 1995). Two years later, Myers claimed that "there are at least 25 million environmental refugees today […]" (Myers 1997, 167) and warned that this number would grow exponentially in the coming decades. Significant estimates were also floated by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The IPCC's first assessment report, published in 1992, stated that millions of people would eventually be displaced by environmental degradation and a hardening climate (IPCC 1992).

These predictions and estimates are controversial. It took little time for the scientific and policy community to call into question the methods used to quantify them (Black 2001, Bates 2002, Brown 2008). At the time, these predictions were deemed deceptively "alarmist" and "apocalyptic" by many scholars. Black claimed that these efforts were " [...] unhelpful and unsound intellectually, and unnecessary in practical terms" and qualified them as Neo-Malthusian[5] (Black 2001, 1). Examining the debate between Myers, Kent and Black, Castles (2002) also concluded that the concept of "environmental refugee is misleading and does little to help us understand the complex processes at work in specific situations of impoverishment, conflict and displacement"

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[5] This expression refers to ideas which reproduce some of Thomas Malthus's assertions on the dangers of over-population and resource scarcity.

(Castles 2002, 5). Empirical studies conducted by Findley (1994) and Henry et al. (2004) cast further doubt on the links between ecological stress and migration.

Several scholars, including Surkhe (1994), Black (2001), Bates (2002), Castles (2002) and Brown (2008), also argued against the use of the term "refugee" in relation to environmental displacement. They deemed the that use of the term refugee in this case is misleading, given that it is derived from the 1951 CSR. A legal concept, the designation of refugees relates to the fear of persecution and depends on sovereign states' action. It thus precludes the consideration of environmental factors as a *vera causa* for those seeking refuge. As such, fleeing one's home because of environmental shocks or degradation is viewed as entirely distinct from persecution as framed by the CSR. People who flee for these reasons are therefore not entitled to claim asylum.

In line with Black, Bates criticized the use of the term refugee, calling it "somewhat vague". (Bates 2002). To remedy this lack of precision, Bates offered a typology of environmental displacement – with categories based on the causes of displacements, which are natural or industrial disasters, expropriation and environmental degradation - and suggested that the initial concept could be repurposed, provided it be strictly defined.

The debate surrounding the use of the word refugee was largely won by these skeptical authors. From the early 2000s onwards, most scholarship began referring to and framing environmental displacement through the lens of migration as opposed to the one associated with the international refugee regime, having conceded the legal confusion surrounding the latter. Moreover, as a scientific consensus formed around the empirical reality of anthropogenic climate change, the question of "environmental migration" began to be framed in exclusive relation to the changing climate. The concept of climate migration was introduced a subset of environmental migration: it refers to migration that is linked to the phenomenon of climate change. Environmental migration, on the other hand, refers to migration linked to any environmental factor - one might think of the 1930's Dust Bowl which occurred in the United States as an example.

In short, these early debates revolved around the empirical and legal validity of the term "environment/climate refugee". Up to the late 1990s, the literature largely reflects this push to establish a link between environmental factors and forced migration. Despite the doubts cast by skeptical scholars, many authors accepted the intuitive notion that a changing climate would inevitably lead to mass movement. A significant portion of the mobility and climate literature adopted the notion that climate migrants are an impending phenomenon. From then onwards, studies began to frame this relationship through differing conceptual lenses, mobilizing diverging representations. The focus turned from predicting the probability of climate displacement, to predicting its effects on (mostly Western) societies.

*The discursive construction of climate migrants*

The first discursive frame to dominate scientific research offered a representation of climate migrants steeped in fears of insecurity. Mass migration related to climate change was posed as a challenge to sovereignty and the integrity of borders. Several authors floated scenarios premised on causal links between climate change, human mobility and conflict (Homer-Dixon 1991,

Baechler 1999, Barnet 2003, Salehyan 2005). This discourse's roots are easy to identify in the research cited above, which employed terms such as "mass exodus" or the expression "crisis in the making" to describe their predicted scenarios. Some research adopted the premise that climate change would lead to mass internal and external migration and that these "disturbances" would likely fuel violence and conflict. In one widely cited paper, Homer-Dixon claimed that "Bulging populations and land stress may produce waves of environmental refugees that spill across borders with destabilizing effects on the recipient's domestic order and on international stability." (Homer-Dixon 1991, 77). This discourse nakedly framed climate migrants as threats to national and international security.

As Methmann and Oels (2015) point out, "[t]his articulation of climate refugees as a threat to national security is in line with the longstanding xenophobia and securitization of migration in Western liberal democracies in general" (56). Their assertion is in line with Baldwin's conceptualization of climate migrants as "Third World Others". It also lines up with claims by mobility and migration researchers who have noted the rise of xenophobic and exclusionary rhetoric directed at migrants, which has been made even more apparent in the current era of hardened borders (Dauverge 2016). Going a step further, Caminero-Santangelo (2020) suggests that this discourse "has been used to bolster populist anti-immigrant rhetoric and greenwash white nationalism" (Caminero-Santangelo 2020, 264).

While discourse has been superseded within the climate migration literature, insecurity remains one of the core frames through which climate migration is conceptualized and understood. Though less prominent, a "threat" narrative is still reproduced in contemporary research, and as Bettini (2013) has shown, sometimes in conjecture with other dominant discourses.

By the early 2000s, an absence of empirical evidence of the relationship between climate change and conflict had thrown into doubt security discourses. Moreover, additional doubts raised in relation to the numbers and temporality of displacement, further undermined the credibility of early alarming predictions. Authors such as Black (2001) and Bates (2002) noted that most displacements would likely take place within rather than across borders and that they would, in many cases, be temporary. New questions emerged based on these claims. Authors were quick to point out that people forcibly displaced within borders - officially designated as Internally Displaced Persons or IDPs by the UN - are without legal recognition or protection. Moreover, as many accepted that a limited number of IDPs would eventually migrate across borders, questions surrounding their legal status came to prominence. Methmann and Oels (2015) also attribute this narrative shift to the ascent of "humanitarian" military interventions in the late 1990s (e.g. the NATO intervention in the Balkans), as well as to reconceptualization of security concerns as concerns of human security. They suggest that the reframing of climate displacement as an issue necessitating a legal and humanitarian approach is largely due to these shifting dynamics.

Accordingly, scientific and policy focus turned to the official recognition and protection of climate migrants, recognizing as they did so that the effects of climate change would be disproportionately experienced by the inhabitants of "vulnerable areas", i.e. countries in the Global South. The assumption here being that people fleeing environmental devastation in the South will flock North in search of refuge.

As such, scholars began to analyse the issue through the prisms of existing refugee protection instruments, the most prominent of which is the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (CSR). Most authors agreed with the early assessments of Black (2001) and Bates (2002), who viewed climate migrants as falling outside of the CSR's purview. Others questioned whether the CSR could lend itself to reinterpretation, allowing for climate refugees to be protected by it (Westra 2009). Many authors debated whether such a reinterpretation would, in effect, water-down existing refugee protections, suggesting that drafting new forms of legal protection would instead offer a better solution to the absence of recognition and rights. Ahmed (2013) argued that, given their disproportionate responsibility for $CO_2$ emissions and for climate change more generally, Western nations ought to abide to be imposed environmental refugee resettlement quotas.

Methmann and Oels (2015) identify this narrative as one which presents climate migrants as victims in need of protection. In most of these texts, the question asked is "how do we save climate refugees?", thereby presenting them through the lens of vulnerability and victimhood. Fartbotko and Lazrus (2012) note that this perspective imposes an interpretation of climate change and potential climate mobility through the lens of Western concerns. They stress that this effectively erases the experiences and perspectives of those who are at the forefront of climate change and more likely to engage in climate-educed mobilities. Their study of Tuvalu islanders shows that non-Western perspectives on climate change can significantly diverge from Western narratives. The authors note that many Tuvaluans conceptualize mobility as inherent to their identity (Farbotko and Lazrus 2012), as opposed to the Western belief that mobility - often conceptualized as displacement - is inherently problematic. They further assert that by imposing a "victim" identity and by focusing solely on eventual forced relocation, Western narratives disempower communities affected by climate change and deny them agency. Caminero-Santangelo (2020) echoes these contentions and further proposes a link between this "vulnerable victim of climate change" narrative and the traditional "white savior complex" (268).

Though still widely present within climate migration discourse, the humanitarian discourse has more recently been superseded by one rooted in the concept of resilience. This perspective individualizes the effects of the changing climate, presenting the individual as responsible for their survival and frames resilience as a feature towards which individuals may strive. Here, migration is seen as a prominent means of resilience, constituting a "rational strategy of adaptation to unavoidable levels of climate change" (Methmann and Oels 2015, 64). In other words, individuals who demonstrate the willingness and ability to move away from the devastation of climate change are seen as resilient. A keen reader will note that this discourse partially departs from those previously discussed, in so far as it does not inherently problematize migration, nor deny the agency of migrants. Rather, the resilience perspective views migration as a valid and historically born form of adaptation to environmental and climatic disruptions (Methmann and Oels 2015. 58).

Methmann and Oels (2015) show how this discursive shift has emerged in relation to both climate migration and climate change. They note that environmental research has also begun to frame responses to climate change through the lens of resilience and capacity building. They suggest that this turn is driven by the belief that climate change has reached a point of inevitability. As some devastation can no longer be avoided, the focus should shift from mitigation to adaptation. They also note that this conceptualization constitutes an attempt to govern the response to climate

change "through contingency". They argue that this depoliticizes climate migration, as it is seen simply as a process to be ordered and governed.

Their arguments echo the conclusions put forth by Roman Felli (2012) in his analysis of policy discourse produced by international institutions such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Felli suggests that this prominent framing stems from neoliberal governmentality - a concept developed by Foucault to describe the ideological paradigm which structures and guides governance - and links it to a logic which affirms that the world is composed of rational individuals who are each responsible for their own welfare. Felli shows that the resilience discourse operates in a similar fashion, placing the onus on individual migrants and framing the issue of climate displacement through the lens of individual entrepreneurialism. This, he claims, contributes to a depoliticizing the issue:

"The discourse of climate migration, as it abstracts from social (and, indeed, class) relations, obscures the questions of dispossession, responsibility, or compensation and replaces them with a mixture of humanitarianism and entrepreneurialism. Social conflicts or contradictions, even mediated through climate change, have disappeared from this discourse, in which all human beings are thought to share the same fundamental interests and ethos." (Felli 2012, 26-27).

These analyses propose that the resilience narrative acts to simplify the issue of climate displacement and impose homogeneity. By decontextualizing climate change and the inequities of its impacts, resiliency narratives present it as a simple exogenous shock with which some humans will have to contend. In this light, migrants are framed as homogenous in their experiences and response, entrepreneurial and resilient.

This discourse falls short of conceptualizing political responses to climate migration. This omission is significant while being somewhat incongruous. Viewing migrants as strategically resilient is incoherent with an ideology of hardened borders and criminalized migration. Yet, this discourse advances this representation as it does not question bordering discourse or practices while simultaneously suggesting that mobility is a strategic way to adapt to a changing climate. As Methmann et al (2015). and Felli (2012) have shown, the only way it can do so is by removing politics from the equation. Doing so, this perspective also purges the necessity of a Western response to the plight of migrants. Movement is seen as a given if people are to survive climate change, whilst falling outside of Western responsibilities and obligations. In simpler terms, resilience is seen as an inevitability which will take place "over there" while the West maintains its hard borders in the name of national security.

Resilience now dominates the scientific and political discourse on climate migration. Recent research has focused on identifying the conditions that will influence climate migration, with a specific focus on geographic conditions. As examples, McLeman (2018) studied the thresholds that made migration appear as a viable adaptive behaviour while Jacobson et al. (2018) analysed the effect of migration as a response to food insecurity.

The work undertaken by Methmann and Oels (2015) offers a valuable survey of this genealogy. It contextualizes the successive development and rise of the narratives presented above, linking them

to scientific, social and political changes. In fact, Bettini (2013) previously showed how different institutions favour different discourses - e.g. with NGO's favoring a humanitarian discourse. He further notes that elements of security, humanitarian, scientific and resilience discourse continue to be mobilized concurrently by actors such as states, NGOs and scholars. He qualifies these concurrences as "discursive coalitions", noting for example that the security and humanitarian discourses cooperate to advance "apocalyptic" scenarios of displacement.

This summary of dominant discourses shows how discourse operates to construct climate migrants as a phenomenon. As previously noted, climate migrants exist primarily as discursive constructs. Identifying and understanding representations of climate migrants, and their function, requires an analysis of this discursive landscape. But first, it requires an understanding of how discourse operates, and of how it operates in relation to politics and power.

*Discourse and power*

Several significant authors – such as Gramsci, Foucault, Derrida, Lacan and Deleuze - have worked to reveal how discourse operates to enshrine systems of meaning which help to create and consolidate social orders and relations of power. These theorists also explored the conditions that give rise to meanings, recognizing their inherent contingency. With the exception of Gramsci, these theorists understood power to be articulated not only through systems of meaning, but also through the conditions that dictate who may "speak" in the first place.

Reflecting on the failures of Marxism in feeding social unrest, Gramsci developed the idea of a cultural hegemony, a form of domination reified through discursive practice. Gramsci contends that cultural hegemony functions to create latent consent for established social, political and economic orders. This hegemony is created through discursive "cultural" practice, in other words, through the use of language and symbols. Together these elements create systems of meaning through which power may be exercised and consent unconsciously obtained.

Michel Foucault offered an alternative post-structuralist perspective. Through his genealogical epistemology, Foucault also theorized the discursive construction of social reality, order and power. He understood discursive practice as consisting of statements of meaning which he views as frequently fragmented and subconsciously expressed. Through genealogies, he aimed to reveal the often implicit historical, social and political conditions which govern discursive practice. Doing so, he gave particular attention to "the difference between what one could say correctly (under the rules of grammar and logic) and what is actually said" (Foucault 1991, 63). In short, his approach consisted of uncovering contextual contingencies and interpreting what is said and, what is left unsaid in relation to them. Foucault further theorized the creation of systems of meaning, conceptualized as ideologies, which give rise to particular social orders - or what he termed governmentalities (*gouvernementalités*). Power, he tells us, is exercised through discursive practices, which give rise to ideologies and institutions, thereby materially structuring social order.

Jacques Derrida formulated a related interpretation of discursive practice, noting that meaning is often conferred through opposition and demarcation. He argues that things are defined by what they are not, e.g. climate migrants being defined as "not refugees". Derrida therefore advocated for a methodological deconstruction of language, one which seeks to uncover meanings hidden

behind dialectical terms. He follows Foucault in his belief that meanings and, by extension, power, can be revealed through hermeneutic deconstruction.

More recently, the links between discourse and power have been theorized by Judith Butler who has focused on the ways discourse, particularly dominant discourse, are materially reified through performance and codification. Butler expands on previous post-structuralist theories through her examination of diverging, subversive identities and discourse. For Butler, as power is constructed and consolidated through dominant systems of meaning, it is equally possible to weaken and deconstruct it through transgressions. Discursive transgressions can therefore be seen as emancipatory, as a force which can act to weaken structures of power. In essence, these authors argue that discourse and power are intertwined and mutually conditioned. Discourse not only gives rise to tangible structures of power, but operates through these structures to define the conditions under which certain meanings can be expressed, legitimated or viewed as transgressive.

*The critical deconstruction of climate migrants*

This section explores the critical scholarship which has worked to deconstruct and analyse climate migration's discursive landscape. These scholars share many of the ontological beliefs summarized above namely that social life and relations of power are created through discursive practice. Those working within this poststructuralist perspective propose that the discourse on climate migration is seen significant since it acts to narratively construct and confer meaning to the phenomenon of climate migration. It also acts to shape the conditions under which our understanding of the phenomenon can take place. Moreover, as discourse operates to shape and condition material forms of power, climate migration discourses reify decisions about actions such as the physical control of borders. This group of authors have worked to deconstruct and interpret the dominant discourse and frames that have been used to conceptualize and describe climate migration. Doing so, they offer offering insights as to how dominant discourses act to shape our understanding this complex phenomenon.

Farbotko and Lazrus (2012) showed that the experiences of those confronted with climate change are frequently obscured by research which adopts a Western perspective. They showed how the subjectivity of people who inhabit so-called vulnerable areas can diverge significantly from these Western narratives. Their work highlights the gap between the lived experiences of these communities and the representations of climate migrants.

Baldwin (2012) goes a step further and shows how most discourse on climate migration frames it a as "future-conditional" phenomenon. Borrowing from the work of Edward Said, he draws parallels with colonial discourse which operates to enforce distance between Western colonizers and racialized others. Baldwin notes that, in the case of climate migrants, this alterity is both geographical (as it is assumed that people will flee from the South to the North) and temporal (through future conditionality). Further, he contends that the climate migrants is a "virtual" figure, one which exists only in theory. This figure, he argues, serves as an identifiable "other", living a life on the margins of Western civil legitimacy (and quite literally kept "outside" of Western society by borders). He states that "If the figure of the climate change migrant is racialized, then this is so because the environmental citizen is a form of "European subjecthood which is ostensibly White.". In other words, this discourse creates two opposing identities, that of the Western citizen

who will contribute to and benefit from Northern wealth and adaptive capabilities and the "other" who will fall victim to climate change. According to Baldwin, discourse on climate migration operates to demarcate the racialized other from the Western (white) environmental citizen.

Methmann's (2014) analyses also highlight the "virtual" essence of climate migrants through his analysis of the visual "field of visibility" constructed through images of climate displacement. His findings support Baldwin's conclusions, as he shows that climate migrants, even when they are presented through the lens of resilience, are depicted as racialized others and as potential threats. In his analysis of visual depictions of climate change and migration, he notes that the figure of the climate migrant is ever present and represented as "a racialized figure, a passive and helpless victim of global warming". (416). Working with Rothe (2014) Methmann showed that visual representations of climate migrants in the Mediterranean-North-Africa (MENA) region translate a sense of threat and potential insecurity for Europe. They also contend that this sense of threat is securitized, thereby removing the issue of climate migrants for the political sphere.

Further supporting this affirmation, Bettini (2013) showed in his exploration of paradigmatic publications that competing discourses can feed into a single narrative, even in spite of contradictions. He shows how the discursive field of climate migration largely coalesces around "apocalyptic" expressions and representations. Moreover, Bettini (2017) also identifies the depoliticization noting " how alarmist narratives on climate refugees co-exist with the neoliberal phantasy of the docile adaptive climate migrant – both highly evocative and 'spectacular', as well as depoliticizing." (81). Bettini (2014) also notes that the turn to resilience-based discourse is accompanied by a "milder" alarmism, but one which "[functions to inscribe] biopolitical subjectivities onto the concerned populations and to inscribe their life into existing neoliberal relation". (180). Like Felli, Bettini views the ascent of resilience as a symptom of neoliberal rationality, which seeks to individualize and depoliticize in favour of managerial forms of governance. For climate migrants, this means both placing the burden of climate change adaptation onto those who experience its effects, while simultaneously enforcing hard borders as necessary measures for national security.

**Conclusion**

Thus far, I have presented the discursive history related to climate migrants, highlighting the succession of three dominant discourses. I have shown that these discourses have evolved in relation to contextual contingencies and noted that they continue to operate and cooperate in current scientific, policy and popular discussions on climate migration. I have further argued that this discursive construction is significant, not only in relation to the understanding of climate change and human mobility, but in relation to material forms of power. Finally, I have explored the critical scholarship which has worked to hermeneutically deconstruct these dominant discourses. These deconstructions show that climate migrants are predominantly represented as racialized others, fleeing vulnerability in the Global South. They also show that they are represented as a "future conditional" phenomenon which has largely been depoliticized as it has been framed through the lens of resilience. This depoliticization explains how the notion of climate migration as adaptation can co-exist with a push for hardened borders.

Their conclusions provide many insights on how the relationship between human mobility and climate change is conceptualized as well as on how this conceptualization feeds into responses to migration and climate change. However, not all relevant areas of discourse have been explored. As areas tipped for the future resettlement of climate migrants, Canada and Australia have begun to reflect on their role in relation to climate displacement. This reflection is, for the most part, contained within a limited number of documents, written for government officials and for the general public. This study engages with these documents, which have, until now, constituted a blind spot in the critical literature presented above. The following section develops the theoretical and ontological grounding for my analysis and outlines the epistemological and methodological process I mobilize in my hermeneutic deconstruction.

## CHAPTER 3: EPISTEMOLOGY AND METHOD

To uncover the representations of climate migrants in Canadian and Australian state discourse, I engage in an in-depth context analysis of seven selected documents. My analysis is ontologically rooted in Poststructuralist Discourse Theory (PDT), a theory developed by Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau in their 1981 book *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*. The following pages serve to present my choice of theory, highlighting the unique relevance and value of this approach. First, however, I will briefly justify my turn to PDT.

Broadly, discourse theory is concerned with analyzing meaning as constructed through discursive practice. Discursive practice functions to create meaning; scholars who engage in discourse analysis interpret speech, texts, images and social behaviors in an effort to reveal it. Foucault referred to "discursive practices" as the acts that create and shape social reality, while Norman Fairclough defined discourse as the "semiotic elements [...] of social life". (Fairclough 2001, 2).

Various analytical approaches have been mobilized by discourse theorists. Many rely on positivist epistemologies for the study of speech. Their methods, in that tradition, consisting of quantifying the use of specific words and expressions and interpreting ratios. Sanchelli, Fabbrizi and Menghini (2016) employed a such a quantitative discourse analysis in their research on the concept of sustainability in international scientific literature.

Scholars engaged in critical discourse analysis (CDA) - as pioneered by Fairclough - engage in a heuristic analysis in order to "explore the interaction between the discursive and non-discursive aspects of social reality" (Newman 2020). Through the systematic coding and categorization of semantic expressions, CDA studies discourse as emanating from and relating to social and political hierarchies, in other words, to structures of power. Crucially, CDA analyzes the relationship between discursive acts and social processes, while theorizing a clear distinction between both dimensions. CDA has been employed by authors such as Sedlaczek (2017) who studied the representation of climate change in factual television and Calliari (2018) who analyzed climate negotiations.

For my purposes, the above approaches are ill-suited. Climate migrants are, as previously discussed, created through discursive practices (i.e. through academic literature, grey literature, media, speech, and so on). The perspectives on the topic explored in this thesis have shown how discourse acts to ascribe meaning to climate mobilities and that these meanings can feed into

material forms of power. These analyses point to a dominant framing of this relationship through the lens of migration, and have shown how discourses have succeeded one another to qualify climate migrants as threats, victims or resilient individuals. Authors Methmann (2014) and Methmann and Oels (2015) and have linked this succession to contextual contingencies, revealing the plasticity of the concept of climate migrants. Thus, my analysis must take into account the contingency and plasticity of the object at hand. Moreover, this project demands an approach that can enable a theorization of the links between discursive practice and power. PDT answers both of these needs, in addition to providing a complete theoretical framework.

## Poststructuralist Discourse Theory

PDT is a form of discourse analysis that initially emerged to fill the ontological gaps of Marxist theory. As Jacobs (2018) explains " [...] classic Marxian sociology is rooted in economic processes that "structure" society and ideas, Post-Structuralist Discourse Theory emphasizes the absence of any determinative principle." (296). PDT follows the conclusions put forth by Gramsci, who stipulated the importance of the "ideational superstructure" conceptualized by Marx. For his part, Marx argued that societal order is established through material relations of production and that ideology and culture functioned to consolidate these relations. Writing a near century later, Gramsci questioned this affirmation, noting that the inequitable distribution of the means of production had not sparked social upheaval predicted by Marx. As such, Gramsci theorized that language, ideas and culture - i.e discursive practice – exercise a greater influence on social behavior than predicted by Marx. Based on this insight, Gramsci made what is perhaps his greatest contribution to social theory through the development of his concept of cultural hegemony, which he used to define the dominant systems of ideas which functioned to condition social existence and insure latent conformity.

PDT evolved as an approach from the work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantale Mouffe who revisited Gramsci's notion of cultural hegemony. PDT conceptualizes social reality as a product of discursive practice. In other words, material reality is conceptualized as having no inherent meaning outside of human interpretation. PDT therefore departs from Marxist theory in so far as traditional Marxism views social structures and changes as emanating from material relations of production. PDT argues that these material relations (e.g capitalistic exchanges or social classes) are insignificant outside of human meaning. Meaning is conferred through articulated, discursive practice - in other words, through our attempts to define and order the world. Simply stated:

"Articulation is the idea that people give meaning to the world around them by combining and connecting certain words, objects, ideas, and concepts in specific ways when they speak or act. When such combinations are repeated over and over again, the patterns they constitute start forming a stable structure, which we eventually recognize as the social world (Jacobs 2018, 298).

Like Marxism, PDT views social reality through perpetual movement, i.e change. As our articulated discourse changes in relation to the world around us, so does our understanding of reality. PDT also views these discursive movements as occurring dialectically, resulting from shifting articulations of power. Here it differs significantly from Marxism, as it conceptualizes these shifts, not as pure changes in the material relations of production, but as the expression of discursive contingencies. For this reason, PDT views social reality as radically contingent.

Furthermore, PDT theorizes discursive practice as emanating from intersubjective experience. This means that meanings can be collectively created, understood and made stable through repeated iteration. In essence, meanings can momentarily crystallize despite their inherent plasticity. Mouffe and Laclau thus theorize that the concomitance of intersubjective meaning and radical contingency constitutes the conditions under which certain forms of discourse can become hegemonic (Laclau and Mouffe 1981).

For my purposes, PDT is uniquely suited to an analysis of "floating signifiers". As I've noted, "climate migrants" are a discursive construct, one that is increasingly mobilized to make sense of the relationship between human mobility and climate change. PDT's central ontological claim is that reality - and by extension meaning - is radically contingent. This makes it theoretically coherent with the indeterminacy of my object. Put differently, PDT allows an open and unfixed interpretation of a "virtual" and plastic category. PDT, furthermore, enables a "thick" analysis which considers discursive practice as wide-ranging, which is to say not limited to speech and text (Remling 2020). This element distinguishes PDT from CDA, in so far as CDA theorizes a discursive practice as distinct from social practice. PDT conceptualizes all social practice as discursive, and thus eliminates any boundary between the two. It views all social practice as meaningful and communicative. Though this feature may be of less significance for the present study - which limits itself to published documents - it nonetheless opens a way for a coherent extended analysis of the representations of climate migrants.

Finally, PDT is particularly well suited to this project because it provides an ontological framework which understands discursive practice as constitutive of power. As my analysis focuses on government produced discourse, it is all the more relevant to consider how discourse feeds into actual manifestations of power. As mentioned, governments place a decisive role in relation to migration. They determine who may enter their borders and who may not. As recent research has shown, many governments have acted to criminalize forms of migration (Sheller 2018). In short, PDT holds that uncovering discursive representations is intimately linked to uncovering the ways in which relations of power operate. In this case, it allows for a theorization of how state power acts in relation to climate mobility.

Given its theoretical density, PDT is often said to be challenging to operationalize (Jacobs 2018). Indeed, its ontological value and richness do not easily translate to methodology. Nonetheless, several authors have managed to elaborate methodologies inspired by the theoretical richness of PDT. My chosen methodology is inspired by the work of Glynos and Howarth (2007) who pioneered an epistemological approach founded on discursive logic. In simple terms, they propose that all discourse can be analyzed as belonging to one of three logics: social, political or fantasmatic. Social logics refer to the form and basic function of discursive practice; they are largely descriptive and constitute the first level of analysis - they correspond to the what phase of our inquiry. Political logics refer to the construction and contestation of discursive practice; they explain "how things came about" (Remling 2020, 35) and how they are challenged, they constitute the second level of analysis and correspond to the how phase of our inquiry. Lastly, fantasmatic logics refer to the affective motives that drive discursive practice; they explain why things are done as they are and constitute the third (and final) level of analysis. Fantasmatic logics correspond to the why phase of our inquiry. Glynos and Howarth's methodology has been used by Bettini (2013)

in his analysis of the institutional discursive representation of climate migrants and, recently, by Remling (2020) in her analysis of adaptation discourse. The following pages serve to define and summarize my approach, which borrows from all four authors cited above.

**Logics approach**

Here, I will briefly define each logic before I outline my method.

*Social logic*

Social logics refer to the form and basic function of discursive practice, in other words the "the taken-for-granted 'rules of the game'" (Remling 2020, 33). Social logics serve to uncover the implicit (and at times explicit) norms and rules which govern social practice. They also serve to reveal sedimented practices - which "circumscribe the domain of credibility and intelligibility of a society's socioeconomic setting the norms, rules and institutions that are taken for granted by large parts of a society and which, over time, have obscured the evidence of their own contingent origins" (Nabers and Stengel 2019, 103) and ontological basis for social action. In essence, social logics help to characterize and name the ideas, behaviors and structures through which social life functions (Glynos and Howarth 2007, 139). They are largely descriptive and constitute the first level of analysis - they correspond to the what phase of inquiry.

In this case, social logics serve to identify and define discourse on climate migration. This first level of analysis enables a recognition of the underlying assumptions which characterize the discourse on climate migrants. It further enables recognition of how these assumptions are structured - e.g by uncovering normative hierarchies - to form specific narratives.

*Political logics*

Political logics refer to the construction and contestation of the sedimented practices revealed through an analysis of social logics; they explain "how things came about" (Remling 2020, 35) and whether or how they are challenged. An analysis of political logics reveals the "contingent origins" that are often hidden and forgotten. They enable a recognition of change and of ideas and movements which seek to challenge and transform. As Glynos and Howarth (2007) state "political logics are concerned with the institution of the social, they are also related to its possible de-institution or contestation." (142). Political logics thus reveal the "radical contingency" of social reality. They constitute the second level of analysis and correspond to the how phase of inquiry.

In this study, political logics serve a two-fold purpose. First, they enable a recognition of discourse which seeks to enshrine a conception of climate migrants, thereby instituting a given representation of the issue. Following this, they also enable a recognition of the discourses which challenges basic social or political assumptions. Second, political logics provide a lens to consider changes within discourse, which is particularly relevant given that the texts analyzed in this project have been produced over a 15-year period.

*Fantasmatic logics*

Fantasmatic logics refer to the affective motives that drive discursive practice and enable a narrative framing of reality. They explain why things are done as they are and constitute the third (and final) level of analysis. Fantasmatic logics correspond to the why phase of our inquiry. As Glynos and Howarth put it "if political logics concern signifying operations, fantasmatic logics concern the force behind those operations" (Ibid, 145). Drawing from elements of Lacanian psychoanalysis, Glynos and Howarth describe fantasmatic logics as relating to the "fantasy" of an ordered social existence. Fanstasmatic discourse serves to uncover how human beings make sense of the reality around them. They enable a recognition of how they coherently order and frame contingent reality by producing a "fake picture of the world" (Ibid.). Crucially, they serve to keep implicit social logics and political logics "in the background" (Ibid.).

For my purposes, fantasmatic logics serve to reveal the affective dimensions of the discourse on climate migrants. They refer to the use of loaded expressions and imagery - e.g through descriptions of devastated environments and flooded landscapes - designed to elicit emotional responses. In other words, they will highlight the means through which this "fake picture" of the world is produced through the mobilization of visceral expressions and imagery.

Together, these three logics constitute the units through which my "thick" analysis is conducted. Individually, they serve to uncover layered dimensions of discursive practice and methodically deconstruct social reality. Zooming out, these three logics and dimensions can be interpreted as interwoven, allowing for a comprehensive deconstruction and understanding of the functions and articulations of discourse.

**Operationalization and methodology**

To operationalize Glynos and Howarth's logic's approach, I turn to the work of Elise Remling (2020). Remling developed an empirical framework which she used to analyze the discursive politics of climate adaptation.

Table 1 breaks down her framework, describing the elements upon which my analysis is based. For each logic, my content analysis is guided by key explanatory functions, general questions and empirical questions.

*Table 1. Logics approach (Remling 2020)*

| Analytical category | Key explanatory function | General questions | Empirical questions |
|---|---|---|---|
| Social logics | Reveal sedimented practices, values, rules, and norms (i.e. sedimentation). | What are underlying the rules and norms? | What characterizes climate migration discourse? |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Political logics | Reveal political contestation, incl. emergence and installation (i.e. change) | How did they come about? How are/have they been challenged or defended? | What meanings and courses of action are put forward and excluded? Which ideas and options have been closed off in the process? |
| Fantasmatic logics | Reveal affective attachment, i.e. what recruits, grips, persuades subjects (i.e. affective energy) | Why and how are discourses sustained and justified? What accounts for the solidity of a particular discourse? | How is the understanding of climate migration justified and explained, and how does it attempt to 'win over' its audience? What outcome(s) do they promise or warn against? |

To conduct my analysis, I proceeded by systematically coding each selected document. Each logic had a corresponding code, with each empirical question corresponding to a sub-code. This left me with segments corresponding to one or more logic. For the next stage of analysis, I engaged in a close reading of each segment, deconstructing the language, and images used and contextualizing them within both the document and the entirety of my sample. Once this process was completed, I aggregated the results by compiling the prominent themes, norms, concepts and images, producing a detailed table for each logic. This table provided a detailed picture of the representations contained in the discourse, enabling me to interpret my results.

**Case/Document Selection**

My choice of cases stems from a number of factors. First, most research on climate migration has focused either on the Global South or Europe, while discursive studies of this topic have until now been particularly Eurocentric. I therefore sought to expand on this scholarship by focusing on different areas. Given my knowledge of the Canadian context, Canada seemed like a relevant choice, all the more so as it has been tipped as a possible sanctuary for climate migrants (Ahmed, 2017). Focusing solely on Canada would have meant an extremely limited sample of discursive material, leading me to search for a complementary case. Canada is often grouped together with the United States, Australia and, to a lesser extent, the United Kingdom in migration literature. As I wanted to move away from the European context, I chose to exclude the U.K. I then excluded the United States based on the complexity of the political system and context of the country when it comes to immigration; I felt certain that I would be unable to address this case fully in my research. This left me with Canada and Australia, two countries that have previously been grouped

together for analysis on the basis of their shared colonial history and analogous political and governmental structures (Hawkins 1991, Dauvergne 2005).

Though different in many ways, Canada and Australia share many traits, making them ideal cases for complementary analysis. I expected their representations of climate migrants to be rooted in similar narratives, given that climate migration is a, relatively, recent notion and one which is frequently represented through hegemonic scripts. In this sense, though Canadian and Australian discourse and practices regarding migration do present some differences (Karim 2018), here I expected them to stick to the dominant narratives echoed in other forms of discourse, such as international institutions and the media (Methmann 2014, McNamera 2014). My analysis is therefore complementary, rather than comparative - though I do discuss some noted differences.

**Data selection**

With the aim of uncovering the state of political discourse on climate migration in Canada and Australia, I set about finding relevant documents that constitute political discourse. Though political discourse is a term which encompasses a wide range of discursive practices, I chose to limit myself, in the interest of feasibility to discourse produced by the state. Moreover, as the state wields the ultimate power to accept or reject newcomers and to enforce its borders, it seemed particularly relevant to examine discourse produced by governments.

Furthermore, I chose to limit my search to documents produced between 2005 - the year the Kyoto Protocol became effective - and 2021, prior to the release of the IPCC's latest assessment report. I searched the Canadian and Australian government and agency websites and publication databases for documents pertaining to climate change and migration, this yielded an initial selection of a few documents. Given that some of these documents only tangentially touched upon the subjects of migration and climate change, I was able to eliminate them. My final sample consists of seven documents, with four from Canada and three from Australia (Table 2). Ideally, my search would have yielded an equal number of documents. However this discrepancy did not affect my results.

*Table 2. Sampled documents*

| Document title | Country | Date of publication | Description |
|---|---|---|---|
| From Impacts to Adaptation: Canada in a Changing Climate 2007 | Canada | 2007 | National report on the impacts of climate change on Canada |
| Climate Change and Forced Migration: Canada's Role | Canada | 2010 | Parliamentary background paper on climate migration and Canada's legal obligation towards climate migrants |

| 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper | Australia | 2017 | White paper written by and for the Australian government |
|---|---|---|---|
| Implications of climate change for Australia's national security | Australia | 2018 | Report on the security implications of climate change for Australia |
| Climate Change Action Strategy: Tackling Climate Change Through Australia's Development Assistance Program 2020-2025 | Australia | 2019 | Report prepared by the Australian department of foreign affairs and trade |
| Climate Change: Its Impact and Policy Implications | Canada | 2020 | Parliamentary background paper on the anticipated impacts of climate change in Canada |
| Canada in a Changing Climate: National Issues Report | Canada | 2021 | Detailed report on the ecological and human impacts of climate change in Canada, includes a section on international relations |

In summary, I built on existing methodologies, elaborated by authors who mobilized post-structuralist discourse theory as an ontological and epistemological framework for analysis. My chosen method was largely lifted from the work of Glynos and Howarth (2007) and Remling (2020) who developed and operationalized a logics approach consisting of three discursive patterns defined as social, political and fantasmatic. I applied this methodology in my analysis of seven selected documents, produced by the Canadian and Australian governments. Each document presents a given representation of the figure of the climate migrant. The next chapters present my findings and my interpretations of these representations.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

**Results**

The following pages detail the themes, concepts, imagery and omissions that emerged from my analysis of the representations of climate migrants in Canadian and Australian state discourse. My results are presented in three sections, each corresponding to the logics defined in the previous chapter. Each section is further divided in three sections which present my findings for Canada, Australia as well as an aggregated analysis – given the similarity and complementarity of the documents. In each section, I present my results chronologically, meaning I commence with the earliest documents and work my way forward in time. This chapter concludes by presenting a brief overview of the representations of climate migrants by interweaving each logic.

Summarily, this chapter shows that Canadian and Australian state discourse reproduces dominant representations of climate migrants. Elements of these dominant representations - which alternatively paint climate migrants as inevitable symptoms of ecological shocks, threats to national security, victims in need of humanitarian aid or resilient entrepreneurs - are present in most of the documents. There is, nonetheless, some variation to the ways in which these elements are narratively configured. As such, we see that the first two discourse - defined as scientific and security based - are predominant.

*Social logic*

This section outlines the results of the first level of analysis, which sought to identify the underlying assumptions and sedimented practices present in the selected documents. Here I present the "what" aspect of my analysis - in other words, I ask "what" are climate migrants? The following presents the "taken for granted" assumptions that underpin the representations of climate migrants. The following shows how elements of hegemonic discourse are woven through basic assumptions, formulated as social logics. My analysis highlights six key assumptions: that climate migrants will or do exist, that they will seek refuge across borders, that they will come from the Global South, that they will pressure Canadian and Australian immigration regimes, that they are not refugees and, finally, that they are problematic.

***Canada***

In Impacts to Adaptation: Canada in a Changing Climate (2007), the relationship between climate change and migration is explored in a chapter titled Canada in an International Context. In this chapter, the authors engage with the eventuality of climate migration – presented as a probable consequence of the impacts of climate change – and outline the ways in which this phenomenon might impact Canada.

This chapter offers several general claims on the relationship between climate change and migration. The authors state that "Adverse impacts of climate change will exacerbate existing conditions of environmental degradation and contribute to internally displaced persons and migrants […]" (p.15). Climate migrants are therefore seen as a probable consequence of the impacts of climate change.

The chapter includes few explicit references to climate migrants, the figure is implicitly defined through the statements on the nature of climate migration. Climate migration is described as a phenomenon which will predominantly take place within borders in the Global South, though "[…] friends and relatives within the immigrant community could make Canada an attractive choice for some international migrants." (Ibid.) The authors also discuss the definition of the term refugee contained in the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (CSR). Having established that the CSR defines refugees as persons fleeing persecution, they note that "People displaced by environmental change [...] do not fit the definition of refugee […]" (Ibid.)

Four central assumptions emerge from these claims. First, the authors assume that the impacts of climate change will include mobilities, and that these mobilities will include migration. Moreover, they anticipate cross-border movement as possible. They also assume that this movement would take place towards Canada, rather than within or from it. Lastly, they frame climate migration in relation to the CSR, noting as they do so that climate migrants are inadmissible for refugee status.

In short, climate migrants are here represented as people on the move because of climate change. Their movement is anticipated to take place within and across borders. Finally, as this movement is seen as distinct from that caused by persecution, they are represented as separate from refugees.

The next document, titled Climate Change and Forced Migration: Canada's Role (2010), engages more explicitly with the figure of the climate migrant. In this document, climate migration is presented as a near certainty as the authors state that it "[...] will come directly as a result of rising sea levels or extreme weather events that leave some regions uninhabitable [...] However, much of the displacement will be caused indirectly, as a result of gradual environmental degradation leading to shortages in food" (Pos. 23). Here too, the authors establish a causal link between migration and ecological disruptions resulting from anthropogenic climate change. Additionally, they state that ecological disruptions and resource shortages could instigate armed conflicts. (Pos. 26) This document also presents the numbers of eventual migrants to be between 25 million and 1 billion (Pos. 19).

The authors situate climate migrants as originating from "[…] least developed states in Africa, Asia and Latin America, as well as small, low-lying island states […]" (Pos. 28), stressing that the majority will migrate within borders. However, they note that "[…] a minority will need to relocate abroad […]" (Pos. 38) and that some may decide to relocate in Canada (Ibid.). They also state that "In some cases, climate-induced migration may simply represent an inability of developing countries to adapt to changing conditions […]" (Pos. 67), thus presenting climate migrants as symptomatic of failed or inadequate state adaptation to ecological shocks.

The document then draws a distinction between climate migrants and refugees. They state that "Under the current law, neither environmental nor economic reasons qualify a person as a Convention refugee or as a person in similar circumstances." (Pos. 54). As such, they exclude climate migrants from the right to claim asylum.

Climate migrants are, summarily, presented as a near inevitability, one of potential scale and significance to Canada. They presented as a product of ecological collapse, failing political and social institutions and a lack of adaptation. These conditions are themselves attributed to "least

developed" (Pos. 28) states in the Global South. Finally, climate migrants are also presented as separate from refugees.

In Climate Change: Its Impacts and Policy Implications (2020) the authors present a detailed examination of the links between climate change and migration. They link ecological degradation and extreme weather to social processes. They highlight the effects of climate change on the distribution of food and water. They present climate migration as extremely likely, drawing from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, which has documented a rise in the number of internal displacements linked to extreme weather.

In the first part of this document, they discuss the impact of these changes on indigenous peoples living in Canada. The authors stress that First Nations communities are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, noting that approximately 24 000 indigenous people were displaced due to environmental causes between 2017 and 2019 (Pos. 155.). They state that "Many Indigenous communities in Canada are particularly vulnerable because of significant challenges when managing and recovering from [natural] disasters. This vulnerability is due, in part, to poorer socio-economic conditions compared to those in large urban communities, distant geographic location, and the frequency with which these events occur." (Pos. 160). The authors further note that mobility within Canada is subject to the national Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

This document presents the scale of international climate migration as uncertain. The authors quote estimates of the eventual number of climate migrants varying from 200 million to 1 billion, noting that the phenomenon is difficult to measure as climate change acts as a stressor, amplifying conditions that lead to migration. They nevertheless suggest that people in Africa, Asian, Latin-America and Island States (i.e in the Global South) are the most likely to be displaced by climate change because "supplies of basic necessities, such as food, water and shelter, are strained [and] climate-related stressors can cause instability by exacerbating problems and impeding effective governance" (Pos. 131-133).

The authors then outline Canada's obligations relating to the CSR and state that environmental factors are not considered as valid reasons for seeking refuge. They do however suggest that Canada has the ability to allow some migrants to remain within the country. They write that "[…] while no state has given refugee protection to individuals affected by disaster- or climate change–related events in their country of origin, some countries have welcomed such individuals within their borders or, at least, have not returned them. Canada is one of those countries: at the time of the 2010 Haitian earthquake and the 2015 Nepal earthquake, it welcomed affected people and temporarily allowed citizens from those countries who were already in Canada to remain." (Pos. 178). They thus highlight Canada's discretionary power in admitting people who are otherwise inadmissible to immigration and asylum provisions.

In essence, here climate migrants are presented as a probable domestic and international phenomenon, though one which is problematic and difficult to quantify and predict. On an international level, their movement is linked to the political instability and fragile governance of the Global South. They are excluded from the CSR, and therefore unable to claim refugee status. Finally, they are presented as potential beneficiaries of Canada's benevolent discretionary power.

In Canada in a changing climate: National Issues Report (2021) climate migrants are no longer presented as a likely or "future conditional" phenomenon. The authors state categorically that "Climate-related human migration and displacement will increase demands for immigration to Canada" (Pos. 7251-7252). The document contains a detailed presentation of the changing climate and the effects of this change on human beings.

The authors state that approximately 21 million people are currently displaced annually by climate related phenomena such as droughts and floods. Moreover, they suggest that this number could rise by 50% "with each additional degree Celsius of warming" (Pos. 7805). They note that migration is multifactorial and that economic resources play a decisive role in allowing people to move, especially across borders (Pos. 7877). As such, they state that the poorest residents of least developed countries (LDCs) will likely remain within their national borders (Ibid.). They also suggest that most migration will be adaptive, i.e at the household level, and will be undertaken as a result of concomitant factors, including financial and social capital (Ibid.).

The authors present climate migration as having an inevitable impact on Canada, given that numbers are predicted to rise significantly over the coming years (Pos. 7893). They write that "Climate change will generate growing numbers of migrants by mid- to late century, especially in Least Developed Countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Canada will come under growing internal and external pressure to accept larger numbers of migrants from climate-disrupted regions." (Pos. 7251-7252). They further note that Canada is currently under no legal obligation to accept or resettle climate migrants, given that they are excluded from the CSR. Finally, the authors briefly mention the theorized links between climate change, migration and conflict, stating that Canada might be called upon to intervene militarily in some regions (7900-7902).

In this document, climate migrants are presented as an impending phenomenon. Though the authors employ a nuanced lens for much of their analysis, presenting the complexities of human mobility and the problems associated with predictions and measurements, they nevertheless present climate migrants as a certain future problem. Climate migrants are seen as originating from the Global South, and resulting from the concomitance of climate stresses, poverty and ineffective governance. Their mobility is also presented as a concern for Canada, which will be pressured to accept increased numbers of migrants. Cross-border migration is presented as an adaptive solution for those who have the means. Finally, it is suggested that mobility might induce future conflicts.

*Australia*

In Australia's 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper, climate change is presented as a stressor which is driving migration, as the authors assert that "Unprecedented numbers of people displaced by conflict and natural disasters are moving within countries and across borders […]" (p. 43). They note that the disruptions caused by climate change will likely impact Australia, particularly given its geographical proximity to Pacific island states. (p. 39) They write that "Climate impacts could add to social, economic and political tensions. Many countries in Australia's immediate region, especially small island states, will be severely affected in the long term […]" (p. 84).

This document also links climate change, and a resulting increase in migration to ineffective governance and "fragile states". The authors suggest that "These challenges [i.e climate change] could undermine stability in some countries, especially fragile states, and contribute to conflict and irregular migration […]" (p. 44). They further emphasize the possibility of escalating tensions related to the distribution of food and water. (Ibid.) In addition, they note that all migrants are increasingly turning to "irregular" routes. They write that "Conflict, climate change and natural disasters are major drivers, but millions of people are now on the move each year seeking opportunity and better lives elsewhere. This massive growth in irregular migration is being enabled by digital communication, cheap transport and, in some cases, people smuggling syndicates." (p. 83). This statement therefore links climate migrants to "regular" migrants who are seeking "better lives" and to "irregular" (i.e criminalized) forms of mobility.

Summarily, the document situates the likelihood of climate migration within a generalized increase in "irregular" forms of mobility. Climate migrants are here presented as an upcoming and potentially destabilizing problem. They are presented as originating from "fragile states", in other words, states with ineffective governance and adaptation, i.e countries in the Global South.

In Implications of Climate Change for Australia's National Security (2018), the authors outline the impacts of climate change for Australian national security. They discuss these impacts by presenting contrasting opinions, formulated by actors such as scholars and NGOs. Climate migration is, in aggregate, presented as a phenomenon which will likely impact Australia, particularly in relation to geography. The authors state that "Submissions agreed   some level of climate-related displacement is inevitable" (p.94). The document also discusses Australia's potential legal and political obligations to people displaced by climate change and contains a brief analysis of the ways in which Australia can prevent migration by building resilience and facilitating adaptation.

The document analyzes the impacts of climate change through the lens of national security. The authors state firmly that "[…] climate change [is] a current and existential national security risk […]". They include migration as one of these impacts (p. 9). The authors present contrasting opinions as to the nature of displacement caused by climate change. They nevertheless suggest that Pacific islanders are likely to be forced to move due to rising sea levels, and that this movement could impact Australia. There is also a relative consensus as to the difficulty in categorizing climate migrants as  "There is no internationally agreed position on expanding the current definition of a refugee or impetus to create a new international protection obligation to encompass people displaced by climate change." (p. 95). The notion here is that climate migrants would not be entitled to protections under existing frameworks.

This document presents climate migration as inevitable. The fact that it is included among the effects discussed by this document does suggest that Australia considers climate migration as a potential threat to national security. Moreover, climate migrants are viewed as an inadmissible category, which may pose challenges to Australia's immigration regime.

In Climate Change Action Strategy: Tackling Climate Change Through Australia's Development Assistance Program 2020-2025 (2019), the authors explore the national and human security implications of climate change. This document presents a detailed analysis of Australia's role in

providing development aid to countries experiencing climate change. The report focuses on adaptation and resilience in the Global South.

As such, the document presents very little information or analysis on climate change and migration, though the authors do link climate change to migration in a few key passages. Climate migration is largely presented as a risk of climate change, they write that "People living in coastal regions in the Indo–Pacific are at risk of flooding and potential displacement" (p. 7). They present climate migrants as a symptomatic failure of adaptation and resilience. They also cite the 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper which draws a link between climate migration, "irregular" migration and state stability. Climate migrants are, therefore, here again linked to ineffective governance and the fragility and vulnerability of countries in the Global South. The document suggests that Australia should help to build resilience in these countries by offering aid.

Climate migrants are therefore largely omitted from this document. They are present only briefly, as their mobility is discussed in relation to "irregular" migrants. They are, however, included among the implicit symptoms of failed resilience and adaptation in the Global South. The document's thesis is that such consequences could be avoided through the distribution of development aid.

### *Aggregated results*

In the explored documents, both Canada and Australia view climate change – conceptualized as extreme weather and ecological degradation - as a likely driver of human mobility, which they define as migration. In most of the documents, climate migrants are seen as a very likely or even inevitable phenomenon. As such, in nearly all cases, they are presented in the "future" or "future conditional" tense. Moreover, climate migrants are predominantly represented as vulnerable individuals from the Global South, who will mostly be internally displaced. It is also largely assumed that some migration flows will spill across borders, leading to movement and increased demands for residence in the Global North. As a result, both Canada and Australia anticipate growing pressures to accept and resettle climate migrants. Climate migrants are also seen as separate from refugees and thus not entitled to the rights and protections conferred by the 1951 CSR. In aggregate, both Canada and Australia view climate migrants as a future phenomenon of concern.

The following table presents the key discursive assumptions revealed by this analysis of social logics and their corresponding excerpts lifted from the documents.

*Table 3. Social Assumptions*

| Assumption | Excerpt |
|---|---|
| Climate migrants exist or will exist | "Adverse impacts of climate change will exacerbate existing conditions of environmental degradation and contribute to internally displaced persons and migrants." |

| | "These challenges [i.e climate change] could undermine stability in some countries, especially fragile states, and contribute to conflict and irregular migration." |
|---|---|
| Climate migrants will seek refuge across borders | "Unprecedented numbers of people displaced by conflict and natural disasters are moving within countries and across borders […]"<br><br>"[…] a minority will need to relocate abroad." |
| Climate migrants will come from the Global South | "Climate change will generate growing numbers of migrants by mid- to late century, especially in Least Developed Countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean […]"<br><br>"People living in coastal regions in the Indo–Pacific are at risk of flooding and potential displacement […]" |
| Climate migrants will pressure Canadian and Australian immigration regimes | "Canada will come under growing internal and external pressure to accept larger numbers of migrants from climate-disrupted regions"<br><br>"Submissions agreed that climate-related displacement and migration is likely to occur in Australia's region […]" |
| Climate migrants are not refugees | "There is no internationally agreed position on expanding the current definition of a refugee or impetus to create a new international protection obligation to encompass people displaced by climate change […]"<br><br>"Under the current law, neither environmental nor economic reasons qualify a person as a Convention refugee or as a person in similar circumstances […]" |
| Climate migrants are problematic | "These challenges [i.e climate change] could undermine stability in some countries, especially fragile states, and contribute to conflict and irregular migration […]"<br><br>"Best estimates suggest that hundreds of millions of people could be on the move in the |

| | coming decades due to the impacts of climate change. Canada has an opportunity now to plan an orderly and effective response to the coming crisis." |
|---|---|

*Political logics*

This section presents the second level of analysis. It delves into the origins and challenges directed at the basic assumptions outlined in the previous section, in order to reveal the "how" of the narrative. This section focuses on the reasonings behind the assumptions uncovered in the previous section, highlighting how the meanings behind these assumptions are created, excluded or challenged. Accordingly, it focuses on the evidence and contradictions present in the sampled documents. The following shows that most of the above assumptions are based on "debunked" predictions and arguments. It also shows how dominant interpretations of the Convention on the Status of Refugees have come to cement the reasoning that climate migrants should be excluded from its provisions. Finally, it presents some of the contradictions formulated in the sampled documents - such as the idea that displacement might in fact occur within the Global North.

**Canada**

In Impacts to Adaptation: Canada in a Changing Climate (2007), there is little challenge to the notion that climate change will induce movement, or that some of this movement will take place across borders. These assertions derive from the predictions formulated by scholars such as Myers and Kent (among others), which are cited in the document.

In addition, the authors go to some length to justify the exclusion of climate migrants from the CSR. They write that "Although the term 'environmental refugee' is used in some climate change literature, it is controversial. People displaced by environmental changes need assistance but generally do not need protection. It may be more appropriate to refer to persons displaced by environmental degradation." (p. 16) The reasoning is, therefore, that climate migrants, as separate from refugees, do not engage Canada's responsibilities and obligations in relation to the 1951 Convention.

The authors also nuance their assertions in relation to the impact of climate migrants on Canada. They state that "the risk that 'waves of environmental refugees' will spill across Canada's borders, with consequent destabilizing effects on domestic order and international relations, is low (Homer-Dixon, 1991)." (p. 16). They thus challenge the idea of a mass migration directed to Canadian borders. They base this affirmation on the fact that "[the harshest effects of climate change are] most likely to affect rural areas of poor countries geographically remote from Canada." (p. 16). Yet, they also claim that "[...] climate change could lead to pressure on Canada to accept more immigrants and refugees." (ibid.) as "Canada has been a destination for international migrants throughout its history." (p. 15).

In essence, these authors explain that climate migrants cannot be considered as refugees because they do not need protection. Moreover, despite calling into question the ways in which climate migration could impact Canada, they ultimately conclude that it could lead to pressure on Canada to accept and resettle climate migrants.

In Climate Change and Forced Migration: Canada's Role (2010), the authors emphasize the impacts of climate migrants on Canada. They assert that a proportion of climate migrants will likely move to countries in the Global North. They anticipate that this movement, or the possibility of this movement, will put pressure on Canada to accept climate migrants.

They further assert that climate migrants are not entitled to claim asylum under the 1951 CSR, in addition to being inadmissible to other prevailing frameworks. They write that "None of the various streams in Canada's humanitarian immigration program – the refugee stream, a stream for humanitarian and compassionate cases, and cases where people are admitted temporarily when it is "justified in the circumstances" – recognizes climate migrants." (Pos. 48). Nonetheless, they also state that "if Canada decided to extend refugee-type protection to climate migrants, legislative changes would not necessarily be required. Regulatory changes or policy direction alone could suffice.".                                            (Pos.                                            60)

Again, the emphasis here is on justifying the government's stance on the non-recognition of climate refugees. The document does not call into question the links between climate change and migration, rather it affirms that climate migrants do not fit into pre-existing definitions and categories, rendering them unable to claim rights and protections under existing frameworks. The authors do, however, challenge the idea that all climate migrants would be barred from settling in Canada, by suggesting that discretionary power could be used in some cases.

In Climate Change: Its Impacts and Policy Implications (2020) the authors implicitly challenge the assumption that climate migrants will originate from the Global South. In this document, the notion that climate migration may take place within Canada is introduced through an analysis of the effects of climate change on indigenous communities. The authors present a detailed analysis of the ways in which the changing climate is impacting indigenous communities, prompting them to quantify displacements and predict an increase in mobility within Canada (Pos. 522-524).

In relation to transborder migration, the authors again assert the authority of the 1951 CSR. They state that "In the case of environment-related cross-border displacement, it is very difficult to identify "a pristine 'well founded fear of persecution' as required by the Convention." (Pos. 172). In this sense, they argue that climate migrants should not be considered as refugees. Moreover, they argue against amending the CSR, claiming that "Expanding the refugee definition under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (Refugee Convention) and its 1967 Optional Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees (Optional Protocol) is not a recommended solution,108 as it could lead to the "watering down of the existing protections." (Ibid.).

This document also mentions the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees, which "call on states to [...] "minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin." (Pos. 186). This suggests

that Canada's responsibility may lie beyond its response to climate migration. We could infer that the authors are suggesting that Canada can act preemptively to reduce and mitigate the effects of climate change on vulnerable communities.

This document challenges the idea that climate migration will affect Canada because of people seeking refuge across borders. However, it upholds the belief that Canada is not responsible for protecting or resettling climate migrants. It also suggests that Canada could play a role in supporting communities – e.g. through the distribution of aid - in order to forestall migration and displacement.

In Canada in a changing climate: National Issues Report (2021) the authors challenge the fixed relationship between climate change and migration that is presented in previous documents, noting that the "Links between climate change and migration are context specific and not always obvious, often because climate stressors alone rarely determine decisions to migrate" (Pos. 7810). Moreover, they somewhat challenge the notion that migration flows could reach Canada, suggesting that lack of financial resources will direct most movement from the Global South to neighboring countries (Pos. 7895). In spite of these critical reflections, however, the authors ultimately assert that climate change will cause an increase in immigration demands to Canada (Pos. 7898).

They conclude by stressing that Canada does not currently have any obligations to admit and resettle climate migrants, given that "Canadian immigration and refugee programs currently do not take climate change into account when determining eligibility, and the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees does not apply to people moving for climate-related reasons." (Pros. 7898).

In short, despite their attempts to complexify and nuance some of the previously identified assumptions, this document reaffirms the links between climate change and human mobility and represent climate migrants as inadmissible to Canadian aid and protection.

### *Australia*

In Australia's 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper, the authors draw links not only between climate change and migration, but also with conflict and security issues. They understand the potentiality of climate migrants in relation to "an increase in irregular migration" (p. 32). They do not outline the ways in which current mobility frameworks, like the CSR, exclude environmental factors. Rather, they state outright that climate migration is likely and relate it to "irregular" forms of migration and implicitly frame climate migrants as concerning for Australian interests and security. They conclude by stating that "Australia will make an important contribution to efforts to respond to these shared challenges." (p. 34), without detailing what this contribution will entail, and how it could relate specifically to climate migrants.

In Implications of Climate Change for Australia's National Security (2018), the authors challenge the notion that most migrants will want to permanently resettle in the Global North. They suggest that Australia should direct aid to enable people to remain in their communities, noting that "most people in such circumstances will be keen to go home and rebuild as soon as it is safe to do so, but

need temporary relief […]" (p. 88). They frame the relationship between climate change and migration as something that can and should be avoided through bolstered resilience and adaptation. The authors highlight recommendations which suggest "that Australia facilitate planned relocations for communities prior to or following disasters, noting the 'vast majority of relocations will occur within countries, rather than across borders" (p. 98). This points to a willingness to direct movement within the Global South in order to minimize "disorderly" and irregular cross-border migration.

The authors do however challenge the assumption that climate migrants would be automatically denied entry: stating that " […] the creation of special visa categories for people living in specifically   identified regions' […]" (p. 89) could allow a number among them to relocate (at least temporarily) to Australia.

In Climate Change Action Strategy: Tackling Climate Change Through Australia's Development Assistance Program 2020-2025 (2019), climate migrants are understood as a significant risk of a changing climate. This document focuses very little on climate migrants but draws several implicit links between the "fragility" of states in the Global South and the potential for mass displacement. As such, the authors reaffirm many of the assumptions outlined in the previous section, notably that related to the conceptualized relationship between "ineffectiveness", "instability" and the impacts of climate change.

Summarily, the sampled documents do not challenge the attempts to substantiate and frame the relationship between climate change and migration. They do however challenge the notion that climate migrants will want to permanently resettle in Australia as well as the assumption that they would automatically be denied the possibility of entry. Yet, the documents also frame climate migrants as potential threats to national order and global security. They thus reinforce the notion that climate migration could destabilize governance in the Global South and be disruptive for Australia. They suggest that resilience building could be beneficial both for affected communities, allowing them to stay in place, and for nations in the Global North.

### *Aggregated Results*

The analyzed documents present a relatively coherent reading of climate migration. Indeed, most key assumptions are not fundamentally called into question. Much of the arguments put forth by the authors serve to consolidate these assumptions, by relating them to scientific estimates, normative mechanisms or existing perceptions of mobility. Crucially, this analysis of political logics shows that the documents justify the conceptual cleavage between "refugees" and "migrants" through their interpretation of the CSR. Further, it shows that migrants are conceptualized as not in need of protection and as a source of instability. The sampled document do, nonetheless, include implicit and explicit challenges to some of the assumptions revealed through social logics. Most notably, the notions that climate migrants will move across borders and that responses are limited by the CSR are cast into doubt.

The following table presents the key affirmations and challenges which emerge from an analysis of political logics.

*Table 4. Political origins and challenges*

| Origins/Challenge | Excerpts |
|---|---|
| Measures/Estimates of (eventual) climate migrants | "25 to 200 million" (Jacobson, 1988; Myers and Kent, 1995)<br><br>"Best estimates suggest that hundreds of millions of people could be on the move in the coming decades due to the impacts of climate change." |
| Climate change does not induce migration | "Links between climate change and migration are context specific and not always obvious, often because climate stressors alone rarely determine decisions to migrate."<br><br>"the prospect of international migration is likely to begin to loom large in their thinking, although evidence to date shows that most households do not wish to migrate except as a last resort." |
| Climate migrants will relocate within borders, away from the Global North | "These impacts are most likely to affect rural areas of poor countries geographically remote from Canada […]"<br><br>"[…] vast majority of relocations will occur within countries, rather than across borders […]" |
| Climate migrants could be granted status | "if Canada decided to extend refugee-type protection to climate migrants, legislative changes would not necessarily be required. Regulatory changes or policy direction alone could suffice."<br><br>"the creation of special visa categories for people living in specifically identified regions" |
| Climate migrants are not linked to conflict | "[…] the risk that 'waves of environmental refugees' will spill across Canada's borders, with consequent destabilizing effects on domestic order and international relations, is low (Homer-Dixon, 1991). " |

| | |
|---|---|
| The Global North can prevent/forestall climate migration | "[…] that Australia facilitate planned relocations for communities prior to or following disasters […]" |

*Fantasmatic logics*

Fantasmatic logics constitute the third and final level of analysis. They serve to construct the "false picture of the world" which obscures the origins and contradictions that underpin fundamental assumptions. The following section details the ways in which affective language is mobilized to justify and sell the discursive representations of climate migrants put forth in the sampled documents. The following shows that the documents refer to climate migrants using terms such as "crisis", "pressure" and "challenge", indicating that they are viewed as a problematic category. It also shows how issues of national and international order, stability and security are invoked in relation to climate migrants, pointing to a conceptualization of climate migrants as threatening.

### Canada

In Impacts to Adaptation: Canada in a Changing Climate (2007), the authors draw a causal link between displacement and environmental factors. They stress that climate migration could occur as a result of ecological shocks "such as reduced crop yields or water supplies" (Ibid.).

In addition, they stress the severity of the impacts of climate change on human settlements and wellbeing, notably invoking images of resource conflicts. They state that "Resource conflicts, especially over water, will be exacerbated in some regions of the world, and sea-level rise and increasing natural disasters will force people to relocate both within countries and internationally, with implications for Canadian policies and activities related to aid, peace-keeping and immigration." (p. 33). They infer that these prospective conflicts will predominantly take place in the Global South. They further suggest that eventual conflicts might implicate Canadian military and peacekeeping forces (p. 15).

This document references the predictions formulated by Myers and Kent (1995). The authors therefore suggest that mass displacement is possible, though they note the absence of conclusive evidence to support this affirmation. They reference additional estimates, predicting the number of climate migrants to be between 10 and 200 million. They also suggest that this scale could lead some migrants to seek refuge in Canada, stating that "[…] climate change could lead to pressure on Canada to accept more immigrants and refugees." (p. 16). Climate migrants are here shown to be a significant and problematic consequence of the ecological impacts of climate change, and are seen as potential instigators of conflict.

In Climate Change and Forced Migration: Canada's Role (2010), the authors stress the severity of climate change and explicitly link it to mass migration, writing that "Climate change threatens to cause the largest refugee crisis in human history" (Pos. 20). They frame this crisis as potentially overwhelming, claiming that "Reports that rising sea levels are "exceeding our worst expectations" may mean that this low-lying nation of islands in the Indian Ocean will soon be uninhabitable,

displacing its 400,000 citizens "decades ahead of schedule." (Pos. 23). In short, they express the problematic nature of this potential movement, stating that "Now, with the effects of climate change becoming increasingly apparent in some parts of the world, the fear of mass migration may escalate within the international community" (Pos. 25). Here then, climate migrants, as a phenomenon, are presented as something to be feared.

In relation to Canada, they state that "it seems certain that climate change will be the source of additional pressure on Canada's humanitarian immigration program to expand, perhaps substantially, in the coming decades." (Pros. 64) and note that "[...] even a small fraction seeking to resettle in Canada could constitute a large number relative to Canada's current intake of new residents." (Pos. 38). The language used here suggest that climate migrants could be an overwhelming problem, not only in the Global South, but in Canada.

These authors present climate migrants as a likely phenomenon, and one which will have probable effects on Canada. Climate migrants are seen as a potentially pressurizing and threatening force which could test Canada's current immigration regime. These conclusions lead the authors to suggest that Canada begin to prepare an "[...] orderly and effective response [...]" (Pos. 70) to climate migration in order to avoid being overwhelmed by demands for resettlement.

In Climate Change: Its Impacts and Policy Implications (2020), the authors also present climate migrants as originating from "the least developed states in Africa, Asia and Latin America, as well as from small, low-lying island nations [...]" (Pos. 131-133). They tell us that these areas will produce climate migrants because, in addition to geographic vulnerabilities, there is a general " [...] lack of preparedness [...]" (Pros. 125) for responses to climate change and that "[...] climate-related stressors can cause instability by exacerbating problems and impeding effective governance." (Pos. 131-133). Consequently, climate migration may fuel instability and conflict. They note that these effects may require Canadian military intervention (Pos. 282).

In short, this document presents climate migrants as products of geographic, political and social vulnerability and suggests that their movement might fuel conflict. Further, they suggest that resulting conflicts might require military intervention from the Global North.

In Canada in a changing climate: National Issues Report (2021) climate migrants are presented as a likely concern for Canada. The authors note that climate migrants might include indigenous people who will move within Canadian borders (Pos. 155-157). They also note that this movement might cause significant harm to dislocated communities (Ibid.).

Most climate migrants are, however, still viewed as originating from the Global South. The authors reason that, as "Canada is an attractive destination for international migration, and this will be magnified by adverse climate change impacts." (Pos. 7895), demands for relocation will increase. Movement across borders is therefore anticipated. As a result of this movement, the authors claim that "Canada should expect increasing pressure in coming decades from the international community to accept the relocation of people displaced by climate change in countries that are not historically significant migration sources for Canada." (Pos. 7898).

This document further links climate migration to conflict, by claiming that the links between these dynamics are "[...] subject to active investigation [...]" (Pos. 7899). Consequently, the authors assert that violence may "[...] generate future demands for international intervention [...]".

Summarily, this document presents climate migrants as a likely consequence of climate change. They are viewed as people fleeing environmental stress in the Global South, or as members of indigenous communities. This document further suggests that many may seek to relocate in Canada and the Global North. They are also presented as potential instigators of conflict.

The fantasmatic representations that emerge from these documents present climate migrants as symptoms of ecological degradation and climate shocks. Moreover, they are presented as originating from countries in the Global South that are unprepared or else too fragile and unstable to whistand and manage these effects. As a result, climate migrants are viewed as a likely consequence which will impact the Global North, as a proportion seeks refuge across borders. Additionally, their movement is viewed as a potential source of conflict and as a probable source of pressure for Canada to increase its admittance of immigrants and refugees.

### *Australia*

In Australia's 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper, the authors emphasize the links between new challenges, including climate change, and "irregular migration", which is described as a significant source of pressure for Australian borders. This document implicitly suggests that climate migrants may seek to move across borders by "irregular" means. As such, the document specifies that it is in Australia's national interest to "[...] provide assistance as close to their homes as possible [...]" (p. 83). The inference is that localized aid may help prevent cross-border migration.

In essence, climate migrants are viewed as potential irregular migrants who could further pressure Australia's borders.

In Implications of Climate Change for Australia's National Security (2018), climate migrants are seen as a consequence of climate change in the Global South. The authors present migration as a "last resort" and note that most movement will take place within borders. Furthermore, they draw tentative links between climate migration and conflict.

The authors also explore future scenarios, where it is recommended that Australia participate in resilience building and other efforts to prevent population displacement. It is also recommended that "Australia facilitate planned relocations for communities prior to or following disasters, […] within countries, rather than across borders [...]" (p. 98). Finally, the authors note that responses to climate migrants must be in line with human rights law and ensure "[...] safe and dignified mobility for these communities [...]" (ibid.).

Climate migrants here are presented as individuals who flee as a last resort, and who's movement may instigate conflict. They are also viewed as individuals with human rights and who have a right to "safe and dignified" mobility. They are seen as likely consequences of climate change in the Global South which could and should be avoided through mitigation efforts.

In Climate Change Action Strategy: Tackling Climate Change Through Australia's Development Assistance Program 2020-2025 (2019), climate migrants are largely absent. Rather, the document deals with the adaptation and mitigation efforts driven and funded by Australia in the Global South. Climate migrants are briefly mentioned as the document suggests that adaptation and resilience building, as well as mitigation, could help avoid some of the consequences of climate change. Indeed, this report quotes the 2017 Foreign policy white paper, claiming that climate migration could constitute one of the most prominent impacts of climate change. The authors thus the infer that Australian development aid can help forestall climate migration. Climate migrants are, in this case, viewed as an undesirable consequence of climate change that should be avoided.

### *Aggregated results*

The documents analyzed above present climate migrants as consequences of ecological shocks in the Global South. None of these documents fundamentally called into question the links between the changing climate and human mobility, rather climate change's impacts on livelihoods and vital resources such as food and water are, in aggregate, presented as certain. All of the above authors suggest that migration is a likely response to these climatic stresses. Moreover, most of them present predictions which state that the numbers of climate migrants could reach several million in the coming decades. Climate migration is also anticipated to take place within borders, with a minority moving across them (though in many cases, given the scale of predictions, this minority is viewed as significant). Climate migrants are also predominantly presented as people fleeing "vulnerable areas" in the Global South. This vulnerability is presented as multidimensional, as most Southern states are viewed as fragile and politically unstable, and thus incapable of mitigating the effects of climate change unassisted. These states are also viewed as largely incapable of managing climate migrants, leading many of the above authors to stress the potential for disorderly and chaotic mobility, which may feed violence and conflict. Those who will move across borders are seen as inadmissible to existing frameworks and protections, and as such are anticipated to move through "irregular means". Their movement is also viewed as a potential source of pressure on Northern states. Finally, it is suggested that resilience building and aid from the Global North might prevent the creation of climate migrants.

*Table 5. Affective justifications*

| Affective justifications/fantasy | Excerpts |
|---|---|
| Climate migrants will be created by environmental/ecological disruption | "Adverse impacts of climate change will exacerbate existing conditions of environmental degradation and contribute to internally displaced persons and migrants"<br><br>"The report presents global risks and impacts from climate change, including those likely to affect the Indo-Pacific region such as sea-level rise, coastal inundation, mass coral bleaching and mortality, heat and rainfall extremes [...]" |

| Climate migrants will be numerous and will move within and across borders | "Unprecedented numbers of people displaced by conflict and natural disasters are moving within countries and across borders [...]"<br><br>"[...] a minority will need to relocate abroad. [...]" |
|---|---|
| Climate migrants are created by vulnerability, fragile and ineffective governance | "[...] fragile states [...]"<br><br>"The consequences [of climate change] will likely foster political instability where societal demands exceed the capacity of governments to cope." |
| Climate migrants might contribute to conflict and violence | "Such changes can induce migration, which may occur peacefully or may generate conflict."<br><br>"[...] welcoming those who need new homes (in Australia or elsewhere in the region) will significantly reduce the cost of [climate migration] and risk of conflict [...]" |
| Climate migrants will arrive in the Global North by "irregular" means | "[Climate change] could undermine stability in some countries, especially fragile states, and contribute to conflict and irregular migration" |
| Aid and resilience building can prevent/mitigate climate migration | "[Australia] will provide additional assistance to support displaced people as close to their homes as possible so they can return home when conditions allow."<br><br>"Canada and other countries could consider providing development assistance – to strengthen coastal defences or to resettle climate migrants in new areas within their own countries, for example – as an effective way to help some larger groups of climate migrants [...]" |

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I presented the results of my post-structuralist analysis. I outlined the discourse associated with each of the three discursive logics mobilized. My analysis of social logics showed the fundamental assumptions made about climate migrants, the most significant of which are that climate migrants are an existing or else impending phenomenon that will impact states in the

Global North. My analysis of political logics outlined the elements in the discourse which served to consolidate or challenge these assumptions. Most documents contained little explicit challenges to the presented assumptions, though some questions were raised as to the ultimate impact of climate migrants on Canada and Australia, as well as relating to the obligations of Northern countries to assist and protect them. Lastly, my analysis of fantasmatic logics revealed the expressions and representations used to justify and "sell" the fundamental assumptions, as well as to obscure potential challenges.


# CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

## Discussion

This chapter contextualizes and discusses the results presented in chapter 4. In the previous chapter, I uncovered and presented key expressions identified in the sample documents and related them to one (or more) of three logics: social, political and fantasmatic. In these pages, I analyze how these expressions (and logics) are weaved together, thereby creating discourses and conferring meaning. Further, I interpret these meanings by relating them to the critical scholarship presented in chapter 2. In other words, I show how key assumptions are supported, challenged and justified, relate them to theory, and contextualize them within previously identified discourses. Broadly, this chapter concludes that both Canada and Australia reproduce a hegemonic narrative, through the mobilization of dominant discourses which represent climate migrants as a threatening and anticipated consequence of the impacts of climate change in the Global South. It further concludes that the representations put forth are somewhat out of step with contemporary literature while conforming to mediatic and popular perceptions.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first analyzes the discursive elements revealed through my logic-based analysis and outlines the structure of the narrative representation of climate migrants uncovered through it. The second part relates this representation to the narratives identified by critical scholars through previous research. In the interest of intelligibility, this first section is divided in six parts, each corresponding to a key assumption (social logic). These assumptions are in fact laced together, as they work to construct a narrative – they are not fragmented. Moreover, they are intertwined with the affirmations, challenges and justifications that emerged from the second and third levels of analysis. Together, all of these elements function to create meaning and shape discourse.

The following broadly considers the Canadian and Australian documents as complimentary texts. As shown in the previous chapter, both discourses present similar or closely related claims identified through social, political and fantasmatic logics. This chapter does identify and discuss one notable difference between both cases, related to the representation of resilience. Beyond this divergence, however, the similarities in the texts are significant, thus enabling a complementary (rather than comparative) analysis.

*The Canadian and Australian representation of climate migrants*

### *Climate migrants exist or will exist*

The first and perhaps most fundamental assumption is that climate migrants exist as a substantiated category of persons or will exist in the near future. As the previous chapter showed, none of the analyzed documents fundamentally question the existence or eventual existence of climate migrants. Though there are some questions as to the proximate links between climate change and migration, there is a consensus as to the probability that climate drivers will induce some types of movement. The documents assert these links with varying degrees of certainty, describing climate change as a phenomenon which "will lead or is likely to lead" to migration. Furthermore, some authors point to existing data compiled by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), which measures internal displacement linked to extreme weather to suggest that climate migrants already exist in the form of internally displaced persons.

This assumption is coded as a social logic, as it constitutes an underlying and fundamental rule of the climate migrants narrative. In other words, it is a condition from which the expression "climate migrant" is changed from "floating signifier" to a substantial category. Indeed, if one accepts that climate migrants do or will exist, then it becomes possible to qualify and "measure" them and discuss the potential consequences of their movement. In the sample documents, the authors discuss climate migration in relation to their national contexts. As such, the assumption that climate migrants exist leads them to consider how and when these people will demand a political response from Canada and Australia.

As seen in chapter 2, the reality of climate migrants is much more ambiguous. For a start, identifying single or prominent drivers for migration is nearly impossible. In addition, it is unclear if climate change does or will translate to mobility, or indeed what forms this mobility will take. It is this ambiguity and lack of substantiation which has led authors such as Baldwin (2013, 2014), Methmann (2014) and Methmann and Oels (2015) to qualify the expression "climate migrant" as a floating signifier, and to suggest that it exists primarily as a "future-conditional" discursive construct. Hence, the claim that climate migrants do or will exist is an assumption that can be deconstructed. As a "rule" it can be challenged and de-articulated, which is to say rendered meaningless if removed from its contingently coherent narrative.

In political terms, the origins of this assumption are difficult to identify as the documents offer little background information. From what little information is present in them, it may be possible to infer that this assumption is derived from early academic work and tentative measurements from the IDMC. In Canada in a Changing Climate (2007), for example, the authors implicitly support their assertions by citing Myers and Kent's (1995) early and controversial estimates. On this basis, a link can be drawn from these attempts to measure and quantify and the assumption that climate change will translate to migration.

At times, the documents do challenge this assumption, as some authors note the difficulty in linking single drivers to human mobility. As the authors state in Canada in a Changing Climate: National Issues Report (2021) "Links between climate change and migration are context specific and not always obvious, often because climate stressors alone rarely determine decisions to migrate". (Pos 7810) This, however, constitutes one of the few attempts to nuance the assumed relationship between climate change and migration. Even in this example, the uncertainty

expressed does not lead the authors to fundamentally question the reality, or eventual reality, of climate migrants. In aggregate, all documents continue to present climate migrants as a feasible, and at times certain, phenomenon. In short, examining the documents through the lens of political logics shows that the existence of climate migrants is largely accepted as conclusive.

By moving to the final level of analysis, it is possible to identify the affective statements and arguments used to justify this assumption (and repudiate potential challenges). The analysis of fantasmatic logic reveals how the "false picture of the world" is constructed. In other words, it reveals why climate migrants are assumed to be real, despite significant doubts cast by lack of empirical evidence and questions surrounding the value of this concept. From the texts, a particular framing of climate change emerges, as it is presented as a probable driver of migration. Indeed, the authors frequently evoke images of devastated environments – they write of "failing crops", "water scarcity" , "drought" and "extreme heat"- which they then link to human mobility. In Canada in a Changing Climate (2007), the authors write that "Gradual changes, such as reduced crop yields or water supplies, induce migration because the affected area becomes less attractive." (p. 15), while in Australia's 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper the authors claim that "Conflict, climate change and natural disasters are major drivers [of migration]" (p. 83).

The deterministic relationship between climate change and migration presented here is suggested to be strong, even undeniable. Plainly, the narrative is "climate change will cause environmental disruption which will provoke migration". This claim is at odds with much of the scientific literature on human mobility, which views this relationship as complex and undetermined. Most mobility literature rejects this deterministic explanation which ties human movement (here defined as migration) to the environmental (or "natural") impacts of climate change. Beyond the problem of attributing causality to single drivers, Bettini (2013b) shows that this type of simplification functions to "blur the distinction between exposure to environmental stresses and their actual impacts on human arrangements.". (24). Simply stated, it blurs the complex range of possible impacts and erases community agency.  As Farbotko and Lazrus (2012) suggest, it ascribes the relationship between communities and their environments through a specific, Western, lens.

Nevertheless, this justification effectively operates by evoking a devastated, deteriorated environment from which people are seeking to flee. Consequently, these documents represent climate migrants as an existing or soon to be existing, substantiated phenomenon. Moving forward, it is possible to see how the entire narrative representation of climate migrants derives from this initial assumption.

### *Climate migrants will come from the Global South*

The second assumption on which the narrative is based, is that climate migrants will come predominantly, or entirely, from "vulnerable" countries, located in the Global South. In Canada in a Changing Climate: National Issues Report (2021), the authors state that "Climate change will generate growing numbers of migrants by mid- to late century, especially in Least Developed Countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean" (Pos. 7804). In the Australian documents, the authors focus on Pacific islands such as Tuvalu and Kiribati. This is the second assumption revealed by an analysis of social logics. The notion that climate migrants will come from the Global South is the second "rule" that underpins the narrative.

The origin of this assumption isn't clear from the documents, though we might infer that it is, at least in part, linked to the cited predictions of scholars such as Myers and Kent. Many of these predictions assumed that climate migrants would originate in areas with concurrent vulnerabilities. As such, countries judged to be vulnerable in relation to geophysical characteristics and endemic poverty were identified as likely to produce climate migrants.

Looking beyond the documents, this assumption can be linked to the conceptualization of a North-South divide and the relationship drawn between migration and development. This relationship, which has been documented by Castles (2009), Khattab and Mahmud (2018) and Adamson and Tsourapas (2019), is a prominent feature of migration academic and policy discourse. Adamson and Tsourapas (2019) showed that most migration literature adopts a Western-centric perspective, whereby the Global North is seen as an ensemble of receiving "migration states", while the Global South, often presented as a homogenous block, is seen as a "fragile" space that instigates mobility. As a homogenous category, the Global South is conceptualized as a space characterized by endemic poverty, conflict and inequality – often with little emphasis on the colonial legacies which perpetuate these problems. In line with this perspective, Castles (2009) highlighted how EU policy makers still assume cross-border migration to arise from development failures.

This reasoning is in step with hegemonic discourses on climate migrants. Bettini (2017b) shows that the focus on the Global South as a "producer" of climate migrants is widespread and characteristic of scientific and policy discourses. He notes how "the identification of (over)population (metaphorized here by waves of environmental/ climate refugees) and 'inappropriate' environmental management in the Global South [are viewed] as main threats to the prospects of sustainable development […]". (83). Methmann (2014), also notes how this discourse imposes a postcolonial lense, which infantilizes populations in the Global South by presenting them as ill-equipped and/or incapable of managing crises.

In relation to political logics, none of the sample documents challenge this assumption. The only suggestion that climate migrants might originate in areas other than the Global South is a brief mention of the vulnerability of "low-coastal" regions which include areas like Florida, as well as a mention of the impacts of climate change on indigenous communities within Canada. In Canada in a Changing Climate: National Issues Report (2021), the authors discuss the possible effects of the changing climate on indigenous peoples, noting that some of them are already facing displacement. Beyond these brief discussions however, it is widely accepted that climate migrants will come from the Global South.

The reasoning behind this assumption is not clear cut. While it is true that poverty and conflict are endemic in many places in the Global South, traits that can be linked to the legacies of colonialism and continued capitalist exploitation, this fact does not itself explain why climate change would inevitably induce migration. Many communities in the Global North also experience high levels of poverty. In relation to geographical vulnerabilities, the areas closest to the North Pole are those experiencing the most intense effects of climate change. Moreover, as previously discussed, the links between environmental changes and migration are not indubitable. In short, these "vulnerabilities" cannot causally explain migration, even when they occur concurrently.

Alternatively, some of the authors link the probability of migration to loss of livelihood for subsistence farmers, who are more likely to be located in the Global South. The conceptualization of their movement, however, is also complex and multifactorial. Indeed, the authors point out that many subsistence farmers in the Global South traditionally rely on cyclical mobility. Identifying if or when this movement can and should be qualified as migration, and whether it should be linked to climate change, is challenging. Moreover, it is worth restating that human mobility is complex and thus not easily predictable or circumscribed to particular geographies or drivers.

An analysis of fantasmatic logics, reveals that this assumption is strongly tied to perceptions of lack of development. Many of the documents reference the "fragility" and "instability" of states in the Global South. These countries are presented as uniquely vulnerable because of the interaction between climate change and poverty, conflict and "ineffective governance". In Climate Change : Its Impacts and Policy Implications (2020), the authors state that "People from the least developed states in Africa, Asia and Latin America, as well as from small, low-lying island nations, are the most likely to be on the move due to environment-related events. In many of the countries in these regions, where supplies of basic necessities, such as food, water and shelter, are strained, climate-related stressors can cause instability by exacerbating problems and impeding effective governance." (Pos. 131). Hence, the authors expect that climate change will have an exacerbating effect on existing vulnerabilities and push some people to leave these areas.

In short, both Canada and Australia overwhelmingly represent climate migrants as originating from the Global South. This assumption is only slightly challenged by a more recent document, which considers the internal mobility of indigenous peoples in Canada. The focus on the Global South is the result of a belief that states in the Global South are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The conceptualization of their vulnerability is anchored in Western theories on the lack of development in the Global South, which is frequently presented outside of a colonial and postcolonial context.

### *Climate migrants will seek refuge across borders*

The third assumption revealed by an analysis of social logics derives from the first two. It is the assumption that climate migrants will seek refuge across borders. Having established that climate migrants will exist and will come from the Global South, the sampled documents suggest that a proportion will move across borders. In Climate Change and Forced Migration: Canada's Role (2010), the authors state that "a minority [of climate migrants] will have to relocate abroad", while in Australia's 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper, the authors state "Unprecedented numbers of people displaced by conflict and natural disasters are moving within countries and across borders", suggesting that climate change is already pushing people across borders. This assumption underlies the representations of climate migrants presented in the sample documents, as such it constitutes the third "rule" uncovered by an analysis of social logics. Furthermore, it constitutes a tacit legitimation of borders themselves.

Again, the textual origins of this assumption are nebulous. It could reasonably be hypothesized that this claim is linked, once more, to the controversial predictions formulated by scholars in the 1990s. These predictions held that mass displacement linked to climate change would inevitably lead to displacement across borders. In fact, fantasmatic logics seem to support this hypothesis.

Beyond the documents themselves, this assumption may be directly linked to broader discursive trends. As Ibrahim (2005) notes "[...] migration has become synonymous with a new risk to the liberal world." (163). In other words, there is a widespread fear that migrants will "flock" to the Global North and pressure Western borders. Tong and Zuo (2018) have shown the prevalence of this thinking within Western media. This shift from a largely positive representation of migration, which has also been documented by Dauvergne (2016) and Sheller (2018), has been marked by increased hostility to migrants, expressed through exclusionary rhetoric and hardened borders. Ibrahim (2005) links this hostility to forms of "new racism" where cultural differences are seen as obstacles to social cohesion. As such, migrants have discursively come to embody this cultural "other" with the potential to "destabilize" societal order. This discursive framing has further been likened to a "moral panic" (Tong and Zuo 2018). Elements of this discourse are clearly identifiable in the sampled documents, where climate migrants are viewed as a potential threat to the integrity of national borders.

This assumption is not without challenges. Indeed, the language used to formulate it is more tentative than for previous assumptions. The authors nuance this assumption given that most literature predicts that the vast majority of climate migrants will move within borders. In Climate Change and migration: Canada's Role (2010) authors state clearly that Experts estimate that most people who are uprooted by climate change will remain in their own countries […] (Pos. 38). This statement is in accordance with most scientific studies that anticipate that a majority of climate migrants will remain in their countries of origin. Indeed, many scholars stress the difficulty in traversing borders. Farbotko (2019) notably writes of the immobility of people who are unable, due to economic or social circumstances, to move away from environmental shocks. Moreover, many researchers note that people will likely choose to remain as close to their communities as possible. In Impacts to Adaptation: Canada and a Changing Climate (2007), these thoughts are echoed as the authors state that "[the impacts of climate change] are most likely to affect rural areas of poor countries geographically remote from Canada" (p.16), pushing them to conclude that most migration will take place internally.

Despite these nuances, however, the documents maintain that some migrants will seek to cross borders. A fantasmatic analysis reveals that this assumption is based on three beliefs. The first, which is principally identifiable in the Australian documents, is that sea level rise will render Pacific Islands States wholly uninhabitable. Consequently, Pacific Islanders will be obliged to seek refuge in neighboring countries.

The second, and perhaps most significant, belief is tied to the idea that climate migrants will be very numerous. In many of the documents, the authors use language to evoke the prospect of mass migration. In Climate Change and Forced Migration: Canada's Role (2010), the authors speak of "the largest refugee crisis in human history" (Pos. 20), while in Australia's Climate Action Strategy (2019) the authors write of the "extreme impacts" and "severity" of climate change and suggest that migration will be among its most prominent consequences. The suggestion here is that cross-border migration will occur because of scale. In cruder terms, they argue that some climate migrants will seek refuge across borders because there will be so many of them. In Climate Change and Forced Migration: Canada's Role (2010) the authors state that "[…] even a small fraction

seeking to resettle in Canada could constitute a large number relative to Canada's current intake of new residents." (Pos. 38).

This argument lends credence to the notion that both Canada and Australia are basing their analyses on controversial predictions. Bettini (2017) writes of the influence of these predictions in popular and policy circles and suggests that they have induced the belief that climate change will result in mass migration. He qualifies this belief as a debunked myth, stating that "The problem with numbers is that they are constructed on a crude, deterministic and mono-causal understanding of mobility –'intense ecological stress leads to mass outmigration […]" (p. 34). This causality is, as previously noted, present in all of the studied documents. Despite nuancing their affirmations, the authors persist in presenting climate migrants as a significant phenomenon, which will likely impact Canada and Australia. The majority of these documents suggest that a proportion of climate migrants could feasibly seek to resettle outside of borders.

### Climate migrants will pressure Canada and Australia

The next assumption directly follows the previous one. It holds that climate migrants will not only move across borders, but that this movement will induce pressure on Canadian and Australian immigration regimes. This assumption draws in both countries and serves to explain why each government has sought to evaluate the impact of climate migrants. The documents suggest that a proportion of climate migrants will want to relocate to Canada or Australia for a variety of reasons, including family ties and perceived hospitality. Moreover, it suggests there will be an expectation within the international community to direct climate migrants to Canada and Australia. In Climate Change and Forced Migration: Canada's Role (2010), the authors claim that "it seems certain that climate change will be the source of additional pressure on Canada's humanitarian immigration program to expand, perhaps substantially, in the coming decades" (Pos. 64). This assumption is also linked to the idea that climate migrants may represent a threat to Canadian and Australian sovereignty. Several documents present a concern that national governments will come under pressure to accept climate migrants.  This is the fourth assumption uncovered by an analysis of social logics.

The origins of this assumption are, again, found in broader narratives on migration which conceptualize migrants as threats to Northern social stability. Beyond the nuances already described for the previous assumption, the notion that climate migrants will pressure Canada and Australia is largely without challenge in the examined documents. Indeed, having conceded that most migrants will remain within their borders and that those who move across them will mainly remain in the Global South, the texts nevertheless reference probable scenarios where a number of climate migrants request to or are directed to be resettled in either country. In Canada in a changing climate, the authors write that "climate change could lead to pressure on Canada to accept more immigrants and refugees." (p. 16) and note that Canada has historically been perceived as an attractive destination for immigrants. They go on to  assert that "Climate-related human migration and displacement will increase demands for immigration to Canada" (Pos. 7251-7252).

A fantasmatic analysis reveals that both Canada and Australia are considered as practical and enviable destinations for the resettlement of climate migrants. The documents stress how both countries have acted to welcome immigrants who faced particular challenges. Furthermore, the

authors discuss the historical role each country has played in relation to immigration. These elements, however, do not directly translate to the plight of climate migrants. In fact, here we find a distinction between the affective perspectives presented by Canada and Australia. In the Canadian context, the authors note that the country's asylum regime is tied to the 1951 Convention which excludes climate migrants. Accordingly, the documents present climate migrants as a de jure inadmissible category which requires particular consideration. While, in Australia, the authors stress that climate migrants are likely to mobilize "irregular" means to cross the border. As a result, climate migrants are implicitly framed, not only as inadmissible, but as potentially criminal. This last framing, which sees climate migrants as inadmissible or criminal, feeds directly into the next assumption uncovered by social logics.

### *Climate migrants are not refugees. They are inadmissible to existing asylum and immigration frameworks*

The fifth assumption holds that climate migrants are inadmissible to existing asylum and immigration frameworks. Indeed, the sampled documents go to some length to establish that current normative and legal frameworks preclude environmental factors from being considered as legitimate factors for immigration or asylum. Most of the documents focus on the 1951 CSR, which presents a legal definition of refugees which is based on individual fear of death or persecution. In Climate Change and Forced Migration: Canada's Role (2010), the authors write that "Under the current law, neither environmental nor economic reasons qualify a person as a Convention refugee or as a person in similar circumstances." (Pos. 54), while in Implications of Climate Change for Australia's National Security (2018), the authors state that "[…] there is no internationally agreed position on expanding the current definition of a refugee or impetus to create a new international protection obligation to encompass people displaced by climate change." (p. 95). In short, as Canada and Australia's recognition of refugees is based on interpretations of this instrument, both countries exclude climate migrants from the right to asylum. Moreover, both nations state that their respective immigration regimes also currently exclude climate migrants. Hence, climate migrants are not viewed as admissible, and therefore excluded from rights and protections. This assumption constitutes the fifth underlying rule revealed by an analysis of social logics.

The origin of this assumption is explicitly tied to the dominant interpretations of the CSR, as well as to existing immigration frameworks which do not formally consider environmental factors. In relation to the CSR, legal scholarship on climate migration has shown how leading interpretations exclude environmental or climatic factors (Jolly & Ahmad; 2015). The sample documents put forth this view, as they state that climate migrants are not refugees, as "refugees" are designated through the CSR, which explicitly states that asylum should be granted to individuals fleeing persecution. This definition has led scholars such as Westra (2009) and Jolly and Ahmad (2014; 2015) to denounce the narrowness of the CSR's scope, particularly in relation to climate migrants. Indeed, the perceived limitations of the CSR are particularly significant as it provides the singular internationally accepted (and predominantly scientifically recognized) definition of a refugee. These authors have also advocated for an expanded reinterpretation of the Convention, or else the drafting and adoption of novel legal mechanisms which would enable the formal recognition of climate migrants. In Implications of Climate Change for Australia's National Security, the authors somewhat echo this challenge by quoting from OXFAM reports, which present climate migrants

as essentially "similar to refugees" (p. 95). Despite this slight challenge, however, they do not engage with the idea that the CSR could or should be reinterpreted or amended. In fact, the examined documents barely engage with the idea of changing existing legal frameworks, except to warn that an expanded definition of the CSR could lead to a "watering down of protections" (Canada in a Changing Climate; 2020, pos. 172).

In relation to immigration regimes, the sampled documents offer little beyond outlining the ways in which climate migrants are currently excluded from admissible categories. They do however offer insights as to the diverging ways in which immigration is perceived in each country. For Canada, this inadmissibility of climate migrants is expressed through a lack of recognition, i.e who do not meet requirements to remain and resettle in the country. In Climate Change and Migration: Canada's Role (2010), the authors state that "Canada [could allow] some foreigners who are inadmissible or who do not meet the regular immigration requirements to stay in Canada temporarily when it is "justified in the circumstances" […]" (Pos. 48), nonetheless they go on to state that such measures could prove costly and, potentially inefficient to deal with the issue of climate migrants. In the case of Australia, inadmissibility is expressed through the assumption that climate migrants will rely on "irregular" means to cross borders. In both cases, lack of admissibility effectively means that the majority of climate migrants would be denied recognition, rights and protections.

The documents rely on little affective language to justify this assumption. Their claims are rooted in the social interpretation of the technicalities of existing legal mechanisms. Rather, affective language is mobilized in relation to the last assumption revealed through social logics. This assumption is the discursive culmination of the previous themes presented in this section. It is the last, and perhaps most visible, element to be woven into the Canadian and Australian narratives on climate migrants.

### *Climate migrants are a problem*

Mobility researchers have shown that not all mobilities are viewed equally or indeed problematized. Mimi Sheller states that "Mobilities are never free but are in various ways always channeled, tracked, controlled, under surveillance and unequal – striated by gender, race, ethnicity, class, caste, color, nationality, age, sexuality, disability etc. Which are all in fact experienced as effects of uneven mobilities." (Sheller 2018, 10). Critical scholarship on climate migration has highlighted the factors that have problematized or even pathologized climate migrants. These factors include the prospective movement of poor, racialized bodies in response to concomitant economic, social and political factors such as poverty and violence. This problematization is echoed by many scholars who, even when they portray climate migrants as victims, view their movement as inherently problematic. More recently, the concept of resilience has overturned this problematization, suggesting instead that mobility can constitute an effective and judicious strategy to the effects of climate change. However, as I show in the next few pages, this concept is of little influence in the documents studied here.

In this case, the sampled documents reiterate this assumption that climate migrants are problematic. Both Canada and Australia view climate migrants as a likely or impending problem which will need solving. The language used to describe climate migrants is overwhelmingly

negative, the terms "crisis", "problem and problematic" and "disaster" are used interchangeably to describe the effects of climate migration. In Climate Change and Migration: Canada's Role (2010), the authors write, for example, that "Canada has an opportunity now to plan an orderly and effective response to the coming crisis." (Pos. 70), in this sentence, the "coming crisis" they describe is the movement of climate migrants. In Implications of Climate Change for Australian National Security (2018), the authors state that "The committee heard varying evidence regarding the nature and scale of this movement, and the extent to which it will be problematic for Australia's national security" (p. 22). A thick reading of these documents leaves little doubt that climate migrants are represented as problematic. The analysis conducted thus far enables us to see that the origins of this claim are derived from the previous assumptions.

The sampled documents present few challenges to this representation. In spite of a few scattered passages which question the causality between conflict and migration, or which suggest that climate migrants are "more likely to be the victims of conflict than the instigators" (Canada in a Changing Climate, 2021, pos. 7899), the authors largely uphold the notion that the mobility of climate migrants will be problematic for Canada and Australia.

The fantasmatic language used to invoke this representation is prominent. In addition to terms such as "crisis" and "disaster", the authors frequently link climate migrants to outbreaks of conflict and violence. As noted above, in Climate Change – Its Impacts and Policy Implications (2020), the authors even suggest that climate migration could require the deployment of Canadian Air Forces to the Global South. In addition, their inadmissibility to asylum and immigration regimes is presented as a challenge – as they are essentially viewed as uncategorizable. In the Australian documents, the use of the term "irregular" suggests that their mobility is not only seen as problematic, but as potentially criminal. Yet, the documents anticipate that both countries will be pressured into accepting climate migrants in spite of these challenges.

In this section, I presented my analysis of the discursive elements through which the narrative representation of climate migrants is constructed in the sampled documents. So far, the narrative which emerges from the sampled documents goes something like this: Climate change will provoke harsh ecological disruptions in the Global South. Because of a lack of resources and stable and competent governance, Southern countries will be unable to effectively respond and adapt to these disruptions. People will therefore be forced to move. Among those who move, some will seek to migrate to countries in the Global North. The international community will also be faced with the need to relocate a proportion of those displaced. This anticipated movement will pressure states such as Canada and Australia to resettle climate migrants and may lead to challenges to sovereignty and the impermeability of borders. Moreover, as climate migrants do not qualify for asylum, they will need to be admitted under different, yet to be established, mechanisms. Consequently, climate migrants are represented as a problematic, even threatening, phenomenon. The following section relates this narrative to previously identified discourses.

**Narratives**

This section discusses the representations that have emerged from the above analysis in relation to the dominant discourses identified by Bettini (2013), Baldwin (2013, 2014), Methmann (2014) and Methmann and Oels (2015). The critical analyses produced by these scholars have revealed

the dominant discursive patterns that are constitutive of the hegemonic narrative on climate migration. Trough these dominant discourses, climate migrants are alternatively (though sometimes concurrently) represented as symptoms, threats, victims or entrepreneurial individuals.

In the following pages, I argue that the representations of climate migrants that have emerged from my analysis reproduce elements of these dominant discourses. As such, I conclude that Canadian and Australian representations of climate migrants are consistent with this hegemonic narrative reproduced through most scientific, popular and policy discourse. I do, however, note some significant particularities which suggest that Canadian and Australian representations reconfigure elements of this hegemonic narrative in novel ways.

*Reproduction of dominant discourses*

Bettini (2013a, 2013b), Methmann (2014) and Methmann and Oels (2015) identified dominant discursive patterns through their analyses of climate migration discourse. They studied scientific, popular and political texts, images and documentaries, concluding that discussions on climate migrants could be categorized according to four recurring patterns. The first, represents climate migrants through a scientific lens, and accentuates the determinism of nature on the lives of human beings. The second sees climate migrants as a threatening prospect, one which could have a destabilizing effect on borders and national security. The third represents climate migrants as victims of climate change and focuses on the ways in which they can be "saved". The fourth mobilizes the concept of resilience and represents climate migrants as entrepreneurial individuals who will move to save themselves. Furthermore, Methmann and Oels' (2015) analysis showed how these discourses came to supplant one another over time. They state that "Early science and policy documents from the 1980s and 1990s discussed 'climate refugees' as a pathology to be prevented. In the early 2000s, scientists and policymakers advocated the responsibility of Western emitters to 'save' climate refugees and offer them refugee status, without implementing any legal instruments to grant refugee rights. In the last five years, the debate has clearly shifted towards resilience." (52)

The results of this study show that all of these elements are present in the Canada and Australian representations of climate migrants. In contrast to Methmann and Oels (2015)' findings however, there is no clear "evolution" from one discourse to another. Indeed, elements from each of these discourses are present concurrently in the sampled documents. The significance thus lies in the configuration and co-articulation of these discourses, rather than in their temporal expression.

First, the influence of the scientific based discourse is clearly visible through the use of predictions and measurements produced by early literature as well as in the resulting claim that "climate migrants will exist". These estimates were produced by scholars – Myers and Kent prominent among them – who conceptualized the relationship between climate change and migration as certain and fixed. The language used in the sampled documents to discuss this relationship strongly suggests that the authors are basing their analysis and opinions on this scientific work.  As such, the documents largely reproduce a deterministic link between climate change and migration. This deterministic lens has been the object of criticism from more recent and critical scholarship on climate mobilities. Baldwin (2014) states that, while contemporary scholarship has rejected this deterministic lens, it remains influential in "popular debates". Additionally, Bettini (2013b) notes

how "Such natural-ontological approaches overlook the relevance and explanatory role of social relations and power structures." (24). In sampled texts, this determinism acts to obscure the origins of climate change and inequities between the North and South and between white settler communities and indigenous peoples. These phenomena are presented as given features of the world. In the documents, climate change is largely presented as a phenomenon that is occurring (or will occur) – as if its political and social roots are unknowable. The same is true for the inequity or "lack of preparedness" in communities in the Global South as the documents make no mention of colonialism or its legacies. This ahistorical and reductive framing obscures the social and political structures that have sowed the conditions of climate mobilities. Through it, "climate migrants" are represented as an affliction that is imposed upon the world.

Second, we can see that climate migrants are also frequently conceptualized as potential threats. Most of the documents suggest that climate migrants could act as a destabilizing force in the Global South and a pressurizing force in the Global North. Many of the documents infer links between climate migrants and the outbreak of conflicts. This is in line with Bettini's findings which shows how popular and policy discourse insists upon linking conflict to climate migration, despite a critical assessment of this relationship in scientific literature. Moreover, critical scholars have shown that this representation is widespread. Methmann (2014) shows that this representation is tied to conceptualizations which otherize communities experiencing the worst effects of climate change. He states that "The racialization of the climate migrant/refugee is thus entirely bound to its potential for disrupting order on the planet as opposed to being an actual threat, rooted in its colonial Otherness." (428). Baldwin also distinguishes this "threatening representation" from colonial otherness, noting that the "climate change migrant is the potential embodiment of racial otherness or the potential embodiment of threat, external, unknown, outside, as the potential to be out of place". Thus the "dangerous" alterity of climate migrants derives from their "potentiality". Indeed, Methmann (2014) and Baldwin (2014) concur that the notion of threat is linked to the yet "unknown" or, in other words, to the possibility that climate migrants, as racialized others, will destabilize the status quo.

The "humanitarian" discourse is more subtly expressed than the previous discourses. It is visible through some of the discussions on the legal categorization of climate migrants (and the applicability of the CSR) and the distribution of development aid. In these discussions, climate migrants are represented as victims of climate change. Accordingly, the focus is on finding ways to protect them, either by resettling them under special provisions in the Global North or, more commonly, to protect them from the instability and ineffectiveness of states in the Global South. Bettini (2017) has discussed how this discourse simultaneously deprives the subject of their agency, thus working to eliminate political alternatives anchored in non-Western perspectives. He states that this discourse reinforces "[the] loss of political status," whereby the climate migrant/refugee is cast as a helpless victim, an object of governmental management" (39). Farbotko and Lazrus (2012) echo these conclusions by noting that the "victimhood" discourse is tied to Western conceptualizations of climate change and its impact on human lives (thereby depriving non-Western populations of their political agency to conceptualize and respond to it).

In relation to the sampled documents, the subjects – i.e populations in the Global South viewed as potential climate migrants – are entirely deprived of agency and their perspective is entirely absent. The documents do not engage with the perspectives and experiences of these populations. When

they state, for example, that they perceive migration as a "last resort", they do so without reference to specific statements or opinions. Rather, they are imposing a vision of mobility that is anchored in Western representations. Farbotko and Lazrus (2012) have shown how non-Western conceptions of mobility are rich and complex, particularly as some communities view migration as an inherent part of their identity and culture. These documents erase this complexity by imposing a narrative whereby climate migrants are represented as helpless (and potentially dangerous) victims.

Lastly, resilience discourse is also subtly present in the discussions on the nature and geography of mobility. In some cases, when the authors discuss internal migration, they present mobility as a legitimate course of action which will be undertaken by migrants who have the means to move. Indeed, this perception leads them to present resilience building in the Global South as an effective strategy to ensure that displaced persons can relocate near their communities. Moreover, this discourse is present in texts where climate migration is conceptualized as an inevitability. Hence, mobility is seen as a given. These claims resonate with the findings of Methmann and Oels (2015) who distinguished three subtypes of resilience: maintenance, adaptive and transformational. Maintenance resilience refers to the deployment of strategies to maintain communities as they are in the face of climate change. Adaptive resilience refers to strategies which seek to reconfigure these communities in ways that are better adapted to climate change – by rebuilding or building differently for example. Lastly, transformational resilience refers to the transformation of these communities – e.g. through their mobility. Methmann and Oels (Ibid.) further state that discussions around climate migration typically accept that possibilities for maintenance and adaptive resilience are limited, leading many to conclude that transformational resilience is inevitable. This perception is echoed in the documents, with one notable exception. In the Australian documents – specifically the 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper and the Climate Action Strategy (with the latter referencing the former) – the authors return to maintenance and adaptive resilience as effective strategies (predominantly conceptualized as the distribution of foreign aid). In essence, the documents infer that sufficient aid, used effectively, could help prevent people from needing to migrate. This suggestion is in contrast with the other documents, which view climate migration as "inevitable" given the progression of climate change. The idea that climate migration can be prevented through the distribution of aid – and thus that the Global North could avoid having to deal with the issue of climate migrants constitutes an exception to dominant discourses and, as such, merits further scrutiny.

The prominence of scientific and security discourses in the studied documents reveals that Canadian and Australian policy discourse is out of step with contemporary scholarship but in line with popular representations. This discordance is visible through the preponderance of deterministic and security (threat) discourses, which have largely been replaced in the literature by resilience. What this study reveals, is that Canadian and Australian government discourse is still anchored in scientifically discredited concepts and conclusions. Though the sampled documents do reproduce elements from each of the dominant discourses described above – scientific (deterministic), security, humanitarian and resilience – the insistence on fixing the relationship between climate change (presented as an ahistorical and decontextualized phenomenon) and human mobility is evidence of the weight of the deterministic lens. Further, the clear problematization of climate migrants – who are consistently framed as a problematic, overwhelming, destabilizing, inadmissible, threatening or potentially violent category of people –

is evidence of the significance of the security-based discourse. Accordingly, I conclude that Canadian and Australian state discourse represents climate migrants as an inevitable, undesirable and threatening consequence of climate change.

In this chapter, I discussed the meanings that emerged from my analysis of social, political and fantasmatic logics and related these meanings – expressed as the assumptions, origins, challenges and justifications found in the texts – to the critical deconstructions of the representations of climate migrants. Through my "thick" analysis of these meanings, I found that Canadian and Australian state discourse reproduces elements from all of the "dominant discourses" identified by the literature. However, I also found that the deterministic and security discourses were preponderant, leading me to conclude that Canadian and Australian state discourse represents climate migrants as an inevitable, undesirable and threatening consequence of climate change. This representation is out of step with recent scientific literature on climate mobilities, which has largely rejected determinism and security discourses in favor of resilience narratives. My findings are characterized by one notable exception – that of the conceptual prominence of maintenance and adaptive resilience in two Australian documents, which implicitly suggest that climate migration could be avoided through the distribution of foreign aid. Nonetheless, this suggestion is also incongruous with recent scholarship which frames migration as a form of transformational resilience, or in simpler terms as an effective strategy to escape the devastation of climate change.


CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION


There is a scientific consensus as to the inescapable geophysical impacts of climate change. Centuries of uninterrupted industrial emissions are translating to significant consequences which will undoubtedly impact the environmental and climatic conditions that sustain human life. How human beings will experience and respond to these consequences, is however, still unknown. It is reasonable to assume that some of these impacts will contribute to human mobilities, though what shape and scale these mobilities will take is yet undetermined.

The progression of climate change has, unsurprisingly, (re)invigorated scientific, political and popular interest in the relationship between social processes and ecology. The scientific interest has manifested itself through the reintroduction of the environment as a salient factor in the study of social life. In migration studies, many scholars have focused their efforts to define, predict and quantify the impacts of climate change on human mobility. Over the last few decades, several ideas have emerged on the probable nature of this movement. Climate migrants (at times referred to as environmental refugees or migrants) have come to embody the anticipated effects of the changing climate on human beings - they have, in other words, been designated as the "human face" of climate change.

As shown throughout this study, this depiction is controversial. As human mobility is complex and multifactorial, it cannot be linked to a single or dominant driver such as the environment. This complexity in turn makes identifying bonafide climate migrants empirically impossible. More importantly the term presupposes a deterministic and fixed relationship between the geophysical effects of climate change (which are in of themselves complex and multiple) and human movement defined through the lens of migration.

Nonetheless, migration is increasingly recognized and discussed as a likely consequence of climate change. Moreover, the "human face" embodied by climate migrants has undergone several transformations as it has been mobilized to evoke different meanings. Climate migrants have at times been presented as symptoms of environmental devastation, threats to national security, victims in need of aid and protection and resilient entrepreneurs taking their fate into their own hands. Each of these representations is politically significant and holds implications for understanding human mobilities and responding to climate change. For these reasons, critical scholars have worked to deconstruct the meanings conferred through the climate discourse. Most work has focused on the media and scientific representations of climate migrants as well as on the political representations put forth by multilateral organizations such as the United Nations or the European Union.

Wishing to expand upon these deconstructions, my research identified Canadian and Australian state discourse as a relevant object of analysis. As states are currently the principal arbiters of cross-border mobility, I sought to uncover how two settler societies represented climate migrants through their political discourse. My study mobilized a poststructuralist theoretical framework and deployed a logics-based methodological approach. I engaged with a limited number of documents in order to identify the underlying assumptions and meanings contained in the texts.

I found that Canadian and Australian state discourse largely reproduces the discursive themes outlined above and thus upholds the hegemonic narrative representation of climate migrants as a determined phenomenon which poses a threat to Western social order. Indeed, though climate migrants were, paradoxically, sometimes portrayed as humanitarian victims or self-reliant entrepreneurs, they were predominantly represented as an inevitable and threatening symptom of the effects of climate change in the Global South. As such, the documents also reproduced a Western-centric perception of the Global South as "fragile", underdeveloped and incapable of managing the effects of climate change. The documents also echoed broader discursive trends which see migrants (and refugees) as problematic "others" who threaten to destabilize the Global North. In this case, the alterity of climate migrants is sourced from their racialization and future-conditionality. In short, I found that Canadian and Australian state discourse represents climate migrants as an inevitable, undesirable and threatening consequence of climate change.

These results suggest a disconnect between state discourse and the literature, which has generally rejected deterministic assumptions and security based narratives. It further suggests that Canada and Australia are extending their representations of "regular" migrants to climate change-affected populations. Just as "regular" migrants are increasingly viewed as threats to social cohesion, climate migrants are portrayed as a likely destabilizing phenomenon for the Global North (whether they remain within their borders or cross them). In both cases, the prevailing concern is nakedly that of national security, borders and territoriality not human experience and well-being.

Beyond their scientific doubtfulness, these narratives - or rather this narrative continuum - effectively erase the perspectives and experiences of migrants. Migrants, whose movement is the product of poverty, war, environmental causes or a likely combination of these factors, are viewed through a Western lens that problematizes "undesirable" forms of mobility. Moreover, it is a lens that, too frequently, erases colonial legacies, "globalised socioeconomic inequalities and the

postcolonial present" (Bettini 2015, 248). In relation to climate migrants, this erasure further operates to obfuscate the origins of climate change, which are rooted in Western exploitation, extractions and emissions.

The discursive expression of this lens works to confer legitimacy to certain mobilities while devaluing or else criminalizing those deemed illegitimate. The tangible effects of this discourse are clear today as increasing numbers of migrants are subjected to hostile politics which manifest through "exclusion, enclosure, incarceration and violence" (Sheller 2018, 15). Whether or how people move in response to climate change will be shaped by these politics - making the question of the political representations of (climate)migrants a question of life and death.

This thesis offers an incomplete analysis of this question, one that is limited in scope and time. While not insignificant, an analysis of Canada and Australia offers a partial view of the Western political representation of climate migrants. More work is needed to understand how the United States, United Kingdom and other prominent Western nations conceptualize this "future" phenomenon. Moreover, additional work is needed to uncover meanings put forth through other means, such as parliamentary debates. In addition, the perspective of those on the front lines of climate change are invaluable and their understandings of climate change and mobility merit greater visibility than what was given here. Finally, it must be noted that this thesis contributes to the uneven geography of climate migration research, which is predominantly conducted in the Global North, by Western researchers who benefit from various kinds of privilege. I have tried to present a critical and postcolonial perspective throughout this study. Nonetheless, it is probable that I at times unintentionally reflected Western epistemological biases. For this reason, more work is also sorely needed from researchers in the Global South who ought to be given the means to analyze these questions from their vantage points. Nevertheless, I believe this study contributes to a critical and effervescent field by deconstructing a subject that is increasingly mobilized in scientific, popular and policy discourse.

Mobility is an inherent feature of human life and will likely be part of the response to climate change. Upholding a fixed and deterministic representation of climate migrants as threats to order and stability not only reinforces the alterity of those experiencing climate change, but also legitimizes exclusionary politics. Climate mobilities should be considered as part of a broader discussion on uneven mobilities. This discussion, which ought to transcend scientific circles, should enable us to envision a world where people are free to move in a safe and dignified way. As Sheller (2018) rightly states "How, when, and where people, goods, and capital move is, in all respects, a political question. In the face of climate disaster, it is also increasingly a moral question of the distribution of life and death." (16). Building a just and ecologically harmonious world requires enshrining the right to move freely and safely within it for all.

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