The Impact of Uncertainty and Institutional Design: UNHCR and IOM's Competing Discourses on Climate Change-Related Mobility

by

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ABSTRACT

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Expanding into the climate change regime in the 2000s, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have become the primary policy actors in the emerging issue area of climate migration and displacement. Despite their key positions in shaping the emerging policy norms, UNHCR and IOM's discourses on climate change-related mobility are under-researched. As this thesis shows, they conceptualize the relationship between climate change and human mobility in differing ways, endorse different terminologies and promote competing policy objectives. This thesis aims to explain why UNHCR and IOM adopt different discourses on climate change-related mobility and discuss their implications for the emerging regime for its global governance in terms of climate justice. It employs Critical Discourse Analysis as its method to study primary sources from UNHCR and IOM. By drawing on constructivist and historical institutionalist treatments of international organizations (IOs), it highlights the role of issue-specific and institutional factors. The findings suggest that coupled with the absence of an international norm and a clear delegation from member states, the uncertainty and ambiguity regarding the relationship between climate change and human mobility provide IOs a wider room for interpretation. Yet, IOs' institutional contexts (e.g. their mandates, funding structures, degrees of autonomy and previous policy standards) constrain the boundaries of imaginable and acceptable discourses when deliberating policy ideas in a new issue area beyond their core mandates.

ÖZETÇE

Belirsizliğin ve Kurumsal Bağlamın Etkisi: Birleşmiş Milletler Mülteciler Yüksek Komiserliği ve Uluslararası Göç Örgütü'nün İklim Değişikliğine Bağlı Hareketlilik Üzerine Rakip Söylemleri

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2000'li yıllarda faaliyetlerini iklim değişikliği rejimine genişleten Uluslararası Göç Örgütü (UGÖ/IOM) ve Birleşmiş Milletler Mülteciler Yüksek Komiserliği (BMMYK/UNHCR), iklim değişikliği, göç ve yerinden edilmeye dair yeni oluşmakta olan sorun alanındaki en önemli politika aktörleri haline gelmiştir. Ortaya çıkan normları şekillendirmede kilit rol oynamalarına rağmen BMMYK ve UGÖ'nün iklim değişikliği ile ilgili hareketlilik konusundaki söylemleri literatürde karşılaştırmalı olarak araştırılmamıştır. Bu tezde gösterildiği üzere, bu iki uluslararası örgüt iklim değişikliği ve insan hareketliliği arasındaki nedensel ilişkiyi birbirleriyle çelişen şekillerde kavramsallaştırmakta ve konuya dair farklı terminolojileri ve politika hedeflerini desteklemektedirler. Bu tez, BMMYK ve UGÖ'nün iklim değişikliği ile ilgili hareketlilik üzerine farklı söylemler benimsemelerinin sebeplerini araştırmaktadır. Ayrıca, söylemlerinin iklim hareketliliğinin küresel yönetişimi için oluşmakta olan rejim üzerindeki etkilerini iklim adaleti açısından tartışmaktadır. Tezde BMMYK ve UGÖ'nün birincil kaynaklarını inceleme yöntemi olarak Eleştirel Söylem Analizi kullanılmıştır. Bulgular konstrüktivist ve tarihsel kurumsalcı yaklaşımlara dayanarak söylem farklılıklarının sebebi olarak sorun alanına özgü belirsizliğin ve bazı kurumsal faktörlerin rolünü göstermektedir. Öncelikle, iklim değişikliği ve insan hareketliliği arasındaki nedensel ilişkiye dair belirsizlik, konuya ilişkin uluslararası bir normun olmaması ve üye devletlerden net bir delegasyonun olmamasıyla birleştiğinde, BMMYK ve UGÖ'ye geniş bir yorum alanı tanımıştır. Buna rağmen, bu örgütlerin kurumsal bağlamları (örneğin, farklı yetki alanları, özerklik dereceleri ve önceki politika standartları) yeni bir sorun alanında politika fikirleri üretirken hayal edilebilir ve kabul edilebilir söylemlerin sınırlarını kısıtlamıştır.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

ABBREVIATIONS

CAF	The Cancun Adaptation Framework
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CI	Constructivist institutionalism
COP	Conference of the Parties
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
GCM	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
GCR	Global Compact on Refugees
GMG	Global Migration Group
HI	Historical institutionalism
IDP	Internally Displaced People
ILO	International Labour Organization
IO	International organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IR	International relations
MECC	Migration, Environment and Climate Change Division of the International Organization for Migration
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PICMME	Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movements of Migrants from Europe
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Committee

Chapter 1: **INTRODUCTION**

"Climate change [is] now found to be the key factor accelerating all other drivers of forced displacement. Most of the people affected will […] be internally displaced. But if they cross a border, they will not be considered refugees. Does it mean they *chose* to abandon their homes? No. These persons are not truly migrants, in the sense that they did not move voluntarily. As forcibly displaced not covered by the refugee protection regime, they find themselves in a legal void."

– António Guterres, former UN High Commissioner for Refugees (2005-2015)

"It is important [...] not to view migration as simply the failure of communities to adapt to climate change. Migration has always been one of the ways in which people have chosen to adapt to changing environments."

– William Lacy Swing, former IOM Director General (2008-2018)

It was 1990 when the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) pointed out that climatic changes could lead to significant levels of migration through shoreline erosion, coastal flooding, and agricultural disruption. More than 30 years after the IPCC's claim, not only has "climate refugees" become a term widely used by media and advocacy actors, the scientific evidence for the human impacts of climate change has become even more compelling. In the context of ever-intensifying climate change-related shocks and hazards from tropical cyclones to extreme droughts, one would expect to find a coherent policy action on climate change-related migration and displacement among the international organizations (IOs) from the environment, migration and humanitarian fields. However, the human impacts of climate change appear to outpace the political and scholarly debate on defining "climate refugees".

As I will illustrate in this thesis through two case studies, there is no coherent policy action among the IOs that are involved in this issue area, and the lack of consensus is also discursive and multi-layered. The disagreements are not only in terms of policy recommendations, but also in terms of labels, conceptualization and distribution of responsibility. Who are "climate refugees"? Should "climate refugees" be the terminology? Are "climate refugees" voluntary or forced migrants? Do "climate refugees" use migration as a survival strategy? Or is climate change-related mobility only a type of economic migration which people use as an adaptation strategy? Is the causal link between climate change and human mobility even deterministic? Do people cross the national borders because of climate change? Is there a need to develop new

protection instruments for “climate refugees”? As the next chapters will suggest, the answers of the international community to all these questions are not yet uniform.

The term “climate refugees” is legally inappropriate in most cases due to its incompatibility with the refugee definition under Article 1A(2) of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (also known as the 1951 Refugee Convention or the Geneva Convention) and most displacement is expected to be internal. However, the disagreements go beyond semantics to the very link between climate change and human mobility. Mostly criticized in terms of the difficulty of attributing environmental changes to anthropogenic climate change and disentangling the role of climate change in migration decision, “climate refugees” (as well as “climate migrants”) remain uncertain and ambiguous as a concept. In most cases, the affected people find themselves outside the existing mechanisms because they do not necessarily fit the legal definition of refugees and other legal categories such as stateless persons. Exemplifying this point, in January 2020, the United Nations Human Rights Committee (UNHRC) ruled a historic decision regarding the status of “climate refugees” *("Ioane Teitiota v. New Zealand," 2020)*. Ioane Teitiota and his family were deported from New Zealand to Kiribati after his asylum application was denied in 2015. He filed a complaint to UNHRC, arguing that his right to life was violated since Kiribati was uninhabitable due to rising sea-levels, water contamination and other climate impacts. UNHRC, in its first decision on the complaint of an asylum-seeker due to climate change, determined that New Zealand’s courts did not violate Ioane Teitiota’s right to life considering the present facts regarding the available protection measures in Kiribati. However, UNHRC also emphasized that both sudden- or slow-onset climate events can indeed lead individuals to seek protection outside their national borders. Even though Ioane Teitiota could not be “the first climate refugee” in its formal sense, this historic ruling is likely to pave the way for future asylum claims due to climate change.

As the case of Teitiota also demonstrated, the lack of a clear conceptualization under international law currently renders the affected people virtually invisible in the system and makes them rely on the general migration policies if they cross national borders. This gap particularly raises concerns regarding climate justice, given that climate change places the heaviest burden on the people who least contribute to climate change and have fewer means to cope with its impacts.

In the presence of the governance gap, United Nations (UN) agencies and other IOs are working to fill this gap in practice by engaging with the issue at the advocacy and operational levels since the early 2000s. For instance, the IOs that engage with the issue include the International Organization for Migration (IOM, UN-related agency since 2016), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). Nevertheless, while closely collaborating with each other (Geiger, 2020), there is not yet a common understanding of the issue among the UN agencies, let alone a coherent policy action. Although UNEP was the organization that coined the very term "environmental refugees" in a report in 1985 (El-Hinnawi, 1985), it has not yet established its focal area on migration and displacement (Geiger, 2020, p. 162). Rather than UNEP, IOM and UNHCR have become the policy leaders in the rapidly emerging issue area of climate change-related mobility, given their expertise in the fields of migration and displacement. While both organizations reject the term "climate refugees" due to legal considerations based on the international refugee law, this thesis shows that their discourses on the new issue area have key differences in terms of terminology, conceptualization of the causal links, discussions of responsibility and climate justice and justification of proposed policy objectives. This variation begs some important questions for international relations (IR) and migration research: How do international organizations deliberate policies when expanding into new issue areas beyond their original mandates? What factors might have led UNHCR and IOM to conceptualize the link between climate change and human mobility in fundamentally differing ways, use different labels and provide different policy objectives? Do labels (such as refugees vs. migrants, voluntary vs. forced) matter?

This thesis provides an original and systematic analysis of UNHCR and IOM's discourses on climate change-related mobility[1] and aims to explain why they have adopted different discourses and discuss the implications of their discourses for the

[1] As it will be detailed in Chapter 2, there is a plethora of terms that are used by scholars, media and political actors (including the case studies of this thesis, UNHCR and IOM), such as climate migration, climate displacement, displacement in the context of climate change or climate refugees. Recognizing that each label has nuances and connotations, this thesis uses the term "climate change-related mobility" as a generic term which includes all forms of human mobility (temporary or permanent, internal or international, or forced or voluntary etc.) in relation to climate change. This thesis does not endorse this term as an answer to the conceptual debates. It is a purely practical choice in order to avoid confusion (particularly in the discourse analysis sections) since the thesis centers on and problematizes the use of different labels and discourses by UNHCR and IOM even in the context of the same environmental disaster.

emerging regime. The next section justifies the selection of the research questions and summarizes the empirical, methodological and theoretical contributions of this thesis.

1.1 Research questions and contributions

Although several international organizations have been actively engaging with climate change-related mobility for almost two decades, there is no consensus around what this phenomenon is and what the right terminology and policy objectives should be. UNHCR and IOM have also been autonomously engaging with the issue although it is not covered by their original mandates (Hall, 2015). UNHCR and IOM were established in a similar political context in the aftermath of World War II, have a similar list of member states and donors, have a long history of cooperation, interact with similar epistemic communities, socialize with similar policy actors, share similar platforms and started to engage with the issue of climate change around the same year. However, UNHCR and IOM have adopted fundamentally different discourses (as "a set of policy ideas and values")[2] on climate change-related mobility. This variation constitutes the research puzzle of this master's thesis:

1- *What are the differences and similarities in UNHCR and IOM's discourses regarding climate change-related mobility?*
2- *Why do UNHCR and IOM adopt different discourses, hence policy suggestions, when it comes to climate change-related mobility?*
3- *What are the implications of UNHCR and IOM's discourses on climate change-related mobility for the emerging regime on climate change-related mobility?*

Why are these questions worth studying? Apart from their own policies, IOs are key actors in shaping the wider circulation of framings in media agendas and discourses as a result of their "privileged power position" as formal political bodies (Carvalho, 2017, p. 493). IOs present themselves as "impersonal, technocratic, and neutral—as not exercising power but instead as serving others" (Barnett & Finnemore, 1999, p. 708), which helps them shape discourse with relative ease (Lochan, 2017, p. 26). For the same reasons, they hold "a privileged position in forging the transnational policy

[2] In this thesis, discourse is broadly understood as "a set of policy ideas and values" that speak to the "soundness and appropriateness of policy programmes" and "a process of interaction focused on policy formulation and communication" that serve to "generate and disseminate those policy ideas" (Schmidt & Radaelli, 2004, pp. 185, 193).

networks through which their definitions of shared problems and the range of 'best practice' solutions are diffused" (Mahon, 2020, p. 55). Given the large impact of their discourses on wider policy practices and the circulation of discourses, it becomes essential to problematize IOs' discourses in terms of their implications and how they are constructed. It is even more important in the context of an emerging issue area such as climate change-related mobility, which is related to two highly politicized and securitized issues: climate change and migration. Being the key IOs in the fields of migration and displacement, IOM and UNHCR have also become the primary actors leading the policy deliberations on climate change-related mobility at the international level. Previous research suggests that both UNHCR and IOM are in "the self-perpetuating circle of research, policy and knowledge production" around climate change-related mobility (Nash, 2018). Therefore, they are likely to exert considerable power in shaping the emerging policy norms.

However, discourses of IOs on climate change-related mobility have not received much scholarly attention from a comparative lens. Previous studies are predominantly either descriptive studies portraying their roles and reactions (e.g. Martin, 2010; Goodwin-Gill & McAdam, 2017; Fornalé & Doebbler, 2017; Geiger, 2020) or examine why they have started to engage with this emerging issue that is beyond their original mandates (e.g. Hall, 2015). This gap is larger for the cases of UNHCR and IOM, despite holding key roles in shaping the emerging issue area. While some comparative studies have problematized their discourses on other categories and issue areas, such as refugees and assisted voluntary returns (Flegar, 2018; Lochan, 2017), their discourses on climate change-related mobility have not received much attention. The existing literature has been largely limited to their operational cooperation in disaster settings (Lakeman, 2021) or focused on how and why their mandate expansion took place by highlighting the roles of substantive issue-linkages, organizational types and international bureaucrats (Betts, 2010; Hall, 2015, 2016). Therefore, this thesis aims to fill this gap and contribute to the existing comparative literature on UNHCR and IOM by systematically analyzing their discourses in this issue area, problematizing them and discussing their implications.

This thesis employs constructivist and historical institutionalist treatments of IOs as theoretical framework and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as its primary method

(see Chapters 3 and 4). By exploring the differences in UNHCR and IOM's discourses on climate change-related mobility, this thesis neither provides a novel definition nor does it entertain the discussion of whether it is possible to define climate migration or climate refugees. Rather, it problematizes IOs' discourses on climate change and human mobility by recognizing the constitutive effects of discourses on social reality regardless of their ontological basis.

The research empirically contributes to the comparative literature on UNHCR and IOM's engagement with climate change in particular. It differs from the previous studies in terms of its research focus (i.e. discourses) and methodological choices. It provides an original and systematic study of 88 primary sources that UNHCR and IOM have produced relating to climate change since their initial engagements with the issue area around 2007 (see Appendix A: Analyzed primary sources). The sources are studied via CDA by focusing on their nomination, predication and argumentation strategies as the primary method and software-assisted content analysis as the complementary method. As it will be explained in detail in Chapter 4, CDA prioritizes the analysis of relations between agency (process and events) and structure in the study of discourses (Fairclough, 2005). It assumes that power structures are implicitly communicated in discourses and that discursive practices contribute to "the constitution of the social world, including social identities and relations" (Aydin-Düzgit & Rumelili, 2019, p. 292). Discourses have a dialectical relationship with the non-discursive social reality (i.e. institutions; power relations) (Aydin-Düzgit & Rumelili, 2019, p. 292). Accordingly, CDA offers "a general theoretical perspective on discourse which recognises the constitutive potential of discourse within and across social practices without reducing social practices to their discursive aspect" (Farrelly, 2010, p. 99). In this light, examining the constitutive effects of discursive practices offers a way to unfold what factors prevent IOM and UNHCR from developing a common understanding of climate change-related mobility.

Theoretically, this thesis is situated within the wider literature on new institutionalist treatments of IOs, particularly by exploring how institutional context shapes IOs discourses on new issue areas that are not covered by their original mandates. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, discourse is "situated in broader institutional contexts, with institutions and culture framing the discourse, defining the

repertoire of acceptable (and expectable) actions" (Schmidt & Radaelli, 2004, p. 193). Existing institutions are the space for policy deliberation, but they interact with agents and are not necessarily deterministic (Bell, 2011; Hay & Wincott, 1998 quoted in Natorski, 2015). Agents, when generating ideas, face institutions, which are "relatively enduring features of political and social life (rules, norms, procedures) that structure behaviour' (Mahoney & Thelen, 2009, p.4 quoted in Natorski, 2015, p.8). Therefore, as argued by constructivist institutionalism, institutional settings provide agents "a variety of competing narratives and discourses which might in turn inform very different policy sets or responses" (Hay, 2016). In addition, historical institutionalism suggests that policies are "not made in a vacuum" but "built on previous policy decisions" (Jones & Baumgartner, 2007, p. 49). Therefore, there is a limited room for agents to depart from the previous patterns of engagement.

In light of these perspectives, UNHCR and IOM's institutional designs (see Chapter 5) are examined in an attempt to explain the variation in their discourses (see Chapter 6 for the CDA findings) when expanding to a new issue area beyond their core mandates. This approach helps to discover which labels and policy ideas are rendered imaginable and appropriate by the institutional context, while others are dismissed and silenced (discussed in Chapter 7). Future research on IOs may apply the same research design to study other IOs in this issue area (or other emerging issue areas) to further test the explanatory power of this theoretical lens.

While affirming previous literature's findings regarding the impact of organizational type on mandate expansion (Hall, 2015), by drawing on constructivist and historical institutionalisms, this thesis centers on discourses and considers a set of issue-specific and institutional factors to explain a larger part of their discursive practices (including their nomination, predication, and argumentation strategies) and particularly their policy ideas. In addition, the temporal comparisons provide an opportunity to test the recent claims that IOM's rising leadership in this issue area has started to lead to a convergence in the discourses.

1.2 Outline of the thesis and the preview of the findings

Chapter 2 serves as a literature review. It shows that climate change-related mobility is highly contested as a new issue area and is characterized by uncertainty and

ambiguity, both conceptually and in terms of relevant policy frameworks. The chapter starts with an introduction of the competing discourses on climate change and human mobility (namely the discourse of "climate refugees" and the discourse of "migration as adaptation") and discusses their policy implications and critiques. It continues with a review of the literature on the global governance of climate change-related mobility (e.g. Biermann & Bauer, 2017; Geddes, Adger, Arnell, Black, & Thomas, 2012; Geiger, 2020; Mayer, 2013). Then, it briefly introduces the engagement patterns of IOM and UNHCR with climate change-related mobility and their dominant discourses based on available literature (e.g. Betts, 2010; Hall, 2015).

Chapter 3 provides the theoretical framework of the thesis. It starts by reviewing the IR theory on IO behavior and discourse, namely the principal-agent theory (e.g. Hawkins, Lake, Nielson, & Tierney, 2006), neorealist (e.g. Mearsheimer, 1994; Snidal, 1985) and constructivist (e.g. Barnett & Finnemore, 1999; Helfer, 2006; Schmidt & Radaelli, 2004) treatments of IOs. It evaluates their explanatory power for addressing the research questions at hand. Next, as briefly introduced above, it outlines the theoretical framework of the thesis by drawing on historical and constructivist institutionalist treatments of IOs.

Chapter 4 lays out the research design. It justifies the selection of UNHCR and IOM as cases that can be studied comparatively. Then, it introduces CDA as the methodological guideline to examine their discourses on climate change-related mobility in terms of their nomination, predication and argumentation strategies (based on Aydin-Düzgit & Rumelili, 2019; Fairclough, 2003; Reisigl & Wodak, 2001) and discusses CDA's strengths and limitations. Chapter 4 also explains the sampling procedures that are used when selecting the primary sources from IOM and UNHCR to examine and the CDA techniques to study them.

Chapter 5 summarizes the institutional contexts of UNHCR and IOM respectively, in terms of their historical evolution, mandate, degrees of autonomy and organizational type, and how their engagement with climate change has started. Briefly, UNHCR is a normative IO (Hall, 2015), with a core mandate on refugees and add-on mandates on internal displacement and statelessness, has moral authority over the refugee regime due to its supervisory role in the 1951 Refugee Convention, and also has a distinct bureaucratic culture based on humanitarian principles and a higher autonomy (as, for

instance, illustrated by many instances of challenging Member States' preferences and autonomously expanding its mandate) (Betts, 2012). On the other hand, IOM is a functional IO (Hall, 2015) and a service-provider, mostly associated with lower degrees of independence due to its project-based funding structure and non-normative mandate. However, the same mandate, owing to its broad and flexible nature, and non-normative stance enable IOM to expand into new issue areas with relative ease (Geiger & Pécoud, 2020; Pécoud, 2018). Given the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 3 based on constructivist and historical institutionalist treatments of IOs, this chapter serves as an overview of the explanatory variables that may help explaining why UNHCR and IOM may adopt different discourses in a new issue area and lays the groundwork for the discussion in Chapter 7.

Chapter 6 presents the findings of CDA. It respectively summarizes UNHCR and IOM's dominant discourses in terms of nomination, predication and argumentation strategies. The analyses focus on several questions, including how the affected people are named, whether they are portrayed as passive victims or active agents, how the causal link between climate change and human mobility is constructed, which forms of mobility are anticipated, how the matters of responsibility and climate justice are discussed, and what policy ideas they promote. The chapter concludes with an analytical comparison of UNHCR and IOM's discourses around these questions. In summary, UNHCR predominantly establishes a direct link between climate change and human mobility; refers to the affected people as forcibly displaced people (even in the context of slow-onset disasters); portrays them as passive subjects who are vulnerable and victimized; discusses the issue of climate justice relatively more explicitly; and considers the related phenomenon as a protection issue and pursues a normative agenda to develop protection mechanisms for people displaced by the impacts of climate change. Furthermore, IOM mainly establishes a non-deterministic link between climate change and human mobility; frames "climate migration as adaptation strategy"; portrays the affected people as entrepreneurial active agents who embark on labor migration, helping to diversify their income, send back remittances and build resilience to climate events; and underlines the role of migration management in terms of policy objectives in order to maximize the benefits for host and sending communities.

Chapter 7 aims to explain the reasons why UNHCR and IOM may adopt differing discourses on climate change-related mobility. By drawing on constructivist and historical institutionalisms, this chapter highlights the role of a combination of issue-specific and institutional factors. The discussion argues that the uncertainty and ambiguity regarding the links between climate change and human mobility have provided a wider room for interpretation. In the absence of an international norm and a clear delegation from member states, the uncertainty and ambiguity have accentuated the impact of each IO's institutional context. In a nutshell, UNHCR and IOM, as normative and functional IOs (Hall, 2015), have different lenses through which they make sense of social phenomena. Their mandates, funding structures, degrees of autonomy and previous policies constrain the boundaries of imaginable and acceptable discourses when deliberating policy ideas in a new issue area beyond their core mandates. This chapter interprets and explains the differences identified in Chapter 6 based on these factors.

Chapter 8 reiterates the main arguments of the thesis that the institutional context outlines the boundaries of discourse in IOs and therefore, IO discourses should not be taken at face value, given that they impact social practices due to their key positions in shaping the policy norms and maintaining (or challenging) power imbalances. It also summarizes its contributions and limitations. It concludes by discussing the implications of UNHCR and IOM's discourses on climate change-related mobility for the emerging regime in terms of climate justice.

Chapter 2: **CLIMATE CHANGE-RELATED MOBILITY AS AN UNCERTAIN AND AMBIGUOUS ISSUE AREA**

2.1 Main discourses on climate change-related mobility

The scholarly debate on the linkages between climate change, migration and displacement is characterized by conceptual and terminological disunity, with two main discourse coalitions ("climate refugees" vs "climate migration as adaptation") providing fundamentally different views. Given the increasing evidence on (both current and future) human impacts of climate change (see, for instance, IPCC's *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, 2022), it appears the conceptual and terminological debate lags behind the reality of climate migration and displacement.

This context also creates an ambiguous environment for the actors that are operationally involved in this issue area in the field, and it remains a question how they navigate their way through this conceptual fuzziness. Therefore, this section provides an overview of the main definitions and discourses surrounding this new issue area and their policy implications.

Several terms have been used in the literature when referring to this new category, such as "environmental refugees", "environmentally displaced persons", "climate refugees", "environmentally forced migrants", "people displaced by climate change", "eco-migrants", "eco-evacuated", "eco-victims" (Ramos, 2013, p. 744). Given this plethora of terms and varying definitions, a clear definition is required "to assess the feasibility of adaptation and application of existing instruments and mechanisms in international law or for the construction of a special protection system" (Ramos, 2013, pp. 744-745). Similarly, McAdam (2010, p. 2) notes that the absence of an internationally agreed definition "makes it difficult to systematically progress deliberations about appropriate multilateral legal and institutional responses". However, it is also highly controversial in the literature whether it is possible to define environmental or climate migration as a meaningful category due to a variety of epistemic and ontological uncertainties. While the literature review reveals that there are two main discourse coalitions ("climate refugees" and "climate migration as adaptation"), both are criticized in terms of their policy implications.

2.1.1 The discourse of "climate refugees"

Taking environmental migration as a policy subsystem, whose policies belong to various policy areas such as refugee protection and disaster management, Gemenne (2009, p. 93) argues that some advocacy coalitions are formed around "core policy beliefs" in this area. Accordingly, there are two coalitions in this issue area: alarmists (exemplifying the discourse of "climate refugees") (e.g. El-Hinnawi, 1985; Homer-Dixon, 1991; Myers & Kent, 1995) vs. skeptics (exemplifying the discourse of "migration as adaptation") (e.g. Stephen Castles, de Haas, & Miller, 2014).

The former coalition calls for the creation of new legal and policy instruments based on the argument that environmental disruptions will cause unprecedented levels of migration and displacement. This coalition is often endorsed by environmental

scholars, civil society, and the media (Mayer, 2013, p. 91), epitomizing the discourse of "climate refugees" or "environmental refugees". In a nutshell, the idea behind this discourse is that through desertification, sea-level rise, extreme weather events, climate change will generate "vulnerability hotspots" that are uninhabitable, which will in turn cause "waves of climate refugees" (mostly from the Global South to the Global North) (Bettini, Nash, & Gioli, 2017, p. 351). By resonating with the securitization of migration and asylum, the discourse of "climate refugees" has been resilient and widely used (Bettini et al., 2017). Indeed, the discourse of "climate refugees" (as well as "environmental refugees") has become prominent in the contexts of not only "popular environmentalism" but also "a general scepticism surrounding migration" (Nash, 2018, p.198). This discourse coalition can be traced back to UNEP's report "Environmental Refugees" in 1985 (El-Hinnawi, 1985) and the Toronto group and Thomas Homer-Dixon, who projected "environmental changes as acute causes of conflict", and therefore, of refugee flows (Homer-Dixon, 1991). Following this study, in 1995, Norman Myers and Jennifer Kent estimated the number of environmental refugees by 2050 as 200 million (Myers & Kent, 1995). One of the early definitions of "environmental refugees" was proposed by El-Hinnawi in 1985:

> "Those people who have been forced to leave their traditional habitat, temporarily or permanently, because of a marked environmental disruption (natural and/or triggered by people) that jeopardized their existence and/or seriously affected the quality of their life." (El-Hinnawi, 1985, p. 4)

Therefore, this definition (also this discourse in general) constructs a direct causal link between environmental degradation ("natural and/or triggered by people) and human mobility and emphasizes the forced nature of the movement ("forced to leave"). The main criticism against this early definition questions the usefulness of such a broad concept because it is "so wide as to render the concept virtually meaningless" (Suhrke & Visentin, 1991 quoted in Gemenne, 2011, p. 3). Similarly, Bates (2002) underlines that too many people can be categorized as environmental refugees according to El-Hinnawi's definition because it does not distinguish between people fleeing sudden environmental disruptions such as volcanic eruptions and those who are affected by gradual changes such as declining soil quality. Hence, the critiques mainly called for a more precise and narrower definition.

Beyond the conceptual criticisms, the terms "climate refugees" or "environmental refugees" proved to be highly controversial. The controversy firstly arises from the fact that this concept holds no legal equivalence in international law. The 1951 Refugee Convention Article 1A(2) strictly defines refugees as

> "[a]ny person who . . . owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country".

Article 1A(2) is reminded by not only UNHCR but also IOM when rejecting the term "climate refugees". According to this definition, except for specific cases in which the adverse effects of environmental events on a particular group of people overlap with these reasons, it is legally inappropriate to use the term refugees. Rather, the term "climate refugees" implies a strong normative stance by calling on the development of new protection mechanisms and implying a victimization by climate change. Yet, at the same time, this discourse has been criticized due to its risk of facilitating securitization of migration in the developed countries since it anticipates large refugee flows from the Global South (Bettini, 2013; Hartmann, 2010).

2.1.2 The discourse of "migration as adaptation"

The second main policy coalition on climate change-related mobility is *the skeptical coalition*, often represented by migration scholars. The skeptics question the magnitude of such migration and displacement and the necessity of new legal and policy instruments to address the issue (see, for instance Stephen Castles et al., 2014, pp. 209-211). Stressing the complexity of migration decision, the skeptics argue that "environmental factors are not a distinct, causal variable, and in fact distract from other determining factors, such as poverty and political persecution" (Gemenne, 2009, p. 111). The skeptics question the estimates regarding the volume and the direction of forced migration that can occur due to climate change and argue that most mobility will be internal (i.e. within the national borders).

Reflecting these concerns, more than two decades after El-Hinnawi's definition, IOM offered another definition for "environmental migrants":

> "[E]nvironmental migrants are "persons or groups of persons who, predominantly for reasons of sudden or progressive change in the environment that adversely affects their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad." (IOM, 2007, p. 1).

Unlike the previous definition, Martin (2010, p. 388) argues that the IOM recognizes the difficulty of determining causality by proposing the following broad definition. While both El-Hinnawi's and the IOM's definitions are broad definitions, covering both temporary and permanent movements, they differ in the terminology, with IOM using a legally more appropriate term. Also, IOM shies away from commenting on the cause of the environmental event (i.e. climate change). Yet, they practically do not differ since El-Hinnawi's definition includes both human-induced and natural causes. Rather, they differ in terms of the level of the forced nature of movement.

While the discourse of "climate refugees" of the 1990s, by definition, frames the related mobility as a survival strategy (i.e. failure to adapt), the skeptical coalition has developed an alternative approach in the 2000s, which frames it as an adaptation strategy. The discourse of "migration as adaptation" suggest that in the context of changing environment, migration can improve the situation of both the individual and their communities through new sources of income, remittances, and diversification of household risk and livelihoods. Among other actors such as policy experts, international organizations and researchers, IOM introduced and endorsed the concept of "migration as adaptation" into other fora including conferences, research reports and press releases (Felli, 2013, p. 341; Vinke, Bergmann, Blocher, Upadhyay, & Hoffmann, 2020, p. 643).

Mayer (2013, p. 91) detects that the descriptive literature on climate change-migration nexus is "largely dominated by the minimalist ("skeptical") perspective". One argument challenging the causal link between climate change and migration is linked to the idea of multi-causality, meaning that climate change is rarely, if ever, the sole driver of migration. This argument underlines that it is hard to isolate climate change from other drivers such as economic push and pull factors, demographic trends, etc. (Koser, 2010, p. 311). Similarly, McAdam asserts that "it is [...] difficult to disentangle the multiple causes for human movement, given the combined impacts of conflict, the environment and economic pressures" (McAdam, 2010, p. 2). For instance, according to Stephen Castles (2010, p. 242), "it is virtually impossible to identify groups of people

already displaced by climate change alone". Likewise, Mayer (2012a, p. 33) argues that although political refugees can be easily distinguished, most climate migrants are essentially economic migrants as "environmental factors exacerbate (economic) migration rather than directly cause it". However, the argument that political refugees are easier to distinguish is also contestable. It is shown by case studies that decision-making in the refugee status determination is not consistent among different countries (Gibb & Good, 2013) and that credibility-based decisions are essentially subjective and change from adjudicator to another (Kagan, 2003).

Another argument behind the lack of consensus is that it is scientifically difficult to definitively attribute a particular environmental event to climate change (Koser, 2010, p. 311), indicating an epistemic uncertainty due to data and measurement limitations. For instance, environmental degradation can be due to the changes in precipitation levels or average temperatures, yet, on the other hand, it can also be due to deforestation. Even the same environmental event can be considered by some researchers to be due to anthropogenic climate change, but not by others, while other researchers even question whether the event was serious as claimed. This mostly stems from the difficulty of attribution. For instance, regarding droughts, IPCC (2013, p. 871) suggests that "there is *low confidence* in attributing changes in drought over global land areas since the mid-20th century to human influence". To illustrate, most recently, following the Syrian Civil War onset, an increasing number of studies have drawn attention to the link between environmental change (referring to the 2006-2010 drought), migration, and conflict. It was claimed that the drought between 2006 and 2010 led to the migration of 1.5 million Syrians to other parts of the country, which in turn exacerbated the risk of conflict leading to the civil war in the end. Selby et al. (2017) question if the drought was due to "anthropogenic" climate change and try to test the accuracy of these claims. Checking the rainfall patterns in the Fertile Crescent, Selby et al. (2017) argue that 2006-2007 and 2008-2009 periods were no drier than those experienced in the last 60 years. On the other hand, Ash and Obradovich (2020, p. 3) argue that it was "a once in 500-year meteorological drought" and measure the historical temperature and precipitation based on the data from the Climatic Research Unit. These inconsistent findings in a way support the argument that "the science of extreme weather event attribution is still young and subject to competing methods and the constraints of limited observational data and imperfect models" (Selby et al., 2017,

p. 235). Moreover, these two studies find opposite results regarding the link between the drought and out-migration.

Beyond the conceptual differences due to epistemic and ontological uncertainties (Bijak & Czaika, 2020), the discursive shift from the "climate refugees" of the 1990s to "climate migration as adaptation" matters as it has important policy implication. While in the former, organizations view migration as failure to adapt to climate change, the latter perceive it as an adaptation strategy. While this shift is seemingly positive in that it provides a less securitized approach, it also depoliticizes the root cause, i.e. climate change, which has proven to be a man-made process that requires concrete policy action to be tackled and thus engenders the question of climate justice. The discourse of "climate refugees" reminds that "climate change enshrines a 'foundational' international inequality – both in terms of historical responsibilities and of differentiated adaptive capacities (however under-defined these aspects may be); it represents a tacit recognition of climate vulnerability as the result of structural 'wrongs'" (Bettini et al., 2017). Therefore, it assigns states the responsibility to "offer refuge to ecologically vulnerable populations"(Bettini et al., 2017). On the other hand, the new discourse emphasizes an "opportunity to move" and has the risk of shifting off the responsibility of the Global North since it frames the decision to move as a form of adaptation to climate change and a rational strategy, which will improve affected communities' living conditions and resilience. Hence, it takes off the pressure on states to tackle climate change itself and address intergenerational justice. In the literature, this discourse is criticized for endorsing a neoliberal approach. It does not necessitate technical and financial transfers from the Global North to the Global South for adaptation to climate change, which is closely linked to "the individualistic and depoliticised social ontology produced by neoliberalisation processes" (Felli, 2003, p. 350). Therefore, to be consistent with this framing, the "climate migrants" also have to be constructed as entrepreneurial agents, not victims:

> "Rather than understanding 'climate refugees' as victims of climate change produced by industrialised countries and, thus, as in need of justice (which could take the form of funding for adaptation), these individuals are turned, through a 'positive story', into entrepreneurial migrants who not only can lift themselves out of poverty but may also contribute to the 'resilience' of their 'vulnerable' communities" (Felli, 2013, p. 350).

In summary, while embodying the risk of securitizing climate change and portraying a relatively unrealistic picture of the links between environment and human mobility, the discourse of "climate refugees" has proven to be a persistent advocacy tool. Yet, the recent years have seen a surge of the discourse of "climate migration as adaptation", which is a product of neoliberalization processes. Given the multiplicity of definitions and discourses that construct its nature and boundaries in differing ways and offer different policy objectives, climate change-related mobility has proven to be an uncertain and ambiguous issue area. In light of this uncertainty and ambiguity at the conceptual level, the next section gives an overview of the current global governance of climate change-related mobility and detects UNHCR and IOM as the key policy actors at the international level.

2.2 Global governance of climate change-related mobility: IOM and UNHCR stepping in as the primary actors

2.2.1 The governance gap

Beyond the multiplicity of discourses, currently, there are no international instruments directly addressing migration occurring due to climate change or other environmental events. Although there are already existing legal categories that may apply to some people migrating due to climate change, a brief look at these categories shows that they are not exhaustive of climate migrants. As argued in the literature, the fact that "a proportion of those affected will fall outside the existing legal and normative framework" makes a significant case for global governance of climate change-related mobility (Koser, 2010, p. 311). While some climate migrants can fall into the categories of internally displaced persons, refugees, stateless persons, international migrants depending on their situations, some of them remain outside these categories.

The *United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, defines internally displaced persons as, although not as a legal category but only a definitive one:

> *"*persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made

> disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border"(*Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, 1998, p. 5).

Evidently, while migrants moving inside the borders of their countries due to natural or human-made disasters can be covered by this definition, people who have crossed borders fall outside this soft law framework, "which in any case is non-binding" (Koser, 2010, p. 311).

As already mentioned before, the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol do not cover displacement due to environmental factors but conflict situations. This legal definition may apply to some climate migrants if they flee due to lack of access to certain resources "for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion" (*Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1951, art. 1(A)(2)) . when the availability of these resources declines because of climate change Scholars also draw attention to the fact that the case-by-case basis lead in situations other than conflict situations might cause significant gaps in protection in case of a large-scale displacement due to climate change (Martin, 2010). Beyond the applicability in terms of legal definitions, many countries, which are shown and predicted to be among climate hotspots, mainly in the South and Southeast Asia (such as Bangladesh, Indonesia, India and Pakistan), are not even signatory states to 1951 Refugee Convention.

As there is the absence of international instruments addressing international migration of those affected from climate change, they hold the same human rights that are pertinent to other migrants in international law. Based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, they enjoy from the basic rights of

> "the right to life, liberty, and security, the right not to be held in slavery or servitude; the right not to be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment; the right not to be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention, or exile; freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state; the right to marry and to found a family; and the right to work, free choice of employment, and just and favorable conditions of work" (Martin, 2010, p. 404).

What is pertinent to the case of climate change-related mobility is that although Article 13 of UDHR states that "everyone has the right to leave any country, including

one's own, and to return to one's own country," the countries have no obligation to admit those people who left their own country. This gap strengthens the case for global governance of climate change-related mobility, especially for the low-lying states where internal migration may not be a viable option in the long-run due to sea level rise, severe flooding, erosion and salinity intrusion to groundwater.

Furthermore, as Helbling (2020) argues, since there is no category of environmental migrants, general immigration policies apply to those affected persons. Helbling's argument can also be extended to "climate migrants". With regards to the general immigration policies and migration flows, Helbling's study finds that "immigration policies matter and that more restrictive regulations indeed lead to lower migration inflows" (Helbling, 2020, p. 131). Although not explored empirically yet, it is expected intuitively that international migration options of climate migrants also depend on the extent to which the general immigration policies are restrictive or liberal across the world.

In the literature and policy circles, there have been several policy proposals to address the aforementioned governance gap. Perhaps the most vocal and contentious one is amending the 1951 Refugee Convention to include climate change and environmental degradation as valid grounds for international protection. This proposal has been harshly criticized by several scholars. Biermann and Boas (2010) underline that the inclusion of climate refugees in the 1951 Refugee Convention would cause competition between this new category and existing political refugees. Similarly, Keane (2003) argues that such an expansion may cause the devaluation of the current protection regime for political refugees. McAdam (2011b) criticizes that "climate refugees" do not necessarily face persecution in their own states but rather most of the time the state is eager but unable to provide protection. Yet another (but less rare) criticism is that this may hinder the efforts to solve the causes of displacement due to climate change (Falstrom, 2002).

Brought forward by Biermann and Boas (2010), another debated proposal is a new legal regime for "climate refugees" as a "Protocol on Recognition, Protection, and Resettlement of Climate Refugees". Again, McAdam (2011) notes that it is practically impossible to come up with a new treaty due to states' hesitations to ratify, implement, and enforce such a treaty. Evoking the skeptical approach discussed in the first section,

Geddes et al. (2012, p. 961) considers the identification of those people who will be protected as impossible because the decision to move is a multi-causal one. Geddes et al.'s criticism is also evocative of why a clear conceptualization is crucial.

Other proposals relate to the international climate change regime which encompasses the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement. Climate change-related mobility was first mentioned in the Cancun Adaptation Framework in paragraph 14(f) adopted at the Conference of the Parties (COP16). Paragraph 14(f) reads as follows:

> "14. Invites all Parties to enhance action on adaptation under the Cancun Adaptation Framework, taking into account their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, and specific national and regional development priorities, objectives and circumstances, by undertaking, inter alia, the following:
>
> ... (f) Measures to enhance understanding, coordination and cooperation with regard to climate change induced displacement, migration and planned relocation, where appropriate, at national, regional and international levels." (CAF, paragraph 14(f))

Underlining the significance of paragraph 14(f), Warner (2013, p. 779) argues that "[p]olicy spheres like the UNFCCC could be useful spaces for enhancing understanding, building dialogue, and facilitating regional cooperation and coordination at the policy and operational level around human migration, displacement and planned relocation." Contrary to such suggestions, Ramos (2013, p. 752) argues that "the UNFCCC – despite its focus on adaptation – has structural limitations to deal with the displacement due to climate change. [...] Its structure and institutions are not designed to meet the offset and the problems associated with it". Following CAF's reference to "climate change induced displacement, migration and planned relocation, the Paris Agreement included "migrants" in the Preamble of the Agreement in 2015 at the COP21.[3] While welcomed by both IOM and UNHCR, UNHCR later recommended that "the interpretation of the Preamble Reference to migrants should extend to the most vulnerable people on the move, including people forcibly displaced by the effects of climate change" (UNHCR, 2016a, p. 6).

[3] The Preamble reference reads: "Acknowledging that climate change is a common concern of humankind, parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity".

In December 2016, the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants had underlined the need to develop a comprehensive approach to human mobility and increase cooperation at the global level (UNGA, 2016). The resulting intergovernmental processes were the Global Compact for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration (GCM), and the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR) in 2018, which also provided venues to discuss human mobility in relation to climate change at the global level. IOM and UNHCR were appointed as the lead agencies of these negotiation processes, respectively. The GCM devoted a full subsection to the links between migration, natural disasters and the effects of climate change and environmental degradation (UN, 2018a). However, the terms refugees and displacement were not mentioned. An IOM commentary suggested that the ultimate aim is to make migration "a choice rather than a desperate necessity" (IOM, 2018b), which can be interpreted as an interest to "avoid any form of unwanted and unplanned movements due to environmental and climate change" (Geiger, 2020, p. 163). On the other hand, the outcome document of the GCR devoted less space to climate change. It only recognized that "climate, environmental degradation and natural disasters increasingly interact with the drivers of refugee movements" but underlined that they are "not in themselves causes of refugee movements" (UN, 2018b, p. 3). While consistent with UNHCR's avoidance of the term "climate refugees", the GCR did not establish a more direct link between climate change and displacement either. Overall, both the GCR and the GCM are non-binding, therefore, it remains a question whether their objectives translate into national and regional policies.

2.2.2 UNHCR and IOM as the primary actors in the emerging issue area

Unlike the refugee regime, which falls under the mandate of UNHCR, there is no equivalent international institution for those who cross the borders due to climate change at the global level. As opposed to the proposals mentioned in the previous section, some scholars underscore that "a dedicated international organization" should be established because "climate migration governance would require specialised expertise in migration, climate change, facilitation of international negotiations and management of international funds" (Mayer, 2012b, p. 42), while some others expected existing intergovernmental organizations are likely to fill this governance gap

(Simonelli, 2016). Geiger (2020) suggests that the main IOs responding to the claims were IOM, UNHCR, UNDP and UNEP.

Existing studies on IOs and climate change-related mobility mostly are either descriptive studies portraying their roles and reactions (e.g. Martin, 2010; Goodwin-Gill & McAdam, 2017; Fornalé & Doebbler, 2017; Geiger, 2020) or examine why they have started to engage with this emerging issue that is not under their original mandates (e.g. Hall, 2015). One early study, Karen McNamara's (2006) Ph.D. dissertation, questions the absence of institutionalized action on "environmental refugees" at the UN. Since IOM was not a UN agency at the time of her writing, McNamara focuses on UNEP and UNHCR as key actors that can potentially deal with "environmental refugees". Her study concludes that the interactions between discursive and institutional politics at the UN lie beneath the absence of policy. At the discursive level, the interviews with UN diplomats reveal two ways of constructing "environmental refugees": as "migrants" or as "internally displaced persons". This, she argues, enables the UN bodies to avoid engaging in the issue as the former portrays environment-related displacement as a voluntary action and the latter puts the responsibility on individual states. At the institutional level, most of the interviewees point out that "environmental refugees" are "not within their mandates" in order to legitimize the absence of policy within their institutions. Ironically, although this was the most common argument at that time, the UN bodies, including UNHCR who had been with one of the strictest stances with regards to the issue, eventually "moved beyond their mandates" (Hall, 2013).

Among the organizations that are engaging with climate change and human mobility, IOM is the most prominent one, claiming to be at the "forefront of operational, research, policy and advocacy efforts, seeking to bring environmental migration to the heart of international, regional and national concerns" (IOM, 2022a). Although its main domain is migration, IOM's work currently also extends to waste and water management, and greenhouse gas emission reduction, which normally falls under the mandate of UNDP and UNEP (Geiger, 2020, p. 160). IOM started its activities on the link between environmental and climate change and migration in 2007. It created Migration, Environment and Climate Change Division in 2015, the institutional change through which it has formalized IOM's engagement in the issue area. Its activities related to climate change-related mobility includes giving support in policy

development and implementation and incorporating environmental causes to migration management activities (Geiger, 2020). Consequently, as part of migration management activities, IOM works in border controls and restrictive measures such as voluntary assisted returns of irregular migrants and asylum seekers in relation to the climate change-related mobility. IOM follows the migration management approach for climate change-related mobility as well. Reflecting this, IOM lists its objectives in relation to migration, environment and climate change as:

- "To prevent forced migration that results from environmental factors to the extent possible;
- To provide assistance and protection to affected populations when forced migration does occur in situations of environmental and climate change, and to seek durable solutions to their situation;
- To facilitate migration in the context of climate change adaptation and enhance the resilience of affected communities" (IOM, 2022b).

Overall, IOM's approach follows the migration management logics. As the first objective implies, IOM's activities include restrictive measures to help states to prevent "unwelcome" migration flows (Geiger, 2020, p. 160). In that sense, the academic literature is mainly critical of that the IOM mostly does what member states and donors demand it to do (Geiger, 2020, p. 160; Pécoud, 2018).

UNHCR's stance is particularly relevant with regards to the demands on expanding the definition of refugees to encompass people forced to leave their habitual places due to environmental reasons (environmental or climate refugees). UNHCR, as the agency with the supervisory responsibility on the 1951 Refugee Convention, adamantly opposes such labels which do not have legal grounds. Rather than climate refugees, UNHCR prefers to refer to them as "persons displaced in the context of disasters and climate change". Furthermore, UNHCR mainly considers the phenomenon as an internal issue as exemplified by the following quote from their website: "Climate change affects people inside their own countries, and typically creates internal displacement before it reaches a level where it displaces people across borders" (UNHCR, 2022).

Interestingly, despite the opposition at the rhetorical level, UNHCR started to work "with regard to policy development and operational responses around the provision of

protection and assistance to persons displaced in disaster and climate change contexts" in the mid-1990s (UNHCR, 2017b, p. 5). Yet, the concerted engagement started with the then new High Commissioner, António Guterres, drawing attention to the effects of climate change in 2007. Guterres in the annual Executive Committee meeting of UNHCR stated that "[f]or each centimeter that the sea level will rise, there will be one million more displaced. The international community seems no more adept at dealing with those new causes than it is at preventing conflict and persecution. It is therefore important to examine the reasons, the scale, and the trends of present-day forced displacement" (Hall, 2015, p. 88). Alongside coming as a shock to the staff at the time, UNHCR donors and member states also showed displeasure with the organization's expansion of activities (Hall, 2015, p. 88).

UNHCR's 2017-2021 Strategic Directions also included topics relating to climate change and disaster displacement by pledging commitments to (1) "Protect" people in different regions of the world, including by "contributing to advancing legal, policy and practical solutions for the protection of people displaced by the effects of climate change and natural disasters" and (2) "Respond", including by "contributing to any inter-agency response to emergencies resulting from natural disasters, with a particular focus on providing protection leadership" (UNHCR, 2017f). In a nutshell, aligned with these commitments, UNHCR's work on climate change-related mobility are as follows:

- "Legal advice, guidance and the development of norms to support the enhanced protection of the rights of people displaced in the context of disasters and climate change,
- Promoting policy coherence to ensure that issues of disaster displacement are effectively mainstreamed across relevant areas,
- Research to fill gaps that underpin this operational and policy work,
- Field-based activities to address internal and cross-border disaster displacement; to reduce the environmental impact of refugee settlements and ensure sustainable responses to displacement; risk reduction activities and others which may contribute to efforts to avert, minimize and address displacement" (UNHCR, 2022).

As its original responsibility is to promote economic development, another interesting actor active in the area of climate change-related mobility is UNDP. UNDP started to work on environmental problems by the mid-2000s (Hall, 2016). Geiger

(2020, p. 161) associates this involvement to the organization's previous shift of focus to human development, which prioritizes individuals, by 1994. Frequently collaborating with IOM, UNDP is among the actors framing migration-development nexus and promoting the narrative of "managing migration for development" (Geiger, 2020, p. 162). Geiger (2020, p. 161) also remarks that "UNDP – and not UNEP – has become a leader in the area of environmental/climate change, and even the factual leader of climate action in the UN" and "an important migration agency". Unlike IOM and UNHCR, UNDP occasionally uses the term "climate refugees" as well.

Although it is expected for UNEP to be an actor in the climate change-related mobility works since it is "a clear leader on environmental and climate change-related discussions," Geiger notes that "it has as of yet not developed its own focal area on migration or forced displacement" (2020, p. 162). While the term "environmental refugees" was first used in 1985 in a UNEP publication, its involvement with the issue has remained limited. Although UNEP collaborates with UNDP, IOM and UNHCR regarding climate change-related mobility, essentially considering climate change-related mobility as one of the outcomes of climate change, it prefers to concentrate on the causes. Hence, its activities mostly relate to water and waste management or ecosystem protection, which are likely to drive and be affected by migration (Geiger, 2020, p.162).

Among these organizations, particularly UNHCR and IOM have gained prominence over the past 15 years in their operational engagement with climate change, migration and displacement. Both organizations autonomously engage with the issue although it is not covered by their original mandates (Hall, 2015). Previous literature has explained why and how they have expanded their mandates by focusing on the role of bureaucrats and substantive issue-linkages (Betts, 2010; Hall, 2016). After their initial engagements with climate change-related mobility, the level and the nature of their engagements have also varied. While IOM "has actively pursued financial and other resources in the climate change regime […] UNHCR was initially reluctant to link to climate change and did not seek climate financing" (Hall, 2015, p. 79). Previous research successfully explains this difference by looking at their organizational types (i.e. functional vs. normative IOs) (Hall, 2015). As it will be discussed further in detail

in Chapters 3, 4 and 7, this thesis builds on these findings by employing a new methodology and a new research focus (i.e. discourses).

As laid down earlier, they also adopt different discourses and promote different policy ideas, which this thesis aims to address. As suggested above, IOM epitomizes the "migration as adaptation" discourse, has been branding itself as one of the key actors in the area of climate change-related mobility, and within the migration management approach, it mainly aims minimizing forced migration and promotes facilitating labor migration (temporary or circular) to address climate change-related mobility. On the other hand, UNHCR is less aligned with this discourse (Nash, 2015). UNHCR also acknowledges the complementarity of this discourse (particularly in the joint statements with IOM as both organizations cooperates in some groups including the Advisory Group on Climate Change and Human Mobility and in disaster contexts as part of the Cluster Approach) (Nash, 2015, p. 204). The Advisory Group on Climate Change and Human Mobility, where both IOM and UNHCR took part, underlines that "close cooperation in framing and communicating issues surrounding human mobility in response to climate change is the most effective way to inform policy-making". While the Advisory Group's approaches in general align with "migration as adaptation" discourse, UNHCR's framing of the issue still puts greater emphasis on the protection needs of the "displaced" people and differentiates affected people from "migrants" and "refugees" (2014, p. 4). Therefore, UNHCR's discourse also differs from "climate refugees" in that it rejects that term (as the IO overseeing the 1951 Refugee Convention) and emphasizes the multicausality of migration. Yet, it also shows some similarities. For instance, UNHCR also pursues an advocacy agenda on the issue and emphasizes human security. It also makes linkages to its mandate by highlighting that "countries already experiencing conflict may be triply hit, rendering both the humanitarian needs and responses in such situations more complex" and that the protection needs of displaced people by climate change can be similar to other displaced people which fall under the UNHCR mandate (Nash, 2015, p. 205).

In brief, IOM and UNHCR has been engaging with climate change-related mobility in differing ways and promoting different policy ideas (detailed in Chapter 6 in terms of their nomination, predication and argumentation strategies). The next chapter provides

an overview of the IR literature explaining IO behavior and outlines the theoretical framework of this thesis.

Chapter 3: **DISCOURSE AND AGENCY IN THE STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Discourse can be understood as "a set of policy ideas and values" that speak to the "soundness and appropriateness of policy programmes" and "a process of interaction focused on policy formulation and communication" that serve to "generate and disseminate those policy ideas" (Schmidt & Radaelli, 2004, pp. 185, 193). This thesis aims to explain why IOM and UNHCR as two important IOs in the fields of migration and displacement have constructed their discourses on a new issue area (i.e. climate change-related mobility) in different ways, despite having a long history of cooperation, interacting with similar epistemic communities and having a similar list of member states and donors. Therefore, within the wider IR literature, this thesis speaks to the literature on how IOs produce and promote policy ideas. This chapter starts with an overview of the main treatments of IOs in the IR literature, evaluates their explanatory power for the present cases and concludes by outlining the theoretical framework of this thesis.

According to the core assumptions of the principal-agent theory, IOs are "agents" created by states (principals) in order to carry out certain tasks with limited autonomy again determined by states. IOs as agents take over the responsibility to provide expertise which would be too costly for the principals to perform on their own under normal circumstances (Hawkins et al., 2006). According to principal-agent theory, mandate change can occur if member states decide to delegate new powers to the IO, or if the IO engages in "agency slack", which is a situation that principals consider as a problem and try to avoid through control mechanisms such as imposing sanctions, appointing the staff or controlling the budget. While "ideas" are largely missing from the principal-agent theory, this theory would predict IO's framing of the new issues would align with the delegation and the interests of their member states. However, as outlined briefly in Chapter 2 and discussed more in detail in Chapters 5 and 6, UNHCR runs counter to the principal-agent theory, as it expanded its activities into the area of climate change without the support of member states and donors and has been explicitly challenging member states to develop protection mechanisms for the affected people.

Moreover, for both IOM and UNHCR, there was no unambiguous delegation from the states regarding climate change-related mobility, given the novelty of the concept as an issue area at the time of their initial engagement. Therefore, UNHCR and IOM had considerable room for interpretation in terms of how they can frame the issue and engage with it due to the lack of a clear delegation.

Neorealism, being a state-centric theory, considers IOs as powerless independent of member states since they hold no economic or military resources. For example, Mearsheimer (1994), argues that international institutions have little impact on states' behavior. And, unsurprisingly, neorealists maintain that IOs can only matter in terms of their use by the hegemons. Similarly, neoliberal institutionalism is also a state-centric theory, which does not ascribe any agency to the IOs independent of member states. Neorealist and neoliberal institutionalist approaches only differ in terms of the function they attribute to IOs. Using game theory, the latter consider IOs as spaces to achieve peace and security through influencing the incentives for cooperation (Keohane, 1982; Snidal, 1985). Similar to the principal-agent theory, neither IOM's nor UNHCR's pattern of engagement with climate change fits in the expectations of statist theories. More importantly, discourse and ideas are also largely missing from these statist theories on IOs, and therefore, they cannot provide a productive theoretical framework for answering the research question at hand.

The constructivist IR scholarship ascribes more autonomy to IOs beyond their principals' controls. While the principal-agent literature essentially focuses on the strategies through which principals control their agents, there is little focus on how agents sidestep these controls. The constructivist IR scholarship expect that IOs have more freedom when member states lack a clear and cohesive policy on an issue area (Barnett & Finnemore, 2004; McKittrick, 2008, p. 18). IOs are expected act more autonomously by for example, using their delegated, moral and expert authority and exploiting information asymmetries (McKittrick, 2008). In addition, knowledge, ideas and norms take a larger space in this strand of literature (see, for instance, the literature on norm entrepreneurs, norm diffusion, advocacy coalitions, epistemic communities). It is well-established why knowledge matters in the constructivist IR theory, which has been treating them as explanatory variables for long and underlining the importance IOs in producing and disseminating knowledge. In particular, one function of IOs is to

reduce uncertainty by producing knowledge and institutionalizing knowledge production practices (Rathbun, 2007). IOs construct knowledge by fixing categories and meanings, and also diffuse them (Barnett & Finnemore, 1999), along with the epistemic tools to construct them (Nay, 2014). The questions of how knowledge, norms and policy ideas are generated within IOs remain relatively underexplored (Bueger, 2015; Park, 2005). Even so, the constructivist treatments of IOs provide better entry-points to address the research questions at hand.

For instance, the literature on epistemic communities provides insights into explaining which discourses and policy ideas prevail at the IOs, particularly when they deal with uncertainty. Epistemic communities are defined as "networks of knowledge-based experts", which become particularly influential "in the face of uncertainty" since they hold the expert knowledge which political actors need to make policies to achieve their desired outcomes (Adler & Haas, 1992). This literature has been criticized for neglecting the construction and contestation of the scientific knowledge itself, and the conflicts between different expert communities in terms of which causal claims are made, how issues are defined, and which policy solutions are promoted (Epstein, 2008; Litfin, 1994; Pantzerhielm, Holzscheiter, & Bahr, 2020). As outlined in the previous chapter, climate change-related mobility has not only been highly uncertain and ambiguous as a new issue area for political actors but has also given rise to diverse epistemic communities that have constructed knowledge, causality and policy ideas in different ways. When answering the research questions of this thesis, epistemic communities literature (also when taking into account its critiques) would underline the role of epistemic communities whom a given IO interacts the most. This could have explained the differences between UNEP (as an environmental IO, interacting mostly with the alarmist coalition) and IOM (as a migration agency, interacting mostly with the minimalist coalition which consists of migration scholars). In the cases of UNHCR and IOM, the role of epistemic communities is undeniable in how both of them define the issue and inform their policy ideas. In this sense, while providing important insights, it falls short of explaining why their dominant discourses still differ despite interacting with the similar (almost identical) expert groups. This implies that IOM and UNHCR were selective when consuming the expert knowledge. In this respect, it becomes crucial to bring in more institutional and context-specific explanations for the purposes of this thesis.

According to Helfer, constructivist treatments of IOs include a group of related theories within historical institutionalism, including sociological and constructivist institutionalisms and organization theory (which are also known as "new institutionalisms), which "share a basic premise that political action is shaped and constrained over time by historically constructed institutions that exhibit surprising durability notwithstanding changes in their economic or political environment or shifts in actors' preferences" (Helfer, 2006, p. 658).[4] New institutionalists underline that "discourse is always situated in broader institutional contexts, with institutions and culture framing the discourse, defining the repertoire of acceptable (and expectable) actions" (Schmidt & Radaelli, 2004, p. 193). Therefore, it should be considered in terms of "the rules that frame ideas and discourse in different political-institutional settings" (Schmidt & Radaelli, 2004). The institutional context is composed of a "vast range of rules – formal and informal, laws as well as social and political norms and conventions – that set actors' common frame of reference and help shape not only actors' perceptions and preferences, but also their modes of interaction" (Schmidt & Radaelli, 2004, p. 198).

For instance, avoiding state-centric explanations, Barnett and Finnemore (1999) argue that IOs have separate bureaucratic cultures shaping their outlook and therefore are relatively autonomous. Accordingly, they claim that IOs expand their activities to new issue areas beyond their mandates "when there is a rational argument that resonates within their field of expert authority" (Hall, 2013, p. 95). Littoz-Monnet (2017) argues that "when international bureaucrats expand into issue domains that are closely connected to their mandate and sphere of expert authority, they hold the expert knowledge they need to perform their new tasks internally". Climate migration and displacement can also be considered as an issue area which is closely connected to both UNHCR's and IOM's spheres of expert authority. Previous research has shown that UNHCR, IOM and UNDP's staff perception of issue-linkages between climate change and their core issue areas have impacted their expansion (Betts, 2010; Hall, 2016). Therefore, one potential explanation for differences in their discourses is their distinct bureaucratic cultures.

[4] Helfer considers sociological institutionalism, constructivist institutionalism and organization theory as variants of historical institutionalism. While sociological, constructivist and historical institutionalism also have their distinct features, many scholars consider their differences to be a matter of emphasis (From, 2002, p. 225; Hay, 2008, p. 62; Natorski, 2015, p. 6).

Unlike the principal-agent theory where IOs are merely considered as "responsive to state demands to avoid losing their support" (Heldt, Mello, Novoselova, & Ramon Serrano Oswald, 2022), constructivist institutionalists underline the role of agency in change and building policy ideas. Historical institutionalists emphasize structural factors that regulate the role of agency and the policy process (Mahoney & Thelen, 2009; Streeck & Thelen, 2005 quoted in Natorski, 2015). A number of exogenous and endogenous sources of change are central to HI, including *critical juncture*, *path dependence* and *policy entrepreneurs*. For instance, in the case of UNHCR, the expansion to the area of climate change-related mobility has come about after the new High Commissioner Antonio Guterres who personally considered the issue of high importance, which shows the role of policy entrepreneurs in IO change highlighted by both CI and HI. Yet, the nature of change and the subsequent engagement have been shaped by the institutional context (e.g. its protection mandate, higher autonomy, its logic of behavior as a normative IO).

Another key concept in HI is *policy inheritance*, which underlines that policies are "not made in a vacuum" but "built on previous policy decisions" (Jones & Baumgartner, 2007, p. 49). Therefore, even when IOs change, there is still a limited room for agents to depart from the previous patterns of engagement. Similarly, Natorski (2015), by drawing on constructivist and historical institutionalisms, argues that actors seek *epistemic coherence* in the face of uncertainty and crisis. Epistemic coherence is "an intersubjective standard for assessing epistemic validity in a given institutional context constructed in opposition to other possible epistemic dispositions" (p.5). As an institutional feature, it creates both opportunities and boundaries for actors when deliberating policies. In the context of uncertainty, information can be ordered and simplified by using different epistemic tools, which can include metaphors, narratives, legal texts, or economic models (Natorski, 2015, p. 4). Such epistemic tools aim at creating coherence, which is associated with simplicity (p.5). Therefore, as it helps reducing the anxiety of uncertainty, agents seek coherence. In addition, since epistemic coherence is a form of social convention and an institutional standard shared by the agents of an institution, it helps legitimizing policy ideas. Epistemic coherence helps agents understand a phenomenon (even when it challenges existing categories and definitions) and guide their responses to it. If the interpretation of the uncertain

phenomenon can be framed based on "existing epistemic schemes of coherence", actors maintain the policy coherence (p.17).

Overall, the concepts of path dependency, epistemic coherence and policy inheritances can help explaining why UNHCR and IOM have constructed their discourses on climate change-related mobility in ways that do not dramatically diverge from their previous discourses on migration and displacement. For instance, UNHCR attributes limited agency to the affected people by climate change in the same way it has been doing for other groups of displaced persons. Similarly, IOM has maintained coherence by only expanding its migration management to the context of climate change.

In short, new institutionalist treatments of IOs suggest that institutional settings outline actors' deliberation on policy ideas and their capacity to act. Existing institutions are the space for policy deliberation, but they interact with agents and are not necessarily deterministic (Bell, 2011; Hay & Wincott, 1998 quoted in Natorski, 2015). Agents, when generating ideas, face institutions, which are "relatively enduring features of political and social life (rules, norms, procedures) that structure behaviour' (Mahoney & Thelen, 2009, p.4 quoted in Natorski, 2015, p.8). This view, thus, underlines the role of endogenous factors in creating resistance to a dramatic change when engaging with a new issue area and creating policy ideas to address it. Indeed, one of the strengths of HI is that it anticipates change in IOs and considers various sources of change and their interactions when explaining how IOs adapt, transform or stagnate. Historical institutionalist treatments of IOs find that while some IOs are resistant to change, others are more proactive and seek to expand their tasks. However, HI's focus on historical contingencies and context also limit its "predictive power", "making it difficult to isolate the causal contribution of any single explanatory variable and limiting the prescriptions the theory offers for analyzing other organizations in different contexts" (Helfer, 2006).

Providing a stronger predictive power, Hall (2013) categorizes IOs under two ideal types as "normative" and "functional" IOs by distinguishing their core attributes and behavioral patterns. Normative organizations have a specific mandate to oversee and supervise norms in an international law regime and are firmly committed to their core mandate (such as the International Labor Organization, holding supervisory authority on

international labor conventions, and UNHCR, on the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1961 Statelessness Convention). They hold "moral legitimacy" over the regime they supervise and their behavioral logic is "logic of appropriateness". For moral legitimacy, the universal welfare is above the interests of particular constituents, and a normative IO's moral legitimacy is mostly limited to the international convention that they oversee. Therefore, normative IOs need to "seek ongoing acceptance that the issues and activities they pursue fall within the scope of their moral legitimacy" (Hall, 2013, p. 94). Therefore, unless new issues cannot be substantively and meaningfully linked to their mandates, normative organizations do not expand their activities. Functional organizations, on the other hand, exist to carry out specific tasks, operate mainly based on projects and seek to expand financing opportunities and affirm their relevance by maintaining and generating "pragmatic legitimacy". IOM classifies in this category as it was established to provide migration transportation service and holds no supervisory authority in the international migration law. Functional organizations seek to prove pragmatic legitimacy and demonstrate to their constituents/donors that they merit the funding by proficiently delivering on their tasks. Therefore, Hall argues that functional organizations tend to "bandwagon" to engage with another regime if they can attract resources from more donors. This typology also covers factors relating to the organization culture. While "normative organizations select staff for their expertise, knowledge, and commitment to the core issue area they govern, […] functional organizations hire staff for their expertise to deliver a specific project, and so staff they are not necessarily attached to an underlying (normative) organizational mission" (Hall, 2015, p. 82). Briefly, since it provides a clear operationalization and of IOM and UNHCR's diverse institutional features and behavioral patterns (thus, serves almost as a summary of the institutional contexts), Hall's IO typology also proves useful when studying the impact of their institutional contexts on their discourses.

Overall, drawing on new institutionalist treatments of IOs, this thesis firstly highlights the uncertainty and ambiguity surrounding the new issue area of climate change-related mobility as factors that give IOM and UNHCR (as well as other policy actors) a wide room for discursive differences in the first place. Then, it emphasizes the role of institutional features to explain the differences in IOM and UNHCR's nomination, predication and argumentation strategies on climate change-related mobility. Given the various possible reasons for difference, the discussion is limited to a

number of institutional factors, namely organizational type (subsuming various institutional factors such as mandate and logics of behavior) and degree of autonomy (see Chapter 7 for a detailed discussion of the findings), which were chosen based on the literature review of IOM and UNHCR's origins, evolution and engagement in the climate change regime. However, since organizational type and degree of autonomy cannot fully explain the details of specific discursive strategies, this thesis also refers to HI and CI's concepts of path dependency, epistemic coherence and policy inheritances to better contextualize the discourses in their political settings. The next chapter lays out the details of the research design.

Chapter 4: **RESEARCH DESIGN**

4.1 Case selection

In this research, a qualitative, comparative small-N research design is adopted since the research questions specifically aims to investigate and explain the variation in UNHCR and IOM's understandings of the link between climate change and human mobility. In comparative migration research designs, UNHCR and IOM are two organizations that are often compared at cross-meso levels (Mencütek, 2020, p. 14), particularly with regards to their evolving cooperation and competition within the migration and refugee regime complexes. While previously the scholarly interest in IOM has been scarce, comparative IO research started to examine IOM in recent years, particularly by comparing it to UNHCR (Geiger & Pécoud, 2020, p. 77). Yet, on climate-migration nexus, the scholarly interest in comparing how these two organizations conceptually shape the emerging issue area remains further limited.

Being the largest, well-established and experienced bodies in the fields of migration, displacement and refugees, UNHCR and IOM have been identified as the top two organizations with relevant expertise and authority in the emerging issue area of climate migration and displacement. Both organizations were established in a similar political context in the aftermath of World War II, with headquarters in Geneva. Therefore, they are not isolated from one another (e.g. unlike the case of UNEP headquartered in Nairobi Ivanova, 2010) and coexist in the same "ecosystem" characterized by spatial and temporal proximity, which potentially leads them to socialize more, share a labor pool and infrastructures and have common spaces and

shared calendars (Dairon & Badache, 2021). While IOM was not part of the UN system until becoming a "related agency" in 2016, the UN-IOM relationship had always been close to the point where IOM was already considered "de facto […] a UN agency" (Bradley, 2021, p. 269). In addition, both UNHCR and IOM are financed by voluntary contributions by states and donors such as the European Union, therefore vulnerable to donor influence (Patz & Thorvaldsdottir, 2020, p. 77). Previous studies have documented the donor influence, predominantly that of the United States, over both organizations (Betts, Loescher, & Milner, 2012; Georgi, 2019).

On the other hand, there are significant differences that potentially impact the way in which these agencies engage in new issue areas. Most notably, UNHCR is a normative organization and operates on a refugee mandate with relatively more autonomy, while IOM is rather a functional organization and has no strict mandate but operates in the field of migration, a field that interacts highly with that of UNHCR (Hall, 2015). Given their long history of cooperation and competition in the displacement and migration regimes, coupling IOM and UNHCR presents a unique case. A comparative analysis of UNHCR and IOM's conceptualization efforts in an emerging issue area contributes to the literature on IO behavior and regime complexity.

While internal validity is relatively ensured with small-N study where the core cases are UNHCR and the IOM, external validity remains insufficient. To increase the external validity of the study, small-N qualitative research deploys case illustrations, larger-N analysis or shadow case studies to evaluate the validity of their findings based on the core case study (Soifer, 2020, pp. 10-11). Since these options were not feasible for the purposes of this thesis given the time and labor constraints, external validity remains a limitation of this thesis. However, within-case variation over time, meaning how each organization's approach changes over time, provides a way to increase the inferential power.

4.2 Methodology

This thesis utilizes Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as its primary method, and content analysis as a complementary method to examine the discourses used by UNHCR and IOM. This section first introduces CDA and gives a discussion of its

strengths and limitations. Next, it provides a more detailed account of the methodological choices in this thesis and justify them.

CDA is both a theory and a method of discourse analysis. In this thesis, CDA is utilized as a methodological guideline to identify UNHCR and IOM's discourses on climate change-related mobility. Ontologically, CDA is based on a critical realist position, which is partially socially constructivist but refuses the reduction of the 'social' to discourse (Fairclough, 2005). It holds a dualist nature in terms of epistemology by prioritizing the analysis of relations between agency (process and events) and structure in the study of discourses (Fairclough, 2005). It assumes that power structures are implicitly communicated in discourses and that discursive practices contribute to "the constitution of the social world, including social identities and relations" (Aydin-Düzgit & Rumelili, 2019, p. 292).

Fairclough, who is one of the prominent scholars developing the CDA approach, views discourses in its Foucauldian sense as "elements of social practices" (Fairclough, 2005, p. 916). By the same token, discourse analysis investigates "relations between discourse and other elements of the social, and it analyses relations between linguistic/semiotic elements of social events and linguistic/semiotic facets of social structures and social practices, including discourses (Fairclough, 2005, p. 916). On the issue of causality, Fairclough identifies two sets of causal powers shaping texts: social structures and social practices, and social agents (Fairclough, 2003, p. 22). Yet, it is not a simple or direct causality that would imply predictability of outcomes. Social structures, i.e. economic structure or language, can be thought of as "defining a potential, a set of possibilities" (Fairclough, 2003, p. 23). In other words, certain possibilities are defined within the structure, while others are precluded. Between the potential set of outcomes and the eventual one, or in other words, between structures and events, are mediating entities called social practices. Finally, social agents are not entirely free as they are socially constrained. However, their actions are not reducible to their social constraints. As agents, they also have their own causal powers, which can be independent of the causal powers of social structures and practices. Overall, as the dialectic relationship between structure and agency is common in CDA and new institutionalisms outlined in Chapter 3, CDA offers a compatible methodological

guideline to study IO discourse and help studying the interactions between discursive and non-discursive domains.

4.2.1 CDA techniques

Broadly speaking, text analysis in CDA comprises three stages: description, interpretation, and explanation. At the first stage, the researcher breaks down the text into sentences or propositions and categorizes them while defining the links between them. At the second stage, the researcher interprets the text by making assumptions about the details. Here, the situational context and the intertextual context hold utmost importance. And finally, for the explanation step, the researcher evaluates the findings by considering the social context of the texts and their constitutive effects. In the description part, I make use of the following discursive strategies in critically analyzing the selected texts in tandem with NVIVO-assisted content analysis[5]: nomination, agency and predication, and argumentation (based on Reisigl & Wodak, 2001).

- **Nomination:** How are climate migrants named and referred to linguistically?
- **Agency and predication:** What characteristics, qualities, and features are attributed to them? In terms of agency, are they represented as agents or passive subjects?
- **Argumentation:** How does the text establish the link between climate change and human mobility (i.e. direct vs. indirect, voluntary vs. forced, internal vs. cross-border, minimal vs. alarmist)? What are the policy positions concerning climate change-related mobility?[6] By means of which arguments and argumentation schemes does the text justify and legitimize the policy positions? Which strategies of legitimation are used? What images and metaphors are employed to bear the perspective out? How is the future projected?

[5] Keywords and phrases that support different discursive strategies are searched in texts in order to capture frequencies and changes over time.

4.2.2 Sampling of the primary sources

The sampling procedure was multi-step. Firstly, all the official declarations, policy briefs, annual reports, brochures/info sheets, books, journals, research reports, press releases, and speeches produced by the selected organizations on climate change-related mobility were listed. This was done by browsing the relevant sections of the official websites of the organizations (such as publications, resources, sections directly reserved for climate change or human mobility) and utilizing the search functions within the websites by using various keywords to ensure all the relevant documents were obtained. This procedure gave over 200 documents in total. The next step was to eliminate the ones that do not reflect the official views of the organizations by checking whether the documents contain a note such as "opinions expressed in the chapters of this book by named contributors are those expressed by the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IOM". This process finalized the main corpus of this study containing 88 primary sources from UNHCR and IOM (see Appendix A, which also notes the organization name, publication title, year, document type, and target audiences[7]). These sources are subjected to NVIVO-assisted content analysis to identify which keywords prevail regarding the climate change-migration nexus and are analyzed via CDA.

The decision to use content analysis as a complementary method is based on the arguments in the literature that "computer-assisted content analysis can be a good complement to discourse analysis in identifying the relevant texts, the frequency of certain keywords in greater samples of texts, and patterns of change across different bodies of texts and across time" (Bennett, 2015, cited in Aydin-Düzgit & Rumelili, 2019, p. 294). As discussed in the background chapter, preliminary analysis of policy documents of the IOs working on climate change-related mobility has shown that there is a wide variety of terms and discourses to refer to this phenomenon, all of which hold differing implications. In this thesis, computer-assisted content analysis is specifically useful in identifying which keywords prevail in which texts and among organizations and their temporal variations. However, content analysis by itself would not give direct

[7] For the target audience, I list three categories: political actors, experts, and the public. It is identified based on the purposes of the publication and their potential reach. For example, if the document is for a COP meeting of the UNFCCC in the negotiation process, its audience is coded as political actors. Brochures and info sheets that are mostly for wider circulation are coded as public. Finally, publications such as research reports are coded as experts.

answers to the research questions at hand because words gain meaning within their context. Rather, it helps me pose certain questions that are particularly valuable in *critical* analysis part, such as whether or why the nomination strategies matters, which certain social practices are rendered possible by terminological choices, and which ones are excluded.

Since discourse analysis is a qualitative, labor- and time-intensive method, in most cases it is not possible for the researcher to analyze all types of relevant texts (i.e. declarations, interviews, official speeches, parliamentary debates, etc.). Therefore, the researcher selects among them and justifies the selection according to the research question. The question of sampling is a point of criticism frequently directed at discourse analysis in terms of its implications for reliability and validity. While the analysis of *typical texts* is one of the most common tactics, it is open to criticism as the definition of "typical" can be easily questioned and contested (Aydin-Düzgit & Rumelili, 2019, p. 300). As already mentioned before, one way to overcome this limitation is to continue to analyze texts up to a saturation point, i.e. where no novel finding is obtained (Aydin-Düzgit & Rumelili, 2019, p. 301). In this thesis, the majority of the documents in Appendix A were examined via CDA in detail (by paying regard to a balance in terms of their publication years and target audiences) until a saturation point was reached in the findings. The rest of the documents were read in light of the initial findings. The saturation point was considered to be met when no new categories that add a conceptual depth to the existing findings emerged (see, for instance, Nelson, 2017) regarding the aforementioned questions regarding nomination, predication and argumentation.

4.2.3 Methodological limitations

The most important criticism against CDA relates to the issue of objectivity. CDA does not offer a strictly defined methodology for data collection and analysis. What CDA provides for data analysis are some linguistic methods to enable an empirical analysis of relations between discourse and the social world (Aydin-Düzgit & Rumelili, 2019, p. 292). Data collection and analysis procedures are conventionally shaped by the researcher according to research questions and relevant data at hand. On top of it being a 'critical' approach per se, this implicates a potential subjectivity on part of the researcher (Brusylovska, 2020). Indeed, CDA does not presuppose full objectivity of

the researcher; rather the researcher is "entrusted with the task of revealing social mechanisms of oppression, domination, and exclusion through discourse from a critical perspective, provided that s/he is guided by theoretical premises, systematic analysis, and constant self-reflection during the course of the research" (Aydin-Düzgit & Rumelili, 2019, p. 301). While this potential subjectivity has received criticism, some hold the view that the researcher's direct analysis of data is a strength on the part of CDA (Brusylovska, 2020 para. 8).

Another limitation relates to the generalizability of the findings and the representativeness of the samples. Since CDA requires a time-consuming process in defining and interpreting the data, it does not allow for the analysis of large amounts of texts. Nevertheless, this limitation can be partly overcome by employing complementary methods (i.e. computer-assisted content analysis, Bennett, 2015) or by triangulating the analysis. In addition, another way to overcome this limitation in discourse analyses is to analyze additional texts after the primary findings up to a "saturation point" until no new findings emerge (Aydin-Düzgit & Rumelili, 2019, p. 301).

In the context of this study, causal inference constitutes the main limitation. As discussed above, CDA is not an ambitious method in exploring causal links since it holds a dialectical view of discursive and non-discursive domains which are in interaction. For the purposes of this research, while the discursive domain includes UNHCR and IOM's publications, media and speeches on climate change-related mobility, the non-discursive domain mainly includes their institutional features, the wider sociopolitical context in which they operate, and their policy practices through which they maintain or challenge power imbalances. The main reason for choosing CDA is that the research question centers on and problematizes the lack of a cohesive understanding of climate change-related mobility, rather than investigating the existence or the magnitude of this phenomenon. Given that, a poststructuralist approach has stood out as a better candidate to examine the discourses about the link between climate change and human mobility. Compared to poststructuralist approaches, CDA relaxes their strict assumptions regarding lack of agency and intentionality. As discussed above, in CDA, discourses have a constant dialectical relationship with the non-discursive social reality (i.e. institutions; power relations) (Aydin-Düzgit & Rumelili, 2019, p.

292). Thus, it also accounts for the constructive effects of non-discursive practices in the social reality. Accordingly, as Farrelly (2010, p. 99) argues, CDA's main contribution to political studies has been that "it offers a general theoretical perspective on discourse which recognises the constitutive potential of discourse within and across social practices without reducing social practices to their discursive aspect". Therefore, examining the constitutive effects of discursive practices via CDA offers a way to unfold what factors prevent IOM and UNHCR from developing a common understanding of climate change-related mobility.

Before reporting the findings of CDA in Chapter 6, the next chapter focuses on the non-discursive aspects of UNHCR and IOM by describing their institutional contexts in terms of their evolution, mandate, degrees of autonomy and organizational type and summarizes how their engagement with climate change has started. By doing so, Chapter 5 will lay the groundwork for the interpretation of how UNHCR and IOM's institutional contexts and discourses interact.

Chapter 5: **INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXTS OF UNHCR AND IOM**

5.1 UNHCR's evolution, mandate, autonomy and organizational type

The office of the UNHCR was created as a multilateral and intergovernmental institution and replaced the International Refugee Organization through the UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution 319 (IV) of 3 December 1949. UNHCR was designed by Member States to be a functional IO with limited authority and autonomy, yet it has found ways to overcome these obstacles to a large extent (McKittrick, 2008) and also evolved into becoming a normative IO after 1951.

The first constraints for UNHCR were its temporary mandate and funding structure. Accordingly, UNHCR was originally formed to help the displaced Europeans during the world war and those who fled Eastern Europe. It was supposed to disband in three years after completing their work in 1952. However, proving its usefulness, UNHCR continued to operate. Resolution 319 (IV) arguably reflected the concerns of the United States with regards to funding and its wish for a temporary non-operational organization of "non-political character" (Elie, 2010, p. 347), despite the inherently political nature of its operations. According to the founding resolution, UNHCR was not allowed to

undertake operational activities, but rather it was supposed to provide solutions only "by assisting Governments and, subject to the approval of the Governments concerned, private organizations" (Elie, 2010, p. 348). In addition, UNHCR was financially dependent on the administrative budget allocated by the UNGA and "a small 'emergency fund' to which the United States made no contributions at all until 1955" (Elie, 2010, p. 348). It also had no right to appeal to the governments for additional funds without the authorization by the UNGA. As another mechanism that aimed to restrain UNHCR's autonomy, the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme (ExCom) was created in 1958 with the tasks of approving UNHCR's programme budgets, reviewing the issues relating to international refugee protection and advising UNHCR regarding its internal affairs.

Despite originally being created as a functional IO in 1949, UNHCR has become a normative organization in 1951. In 1951, States signed the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which constitutes the fundamentals of international refugee law. UNHCR was given the responsibility to supervise the convention. Article 35 of the 1951 Refugee Convention reads that "[t]he Contracting States undertake to co-operate with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees […] in the exercise of its functions, and shall in particular facilitate its duty of supervising the application of the provisions of this Convention". The 1951 Refugee Convention also spelled out the definition and the rights of refugees. UNHCR's original mandate thus covered the Convention refugees who were narrowly defined by Article 1 paragraph 2 as someone who:

> "[a]s a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it."

In addition to the temporal dimension that limits the definition of refugee to persons displaced "as a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951", the 1951 Refugee Convention has given states parties the option to limit their obligations to refugees from Europe only. However, this narrow original mandate has been expanded

in terms of its scope on several occasions to cover returnees, stateless persons, and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

There are five key turning points in which UNHCR has expanded its mandate: "1. prolonging its existence (1952-56); 2. geographical expansion (1957-67); 3. becoming a humanitarian relief agency (1990-2000); 4. assuming responsibility for IDP protection (1998-2006); and 5. protecting victims of natural disaster (2007-11)" (Betts, 2012, p. 119). For instance, the 1967 Additional Protocol removed the temporal and geographical limitations on the definition of refugees, making the 1951 Refugee Convention universally applicable (UNGA, 1967). Although IDPs normally fall under the state jurisdiction, UNHCR has also been involved in certain internal displacement situations as it has been asked by States to use its expertise in humanitarian assistance to help the internally displaced people due to conflict. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to argue that its mandates for IDPs and for refugees are on equal footing. Hall (2013, p. 97) argues that UNHCR's IDP activities are "additional "add-ons" or "extra-mandates" that must not detract from or dilute the agency's core mandate for refugees" because its mandate for IDP is "not based on an international convention but on consent from states". Nevertheless, UNHCR's overall change exemplify that it holds a considerable degree of autonomy as an agency. Given that the change has sometimes occurred in the absence of its core donors' demands or sometimes even in spite of core donor states' explicit opposition, the case of UNHCR cannot be fully interpreted by the principal-agent theory (Betts, 2012).

In addition to its scope getting larger, UNHCR has also expanded in terms of its size, budget, and spread. By the end of 1953, the staff comprised 99 people. The staff increase was only marginally in the following years. For instance, in 1965 this number totaled 271 (Elie, 2010, p. 348). According to recent records, UNHCR has more than 17,000 staff operating in 135 countries. Regarding the spread of their operations, UNHCR operations stayed restricted to Europe until the 1960s. However, during the 1960s, the decolonization in Africa has led to refugee crises in the continent. In the following decades, UNHCR has gradually started to operate in South East Asia, Latin America, and later the Middle East, and today it operates globally. Its budget, which was US$300,000 when it was first established, grew substantially to US$3 billion in 2010 and to US$8.6 billion in 2019. According to Elie (2010, p. 349), this substantial

change in UNHCR's size and operations came about only towards the end of 1970s. At present, UNHCR still has an annual budget, which, unlike most UN agencies', predominantly relies on voluntary contributions from governments, the European Union, individuals and the private sector. For instance, contributions from UN Regular Budget made up only 1% of UNHCR's budget for 2021. UNHCR has also recently developed four pillars (i.e. refugee programme, stateless programme, reintegration projects and IDP projects). Based on needs assessment for each pillar, the expenditure and budget required for the following year are published in UNHCR's Global Appeal report.

As its funding structure and the restrictions originally placed on its operational activities illustrate, Member States deliberately created several mechanisms to limit UNHCR's authority and autonomy, yet the agency has proved to overcome much of these constraints (Betts, 2012; McKittrick, 2008). McKittrick (2008) argues that UNHCR was able to define its own role, become "the lead humanitarian agency" and create an autonomous space for itself by using "strategies of autonomy", such as the exploitation of information asymmetries and sources of authority. UNHCR, first and foremost, uses its *delegated authority* from its principals; second, it makes use of its *moral authority* due to "its role as guardian and diffuser of international refugee law and standards"; and finally, it leverages its *expert authority* based on "its extensive specialised knowledge of and experience with refugee movements and refugee law and related issues" (McKittrick, 2008, p. 16).

Overall, given its supervisory authority over the 1951 Refugee Convention, UNHCR holds a considerable degree of moral authority and, as a normative IO, it selects its staff for their expertise and commitment to the refugee issue area (Hall, 2013). In addition, UNHCR is "an individual, represented in the High Commissioner, and a bureaucracy, with its own distinctive culture and value system" (Loescher et al. 2008, p. 74, quoted in McKittrick, 2008). The leadership in UNHCR comprises various functions, including diplomatic, legal, programmatic and public relations functions, which are usually fulfilled based on the information produced by the agency itself (McKittrick, 2008, p. 14). Therefore, the literature on UNHCR underlines the importance of leadership in UNHCR in terms of its influence on increasing the agency's autonomy, responding to the changing structural environment and shaping the direction

of its work. For instance, Betts (2012) argues that "[c]ounterfactually, without the role of particular high commissioners, the specific changes that took place would not have occurred in the way that they did" (p. 137).

5.1.1 UNHCR's expansion to the issue area of climate change-related mobility

UNHCR's concerted engagement with the issue of climate change has not come about until the leadership of Antonio Guterres as High Commissioner (2005-2015), though some previous work was done in the mid-1990s. Previous study has shown that the UNHCR staff was particularly reluctant in engaging in the "climate refugees" or "environmental refugees" debate before 2007 as they did not consider it to be within their mandate (McNamara, 2007). A former manager with UNHCR expressed: "If you mention this kind of issue in UNHCR, a lot of people will sigh and won't want to discuss it with you... The first and standard UNHCR response is we don't deal with such things as an environmental refugee…" (McNamara, 2007, p. 19). However, in the annual ExCom meeting in 2007, the then new High Commissioner Guterres stated:

> "For each centimeter that the sea level will rise, there will be one million more displaced. The international community seems no more adept at dealing with those new causes than it is at preventing conflict and persecution. It is therefore important to examine the reasons, the scale, and the trends of present-day forced displacement" (McAdam, 2011a, p. 7).

This statement which framed climate change as a driver of displacement came as a shock to both Member States and UNHCR staff; many donors expressed their concerns with UNHCR's expansion to a new issue area and demanded return to the core mandate. UNHCR's initial engagement has thus begun in the face of considerable opposition from Member States and the staff.

In 2008, Guterres formed a task force with staff from different divisions in order to develop the organization's position on climate change. In the following year, UNHCR published its first policy paper about climate change and displacement. The paper emphasized the reservations on terminology of environmental/climate refugees which has no legal basis in international refugee law (UNHCR, 2009, p. 8). It also highlighted that this terminology "could potentially undermine the international legal regime for the protection of refugees whose rights and obligations are quite clearly defined and understood" (UNHCR, 2009, p. 8). Overall, while UNHCR's first policy paper on this

issue was protective of its core refugee mandate and Member States have expressed their opposition, UNHCR has gradually expanded its work in the field by taking on "a de facto role in responding to several natural disasters" (Betts, 2012). In 2012, UNHCR established its first Climate Change and Disaster Displacement unit, which has been dedicated to work on environmental issues, publish reports and guidelines and contribute to intergovernmental initiatives on these issues and has an operational branch working on climate adaptation and capacity building.

5.2 IOM's evolution, mandate, autonomy and organizational type

IOM was created in 1951 under the name of the Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movements of Migrants from Europe (PICMME). It became a UN-related organization only in 2016, although the UN-IOM relationship had always been close and it was already considered "de facto […] a UN agency" (Bradley, 2021, p. 269). Similar to UNHCR, IOM's operations had started in the European context with a specific purpose, which is to address the perceived "overpopulation" concern as a threat to post-war Europe's recovery (Pécoud, 2018). IOM was also supposed to be dismantled once it addressed this issue. In addition, as the founding states were jealous of their sovereign rights regarding migration controls, IOM's initial activities were restricted to the logistical organization of labor immigration of Europeans to other continents, specifically regions that were considered "underpopulated" like Latin America.

Throughout its institutional history, IOM had been renamed three times (Pécoud, 2018, pp. 1623-1624). The original name, PICMME, was replaced by "the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration" a few months after its foundation. In 1980, it was renamed as "Intergovernmental Committee for Migration". Finally, in 1989 it received its current name "the International Organisation for Migration". According to Pécoud, these changes reflect "a troubled and ambivalent history" in intergovernmental organizations, meaning "while there has never been a consolidated international regime for the politics of migration, history shows that migration has long been on IOs' agenda" (Pécoud, 2018, p. 1624).

IOM rather has a technical mandate, which does not explicitly entail the protection of migrants' rights. However, it would be wrong to say that IOM is not a politicized

organization. Quite the opposite, IOM was strongly associated with the United States leadership and its membership was relatively homogeneous, consisting of capitalist Western states. In the Cold War context, the membership was limited by its Constitution to countries supporting "free movement", which meant that the Soviet Union and its allies preventing free emigration were excluded. Another set of countries that were excluded was newly independent countries. Parsanoglou (2015) remarks that the United States was skeptical of UNHCR which was mainly concerned about human rights protection. Hence, unlike UNHCR, IOM's mandate has been rather technical, and it was meant to be "the UNHCR's operational, United States-controlled counterpart" (Parsanoglou, 2015, p. 64).

Although IOM was embedded in a specific political context at the beginning and its activities were limited, similar to UNHCR, it has also grown considerably since its inception in terms of size, budget, Member States, scope and spread. Some examples of its activities include assistance to displaced persons both internally and cross-borders, advising governments in migration policies, facilitating interstate discussions on migration issues; implementing aspects of migration policy that States subcontract to IOM (e.g. readmission of migrants through return migration, anti-trafficking measures or labor migration); training of all types of actors such as state officials, media, non-governmental organizations (NGOs); or collect and publish information on migration (IOM, 2022c). IOM states its works as: "to help ensure the orderly and humane management of migration to promote international cooperation on migration issues, to assist in the search for practical solutions to migration problems and to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants in need, including refugees and internally displaced people" (IOM, 2022c). It legitimizes this work by referring to its Constitution which gives "explicit recognition to the link between migration and economic, social and cultural development, as well as to the right of freedom of movement of persons" (IOM, 2022c). Contrasting UNHCR's mandate, IOM's mandate is rather a soft and broad mandate.

IOM Constitution is characterized by "constructive ambiguity" and "embedded flexibility" (Bradley, 2020). Unlike UNHCR, IOM does not have a protection mandate for a legally defined group of people. Article 1[8] describing IOM's purposes and

[8] Article 1 reads: "The purposes and functions of the Organization shall be:

functions enables it to provide assistance to various categories of people, including migrants and refugees (Bradley, 2020, p. 21). Pécoud (2018) argues that IOM's broad mandate has been enabling it to incorporate such a wide range of circumstances since it is based on a broad definition of migrants, unlike the narrower categories that characterize other intergovernmental organizations such as refugees for UNHCR or migrant workers for ILO. On the other hand, migration falls under state sovereignty since there is no international regime for migration comparable to the one for asylum and refugees based on 1951 Refugee Convention. Given this context, although IOM "may lack legitimacy and encounter resistance among governments", it also gains an entrepreneurial character that allows the IOM to take the initiative to enter new policy areas (Pécoud, 2018, p. 1626).

Despite this flexibility due to its broad mandate, IOM's autonomy is highly debated. Being an IO, it is formally governed by its member states, and it does not have a say on member states' migration policies. Almost its entire budget (95%) is earmarked and most of its staff is hired on a project basis, which makes it a "service-provider" and reliant on new projects for its survival (Hall, 2015, p. 85). The relevant literature is highly critical of IOM's failure to deviate from the wishes of member states and donors (Andrijasevic & Walters, 2010; Geiger, 2020; Georgi, 2010) even to the detriment of people on the move (Ashutosh & Mountz, 2011). IOM also explicitly describes itself as a "member state-led organization" and in many ways "compared to more robustly mandated organizations like UNHCR, IOM's Constitution, institutional structure, and organizational culture provide weak or even antithetical foundations for autonomous action" (Bradley, 2020, p. 17). In terms of its organizational culture, IOM's staff largely consists of lower pay grade employees and temporary staff that moves from contract to

(a) to make arrangements for the organized transfer of migrants, for whom existing facilities are inadequate or who would not otherwise be able to move without special assistance, to countries offering opportunities for orderly migration;

(b) to concern itself with the organized transfer of refugees, displaced persons and other individuals in need of international migration services for whom arrangements may be made between the Organization and the States concerned, including those States undertaking to receive them;

(c) to provide, at the request of and in agreement with the States concerned, migration services such as recruitment, selection, processing, language training, orientation activities, medical examination, placement, activities facilitating reception and integration, advisory services on migration questions, and other assistance as is in accord with the aims of the Organization;

(d) to provide similar services as requested by States, or in cooperation with other interested international organizations, for voluntary return migration, including voluntary repatriation;

(e) to provide a forum to States as well as international and other organizations for the exchange of views and experiences, and the promotion of cooperation and coordination of efforts on international migration issues, including studies on such issues in order to develop practical solutions".

contract, given its project-based funding structure and its self-branding as a cost-effective and efficient alternative to other UN agencies. In 2017, while only 49 of 10,000 IOM staff members occupied D-level positions (the most senior positions after the director general and deputy director general), this ratio was the threefold for UNHCR with 163 of 11,000 staff members at D-level (Bradley, 2020, p. 37).

In terms of leadership, available studies suggest that since 1951, IOM has had ten directors general, which were all men and all U.S. citizens except for two (Bastiaan Wouter Haveman, Dutch citizen serving between 1962 and 1969, and António Vitorino, the current Portuguese Director General since 2018) (Bradley, 2020, p. 34). Its two recent directors general, McKinley (1998-2008) and Swing (2008-2018) have transformed IOM to a global enterprise. McKinley's period is associated with the "the franchise model of the field offices" which helped IOM to expand its services to Member States through "the projectization system" (Bradley, 2020, p. 35). This has paved the way for increasing not only humanitarian operations but also "contentious" activities such as assisted voluntary returns (p. 35). Swing (2008-2018) has positioned IOM as a key actor in the humanitarian field and also enabled IOM to enter the UN system as a related agency in 2016. While progressing towards these goals, Swing has maintained a highly respectful position vis-à-vis Member States, consistently describing IOM as a member state-led organization.

5.2.1 IOM's expansion to the issue area of climate change-related mobility

In 2006, IOM requested funding from Member States for a conference on environmental migration. Unable to gain any funding from Member States, IOM received funding from the United Nations Population Fund to co-host a seminar in February 2007, thus initiating IOM's official involvement in climate change-related mobility. Hall (2015) reported that "the IOM *convinced* states at the 2007 council meeting to hold a three-hour discussion on the links between environment, climate change, and migration". These attempts suggest that the initial decision to expand to a new issue area came from within the organization, not from the Member States.

At the annual council meeting in November 2008, Director General McKinley announced climate change among strategic priorities and the representatives of Greece, Cameroon and Colombia indicated the significance of environmental migration as a

problem (Hall, 2015, p. 86). While direct responses to this announcement is lacking from official records, at this meeting, some Member States voiced their concerns about "mandate creep" due to IOM's expansion (both in terms of membership and scope of activities) (IOM, 2009b, p. 6). A particular cause for concern was the possibility of IOM assuming a normative role and drifting away from its function to help Member States formulate migration policies. The Director General assured that there "should be no mandate creep" and that IOM "would always provide compelling evidence of linkages" between its work and the 12 strategic activities defined in IOM's Strategy (IOM, 2009b, p. 6).

Following the initial engagement, IOM has started to conduct vast research on the link between environment, climate change and migration. Between 2007 and 2008, four issues of the IOM Migration Research Series were directly about migration and climate change, disasters, and environment. Based on their research, IOM published its first policy brief about the issue in May 2009. The policy brief titled "Migration, Climate Change and Environment" presented evidence and introduced the organization's perspective and activities in this field (IOM, 2009a).

Similar to Guterres, IOM Director General, Brunson McKinley, viewed climate change-related mobility as a key issue that should be addressed. He argued that the IOM "has an obvious role in addressing the linkages between environmental degradation, climate change, and migration" (IOM, 2008). In December 2009, the new Director General, William Lacy Swing, became the first IOM leader to participate in the UNFCCC meeting. At one of the side-events where key UN and non-UN humanitarian agencies, including UNHCR, met, he drew attention to IOM's role and expertise in environmental migration and advocated for the concept of "climate migration as adaptation strategy" (Hall, 2016, p. 101).

In 2015, IOM formalized its engagement with climate change by establishing Migration, Environment and Climate Change (MECC) Division, within the Department of Migration Management. Fully devoted to work on these topics, MECC Division "oversees, supports and coordinates the development of policy guidance for activities with a migration, environment and climate change dimension" (IOM, 2022b).

Chapter 6: **CLIMATE CHANGE-RELATED MOBILITY AS A PROTECTION ISSUE OR AN ADAPTATION STRATEGY?**

This chapter identifies different nomination and predication strategies of UNHCR and IOM and presents the recurring discursive themes based on different argumentation strategies in the analyzed documents by using CDA and software-assisted content analysis. It presents the findings for each organization separately in order to contextualize the discourses better and track their changes over time. For both UNHCR and IOM, the flow of the analysis is as follows: The analysis first starts with an analysis of nomination and agency, i.e. how climate migrants or displaced persons are named and whether they are constructed as passive subjects or resourceful agents. Then, it goes on to examine the argumentation strategies of each organization regarding 1) the causal links between climate change and human mobility, 2) the issues of responsibility and climate justice, 3) their legitimation strategies around why their organizations engage with the issue, and 4) their policy ideas and practices related to the issue.

6.1 UNHCR: Climate change-related mobility as a protection issue

6.1.1 Nomination and agency

In the analyzed documents, UNHCR does not adopt a single terminology when referring to climate change-induced migration and displacement. Rather, there are several phrases that are frequently used by UNHCR: *persons displaced in the context of climate change, displacement related to climate change, climate-related human mobility, people relocated or displaced by the effects of disasters and climate change, climate-related displacement, external displacement, persons displaced in the context of disasters and climate change*. Regarding the temporal comparison, the only notable change is related to the introduction of certain phrases (e.g. persons displaced in the context of climate change) following some inter-agency and/or inter-governmental policy dialogues (such as the Nansen Initiative). Overall, the temporal comparison shows no significant variation as “displacement” has been the constant focus of the preferred terms.

To the question what the terminology *should not* be, UNHCR's answer is clear: “climate refugees”. UNHCR frequently expresses their reservations regarding the

terminology of "climate refugees", which is commonly used by the media and some political actors, in separate sections or note boxes. Overall, as the international organization that has supervisory authority on the 1951 Refugee Convention, UNHCR refuses this terminology to protect its core mandate and its own legitimacy in overseeing the 1951 Refugee Convention and justifies this reservation by referring to legal authority. Previous study, based on interviews with the UNHCR staff, suggests that ""[c]limate refugees" posed a threat to UNHCR as they blurred the boundaries between convention refugees and popular conceptions of refugees" and engaging with the issue would be "a distraction from protecting the unique legal status of convention refugees" (Hall, 2016, p. 57). Guterres, then High Commissioner, has also stated that "UNHCR has refused to embrace the new terminology of 'climate refugees' or 'environmental refugees,' fearing that this will complicate and confuse the organization's efforts to protect the victims of persecution and armed conflict" (Guterres, 2009, quoted in Hall, 2016, p.59). As another example, the following quote from the 2009 Policy Paper is emblematic of these concerns and UNHCR's emphasis on legal definitions:

> "UNHCR has serious reservations with respect to the terminology and notion of environmental refugees or climate refugees. These terms have no basis in international refugee law. The phrase 'refugee' is a legal term. A person who has been determined a refugee will have satisfied the criteria under the 1951 Refugee Convention, the 1969 OAU [Organization of African Unity] Convention, or UNHCR's mandate. For this reason, just as a reference to an 'economic refugee' is not a reference to a recognized term under international law, neither are 'climate refugee' nor 'environmental refugee'. While often used, particularly in the media, it would be incorrect to give the words a legal meaning that has not been endorsed by the legal community." (UNHCR, 2009, p. 8)

High-ranking officials at UNHCR have also been very careful in avoiding the terms of "climate refugees" and "environmental refugees". In his speech at the Discussion Forum on Climate Change in June 2014, Volker Türk, Director of International Protection division, noted that he felt "compelled to comment on" the use of these terms, which are "best avoided" for two main reasons (UNHCR, 2014a, p. 3). Firstly, Türk argued that only a small portion of displacement will happen across international borders. Secondly, he made reference to the 1951 Refugee Convention, which defines "a refugee as someone with "a well-founded fear of persecution" on the basis of one of five grounds: race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, and political opinion". Thus, both reasons implied that the term contradicts the legal

definition of refugee, which by definition entails a cross-border movement and the risk of persecution associated with one of five grounds. Türk, instead, suggested that UNHCR feels "more comfortable with terminology such as 'external displacement' to refer to cross-border movements driven by disasters or environmental factors, until States settle the terminology" (UNHCR, 2014a, p. 3).

UNHCR's emphasis on legal definitions and States' preferences is also evident from the frequency of references to the Nansen Initiative, a state-led consultative process launched in 2012, and its preferred terminology.[9] There are 84 references to the Nansen Initiative in half (19 out of 38) of the documents which are analyzed in this thesis and published after 2012. For instance, UNHCR's quick guide on climate change and disaster displacement takes the Platform on Disaster Displacement (a state-led platform as the follow-up to the Nansen Initiative) as an authority when explaining the terminological choice. The guide argues that "[…] the term "climate refugee" is not endorsed by the UNHCR or by the Platform on Disaster Displacement, and it is preferable to refer to "persons displaced in the context of disasters and climate change"" (UNHCR, 2017a, p. 3). Overall, the refusal of the term "climate refugees" based on UNHCR's own legal authority and other state-led processes can be interpreted as the persistence of institutionalized definitions and UNHCR's narrow mandate that necessitates it to maintain its moral legitimacy in the refugee regime.

While UNHCR does not consider the term "refugees" as an acceptable option for people crossing borders due to climate change, it does not refer to them as "migrants" either. UNHCR is particular about the distinction between migrants, refugees, and displaced persons; and rarely uses the term "migrants" in the context of climate change. The 2009 Policy Paper argues that "their status remains unclear" since "they would not normally qualify as refugees, [...] nor would they necessarily be classified as migrants". In the 2017 questionnaire in relation to Human Rights Council Resolution

[9] At the UNHCR Ministerial Conference in December 2011, the Swiss and Norwegian governments pledged to build consensus on a protection agenda addressing the needs of people displaced across borders in the context of disasters and climate change. The Nansen Initiative was launched by the Swiss and Norwegian governments as a state-led consultative process in 2012 (outside the UN system), aiming at filling in this gap under international law. The process led to the "Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change", endorsed by 109 governments in October 2015. The Protection Agenda outlines the key action areas to prevent and prepare for disaster displacement. The state-led Platform on Disaster Displacement (launched in 2016) builds on the Nansen Initiative's work. UNHCR and IOM are standing invitees to its Steering Group, one of the main pillars of the Platform, which provides leadership and guidance on coordination, policy and advocacy (see details at https://disasterdisplacement.org/the-platform/our-response).

A/HRC/35/20, UNHCR's submission expressed their caveat on terminology regarding the questionnaire's preferred term "migrants affected by climate change". UNHCR's submission reads:

> "Caveat on terminology: UNHCR does not consider forcibly displaced person, refugees or otherwise, to be migrants. On terminology, it is understood that the generic term "human mobility" entails "displacement (understood as the primarily forced movement of persons), migration (understood as the primarily voluntary movement of persons) and planned relocation (understood as planned process of settling persons or groups of persons to a new location)"" (UNHCR, 2017e, p. 1).

Instead of the term "migrants affected by climate change", UNHCR uses terms such as "persons fleeing climate change or disasters" or "people displaced across borders in climate change and disaster contexts" throughout the questionnaire submission. This is illustrative of UNHCR's conceptualization of the link between climate change and a person's decision to move as more of forced action.

Another example of this reservation is shown in UNHCR's recommendations for COP-22 in 2016. In response to the Paris Agreement's Preamble reference to "migrants" in the context of climate change, while recognizing the distinction between migrants and refugees, UNHCR recommends that "the interpretation of the Preamble Reference to migrants should extend to the most vulnerable people on the move, including people forcibly displaced by the effects of climate change" (UNHCR, 2016a, p. 6). This terminological distinction also goes hand in hand with an emphasis on vulnerabilities and protection needs. Regarding the protection needs, UNHCR argues that people displaced by climate change should be provided with complementary forms of protection even though most of them do not qualify for international protection. Counterfactually, if UNHCR had chosen the term "climate migrants", it would not have been necessary for the organization to mention the protection needs except for those in specific situations such as residing in a third country beset by conflict or environmental shocks.

Beyond terminological choices, for UNHCR, one recurrent buzzword has been "vulnerable" to describe people that move in the context of climate change from the very initial phases of engagement. In 34 out of 42 analyzed documents, keywords "vulnerable" and "vulnerability" got 196 mentions. The vulnerability label is mostly

attributed on group basis, particularly to forcibly displaced persons, women, children, disabled people, elderly people, minority groups and indigenous people who in climate hotspots or move due to climate change. Climate change and related mobility are considered as factors exacerbating pre-existing vulnerabilities and disproportionately affecting these groups as they often lack the resources to adapt to changing conditions. For instance, forcibly displaced people, including refugees, IDPs and stateless persons, are mentioned because most of them live in climate hotspots where they face the risk of second displacement due to climate change-related disasters. In addition to group-based vulnerabilities, UNHCR also refers to situational vulnerabilities such as migrants finding themselves in disasters situations in their countries of destination.

In line with the nomination strategies, the analysis of the agency of climate migrants based on predication and activation/passivation strategies shows that UNHCR portrays climate migrants predominantly as vulnerable, passive subjects that *are forced to flee* the impacts of climate change, similar to convention refugees. Previous studies have also found that in the press releases and news, UNHCR mainly represents refugees as "passive", "suffering", "impoverished", "victimized", "voiceless masses" and "dependent beneficiaries of material processes", rescued and assisted by other active doers (including UNHCR, states, international community etc.) and therefore reproduces "humanitarian savior and deservingness logics" (Ongenaert, Joye, & Machin, 2022). Refugees are often viewed in "humanitarian silo" as "passive objects of our pity" and "an inevitable burden" rather than "potential agents of development" (Betts & Collier, 2017). However, depending on the media genre (e.g. in videos and stories), this representation is more nuanced and coexists with more "positive" representation of displaced persons as active doers and contributors to host societies, and therefore "closer to "whiteness" and more acceptable for Western audiences and donors", which can be explained by the context of rising anti-immigrant sentiments and xenophobia (Ongenaert et al., 2022). The representation in the texts on climate change are also sometimes ambivalent, but the representation as passive subjects is still the dominant one as in the case of refugees. Frequently used passive forms include: "(will) be displaced", "become displaced", "are forced to flee", "have been forcibly displaced", "are ordered to relocate", "are compelled to migrate". On the other hand, active voice is rarely employed, and when employed, it is often coupled with words that connote a lack

of choice and agency. The following quotes exemplify the use of the active voice when referring to climate change-induced migration.

1. "Some substantial percentage of the people who will be displaced *will be escaping* conflict or persecution brought on by civil strife caused in turn by climate change" (then-UN Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees Johnstone, 2008, p. 1)

2. "It is evident that they create the conditions in which significant numbers of people may be displaced or *feel obliged* to migrate" (UNHCR, 2009, p. 9)

3. "People *fleeing* extreme situations of disasters and adverse effects of climate change indeed may be compelled to leave their country of origin because of events seriously disturbing public order" (UNHCR, 2017c, p. 2)

All the above sentences use active voice ("*will be escaping", "feel obliged", "fleeing"*) along with passive voice ("*will be displaced*", "*may be displaced", "may be compelled"*). Moreover, although the active verbs (to escape, to feel obliged, to flee) represent displaced people as active doers as well, these verbs still semantically convey a sense of obligation.

In the literature, the refusal of the term "climate refugee" has been accused of depoliticizing both climate change and related human mobility since it implies a voluntary movement and avoids assuming responsibility to act (Gemenne, 2015; McNamara, 2007). However, I argue that UNHCR's terminological choices and policy position do not necessarily depoliticize these issues since they convey a sense of victimization by climate change. UNHCR's consistent emphasis on the distinction between migration and forced displacement (e.g. Preamble and the Questionnaire examples above) is one of many indicators to support this argument. UNHCR rather rejects of the term "climate refugee" in order to maintain a legal definition for which it is responsible. Even though the term is strictly refused, UNHCR does not claim that related movement is of a voluntary nature. On the contrary, UNHCR tends to argue that even scenarios such as drought-induced mobility, which are often considered voluntary movements, cause forced displacement. Similar to that of "climate refugees", UNHCR's displacement narrative also allows problematizing climate change and considering the questions of responsibility and climate justice. Yet, equally, UNHCR's tendency to frame displaced people (who are predominantly from Global South) as vulnerable subjects may hinder their autonomy and agency within the emerging regime.

Overall, the analysis of nomination and predication strategies shows that UNHCR represents climate change-related mobility from a humanitarian perspective (as expected from normative agency) and implies a victimization by climate change. The analysis also reflects the constraining impact of legal mandates (and the institutional context in general) in terms of what terms and narratives are imaginable and not for the actors of an institution (such as in the case of the refusal of "climate refugees" due to 1951 Refugee Convention), which is discussed more in detail in the next chapter.

6.1.2 Argumentation

Discussing the causality and the forms of mobility

UNHCR recognizes climate change as "a driver of movement" in three forms: displacement, migration, and planned relocation (UNHCR, 2018, p. 2). Primarily by referencing research reports of institutions such as IPCC or Danish Refugee Council, UNHCR argues that there is a "scientific agreement" regarding the displacement effects of climate change (UNHCR, 2014a, 2017c, 2017d). In addition, UNHCR frequently references relevant clauses from international agreements such as paragraph 14(f) of the Cancun Adaptation Framework (CAF) and the Paris Agreement and its Preamble reference to climate migrants. For instance, CAF and paragraph 14(f) receive 20 references in 10 among the 42 analyzed documents, and the Paris Agreement and its Preamble are mentioned in 14 documents 57 times.

Even though UNHCR recognizes three forms of mobility in response to climate change (i.e. voluntary migration, displacement and planned relocation), the organization's main focus has been on displacement. While UNHCR also acknowledges migration in the context of climate change as a form of adaptation, the adaptation argument remains only secondary. The text search for "form of adaptation" and "adaptation strategy" returns few results with only 13 mentions in 8 documents out of 42.[10] Remarkably, the adaptation argument is mentioned almost exclusively when referring to international or inter-agency policy dialogues and documents such as CAF, Global Migration Group (GMG), the Advisory Group on Climate Change and Human

[10] The word "adaptation" is not included in order to avoid counting the mentions as part of the wider concept "climate change adaptation", which does not specifically refer to migration.

Mobility. Therefore, these mentions do not necessarily reflect the views of UNHCR, although they might be interpreted as potential diffusion of alternative discourses.

On causality (i.e. how and if a causal link between climate change and human mobility is constructed), UNHCR does not contest the causal relationship between climate change, migration, and displacement as the organization assumes both direct and indirect links between these phenomena. In explaining the causality, mainly two interrelated arguments are used by UNHCR. Climate change is considered, first, as a factor adding to the complexity of human mobility and displacement by increasing the vulnerabilities of people, and second, as a "threat multiplier" playing a role in conflicts leading to internal displacement and refugee movements. In a nutshell, the former mainly refers to both direct and indirect displacement effects of both sudden- and slow-onset disasters related to climate change through destroying habitable lands (such as in the case of floods or low-lying islands) and reducing livelihoods (such as in the case of droughts). The latter refers to situations in which people are displaced by violent conflicts in which climate change is a factor.

Among analyzed documents, the complexity argument is first mentioned in the 2009 Policy Paper, which argued "the process of climate change – and the multiple natural disasters it will engender – will in all certainty add to the scale and complexity of human mobility and displacement" (p.1). Even though these opening words were phrased in the future tense, the human effects of climate change were not distanced to the future. In addition to providing statistics such as "as many as 20 million people may have been displaced by climate-induced sudden-onset natural disasters in 2008 alone", the Policy Paper recognized climate change as a process "already undermining the livelihoods and security of many people, exacerbating income differentials and deepening inequalities" (p.3). Among several possible causal mechanisms, it considered some scenarios such as increasing competition over resources and public services in cities as temperature increases and the productivity of land decreases and increasing vector-borne diseases due to rises in food and energy prices (p.3). Another displacement scenario is the case of low-lying island states, or "the sinking islands", such as Tuvalu and the Maldives, which is considered as "the potentially most dramatic manifestation of climate change" by UNHCR (p.6). By provoking the images of "sinking islands", UNHCR uses these locations as "proofs" and "victims" of climate change (which is also

a point that was underlined by previous research on the media discourses, see, for instance, Dreher & Voyer, 2015).

The second argument that views climate change as a "threat multiplier" is a product of a securitized approach and also can be linked to the UNHCR's mandate. The causal mechanism predicted by this argument is that climate change may increase the potential for conflict due to increased social tension and competition over scarce resources, such as arable land and water, thus leading to displacement and refugee movements. "Threat multiplier" argument is often corroborated by examples such as Darfur, Somalia, Iraq, and Syria. For instance, the 2009 Policy Paper mentions:

> "Already today, some commentators have argued that conflict over energy sources, fertile land and fresh water are among the factors fuelling the crisis in the Darfur region of Sudan. Climate-related issues are projected to become an even more direct and common driver of conflicts."

Similarly, the following quote from UNHCR's FAQ document reflects this argument:

> "Climate change is also a "threat multiplier" in many of today's conflicts, from Darfur to Somalia to Iraq and Syria. The Arab Spring is commonly seen as leading to Syria's conflict, but people tend to forget the five-year drought in Syria's northeast that preceded the war and the displacement of some 1.5 million people. ***Climate change sows seeds for conflict, but it also makes displacement much worse when it happens."*** [emphasis in original] (UNHCR, 2016b)

UNHCR uses this argumentation in texts targeted at political actors as well. In his opening remarks at the eighth annual High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges in December 2015, Guterres described conflict and climate change as the two "mega-problems" causing displacement and argued these two cannot be discussed separately. Arguing that an environmental perspective is needed when analyzing conflict, he gave the examples of Darfur and Syria:

> "It is well known that water scarcity often fuels tensions between herder and farmer communities, one of the underlying causes of the conflict that occurred in Darfur. The drought-induced displacement of some 1.5 million Syrians from rural to urban areas between 2007 and 2010 contributed to the factors that eventually led to the break-out of the current conflict." (Guterres, 2015)

UNHCR also often ignores the discussion of distinguishing climate-related slow-onset disasters from sudden-onset disasters. This can be partially explained by the

organization's focus on the effects of displacement, rather than their causes, which is a point reiterated by UNHCR on multiple occasions. On the other hand, in the literature, it is highly controversial whether slow-onset disasters such as extreme drought and coastal erosion are drivers of movement distinct from economic drivers and whether they cause forced displacement in the same way that sudden-onset disasters do. However, UNHCR does not interrogate whether climate change-induced migration is voluntary in most cases and frames slow-onset disasters as causes that "force" people out of their places. For instance, High Commissioner Guterres argued in his speech addressed to the Lowy Institute for International Policy in 2012: "[A]lthough they attract less media attention, the slow-onset effects of climate change, like drought, desertification, rising sea levels and shrinking agricultural productivity will likely also contribute to hundreds of thousands being [*forced to abandon their homes*] in the future" (Guterres, 2012). Illustrating the same stance, Marine Franck, UNHCR's climate change and Nansen Initiative officer, notes slow-onset disasters as factors leading to forced displacement in her speech at a meeting of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in 2014: "In addition to slow-onset events such as droughts and sea-level rise, others will be forced out of their homes and see livelihoods destroyed by rapid-onset events, becoming displaced in the process" (UNHCR, 2014b, p. 1).

Discussing responsibility and climate justice

UNHCR mainly distances the issue to the Global South by the argument that most of the displacement is occurring and expected there. The most cited examples of vulnerable areas include small low-lying island states, Africa and South and East Asia in general, and Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, and the Philippines in particular. For instance, UNHCR's 2016 FAQ document replies to the question which regions are most at risk against climate change as low and lower-middle income countries where most disaster displacement occurs both in crude (e.g. South and East Asia) and relative numbers (e.g. small island states such as Tuvalu and Vanuatu). The document suggests that even though "[n]o region is immune from climate change", displacement risk is greatest for countries that are heavily exposed to natural hazards with large populations living in areas with inadequate capacity or resources to prepare (UNHCR, 2016b). Also, Global South countries are often mentioned as places in which climate change and conflict merge as drivers of displacement. One of the most recent examples of this is

from the High Commissioner Grandi's article published in Al Jazeera: "From Burkina Faso to Bangladesh, and from Afghanistan to Mozambique, climate change is increasing poverty, instability and human movement; it is fueling tensions and competition over dwindling resources" (Grandi, 2021).

UNHCR also acknowledges that the Global North is exposed to disasters due to climate change and experiences disaster displacement. However, remarkably different from the Global South, the Global North countries are particularly mentioned as actors who need to take more responsibility in tackling the issue and as potential destination countries. For instance, the Deputy High Commissioner in 2008 recognized that the argument that the industrialized world has a greater responsibility, therefore should assume a greater burden. However, he was cautious in assigning an obligation to the developed countries. Instead, he argued that "rather than assigning blame we achieve the same result by asking those who have the funds and the technologies to rise to the occasion and carry out their duty to humanity. In sum, the developed countries of the world should be able to shoulder this burden if the will exists to do so" (Johnstone, 2008). As another example, Marine Franck pointed developed countries as potential destination countries in UNHCR's speech delivered at the OSCE's meeting on the impacts of natural and man-made disasters in 2014:

> "While the most affected populations will be those with less resource in least developed countries, OSCE countries are also vulnerable to natural hazards including climate change impacts. To cite just one example, tens of thousands of people are currently made homeless by historical flooding in Bosnia, Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia. On the other hand, OSCE countries are also concerned as potential countries of destination when people flee disasters and climate change impacts" (UNHCR, 2014b, p. 2).

It should be noted in the context of this speech that an overwhelming majority of the participating states are from Europe and North America. In her concluding remarks, Franck reiterated that "OSCE countries are particularly concerned by climate and disasters induced displacement both as vulnerable countries and as destination countries" (UNHCR, 2014b, p. 2). Yet, the emphasis on being destination countries is contradictory to UNHCR's conceptualization of the issue for two reasons. Firstly, UNHCR has been consistently claiming that most displacement is internal. For instance, another senior-level staff member, José Riera, argued in a seminar in that "the parade of horrors argument" of large-scale cross-border movement does not reflect the current

patterns of disaster displacement. He further argued that "[i]n most cases, people's poor socio-economic circumstances will preclude them from undertaking cross-border journeys" (UNHCR, 2013b, p. 2). Secondly, UNHCR has been arguing that when displacement is cross-border, the movement is mainly towards the neighboring countries. Yet, the countries listed as most vulnerable areas by UNHCR are geographically distant to OSCE countries.

This contradiction can potentially be explained by the fact that the target audience of Franck's speech is political actors, whereas Riera's speech was addressed in a seminar with panelists from academia, NGOs, and IOs. Through Franck's alarmist discourse, the idea that there will be masses at the gates of developed countries is being provoked, and more climate action is demanded in order to address the root causes of displacement. Indeed, Franck's first two recommendations to OSCE countries are to "mitigate their greenhouse gases to diminish climate change effects and avoid displacement" and to "support adaptation and DRR [Disaster Risk Reduction] actions to enable people to remain in their original settlements or, as a last resort, to support planned relocation of populations who are at risk" (UNHCR, 2014b, p. 2).

Most recently, in UNHCR's messages for COP26 in Glasgow, an alarmist discourse was adopted in tandem with call for climate action and further climate financing to developing states (UNHCR, 2021). The climate change-related displacement was considered as a justice issue:

> "The displacement of people by climate change-fuelled crises is already a global reality – a reality that reflects and amplifies the deep inequalities and injustices in our world today. Countries and communities that have contributed the least to global warming are bearing the brunt" (UNHCR, 2021, p. 1).

Building on this line of argument, UNHCR "urge[d]" parties to the UNFCCC to "keep 1.5 degrees within reach to avert the worstcase loss and damage scenarios", "increase action and support for measures to avert, minimize and address displacement in the most climate vulnerable countries and communities, based on their specific needs", and "ensure that climate action not only reaches climate vulnerable countries, but also reaches displaced people and their host communities" (p.1).

Legitimizing the engagement

While UNHCR staff had previously opposed engagement in the issue area of climate change by arguing that it was not within their mandate, ironically, that same mandate was put forward as a legitimization tool once the engagement began. Since the initial engagement with this issue area, UNHCR has been justifying its engagement mainly based on three arguments: 1) UNHCR's mandate, 2) operational expertise in the area of displacement, 3) UNHCR's "humanitarian obligation" due to its status as a rights-based agency.

An early example of the first and third arguments appears in the then-UN Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees Craig L. Johnstone's speech "The Future is Now" at a conference in April 2008 (Johnstone, 2008). Johnstone started his speech by underlining the urgency of taking action against climate change and preparing for the human consequences of climate change. Reminding UNHCR's "clear mandate" in the protection of refugees and stateless persons, he assumed responsibility in protecting and assisting people who will be displaced due to "civil strife caused in turn by climate change" and thus can classify as refugees. While this point was straightforward, Johnstone went well beyond the "clear mandate" by referring to UNHCR's "humanitarian obligation" to be involved in emergencies caused by natural disasters. Following this logic, he continued: "it is hard to envisage a true international emergency of forced displacement precipitated directly or indirectly by climate change in which UNHCR would not play a key role. So we have to be ready to assume our share of this responsibility".

Johnstone's words that bore out the "logic of appropriateness" in justifying UNHCR's role in climate change-related displacement have been repeated in the following years. For instance, the 2009 Policy Paper argued that since climate change is "likely to pose humanitarian problems and challenges", "it is of direct interest to humanitarian agencies" including UNHCR. By reminding that UNHCR is "a leading agency of the United Nations responsible for and possessing the expertise in the area of forced displacement", the Policy Paper justified UNHCR's engagement in displacement scenarios in the context of climate change.

Another example of the first two arguments is provided by the senior adviser José Riera at an international conference in 2013 when explaining UNHCR's institutional interest in climate change and displacement. Firstly, Riera explained that environmental factors can play a role in conflicts and lead to flows of refugees and IDPs, thus falling under UNHCR's mandate. Secondly, he referred to UNHCR's operational expertise that is applicable to "displacement caused by natural disasters and climate change" scenarios (UNHCR, 2013b, p. 2). Riera explained that "the affected populations may have protection needs and vulnerabilities similar to those whose flight is provoked by violence or human rights abuses" (p.2). He further suggested that UNHCR is operationally involved in disaster situations on a case-by-case basis due to the Cluster Approach.

Similarly, a 2019 publication outlining UNHCR's key messages for COP-25 referred to the first two arguments: "UNHCR has provided protection and assistance in numerous disaster situations over the years, and its mandate and expertise in the area of forced displacement has been recognized as equally being directly relevant to displacement also in the climate change context" (UNHCR, 2019, p. 2). This was further emphasized by the argument that it is "the protection needs in consequence of displacement", "not the causes of the displacement", that makes UNHCR's mandate and expertise relevant in disaster displacement situations.

Promoting policy ideas: Protection gap

The dominant discourse in UNHCR's publications on climate change is on the protection gap when it comes to people who cross borders due to climate change (UNHCR, 2009, p. 8; 2013a, p. 5; 2013b, p. 3). For instance, the 2009 Policy Paper, while underlining that UNHCR strictly opposes the term "climate refugees", does recognize that "certain groups of migrants, currently falling outside of the scope of international protection, who are in need of humanitarian and/or other forms of assistance" (p.8). The protection gap argument is also reiterated by senior-level staff. In a seminar of Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in February 2013, José Riera, senior adviser in the Division of International Protection, argued that the majority of member states do not have provisions in their legal frameworks for legal entry and (temporary or permanent) stay of "people exposed to the impacts of climate change or residents of islands subjected to sea level

rise"(UNHCR, 2013b, p. 3). Riera further argued: "Even if they are not refugees, such people are entitled to be supported and to have their voices heard and taken into account" (p.3).

Regarding the question of whether there should be a protection mechanism, a major debate in the literature relates to the determination of the forced or voluntary nature of cross-border movements due to climate change. However, UNHCR considers this as a practically impossible and irrelevant quest. Instead, UNHCR puts greater emphasis on the protection needs of people displaced by climate change who classify as neither refugees nor migrants. The 2009 Policy Paper argues:

> "Where people affected by such disasters cross an international border, for example, because the only escape routes lead them there, they would not normally qualify as refugees who are entitled to international protection within the existing international refugee framework, nor would they necessarily be classified as migrants. While benefiting from the applicability of human rights norms, "their status remains unclear." […] Determining whether cross-border movements are forced or voluntary may not be practicable in the vast majority of cases, but this is not the most relevant element under international law. The crux of the issue will be whether persons have a need for international protection; and, if so, on what grounds this need may be turned into an entitlement." (UNHCR, 2009, pp. 4-5)

UNHCR's policy suggestion to address the protection gap regarding cross-border movements is not a new international convention or amending the existing refugee convention. The 2009 Policy Paper argues against the demands of the media and some NGOs to amend the 1951 Refugee Convention or extend the refugee definition. It underlines that any attempt to change this definition entails a risk of renegotiating the 1951 Refugee Convention even though it cannot be "justified by actual needs" (p.9). In addition to the risk of renegotiation, the Policy Paper draws attention to the potential impacts on the protection regime: "Moreover, in the current political environment, it could result in a lowering of protection standards for refugees and even undermine the international refugee protection regime altogether" (p.9). Against the already securitized context for migration and asylum, the renegotiation of the 1951 Refugee Convention may in fact result in a more limiting definition of refugees or some signatories may even withdraw from it.

Since its first engagement with the issue, UNHCR has also attempted to expand its protection mandate, which was opposed by the Member States (Hall, 2016, pp.67-93).

At the ministerial meeting in 2011, UNHCR lobbied states to expand its mandate and called on them to pledge to address the protection gaps, including climate change induced displacement, which were identified by the Bellagio expert recommendations. Only Argentina, Germany, Mexico, Norway and Switzerland made pledges and UNHCR's mandate did not expand. Other states underlined that UNHCR already had financial difficulties in addressing the needs of refugees, and that a fourth category (after the expansions to include stateless persons and IDPs) would make the organization "amorphous" (Hall, 2016, p. 69). The majority of the States has also opposed UNHCR assuming the leadership role for protection of IDPs due to natural disasters. Yet, despite not pursuing climate funding and in the presence of oppositions to mandate expansion, UNHCR has assisted IDPs due to natural disasters on case-by-case basis and continued to work with few supportive governments to develop protection framework for internationally displaced people due to climate change (e.g. through the Nansen Initiative led by Switzerland and Norway). These go against the expectations of principal-agent and resource dependence theories. This rather shows that regardless of the funding concerns and formal delegation from Member States, UNHCR holds the autonomy to expand its actions at the operational level, while also pushing for a normative change at the rhetorical level. This will be further explained with the differences of normative organizations from functional organizations (such as IOM) in the next chapter.

Overall, UNHCR mainly calls for the development of normative frameworks at the national and regional levels, such as such as temporary protection and humanitarian stay arrangements (UNHCR, 2013b, p. 3; 2017a, p. 3; 2018, p. 1). For instance, a 2015 publication argues that

> "[r]ather than calling for a new binding international convention on cross-border disaster displacement, UNHCR supports an approach that focuses on the integration of effective practices by States and (sub-) regional organizations into their own normative frameworks and practices in accordance with their specific situations and challenges" (UNHCR, 2015, p. 7).

In addition, UNHCR underlines ways to reduce the risk of climate-related displacement through 1) climate mitigation, 2) investments in climate adaptation and resilience, 3) DRR measures, 4) multiplying legal ways for voluntary migration, and 5) planned relocation as a last resort. While some of these policy objectives (such as planned relocation) relate to UNHCR's mandate, some of them directly relate to climate

change regime. Although UNHCR is not accredited to receive climate adaptation financing by the major adaptation funds (such as the Green Climate Fund and Global Environment Facility), it has been carrying out projects for adapting refugee camps to climate change and running projects with other agencies, such as UNEP (Dellmuth, Gustafsson, & Kural, 2020, p. 207). Moreover, at the political fora, UNHCR calls for more adaptation financing to minimize the risk of climate displacement, for instance, at the COP22 in 2016 and COP26 in 2021 (UNHCR, 2016a, p. 3; 2021). Therefore, financial resource availability cannot be considered as a constraint for UNHCR to push for its protection agenda and develop policy ideas relating to climate adaptation measures as a way to reduce climate displacement risks. These again run counter to principal-agent and resource dependence theories and hints at that UNHCR has a relative autonomy and follows a normative logic in line with its organizational identity.

6.2 IOM: Climate change-related mobility as an adaptation strategy

6.2.1 Nomination and agency

On the semantic debates around the people who leave their homes for environmental or climatic reasons, similar to UNHCR, IOM does not accept the terms "environmental refugees" or "climate refugees" (see Chapter 2). IOM draws attention to their lack of legal basis in international refugee law and warns that their use may also undermine the international regime for the protection of refugees. For instance, as an exemplary of IOM's position against the use of "climate refugees", Philippe Boncour (then-Head of the International Dialogue on Migration Division) warns in the editorial of IOM's Migration journal:

> "People moving for environmental reasons are not "climate refugees", even though the media continues to use this term because of its strong emotional connotation and the compassion it generates. Words do have a meaning, and the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees clearly states that the notion of persecution is central to the eligibility of people for this status" (Boncour, 2009).

IOM also often refers to UNHCR's authority in this regard, arguing, for example, that "[t]here is consensus among concerned agencies, including UNHCR, that their use is to be avoided" (IOM, 2009a, p. 5). While there is a consensus on not using "climate refugees" among UNHCR and IOM, both also acknowledge that there is a lack of

internationally agreed terms for "persons moving for environmental reasons". However, unlike UNHCR, which has not adopted a single term and a clearly defined working definition, IOM has preferences for both, which can be potentially explained by the flexibility of the term "migrant" compared to the legal categories of displaced persons and refugees under the UNHCR mandate. The term "environmental migrants" is used as an umbrella term, which encompasses "climate migrants" as well. While IOM emphasizes the difficulty of attributing migration decision to environmental causes in many publications, it has developed a working definition of "environmental migrants":

> "Environmental migrants are persons or groups of persons who, predominantly for reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their homes or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad" (IOM, 2009a, p. 5).

In an effort to capture the complexity and breadth of the phenomenon, this definition, which IOM suggests being a "non-normative" definition, is particularly broad. It recognizes sudden-onset and slow-onset disasters as the drivers of movement and applies to both forced and voluntary movements.

The proposition of a working definition of "environmental migrants" by IOM was first linked to the lack of internationally agreed definitions and, second, to the attempt to replace the widely used terms "climate/environmental refugees". For instance, at the IOM Council's Ninety-Fourth session, the administration's presentation explained the purpose of the proposed definition as:

> "In presenting this definition, the intent is not to ignore other intervening political, economic and social factors, but rather to focus policy on a key driver of human mobility that has all too often been overlooked. The intent is also to offer an alternative definition to "environmental refugees", a term that UNHCR has stressed has no legal grounding in international refugee law" (IOM, 2007, p. 2)

In proposing a working definition, while IOM argues that "[s]emantic and legal considerations are critical and they should not be ignored", it is also necessary to "to move ahead with more neutral and acceptable options and prevent any further delays in supporting those migrating due to climate impacts" (Chazalnoël & Ionesco, 2016). In this sense, it could be argued that the conceptual distinctions between voluntary and forced migrants in the context of climate change are overlooked to some extent for the

sake of practicality. Indeed, in the analyzed texts, the conceptual distinction between migrants, displaced persons and refugees is not as emphasized by IOM as it is by UNHCR. IOM conceptually removes "climate migrants" from the field of international law, consisting in formal legal categories, and locates them within a rather informal field based on norms and practices, such as soft laws, capacity-building practices, advice etc. (Felli, 2013). IOM emphasizes that there is a lack of a clear distinction between forced and voluntary forms of movement related to environmental factors: "Except in cases of imminent and acute disaster", most movement falls within "a large grey zone" (IOM, 2009a, p. 5). Following this reasoning, IOM argues that the differentiation between formal legal categories should not be the focus, but rather "[a] holistic, human security-oriented approach to environmental migration is needed to address all forms of movement comprehensively, putting the migrant at the centre of concern" (IOM, 2009a, p. 5).

Regarding the level of agency, while both UNHCR and IOM agree not to use the term "climate refugees", their perspectives on the agency involved in the decision to move are not entirely aligned. As discussed in the previous chapter, for UNHCR, this decision is of a forced nature in most cases, hence UNHCR puts caveat on the use of the term "climate migrants" besides "climate refugees", emphasizing the need to attend to the nuances between the categories of migrants, displaced persons and refugees (e.g. UNHCR submission to A/HRC/35/20). However, while acknowledging these nuances, IOM does not consider human mobility linked to environmental factors as necessarily a forced movement. The quote below from IOM Outlook on Migration, Environment and Climate Change exemplifies that IOM constructs climate migration as a voluntary movement, thus gives more room to individual agency:

> "There is no legally agreed upon definition of environmental migrants and migration. Yet, there is a tendency to assume that migration can easily be linked causally to environmental "drivers" and that such movements are predominantly of a "forced" nature. As such, the terms climate change and environmental refugee have been frequently used in the media and in some publications. However, closer analysis reveals that [*neither*] of these assumptions holds true" (IOM, 2014a, p. 21).

Another evidence to the wider room for agency lies in the IOM's dominant narrative of "climate migration as adaptation strategy". In this narrative, the climate migrant is an adaptive and active agent, moves from the ecologically vulnerable areas (predominantly in the Global South) to nearby areas (which are again in the Global

South); mostly embarks in labor mobility in the form of circular or temporary migration; contributes to their communities through remittances and transfer of knowledge and skills; and helps building resilience and facilitating development back home. On the other hand, IOM suggests that the most affected populations by climate change are ecologically vulnerable people, people who depend on agriculture for subsistence and marginalized persons in the society, all of which may lack economic and social capital to move out of harm's way (usually called "trapped populations") (e.g. IOM, 2014b, p. 2). However, in this narrative, (ecologically, socially and economically) vulnerable people are entrepreneurial agents who can adapt to and even better their conditions at the individual and household level, not (in most cases) passive victims in need of protection and help. While this narrative represents migration in a positive, optimistic and less securitized manner (compared to the "climate refugees" narrative), I argue that it disengages from larger questions such as tackling climate change and addressing climate justice. This is discussed in detail and explained by taking into account IOM's institutional context in the next chapter.

6.2.2 Argumentation

Discussing the causality and the forms of mobility

IOM usually refrains from assuming a direct causality between climate change and migration. Early publications either avoid discussing the causality altogether, or simply refer to broad statements such as "environmental factors have always shaped human mobility" and draw attention to (1) the complexity of migration decision itself and (2) the lack of reliable evidence. While these two arguments still constitute the basis of IOM's conceptualization of climate migration, over time, IOM has started to distinguish a more direct causal link between climate change and migration (especially following the formal recognition of climate change as an underlying factor of migration by the UNFCCC Paris Agreement in 2015 and the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants in 2016). Such acknowledgment of a causal link does not yet outweigh the complexity argument, which underlines multiple factors (e.g., economic, social, and security) in shaping a person's decision to migrate, thus emphasizing that climate change cannot be the sole reason but a mediating reason. While IOM publications reiterate the complexity argument even in the context of most extreme cases (such as

floods, extreme heat etc.), such climatic events would qualify as directly leading to disaster displacement in a UNHCR publication.

Yet another finding is the larger difference in the discourse depending on the target audience. While the causality is constructed more directly in the texts that target public audience, the texts that target political actors and experts employ a much more cautious wording and nuanced narrative, reflecting the impact of the audience in shaping discourse for increased efficiency to "win" the target audience. Previous literature has underlined that speech act is closely linked to target audience, as it aims at evoking attitudes, feelings, thoughts or actions of the target audience (Balzacq, 2005). According to the context, suitable wording and frames of reference are used in order to win the target audience for political purposes (Balzacq, 2005, p.192; Bakhtin, 1986). Therefore, IOM's (as well as UNHCR's) discourse in texts and mass media targeting public audiences can be interpreted in the context of securitization of migration, negative public opinions and xenophobia. Admitting that the causal link is "indirect" could risk losing the already weak sympathy of the general public towards migrants and could lead to the questioning of the legitimacy of "climate migrants" as a new category.

In contrast, in texts targeting experts and political actors, IOM frequently puts forward the "complexity" argument (which will be explained by the impact of IOM's institutional setting besides the contextual factors in the next chapter). IOM underlines that migration is a multi-causal process, and as such, it is hard to isolate climate change as the cause of migration decision among all other factors such as political, social or economic aspects (IOM, 2014b, p. 1). IOM argues that climate change is not typically "the only cause for migration" but rather a mediating factor between these drivers by "providing an additional reason for people to consider migration" (IOM, 2017a, p. 10). An article published in the IOM's website (authored by the head of MECC Division and an associate expert) summarizes this strand of argument:

> "IOM has repeatedly outlined that the linkages between human mobility and climate impacts are highly complex and that in many cases, we should refrain from making direct causal links between climatic change and the decision to migrate. Instead, it is critical to remember that, in most situations, people choose or are forced to migrate due to a number of factors – climate change can be the primary or one of many secondary factors that prompt an individual or a family to move" (Ionesco & Chazalnoel, 2015).

Similarly, in a 2017 publication on extreme heat, the causal link is again constructed in an indirect way with an emphasis on the multiplicity of migration drivers: "While we can surmise that there are biophysical limits to living under extreme heat, it is in the grey area of indirect effects that most climate-related migration occurs currently. Indeed, the indirect impacts of climate change on livelihood, and especially on subsistence agriculture, are critical and interwoven with many other factors to drive migration" (IOM, 2017a, p. 8).

While these texts do recognize the "significant and increasing determinative role" of environmental and climate change drivers (IOM, 2014b, p. 1), the argumentation on climate change noticeably differs from that of environmental drivers in general. The link between the environment and migration is more directly established with references to generic arguments such as "[e]nvironmental factors have always been a cause of migration" and "[p]eople flee to survive natural disasters or when faced with harsh and deteriorating environmental conditions". On the other hand, climate change, which is discussed separately, has a less straightforward impact and is mostly distanced to the future: "The adverse consequences of climate change for livelihoods, public health, food security and water availability can exacerbate pre-existing vulnerabilities and provoke migratory movements" (IOM, 2014b, p. 2). This discrepancy may imply that discussing the human impacts of climate change is also a normative exercise, in the sense that it is a politically sensitive topic since it assigns responsibility to take action against climate change.

Another recurring argument is the lack of evidence, which also exemplifies IOM's migration management approach's aspiration for "more and better" data. As previously mentioned, earlier IOM documents do recognize the impact of climate events on migration and displacement and predict them to intensify in the following decades and to take place predominantly in the context of slow-onset disasters. Yet, the lack of empirical evidence and the need for further research is emphasized, and the link is not deterministic. For instance, 2009 Policy Brief underlines the lack of data on the extent of environmental migration and in doing so distances it from an immediate reality to a future possibility: "Environmental factors have long had an impact on global migration flows. Although there is limited reliable data on the subject, the scale of such flows,

both internal and cross-border, is expected to rise significantly over the next decades as a result of climate change" (IOM, 2009a, p. 1).

Regarding the forms of mobility in response to climate change, similar to UNHCR, IOM recognizes complex forms, including forced or voluntary, temporary or permanent, and internal and international. In line with the complexity argument, on voluntary/forced dimension, IOM underlines that in most cases it is not straightforward whether the movement is forced or voluntary. Though, overall, it can be argued that IOM's focus has been on voluntary forms of mobility within the larger "migration as adaptation strategy" narrative, meaning different scenarios such as seasonal migration, while forced forms such as displacement and planned relocation come secondary. Another key finding is that terms and verbs that connote a forceful action are used almost exclusively when referring to the sudden-onset disasters, whereas UNHCR uses them in the context of slow-onset disasters as well.

Discussing responsibility and climate justice

Similar to UNHCR, IOM primarily distances the issue to the Global South based on current evidence (on which groups are affected by climatic changes the most) and future projections as the main bulk of climate migration and displacement is occurring and expected there. The most affected populations are shown to be least developed countries (due to their lower adaptation capacity), low-lying small island states and coastlines (due to their geographical location) and, within the society, communities that depend on agriculture for subsistence and socially and economically marginalized persons (due to fewer alternatives to diversify their livelihood) (IOM, 2014b, p. 2). The most cited examples of vulnerable areas include the Middle East, Africa, South Asia and South East Asia in general, and countries such as Tuvalu, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, the Philippines, Senegal in particular. For instance, the sea-level rise leads to coastal erosion, decreasing the size of arable land due to salinized soil and groundwater, and most of the metropolises that are densely populated are on the coastlines, such as in the South Asia and South East Asia.

Yet, differing from UNHCR, IOM rarely mentions the Global North as (potential and/or actual) places that (will) see the human impacts of climate change. Rather, much of the discussion is on whether climate migrants will move to the developed countries.

IOM warns against the alarmist discourse that appears in the media regarding mass migration towards the Global North, which is considered to be unlikely for a couple of reasons. According to IOM, (1) developing countries are expected to feel the human impacts of climate change the most, (2) most of the related mobility will be internal because long-distance travel is unlikely to be an affordable option for most of the affected people (3) in cases of cross-border movement, it is expected that migrants follow migratory routes based on cultural, family or historical ties. For instance, in 2009, Boncour (the then-Head of International Dialogue on Migration) argued that "[i]t may certainly be politically tempting to surf the "security wave" and argue that climate change will inundate the shores of the developed countries with millions of people in search of less hostile environments. Such arguments could be used as a justification for even more restrictive migration policies. […] However, such political short-sightedness does not stand up to reality" (pp.3-4).

Legitimizing the engagement

IOM justifies its engagement with the climate change-migration nexus mainly by the arguments that (1) IOM is the leading agency with a mandate on migration, (2) it has significant operational expertise in the context of disasters, and (3) Member States called upon IOM to address the issue. Remarkably, contrary to UNHCR, IOM does not emphasize the humanitarian obligation in explaining their engagement, which can be explained by the normative nature of UNHCR as a humanitarian agency with a protection mandate. For IOM, the first argument depends on establishing issue-linkages, which refers to the real or perceived causal relationship between different issues and can serve to political purposes (Haas, 1980). Issue-linkages are important as they can be used instrumentally by IOs "as a resource to advance their interests" and enable them "to appeal to the interests of another actor in exogenous issue areas as a means to shape endogenous negotiations in a given issue area" (Betts, 2010, p. 98). Given this, despite the uncertainty and ambiguity associated with the links between climate change and migration, IOM (as many other IOs including UNHCR) invokes issue-linkages in order to justify its extending role and mandate in another issue area and show its ongoing relevance (Betts, 2010, p. 94). Recognizing the link between climate change (or environmental factors in general) and migration, IOM is seen as one of the actors expected to be active in this field due to their mandate on migration. On a closer look,

this argument not only justifies the engagement but also positions IOM as the *primary* actor at the center of an emerging issue area because migration is a cross-cutting issue "beyond the so-called institutional divide between the humanitarian, development and environmental communities" all of which relate to climate migration and displacement (IOM, 2010a, p. 12). This self-positioning as the primary actor of the new issue area can be explained by IOM's entrepreneurial character and its need for ongoing projects for its survival given the organization's funding structure.

One early instance of this argument appears in the 2009 Policy Brief, which sets out this argument, as well as highlighting how IOM was interested in the issue in the past:

> "As the leading inter-governmental organization in the field of migration, IOM addresses linkages between the environment on the one hand and human settlement and population movement on the other hand from a human mobility perspective. IOM's involvement and interest in the relationship between migration and the environment is long established" (IOM, 2009a, p. 5).

In 2017, IOM restated why and how it is involved in the climate change-migration nexus in its submission for OHCHR's research in relation to Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/35/20 on human rights and climate change. The submission first underlined how IOM's mandate "allows it to work with migrants, refugees, displaced persons and others in need of migration services or assistance" as "the only inter - governmental organization exclusively focused on migration", implying that there is no mandate creep when it comes to climate migration as well (IOM, 2017b, p. 5). Second, the submission drew attention to IOM's operational expertise in justifying their involvement: "In the context of disasters, IOM is the leading agency on coordinating camp management, provides humanitarian relief, including shelter, non-food items and health support, supports communities to build their resilience and adapt to climate change, and provides socio-economic support to returnees in post-disaster contexts, catering to wide range of needs and rights" (IOM, 2017b, p. 6).

Another frequent argument is that Member States have called upon IOM to engage with the issue area and requested the institutional changes such as the establishment of a separate division focusing on environment and climate change. For instance, after reiterating that "as the leading intergovernmental agency working on migration" IOM recognizes the need to address "human mobility challenges associated with

environmental factors and climate change", the 2018 info sheet explains the institutional changes with Member States' request in that direction:

> "Since 2007, Member States have requested IOM to report on its work on migration, environment and climate change within its governing bodies, including at its Council, the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finances and the International Dialogue on Migration. In 2014, Member States requested IOM to scale up action on migration environment and climate change, which led to the establishment of the Migration, Environment and Climate Change (MECC) Division in 2015" (IOM, 2018a, p. 2).

This argument simply reflects IOM's higher dependency on Member States as also suggested by previous literature on IOM. By stressing the demands of Member States, the arguments regarding "agency slack" is avoided. While here the initial engagement with climate change is traced back to Member States' requests, in fact, the push for expansion had come from IOM itself at the 2007 Council Meeting where IOM *convinced* the states to hold a discussion relating to environment, climate change, and migration (Hall, 2016).

Promoting policy ideas: Climate migration as an adaptation strategy

Overall, the prevailing discourse in IOM's texts can be named as "climate migration as an adaptation strategy". IOM disagrees that migration is a "failure to adapt" to a given condition. Quite the contrary, IOM advocates that migration is not necessarily a negative outcome which can add to pre-existent vulnerabilities but rather it should be recognized as adaptation strategy that can help building resilience (IOM, 2009a; 2014b, pp. 1-3; 2018a, p. 3). Particularly at the early and intermediate stages of environmental degradation, migration is argued to help "manage risks, diversify livelihoods and cope with environmental changes affecting their ways of life" (IOM, 2014b, p. 2). For instance, it can help people reduce "reliance on the environment for livelihoods by allowing, for example, for income diversification through remittances", by strengthening the livelihoods of the sending communities through the transfer of knowledge and skills by migrants (IOM, 2009a, p. 2). In this context, IOM underlines that migration has always been a natural human response to changing conditions in the environment as a way of adaptation. For instance, as a caption of a camel herder's photo, IOM's 2009 Policy Brief suggests that "migration has long been a strategy by which humans adapt to their environment". IOM's publications also give the examples

of communities that have been ““[e]ating the dry season” by sending a family member to the nearest city” in the face of harsh environmental conditions or how some of them, such as “pastoralist or nomadic communities in the Sahel, in the Middle East or Mongolia, have turned this practice into a way of living” (IOM, 2010a, p. 3). In this sense, climate migration provides an alternative to permanent migration and can foster sustainable development by strengthening the resilience and adaptive capacities of vulnerable populations to climate-related hazards and disasters (relating to SDG Targets 1.5, 11.5, 11.b and 13.1). These linkages (to historical human response to environmental conditions and to development) helps depoliticizing and normalizing human impacts of climate change.

This perspective is reiterated in IOM’s texts of different genres targeted at different audience (political actors, experts or public) and IOM is one of the first promoters of this discourse at the international arena. Prior to the Copenhagen UNFCCC COP meeting in 2009, IOM, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Norwegian Refugee Council, and researchers at the United Nations University – Institute for Environment and Human Security formed an alliance to support for framing migration as an adaptation strategy. The alliance lobbied the delegates at the UNFCCC actively in Copenhagen (2009) and in Cancún (2010) to include migration as adaptation in the final agreement. These efforts proved successful at Cancún. The above-mentioned alliance had drafted Paragraph 14(f) of the Cancun Adaptation Framework (decision 1/CP.16), which reads as follows:

> “Invites all Parties to enhance action on adaptation under the Cancun Adaptation Framework, taking into account their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, and specific national and regional development priorities, objectives and circumstances, by undertaking, inter alia, the following:
>
> (f) Measures to enhance understanding, coordination and cooperation with regard to climate change induced displacement, migration and planned relocation, where appropriate, at the national, regional and international levels” (UNFCCC, 2011).

This is the first-ever mention of any form of human mobility under the UNFCCC and so far, has proved to be interpreted in various ways (Serdeczny, 2017). As an example of IOM's engagement at the UNFCCC COP 16 Plenary session in Cancún, Lacy Swing highlighted that the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on migration and displacement is already being realized and that especially

in the slow-onset disasters, "people are learning to use migration as a strategy to adapt to their changing environment" (IOM, 2010b, p. 1). Further emphasizing the need to include migration as part of the response to climate change, he maintained that "[e]nvironmentally-induced migration need not be a worst case scenario" and "[e]ven this type of migration does contribute to development in countries of origin and destination" (p.2).

Regarding the advanced stages of environmental degradation, however, IOM has slightly changed its perspective over time. Around 2010, when the "migration as adaptation" narrative has just started to form, forced migration was rather considered as a survival strategy.[11] Yet, around 2015, the "migration as adaptation" narrative has expanded to cover displacement scenarios, which were previously considered to be a survival strategy or failure to adapt. Adaptation has come to be understood as any type of response that enables humans to cope with the external changes to either improve living conditions or *survive* their adverse impacts. This perspective is emphasized by IOM on many occasions, the following quote from a 2015 article published by the head of MECC Division and an associate expert is one of many examples: "When people decide or are forced to move due to environmental and climatic changes – whether sudden or slow – their mobility is an adaptation strategy that allows them to minimize harm for themselves and/or improve their overall lives" (Ionesco & Chazalnoel, 2015). As discussed in the section on nomination and agency, in this narrative, the vulnerable people who are even "forced" to move out of their homes and would lack economic and social capital to migrate are portrayed as entrepreneurial agents that can improve their lives at the same time.

In line with this argumentation, IOM's main policy recommendations aim at linking climate migration and adaptation, with a particular emphasis on applying "migration management" tools and practices to prevent and mitigate the adverse impacts of such migration (on host communities and the environment) and creating a win-win situation for the sending and host communities. Migration management cycle in the context of climate change is summarized by IOM as: "minimize forced migration as much as possible; where forced migration does occur, ensure assistance and protection for the people affected, while looking at durable solutions; facilitate the role

[11] See, for instance, Lacy Swing's speech at COP 16 in 2010, referring to scenarios where migration can become "a matter of sheer survival" or 2009 Policy Brief.

of migration as an adaptation strategy to climate change"(IOM, 2010a, p. 4). In brief, IOM's policy recommendations principally concentrate on integrating environmental factors and climate change into different areas of migration management, such as prevention, preparedness and response to displacement, border management, labor migration, return and reintegration (see for instance IOM, 2018a).

6.3 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the ways in which UNHCR and IOM differ in terms of nomination, predication and argumentation strategies when it comes to climate migration and displacement (see Table 6.1).

In terms of nomination, UNHCR chooses to refer to the affected people as "displaced persons" and differentiates them from voluntary migrants and refugees, whereas IOM prefers the term "climate migrants". In terms of predication strategies, it is found that although both IOM and UNHCR underline that they are vulnerable on many dimensions, IOM's climate migrants are active, adaptive and hopeful subjects which bring opportunities to both sending and host communities, whereas UNHCR's displaced persons due to climate change are mostly represented as "victims" of climate change and have little agency. Still, given the increasing skepticism about agency-lacking portrayal of displaced people from Global South (Ongenaert et al., 2022), a more "positive" representation of coexist in UNHCR's texts but does not yet dominate the agency-lacking representation. In terms of argumentation strategies, the impacts of their organizational type, mandates and funding structures are again visible (see the next chapter). The scholarly debate on human impacts of climate change associates it to high uncertainty and ambiguity (Betts, 2010). Against this uncertainty and ambiguity, both UNHCR and IOM make claims on the causal relationship between climate change and human mobility and establishes issue-linkages between their mandates and climate change in differing ways in order to justify their relevance and expansion of their activities. While IOM mainly considers climate change as one of the many migration drivers (therefore, mostly voluntary), UNHCR mainly links the issue to not only its mandate on IDPs by focusing on the disaster displacement but also its mandate on refugees by referring to how climate change acts as a threat multiplier contributing to the conflict in some contexts. The causal relationship between climate change and human mobility is, therefore, constructed more directly by UNHCR, while both

organizations underline that most of the mobility will be internal. There are also striking differences when it comes to policy objectives and how responsibility is discussed, again reflecting the constraining (or enabling) role of institutional structures and policy inheritances, which is discussed further in detail in the next chapter. Overall, UNHCR, as a normative agency, frames climate migration and displacement from a humanitarian perspective. It focuses on protection needs of the displaced people and does not refrain from attributing responsibility to states to take action against climate change and develop new protection mechanisms for the affected people. On the other hand, IOM frames climate migration as a form of adaptation to changing environment, which helps building resilience in the sending community. In terms of policy objectives, therefore, IOM mainly focuses on facilitating labor migration options and follows the migration management approach.

By identifying their nomination, predication and argumentation strategies in detail, this chapter laid the groundwork for the interpretation and explanation of discursive differences and policy ideas promoted by UNHCR and IOM. The next chapter, in light of constructivist and historical institutionalisms, comparatively interprets and explains the use of different discursive themes by taking into account issue-specific and institutional factors enabling the differences.

Table 6.1: Summary of the discursive strategies of UNHCR and IOM

	UNHCR's dominant discourse	**IOM's dominant discourse**
Nomination	Displaced persons due to climate change and disasters; not necessarily migrants nor refugees Caveats on the term "climate refugees"	Climate migrants Caveats on the term "climate refugees"
Agency & Predication	Mostly limited agency, but alternative representations coexist	Wider room for agency Active, embarks on labor

	Passive, forced out of their homes Vulnerable subjects with protection needs, victims of climate change Mostly from the Global South	migration Vulnerable but entrepreneur, self-reliant and resilient actors, adapting to the changing environment and contributing to host and sending communities Mostly from the Global South
Argumentation		
Causality	Both indirect and direct causal links are assumed Climate change as (1) an exacerbating factor to disasters and other migration drivers, (2) threat multiplier	Climate change is rarely the sole driver of migration (the complexity argument) More sceptic and nuanced approach, emphasizes the lack of reliable data
Forms of mobility	Mostly forced and internal, temporary or permanent	Mostly voluntary and internal in the context of slow-onset disasters, mostly temporary
Legitimation of institutional engagement	Legal authority due to UNHCR's mandate Moral authority as a rights-based humanitarian agency Expert authority due to their expertise in displacement scenarios and protection	Legal authority due to IOM's mandate on migration and Member States' call Expert authority due to their expertise in camp management
Policy objectives	Development of protection mechanisms, such as temporary protection, for	Developing temporary and circular labor migration schemes with ecologically vulnerable communities in order to

	displaced people Climate action (e.g. investments in climate mitigation, adaptation, resilience) DRR measures Planned relocation as a last resort	minimize forced migration Mainstreaming environmental and climate change considerations into migration management policies and practice
Responsibility	Global South as affected populations Global North as both affected and potential destination countries, Global North also has the greatest responsibility in tackling the issue	Global South as affected populations Global North – mostly missing from the analyses No direct responsibility in line with the "migration as adaptation" narrative

Chapter 7: **THE IMPACTS OF UNCERTAINTY AND INSTITUTIONAL DESIGN**

As outlined in the previous chapter, the discourses adopted by IOM and UNHCR on climate change, migration and displacement have significant differences in terms of their terminological choices and argumentation strategies, which in turn inform their policy objectives (see Table 6.1). Through the lens of constructivist and historical institutionalisms, this chapter interprets and explains the differences by taking into account a combination of institutional and issue-specific factors: 1) the level of uncertainty and ambiguity surrounding the issue, 2) organization type (with a focus on the differences between functional and normative organizations), and 3) the degree of autonomy (depending on funding structure and mandate).

Although all social and political events are social constructs, inherently ambiguous and open to change, the concepts of "climate migrants/refugees" were only nascent and lacked a norm when UNHCR and IOM first started to produce policy papers on the issue. The same uncertainty and ambiguity applied to their Member States which lacked an understanding (let alone a *common* understanding) of the issue and were not able to provide a relatively unambiguous delegation related to the issue to UNHCR and IOM. Therefore, high uncertainty and ambiguity of the human impacts of climate change as a new issue area have provided an even wider room to UNHCR and IOM for interpreting and constructing the issue-linkages between climate change and human mobility in noticeably different ways. However, the imaginable limits of these issue-linkages depended on each organization's epistemic standards and institutional features.

Additionally, as argued by constructivist institutionalism, all institutional settings provide agents "a variety of competing narratives and discourses which might in turn inform very different policy sets or responses" (Hay, 2016). Therefore, although the institutional context does not determine the particular discourse, it shapes the set of options available to the institutionally embedded actors. The findings of CDA also affirm that the role of institutional context was accentuated in shaping the limits of the policy deliberations at UNHCR and IOM when expanding to a new issue area. A diverse set of institutional factors (mainly their organizational types, degree of autonomy, policy inheritances etc.) help explaining why UNHCR considers the phenomenon as "displacement", establishes more direct links between climate change and human mobility despite migration literature's skepticism against direct causality, frames it as a protection issue and pursues an advocacy agenda, whereas IOM names it as "climate migration" and frames it in a neoliberal logic and more positively as a form of adaptation strategy to climate change. By interpreting the findings of CDA, I firstly affirm previous literature's claims regarding the differences between normative (UNHCR) and functional (IOM) organizations when engaging with a new issue area through different logics of behavior (logic of appropriateness vs. consequences) and by seeking different sources of legitimacy (moral vs. pragmatic) (Hall, 2016). Second, I expand the explanation for UNHCR and IOM by focusing on the degree of autonomy in terms of how policy actions are taken, and which policy ideas are promoted against (or in line with) the interests of their Member States.

Before discussing the institutional and issue-specific factors, it should be noted that these factors do not necessarily outweigh the contextual factors which are in a dialectic relationship with discursive practices. Independent of the institutional factors, a careful consideration should be also given to the political context in which the terms "refugee" and "migrants" have increasingly become highly polarizing. In the aftermath of World War II, many European countries considered immigrants to be a source of flexible and cheap labor force which can help filling in the gaps in the domestic labor market (Huysmans, 2006, p. 6). Yet, the European immigration policy has taken a new turn towards curbing "unwanted flows" since the 1970s, with increased control following changes in the labor market and efforts to protect the domestic workers' rights (Joppke, 2011, p. 17). Although alternative views on migration have always existed, the political debate on migration has started to become increasingly hostile towards immigrants, associating them to the destabilization of public order (Huysmans, 2006, p. 66; Trombetta, 2017, p. 140). This has intensified in the mid-1980s, as the boundaries between immigration and asylum were blurred through the representation of asylum "as an alternative route for economic immigration" (Huysmans, 2006, p. 66). The securitization of migration has interacted with multiple factors, such as the weakening welfare state provisions after the 1980s, the fear of refugee influx due to the end of the Cold War, terrorist attacks in New York in 2001 and Madrid in 2004, and most recently, the migration "crisis" of 2015 and the rise of far-right parties. In this context, let alone creating a new category for protection, most countries intend to reduce the number of asylum seekers in the first place. Therefore, the political context has made it tricky to discuss the category of environmental (or climate) migrants (or refugees) who are most likely to be associated with "unwanted immigrants", in a similar fashion for the asylum seekers and refugees since the mid-1980s (Trombetta, 2017). The impact of this polarized context is particularly evident in how climate migrants and displaced persons are represented as either deserving victims (such as children and women) or resourceful and hardworking agents, closer to "whiteness" and acceptable to Westerners (Ongenaert et al., 2022, p. 20), as well as how both organizations' policy ideas respond to migration management paradigms, though in different ways.

While this thesis focuses on the effects of issue-specific and institutional factors on IOM and UNHCR's discourses on climate change-related mobility, these discourses do not exist in a vacuum and cannot be fully interpreted without taking into account the

global and national political contexts in which they are operating. In addition, being international organizations, both IOM and UNHCR, by definition, cannot be as independent as non-governmental organizations from the political debates and the interests of their Member States when shaping their discourses and operations. Illustrative of this impact, at the IOM's 110th Council meeting in November 2019, it was acknowledged that since "the political debate on migration has become more sensitive and more polarized", IOM has to "navigate a public debate where every word and action has become charged with meaning" (IOM, 2019, p. 2). Both UNHCR and IOM are operating in the same global context, and the highly securitized discourse and social practices on migration certainly impact their own discourses and social practices around climate change, migration and displacement as well. Therefore, the following sections balances the interpretation of the effects of securitization of migration for each organization and the main purpose of this thesis, namely, to explain the causes of discursive differences on climate migration and displacement.

7.1 Deliberating policies in the face of uncertainty and ambiguity: Wider room for interpretation

Uncertainty is among the challenges that states and IOs must tackle on an ongoing basis and some policy areas are more prone to uncertainty. One function of IOs is to reduce uncertainty by producing knowledge and institutionalizing knowledge production practices (Rathbun, 2007). IOs construct knowledge by fixing categories and meanings, and also diffuse them (Barnett & Finnemore, 1999), along with the epistemic tools to construct them (Nay, 2014) and they have more freedom when member states lack a clear and cohesive policy on an issue area (Barnett & Finnemore, 2004; McKittrick, 2008, p. 18). Given that norms prescribing appropriate action is absent on this issue (Mayer, 2012b), climate migration and displacement are also associated with uncertainty (i.e. lack of meaning in the absence of norms and identities) and the internationally agreed policy texts relating to it are considered ambiguous. Yet, how do IOs themselves develop policies in the face of uncertainty? Based on constructivist and historical institutionalisms, this section argues that uncertainty and ambiguity inherent in the issue of climate migration and displacement (as any other social and political event), as well as the lack of clear and coherent delegation from the states, are among the factors that give UNHCR and IOM a wide room for interpretation and flexibility in

policy deliberations and increase the impact of the institutional factors on sense-making of a new issue-area.

While climate science has become relatively uncontested, the migration literature underlines that "the relationship between environment – let alone climate change – and human mobility is inherently ambiguous" with no "certain, known or unambiguous material relationship" (Betts, 2010, p. 90). Epistemic uncertainty, in this case, mainly arises from the limits to knowledge on human mobility in general and the lack of knowledge or meaning on how climate change interacts with other migration drivers. In social sciences, human mobility is acknowledged to be a complex and multi-causal phenomenon, with multiple migration drivers interacting with each other and diverse combinations of predisposing, mediating and proximate factors. A systematic literature review on migration drivers identified at least 24 categories of migration drivers, all of which interact in many ways (Czaika & Reinprecht, 2020). The future development of these drivers, as well as data and measurement, are also mostly uncertain. Unlike some other demographics with clearer definitions (e.g. birth, marriage, divorce), migration is measured by "putting arbitrary boundaries" on two dimensions: space (how far someone should move to be considered as internal or international migrant) and time (how long their stay should be) (Bijak & Czaika, 2020, p. 13). Likewise, as a social construct, migration statistics also reflect political priorities of the contexts and times in which they were collected (Bijak & Czaika, 2020, p. 14). In terms of modelling forecasts and scenarios, there are also additional uncertainties due to model specification, parameters, the extent of expert knowledge needed. For instance, topics related to climate change highly rely on knowledge of experts and results of scientific research, and the attribution of climatic events to climate change is not always straightforward, making it harder to delineate climate migration from environmental migration. In terms of ontological uncertainty, there is an inherent and irreducible uncertainty due to the chaotic behavior of natural disasters (which particularly applies to sudden-onset disasters). Even though there are certain climate hotspots, and it is known that natural disasters do happen and are only going to intensify in time due to climate change, their exact location, timing, magnitude or human impact remain unpredictable. In addition, beyond the migration policies and migration drivers, at the micro-level, individual decision-making in any context remains largely aleatory due to free will and choice (Bijak & Czaika, 2020, p. 18).

In summary, the issue area of climate migration and displacement is prone to uncertainty, and the boundaries between epistemic uncertainty and ontological uncertainty are sometimes blurred. Various sources of epistemic uncertainties are particularly relevant in the context of slow-onset climatic events such as droughts, which are more likely to interact with other predisposing migration factors. At the initial stages of UNHCR and IOM's engagement with this issue, there were also very few (both qualitative or quantitative) scientific studies on the relation between climate change and human mobility. Therefore, epistemic uncertainty was high with regards to climate change's interaction with other migration drivers, data and measurement, and modelling of forecasts and scenarios. On the other hand, ontological uncertainties also render attempts to forecast climate migration and displacement largely futile. While there have been considerable improvements in climate science, models, methods and datasets on the issue, the forecasts of the existing studies have also been at significant variance (ranging from 100-150 million by 2050 to 1.4 billion by 2060) (Durand-Delacre et al., 2021). Overall, these uncertainties hint at the need to shift the focus to contingency plans and risk reduction, rather than predicting the future flows. Still, quantification remains an essential part of the migration management approach (e.g. IOM's regular emphasis on the need for more and better data on the issue).

Then, how do uncertainty and ambiguity impact IOs' policy ideas? Natorski (2015), by drawing on constructivist and historical institutionalisms, argues that actors seek *epistemic coherence* in the face of uncertainty. As a background to both institutionalisms, in building policy ideas, while constructivist institutionalists underline the role of agency, historical institutionalists stress structural factors that regulate the role of agency and the policy process (Mahoney & Thelen, 2009; Streeck & Thelen, 2005 quoted in Natorski, 2015). Both institutionalisms concede that epistemic coherence can help actors understand a phenomenon (including the ones that challenge existing categories and definitions) and guide their responses to it.

According to Natorski (2015), if the interpretation of the uncertain phenomenon can be framed based on "existing epistemic schemes of coherence", actors maintain the policy coherence (p.17). Epistemic coherence is "an intersubjective standard for assessing epistemic validity in a given institutional context constructed in opposition to other possible epistemic dispositions" (p.5). As an institutional feature, it creates both

opportunities and boundaries for actors when deliberating policies. In the context of uncertainty, information can be ordered and simplified by using different epistemic tools, which can include metaphors, narratives, legal texts, or economic models (Natorski, 2015, p. 4). Such epistemic tools aim at creating coherence, which is associated with simplicity (p.5). Therefore, as it helps reducing the anxiety of uncertainty, agents seek coherence. In addition, since epistemic coherence is a form of social convention and an institutional standard shared by the agents of an institution, it helps legitimizing policy ideas.

In brief, according to this view, institutional settings shape actors' deliberation on policy ideas and their capacity to act. Existing institutions are the space for policy deliberation, but they are not necessarily deterministic and interact with agents (Bell, 2011; Hay & Wincott, 1998 quoted in Natorski, 2015). Agents, when generating ideas, face institutions, which are "relatively enduring features of political and social life (rules, norms, procedures) that structure behaviour' (Mahoney & Thelen, 2009, p.4 quoted in Natorski, 2015, p.8). Similarly, rooted in historical institutionalism, the concept of *policy inheritance* also suggests that policies are "not made in a vacuum" but "built on previous policy decisions" (Jones & Baumgartner, 2007, p. 49). Therefore, there is a limited room for agents to depart from the previous patterns of engagement. This view, thus, underlines the role of endogenous factors in creating resistance to a dramatic change in developing new policy ideas. For example, this is evident in why UNHCR staff was initially hesitant to talk about "climate refugees" due to the limited understanding of refugee status based on the criteria spelled out in the 1951 Refugee Convention (McNamara, 2007).

Therefore, following these strands of institutionalisms, it would be expected that when addressing issues associated with uncertainty, IOs are more likely to seek epistemic coherence, maintain policy continuity, and frame the new issue under the influence of their institutional settings and policy inheritances. The findings of CDA also reflect these expectations. For instance, IOM framed climate change as one of the many drivers of migration, which adds to the complexity of migration decision, which is a narrative that is coherent with its epistemic standards and policies. IOM has also continued to maintain its non-normative representation of migration by employing a neoliberal logic and situating the discourse on climate change-related mobility to its

general migration management approach which has been applied to other forms of mobility for long (Pécoud, 2018). On the other hand, UNHCR framed climate change as a cause of displacement, therefore of forced nature, which was the only way for resonating with its staff who considered the issue to be outside their refugee mandate and were initially hesitant to engage with climate change (see previous literature based on interviews with UNHCR staff, McNamara, 2007). Despite the initial refusal to discuss "climate refugees", UNHCR's consequent discourses have reproduced UNHCR's "humanitarian savior logics", which has been long observed for other groups of forcibly displaced persons (Ongenaert et al., 2022). Therefore, being uncertain and ambiguous, the causal relationship between climate change and human mobility might have been constructed by UNHCR and IOM in ways that reflect their epistemic standards of sense-making and policy inheritances.

Counterfactually, if the concept of climate change-related mobility were not as uncertain and ambiguous as it was at the initial stages of IOM and UNHCR's engagement, the differences would be smaller since there would have been less room for interpretation, mainly because delegation from the member states would be less ambiguous. As evidence to this, there is an increasing coexistence of discourses in both organizations following the international policy processes and the adoption of internationally agreed texts on climate change, migration and displacement (such as Platform on Disaster Displacement or Preamble reference to climate migration in Paris Agreement in 2015). These processes and texts help constructing a shared understanding of the causal relationship between climate change and human mobility at the international level, even if still not at the stage of norm emergence.

7.2 Institutional design shaping the limits of policy deliberation

In light of the theoretical framework provided by constructivist and historical institutionalisms outlined in Chapter 3, this section examines the institutional differences which are reflected in UNHCR and IOM's differing discourses and patterns of engagement with climate change-related mobility. In this section, I argue that given the wide room for interpretation of the issue in the absence of a norm around it, UNHCR and IOM frame climate change-related mobility under heavier influence of their institutional contexts (outlined in detail in Chapter 5), for different political purposes and through different logics of behavior.

Table 7.1: Summary of the institutional contexts of UNHCR and IOM

Organization	**IOM**	**UNHCR**
Type	Functional	Normative
Source of legitimacy	Pragmatic legitimacy	Moral legitimacy
Behavioral logic	Logic of consequences	Logic of appropriateness
Mandate	Migration; relatively flexible	Refugees (core mandate), IDPs, statelessness; relatively strict
Funding system	Voluntary contributions, project-based	Voluntary contributions, annual budget
Level of autonomy	Lower	Higher

In explaining the differences in their engagement patterns and how they justify their engagement with a new issue area, the differentiation between normative and functional organizations proves useful (see Table 7.1). Although the typology was originally used by Hall (2013) to explain the extent and/or timing of institutional engagement with a new issue area, it also helps explaining discursive differences after the initial engagement. According to the typology, there are two ideal types of IOs: normative and functional. Normative organizations have a specific mandate to oversee and supervise norms in an international law regime and are firmly committed to their core mandate. They have a particular kind of "moral legitimacy" over the regime they supervise and their behavioral logic is "logic of appropriateness" (Hall, 2013, p. 94). For moral legitimacy, the universal welfare is above the interests of particular constituents, and a normative IO's moral legitimacy is mostly limited to the international convention that they oversee. Hall argues that normative IOs need to "seek ongoing acceptance that the issues and activities they pursue fall within the scope of their moral legitimacy" (2013, p. 94). Therefore, unless new issues cannot be substantively and meaningfully linked to their mandates, normative organizations do not expand their activities. Examples of normative organizations include the International Labor Organization, holding supervisory authority on international labor conventions, and UNHCR, on the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1961 Statelessness Convention. Functional organizations,

on the other hand, exist to carry out specific tasks, operate mainly based on projects and seek to expand financing opportunities and affirm their relevance by maintaining and generating "pragmatic legitimacy" (Hall, 2013, p.93). IOM classifies in this category as it was established to provide migration transportation service and holds no supervisory authority in the international migration law. Functional organizations seek to prove pragmatic legitimacy and demonstrate to their constituents/donors that they merit the funding by proficiently delivering on their tasks. Therefore, Hall argues that functional organizations tend to "bandwagon" to engage with another regime if they can attract resources from more donors (2015, p.82).

Based on these expected behavior patterns, organizational type explains IOM and UNHCR's differing terminological choices (i.e. climate displacement vs. climate migration) and argumentation strategies in justifying their engagement with climate change-related mobility. UNHCR was initially more cautious to start engaging with the issue and, after the initial engagement, it was particularly protective of the scope of its core mandate. Frequent references to the 1951 Refugee Convention in explaining why "climate refugees" is not an acceptable term attest to that. On the other hand, IOM's initial engagement has been rather smooth, the staff showed little resistance, and conceptually it was easier for IOM to place the phenomenon under migration category, which is almost a blanket term and is less politically charged and non-normative. Yet, despite being protective of its refugee mandate, UNHCR has not simply placed climate change-related mobility under migration category either. In most cases, UNHCR opts for naming this phenomenon as displacement and also underlines the protection needs of the displaced persons, which reflects its logic of behavior as a humanitarian agency (i.e. logic of appropriateness).

As discussed in detail earlier, UNHCR justifies its engagement by referring to its 1) legal authority due to UNHCR's mandate, 2) moral authority as a rights-based humanitarian agency, and 3) expert authority due to their expertise in displacement scenarios and protection. IOM, on the other hand, underlines 1) its mandate on migration and Member States calling on IOM to action and 2) expert authority due to their expertise in camp management (see Table 6.1). The notable difference is UNHCR's focus on normative dimensions of the issue by underlining its moral authority, which affirms its distinctive behavior pattern as a normative organization.

IOM's argumentation strategies also confirm the assumptions regarding functional organizations' behavior. Its engagement with climate change is firstly explained on the basis of the demands of individual Member States, therefore any concerns regarding an "agency slack" (which were often raised by some Member States) are avoided. At the initial phases of its institutional engagement, at the annual council meeting in November 2008, IOM's Director General McKinley announced climate change among strategic priorities. While direct responses to this announcement is lacking from official records, at this meeting, some Member States voiced their concerns about "mandate creep" due to IOM's expansion (both in terms of membership and scope of activities) (IOM, 2009b, p. 6). A particular cause for concern was the possibility of IOM assuming a normative role and drifting away from its function to help Member States formulate migration policies. They insisted IOM to establish its work consistent with the 12 strategic activities defined in the Strategy. The Director General assured that there "should be no mandate creep" and that IOM "would always provide compelling evidence of linkages" between its work and the 12 strategic activities (IOM, 2009b, p. 6). On the other hand, Member States welcomed that the Director General was prioritizing "increased consultation with Member States so as to enhance their sense of ownership of the Organization". In brief, despite its entrepreneurial character and flexible mandate allowing it to have broad range of activities, there are still many structural constraints on IOM's possibilities to put a normative pressure on its Member States. Given many disquiets raised by some Member States regarding IOM's expansion and "mandate creep", it is no surprise that IOM predominantly justifies its work on climate change based on issue-linkages to its mandate and instances of Member States calling IOM to action and does not push for a protection agenda.

In addition, IOM seeks pragmatic legitimacy by emphasizing its expertise in camp management and the relevance of their work in the field. On the other hand, while such arguments are not lacking from UNHCR's argumentation strategies in explaining the engagement, there are prominent differences such as the emphasis on humanitarian obligation and the caution around the refugee mandate. These differences fit in the behavior pattern of normative organizations. Indeed, UNHCR's core mandate as a refugee agency has shaped both the pace and the nature of its engagement with climate change. Having a moral legitimacy over the refugee regime, UNHCR is cautious of extending the definition of refugees to include "climate refugees" since it would risk

questioning the legitimacy of the existing regime. Still, UNHCR chose to engage with climate change-related mobility with the persistent demands of the senior staff (namely then High Commissioner Antonio Guterres) despite Member States' (including many top donors) resistance. UNHCR had to lobby countries and to justify this engagement. Previous literature has also put forward that UNHCR has a "significant degree of independence in how it has defined its own identity" and "UNHCR's direction of change has frequently contradicted, rather than complied with, the preferences of major donors" (Betts, 2012, pp. 136-138). In addition, normative IOs seek ongoing acceptance around their activities to maintain their moral legitimacy. Therefore, UNHCR had to carefully consider and frame climate change-related mobility and justify this engagement appropriately in order to preserve its moral legitimacy over the refugee regime. Besides its refugee mandate, UNHCR is also responsible for the protection of IDPs as part of the Cluster Approach. These explain to an extent why UNHCR chooses to frame climate change-related mobility as a form of displacement and, above all, as a protection issue. The issue-linkages between climate change and internal displacement were persistently forged by UNHCR, emphasizing that climate change will predominantly lead to internal displacement, though not directly refugee movements (except for very few cases where climate change interacts with the drivers of persecution defined in the 1951 Refugee Convention). In this context, it was stressed that UNHCR's mandate does not cover those who moved across international borders due to natural disasters, except for stateless persons. By framing climate change-related mobility as a form of (predominantly internal) displacement, even in the most debated cases where it is hard to differentiate voluntary and forceful nature of the movement, UNHCR establishes that their engagement is not an "agency slack" but legitimate. This firstly allows protecting the legitimacy of the core mandate (i.e. refugee mandate) by being considerate of the legal definitions and not stretching them. Secondly, it ensures that the new issue is still within the boundaries of UNHCR's add-on mandates and is suitable to UNHCR's general stance as a humanitarian agency.

Other differences that exemplify the role of organizational type include how the agency of "climate migrants" is constructed and the offered policy actions, which are closely interconnected. Regarding agency, in UNHCR's texts, the subjects are predominantly "displaced persons", portrayed with little agency, who are vulnerable persons in need of protection and forced out of their homes due to climatic changes

(including both sudden- and slow-onset disasters). In contrast, IOM's "climate migrants" are mostly voluntary migrants, who embark on labor migration, for which migration is a form of adaptation but not of survival. Yet, at the same time, they are represented as "vulnerable" on many dimensions, reflecting a paradox of the climate migrants as both victim and agent. Despite many vulnerabilities, IOM's climate migrants are entrepreneurial agents who can adapt to the changes in their environment, diversify livelihoods and help building resilience of their communities. The difference is stark. While UNHCR's "climate displacement" narrative, where the affected people are "victims" of climate change, is not as alarmist as "climate refugees" discourse, it is more negative than IOM's "climate migrants" narrative. The "climate migration as adaptation strategy" narrative is rather positive, depoliticizes the issue and has a neoliberal logic. It puts pressure off the political actors as the affected individuals can improve their conditions by their own means. This is again consistent with the expected behavior pattern of a functional organization, as it does not endorse a normative stance. IOM has also repeatedly underlined that their definition of climate migration is strictly non-normative but operational.

Similarly, the organizational type also impacts the policy objectives and solutions endorsed by IOM and UNHCR. As outlined above, following IOM's increased engagement with new issue areas (including environment and climate change), Member States were particularly wary of the possibility of "mandate creep" and the expansion of its scope of programming. The Director General had assured them that they will "engage cooperatively and thoughtfully in emerging fields such as elections and climate change" (IOM, 2009b, p. 6). Against this backdrop, if IOM were to endorse a protection agenda for climate migrants and displaced persons, it would have faced considerable backlash from Member States.

In this respect, IOM and UNHCR's different levels of autonomy prove to be relevant, which certainly impact their discourses on politically sensitive topics, such as climate change. In terms of their degrees of autonomy, previous literature suggests that contrary to the principal-agent theory, UNHCR has been significantly autonomous. For instance, Betts (2012) finds that "UNHCR's direction of change has frequently contradicted, rather than complied with, the preferences of major donors" (p.136). Furthermore, even when the direction of change complied with their preferences, "the

initiative for change has often come from UNHCR, rather than donor states" (p.136). Similarly, Barnett and Finnemore (2004) argue that by exploiting its sources of authority (delegated, moral and expert), UNHCR has been a "policy leader", "setting the agenda in their domain of action and cajoling states to adopt it" (p.11).

On the other hand, literature on IOM suggests that it has a relatively (though not completely) limited autonomy, rarely goes against the state interests, and that "unlike IOs with a normative mandate, IOM never criticizes its member-states and is unlikely to resist implementing projects that would be incompatible with its (non-existent) standards" (Pécoud, 2018, p. 1629). Rather, by "depoliticizing and making political measures sound technical and therefore more acceptable", IOM has leveraged its "neutrality" and expert authority in expanding its work and increasing the role of the organization, which is argued to have penalized UNHCR (Pécoud, 2018; Wunderlich, 2012, p. 496). IOM has also been criticized in terms of challenging only non-Western states. Pécoud (2018) argues that "[w]hile IOM can indeed display autonomy, it can only challenge the (weak) sovereignty of non-Western states – leaving untouched the power of Western governments" (p. 1627).

Their funding systems also help contextualizing why IOM would have smaller autonomy than UNHCR. In terms of funding, although both IOM and UNHCR's budgets depend on voluntary contributions and their main donors are similar, there are some differences. UNHCR has an *annual budget*, which, unlike most UN agencies', predominantly relies on voluntary contributions from governments, the European Union, individuals and the private sector. For instance, contributions from UN Regular Budget made up only 1% of UNHCR's budget for 2021. UNHCR has also recently developed four pillars (i.e. refugee programme, stateless programme, reintegration projects and IDP projects). Based on needs assessment for each pillar, the expenditure and budget required for the following year are published in UNHCR's Global Appeal report. On the other hand, IOM relies on voluntary contributions but *on project basis* – i.e. IOM must appeal to donors for specific projects, and therefore, needs to have active projects to ensure organization's survival. This pushes IOM to be involved not only in projects of interest to donors, but also in specific ways favored by donors in order to secure future funding from them. In addition, donors frequently audit IOM programmes and outline "the weaknesses of certain projects, or the gap between discourses and

practices", which can be quite critical (Pécoud, 2018, pp. 1622-1623). Still, it should be stressed that these differences are only in relative terms. It does not necessarily mean UNHCR does not face constraints due to its funding structure and pursues a strong advocacy programme on climate change and displacement. While UNHCR may be more autonomous than IOM as its funding system is annual and not project-based and it holds legal and moral authority, UNHCR is still dependent on voluntary contributions and has no permanent funding allocation from the UN.

Given the differences in their degrees of autonomy, how IOM and UNHCR discuss the issue of *responsibility* and *climate justice* in the context of migration and displacement can be explained. It can be predicted that UNHCR is at relative liberty (compared to IOM) to call its donors to action in a politically sensitive topic such as climate change thanks to not only its normative authority (which is only restricted to refugee regime in theory) but also its funding structure making it less reliant on ongoing donor approval. On the other hand, being a service-provider and being funded for projects that it should deliver with the guidance of the donors, IOM might tend to avoid discussing and attributing responsibility to any of its Member States.

Overall, the findings affirm that IOM's discourse shies away from challenging Member States and attributing a humanitarian (or even logistical) responsibility to them with regards to climate change and its human impacts. In many cases, what is missing from IOM's discussion is not only the scientifically well-documented responsibility of Global North countries for historical carbon emissions, but also the call for climate action in general. Partly because most of the climate migration and displacement is suggested to be internal and short-distance, Global North countries are not specifically mentioned as regions affected by climate-related hazards or as potential destination countries in IOM's texts. On the other hand, Global South countries are often mentioned as affected/vulnerable regions in the context of climate change. IOM's migration management approach holds the claim to "make migration beneficial for all countries", as it "downplays the power imbalances between states" (Pécoud, 2018, p. 1627). In this respect, IOM has been criticized for promoting the interests of Western developed countries by managing migration from far away.

Similar to IOM, UNHCR also puts greater emphasis on the Global South countries as affected regions. However, UNHCR also mentions Global North countries among

regions that are exposed to climatic shocks and disaster displacement. Beyond being potential affected regions, the Global North countries are predominantly referred as actors who need to take more responsibility in tackling climate change and also as potential destination countries. UNHCR does not shy away from making comments on Global North's historical responsibility for climate change. For example, the then Deputy High Commissioner in 2008 explicitly called the industrialized world to assume a greater burden in tackling human impacts of climate change because of their historical responsibility in terms of the accumulation of the carbon emissions (UNHCR, 2008). Compared to texts targeted at experts and general audience, this line of argument appears more often in the speeches delivered to political actors.

Beyond the institutional factors, framing migration as an adaptation strategy can also be linked to the securitization of migration, albeit through the migration-development nexus. For instance, it aims at minimizing large scales of migration by promoting the development and the resilience of local communities through few family members migrating to other places (mainly in short distance) to diversify income and send back remittances. Essentially, the governance mechanisms that IOM's framing of "migration as adaptation strategy" promote have a logic of containing people where they are locating and minimizing the migration "threat". First, it keeps migration geographically narrow in range (e.g. most scenarios and proposals include seasonal migration to other cities in the country or to neighboring countries in the developing world). Second, when labor migration to the developed world is considered, these governance mechanisms inevitably apply a highly selective filter, making some aspiring migrants unable to move. Given the regulations of migration in the developed countries, only the ones that have the suitable skills and capabilities to be admitted can migrate.

The effects of organizational type and contextual factors are also observed for UNHCR's policy objectives. Its policy objectives include the development of protection mechanisms, such as temporary protection, for displaced people, planned relocation as a last resort, and also focus on addressing the "root causes" of migration and displacement through climate action (e.g. investments in climate mitigation, adaptation, resilience) and DRR measures. What is common in both IOM and UNHCR's discourses is the impact of securitization of migration, due to their implications for managing and controlling human mobility. While human security is emphasized in both, either through

sustainable development, adaptation or climate action, they are expected to be attained locally at distance. The aim is to contain underdevelopment and zones of conflict. Therefore, although it seemingly differs from "migration as adaptation strategy" discourse, UNHCR's discourse is also linked to a securitized approach to migration and displacement. Similar to the argumentation regarding responsibility as discussed earlier, UNHCR's policy objectives imply that if developed countries cannot address the issues of environmental degradation and climate change, there is an intrinsic risk of mass immigration, which is considered as a concern for the developed world. Again, although not as alarmist and maximalist as "climate refugees" discourse, UNHCR also represents climate change as a humanitarian problem that needs to be addressed in order to alleviate people's vulnerabilities and stop them from being moved out of their places. While the focus is on human security, this discourse also promotes the idea of governing at distance prospective migrants, who are not able to secure themselves (Duffield & Waddell, 2006), through temporary protection mechanisms or planned relocation (though as a last resort).

Equally, UNHCR lobbies for further climate action and climate financing to the developing and least develop countries to increase their resilience to climate shocks, and therefore, to minimize migration and displacement. By drawing on a humanitarian and pessimistic narrative, UNHCR's discourse can mobilize diverse groups concerned with not only uncontrolled immigration but also the environment. Even though the impact of contextual factors can be found in both UNHCR and IOM's discourses, the difference in the outcomes stems from the organizational type. While UNHCR appeals to a humanitarian imperative and explicitly calls the developed world to action, IOM has a strictly non-normative stance. As a humanitarian agency with a normative authority, UNHCR puts greater emphasis on protection needs of the affected populations and, therefore, on developing protection mechanisms.

While IOM is restricted in its ability to urge Member States to develop a protection framework for migrants due to its organizational type, IOM has expanded its climate change-related activities noticeably fast at the operational level. This was again possible because of its bilateral, project-based funding system and broad mandate. For instance, an assessment of "gaps" in IOM's 12-point strategy showed that migration caused by environmental and climate change factors was one of the 14 areas that IOM actively

works on but are not mentioned explicitly in the Strategy (IOM, 2014c, p. 1). However, these gaps were reported not to constitute any barrier to their work as the points are broad enough. The staff (both from the headquarters and the field) reported that "the 12 points, in conjunction with the other mandating documents, are sufficiently broad to encompass all the work they do, including new issues as they arise" (p.2). Similarly, in terms of its funding system, as long as IOM can show to some donors that it can deliver on the specific tasks they want to be fulfilled or address the issues that they are concerned about, it can expand its operations. It does not need to obtain a mandate from all (or the majority) of its Member States to engage in climate change-related activities since it can partner with a state (e.g. Greece). Yet, this also means that the nature of its operations is bound to be in line with donor states' demands and earmarks. In this case as well, in order to find acceptance for its work and attract funding, IOM devoted a considerable amount of effort to establish the links between climate change and migration through research projects and reports and showing the significance of these linkages to the states.

To summarize, UNHCR's policy ideas depend on a logic of appropriateness as a normative agency. Furthermore, with larger autonomy owing to its diverse sources of authority, UNHCR can promote policy ideas at the expense of the interests of its main donors. On the other hand, IOM's voluntarily broad mandate based on a broad definition of migrants and its entrepreneurial character as a functional organization and its limited autonomy help explaining not only why IOM could expand its work considerably easier but also why it chooses to discuss climate migration in a non-normative and "neutral" manner.

Chapter 8: **CONCLUSION**

UNHCR and IOM's discourses on climate change-related mobility do matter. They are among the key actors in both knowledge production and policymaking in this new issue area. As such, they certainly shape the emerging policy norms. Thus far, both organizations have played an active role in the recognition of climate change-related mobility in various international agreements and policy initiatives by lobbying states and providing technical and policy advice (e.g. the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Nansen Initiative, the UNFCCC Task Force on Displacement, the Paris

Agreement, GCM and GCR). In addition, they are among the leading knowledge providers on the links between climate change and human mobility. For instance, IOM has implemented the project of "Migration, Environment and Climate Change: Evident for Policy", one of the largest research projects on climate change-related mobility. Previous research also identifies UNHCR and IOM among the "self-perpetuating circle of research, policy, and knowledge production" in the emerging issue area of climate change-related mobility, which almost plays "a gatekeeper role in the passage of knowledge" into policy fora such as the UNFCCC (Nash, 2018, p. 78). This self-perpetuating circle conflates the boundaries of academic and non-academic research in large research projects and raises concerns due to "the involvement of policy and advocacy actors in the conceptualisation and question-setting stages of these projects" (Nash, 2018, p. 76).

Based on these concerns, this thesis has problematized UNHCR and IOM's discourses on climate change-related mobility by using CDA and explained their differences by drawing on constructivist and historical institutionalist treatments of IOs. In summary, CDA findings identified that UNHCR frames climate migration and displacement from a humanitarian perspective, with focus on protection needs of the displaced people and the responsibility of states to take action against climate change and develop new protection mechanisms for the affected people. While it chooses to focus on disaster displacement, where the mobility is of forced nature, it does not necessarily frame other forms of mobility as voluntary and name them as "migration". The affected people are often portrayed as vulnerable passive subjects who are victims of climate change. On the other hand, by emphasizing the complexity of migration drivers, IOM does not build a deterministic causal link between climate change and migration and frames climate migration as a form of adaptation to changing environment, which helps building resilience in the sending community. IOM's climate migrants, despite their personal and group-based vulnerabilities, are entrepreneurial active agents. In terms of policy objectives, IOM mainly focuses on facilitating temporary labor migration options.

In explaining the discursive variation, this thesis firstly highlighted the role of uncertainty and ambiguity surrounding the issue area. If the concept of climate change-related mobility were not as uncertain and ambiguous as it was at the initial stages of

IOM and UNHCR's engagement, the differences would be smaller since there would have been less room for interpretation, mainly because delegation from the member states would be less ambiguous. Secondly, it drew attention to the institutional differences between IOM and UNHCR, mainly in terms of their mandates, organizational types (functional vs. normative) and their degrees of autonomy as factors shaping the boundaries of policy deliberation in IOs. This comparison helped explaining the key differences. For instance, UNHCR as a normative IO with higher autonomy and moral authority in the refugee regime uses a normative discourse and call on developed countries for climate action with relative ease. On the other hand, IOM as a functional service-provider IO with less autonomy shies away from using normative terms and placing responsibility on the countries for climate action.

The thesis also highlighted that as expected by historical institutionalism, IOM and UNHCR's policy ideas, when they have expanded their activities to this issue area, were built on their previous policies and epistemic standards (e.g. IOM has applied its broader migration management logics to this area as well, or UNHCR represents people displaced by climate change similar to convention refugees as passive subjects). While institutional design is not necessarily fixed (as illustrated by the instances of mandate expansions and change in both UNHCR and IOM), agents do interact with them, sometimes as constraints and sometimes as opportunities, and have to justify their engagements with the new issue area in relation to their institutional features. In a sense, the institutional context defines the set of potential paths available to the agents, while the agents interpret and choose among them accordingly.

In summary, the findings broadly speak to the ongoing literature on IOs' engagement with climate change-related mobility and IOs' expansion to new issue areas and how they produce policy ideas. The findings affirm the substantive differences between UNHCR and IOM as normative and functional IOs (Hall, 2015) and highlight the potentially constraining impact of IOs' institutional design, autonomy and previous policy inheritances when deliberating policy ideas in a new issue area.

Moreover, this thesis particularly contributes to the comparative literature on UNHCR and IOM's engagement with climate change, which has lacked an in-depth critical analysis of their discourses and their implications. Most significantly, it provides an original and systematic study of the primary sources that UNHCR and IOM have

produced relating to climate change since their initial engagements with the issue area around 2007. Although some comparative studies have previously problematized their discourses on other categories and issue areas, such as refugees and assisted voluntary returns (Flegar, 2018; Lochan, 2017), their discourses on climate change-related mobility have not received much attention. Instead, the existing literature has been largely limited to their operational cooperation in disaster settings (Lakeman, 2021) or focused on how and why their mandate expansion took place by highlighting the roles of substantive issue-linkages and international bureaucrats (Betts, 2010; Hall, 2015, 2016). While confirming some of their findings, this thesis built upon the existing literature by also problematizing UNHCR and IOM's discourses in this issue area and their implications by employing a different methodology and systematically analyzing the primary sources via CDA.

However, the main limitation of this study is its reliance on secondary sources when assessing the impact of these institutional factors on discourses (discourses were analyzed based on primary sources). Alternatively, interviews with UNHCR and IOM staff would have been another reliable source to study these interactions. Future research based on interviews may triangulate and test the findings of this thesis and can also explore the role of bureaucratic culture and leadership in IOM and UNHCR when engaging with this issue area from a sociological institutionalist perspective. In addition, although internal validity is relatively ensured with a small-N study, external validity remains a limitation. While labor and time constraints did not allow these options, the research could have used case illustrations, larger-N analysis or shadow case studies (such as UNEP, UNDP or OHCHR) to evaluate the validity of the findings (Soifer, 2020, pp. 10-11). Future research on IOs may apply a similar research design to study other IOs expanding into this issue area to further test the explanatory power of the theoretical lens provided in this thesis. Alternatively, the insights of this thesis can be useful for future research focusing on the role of IOs in other emerging issue areas such as bioethics or data privacy, where IOs might have more freedom in shaping discourses due to the uncertainty and ambiguity of the issues.

Future research may also approach the present cases from the perspective of the IR literature on norm (non-)emergence. Given the multiplicity of discourses among the primary actors of the issue area, a norm emergence is yet to come concerning the human

impacts of climate change. The comparison of UNHCR and IOM, two of the primary actors in this issue area, in terms of discourse shows that the current international understanding can be located at the "candidate norm creation" stage at best (after the stages of "problem adoption" and "issue creation") (Rosert, 2019). Both UNHCR and IOM give frequent references to international processes and their results relating to the issue area of climate change, migration and displacement (e.g. Cancun climate agreements in 2010 and Paris Agreement in 2015). This finding shows that internationally institutionalized norms are largely taken for granted as a standard (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998). Still, given that the outcomes of these international processes are also marked by ambiguity, they only coexist with the dominant discourses of both IOM and UNHCR and are interpreted differently. Overall, the norm non-emergence may be giving states and non-state actors an opportunity for forum shopping, given that both UNHCR and IOM are the among the leads in natural disasters as part of the Cluster Approach and promote fundamentally differing policy ideas. Further research could explore how states and non-state actors navigate through this multiplicity, particularly in the post-disaster contexts.

The existence of competing discourses has also led to cooperation and exchange. Although only complementary to their own discourses, both organizations recognize the policy ideas promoted by the other. For instance, UNHCR accepts that climate migration can be leveraged as an adaptation strategy to cope with the impacts of climate change and IOM refers to UNHCR's legal authority in rejecting "climate refugees" on every occasion and blends its migration management discourse with humanitarian slogans as a "competitor in the humanitarian marketplace" (Georgi, 2010, p. 48). Still, while they seem to have a certain impact at both levels, contradictory/competitive discourses are not directly adopted so as to replace an IO's preexisting normative stance and practices. One possible explanation for the exchange of discourses is the close cooperation between IOM and UNHCR, deep rooted in history, in the field (including but not limited to refugee protection, mixed migration, protection of victims of human trafficking and post-disaster contexts). Beyond the cooperation, there is also the undeniable factor of competition between UNHCR and IOM to stay relevant in the emerging issue area. Future research could investigate the present cases with a different lens to understand the impacts of institutional interplay and competition between different actors in this issue area on norm (non-)emergence and (non-)convergence. For

the time being, it appears that IOM is increasingly securing its place as the cognitive authority on climate change-related mobility, given its broader engagement in disaster relief and influence as knowledge production hub.

8.1 No climate justice in sight

Ironically, even though this thesis sought to detect and explain the differences in UNHCR and IOM's discourses on climate change and human mobility, a key finding is that both discourses essentially emerge from the same social practices and do little to challenge the power imbalances. Both discourses, though to differing extents and ways, can be considered as productions of "dominant biopolitical neoliberal discourses" (Bettini, 2017). First of all, in both discourses, the underlying assumption is that human mobility is a problem that needs to be solved. Whether as a protection issue as described by UNHCR or adaptation to climate change to build resilience as described by IOM, human mobility, not climate injustice, is the problem that needs to be prevented or managed. Related to this assumption, another commonality of both discourses is the depoliticization of the root cause, though at different levels. As migration and displacement are assumed to be the problem, what must be done is to find the right policies to manage mobility, either from the humanitarian perspective for protection purposes or the development perspective to maximize the benefits. This can be identified as the "conflation of policy and politics", which is "a standard mechanism of de-politicisation conducive to the reproduction of hegemonic relations" (Bettini, 2017, p. 36). Still, UNHCR's dominant discourse implies a degree of responsibility and UNHCR demands climate mitigation measures from the developed world more often and more explicitly. Yet, given its protection focus, this discourse comes at the expense of reproducing the "humanitarian savior logics" (Ongenaert et al., 2022). Furthermore, it risks securitizing climate change-related mobility since it stresses the role of climate change as a threat multiplier that increases the risk of conflict and refugee flows. On the other hand, IOM's discourse essentially shifts the responsibility from the international community to individuals to undertake climate adaptation measures. Additionally, while underlining the role of migration management as a prerequisite to realize the benefits of migration, it portrays unmanaged and autonomous migration as a threat (Ashutosh & Mountz, 2011). This is worrisome as IOM's discourse has become the new dominant

discourse at the international level due to its de facto leadership in the emerging issue area, mostly through research and knowledge production.

Therefore, these discourses and policy ideas should be problematized since their seeming promises may veil many of their pitfalls for the affected people (who are the least responsible for climate change) and help reproducing the power imbalances. For instance, temporary labor migration programs promoted by IOM promises a win-win situation for host and sending communities if carefully managed. However, a closer look shows that *even if* temporary labor migration programs are carefully managed, many temporary migrant workers face exploitation and abuse in industrialized countries, and as such, they are not "an appropriate or effective vehicle to jumpstart development in countries of origin" (Costa & Martin, 2018, p. 2). Many of them receive low wages, may face forced labor and poor working conditions, find themselves not covered by social protection and denied union rights and face social exclusion and xenophobia. Under temporary migration programs, migrant workers can also face deportation due to their legal dependence on an employer. In the absence of permanent immigration status, these programs help creating a perpetual supply of cheap and precarious labor for many employers without an incentive to foster a sustainable domestic labor force and improve working conditions (Costa & Martin, 2018).

Another key issue relates to the failure to amplify the voice of the affected people in the emerging governance mechanisms. Climate justice also entails ensuring the voice of people and countries that are affected by climate change the most (Dreher & Voyer, 2015). It might be true that the futurology of climate change-related mobility is marked by uncertainty for the most part. However, for instance, it is now irrefutable that low-lying small island states such as Kiribati, Tuvalu, Nauru and the Bahamas will become unfit to live in by 2050. Therefore, the relocation of their citizens will be an inevitable reality, although as a last resort since the local communities may not necessarily want to abandon their countries altogether and many lack the resources to migrate (i.e. trapped populations) (Dreher & Voyer, 2015). This task will also require answering complex questions relating to the sovereignty, self-determination and nationhood of the small island states. Nevertheless, the findings suggest neither IOM's nor UNHCR's policy objectives necessarily reflect the agenda advocated by the small island states themselves either.

Even though UNHCR's discourse may be partly beneficial as it calls for further climate action, it frames the affected people as passive victims of climate change. Framing climate change from a humanitarian perspective may offer a corrective to the usual divide between humans and the environment (Dreher & Voyer, 2015) and may elicit stronger climate action. However, this framing should be accompanied by representation of the agency and aspirations of the people affected by climate change the most in their daily lives. However, by provoking the images of "sinking islands" and representing the affected people as passive victims of climate change, who have no other options than fleeing, these discourses reproduce colonial images of these states as backward, insular and weak (Campbell & Barnett, 2010; Duong, 2015).

Compared to UNHCR's discourse, IOM's climate migrants are active agents, yet it cannot be argued that it amplifies the affected people's voices either. As briefly discussed above, temporary migration programs promoted by IOM are inherently neoliberal and more to the benefit of capital holders than the temporary migrant workers and their communities. For instance, the response strategies promoted by the small island states including "Migration with Dignity" are largely missing from both organizations' texts on climate change. The long-term relocation strategy of "Migration with Dignity" was put forward in 2014 by Anote Tong, then-President of Kiribati, where internal migration will not offer a sustainable solution in the long-run. The strategy fundamentally aims at investing in the education of I-Kiribati (i.e. the Kiribati people) to increase their employability in the host countries so that their new lives would be at least on equal footing with their lives in Kiribati prior to their migration (McClain et al., 2022, p. 292). A key component of this strategy is investing in the human capital of affected people who are not only likely to find themselves vulnerable in host communities but also lack the resources to migrate with dignity in the first place. Given the current state of temporary labor migration programs and restrictive immigration policies, migration with dignity appears a distant reality for most people affected by climate change.

In conclusion, the dominant discourses circulated by the key policy actors do not offer many opportunities to meaningfully discuss and address climate justice. IO discourses should not be taken at their face value, given that they impact social practices as they hold a key role in shaping the emerging policy norms and reproducing (or

challenging) power imbalances. The current immigration practices are already discriminatory against many of the people that face the impacts of climate change the most in their daily lives. As such, international migration is not likely to offer a viable adaptation option for many of those affected. Yet, the human impacts of climate change go beyond migration in most cases. Therefore, in order to ensure climate justice, the discussions of climate change-related mobility should also consider "trapped populations" and challenge the migration injustices. Essentially, the ultimate aims should be to tackle climate change and to achieve climate justice.

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APPENDIX A: ANALYZED PRIMARY SOURCES

Table A.1: Analyzed primary sources from UNHCR and IOM

No	Organization	Year	Document type	Audience	Title
1	IOM	2007	Discussion note	Political actors	Ninety-fourth session discussion note: Migration and the environment
2	IOM	2009	Policy brief	Experts and political actors	Migration, Climate Change and the Environment
3	IOM	2009	Brochure/infosheet	General	IOM in Disaster Risk Reduction & Climate Change Adaptation
4	IOM	2009	Magazine	Experts	Migration - Autumn 2009
5	IOM	2010	Studies and reports	Experts	Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change Adaptation and Environmental migration: A Policy Perspective
6	IOM	2010	Magazine	Experts	Migration - Winter 2010
7	IOM	2010	Speech	Political actors	Joint High-level segment of the COP 16 and CMP 6 - William Lacy Swing, Director General
8	IOM	2011	Brochure/infosheet	General	Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation in IOM's

					Response to Environmental Migration
9	IOM	2013	Journal	Experts and political actors	Migration Policy Practice (Volume III, Number 3, June-July 2013)
10	IOM	2013	Journal	Experts and political actors	Migration Policy Practice (Volume III, Number 1, February-March 2013)
11	IOM	2014	Policy brief	Experts and political actors	IOM Outlook on migration, environment and climate change
12	IOM	2014	Brochure/infosheet	General	IOM Perspectives on Migration, Environment and Climate Change
13	IOM	2014	Brochure/infosheet	General	Programmatic Activities on Migration, Environment and Climate Change
14	IOM	2015	Blog	General	Migration as adaptation strategy to climate change
15	IOM	2015	Brochure/infosheet	General	Focus On Migration, Environment And Climate Change (MECC) At The 105TH IOM Council
16	IOM	2015	Brochure/infosheet	General	Contributions to the United Nations Convention to Combat

					Desertification (UNCCD)
17	IOM	2015	Brochure/infosheet	General	21st Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
18	IOM	2016	Blog	General	Defining climate migrants – Beyond semantics
19	IOM	2016	Brochure/infosheet	General	Elements for the UNFCCC Paris Agreement (March 2015) 22ND Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
20	IOM	2016	Studies and reports	General	Migration in the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCS) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCS)
21	IOM	2016	Brochure/infosheet	General	Ocean, Environment, Climate Change and Human Mobility
22	IOM	2017	Brochure/infosheet	General	The Climate Change-Human Trafficking Nexus
23	IOM	2017	Brochure/infosheet	General	Extreme Heat and

					Migration
24	IOM	2017	Questionnaire responses	Political actors	Submission for OHCHR's research in relation to Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/35/20 on Human Rights and Climate Change
25	IOM	2018	Brochure/infosheet	General	IOM's Engagement in Migration Environment and Climate Change
26	IOM	2018	Report	Experts	Mapping Human Mobility (Migration, Displacement and Planned Relocation) and Climate Change in International Processes, Policies and Legal Frameworks
27	IOM	2019	Appeal	Experts and political actors	Migration Initiatives 2020 - Objective 1 Advancing the socioeconomic wellbeing of migrants and society
28	IOM	2019	Appeal	Experts and political actors	Migration Initiatives 2020 - Asia and the Pacific
29	IOM	2019	Appeal	Experts and political	Migration Initiatives 2020 - Central America, North America and the

				actors	Caribbean
30	IOM	2019	Appeal	Experts and political actors	Migration Initiatives 2020 - Objective 2 Addressing the mobility dimensions of crises
31	IOM	2019	Appeal	Experts and political actors	Migration Initiatives 2020 - East and Horn of Africa
32	IOM	2019	Appeal	Experts and political actors	Migration Initiatives 2020 - PRINCIPLE 1 Adhering to international standards and fulfilling migrants' rights
33	IOM	2019	Appeal	Experts and political actors	Migration Initiatives 2020 - PRINCIPLE 2 Using evidence and whole-of-government approaches
34	IOM	2019	Appeal	Experts and political actors	Migration Initiatives 2020 - European Economic Area
35	IOM	2019	Appeal	Experts and political actors	Migration Initiatives 2020 - Middle East and North Africa
36	IOM	2019	Appeal	Experts and political actors	Migration Initiatives 2020 - South America

37	IOM	2019	Appeal	Experts and political actors	Migration Initiatives 2020 - South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia
38	IOM	2019	Appeal	Experts and political actors	Migration Initiatives 2020 - Southern Africa
39	IOM	2019	Appeal	Experts and political actors	Migration Initiatives 2020 - West and Central Africa
40	IOM	2020	Studies and reports	Experts	Internal Displacement in the Context of the Slow-Onset Adverse Effects of Climate Change
41	IOM	2021	Policy paper	Experts and political actors	Institutional Strategy on Migration, Environment and Climate Change 2021–2030 For a comprehensive, evidence and rights-based approach to migration in the context of environmental degradation, climate change and disasters, for the benefit of migrants and societies
42	IOM	2021	Policy and normative development	Political actors	IOM Messages to COP26

43	UNHCR	2008	Speech	Experts and political actors	Climate change and displacement: The future is now
44	UNHCR	2009	Policy brief	Experts and political actors	UNHCR Policy Paper: Climate change, natural disasters and human displacement: a UNHCR perspective
45	UNHCR	2009	Briefing note	Experts and political actors	Briefing Note: The Management of Humanitarian Emergencies Caused by Extreme Climate Events
46	UNHCR	2011	Policy and normative development	Experts and political actors	UNHCR - Bellagio Expert Meeting, Summary of Deliberations on Climate Change and Displacement, 2011
47	UNHCR	2013	Research and studies	Political actors	Session 2: International Cooperation and Respect for Human Rights. Seminar to Address the Adverse Impacts of Climate Change on the Full Enjoyment of Human Rights
48	UNHCR	2014	Speech	Political actors	Volker Türk Discussion Forum on Climate Change, Berlin, 2014

49	UNHCR	2014	Speech	Political actors	Second preparatory meeting of the 22nd OSCE. Session II: Cross-dimensional Impacts of Natural and Man-Made Disasters, Population movements in the context of natural disasters
50	UNHCR	2015	Speech	Political actors	High Commissioner' Dialogue on Protection Challenges: Understanding and addressing root causes of displacement - Opening Remarks by António Guterres United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva, 16 December 2015
51	UNHCR	2015	Policy and normative development paper	Experts and political actors	Human Mobility in the context of Climate Change UNFCCC-PARIS COP-21. Recommendations from the Advisory Group on Climate Change and Human Mobility (November 2015)
52	UNHCR	2015	Policy and normative development paper	Political actors	October 2015 recommendations to UNFCCC Parties from

					the Advisory Group on Climate Change and Human Mobility
53	UNHCR	2015	Policy and normative development paper	Political actors	Planned relocation guidance (October 2015)
54	UNHCR	2015	Policy and normative development paper	Political actors	Climate Displacement and the Paris Agreement. Side Event UNFCCC, 3 June 2015, Bonn
55	UNHCR	2015	Policy and normative development paper	Political actors	Climate change and human mobility solution agenda - Resilience - Paris COP 21
56	UNHCR	2016	Policy and normative development paper	General	Frequently Asked Questions on Climate Change and Disaster Displacement
57	UNHCR	2016	Policy and normative development paper	Political actors	Policy brief: Displacement at COP 22
58	UNHCR	2016	Policy and normative development paper	Political actors	COP 22 Technical Inputs: Climate & Disaster Displacement
59	UNHCR	2016	Policy and normative development paper	Political actors	UNHCR analysis of COP22-UNFCCC
60	UNHCR	2016	Policy and normative development paper	Political actors	Highlights of UNHCR Organized Side Events at COP22

61	UNHCR	2016	Policy and normative development paper	Political actors	Warsaw International Mechanism Executive Committee (WIM ExCom) Work Plan Action Area 6 on Migration, Displacement and Human Mobility
62	UNHCR	2016	Policy and normative development paper	Political actors	Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage, Bonn, Germany, 2-5 February 2016 - Inputs from the Advisory Group on Climate Change and Human Mobility
63	UNHCR	2017	Research and studies	Political actors	Climate change, disaster and displacement in the Global Compacts: UNHCR's perspectives
64	UNHCR	2017	Research and studies	Political actors	Climate Change and Disaster Displacement: An Overview of UNHCR's role
65	UNHCR	2017	Infosheet	General	Quick guide - Climate Change and Disaster Displacement
66	UNHCR	2017	Infosheet	General	Key Concepts on Climate Change and Disaster Displacement

67	UNHCR	2017	Policy and normative development paper	Political actors	2017 UNHCR Engagement in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
68	UNHCR	2017	Flyer	Political actors	ONE UN side event - Climate-related Human Mobility: Connecting the dots to implement the Paris Agreement (8 November 2017)
69	UNHCR	2017	Policy and normative development paper	Political actors	Key messages for COP23
70	UNHCR	2017	Questionnaire responses	Political actors	UNHCR Responses - Questionnaire in relation to Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/35/20 on human rights and climate change
71	UNHCR	2018	Research and studies	Experts and political actors	UNHCR's Mapping of international and regional guidance and tools on averting, minimizing, addressing and facilitating durable solutions to displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change

72	UNHCR	2018	Policy and normative development paper	Political actors	Key messages for COP24
73	UNHCR	2019	Policy and normative development paper	Political actors	Key messages for COP25
74	UNHCR	2019	Policy and normative development paper	Political actors	Climate change and disaster displacement in the Global Compact on Refugees
75	UNHCR	2020	Policy and normative development paper	Experts and political actors	Legal considerations regarding claims for international protection made in the context of the adverse effects of climate change and disasters
76	UNHCR	2020	Fact sheet	General	Climate Change and the Future of Safe Returns
77	UNHCR	2020	Fact sheet	General	Sustainable Energy, Displacement and Climate Resilience
78	UNHCR	2020	Fact sheet	General	Indigenous peoples' Knowledge and Climate Adaptation
79	UNHCR	2020	Fact sheet	General	Gender, Displacement and Climate Change
80	UNHCR	2020	Fact sheet	General	COVID-19, displacement and climate change
81	UNHCR	2020	Research and studies	Experts	Climate Change, Displacement and Human Rights

82	UNHCR	2021	Policy and normative development paper	Political actors	Key Messages and Calls To Action: COP26
83	UNHCR	2022	Policy and normative development paper	Experts and political actors	Operational Strategy for Climate Resilience and Environmental Sustainability 2022-2025
84	UNHCR	2022	Manual and guideline	Experts and political actors	Strategic Framework for Climate Action
85	UNHCR and IOM	2013	Policy and normative development paper	Political actors	Joint submission to the UNFCCC on Loss and Damage, 2013
86	UNHCR and IOM	2014	Policy and normative development paper	Political actors	Joint submission to the UNFCCC on National adaptation plans, 2014
87	UNHCR, IOM and UNDP	2014	Policy and normative development paper	Political actors	Joint submission to the UNFCCC on Excom of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage, 2014
88	UNHCR, IOM and UNDP	2014	Policy and normative development paper	Political actors	Joint submission to the UNFCCC on the Nairobi Work program, 2014