Climate-induced migration in the proposed Joint Africa-EU Strategy –
what's the problem represented to be?

Elin Söderberg Olofsson

Abstract

This study engages with problem representations of climate-induced migration in European Union (EU) policy. As Africa is a region highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, and one of geopolitical interest for the EU, the material for the study consists of the policy documents concerning the new proposed Joint Africa-EU Strategy formulated by the EU in 2020 and 2021. The material is analysed through the discursive approach to policy analysis "What's the problem represented to be?" (WPR). The study builds upon a postcolonial theoretical framework based on the concepts of 'othering' and 'eurocentrism'. The findings of the study suggest that climate-induced migration in this context is represented as an economic issue, where a lack of economic development is framed as the 'problem'. I argue that this dominant problem representation reproduces a colonial narrative as the 'problem' is placed in Africa that is represented as the party that needs to 'change'. The EU is simultaneously represented as the possessor of the necessary knowledge, and as a norm towards which Africa should strive, while escaping further accountability and responsibility.

Keywords: climate-induced migration, policy, European Union, WPR, othering, eurocentrism

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1. Introduction

Climate change is a multi-faceted issue with ecological as well as social, economic, political and legal consequences (Manou et al 2017). One aspect of climate change that has been increasingly acknowledged since the 1980s, is its potential impact on migration patterns. Although climate-induced migration as a phenomenon is not new as such, but rather something that has occurred throughout history, the discussion as one of interest and concern for scholars, governments and policy makers has mainly grown in the last few decades (Klepp 2017).

Climate-induced migration is thus far mainly internal, within countries' borders and from rural to urban areas, rather than transnational (IOM 2020b, Ionsesco 2019, Ammer et al 2014). For the European Union (EU), it has been acknowledged that increased migration to Europe from other regions as a direct result of climatic changes is thus unlikely (Geddes and Somerville 2012). However, there are estimates suggesting that climate change, in interaction with other drivers of migration, may increase transnational migration, where the EU could be an important destination (Missirian and Schlenker 2017). Transnational climate-induced migration has raised concerns regarding the lack of an international protection framework for those affected. The international refugee system is characterised by a common definition and a legally binding protection framework, but although the term "climate refugee" is common, climate change or other environmental factors are not included in the legal definition of a refugee (Ferris 2017). Beyond the refugee system, the migration system is largely governed by the principle of national sovereignty and left to individual states. It is thereby less institutionalised internationally (ibid). This implies that people moving cross-border due to factors involving environmental changes risk being situated in an international protection gap (Brown 2008).

Climate change and migration are both important policy topics for the EU. Given the estimated scope of climate-induced migration, the importance for the EU to address climate-induced migration in both climate and migration policies has been emphasised by several scholars (see for example Ammer et al 2014, Wilkinson et al 2016). Africa, especially Sub-Saharan Africa, is one of the regions that is the most vulnerable to climate impacts and thus migration following such changes (Rigaud et al 2018, Cattaneo et al 2019). This could have substantial implications for development, and it has therefore been argued important that climate-induced migration is effectively addressed also in development policies. Africa is simultaneously a geopolitically important region for the EU with several partnership programmes in place between the regions (European Commission, n.d.). The partnership between the regions is guided by the Joint Africa-EU Strategy, first adopted in 2007. In 2020, the European Commission proposed a new such strategy, where issues of climate, migration and development are central (European Commission 2020). This strategy proposal, and the EU process of formulating a new

strategy, will be of interest for this thesis in which EU policy representations of climate-induced migration will be analysed.

1.1.   Problem formulation, purpose and research question

Since the start of the debate on climate-induced migration, the concept has been highly contested. The great variety of actors involved in the debate; scholars, policymakers, international organisations, and journalists, has led to many different perspectives of the issue, building upon different paradigms and interests (Klepp 2017). The varying perspectives of the linkage between climate change and migration constitute obstacles for developing a common terminology for the issue and the people affected. This has implied that climate-induced migration has been interpreted, problematised and presented in various manners. The different interpretations and ways of portraying the issue may be influenced by the interests of the actor and what effects they seek to reach. Simultaneously, the ways of representing the issue are presumed to be affected by, as well as affect, the discourses, or possible ways of thinking about the issue, in society.

In this study, the aim is to explore how climate-induced migration is interpreted and represented by the EU. As the EU is arguably an important international actor concerning issues of climate change, migration and development policies, my study will depart from a supposition that the ways in which the EU bodies frame and represent climate-induced migration in policy may have significant implications for how policymakers on national levels as well as citizens conceptualise the issue and how it can be reacted upon. As Africa is a region especially vulnerable to climate change, and one of geopolitical interest for the EU, I will seek to analyse how the EU represents climate-induced migration in this partnership context. It is against this backdrop that the EU process of formulating a new Joint Africa-EU Strategy initiated in 2020 is of interest for the study. From this background, the research question will be:

How is climate-induced migration represented by the EU in the policy documents concerning the proposed new Joint Africa-EU Strategy?

In order to examine the representations of climate-induced migration in the strategy, policy documents published in relation to the process of reaching a new, updated strategy in 2020 and 2021 will be analysed. The analysis will be influenced by postcolonial theory and operationalised through discursive policy analysis.

1.2.   Delimitations

Considering the scope of this project, a few delimitations are necessary for the study. It should first be noted that this study will seek to answer *how* climate-induced migration is represented in the policy material. This means that I will not evaluate the potential

effectiveness of the policy proposals but rather focus on the narratives that they shape. This also means that potential *consequences* of the representations analysed in the material will not be specified in an exhaustive way. It should however be stressed that a central position for this study is that policy representations do have effects for how the specific issue can be thought about, that they set certain frames. It is therefore expected that the representations *do* have certain consequences, albeit outlining these is not the central aim of this study.

1.2.1. Defining climate-induced migration

As will be further illustrated in the next chapter, there is not a common definition or established term describing the issue of migration influenced by environmental changes. In academia and policy, terms such as 'climate refugee', 'climate migrant', 'human mobility in the context of climate change' and 'forced displacement' are all common, each with their own potential political interpretations and implications. Choosing the terminology for this thesis is thereby not necessarily a neutral action. As has perhaps been noticed, I have chosen to use the term 'climate-induced migration', as I perceive this to be the most widely used term in academia and policy. By using the term climate-induced migration, I aim to include all "movement of people driven by sudden or progressive changes in the weather or climate […] temporary and permanent, seasonal and singular, as well as voluntary and forced movement" (Wilkinson et al 2016 p. 2). The definition thus includes both internal and transnational movement. With this definition, the influence of environmental factors and climate change on the decision to migrate is emphasised. This does not imply that climate change is considered the sole, or even most important, influence behind such a decision. Rather, it is acknowledged that migration is multi-causal and that climate change is part of environmental 'push' factors that may interact with other drivers of migration (IOM 2020a).

1.3.   Disposition

The second chapter of this thesis will outline the fragmented research field concerning climate-induced migration by developing on the different ways in which the issue predominantly has been represented by researchers, governing bodies and international organisations. The third chapter introduces the background to migration and climate as EU policy areas, the Joint Africa-EU Strategy and the role it plays for the partnership between the regions. The subsequent chapter will present the theoretical framework for the study based on postcolonial concepts of *othering* and *eurocentrism*. Moreover, it will describe the theoretical concepts of *problematisation* and *problem representation* that are central for the study. The research design and methodology applied in the study is the "What's the problem represented to be?" (WPR) approach, developed by Carol Bacchi (2009). The approach, and its analytical framework building upon specific questions to

'ask' the policy material, will be described in the fifth chapter. This chapter also includes a discussion on the selection of the EU policy material that is subject to analysis. The questions will, one by one, be applied to the policy material and the results of the analysis will be presented in the sixth chapter. Finally, the results will be discussed in relation to the theoretical framework and previous research in the seventh chapter, before the thesis in the eighth and last chapter is ended with some concluding remarks.

2. Literature review

In this chapter, the previous literature on the topic of representations of climate-induced migration will be introduced. This will be done through outlining the different competing conceptualisations of the issue that have been central in academia and the international policy arena.

2.1. Representations of climate-induced migration

As has been discussed in the introductory chapter, migration in the context of climate change is by no means a new phenomenon. However, as an issue of political interest, the concept emerged in the 1980s. As Bettini (2013a p. 11) expresses it, climate-induced migration is not to be seen as "a transparent empirical object, but as a situated problematization that individuates, connects and signifies a series of phenomena into an issue to be researched and governed". It is a multi-faceted issue that is related to several 'hot topics' on the international arena.

An important step towards the current debate on climate migration was the report by El-Hinnawi published by the UN Environment Program in 1985. In this report, the term 'environmental refugees' (also the name of the report) was established. From that point, the concept, that as has been discussed came to be given many different names, attracted increased attention. The different terms, such as 'environmental refugee', 'ecomigrant' and 'climate migrant' could then be incorporated into existing discourses within environmental studies as well as migration and social science approaches (Bettini 2013a).

In the previous literature on the topic concerned with representations of climate-induced migration, different ways of framing the issue have been identified. Three of these, that are central and recurrent in the literature, will be described below in order to serve as a basis from which this study can depart. My ambition is that they will serve to make the interpretation of the findings more pedagogical for the reader. Simultaneously, they facilitate positioning my study within an already ongoing academic debate that the study can draw upon and add to.

The different ways of representing climate-induced migration will be outlined and developed below. Although presented in what seems like a chronological order, this is only to some extent the case. The different discourses have been developed as responses towards one another, however none of the discourses are irrelevant today. They rather exist side by side and in different contexts.

2.1.1. A threat against national security

One way of representing climate-induced migration and migrants is as, implicitly or explicitly, a *national security threat* for potential areas of destination (Oakes et al 2019). This way of representing the issue dominated the early debate on climate-induced migration in the 1980s and 1990s. From this perspective, climate-induced migration has been portrayed as the human face of climate change and as a 'problem' requiring urgent policy attention (Klepp 2017, Methmann and Oels 2015). Scientists, such as Myers and Kent (1995), have drawn upon an alarmist and apocalyptic rhetoric of environmental degradation leading to 'millions of refugees' in the future. Different numerical predictions have flourished in academia as well as international organisation reports and media headlines. Following the El-Hinnawi report for the UN Environment Program from 1985, where the term 'environmental refugee' was given attention, the concept gained momentum in the scientific community (Methmann and Oels 2015). In relation to this discourse, climate change is considered a threat multiplier for migration as well as conflict concerning natural resources. It is argued that such conflicts can disrupt international security. The discourse is exemplified in the *Human tide* report by Christian Aid:

> "As the effects of climate change join and <u>exacerbate the conflicts</u>, natural disasters and development projects that drive displacement, we fear that an <u>emerging migration crisis will spiral out of control</u>. Unless <u>urgent action is taken</u>, it threatens to <u>dwarf even that faced by the warravaged world</u> all those decades ago." (Christian Aid 2007 p. 1, underlining mine)

This way of representing climate-induced migration has not rarely come with the ambition of bringing the attention of policymakers to the pressing issue of climate change. While this has perhaps often been the aim, this kind of representation has simultaneously been argued to feed into a larger debate on the securitisation of migration in the 'global north' (Methmann and Oels 2015). It has been argued that instead of leading to urgent measures to combat climate change, the policy effects have been more focused on vigorous border control and securitisation measures in potential receiving nations (Oakes et al 2019, White 2012, Bettini 2013b). Hartmann (2010) has further argued that such alarmist representations may lead to a militarisation of development, where military interventions are legitimised in the name of development aid.

The alarmist representation of climate-induced migration as a threat for national security has been questioned on several grounds. From a social scientific perspective, the assumed linear relationship between climate change and migration has been questioned as being too deterministic with regards to the multi-causal nature of migration (Klepp 2017). As has been stated earlier, the term 'climate (or environmental) refugee' that has been prevalent in this security discourse has been considered rather misleading and perhaps not very helpful. This as climate change is *not* part of the refugee definition in the international refugee framework and thus not protected by international law. The different headline-grabbing numerical predictions have also been argued to be rather pointless as

they cannot be more than rough estimations. Jakobeit and Methmann (2012) have argued that they may also lead to rough solutions and misled political responses.

2.1.2. A human security problem

As a response to the shortcomings of the national securitisation discourse, another way of representing climate-induced migration has been as a *problem of human security* rather than one threatening national security. This redefinition shifts the focus towards the migrants and emphasises the political, economic, social and demographic processes that in addition to environmental ones may influence migration (Klepp 2017). This emphasis on multi-causality rejects the large-scale projections by the 'alarmists' (Methmann and Oels 2015). Moreover, this way of representing the issue moves the focus from national sovereignty towards the idea of a world governed by global rights and security (Metmann and Oels 2015). It is thus a way of representing climate-induced migration that is arguably closely linked to the concept of human rights (Oakes et al 2019). This way of representing climate-induced migration is for example prevalent in the Fifth Assessment Report by the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). In the discussion on climate change and migration, 'human security' has been assigned a separate chapter of the report.

> "Climate change is an important factor <u>threatening human security</u> through […] <u>increasing migration that people would rather have avoided</u> […] and […] challenging the ability of states to provide the conditions necessary for human security." (IPCC 2014 p. 758, underlining mine)

Through this representation, common within the field of development and human rights, (potential) migrants have been argued to often be portrayed as vulnerable victims in need of externally provided protection through international humanitarian aid and protection (Klepp 2017, Methmann and Oels 2015). Critics towards this portrayal argue that it has produced a victimising and racialised picture of people as well as places while reconstructing a colonial narrative (Klepp 2017). Moreover, the representation of climate-induced migration as a threat against human security has been criticised for portraying people as lacking agency and for constructing a narrative that people who migrate in the context of climate change are per definition powerless and passive (Bettini et al 2017). It has thereby been argued to fail to address the decision-making aspects involved behind migration (ibid).

2.1.3. A potential strategy of adaptation

In the last decade, the term 'climate refugee' has almost disappeared from the debate. A third and increasingly recurrent way of representing climate-induced migration is as a *potential strategy and adaptive response* to climate risks (Oakes et al 2019). In doing this,

climate-induced migration shifts from being considered the 'problem', to being considered a potential 'solution' (Ransan-Cooper et al 2015).

Contrary towards the previously presented discourses where migrants are portrayed as lacking agency and as 'forced' to escape environmental changes, the volition and decision-making involved in migration are emphasised in this discourse. The binary of 'voluntary' and 'forced', where each person or family falls within one of the extremes, is not considered satisfying when discussing the issue of climate-induced migration. Rather, it is argued that there is a whole spectrum of forced to voluntary (Oakes et al 2019).

Stemming from the argument that people have always migrated in the context of environmental changes, adaptation and resilience are core concepts of the discourse. Resilience is in this context discussed in terms of transformation. It is expected that ecological resilience will not succeed and that livelihoods will be negatively affected by climate change. Resilience is thus considered the positive result of migration; through migrating, resilience can be increased for the individual. Migration thereby becomes a 'normal' and necessary response to climate change. From this perspective, migration in the context of climate change is discussed in terms of the opportunities that it may involve for the individual as well as the societies (Methmann and Oels 2015). The adaptation discourse is well exemplified in the report *Migration and Global Environmental Change* by the thinktank Foresight from 2011:

> "Development policy […] should not be based on a presumption that people should stay where they are, especially if that involves staying in locations that are increasingly vulnerable environmentally. The possibility of migration allowing people to build themselves a better life should be part of the policy assessment." (Foresight 2011 p. 173)

In the report, climate-induced migration is largely constructed as a way for people to "build themselves a better life" (above), "protect themselves" (p. 53) and as an opportunity to "capitalise on and maximise the benefits from migration" (p. 17) through building resilience and adaptive capacity. Through the perception of climate-induced migration as a strategy and 'solution' rather than 'problem', resilience in the context of a changing climate is perceived as an individual, rather than a societal, matter (Bettini et al 2016). Contrary to the security discourses, the subject is here perceived as one of agency that should be empowered to transform their own life. Part of the criticism towards this representation is concerned with the individualistic, neoliberal focus and the large responsibility placed on individuals to 'make their own fortune' through entrepreneurial, rational decisions and through putting themselves on the labour market (Felli and Castree 2012). Another criticism towards this is the risk of dividing groups of resilient and non-resilient inhabitants according to individuals' potential success in labour markets in new geographical areas, age, and education levels. Klepp (2017) has argued that this may lead to new forms of discrimination and 'othering' processes between resilient and non-resilient groups of people.

3. Background

This chapter will contextualise the specific process of formulating a new Joint Africa-EU strategy that is of interest for this study. It will do so by discussing migration and climate as important EU policy topics, the EU engagement with the issue of climate-induced migration as well as the role that the Joint Africa-EU strategy plays in this context.

The salience of migration as a public policy, understood as the perceived importance of the issue, has increased within the EU in recent years. In addition to increased public and political attention to migration, public attitudes have grown to become more polarised than was the case in the early 2000's. The division of attitudes is prevalent within as well as between EU member states. This pattern is not the least indicated by the EU's struggle to find common ground on policies addressing migration flows and regulation. (MEDAM 2019)

Just as migration is increasingly debated among EU member states, climate is another predominant policy issue within the union. In international multilateral fora, the EU has positioned itself as a strong advocate for mitigating risks associated with climate change and ambitious goals on the topic in multilateral agreements. This was the case during the COP21 Paris Agreement, where the EU member states were one of the leading parties promoting efforts to limit the global average temperature increase to 1.5 C above pre-industrial levels. (Kraler et al 2020)

Climate-induced migration was first brought to limited attention by the European Parliament in 1999, when it in a motion acknowledged that "the number of 'environmental refugees' now exceeds the number of 'traditional refugees'" (European Parliament 1999 p. 5 art. K). Since then, the issue saw increased attention in EU institutions. For instance, the European Commission addressed climate-induced migration in its analysis "2013 Commission Staff Working Document on Climate change, environmental degradation, and migration" and the "European Agenda on Migration from 2015". Moreover, the European Parliament referred to environmental degradation as a driver behind population movements in a report in 2016 (Kraler et al 2020). Later, in April 2017, the Parliament adopted a resolution calling for the EU and Member States to "take a leading role in recognizing the impact of climate change on mass displacement" (European Parliament 2017 art. 31).

However, although the connection between climate change and migration is receiving increased attention in public debates and EU institutions in late 2010's, a recent and comprehensive public policy document explicitly and exclusively addressing climate-induced migration as a distinct topic is rather absent. The EU's position on the issue is instead discussed, usually as an offshoot, in other policy documents. One of the most recent policy processes touching upon the topic is the proposed new Joint Africa-EU Strategy. Although climate change and migration are still mainly discussed as separate

topics in the current draft, climate-induced migration is treated as a topic of interest for both the EU and Africa. The Joint Africa-EU Strategy currently in place was first adopted in 2007 at the Lisbon Summit. It was adopted to serve as the formal political channel for EU relations with African countries and to set up strategies for political dialogue, policy processes and cooperation on areas of common interest. The common challenges that it seeks to address are migration, a clean environment, peace and security and development (African Union and European Union 2007). The strategy was agreed by the African Union (AU) and the EU institutions, as well as by African and EU countries. The Joint Africa-EU Strategy makes up the steering framework for the partnership between the two regions and is argued to reflect "the Euro-African consensus on values, joint interests and common strategic objectives" (European Commission 2019). From this foundation, focusing on specific areas of priority, several more targeted and specific programs and action plans are in place.

The process of formulating and adopting a new and updated Joint Africa-EU Strategy initiated within the EU in 2020. The ambition with the initiative is to discuss the current proposal and agree upon a new strategy at the next EU-AU Summit in 2021 (postponed from 2020). The European Commission initiated the policy process through drafting the "Joint Communication Towards a Comprehensive Strategy with Africa", that was published in March 2020. As reviewing EU bodies, the European Parliament and the Council have examined the proposals and expressed their suggested adjustments. The Council approved the Joint Communication in their conclusions in June 2020. Within the European Parliament, the Committee on Development compiled a report published in February 2021. Together, the joint communication from the European Commission, the conclusions by the European Council and the report by the European Parliament through the Committee on Development will make up the material subject to analysis in this study. In chapter five, greater depth is given to the material and the material selection process.

4. Theoretical and conceptual framework

This chapter will develop the theoretical foundation for the thesis. The theoretical framework is based on postcolonial theory and the concepts of 'othering' and 'eurocentrism'. Further, the concepts of 'problematisation' and 'problem representation' will be explained as they are central for the methodological approach of the study that will be outlined in the subsequent chapter.

4.1.　　　　Postcolonial theory – 'othering' and 'eurocentrism'

When exploring how climate-induced migration is represented by the EU in this context, a postcolonial perspective will be helpful in understanding the narratives of the issue. Postcolonial thinking aims to explain how phenomena relate to each other in the aftermath of colonialism. It serves to illustrate that modern societies are still influenced by a colonial heritage and that this continuously reinforces unequal power relations between the previously 'colonising' and 'colonised' (Eriksson Baaz 2001). The theoretical field offers a critical approach to studying knowledge production and how 'truths' based on predominantly European experiences are reproduced (Wilkens 2017). It is therefore a useful framework for the analysis of how the EU portrays climate-induced migration in its proposed strategy for the partnership with the African region.

A central concept within postcolonial theory that will be of value for this study is the concept of 'othering'. The concept seeks to explain how subjects are constructed in relation to one another and ascribed certain characteristics through discursive practices (Thomas-Olalde and Velho 2011). The concept as of interest for the study has been discussed by Edward Said in terms of a construction of the 'orient' as the antithesis of the 'occident' (Said 1978). He argues that the mechanisms of orientalism need to be understood in the context of the European imperialism as a way of legitimising colonisation and establishing the European culture and practices as superior to others (ibid). The divide stems from a historical geographical dichotomy between 'east' and 'west', but can also be applied to the more contemporary conceptual divide between the 'global south' and 'global north'. Through this perspective, it is argued that a postcolonial narrative still exists as the remains of the colonial era. Although not explicitly using the term 'othering' in his texts, Said's discussions deal with the discursive processes of constructing a fundamentally different 'other' in relation to 'us'. As the material of analysis in this study is *formulated* by the EU, and concerning its partnership with the African region, the postcolonial theoretical framework and specifically the concept of 'othering' has been considered relevant.

The construction of the 'other' as an antithesis to 'us' has arguably continued in different societal spaces. The concept has been discussed also in relation to climate-induced

migration. In relation to climate-induced migration, it has been argued that the different ways of representing 'climate migrants' contribute to a process of 'othering' (Bettini 2013b). As the 'climate migrant' is constructed as a security threat or a victim, the concerned is deprived of political subjectivity through a double process of victimisation and de-individualisation. The combination of these processes, Bettini argues, reinforces postcolonial imaginaries where the 'other' is silenced and turned into an unpredictable threat against 'us' (Bettini 2013b).

The binary between 'us' and 'them' has been argued to be further reinforced through policy, not least within the development and migration policy spheres (Eriksson Baaz 2001). In these arenas, it is manifested through a general perspective constructing the 'global north' as the dominant centre, and as the possessor of the knowledge needed to 'solve' the 'problems' in the 'global south'. Simultaneously, the 'global north' is constructed as responsible to 'develop' the 'global south', thus positioning the 'global south' as 'less developed' (ibid). Through this perspective, termed *eurocentrism*, 'othering' is argued to take place continuously in the international policy arena through a reconstruction of the colonial relations (Spivak 2012). In this way, 'othering' is a highly political process, where colonial patterns of political domination and legitimised power relations can be reinforced (Thomas-Olalde and Velho 2011). In the context of the proposed Joint Africa-EU Strategy, formulated by the EU, this idea of essential and superior knowledge could imply a narrative where the EU considers itself most apt to handle climate change, migration and related 'development' issues in African countries. Furthermore, it may imply that 'European' culture and values are constructed as absolute and 'true'. In this thesis, the concepts of 'othering' and 'eurocentrism' will be central in interpreting and drawing conclusions from the findings. Through this perspective, I will be able to examine whether the ways in which climate-induced migration is represented carries elements of a postcolonial narrative.

4.2.   Problematisation and problem representation

In combination with the postcolonial theoretical framework and the concepts of 'othering' and 'eurocentrism' outlined above, 'problematisation' and 'problem representation' are central theoretical concepts for this study that merit further explanation. The concept of problematisation may have various meanings depending on the context in which it appears. In this study, it is understood as the ways in which something is put forward as a problem. Policy proposals are themselves seen as problematisations, as they – through proposing changes, improvements and desirable developments, simultaneously contain problem representations. 'Problem representations' are thus viewed as the implied 'problems' in problematisations, such as policies. This is also the theoretical standpoint in Bacchi's WPR approach, described in the next chapter. (Bacchi 2009)

The way in which problematisations are understood in this study build upon certain propositions, as outlined by Bacchi (2009):

1) we as citizens are *governed through problematisations*, and
2) we need to *study problematisations* (through analysing the problem representations they contain) rather than studying 'problems' when analysing policy material.

The third proposition gives the concept of problematisation a different meaning. The proposition is that:

3) we need to *problematise* (interrogate) the *problematisations* on offer through scrutinising the premises and effects of the problem representations they contain.

This illustrates that 'problematisations' has a meaning that is twofold; it is the social practices that "establish a certain view of social phenomena as 'true' and 'real'" (Barbehön et al 2015 p. 251), but it is also the critical strategy of putting into question of accepted and taken-for-granted 'truths' (Bacchi 2009).

Problematisations through policies are argued to reduce the complexity of the issue at hand, and to tell a story where only certain aspects are included. The underlying assumption is that problematisations have real life effects through the stories and narratives that they tell and react upon. Simultaneously, the problematisations are themselves considered a product of the existing discourses within a society, making the process mutually reinforcing. In line with other approaches to studying discourses, problematisations of issues are argued to set the frame for how we, as governed through problematisations, understand certain issues (Bacchi 2009). The point of departure is thereby that the ways in which climate-induced migration is represented in policy has effects for how the issue can be understood as well as for how the subjects (people) involved in such mobility can understand themselves and their position within the social relationships that are produced.

5. Research design

In this chapter, the research design of the study will be developed. The chapter will initiate with an outline of the philosophical standpoint underpinning the study, before describing the methodological approach What's the problem represented to be? (WPR) and its analytical tools that will be used to study the material. The material subject to analysis will then be described.

5.1.   The social constructionist foundation

A central position for this study is that reality as we experience it is socially constructed through interaction and language. From a social constructionist perspective, it is argued that our knowledge about the world, and the things we take for granted as 'truths', are products of certain times and spaces (Winther-Jørgensen and Phillips 2000). This knowledge is argued to be deeply rooted in discourses, why the study of those is important in order to understand what meaning is ascribed to certain phenomena (Neumann 2003, Bacchi 2009). 'Discourse' refers to a certain, unambiguous pattern of meaning that *creates* the object(s) or domain(s) at hand, and that serves to give those objects and domains the status as 'truth' or 'knowledge' (Bacchi 2009). This implies that representations of certain issues in different societal spaces are assumed to produce and reproduce collective perceived realities, why they are important to study.

5.2.   Policy as discourse

Studying representations and problematisations through language is a common objective for textual analyses, and discourse analytical approaches are appropriate for such studies (Bergström and Boréus 2012). For this study, the discursive approach to policy analysis, 'What's the problem represented to be?' (WPR), developed by Carol Bacchi (2009), will be applied. As discussed above, the theoretical foundation for the approach focuses on representations in policies with the point of departure that policy 'problems' are contextual and cultural. This implies that such 'problems' *could* be thought about differently (Esaiasson et al 2017). Through the WPR approach, *policy* is thus studied *as discourse*.

In many traditional, or conventional, approaches to policy studies, policy is approached and viewed as potential solutions to social problems. The common foundation for such approaches is an underlying assumption that the problems that policymakers seek to solve, or at least improve, through policy are given problems waiting to be addressed. Governments and other policymakers are then viewed as reacting upon *existing* problems.

The focus of such approaches to policy studies is thus on the effectiveness of the policy in achieving the thought solution, which has resulted in quite technical descriptions of policy processes illustrated through models and flowcharts. Policy itself is viewed as something rational, objective and orderly. (Goodwin 2012)

In this study, and through the WPR approach, the traditional approaches to policy studies are challenged and questioned. When a social constructionist perspective, emphasising the role of discourses in shaping shared meanings, is applied to policy studies, policies and policy proposals can be studied as discursive practices. It is then a natural point of departure that the social 'problems' that are addressed through policy 'solutions' are themselves socially constructed. Rather than viewing social 'problems' as a natural given waiting to be 'solved', the suggestion is that social 'problems' are brought into being, are *constructed* through policy formulations (Goodwin 2012). The WPR approach thus provides an alternative to the traditional 'problem-solving' policy analysis approach by shifting the focus towards the process of constructing 'problems' and of governing through such problematisations.

Viewing policy as discourse involves starting from the notion that the interpretation of certain phenomena is shaped by the political struggles in which they are ascribed meaning. Policy is thus a cultural product that is developed in a specific context. Simultaneously, policy is argued to shape culture by creating 'facts' and 'truths', thereby serving to produce *and* reproduce shared meanings of certain phenomena (Goodwin 2012). The research objective is thus not to examine the effectiveness of a policy in solving problems, but rather the ways in which 'truths' are produced and narratives are constructed through policy formulation (Bacchi 2009).

5.3.   Operationalisation of the WPR approach

With its departure in the propositions that we are governed by problematisations and need to study these rather than studying 'problems', WPR offers a tangible approach for studying problematisations in policy. In order to 'problematise the problematisations' identified in policies, Carol Bacchi (2009) argues that the premises they rely upon and the effects that they may have need to be scrutinised. To identify and engage with the problematisations that policies contain is thereby the objective when using the approach. For this study, this will imply uncovering the problem representations of climate-induced migration in the documents relating to the new Joint Africa-EU Strategy.

Instead of viewing policy as responsive, as reactions upon a problem, Bacchi advocates to 'work backwards'. With the material at hand, implicit problem representations can be revealed through the prescriptions of desired outcomes. In order to analyse policy as discourse, the WPR approach takes departure from specific questions to 'ask' the material at hand. The questions serve to identify as well as critically engage with the problem representations in the policy material (Bacchi 2009). The questions have been further clarified and developed by Esaiasson et al (2017), and for this study I will use a

combination of Bacchi's and Esaiasson et al's proposed questions in analysing the material. The questions are as follows:

1. What's the 'problem' of climate-induced migration represented to be in the material? In other words, what *kind* of 'problem' is it?
2. What assumptions or presuppositions underlie the problem representation? What are the taken-for-granted 'truths' concerning the 'problem' and the actors involved?
3. What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? What voices or perspectives are left out of the problem representation?

In the analysis, the questions will be applied to the material and presented in the above stated order.

5.4.   Material

Sampling the policy material of analysis is an important as well as difficult task in text analytical studies, and it brings some methodological issues. The selection of material will unavoidably affect the analysis and is therefore important to discuss transparently. In this section, the material subject to analysis will be explained in detail, with the ambition of ensuring a transparent research process.

The material that is subject to analysis in this study is the EU documents first mentioned in the background (chapter three). Since policy documents concerning climate-induced migration exclusively have proven difficult to find, the sampling process has instead involved seeking a recent EU policy concerning the topic. One of the most recent policy processes touching upon the topic is the proposed new Joint Africa-EU Strategy that is of interest for this study. A major delimitation has thus already been made through the selection of this specific process of formulating a new Joint Africa-EU Strategy that initiated in 2020. This process was chosen due to it being a contemporary case of the ways in which the EU represents climate-induced migration. When this process had been chosen, the sampling of documents was based on the 'legislative train' that constitutes the whole process of formulating a new strategy as of April 2021 (see European Parliament 2021b).

The policy documents that are concerned with this specific process derive from each of the three legislative EU institutions (the European Commission, the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament), and are expected to provide an appropriate sample for analysing how the EU represents climate-induced migration in the process of interest. The documents subject to analysis are:

- The European Commission's *"Joint Communication Towards a Comprehensive Strategy with Africa (JOIN (2020))"* (from hereon called the "Joint Communication"), 17 pages,

- The Council of the European Union's *"Council Conclusions on Africa (9265/20)"* (from hereon called the "Conclusions")*,* 9 pages,
- The European Parliament Committee on Development's *"Report on a new EU-Africa Strategy – a partnership for sustainable and inclusive development (2020/2041 (INI))"* (from hereon called the "Report"), 87 pages.

The Commission is the EU body responsible for initiating legislative processes through proposing new EU legislation and policy to be adopted by the Council and the Parliament. The Commission represents the EU's general interests and consists of one commissioner from each EU country (European Union n.d.). As the initiating body within the union, the Commission has proposed the new strategy for the EU with Africa manifested in the Joint Communication above. The document was published in March 2020 as addressed to the Council and the Parliament. In the policy document, the Commission emphasises five thematic partnerships with Africa:

1) a partnership for green transition and energy access,
2) a partnership for digital transformation,
3) a partnership for sustainable growth and jobs,
4) a partnership for peace and governance,
5) a partnership to ensure a balanced, coherent and comprehensive approach to migration and mobility.

The Council and the Parliament are the main decision-making bodies of the EU, passing EU laws and policies. In this process, the Council acts as the voice of the EU member states' governments (European Union, n.d.). The Council consists of government ministers from each EU country, and the set of members depends on the policy area that is to be discussed in each meeting. Decisions by the Council are made through meetings where the Council adopts conclusions based on the drafts proposed by the Commission. The Conclusions on Africa adopted in June 2020 is an example of such, and thus expresses the Council's position *regarding the specific policy proposal from the Commission*. The Council Conclusions are not legally binding but are considered to heavily influence the EU's political position (Council of the European Union, n.d.).

Whereas the Council represents the member states' governments, the Parliament's function is to represent the EU citizens through certain political party groups. All adult EU citizens are entitled suffrage in EU parliament elections. To prepare legislation, the Parliament is divided into 20 committees, each being responsible of a particular policy area (European Parliament, n.d.). One of the Parliament's policy-making tools is the "own initiative procedure", where a committee can initiate and draft a report on an EU policy topic (European Parliament, n.d.). The Report above is such a report initiated *as a response to the Commission's policy proposal*. It was issued by the Committee on Development, but also contains opinions by the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee of Agriculture and rural development, the Committee on international trade and the Committee on civil liberties, justice and home affairs. The report thereby expresses the position of the five committees of the European Parliament. The report

forms the basis for a resolution, adopted in plenary on the 25 March 2021, carrying the same title as the report itself (European Parliament 2021a).

5.4.1. Material delimitations and limitations

The selection of material for this study is in itself a methodological practice, having direct implications for the analysis and results of the study. Considering the scope of the study, delimitations considering the material are necessary. As has been discussed, the 'legislative train' (European Parliament 2021b) for the specific process of formulating a new Joint Africa-EU Strategy in 2020 and 2021 has served as the basis for the sample. This implies that the Joint Africa-EU Strategy from 2007 that is currently in place has been excluded from the sample. This is as my interest lies in exploring more contemporary representations of climate-induced migration by the EU. I have therefore chosen to include only documents concerning the process of formulating a new strategy that has been ongoing during 2020 and 2021.

Further, an important practice of delimitation is that the European Parliament resolution (2021a) following upon the Report and discussed above has not been included in the material selection. Although the resolution can be considered the formal opinion of the European Parliament and is part of the 'legislative train', I have chosen to include the preceding Report instead. This is as the resolution builds upon the Report, but is less extensive. I found the Report interesting as it contains also the different opinions expressed by the committees involved in the partnership with Africa, something that is not clear in the final resolution.

There also exist some policy briefings as responses to the Joint Communication that were requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs (see Directorate-General for External Policies of the Union 2020). These briefings have also been excluded from the material as they do not express the standpoints of the European Parliament but are rather products by the external and independent authors who do not represent EU institutions. The Report by the Committee on Development has therefore been deemed more interesting for this study.

Lastly, it should be noted that the aim of this study is *not* to compare the documents subject to analysis. Rather, the idea is to treat the policy documents as a unity together illustrating of how the EU as a union of several bodies represents the issue of climate-induced migration in this specific context. The expectation is that the documents together manifest broader EU standpoints for its relationship with Africa. As migration and climate are central topics of this partnership, the prospect is that the ways in which the EU views climate-induced migration can be uncovered through the analysis of this material.

5.5. Reflexivity

One of the main limitations and difficulties with discourse analytical approaches is that the study itself is conducted *within* certain discourses. As a researcher, I am immersed in the conceptual ideas of a specific time and of the spaces where I operate. As problem representations are argued to shape how we as citizens conceptualise certain issues, this means that I cannot stand 'outside' of these. Rather, I am too shaped by these problem representations. It is therefore important to aim to approach the material as something foreign as to not simply buy into problem representations without reflecting on them and the effects that they may have (Winther-Jørgensen and Phillips 2000, Bacchi 2009). With that stated, it is important to note that the analysis of the material that follows will inevitably be my own interpretation (Esaiasson et al 2017). This implies that other, deviating results are possible if the material is studied through a different lens. This issue will be addressed through the strive for a transparent analysis where my (subjective) interpretations of the material are supported through illustrative examples and quotes from key passages in the documents (Bryman 2016, Esaiasson et al 2017).

6. Analysis

In this chapter, the findings from the analysis of the material according to Bacchi's method will be presented. These findings will be illustrated through short examples from the material. The quotes have been underlined by me in order to clearly present and emphasise the interpretation to the reader.

6.1.   Climate-induced migration in the material

As has been continuously discussed throughout this study, climate-induced migration is still quite scarcely discussed in EU policy. Although it has been recognised that environmental factors are becoming an increasingly important driver of migration, the issue is still not a self-standing policy area (Mayrhofer and Ammer 2014). The ways in which the EU constructs the 'problem' of climate-induced migration has in this thesis instead mainly been sought in the ways that climate change and migration are represented as separate but largely intertwined issues in the context of Africa.

In the material, climate-induced migration is only addressed explicitly in two occasions. Although climate-induced migration specifically is not extensively mentioned explicitly, climate change is central in the material and is almost exclusively discussed as a problem with regards to the human consequences that it may have. In this context, issues of mobility and displacement are essential and often addressed more implicitly. My interpretation is thus that as 'solutions' regarding climate change, including strategies to mitigate the root causes of climate change as well as strategies to adapt to unavoidable changes, are presented, the 'problem' of climate-induced migration is simultaneously constructed.

6.2.   What's the problem represented to be?

The first question to ask the material according to the method is what the problem is represented to be. The idea is to uncover and identify the problem representations in the material by asking what *kind* of 'problem' it is. Identifying the dominant problem representation is a difficult task, as a given material often contains several, sometimes contradictory and conflicting problem representations. From this backdrop, it needs to be stated that the dominant problem representation highlighted in this thesis is not to be seen as an exhaustive account of all the possible problem representations and ways of delimiting those. Due to the limited scope of the thesis, the focus will be on delimiting *one* dominant problem representation in the material and to use this as the basis for the analysis.

As has been discussed, Bacchi (2009) recommends moving backwards when seeking to identify the dominant problem representation. Such a move backwards involves starting with identifying the 'solution' or proposed policy strategies that are presented to 'solve' the 'problem'. In the material subject to analysis in this thesis, a strategy to address and cooperate on common EU-Africa interests is proposed. This implies that the material is rich in proposed 'solutions' to what is considered to be the 'problem'. A first step is thereby to identify what 'solutions' in the material address the issue of climate change and climate-induced migration and thus simultaneously construct the 'problem' thereof. The findings from this process will be presented in the following.

Throughout the material, it is recognised that Africa is disproportionately affected by climate change and many of the solutions in the material are aimed at addressing the issue of climate change that drives human mobility. The dominant 'solution' that can be identified in the material is largely focused on the market and on economic development. There is thoroughly a strong focus in the material on the need of increased investments, innovation and economic growth. This is highlighted both in terms of combatting climate change through 'green growth', and in terms of adapting to unavoidable climate change. These results are exemplified below:

> *Example 1:*
> "Public and private investments are crucial to stimulating entrepreneurship and sustainable economic diversification. […] These include investments in transport, clean energy and agricultural sectors and in private sector development. Africa and the EU need to continue working together to further accelerate such sustainable investments. (European Commission 2020 pp. 6-7)

> *Example 2:*
> "Innovation is key to drive green transition. […] This will enable African countries to pursue a low-carbon, climate resilient and green growth trajectory […]. Trade should also facilitate the adoption of innovative, sustainable business models and play a leading role to shape a climate-neutral future." (European Commission 2020 p. 3)

In these examples, it is emphasised that climate change should be fought through public and private investments that can lead to economic diversification and sustainable growth. The proposed 'solutions' imply that there is not enough investments and economic growth. Further, Africa is argued to need investments in climate crisis adaptation:

> *Example 3:*
> "whereas the African continent is particularly affected by the negative impacts of climate change […]; whereas Africa needs investments in climate crisis adaptation" (European Parliament 2021c p. 7)

> *Example 4:*
> "highlights that the EU should offer concrete, predictable, accountable and long-term financial and technical support to African countries to equally reinforce their climate adaptation" (European Parliament 2021c p. 24)

When the 'solution' is to increase investments and boost economic development, the 'problem' is simultaneously constructed as the *lack* thereof. It is thus constructed as an economic 'problem' on a societal level and as a 'problem' that lies within the African region. The same problem representation is also dominant when analysing what the problem is represented to be *independently* of the 'solution'. This is exemplified here:

> *Example 5:*
> "[…] the <u>lack of economic progress</u> in the region […] together with the <u>effects of climate and environmental changes</u> […] will <u>inevitably</u> lead to a series of new <u>challenges</u>, which, <u>if not addressed immediately</u>, may result in forced displacement and <u>mixed migration movements […] that could lead to extremely challenging scenarios for African countries, the European Union and its Member States</u>" (European Parliament 2021c p. 52).

> *Example 6:*
> "[…] while there are a number of <u>dynamic middle-income countries</u> on the African continent, <u>its economic development is still relatively weak</u> […] <u>many African countries will therefore face almost insurmountable challenges caused by the COVID-19 crisis and the effects of climate change</u>, among them <u>huge demographic shifts with climate-</u>, economic- and <u>conflict-driven migration</u> […]" (European Parliament 2021c p. 68)

In these examples, 'weak' economic development is argued to link with climate change and lead to 'inevitable' and pressing challenges such as climate-induced migration. It is thus argued that the 'lack of' economic development is an underlying problem that needs to be addressed. This shows that the methodology of moving backwards from identifying the 'solution' uncovers a similar problem representation as when identifying the 'problem' independently of the 'solution'. Through both processes, *the 'problem' that the EU constructs can be formulated as one of weak economic development*.

6.3.　　　What assumptions underlie this problem representation?

In the previous section, it has been argued that the dominant problem representation in the material is one of climate-induced migration being an *economic* and *market-based* 'problem', to which increased investments into 'green growth' and adaptation measures could be a 'solution'. The second analytical question to ask the material is what assumptions or presuppositions underlie the problem representation. The purpose with this question is to identify and analyse the deep-seated cultural premises and taken-for-granted 'truths' considering the 'problem' and the actors involved that lie within the problem representation. This is done through identifying the binaries and categories in the problematisation (Bacchi 2009). I will thus in this section discuss what such assumptions and presuppositions can be identified in relation to the dominant problem representation.

6.3.1. Binaries

An important binary that is recurrent in the material is between climate-induced migration as a *challenge* and an *opportunity*. This dichotomy is recurrent in the material. In Example 5 and 6, an emphasis on the 'challenge' can be identified. In other parts of the material, it is instead the 'opportunities' that are in focus. The binary is exemplified below:

> *Example 7:*
> "[…] adaptation to climate change and environmental degradation […] mean that the levels of migration and forced displacement will continue to pose both challenges and opportunities for our two continents." (European Commission 2020 p. 13)

> *Example 8:*
> "[…] the aspiration for economic opportunity […] and adaptation to climate change and environmental degradation, all mean that the levels of migration and forced displacement will continue to pose both challenges and opportunities for our two continents. […] Well-managed migration and mobility can have a positive impact on countries of origin, transit and destination alike. […] Some African Union Member States host a substantial number of migrants, refugees and forcibly displaced persons and thus face significant challenges and opportunities. Migration also represent challenges and opportunities for EU Member States." (European Commission 2020 p. 13)

In these examples, and throughout most of the material, it is rather unclear what these challenges and opportunities are and for whom. More implicit, however, is that the opportunities are related to the labour market and thus tie to the problem representation of climate-induced migration as an economic issue. This is exemplified when the EU discusses interregional migration to the EU:

> *Example 9:*
> "Recalls that the mobility of workers can be one of the responses to the EU's demographic challenges and labour market shortages and mismatches […]" (European Parliament 2021c p. 32)

> *Example 10:*
> "[…] stepped up cooperation on legal migration can provide significant two-way benefits, providing employment opportunities that match the needs of the labour market on both continents. Projects on legal and circular migration and labour mobility with African countries and efforts to improve the development benefits of migration, including through facilitation of remittances, could significantly contribute to regular and safe migration and mobility." (European Commission 2020 p. 14)

The opportunities for the individual thus seem to involve a possibility to transform their lives through mobility, and the opportunities for the societies in both regions involve

making use of the 'capabilities' of 'regular' migrants. Migration should therefore be 'well-managed', to capitalise on these benefits. It can thereby be noted that there seems to be a certain 'type' of migration that is considered positive and that entails opportunities, namely 'circular' migration and labour mobility. Within this binary lies thus lies another binary between *regular* and *irregular* movement. While the opportunities are closely linked to an individual's choice to change one's situation and through 'regular' routes mainly for labour migration, the challenges appear to be linked to the 'irregular' and perhaps less voluntary side of the spectrum, and where the economic societal 'gain' is not central. Common and central for the binaries, and thus a strong underlying assumption, is that economic factors and growth is taken for granted to be an absolute benefit for the individual as well as the society, and that the issue of climate-induced migration should be tied to this parameter.

6.3.2. Subject categories

Within the question of the underlying assumptions of the problematisation, it can also be discussed what subject categories, or actors, are represented and in what ways. The purpose is to understand what characteristics, motives and capacities the central actors in the material are ascribed. The material of this analysis focuses on the EU and Africa as partner regions in general. These two are the main actors of interest in relation to how climate-induced migration is represented in the material.

Throughout the material, the commonalities between the two regions are emphasised and that the relationship is one between equals. "We need to partner with Africa, our twin continent, to tackle together the challenges of the 21st century and to further out common interests and future", the European Commission (2020 p. 1) states on the first page of the Joint Communication. These mutual interests and responsibilities are emphasised throughout the material, highlighting that the cooperation is based on commonalities. Among these common interests, climate change and migration are central.

The EU thoroughly points out that the union and its member states are Africa's "biggest partner on all accounts" (European Commission 2020 p. 2), the "leading partner in trade and investment, […] green transition, development cooperation and humanitarian assistance […]" (Council of the European Union 2020 p. 2). Although the partnership is discussed as one of equals (European Parliament 2021c p. 33), it is rather evident that the EU also considers itself the actor that in many ways is fit to 'help' and 'empower' the other. This view is recurrent in the material both explicitly and implicitly. It is exemplified here:

> *Example 11:*
> "Europe must <u>support Africa in its transition to a green economy</u> and
> encourage the development of its renewable energy production potential and
> sustainable agriculture." (European Parliament 2021c p. 39)

Example 12:
"The EU stands ready <u>to continue its support</u> […] for the development of national <u>adaptation plans</u>. An enhanced and green EU-Africa partnership […] has great potential to create <u>economic growth and jobs on both our continents</u>. (Council of the European Union 2020 p. 7)

Example 13:
"[…] the EU will keep <u>investing in people and empowering them</u>, in particular young people, women and girls, <u>in support of sustainable growth</u> and in order to harness the demographic dividend." (Council of the European Union 2020 p. 6)

In these examples, the EU emphasises its role in boosting the economic growth in Africa through their investments in green sectors and in empowering people with sustainable growth as the goal. As the lack of 'sufficient' economic development in the African region must be related to something that is considered 'sufficient', there is an underlying and taken-for-granted 'truth' that the EU's idea of 'green', 'sustainable' growth is the ultimate goal that Africa should want to reach.

In summary, the EU arguably frames itself as the *norm* and as the *supporter*. As an antithesis to this is Africa. Although the partnership is framed as a necessary and mutual relationship for the common interests, Africa is represented as the actor with 'needs' that should be addressed and aspects that should be changed. As exemplified in Example 11 and below, the region 'needs' to grow economically and 'green', to transform and for the EU and other actors to invest in it:

Example 14:
"Africa <u>needs</u> an <u>industrial and infrastructure transformation</u> that will only be possible through <u>large sustainable investments</u> in which public-private modes of operating represent a viable option to <u>foster development</u>" (European Parliament 2021c p. 19)

As for people categories in the material, these are concepts that are central to governing, according to Bacchi (2009). *People* categories in the material can be analysed for the role that they play in the governing process. In this material, the category of *gender* through the emphasis on the role of women has been identified as recurrent and important. Although not entirely linked to climate-induced migration, it could be of interest that women are specifically constructed as entrepreneurial and key economic actors that should be empowered. This arguably serves to legitimise and add momentum to the proposed 'solution' of focusing on the market and increased economic growth. Examples of this people category as rational, entrepreneurial and economic agents are the following:

Example 15:
"Recognises the <u>critical role of women and girls in sustainable growth and development</u>; […] underlines that the economic independence of women must

be fostered by the promotion of female entrepreneurs […]." (European Parliament 2021c p. 72)

> *Example 16:*
> " […] calls on the African and European partners to better highlight […] the role that women can play in leading their communities towards more sustainable practices and participating in decision-making on climate change adaptation and mitigation […]" (European Parliament 2021c pp. 24-25)

Another subject that is central to the research question is the 'climate migrant' and how this subject is constructed. As has been discussed, climate-induced migration is only scarcely addressed explicitly, and so is thereby the subject. Migration in general is addressed to a larger extent and the analysis thereby revolves around this, as climate change is recognised as a potential driver of such. In this context, it has already been recognised in the previous section that there is a binary between *regular* and *irregular* migration, that could also be viewed as a binary between *voluntary* and *forced* migration. There is a divide between how these subjects are constructed. The 'regular', 'voluntary' and 'adaptive' migrant is represented as "contributing to Africa's development, prosperity and integration" (European Parliament 2021c p. 78) when moving within the African region. When discussing 'labour' migration to the EU, too, it is recognised that such migrants could create "two-way benefits" (European Commission 2020 p. 14) and be a response to the EU's labour market shortages (see Example 9 above). These are thereby represented as entrepreneurial, desirable economic agents. 'Irregular' migrants, on the other hand, are largely represented as anonymous, vulnerable subjects and as a phenomenon that should be urgently addressed in order to ease the "burden on asylum and migration systems" (European Parliament 2021c p. 32). As subjects, these are represented with very limited agency:

> *Example 17:*
> "Strengthened engagement to prevent irregular migration and putting an end to the loss of life at sea is needed. This includes stepping up the fight against the smuggling of migrants[…]. […] Further action is also needed to tackle the root causes of irregular migration" (European Commission 2020 p. 14)

In this example, 'irregular' migrants are represented as vulnerable subjects exposed to smuggling and in general as a phenomenon that needs to be prevented and tackled.

6.4.   What is left unproblematic in the problem representation?

The third and last question to apply to the material is what is left unproblematic in the dominant problem representation. The purpose is to identify the silences and limitations that the problem representation implies, and thereby what perspectives or voices that have been left out in the problematisation. The argument is that policies are constrained by

their own problem representations, and that the construction of a 'problem' in a certain way implies that some aspects have to be left out. In this section, I will highlight these silences. (Bacchi 2009)

Through constructing the dominant 'problem' as a lack of economic growth, the policy alternative made possible is one based on money through investments, trade and economic diversification. That climate change should be addressed through large economic investments arguably implies that many alternative approaches are automatically silenced. 'Green growth' through this problem representation becomes the definition of sustainable development, and alternative approaches to development and to human-environment relations are thereby left out. This also implies that the voices of such alternative approaches are silenced in the material. When the problem is framed in such a matter, other values than monetary ones in the relationship between humans and the environment are largely silenced.

Another important aspect that is left unproblematic is the issue of responsibility. In the material, it is recognised and emphasised that "Africa is not responsible for climate change, but it is bearing the brunt of its impact" (European Parliament 2021c p. 39). When the 'problem' is framed in economic means, and the proposed 'solution' is increased investments and growth, however, the causes of climate change that drives human mobility are left out. There is no room for a discussion on the sustainability of the practices, economic models and consumption patterns of the 'global north'. Through framing the 'problem' in economic terms, it could be argued that the EU largely escapes accountability and responsibility, and legitimises business-as-usual practices, albeit with a 'green' focus. When the issue of responsibility and accountability is left out, this is in line with a general framing of the 'problem' as being an 'African' problem. Potential issues that could be 'improved' and 'changed' in and by the EU are thereby left out as Africa is represented as the region that 'needs' economic development.

7. Discussion

In this chapter, the findings from the previous chapter will be further interpreted and discussed in relation to the theoretical framework, and situated against the previous research on the topic. The chapter will also include reflections on the limitations of the study.

The dominant 'problem' of climate-induced migration is in the material represented as being *economic*; a lack of economic growth. The 'solutions' that have been presented are increased investments into climate mitigation through 'green growth' and into climate adaptation measures.

The findings show that a colonial narrative is reproduced in several aspects. Climate-induced migration is represented as an economic issue regarding which Africa 'needs' investments and economic development. The 'weak' economic development arguably needs to be compared and related to something. In this context, my interpretation is that the EU implicitly situates itself, or the 'global north', as this economic norm to which Africa, as its 'twin continent', should relate, adapt, and strive. This is arguably an element of a eurocentric perspective where the EU's knowledge and ideas of sustainable development and 'green growth' through large investments are constructed as superior and 'true'. This is in line with Spivak's (2012) argument that 'othering' processes take place in the international policy arena through such a eurocentric perspective, thus reproducing colonial relations. Through these processes, The EU arguably positions itself as the possessor of the necessary knowledge to 'solve' the African 'problems' of weak economic growth (Eriksson Baaz 2001).

Further, the EU frames its economic engagement as a sort of goodwill practice – a result of pure thoughtfulness and altruism. Very little to no emphasis is put on the economic interests of European companies to establish activity in Africa – which contains several of the fastest growing markets in the world, offering great business opportunities and returns on foreign investment. Arguably, the EU's self-interest is strategically dimmed to allow for a discourse where EU is the norm which Africa *needs* in order to develop. Other ways of reducing the impact of climate change that are not compatible with neoliberal policies maximising economic growth and facilitating EU investments are through this representation excluded, such as for example small scale production and other alternative approaches.

Moreover, as the 'problem' is represented as being *in* Africa (although the 'global north' has contributed substantially to climate change), the EU arguably in a way escapes accountability and responsibility. Through placing the 'problem' regionally in Africa, there is no room for a discussion of the EU having to change how societies in its member states function and how certain practices within the union may continuously worsen environmental impacts. This also neglects possible policies including solutions in which

the EU is the party to adapt to climate-induced migration, for example by opening its borders, granting economic redistribution programs to invest financially in human capital and integration processes within the EU. Instead of such responsibility, the EU considers itself responsible to 'help' and 'support' Africa with its 'needs' *inside* Africa, reconstructing colonial narratives and relations of 'developing' the 'undeveloped' (Eriksson Baaz 2001). It could possibly be argued that such a way of allocating resources and investments *is* a way of taking responsibility for an issue that the EU has contributed to. Either way, however, these narratives arguably contribute to a process of regional 'othering'. Africa is in the material explicitly referred to as the 'twin continent' of the EU, thus emphasising the similarities and commonalities between the regions. Simultaneously, however, Africa is constructed as fundamentally different and as the region having to change and adapt (Said 1978). The EU simultaneously carries the necessary knowledge to bring about these changes. This may, as Thomas-Olalde and Velho (2011) have argued, serve to further institutionalise colonial political and social power relations between the regions.

In the literature review of this thesis (chapter two), three dominant ways of representing climate-induced migration were explained; as a *threat against national security* (see section 2.1.1), as a *human security problem* (see section 2.1.2) and as a *potential strategy of adaptation*. I argue that the way in which climate-induced migration is represented in the material of analysis for this thesis can be related to all these three broader problem representations.

As was exemplified in the analysis (Example 5 and 6), there are parts in the material where climate-induced migration is discussed in securitising terms, framing the phenomenon as a *national security threat* (see section 2.1.1). This is especially the case when the EU discusses the 'challenges' that climate-induced migration may involve *for the EU*, and thus the urgency of addressing the issue. The way in which climate-induced migration is placed within a text range consisting of disastrous scenarios of conflicts suggests it is an urgent threat. Another example of this is the way in which the EU encourages 'well-managed' migration. This could be interpreted as a perception that Africa lacks sufficient border control, which portrays 'irregular' migration as something that needs to be controlled and contained. These portrayals indicate that 'irregular' migration seems to pose a 'threat' to the EU. This could thereby be argued to feed into the debate on securitising migration to the EU or the 'global north' (Oakes et al 2019, Methmann and Oels 2015). As Bettini (2013b) has argued, this narrative also contributes to a process where the 'climate migrant' is turned into an unpredictable 'other' and as a threat. The focus on investments, 'green growth' and economic diversification can in this context arguably be interpreted as an implicit agenda to limit the 'need' for such 'irregular' movement through ensuring opportunities *in* Africa.

Out of the three dominant representations discussed in previous literature, the representation of climate-induced migration as a *human security problem* (see section 2.1.2.) has been the least common in the material. However, it can be identified in the ways in which 'irregular' migrants are represented in the material, with limited agency

and insufficient abilities to economically 'contribute' to receiving nations, and thereby in need to be 'taken care of' (Bettini et al 2017). The most recurrent representation of climate-induced migration in the material seems to be as a potential *adaptation strategy* (see section 2.1.3.). From this standpoint, climate-induced migration is treated as a response that can lead to increased individual resilience. Such individual resilience has been argued to presume that the individual has the possibility to 'make their own fortune' through entrepreneurial decisions and putting themselves on the labour market (Randall 2019, Felli and Castree 2012). As the 'problem' and driver behind climate-induced migration is represented as being weak economic development, and the 'solution' increased investments and growth, entrepreneurial decisions that can lead to individual resilience are arguably premiered and in focus. Elements of seeing climate-induced migration as a potential adaptation strategy can be seen as well in the ways in which the EU discusses the 'opportunities' that 'labour migration' involves and how such migration should be facilitated for the benefits that it may entail. This way of representing the issue could, as Klepp (2017) has argued, potentially also lead to new forms of discrimination and processes of 'othering' where individuals and groups are conceptually divided between those who are 'resilient', through successful 'adaptation', and those who are not.

Assuming that we as citizens are governed by problematisations (Bacchi 2009), this is likely to have certain effects for policymaking as well as for the ways in which the issue can be thought about. When the 'climate migrant' is implicitly represented as either threatening or entrepreneurial and 'adaptive', it is unlikely that the political response will be to offer increased support or international legal protection. Rather, the 'rational' response is likely to continue to be resilience-building strategies in vulnerable regions, thus further positioning the 'problem' *somewhere else* than in and for the 'global north'.

It should at this final stage of the discussion be restressed that the aim of this thesis has not been to investigate the policy material from an approach where the potential 'effectiveness' of the policy 'solutions' are in focus. Rather, the aim has been to examine how the 'problem' is represented. This means that the critical approach to 'green growth' and large investments presented in the analysis and discussed in this section does not necessarily imply that these policy suggestions are per se negative. Rather, the focus of this thesis has been on the *problem representations* that such 'solutions' imply and the ways in which climate-induced migration is represented through these. It should also be stressed that there are several limitations to this study, one of them being delimited material. The selection of material plays a significant role for the analysis and the results to be found. This study should thereby not be seen as claiming to have identified an exhaustive account of EU representations of climate-induced migration. It should however not either be seen as an exhaustive account of the possible problem representations and ways of delimiting these present in the specific material, but rather as a product of my interpretation. I have sought to ensure a transparent process through the included examples from the material as well as a general awareness of the subjective nature of qualitative text analyses.

8. Concluding remarks

In this thesis, the aim has been to explore how climate-induced migration is interpreted and represented by the EU. As Africa is especially vulnerable to climate change, and a region of great geopolitical interest for the EU, this has been done through analysing how the EU represents climate-induced migration in this partnership context. The material has consisted of the policy documents concerning the EU process of formulating a new Joint Africa-EU Strategy that initiated in 2020. The study has been undertaken through the discursive policy analysis approach What's the problem represented to be? (WPR) by Carol Bacchi (2009). The theoretical framework has consisted of postcolonial theory through the concepts of *othering* and *eurocentrism*.

It has been stated that the material of analysis does not explicitly address climate-induced migration to a large extent. However, climate change and its human consequences, including migration, is an important issue in the material. Another important issue in the material is migration, and the answers to the research question concerning how climate-induced migration is represented have thus been sought across these issues.

The findings have shown that the 'problem' of climate-induced migration is in this material represented dominantly being weak economic development in Africa. This problem representation has been identified with the basis in the proposed 'solutions' that the material contains, where increased investments into 'green growth' and in adaptation measures are central. This problem representation has been argued to have elements from predominantly two of the three broader representations of the issue identified in the previous literature; climate-induced migration as a national security threat and as a potential adaptation strategy. Aspects of framing the issue as a *national security threat* and thus in negative terms can be identified in the ways in which the EU indicates that 'irregular' migration should be addressed and prevented and how some groups of people are not desirable. From this perspective, the focus on increased investment and economic growth *in Africa* can be interpreted as a way of decreasing the 'need' for such migration to the EU. The representation of climate-induced migration as a *potential adaptation strategy* is used in the material in regard to 'labour migration' and when migration is framed in more positive terms. From this perspective, the focus on investments and growth can be interpreted as a prerequisite for the individual's ability to build their own resilience on the labour market.

It has been argued that the ways in which climate-induced migration is represented in the material carries elements of eurocentrism, reinforcing processes of 'othering' people and places. These elements are identified as the 'problem' is represented as being 'African', why Africa is the party that should change and 'develop'. EU, on the other hand, through this representation, does not need to change its practices, thus legitimising business-as-usual practices. This also means that the EU does not need to adapt to climate change

through offering legal protection for climate migrants, since the 'problem' is framed as someone else's. Through such a process, Africa is, although referred to as the 'twin continent' of the EU, represented as a fundamentally different 'other'. Climate-induced migration is simultaneously represented as an issue *for* this 'other', for which the only responsibility the EU carries is through investments as the benevolent supporter. The EU's self-interest in such investments and market opportunities are thus largely covered in altruism. These elements are further present in the ways in which the EU is represented as the possessor of the necessary knowledge to address the 'problem' *in* Africa, and in the ways in which the EU's ideas of 'sustainable' development is represented as an absolute truth and a norm to which Africa should want to strive. Alternative approaches to addressing the issue and to climate change are thus excluded through this way of representing climate-induced migration.

This study has contributed to the scarcely researched issue of policy engagement with climate-induced migration. As the thesis is of a limited scope, further research on the topic is highly encouraged. Such research could take a more comparative approach, where EU policy representations of the issue could be compared with more local policy representations of the issue in affected nations or regions. Analyses of such local policies would be interesting independently as well. Another interesting aspect would be studies regarding the effects of the identified policy representations and the policy measures that they enable. In this thesis, it has been stated that a central position is that policy representations *do* have effects for further policymaking on different levels and for the ways in which the issue can be thought about. The effects, however, have not been the focus for the study. Further research could therefore explore such effects, for individuals as well as societies. A final aspect that would be interesting is to shift the focus to the perceptions and experiences of people affected by climate-induced migration. Such experiences should ideally be a starting point for policymaking, why they are important to study and learn from.

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