



LUND
UNIVERSITY

Lund University Master of Science in
International Development and Management
August 2022

FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL?

*– A WPR analysis of the International Organization for Migration’s
discourses on ‘climate migration’*

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the discourses produced by the International Organization for Migration in relation to the phenomenon of ‘climate migration’ in order to identify the main problematization and subsequent implications. Using Carol Bacchi’s approach entitled “*What’s the problem represented to be?*” and conducting a qualitative policy analysis of 13 documents written by the IOM between 2007-2022, the thesis answers the following questions: i) *How does the IOM problematize ‘climate migration’ within its knowledge products?* ii) *How are the ‘climate migrants’ represented?* iii) *What are the implications of such problematizations?* The analysis reveals that ‘climate migration’ is linked to one’s vulnerability to cope with climate change and is seen as an appropriate adaptation strategy. The ‘climate migrants’ are represented as agents of positive change and as a source of labour. These findings hold many implications: the migrants are responsible to help themselves increase their resilience and not as much emphasis is put on states in that regard. Further, issues of maladaptation, deep-rooted vulnerability factors, and global responsibilities are omitted which impacts the work done. Finally, the thesis questions whether the IOM’s work is really for the benefit of *all*.

Keywords: *climate migration, migration, climate change, policy, international organization for migration, IOM, discourse, WPR approach*

Word count: 14 982

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In 2009, my dad gave me a paper with a quote from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe written on it: “*Quoi que tu rêves d’entreprendre, commence-le. L’audace a du génie, du pouvoir, de la magie*”. I think the English version goes as such: “Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it; Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it”. This quote has been following me since then and has been a source of motivation.

In 2020, I followed my dream to go to Sweden to complete this master’s programme and I could not have been happier – despite the many challenges I faced these last two years. It has been an incredible journey that I will forever be grateful for! I met such wonderful people in Lund and through LUMID, people that I learned a lot from and with whom I share beautiful memories. I am thankful for every single one of them.

I am also thankful for the unconditional love and support my dad gave me.

Merci de toujours croire en moi et en mes rêves.

Je t’aime papa!

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
COP	Conference of the parties
IDP	Internally displaced people
IOs	International organizations
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MECC	Migration, environment and climate change
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Program
WB	The World Bank
WPR	What's the problem represented to be?

1. INTRODUCTION

Climate change and its many consequences are arguably the biggest challenges humanity will face in the upcoming decades. A warming climate will lead to an increase in natural hazards, affect agricultural yields, render lands uninhabitable, and overall impact people's livelihoods (IPCC, 2021). A change in migration patterns, in prevention of, or in reaction to, this reality, has been predicted by scientists and scholars alike (IPCC, 2014; Myers, 1997). The phenomenon of 'climate migration'¹ is defined as:

“The movement, within a State or across an international border, of a person or groups of persons, who are obliged to leave their habitual place of residence, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, predominantly for reasons of sudden or progressive change in the environment due to climate change” (IOM, 2019a).

Numbers of anticipated 'climate migrants' have been varying for decades: Myers (2002) speculated up to 200 million *international* migrants by 2050, whereas the World Bank (2021) now estimates that 216 million people will be *internal* migrants –or internally displaced people, IDPs – by the same year. Even though the question of numbers is up for debate, these numbers are a good testament of the seriousness and urgency of the situation.

The discourses and debates surrounding 'climate migration' emerged in the 1980s, notably with the publication of a report on 'environmental refugees' by the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) (El-Hinnawi, 1985). It has, since then, been the subject of numerous research papers and policies by actors ranging from scholars, governments, or international organizations (IOs) such as the World Bank (WB), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Barnett and Finnemore (1999) argued that IOs can shape the way that migration is conceived by

¹ The term 'climate migration' and the related 'climate migrants' have long been subjects of debates. Other terms such as 'environmental migration', 'environmental migrants', 'climate refugees', 'climate-induced migration' and so on have been used as different terminologies to describe the phenomenon (see Klepp, 2017; Baldwin, Methmann, and Rothe, 2014; Pigué, 2013; Zetter, 2011; Gemmene, 2011; Foresight, 2011 for more information). In this thesis, the term 'climate migration' is used over 'environmental migration' as a choice to highlight the undeniable influence of climate change on the environment and as a major issue needing to be addressed.

producing both data and normative recommendations, thereby influencing and creating the ‘social world’ in a way that fits their interests. In doing so, they gain power and legitimacy. Similarly, Brachet (2016: 277) mentioned the ability of IOs to influence how state and non-state actors perceive migration, leading to a “homogeneous governmentality² of borders”. The discourses developed by IOs and governments create categories associated with ‘climate migration’ and ‘climate migrant’, and need careful attention.

One such IO is the IOM, the only agency of the United Nations (UN)³ with a mandate regarding migration issues (Traore Chazalnoël and Ionesco, 2018). The organization, created in 1951, counts 174 Member States and numerous observers and has various regional, national, and liaison offices⁴ (IOM, n.d.b; n.d.c). Due to its established and influential status, the IOM is shaping the reality of migration worldwide, and is also a prolific global leader in policies on ‘climate migration’ and displacement (Lakeman, 2021; Geiger and Koch, 2018; Gervais *et al.*, 2017). This is because migration is often linked to other social phenomena, which led the IOM to expand its work to address issues such as economic migration, border management, ‘climate migration’, and more (Pécoud, 2020; Traore Chazalnoël and Ionesco, 2018). Despite the power and legitimacy it holds, little attention has been given to the organization or the implications of the knowledges⁵ it produces (Pécoud, 2018). The IOM’s influential status as a renowned IO gives a lot of weight and power to its recommendations, which is one more reason to carefully look at it more comprehensively.

² Governmentality is a term that was coined by Michel Foucault (1991). It refers to the understanding of how rule takes place and is justified through ‘governmental rationalities’ or ‘governmentalities’. Rule takes place with the production of governable subjects (Bacchi, 2010). In this case, a homogenous governmentality of borders can be understood as a shared way of justifying the ruling of borders through the production of widely spread discourses by IOs.

³ The IOM officialized its relation to the UN in 2016, but only as a ‘related’ organization. The agreement was adopted in order for the UN and the IOM to “strengthen the cooperation [between them] and enhance their ability to fulfil their respective mandates” (IOM, n.d.a.). It also highlighted the importance of the work done by the IOM within the human mobility sector.

⁴ The regional offices are formulating strategies and plans of action within the regions and are supporting the country offices located within the region, while the country offices are implementing projects. The liaison offices are aiming to strengthen the relations with various actors (IOM, n.d.b). The offices are subject to the decisions taken at the headquarters in Geneva.

⁵ Throughout the thesis, the word ‘knowledge’, even in plural forms, may be written as ‘*knowledges*’. This is in reflection of Michel Foucault’s understanding of knowledge as plural and potentially contested (see section 3).

1.1. Aim and research questions

This thesis examines documents produced by the IOM in recent years (2007-2022) in relation to ‘climate migration’. To do so, Carol Bacchi’s (2009) approach entitled “*What’s the problem represented to be?*” (hereafter WPR) is employed. WPR is a post-structural critical policy analysis method greatly influenced by the work of Michel Foucault (see section 3). The approach challenges the typical view of policies as *addressing* ‘problems’ and sees them rather as *productive* or creative (Bacchi, 2016; Bacchi, 2009). Special attention is given to the role that knowledges play in shaping discourses and how it impacts problem representations and subjects.

The aim of this thesis is to analyze the work of the IOM and identify the main discourse of the organization regarding ‘climate migration’. It hopes to contribute to the fields of policy analysis and human mobility by shedding light on the possible impacts of problematizations on ‘climate migration’ and ‘climate migrants’. As such, the following research questions guide the thesis:

- i. *How does the IOM problematize ‘climate migration’ within its knowledge products?*
- ii. *How are the ‘climate migrants’ represented?*
- iii. *What are the implications of such problematizations?*

1.2. Disposition

The thesis is divided into six different sections, with this introduction being the *first* one. The *second* section provides a literature review of the main discourses and debates surrounding ‘climate migration’ as well as a presentation of the IOM in academic literature. The *third* part delves deeper into the WPR approach and the theoretical concepts involved in it. Following, the *fourth* part focuses on the methodology behind the thesis: the research design, data collection and interpretation, and the limitations are explained. In the *fifth* section, the research findings are presented using elements from previous sections, notably the questions from the approach. Finally, the *sixth* section summarizes the main findings and offers recommendations for further research on the topic.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, the background of the thesis is established and a literature review provided. The idea here is to explore the broader debates surrounding ‘climate migration’ and then take a closer look at the IOM, its work, and how it has been criticized by scholars. The *first* subsection introduces the main discourses surrounding the conceptualizations of ‘climate migration’. It presents the debate between the ‘alarmists’ and the ‘sceptics’ as well as the new discourses about (mal)adaptation. The *second* subsection presents an overview of the representations of the ‘climate migrants’ within the main discourses. These parts are meant to be insightful regarding the main concepts employed in the literature to approach the issue. Lastly, the *third* subsection aims to shed light on the organization and its work on the climate-migration nexus, thereby explaining the rationale behind the decision to look specifically at the work of the IOM. This part is useful for understanding how the organization works, but also to highlight the gaps within previously conducted research.

2.1. ‘Climate migration’ discourses

This part of the thesis presents the main discourses that have surrounded the problematization of ‘climate migration’ over the years. In the context of the research, it is useful to highlight the main concepts used, but also to showcase the plurality of discourses, their similarities, and tensions.

2.1.1. *The ‘alarmists’ discourse*

The ‘alarmists’ discourse appeared and gained support not long after the emergence of ‘climate migration’ as a phenomenon recognized internationally in the 1980s. It is one of the first clear problematizations of the issue. Suhrke (1994) first coined the term as the “maximalist approach”; an approach in which the environmental degradation caused by climate change is considered to be the main factor driving migration. As the name indicates, the proponents of this coalition were *alarmed* both by climate change and by the possibility and reality of a growing number of people being considered as ‘environmental refugees’ (Ayeb-Karlsson, Smith, and Kniveton, 2018; Black et al., 2011; Myers, 1997). It is the

publication of a report by UNEP that sparked interests in the topic. The report defined ‘environmental refugees’ as:

“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: 4).

In addition, the report looked into various environmental hazards such as floods, cyclones, droughts, or earthquakes, and how those led to a large influx of people migrating *out* or *within* their countries (El-Hinnawi, 1985). At the forefront of the ‘alarmist’ coalition was Norman Myers who published many articles on the subject (1997, 2002, 2005). He estimated that there were 25 million environmental refugees in 1995, and that it would amount to 50 million by 2010 and 200 million by 2050 (Myers, 2002).

The ‘alarmist’ approach has implications for the representation of ‘climate migration’. The proponents of such a view assumed a deterministic causal link between the state of the environment, climate change, and out-migration (Myers and Kent, 1995). Myers assumed that those living in a risk-prone area would become ‘environmental refugees’ and would “feel [as if] they have no alternative but to seek sanctuary elsewhere” (Myers, 2002: 609). According to this conceptualization of the issue of ‘climate migration’, migration is not seen only as a result of changes in the environment, but as a catastrophe; it was “represented as a pathology to be prevented” (Methmann and Oels, 2015: 52; Piguet, 2013). The alarmist discourse often included a security aspect, especially in media and policy spheres, where ‘climate migrants’ were depicted both as victims and as a possible threat to national security and sovereignty (Cundill *et al.*, 2021; Methmann and Oels, 2015; Gemenne, 2011; Myers 2005). Therefore, migration was often described with words such as ‘waves’, ‘floods’, ‘tides’, or ‘streams’ of migrants (Ayeb-Karlsson, Smith, and Kniveton, 2018), which illustrates the magnitude of migrants that was expected, but also how they were perceived as an issue to be dealt with. Some scholars were mentioning “waves of environmental refugees that [would] spill across borders with destabilizing effects on the recipient’s domestic order and on international stability” (Homer-Dixon,

1991, cited in Gemenne 2011a: 230). Others assessed that “disruption and conflict will be endemic features of life” following an abrupt climate shift that would create ‘environmental refugees’ (Schwartz and Randall, 2003: 22). This threat of the ‘climate migrant’ was mostly perceived in the Global North regarding people from the Global South⁶ (Cundill *et al.*, 2021; Bettini, Nash, and Gioli, 2017; Klepp, 2017).

In sum, the ‘alarmist’ stance had its referent into what ‘climate migration’ would look like: a problem needing to be addressed. A large aspect of it concerned security, thereby potentially leading to restrictive policies towards, and a militarization of, migration (Bettini, 2014). Consequently, migrants may receive less support and remain stigmatized. The ‘alarmist’ discourse recognized the urgency of climate change as an issue to be dealt with.

2.1.2. The ‘sceptics’ discourse

On the other side were the ‘sceptics’. This approach is a direct critique of the previous one and was principally supported by scholars and migration experts (Mayer, 2014). They questioned many aspects of the ‘alarmist’ stance – namely the question of numbers, the term ‘refugee’, and the deterministic approach (Castles, 2002; Black, 2001; Kibreab, 1997).

The ‘sceptics’ highlighted the methodological flaws of the ‘alarmists’. They had issues with the ways the estimations were calculated, especially by Myers and Kent (1995) who assumed that those in affected areas would *all* become ‘climate refugees’. Gemenne (2011b) stipulated that neither consensus regarding estimates nor an agreed methodology existed, which led to contentious debates. He further assessed that numbers were “artificially inflated, excessively alarmist, or ‘guestimates’” (Gemenne, 2011b: S41). Myers’ numbers were criticized for their deterministic nature due to the assumption that

⁶ The terms ‘Global North’ and ‘Global South’ refer to a division of the world in two. It replaced the notions of ‘underdeveloped-’/‘Third World-’/‘Periphery-’ countries. The ‘Global North’ includes Europe, North America, some countries in Asia (such as Japan, South Korea, China) and in Oceania (Australia, New Zealand). ‘Global South’ refers to some countries in Latin and South America, Africa, and Asia (Dados and Connell, 2012).

environmental changes were the only reason for human mobility (Methmann and Oels, 2015; Gemenne, 2011b). Black (2001) further argued that there was no evidence at this point that changes in the environment could lead to mass migration, nor that the migration would take place in the Global North. The ‘sceptics’ did not reply with different numbers as they advocated for a larger understanding of what drives mobility and argued for multi-causality.

The term ‘environmental refugees’ was also a point of tension between the two coalitions. Castles (2002) reminded that the term ‘refugee’ already had an established definition within international law per the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Fleeing for environmental reasons was – and still is – not seen as an acceptable ground for refugee status. Castles (2002: 8) argued that using ‘refugee’ was “simplistic, one-sided, and misleading”, following the footsteps of other ‘sceptics’ such as Kibreab (1997) who argued that it was both confusing and misleading, or Black (2001) who argued that ‘environmental refugees’ were just a myth. Some scholars have also criticized the use of the term for its depoliticizing nature which erases the connection of environmental problems to other ones such as conflicts or social and economic factors (Piguet, 2013; Kibreab, 1997).

The main point of contention between the ‘alarmists’ and ‘sceptics’ relates to the reasons behind migration. Indeed, from the ‘sceptics’ point of view, migration is driven by multiple interconnected factors (Castles, 2002; Black, 2001). The idea that the environment is the sole motivation to migrate leaves out context-specific factors as well as historical or cultural ones (Klepp, 2017). Black (2001) argued that political and socioeconomic factors were more influential in one’s decision to migrate than environmental ones. The multi-causality of migration is widely accepted nowadays in academia and policy spheres. The decision to migrate is largely attributed to migrants’ agency and economic, political, social, and environmental factors where the environmental ones are adding an *extra* dimension to the more ‘conventional’ ones (Cundill *et al*, 2021; Ayeb-Karlsson, Smith, and Kniveton, 2018; Black *et al*, 2013; Foresight, 2011).

In sum, the debate between the two coalitions can be summarized as a debate on the conceptualization of ‘climate migration’ and its implications. On the one hand, it is conceptualized as an issue urgently needing to be addressed in order to limit the threat of ‘waves of refugees’ on national security, whereas on the other hand there was a more nuanced and complex understanding of what ‘climate migration’ is. In terms of policy, a more holistic view can generate more comprehensive and cohesive policies within different sectors and migration. The ‘sceptics’ discourse of multi-causality is commonly accepted nowadays, although ‘alarmists’ influences can still be detected in discourses, especially in the media⁷.

2.1.3. *The (mal)adaptation discourses*

In recent years, a new conceptualization of the issue has emerged where ‘climate migration’ is seen as an adaptation mechanism and an illustration of the migrants’ resilience, or the capacity to mitigate and recover from harm (IPCC, 2014; Foresight, 2011; Pelling 2003). What was once considered a ‘problem’ is now seen as a ‘rational strategy’ (Methmann and Oels, 2015). This way of putting ‘climate migration’ led to a new framing of the issue that is more optimistic in nature and departs from the aforementioned discourses.

Leading the adaptation discourse is the Foresight (2011) report⁸. The publication, a major reference in the field, states that ‘no migration’ is not an option as people will continue to migrate due to climate change and related factors (in agreement with the ‘sceptics’ and their multi-causality conceptualization). As an accepted and undeniable

⁷ Examples of it are Williams (2021), Gaudreault (2021), or Shamshiri, Omalar and Châtel (2021). The three articles are using ‘climate refugees’ as a term to describe ‘climate migrants’ – the articles do mention the lack of international legislations but describe the migrants as refugees regardless. Further, Flavelle et al. (2021) published in the New York Times about the national security threats posed by climate change. These discourses are very ‘alarmist’ in nature. Worth mentioning is that all four articles are from 2021, which shows how actual the topic is.

⁸The report was overseen by an expert group of six university professors in geography, environmental/development economics, environment studies, and politics. The chair of the group was Richard Black, one of the main ‘sceptics’ and critique of the ‘alarmists’. His presence there is reflected in the report’s acknowledgment of migration as multi-causal and in the critique of the methodology of previous estimations of ‘climate migrants’ as methodologically unsound.

truth, migration should be well managed as an unplanned and unmanaged one would be detrimental to all parties (Foresight, 2011). The report also concludes that migration represents a “transformational adaptation” and can lead to long-term resilience of populations (Foresight, 2011: 10). The link between migration and resilience has also been explored outside of its relation to climate, notably as a way to decrease households’ economic risks (McLeman, 2019). In addition, the report represents the ‘climate migrant’ as an economic agent, stating that migration is a way to diversify income and secure livelihoods. This shift was seen in the World Bank’s (2010) work where it described ‘climate migration’ as a way to help people help *themselves*. Migration is therefore seen as an opportunity for development, instead of a characteristic of underdevelopment as it was once perceived (Bettini, 2014). The ADB also opted for a similar discourse:

“The countries of Asia and the Pacific can choose to turn the *threat* of climate-induced migration into an *opportunity* to improve lives, advance the *development* process, and adapt to long-term environmental change by altering development patterns, strengthening disaster risk management, investing in social protection, and facilitating the movement of labor” (ADB, 2012: 7, emphasis added).

In this discourse, labour mobility is represented as a virtuous way of improving one’s life and the resilience of communities. Migration as an adaptation strategy highlights the economic agency of migrants and sees remittances as self-help (Bettini and Gioli, 2016). Bettini (2017) argues that ‘migration as adaptation’ has a neoliberal tone as it aims to create a good governable population of migrants as labour.

This way of conceptualizing ‘climate migration’ also received its share of criticisms. Describing the ‘climate migrant’ as an economic agent and understanding migration as an opportunity is changing on whom the burden should be. According to Methmann and Oels (2015), this discourse is shifting the responsibility from the Global North to the Global South. It disregards the role of the Global North in creating structures which impacted the current livelihoods of people in the South. Similarly, focusing on the role of remittances as a “self-help development ‘from below’” has also been criticized for

omitting structural settings and states' roles in building adequate conditions (de Haas, 2010: 258). The adaptation discourse has also been criticized for its individualistic aspect and for creating binaries such as 'fit' and 'unfit' or 'developed' and 'underdeveloped' (Bettini, 2017). Bettini (2017) added to the critique by highlighting that those unable to become resilient – due to a lack of capital, for example – are at risk of being left behind. As such, being resilient and adaptable is a privilege.

While migration was presented as a proof of adaptation, immobility and subsequently 'trapped populations'⁹ are depicted as a failure to adapt. However, another critique is that migrating might also very well be a symptom of *maladaptation* – or an inability to cope with changes. A study in Bangladesh by Penning-Roswell, Sultana, and Thompson (2013) found that despite the high risks of hazards, migration typically is the 'last resort' of migrants. Migration is used when a population has tried various solutions to stay without success. Similarly, Singh and Basu (2019: 1) found that migrating can "alleviate vulnerability for some [...] while exacerbating vulnerability of others" and that it can become maladaptive at a larger scale. Jacobson *et al* (2019) also found that migration may be maladaptive on the long-term and lead to a poverty trap. Both studies are in line with Gemmene and Blocher (2017) who argued that what for some is adaptation may be maladaptation for others. Having a holistic view is therefore advised by many scholars.

2.2. Representations of the 'climate migrant'

Discourses on 'climate migration' ultimately produce 'subjects' ('climate migrants'). These 'subjects' are governed through their representations in discourses. According to Farbotko (2017), representations are not 'static' but heavily influenced by a continuously evolving 'knowledge landscape', hence why attention should be given to knowledge production and the establishment of 'truths' (Farbotko, 2017; Bacchi, 2009), such as the work done by the IOM.

⁹ The thesis will not add to the debate about 'trapped population' and immobility. Many articles exist on the matter (see, for example, Cundill et al. (2021) Mallick and Schanze (2020), Farbotko and McMichael (2019), Zickgraf (2019), Adams (2016) or Black and Collyer (2014)).

Different discourses lead to different representations. From an ‘*alarmist*’ stance, the ‘climate migrant’ is essentially seen as a problem. Indeed, they are depicted as a security threat to the Global North’s stability (Farbotko, 2017; Gemmene, 2011a). In a study by Methmann using post-colonialism (2014: 421-422), the author highlighted how the ‘climate migrant’, in discourses, is associated with stereotypes of poor populations in the Global South. They are also seen as passive victims of a phenomenon bigger than them (Bettini and Gioli, 2016; Methmann, 2014). Negative views such as these can limit migration options for ‘climate migrants’. As for the ‘*sceptics*’ stance, they recognize that migration is linked to many factors requiring transformations from a societal standpoint. The pressure is not put on the ‘climate migrants’ per se, and they give more strength to a ‘human security’ issue than a strictly ‘security’ one (Baldwin, Methmann, and Rothe, 2014). Finally, the *adaptability* discourses offer a very different angle. From a matter of societal transformations and global climate action, it becomes a matter of individual agency (Ayebe-Karlsson, Smith, and Kniveton, 2018; Methmann and Oels, 2015). ‘Climate migrants’ are agents of change (Bettini, 2014), a vulnerable Other (Farbotko, 2017), a resilient subject, or a source of mobile labour (Felli, 2013). These views have been criticized by some scholars as potentially limiting the support received by classifying the ‘climate migrants’ as adapting successfully or not and contributing to a racialization of bodies based on (mal)adaptive capacities (Ayebe-Karlsson, Smith, and Kniveton, 2018; Baldwin, 2017).

This is only a brief illustration of the power of discourses on the conceptualizations of what people are, how they are governed, and what their actions can be. This thesis takes a closer look at where exactly the IOM’s work is situated within the debates and what the subsequent implications are. It is argued that while the IOM mainly locates itself in the ‘adaptation discourse’, elements from each discourses can also be found within the work. Having now presented the main debates, a closer look at the IOM is needed.

2.3. The International Organization for Migration

The organization has been overlooked as a research topic until the 1990s, although most of the research conducted on it has been done in recent years (Pécoud, 2018; Andrijasevic and Walters 2010). The following subsections briefly present studies conducted on the IOM, and the organization's work on 'climate migration'. Paying attention to the critiques and previous work of the IOM helps to better understand the nature of its work on 'climate migration' in the context of the thesis.

2.3.1. *The IOM: a technocratic organization?*

The IOM operates within the lines of 'migration management'¹⁰. Through a well-managed and predictable migration, the organization claims to create a 'triple-win' situation where the *migrants*, and the countries of *departure* and *arrival*¹¹ benefit (Geiger and Pécoud, 2010). However, migration management, warned Castles (2004), can become a too technocratic and top-down approach hindering the migrants' agency when it should be cooperative in nature. This technocratic aspect has been criticized by Andrijasevic and Walters (2010): through its expertise, the IOM constructs how states understand the 'problems' of borders and migration and partakes in the "international conduct of the conduct of countries" (Merlingen 2003: 367). Indeed, by positioning itself as an 'expert' entity, the IOM 'renders technical'¹² questions and concepts that are inherently political, and spreads its knowledges – and views – through its various reports, seminars, or fieldwork (Ashutosh and Mountz 2011; Andrijasevic and Walters, 2010). It is prescribing how to act. Such depoliticization, argued Geiger and Pécoud (2010), can hinder the ability of stakeholders to influence their own development paths. What is more, by prescribing and managing migration, the IOM has been said to exert control over migrants' bodies, deciding who is useful or useless (Pécoud, 2013; Andrijasevic and Walters, 2010).

¹⁰ The IOM (2003: 53) understands it as the "range of measures needed to effectively address migration issues at national, regional and global levels".

¹¹ The IOM's slogan used to be "Managing migration for the benefit of all" and was changed to "Making migration work for all". It reflects a desire to be seen as an ally to everyone.

¹² 'Rendering Technical' is a term coined by Tanya Li (2007). Simply put, it refers to the process of putting an issue as a technical matter rather than as a political one. It creates a power imbalance in which the voices of 'experts' who 'know best' are more heard and valid than the ones of local communities.

The IOM has also been criticized for its entrepreneurial and neoliberal ways of proceeding. Bradley (2017) reflected on the entrepreneurial nature of the organization and its desire to increase its influence. The IOM has been expanding its work in many areas – capitalizing on its established reputation – following demand and opportunities, making it a sort of “jack of all trades” (Bradley 2017). The entrepreneurial approach is applied not only to the IOM itself, but to the migrants as well. In a study by Gardiner-Barber and Bryan (2018: 1734), the authors argue that the IOM molds migrants into “good neoliberal subjects of the global economy”. Similarly, for Campillo-Carrete and Gasper (2011), the IOM’s work responds to the needs of the global economy and reduces migrants to mere ‘labour mobility’ in a demand and supply context. A final criticism relates to the IOM’s own conceptualization of migration. The IOM operations rest on the idea that macroeconomic forces cannot be modified and that individual should adapt to them, which perpetuates inequalities and injustice (Gardiner-Barber and Bryan, 2018; Pécoud, 2018).

2.3.2. *The IOM and climate change*

The IOM gained, throughout the years, an influential status within the field of ‘climate migration’. It is now seen as a defining feature of the organization (Felli, 2013). The emergence of ‘environment’ or ‘climate change’ as drivers for migration began to be investigated by the organization in the 1990s following a demand from the Member States to better understand the phenomenon and its implications (Traore Chazalnoël and Ionesco, 2018; Gervais *et al.*, 2017). Although there was an increase in interest in the 1990s, most of the work on ‘climate migration’ started in 2007 when the Member States requested more work on the matter (IOM, n.d.d). The IOM (n.d.d) positions itself at “the forefront of operational, research, policy and advocacy efforts [regarding] environmental migration” and has conducted over 1000 projects since 1998 in that field. These projects range from small-scale national projects to bigger ones funded by other partnering organizations such as the European Union (IOM, n.d.e). Examples of recent work include: drafting regional and national action plans regarding ‘climate migration’ in South Asia, a project on “human mobility [and] climate change” in the Caribbean, and work on ‘climate migration’ in urban areas (IOM, n.d.f, 2022; OECS, 2020).

In 2015, the IOM took one step further and established a new division focusing only on the matter: the ‘migration, environment, and climate change’ (MECC) division. This was a way of stepping up the organization’s position in the field of ‘climate migration’ and also came from Member States (IOM, 2014a). The creation of the MECC formally illustrated the organization’s interest in the topic and is the first institutional structure in an intergovernmental organization to focus on the climate-migration nexus (Lakeman, 2022; Gervais *et al.*, 2017). The MECC also allowed the IOM to put more staff and resources on the issue, therefore increasing the organization’s capacities. With its extensive work on ‘climate migration’ in the last 30 years, the organization became a credible and leading voice on the matter, and continues to grow as such (Gervais *et al.*, 2017).

When it comes to the IOM’s work on ‘climate migration’, Hall (2015) and Felli (2013) are the rare ones to offer some insights. Hall (2015) focused on the IOM’s motives to engage in the ‘climate migration’ work. The author makes a brief summary of the work done from 2007-2015 and how it quickly grew – in 2009, “migration, climate change and environmental degradation” was the IOM’s second priority (Hall, 2015). This can be explained by the larger scope of work of the organization, its status as a ‘gap filler’ and service provider, and its need for additional finances (Hall, 2015). It also reflects the entrepreneurial nature of the IOM explained above. Felli (2013) took a different approach and was more critical of the organization. He argued that the ‘climate migration’ work within the IOM follows the neoliberal trend identified above. As such, not only is the work built on an entrepreneurial ethos, but it also fosters it within ‘climate migrants’. Consequently, they are no longer “(southern) ‘victims’ of (northern-produced) climate change” (Felli, 2013: 346), but agents of change responsible for themselves. This changes the narrative of blame and responsibility and the whole conceptualization of ‘climate migration’ and the ‘climate migrant’. Finally, Felli (2013) points out that ‘climate migration’ is represented as solution to adapt to climate change by the IOM so far as it is properly *managed*.

The two articles were the only research found regarding the IOM and ‘climate migration’, with the exception of articles produced by employees (Traore Chazanoël and Ionesco, 2018; Gervais et al., 2017; Ionesco and Traore Chazalnoël, 2016). As discourses are constantly evolving, an updated look at them is relevant and needed. There is a clear absence of analysis when it comes to the actual *content* and *implications* of the work produced by the IOM with regards to ‘climate migration’, despite the clear influence it holds. This is where this thesis becomes relevant: it hopes to fill that gap.

3. THEORETICAL GROUNDING

This section of the thesis presents the theoretical foundations used for the analysis. The WPR approach, which provides a *theoretical* and an *analytical* lens, was chosen. Indeed, it is a theoretically motivated analytical approach which rests mainly on the work of Michel Foucault while also being influenced by social constructionism and poststructuralism (Goodwin, 2011; Bacchi, 2009). These influences are seen in WPR’s acceptance of our world as shaped by socio-political forces and in the possibility to challenge said forces. The concepts presented below are useful to conduct an in-depth analysis of policies and are central to the thesis.

3.1. ‘What’s the Problem Represented to be?’

The WPR approach is admittedly not such a common policy analysis tool. However, it has been recognized as a “refreshing” one for its methodological flexibility in terms of context and policies¹³, but also for going against the typical assumption of policies as neutral (Bletsas, 2012; Marshall, 2012). The approach is sceptical of that neutral nature and of the knowledges used in policies (Bacchi and Goodwin, 2016). Indeed, it is constructed around the idea that “what we propose to do about something indicates what we think needs to change and hence what we think the ‘problem’ is” (Bacchi and Goodwin, 2016: 16). WPR sees policies as “powerfully productive and political” (Marshall, 2012:

¹³ As an example, Marshall (2012) used the WPR approach in her PhD investigating the work of the World Bank in relation to disability. She looked at the disability website of the World Bank to conduct her analysis, even though the organization lacked a formal policy or strategy on the topic.

56). Bacchi's goal is to shed lights on the politics involved in policy practices and on the deep-rooted assumptions, or taken-for-granted truths, behind them. As a final note, it is important to highlight that WPR does *not* seek to offer solutions to a 'problem', nor does it assess whether a policy is good or bad (Goodwin, 2011). It looks at how policies are produced, what is produced through them, and with which implications. This allows for a more in-depth understanding and for forgotten aspects to shine through. Given the scope of the thesis, WPR is seen as an interesting and relevant approach to use.

3.1.1. *Problematization and subjectification*

One of the many key terms within WPR is *problematization* – or problem representation. As Bacchi and Goodwin (2016: 5) define it, it refers to the result of a government's practice, where government is also more broadly understood as activities that “shape, guide, or affect the conduct of people” – which fits with the IOM's work.

Problematization is central not only in governing processes, but in people's lives more generally, which is why attention must be given to it. For a policy to be implemented, it has to identify a 'problem' that needs fixing. As such, 'problems' are endogenous to policies – or created within them – and lead to an attribution of responsibility (Bacchi, 2009). In the sea of problematizations possible, governments and organizations have an advantage since their versions create legislations and policies impacting people's lives (Bacchi, 2009).

Through their consequences, problematizations and subsequent policies are creating 'subjects', a process called *subjectification*. Following Foucault's work, the term refers to “political subjection as a mode of having power exercised over oneself” (May 2014: 496). The subjects are emerging both from policy and the knowledges held within them, but also through one's own perception of the problematizations they face. The making of 'subject' also includes the different behaviors one should adopt and classifies people in various categories (Bacchi and Goodwill, 2016). The different categories of subjects created divide people in binaries opposing each other: resilient/non-resilient, employable/unemployable, citizen/migrant, man/woman, etc. Bacchi and Goodwin (2016)

argue that these categories are the product of hierarchical and inegalitarian rules where one category is seen as superior to the other. Policies are then creating worse-offs and better-offs. However, the authors also acknowledge that subjects are not in deterministic positions and that these positions can be challenged and changed. The WPR analysis of problematizations helps to evaluate and assess the various implications and subjectifications that they create. In the case of ‘climate migration’, it helps to identify the categories created, assess the impacts, and highlight what is silenced.

3.1.2. *Policy, discourses, knowledges, and power*

Other concepts, central to the thesis and the WPR approach, are worth being explained: *policy, discourses, knowledges, and power*. This subsection aims to present them in an accessible way and to highlight their relevance to the analysis.

Let us start with *policy*. In this thesis, the term is understood in a broader way following a Foucauldian approach. Thereby, policies are seen as prescriptive texts, or “texts written for the purpose of offering rules, opinions, and advice on how to behave [...]; they [are] designed to be read, learned, reflected upon, and tested out.” (Foucault 1986: 12-13). Following this definition, reports, strategies, plans, and other documents offering insights can qualify as policies. In addition, policies emerge from competing problematizations, which constitutes them as a result of practices influenced by socio-cultural contexts.

Discourses and policies, here, are linked through the notion of ‘policy as discourse’. To begin with, the term ‘discourse’ is understood as “socially produced forms of knowledge that set limits upon what it is possible to think, write or speak about a ‘given social object or practice’” (Bacchi and Goodwin, 2016: 35). As such, ‘discourse’ goes beyond linguistic particularities and is instead conceptualized as a form of practice comprising different thought processes in problematizations (Foucault, 1994). The ‘policy as discourse’ approach does not see policies as answers to existing problems, but as a discourse that creates *problems* and *solutions*. It incites the researcher to reflect deeply on the borders of an examined policy (Bacchi, 2000; Goodwin, 1996). What is more,

discourses are also not fixed: they can change through their interactions with further ones (Lynch, 2014).

Knowledge is an inherent part of discourse. In this thesis, it is not considered as a pure truth, but rather as what is *accepted as being true* (Bacchi and Goodwin, 2016). Again, in a Foucauldian fashion, “there is no knowledge without a particular discursive practice” (Lynch, 2014: 121). As such, knowledge is made possible because of its presence within discourses, but discourses are also made possible because of the existence of these ‘accepted truths’. In addition, not all knowledges are treated as equal, with some being discredited and/or disregarded. Foucault (1980) wrote about ‘*subjugated knowledges*’, or those that are not as likely to be taken into account: there are the silenced ‘erudite’ ones and the surviving ‘indigenous’ ones. Therefore, looking at other constructions of a ‘problem’ – or in this case various representations of ‘climate migration’ – is a good way of both acknowledging different knowledges and opening a space for change and challenges. The fact that some forms of knowledges are disregarded comes from the intricate relationship between knowledge and power. Knowledge *is* power.

Within the WPR approach, *power* holds a particular space and surrounds every concept. In ‘policy as discourse’, policies are powerful in the sense that they produce truths and knowledges (Bacchi, 2000). These governing practices are inegalitarian and conceived based on “professional and ‘expert’ knowledges” to determine the policies and the subjects that they create (Bacchi and Goodwin 2016: 5). Power is also legitimized through the production of knowledges and discourses. This has been depicted as the *knowledge-power* nexus: power is involved in the production of knowledge, but knowledge also has power over lives (Bacchi, 2009: 276). Finally, a last interpretation of power refers to what Foucault calls ‘biopower’ and disciplinary power, or the power over the bodies of a population (Bacchi, 2009).

Regarding the overall thesis, the concepts in 3.1.1. and 3.1.2. are central to the analysis. The IOM being a major player in the field of ‘climate migration’, it creates its own vision of the ‘problem’ based on what is seen as being ‘true’ by their ‘experts’. The subsequent policies are shaping what is being done concretely by influencing countries and organizations, which ultimately impacts populations. The power that the organization holds has to be investigated, and this study hopes to bring forward different types of knowledges and silenced aspects to create a space for disruption.

4. METHODOLOGY

This section of the thesis presents the research design elaborated to adequately answer the research questions. The philosophical bases around which the thesis is built are first established. Following, the design is presented more concretely as well as the material examined, how it was collected, and analyzed. Finally, issues of limitations and positionality are discussed.

4.1. Philosophical assumptions

This thesis derives from ontological politics, which means researchers are seen as shaping what is considered ‘real’ within a given study area, and that this ‘reality’ is not empty of political consequences (Rönblom, 2012). Additionally, the analysis also rests on social constructionist and poststructuralist premises. According to social constructionists, the ‘physical world’ is different from the ‘social’ one, therefore one must study them in different ways (Quinn Patton, 2015). Whereas the ‘realists’ assume an objective truth or reality that is ‘out there’, the social constructionists are seeing reality as socially constructed and emerging from practices and interactions (Bacchi, 2016; Bryman, 2012; Trombetta, 2008). Knowledge is therefore not seen as neutral but as creative. The WPR approach used in the thesis (see sections 3.1. and 4.3.) focuses more on the political dimensions of reality, making it poststructural in essence (Bacchi, 2009).

4.2. Research design

While reflecting on which research design would be more appropriate, a qualitative case study seemed like the best option. As Cresswell and Poth (2018) mentioned, a qualitative approach is useful to further explore a topic that requires an in-depth understanding. In section 2, it was established that while ‘climate migration’ is an increasingly ‘hot’ topic, little attention has been given to the work of the IOM. This thesis aims to shed light on the problematizations put forward by the organization, making it a case study with a focus on an organization. Another reason to opt for a qualitative approach is simply that a quantitative one does not fit the problem: looking at the IOM’s *discourses* and their effects is inherently qualitative approach by definition. The research is a policy analysis with a focus on discourses as understood per the WPR approach. It differs from more ‘conventional’ policy analyses where the aim is to examine the effectiveness of policies. In the case of the approach developed by Bacchi (2009), as seen in sections 3.1. and 4.3., there are two goals to discourse analysis: to reveal the underlying assumptions and preconceptions in a problematization and to identify the silences. The aforementioned characteristics are in line with the aims of the thesis and are deemed to be the most relevant research design.

4.3. WPR’s analytical framework

As part of her approach, Bacchi created a set of six comprehensive questions (and an additional step) to guide the researcher’s analysis of a policy. The aim is to critically question, analyze, and scrutinize various forms of problematizations in policies, making the politics behind them visible. The original questions are as follows (Bacchi and Goodwin, 2016: 20):

1. *What’s the problem [...] represented to be in a specific policy or policies?*
2. *What deep-seated presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the “problem” (problem representation)?*
3. *How has this representation of the “problem” come about?*
4. *What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the “problem” be conceptualized differently?*

5. *What effects (discursive, subjectification, lived) are produced by this representation of the “problem”?*
6. *How and where has this representation of the “problem” been produced, disseminated and defended? How has it been and/or how can it be disrupted and replaced?*
7. *Apply this list of questions to your own problem representations.*

Considering the aim of this thesis, not every question has been kept for the analysis. Questions 1-2 and 4-5 are the ones being used. While questions 3 and 6 are part of the original analytical framework, they are beyond the scope of the thesis and therefore left out of the analysis. Question 3, to some extent, is answered with the literature review provided in section 2 with the presentation of the various ‘mainstream’ discourses on ‘climate migration’. For question 6, the focus of the thesis is on what is *within* the policies of the IOM and subsequent *implications*, not on how they are implemented, by whom, and where. The following list is the questions kept, reordered, and lightly modified to better fit the research questions:

1. *What’s the problem of ‘climate migration’ represented to be?*
2. *What deep-seated presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of ‘climate migration’?*
3. *What effects (discursive, subjectification, lived) are produced by this representation of ‘climate migration’?*
4. *What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can ‘climate migration’ be conceptualized differently?*

The questions all serve a different purpose for the analysis. *Question 1* is more of a clarifying one: it identifies a place to begin the analysis. With this question, the goal is to find a problem representation and work *backwards* to understand what is being problematized. While it is the first question, the following ones are all helping to complement it with additional information. Bacchi (2009) notes that there might be more than one problem representation within a policy. *Question 2* has many goals, but it mostly reflects on the underpinning assumptions, or taken-for-granted ‘truths’, in the representation of ‘climate migration’. It identifies key concepts, binaries, and categories upon which the representation is built. *Question 3* is assessing the potential effects – or implications – of the problem representation. Effects may be difficult to measure, however

in this case they are understood more as “political implications” and not so much as direct “outcomes”. *Question 4* is said to encourage a practice of ‘thinking otherwise’, meaning that it destabilizes how the problem is represented and highlights the silences and unproblematic aspects. It is also an opportunity to draw attention to tensions, gaps, and limitations of the representations. Finally, the last *step*, a reflexive practice, takes its importance from Foucault’s self-problematization, and aims to recognize the “deep-seated cultural assumptions” (Bacchi and Goodwin, 2016; Bacchi, 2009: x). This step is taken into account by the author during the analysis. In the presentation of the findings, questions 1-2 rely mostly on the examined documents, whereas questions 3-4 are built around external literature provided in section 2 of the thesis.

4.4. Material

This subsection first presents the process of data collection and the sampling method that has been used. It further describes the documents used as data and explains why these were selected over other available ones. As Bacchi (2009) points out, data collection and the sourcing of policies is an inherently interpretive process which ultimately impacts the analysis. As such, this section hopes to be as transparent as can be.

4.4.1. Data collection

Since the aim of the thesis is to analyze the representations of ‘climate migration’ within the IOM’s policies, a careful consideration had to be put into the data selection. The first step was to use IOM’s publications platform¹⁴ to access the relevant documents regarding “climate/environment migration”¹⁵. In total, 122 documents are listed on the platform under this topic, however they are not all available to the public and some of them are in different languages.

¹⁴ The link to the webpage is as follow: <https://publications.iom.int/>. This platform allows the public to have access to more than 2200 publications such as reports, country profiles, journals, manuals, flyers, and more. The user can filter by type of publications, years, languages, regions/country, and a wide range of topics (border management, gender, development, migrants’ rights, and so forth).

¹⁵ This is how the IOM entitled the topic in the filter, which is a subtopic of the main one “climate and the environment”.

When it came to sampling the documents, a non-random approach had to be used. That is because the thesis looks specifically at documents considered as policies. Therefore, a flyer, for example, would not be suited for the analysis. In addition to being considered as a policy, other criteria for selection were used: the documents had to be English, address ‘climate migration’ in a general way (not country/region specific), written solely by the IOM¹⁶, and published between 2007 and 2022. The logic behind that timeframe is twofold. First, as mentioned in section 2, the work on ‘climate migration’ mostly started in 2007 which is why it was kept as a ‘start date’. Second, the time window allows for a broader picture and to assess the evolution – or not – of the discourses.

The kind of sampling done can be considered a mix of snowball and purposive samplings. Indeed, in snowball sampling the researcher starts from a small sample and keeps on going from there, whereas in a purposive sample the researcher keeps the research question in mind while sampling (Bryman, 2012). In this study, the “*Institutional strategy on migration, environment and climate change 2021-2030*” (henceforth “the Strategy”) served as a basis. At the end of the Strategy, the IOM provided a list of “key documents” regarding its elaboration and other documents were mentioned in directly in it as important work done on ‘climate migration’¹⁷. Not all of them have been sourced due to the thesis’ scope, but it was noticed that those selected built on each other. This is also known as intertextuality (Bryman, 2012). Additional recent documents were sourced directly from the platform in a purposive manner to gain further knowledge and ensure that relevant information would be gathered to answer the question (Creswell and Poth, 2018). The documents allowed for a proper data saturation, meaning that no new and relevant data was emerging at the end of the process, therefore giving a sense of exhaustion and reliability to the data (Bryman, 2012). In total, 13 documents¹⁸ were analyzed and they can be separated as such: one strategy, one working paper, two discussion notes, three policy briefs, three documents relating to a conference, and three reports. The documents from the conference

¹⁶ The IOM frequently collaborates with other organizations such as the European Union, UNHCR, UNDP, and so on. Since the thesis focuses solely on the IOM and its representation of ‘climate migration’, any work done in collaboration has been omitted from analysis.

¹⁷ Those documents are marked with an ‘*’ in Annex 1.

¹⁸ From the initial 122 documents, it went down to 63 for ‘global’ documents and to 35 for English ones. It was narrowed down with further criteria such as the topic (those on data collection or specific experts were left out, for example).

were sourced from the MECC's website in order to obtain a different type of information. The documents taken together cumulate to more than 400 pages.

4.4.2. *Data analysis*

Bacchi (2009) proposes a set of guidelines to follow when conducting the analysis. Since the analysis builds on the questions presented in section 4.3., it can be said that the approach used is a deductive one. Contrary to a standard discourse analysis, the WPR does not encourage a coding of the texts. As Bacchi (2009) explains, the approach is inherently interpretative and aims to provide a deeper understanding. It necessitates many careful and systematic readings of the documents chosen from the data collection, a constant application of reflexivity, and a realization that in a way, the researcher is also taking part in the problematization of the 'problem'. Information was however gathered and stored in a document in order to gain a general perspective and establish links more easily¹⁹. Bacchi (2009: 20) mentions the importance of acknowledging this interpretative dimension and warns the researcher not to "distort documents" when using quotes to support the interpretation: one should respect the context (Bacchi, 2012). Keeping this in mind, the context in which the quotes are sourced from remains taken into consideration. It has to be said that the rigorous and systematic analytical framework is there to guide the researcher towards the main problematization. Therefore, although interpretative in nature, it remains a strong tool that would most likely yield the same results if repeated.

When it comes to the presentation of the findings, there are two main ways of proceeding. The first one is to answer each question in the order they are presented in section 4.3. This way makes the results clearer, but may lead to some repetitions due to the interlinkages between the questions. The second one is to answer more cohesively by adding the number of the question answered at the end of the sentence (e.g., Q2-Q3; Q1; Q1-Q4), but it may hinder the clarity of the results. Since there are more documents analyzed than in a traditional WPR analysis – possible due the flexibility of the approach, the first option was chosen to maximize the understandability of the analysis.

¹⁹ See Appendix 2 for a small excerpt.

4.5. Limitations of the study

Each type of study has its own set of limitations and this thesis is no exception to the rule. Qualitative studies and discourse analysis have been criticized for being too subjective and subject to an unsystematic approach due to the researcher's views (Bryman, 2012). Careful attention has been given to the material examined. Bryman (2012: 44) mentions four criteria elaborated by Scott (1990) to assess the quality of the documents, namely: authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning. While the number of documents examined in the thesis may be 'low'²⁰, the degree of authenticity and credibility are high given that they were retrieved directly from the IOM's publications database. By 'meaning', Scott (1990) meant the extent to which the documents are comprehensible. Since the documents used were all in English, it was not an issue to understand their meaning. Additionally, to limit subjectivity, using specific criteria while sampling is seen as an appropriate solution (Gross, 2018).

Admittedly, the results of the study would also have been different if interviews with employees of the MECC had been conducted or if documents relating to programs and projects had been included. This was not possible due to a lack of time and resources. Similarly, a more comprehensive analysis done through a systematic review of *all* the documents could also have generated a different result. As such, through other methods, different concepts, tensions, or silences might have appeared or disappeared. However, it should be recognized that many documents, including 'key documents' according to the IOM, were analyzed and allowed to reach data saturation.

4.6. Positionality

As positionality is a very *personal* matter when it comes to doing research, this part of the thesis aims to illustrate more clearly the train-of-thoughts I had during the whole process. Hence why the section is more 'informal'.

²⁰ It is low when looking at the ocean of documents made available by the IOM when it comes to 'climate migration', however it was enough to reach data saturation.

In this thesis, the only interaction I had was with my new best friend: my computer. I had to forget about my initial plan of going to the ‘field’ and accept my fate as a master’s student of the covid era. While my research was quite lonely and did not involve traditional fieldwork where I would conduct interviews, it was still imperative for me to reflect on my own positionality within my research...

I am not an all-knowing researcher and I recognize that my knowledges come from my past, my interests, my privileges. Moss (1995) wrote about the ‘double reflexive gaze’ through which researchers should look inward at their identity, but also outward at their research and how it becomes part of what is known. Looking *inward*, I am a white researcher from a Global North country researching and questioning policies on a topic that most likely will never impact me, yet I feel very strongly about it and have my own biases. Looking *outward*, I am aware that I am bridging development, migration, and environmental studies, and I have the privilege to produce knowledge about others’ realities based on materials that I have access to. Bacchi (2009) invites the researchers to subject themselves to the same analysis they conducted. Thus, throughout the writing process, I maintained a reflexive practice.

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section of the thesis contains the findings of the research. Every subsection answers one of the analytical questions prescribed by the WPR approach with the help of the literature review and theoretical grounding. To better support and illustrate the findings, quotes from the analyzed documents are used and any added *emphasis* is a personal choice.

5.1. ‘Climate migration’

Before proceeding with the analysis, a point needs acknowledgement for transparency purposes. Within the examined material, the IOM rarely explicitly mentions the term ‘climate migration’. Indeed, in earlier documents, it is more a question of

‘environmental migration’ and migrants (IOM, 2012, 2009, 2007). The first explicit mention of “climate-induced migration” is in a report from 2014 where the organization recognized the need for it to be a standalone working area (IOM, 2014b). The Strategy often refers to the “migration, environment, and climate change nexus”, which acknowledges the role of climate change in migration patterns (IOM, 2021a). Additionally, in one of the most recent documents examined, the IOM mentions the “migration and climate change nexus”, omitting the ‘environment’ part (Traore Chazalnoël and Randall, 2021). Therefore, despite the lack of direct references to ‘climate migration’, the interpretation is that the recognition of climate change as a factor and the reference in projects to ‘climate migration’ (see section 2.3.2) allows to use the term in the analysis. Finally, it is also a personal choice to commit to only one term for clarity purposes.

5.2. What’s the problem represented to be?

The first step in a WPR analysis is to identify how the main ‘problem’ is represented. However, it is important to acknowledge that there can be many problem representations in policies, and that those can be complementary or even contradicting (Bacchi, 2009). In order to assess what needs to be ‘fixed’ – or the problem –, the approach suggests to ‘work backwards’ and look at the proposed solutions.

Interestingly, ‘climate migration’ is put both as a solution and as a problem, depending on whether is it *well-managed* or not. Migrating is seen and promoted as a viable solution to improve the lives of populations affected by climate change and environmental degradation. In addition to conceiving (circular and temporary) migration as a solution, the IOM emphasizes the potential of income diversification for adaptation (IOM, 2015). As such, “[l]abour migration can significantly increase *resilience* through *income diversification*. Additionally, *financial and social remittances* and more general engagement of the diasporas can contribute to building *resilience* at the local level” (IOM 2014b: 81). Such representation falls within the lines of the ‘migration as adaptation’ discourse, which becomes evident in the Strategy where the IOM “seek[s] to develop solutions that leverage the potential of migration for *climate change adaptation* and risk

reduction and enhance the contributions of migrants, diasporas and communities to climate action and *resilience* building” (IOM, 2021a: 17). The resilience building aspect implies a need to counter one’s vulnerability to climate change. The IOM argues that “vulnerability needs to be put at the *centre* of current and future responses” (IOM, 2019b: 3). The organization affirms that “the poor are typically the most vulnerable [and] bear a disproportionate share of the burden because of their relatively limited coping capacity” (IOM, 2007: 5). This lack of (adaptive) capacity is explained by a lower economic and social capital (IOM, 2009). Migrating therefore becomes a means to diversify and accumulate capital that can be used by the migrants themselves to increase their own resilience and the resilience of their communities.

The IOM’s position on adaptation and vulnerability follows the paths of other major IOs such as ADB or WB, and the Foresight report. Their similar stance validates the ‘expert’ knowledge put forward and reinforces the established and shared “taken-for-granted truths” linked to ‘climate migration’. However, it also potentially blocks the space for other interpretations and subjugated knowledges (the migrants’ perspectives or the ones of coastal and island states, for example), as Foucault puts it (1980). As such, the IOM can consolidate its position as a leading expert and the power that comes with it, while also exerting control over *what* is being done, for *whom*, *how*, and at *which* price.

To summarize, the *main* ‘problem’ identified in the material is a problem of *vulnerability* due to the inability to cope with a changing climate and environment, which is also linked to a lack of *economic capacities* to build resilience. It is important to reiterate that other problematizations may be included in the examined documents, however, as they would necessitate their own WPR analysis, they have been left out and the main ‘problem’ is the one subjected to the current analysis (see section 5.3.3.). The following subsections take a closer look at the assumptions, implications, and silences of such a representation of the problem and elaborate on them.

5.3. Presuppositions and assumptions

The previous subsection argued that in the IOM's eyes, 'climate migration' is both a vulnerability and an economic 'problem' that can be fixed through a well-managed migration in order to increase people's abilities to cope with change. After having identified the main problem representation, the second step is to ask what the underlying presuppositions and assumptions which led to such a problematization are. This subsection will therefore discuss these with the help of binaries, concepts, and categories prominent in the examined material.

5.3.1. *Climate change*

The reality and urgency of climate change is acknowledged in every document examined and is a strong assumption guiding the work of the IOM. In 2007 (p.1), the organization argued that “[e]nvironmental degradation and climate change pose *significant challenges* to human security and sustainable economic and human development”. That being said, while climate change was and still is accepted, its impacts on migration were deemed not sufficiently researched (IOM, 2012). As such, it was difficult to refer to 'climate migration' as a phenomenon. Recent documents, however, recognize the importance of climate change in societies and on migration, claiming that it is “the defining issue of our time” (IOM, 2021b: 1). Furthermore, according to the IOM “[c]limate change and its adverse impacts increasingly affect *how, when, and where* people migrate worldwide. There is no region in the world that has avoided population movements directly, or indirectly, linked to adverse climate impacts” (IOM, 2021b: 2). The discourse recognizes the role of climate change in relation to human mobility and assumes that the phenomenon will continue to lead to more migration, which creates a need for it to be looked over – and validates the work of the organization. The IOM adopts the sceptics' point of view in the fact that it is an additional factor and not necessarily the *sole* cause of migration. Indeed, one of the organization's key messages is that “[e]nvironmental and climatic factors are both drivers and pull factors, and they are mediated by economic, social, political and demographic aspects. All these different dimensions together define a

community and an individual's *resilience* and *vulnerability*" (IOM, 2014b: xi). This recognition implies a need to work holistically regarding climate change and vulnerability. Finally, a last assumption, as argued by Methman and Oels (2015) is that the 'migration as adaptation' discourse, as promoted by the IOM, assumes the unavailability of climate change and puts it as an issue to live with.

The evolution in the discourse when it comes to climate change and migration is interesting as it also reflects the increasing seriousness given to the issue over the past decades. This change has been seen, for example, in Black's work who first pointed out the lack of evidence between the phenomenon and migration (2001) and later joined the Foresight report (2011) in which 'climate migration' is put as an undeniable truth. Discourses as the ones above also intrinsically affected the work of the IOM, with the Member States continuously asking for more work on the issue, ultimately leading to the creation of the MECC (IOM, 2014a). It shows how knowledges can shape what is deemed as important and worthy of attention. The IOM is contributing to the acknowledgement of climate change as an issue to be dealt with and, by recognizing the urgency and need to act now (IOM, 2012), exerts its power to shape the knowledges and discourses upon which actions are taken globally, for example through their projects.

5.3.2. *Human mobility*

Within the work of the IOM, it is possible to observe binaries when it comes to human mobility, which ultimately impacts the policy recommendations of the organization. Binaries usually include an unequal relation where one is seen as superior and more desirable than the other. In this case, they are helpful to understand why the IOM strongly advocates for a *well-managed* migration.

Human mobility is a continuum with various categories of movements included in it, each movement requiring an adequate and specific policy response. The state of the environment and climate change consequences will lead to different movement: an unexpected natural disaster will cause sudden and large-scale forced displacement, whereas

early environmental degradation can lead to a voluntary temporary movement where migrants rely on labour and remittances to cope (IOM 2014b, 2009). As of now, “[c]limate change is expected to lead to a shift towards more permanent movements, both in relation to disasters and slow process degradation” (IOM, 2014b: 40). However, *permanent* movements are problematized by the organization as potentially issue-inducing, compared to *circular* ones which are deemed to be virtuous. In the case of more advanced environmental change, a switch from circular to permanent migration could “be *detrimental* to social networks, socio-economic status, lifestyle and access to public services, [and] [w]ith limited legal migration options, the vast majority of such movement is likely to be *irregular*” (IOM, 2007: 3). Such a statement has been reiterated by the organization in 2014(b) where it was said to potentially affect the well-being and the *stability* of the destination societies. This has ‘alarmist’ undertones in the sense that an uncontrolled, permanent, and irregular migration must be dealt with to limit the negative impacts caused by migration on states. An assumption here is that circular and more economical migration are better and lead to less societal issues in the long-run.

A further binary concerns *regular* and *irregular* migration and their respective impacts. By regular migration, the IOM refers to a form of mobility done through recognized authorities and in the respect of laws in opposition to an irregular one (IOM, 2019a). Irregular migration is described as ‘bad’ both for host communities and for the migrants themselves as they might increase vulnerabilities due to a lack of support or access to information, for example (IOM, 2021c, 2009). To counter potential negative consequences of irregular migration, the IOM advocates for ‘migration management’ and a ‘*well-managed*’ migration, in opposition to an *unmanaged* one. Indeed, “[m]igration management implies a proactive approach, which produces outcomes beneficial for migrants and societies” (IOM, 2014b:55). This is in line with the ‘triple-win’ argument used by the organization and with its aim for migration to benefit everyone. It assumes that a well-managed migration will automatically lead to positive outcomes for *all*. This stance has been criticized by Geiger and Pécoud (2010) for its depoliticizing nature that disregards opposing interests and power relations. The IOM renders technical the issue by presenting it as a simple equation for which the organization and its ‘experts’ have the answer. It

reinforces its power, as it is fair to assume that no one would reject the possibility of a situation where everyone ‘wins’. However, the organization recognizes that “[m]ore and better evidence is needed, particularly in regard to the positive potential of facilitated migration and of ‘migration and development’ in this context” (IOM, 2014b: 55). In recent documents, the IOM affirms that a well-managed migration can help the adaptation of migrants and positively impact development (IOM 2021a, 2021b). By promoting migration management as the appropriate way to handle ‘climate migration’, the IOM is positioning itself as a relevant actor and securing its position as a leading ‘expert’ in the field, thereby maintaining *power* over it.

5.3.3. ‘Climate migration’

As mentioned in section 5.2, ‘climate migration’ is a *problem* and a *solution*. This positive/negative aspect is reflected in numerous documents in the assessment of ‘climate migration’ as a *good* or *bad* phenomenon, or as an *opportunity* or a *challenge*. However, in earlier documents the IOM did not elaborate on why it could be both nor what made it positive or negative (IOM 2012, 2007). It can be understood that the IOM does not have a “black or white” approach and is more nuanced. It is also possible to observe the glimpse of an answer in the following:

“[I]nherently, migration is not “good” or “bad”. Rather, the impacts of migration – when individuals and communities do not have any emergency plans or are not prepared – can, in some cases, increase the *vulnerability* of the individuals and communities. In other situations when migration allows for *income diversification*, for instance, it can constitute an *adaptation* strategy and contribute to building *resilience*.” (IOM, 2014b: 6-7)

Here, the organization provides more information into what is good or bad. An unplanned migration is seen as heightening the vulnerabilities of individuals, whereas economic opportunities are seen as intrinsically beneficial and leading to more resilience. Consequently, solutions promoted by the IOM include, among others, to develop the skills of migrants and make them part of a ‘green economy’, incentivizing investments of migrants, and establishing quotas for migrant workers (IOM, 2021d, 2007; Traore

Chazalnoël and Randall, 2021). Access to labour and income is said to be beneficial in various ways: it improves the capacity of individuals and communities to adapt, reduces stress on the environment, and allows migrants to gain new useful skills (IOM, 2015a, 2012, n.d.g). The IOM thereby makes an assumption that financial capital is linked to an increase in resilience which leads to a better adaptation to climate change. It also seems to assume that access to labour markets is conditional of a planned (managed) and regular migration. The economic focus is compatible with the neoliberal observations made by other scholars such as Campillo-Carrete and Gasper (2011), Felli (2013) or Gardiner-Barber and Bryan (2018) in section 2.3. Further, this neoliberal aspect of the IOM is seen in its conceptualization of adaptation as an ‘individual transformation’ instead of the sceptics’ view of adaptation as a ‘societal transformation’. Here, it is up to the migrants to adapt to circumstances and take the appropriate steps to be responsible for themselves.

‘Climate migration’ is also linked to other issues, thereby creating new representations of the ‘problem’. First, the organization argued that “[t]he *scale* of the *flows*, both internal and cross-border, is expected to rise and have an *unprecedented impact* on lives and livelihoods” (IOM, 2007: 1). Such a statement is the epitome of an ‘alarmist’ stance with the use of ‘flows’, ‘rise’, and the expectations of ‘unprecedented impact’. One such impact identified in the documents relates to conflict. The linkages between conflict and ‘climate migration’ have been studied by scholars and used in medias for decades (Gemmene, 2011a; IOM, 2011). ‘Climate migration’, argues the IOM, can generate a competition over resources thereby exacerbating tensions and State fragility, which can potentially lead to conflicts (IOM, 2021c, 2014b, 2011; Traore Chazanoël and Randall, 2021). The IOM uses a ‘human security’ approach which positions ‘vulnerable people’ at the center of interventions (IOM, 2021a, 2014b). It was also advocated in a document that an appropriate solution is to strengthen adaptation abilities through “sustainable economic development” (IOM, 2011: 29). Therefore, the thesis maintains its argument that the main problematization relates to vulnerability and economy.

To summarize, the work of the IOM is underpinned by a variety of assumptions which ultimately affects the knowledges put forward and subsequent policies. When it comes to *climate change* as a whole, the organization recognizes that it does lead to migration and will continue to do so. *Human mobility* is seen as positive, desirable, and a solution as long as it is regular, circular, and managed. Lastly, '*climate migration*' is assumed to be an opportunity when planned and offering economic improvements. As such, an increase in capital is deemed to be linked to a higher degree of resilience. This problematization is not empty of consequences nor is it empty of tensions and silences, which will be explored in the next subsections.

5.4. Implications of the problematization

This subsection of the analysis aims to identify the various implications (effects) of the problem representation. The effects are more 'political implications' than actual direct repercussions as those are harder to assess²¹. The WPR approach suggests to look at *discursive* (what is discussed), *subjectification* (representations of people), and *lived* (who can be harmed) effects (Bacchi, 2009). A closer look is therefore given to the representations of the 'climate migrants' within the documents.

5.4.1. The 'climate migrant' as an 'agent of change'

Policies create both 'problems' and associated 'subjects'. Subjectification relates to how solutions generate "good governable political subjects" (Bacchi, 2009: 12), and as it was showcased in section 2.2., various discourses create different representations of migrants. Due to the IOM's influential status and its numerous projects, the representations of the 'climate migrants' created by the organization hold a lot of weight and deserve attention. The IOM highlights the potential held by 'climate migrants' both for their own and host communities, thereby departing from an 'alarmist' discourse that perceives them

²¹ What is meant here is that it is harder to assess since there was no interactions with migrants in this study, but also as those impacts will most likely be seen over time. I did not want to assume what 'climate migrants' might think and live, as this reality is so far away from mine.

as a threat. Indeed, ‘climate migrants’, argues the organization, have something to offer, they have a utility. In the case of an expected rural-urban migration, for example:

“It is also worth keeping in mind that migrants often serve as a valuable *resource* to a city’s life. Their presence drives the demand for *goods and services* and has the potential to expand the *local labour market* and *economic activity* by multiplying the available human capital” (IOM, 2014b: 75).

Such representations of the migrants as a ‘resource’ and, in a way, as a tool to increase local demand and economic activity, removes some of their humanity and puts the focus on the economy rather than on the hardships that migrants may face. They are represented as *labour*. This can in turn lead to what Foucault calls ‘dividing practices’ where within a category (migrants) new ones are created where subjects are opposed (Bacchi, 2009). One such example is the virtuous working migrants in opposition to those who maybe do not have such opportunities or struggle with integration. Given the importance the IOM gives to labour mobility, the organization works to:

“promote *temporary and/ or circular labour migration schemes* to prevent the loss of livelihood associated with environmental degradation and natural hazards by facilitating institutional arrangements, transportation and access to *labour markets*. This [includes] components designed to strengthen resilience in communities of origin, for example by mobilizing the migrants as “*agents of development*” in their home communities” (IOM, 2014b: 112).

With this statement, the IOM continues to delimit the border around what is possible to think about ‘climate migrants’, while at the same time putting the burden of ‘resilience building’ on the same people who are subjected to the adverse impacts of climate change. The *responsibility* to improve their lives is attributed to them, notably with the use of remittances or skills acquired while migrating. Through accumulated capital and skills, the migrants can “improve infrastructure and land-use practices”, thereby increasing the ability to handle changes (IOM 2012, 2007:2). This narrative fits perfectly into the ‘adaptation discourse’ which puts the individual in the center in a neoliberal fashion. It also reflects Felli’s (2013) assessment of the ‘climate migrants’ as a source of labour and Bettini’s (2014) as an agent of change.

To support its view, the IOM is committed “to support the development of enabling environments that can help migrants, diasporas and their communities directly contribute to climate action and sustainable development in places of origin and destination” (IOM, 2021a: 3). One way identified in the World Migration Report²² 2022 is for the migrants to use the remittances they earn to support climate finance and build resilient houses or infrastructures (Traore Chazanoël and Randall, 2021). However, the authors also recognize that “[f]inancial remittances are often a *lifeline* for the poorest households, allowing them to meet their basic needs” (Traore Chazanoël and Randall, 2021:247). Contributing to climate action, in this sense, accentuates the already heavy burden faced by migrants. What is more, remittances have been subject of criticisms in that they may increase inequalities and vulnerabilities linked to natural hazards, and because they rarely benefit the poorest (Bettini, Nash, and Gioli, 2017). While the IOM’s discourse aims to include the migrants, empower them, and put them at the center of initiatives (IOM, 2021a), it also takes away the states’ responsibilities in fighting climate change. As pointed out by Felli (2013), migrants are set out to be responsible for themselves. This indicates that the IOM discourse has been consistent over the years and shows low chances of change within it.

By being represented as such, the migrants may internalize the knowledge of the IOM and see themselves as mere labour, especially after having been in contact with the organization through projects, for example. It renders them subjects of the global economy. Through its knowledges, the IOM partakes in ‘performative discourse’ (Geiger and Pécoud, 2010): by presenting its knowledge as being neutral and produced by experts, which makes it harder to question and reject, it impacts the way in which ‘climate migrants’ are to be perceived by themselves and other actors. An implication is that the knowledges of migrants and affected populations are subjugated – not taken into consideration. For example, the IOM disregards ‘trapped’ populations who may not have the resources to move and migrate circularly to accumulate capital. By focusing on those who have the privilege to move, the IOM may create worse-offs and better-offs within populations subjected to climate change.

²² The *World Migration Report* is one the flagship publications of the IOM.

5.4.2. *A word on governments*

The previous section argues that the burden of climate action is put on the migrants by the IOM. However, it is important to address some of the dimensions that relates to the States. The organization does not put the whole of the climate fight on migrants and affected population, but the suggestions made to the different categories of actors are telling.

States do have a level of responsibility. The IOM reiterates how, in international law, it is the States who primarily holds the responsibility to protect populations. However, funds and capabilities are often limited (IOM, 2014b). The organization, throughout the examined documents, made several policy suggestions for states to follow: work on capacity building through improvements in knowledges, skills, and disaster preparedness; promote migration as adaptation; harmonize policies between sectors to improve resilience; or develop legal aspects to ensure protection (IOM, 2021a, 2014b, 2012, 2007; Traore Chazalnoël and Randall, 2021). A first element standing out is the evident link between the work of the IOM and the policy recommendations. Through the knowledge produced, the organization positions itself as a go-to reference, a relevant and needed actor. A second element is how the IOM suggests states to work *with* and *around* climate change, however climate action is barely mentioned. As shown in 5.4.1., the issue of climate action is central to the migrants, but the IOM also admits that States alone cannot tackle climate change and that improve global actions are necessary (IOM, 2021b, 2021d). That being said, the burden is not on the same scale for the migrants compared to the States.

5.5. What is left unproblematic?

This last section of the analysis looks at some of the identified tensions and silences within the IOM discourses on ‘climate migration’. These elements have been identified with the help of the literature review.

5.5.1. *Gaps and tensions*

One main tension concerns the maladaptation possibility linked with ‘climate migration’. In the examined documents, the IOM clearly favors and promotes migration as a way to cope with climate change and develop resilience. However, the organization also mentions how ‘climate migration’ may in fact lead to increased vulnerabilities and be harmful to the environment – making it maladaptive. The IOM recognized that “[d]isplaced persons themselves may resort to *unsustainable resource management* in order to make ends meet in extraordinary and protracted circumstances” (IOM, 2007:3). The IOM (2007, 2014b) also pointed out how even a gradual flow of migration in cities may cause more environmental degradation. Furthermore, migrating can increase the vulnerabilities of origin areas due to a loss of human capital (IOM, 2014b; Traore Chazalnoël and Randall, 2021). This reflects Singh and Basu’s (2019) study mentioned in section 2.1.3. in which they found that what might decrease one’s vulnerabilities – through migration and remittances, for example – might increase others’ vulnerabilities. The organization mentions those possibilities, but never addresses *how* to counter them. A well-managed migration will not replace the loss of human capital and does not prevent migrants from inadequately using natural resources. There is a gap in the knowledges produced by the IOM in that regard. In the World Migration Report 2022, the authors argued that a focus on these negative aspects could be “negatively politicized and lead to [restrictive] policies” (Traore Chazanoël and Randall, 2021:10). However, limiting the knowledge available and focusing only on the good sides is projecting an idealistic reality. By promoting ‘migration as adaptation’ and pushing for better evidence of the positive potential of the approach (2014b), the IOM shapes what is possible to think in its own advantage. By doing so, it positions itself as a relevant and needed actor in the field, reflecting its entrepreneurial nature (Bradley, 2017).

There are other tensions and gaps within the documents when it comes to migration and vulnerability. A first point is that, as found by Penning-Roswell, Sultana, and Thompson (2013), migration in relation to climate change is often a last resort. Immobile people are seen as more vulnerable in IOM’s discourses (2019, 2014b). However, many

scholars have mentioned different reasons for *wanting* and *choosing* to stay put such as cultural and spiritual reasons (Farbotko and McMichael, 2019), place attachment (Blondin, 2021), or social capital (Bhusal, Ndzifon, and Awasthu, 2021). Categorizing them automatically as vulnerable robs communities from their agency. The IOM (2021a; Traore Chazanoël and Randall, 2021) has identified research on immobility as a priority, although in a context of vulnerability. This represents an important gap in knowledge. A further gap and tension concerns vulnerability factors. In earlier documents, the IOM treats migrants as homogenous, meaning that it does not mention any specific conditions that would increase one's vulnerability. The organization spoke of "the poorest and most vulnerable groups of society" (IOM, 2012: 65) without developing. Only in recent years has the IOM acknowledge how gendered power relations impact migration and how migration can heighten inequalities between gender (IOM 2014b, 2021a). People with disabilities, youth, elderly, Indigenous People, and the LGBTI community were mentioned for the first time in 2021(c), several decades after the IOM began its work on mobility and climate change. Despite this recognition, the organization does not address *why* they are more vulnerable nor does it suggest or recommend *how* to deconstruct the structural and deep-rooted causes for such vulnerabilities. Following its neoliberal stance, it is up to them to adapt and be responsible for themselves, even though the hardships they face are bigger.

Finally, there is an overarching tension related to all of the previously identified tensions and gaps. It is possible to wonder how the IOM can really generate a 'triple-win' and work for the benefit of *all* without first addressing all of these issues. The organization also omits to integrate knowledges of migrants who may have a different take.

5.5.2. *Silences*

As it was argued throughout the analysis, the IOM situates itself mainly within the 'migration as adaptation' discourse. It is a discourse criticized for its 'positivity' that tends to disregard bigger issues. One such issue is the notion of responsibility when it comes to climate change. Indeed, as pointed out by Methmann and Oels (2015) and Felli (2013), such a discourse focusing on the migrant and its role in tackling climate action shifts the

burden: it omits the predominant role of the Global North in creating climate change and how it disproportionately impacts populations of the Global South. The IOM does acknowledge that countries in the South are more vulnerable due to their locations (for low-lying islands and more coastal areas) and lower adaptive capacities (IOM, 2021c, 2014b, 2012, 2009). However, it remains silent on the deep-rooted causes of such vulnerabilities and lack of adaptive capacities. The organization does not mention the existence of power relations between the North and South nor that those have impacted and continue to impact people's lives in an unequal matter. Instead, the responsibility to adapt is put on southern countries and their populations, although the Global North countries are responsible for the emissions of 92% of the excess global carbon emissions (Hickel, 2020). The adaptation and resilience discourse promoted by the IOM thus creates a silence surrounding questions of injustice and reparations (Bettini, Nash, and Gioli, 2017).

Along with responsibility, the IOM is also barely mentioning the importance of mitigation efforts, which is another critique to the adaptation discourse (Methmann and Oels, 2015). Mitigation is mentioned here and there in the examined documents: sometimes in relation to the negative impacts of a sudden unmanaged migration (IOM, 2014b, 2009, 2007), and other times in relation to climate change (IOM, 2021c, 2014b, 2012). However, while the states are seen as responsible to reach the goals of the Paris Agreement (2014b), cities and citizens are put at the forefront to contribute to mitigation efforts (IOM, 2021c). By recommending to increase mitigation efforts through green investments or clean energy (IOM, 2021c), the IOM forgets its own statement recognizing that the Global South already lacks financial means to address other important issues (2014b). This disbalance should be taken into account.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This thesis aimed to take a closer look at the IOM's discourses in regards to 'climate migration' and to identify the main problem representation and its implications. The study used a qualitative approach and examined 13 documents produced by the organization between 2007-2022. Carol Bacchi's (2009) approach, entitled "what's the problem represented to be?" was used to shed light on such problematizations. It also helped to identify potential gaps, tensions, and silences, which generate several implications both in terms of what is being done, but also in terms of effects on migrants.

Through the analysis, the thesis found that the organization problematizes 'climate migration' both as a vulnerability and as an economic issue, which can be addressed through a well-managed migration. The organization's work mostly fits within the 'migration as adaptation' discourse on 'climate migration' presented in the literature review, which is the most recent way of seeing the phenomenon. It is also shared by other IOs such as the WB or ADB. This shared view is seen as strengthening the work of the organization and positioning it as a relevant and 'expert' actor, which helps the IOM to maintain and increase its power. 'Climate migration' is represented as a way to adapt and increase one's resilience through an accumulation of capital (social or financial) which should ultimately benefit *everyone*, per the 'triple-win' claim.

This problematization transcends the work produced by the IOM and has subsequent impacts on the 'climate migrants'. The thesis found that 'climate migrants' are represented in various ways, albeit always in a neoliberal fashion. The neoliberal aspect is in line with many of the studies presented on the work of the IOM, an aspect with which this thesis is thereby in agreement. Adaptation and resilience building is put as the *responsibility* of the migrants, which departs from previous conceptualization of it in the literature which saw it as a needed societal transformation. The 'climate migrants' are seen as a source of labour and as agents of changes who should support climate action in order to limit the impacts of climate change.

The identified problematization and representation have several implications. As mentioned, the migrants are seen as responsible for themselves, which limits the responsibilities that should be attributed to States. The thesis also found some tensions, gaps, and silences within the work of the IOM. These also hold implications. It was found that the organization barely touches upon the possibilities of maladaptation in relation to its assessment of the appropriate solution. The study also identified gaps when it came to individual's vulnerabilities and a silence on how to tackle them and disrupt the status quo. The IOM is also found to be silent on issues regarding the Global North's responsibility regarding climate change, on the reason for the Global South's enhanced vulnerabilities, as well as on mitigation measures. The thesis argues that all those elements should be addressed in order to better address the situation and really create a situation that potentially would benefit *all*.

A final remark concerns possible future studies on the topic of 'climate migration' and discourses. *First*, this thesis looked at documents written by the IOM on a 'global' level. However, in order to get a more in-depth understanding, an analysis of documents relating to specific regions may be enlightening and offer different perspectives. *Second*, a comparative analysis between the examined documents and more programmatic documents would be useful to identify potential discrepancies or lack thereof. *Third*, as it has been said, the IOM's discourse fits with those of other IOs. A comparison of policies may be helpful to assess how it impacts the global governance of migration. *Fourth*, bringing in different perspectives such as urbanizations, conflicts, or disaster risk management studies in relation to 'climate migration' is critical to ensure cohesiveness between policies. *Finally*, at the center of 'climate migration' are migrants. Their knowledges, experiences, and opinions must be taken into consideration given that they are the ones directly affected by climate change: studies involving them are invaluable.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. List of documents analyzed

#, year, and name in references	Type	Author	Title, #pages
1* (2007)	Discussion note	IOM	Discussion note: migration and the environment (MC/INF/288), 8p.
2* (2009)	Policy brief	IOM	Migration, climate change and the environment, 9p.
3 (2011)	Report	IOM	Climate change, migration and critical international security considerations, Migration Research Series 42, 56p.
4* (2012)	Working paper	IOM	Climate change, environmental degradation and migration, International Dialogue on Migration 18, 86 p.
5* (2014b)	Report (collection of 14 briefs)	IOM	IOM outlook on migration, environment and climate change, 144 p.
6 (2015)	Policy brief	IOM	Disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in IOM's response to environmental migration, 4p.
7 (2019b)	Policy briefs	IOM	IOM's engagement in migration, environment and climate change, 8p.
8* (2021a)	Institutional strategy	IOM	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, 56p.
9 (2021b)	Opening remarks	IOM	Accelerating integrated action on sustainable development: migration, the environment and climate change, opening remarks by the Director General, 3p.
10 (2021c)	Summary of conclusions	IOM	Accelerating integrated action on sustainable development: migration, the environment and climate change, summary of conclusions, 11p.
11 (2021d)	Closing remarks	IOM	Accelerating integrated action on sustainable development: migration, the environment and climate change, closing remarks by the Deputy Director General, Ms. Laura Thompson, 6p.
12 (2021)	Report	Traore Chazanoel and Randall (for IOM)	World Migration Report 2022, chapter 9. Migration and the slow-onset impacts of climate change: Taking stock and taking action, 22p.
13 (N.d.)	Discussion note	IOM	IOM perspectives on migration, environment and climate change, 4p.

Appendix 2. Excerpt of the categorization of information from the documents

The following table is not the whole document as it was quite a lengthy one. This excerpt is only a small example to illustrate how the information was stored. There were many more categories, including references to the literature review to better situate the IOM’s discourse. Further links were made in an old-school way with papers and pen to better make sense of the tensions or the linkages between the various sections.

CONCEPTS	
THE MIGRANTS	<p>“It is also worth keeping in mind that migrants often serve as a valuable resource to a city’s life. Their presence drives the demand for goods and services and has the potential to expand the local labour market and economic activity by multiplying the available human capital” (IOM, 2014b: 75)</p> <p>“The International Organization for Migration (IOM) seeks to promote 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.” (IOM, 2021a: 2)</p> <p>“Leveraging the positive contribution of migrants, diasporas and communities is a priority. Not enough has been done to date to facilitate and support the contributions of migrants to climate action, disaster risk reduction and sustainable development in places of origin and destination. Migrants are key actors of climate action and efforts should be made to promote and develop their skills to contribute to the green economy.” (IOM, 2021d: 4)</p>
CLIMATE CHANGE	<p>“Environmental degradation and climate change pose significant challenges to human security and sustainable economic and human development.” (IOM, 2007: 1)</p> <p>“The challenges posed by climate change for development are increasingly understood, such as the impact of recurrent disasters on GDP.” (IOM, 2014b: 73)</p> <p>“People are already moving because of the adverse effects of climate change, environmental degradation, and disasters due to natural hazards and will increasingly continue to do so.” (IOM, 2021a: 2)</p>
REMITTANCES (ECONOMY)	<p>“There is a growing body of evidence, including through the studies prepared for the Foresight Project on Migration and Global Environmental Change, that remittances can act as powerful levers in increasing household resilience by supplementing incomes and allowing communities to cope with external stresses, including disasters and adverse environmental conditions.” (IOM, 2012: 35)</p> <p>“Financial remittances are often a lifeline for the poorest households, allowing them to meet their basic needs. Financial remittances are mostly used for poverty reduction as opposed to investment in longer-term adaptation. However, remittances have the potential in some contexts to constitute an alternative source of climate finance in developing countries, such as in Pacific small island developing States. Financial remittances can contribute to building resilience at both the individual and community level, for instance when migrants are able to build climate-resilient houses or invest in climate-proof community infrastructure.” (Traore Chazalnoël and Randall, 2021: 247)</p>

BINARIES	
CIRCULAR /PERMANENT	<p>“In this situation, a shift from circular to permanent migration could occur and be detrimental to social networks, socio-economic status, lifestyle and access to public services. With limited legal migration options, the vast majority of such movement is likely to be irregular.” (IOM, 2007: 3)</p> <p>“Even where urban planning has anticipated migratory inflows, irregular migration may still strain infrastructure and services.” (IOM, 2007:4)</p> <p>“Minimize forced displacement and facilitate the role of migration as an adaptation strategy to climate change by, for instance, developing temporary and circular labour migration schemes with environmentally-vulnerable communities, where appropriate, particularly at less advanced stages of environmental degradation, and seeking to strengthen the developmental benefits of such migration for areas of origin.” (IOM, 2009: 2)</p> <p>“IOM has also sought to promote temporary and/ or circular labour migration schemes to prevent the loss of livelihood associated with environmental degradation and natural hazards by facilitating institutional arrangements, transportation and access to labour markets. This has included components designed to strengthen resilience in communities of origin, for example by mobilizing the migrants as “agents of development” in their home communities.” (IOM, 2014b: 112)</p>
(UN)MANAGED	<p>“One of the key messages of this publication is that planned, safe, dignified and orderly migration is a viable adaptation strategy to cope with the adverse effects of environmental and climate change, foster development, increase resilience to disasters and reduce environmental pressure.” (IOM, 2014b: ix)</p> <p>“Well-managed migration can contribute positively to all aspects of economic, environmental, and social development and is key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).” (IOM, 2021a: 13)</p> <p>“When well managed migration becomes a safe and accessible choice, it can help people adapt to environmental and climate change pressures” (IOM, 2021b: 3)</p>