



Article title: Addressing Environmental Migration in the European Union Discourse

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Preprint statement: This article is a preprint and has not been peer-reviewed, under consideration and submitted to UCL Open: Environment Preprint for open peer review.

DOI: 10.14324/111.444/000203.v1

Preprint first posted online: 20 April 2023

Keywords: European Union, Migration, Climate Change, Normative Power, Securitization, Discourse Analysis, People and their environment, Politics of the environment, Climate change

Addressing Environmental Migration in the European Union Discourse

For decades, the European Union (EU) has been addressing issues related to climate change and ecological degradation as a self-proclaimed pro-environmental and human rights-oriented actor. Correspondingly, the topic of environmentally driven migration entered the EU discourse at the dawn of the new millennium. As such, environmental migrants around the world find themselves in an existential crisis and are in need of support whether it comes to questions of compensations, relocation, protection of cultural heritage etc. Thus, considering the EU's interest in the human rights and environmental/climate issue areas, I argue it is important to ask what the Union's approach to this matter has been. Consequently, this article assesses the European Union discourse related to the topic of environmental migration over a twenty-year period. Through the theoretical lens of the Copenhagen School of Security Studies and the normative power EU conception, this paper critically analyzes the EU's securitization of climate change in relation to environmental migrants who are experiencing an existential threat to their lives. Based on a qualitative discourse analysis, the preliminary results imply that the topic has been receding into the background of the EU agenda. In line, environmental migrants have been pushed aside by a multiplicity of other subjects threatened by climate change, and their problems were thus not reflected in either the EU climate change or migration management policies. Overall, the findings show a shift from an alarmist discourse to pragmatism on the EU's behalf. Thereupon, this article questions the normative standard the EU sets for itself when it comes to the case of environmental migrant protection.

Keywords: European Union, Migration, Climate Change, Normative Power, Securitization, Discourse Analysis

Introduction

As a self-proclaimed leader against threats and consequences posed by climate change and environmental degradation, the EU has been attempting to raise awareness and gain support in the fight against such threats within as well as beyond EU borders (Foreign Affairs Council, 2011, p. 1; Juncker, 2017, p. 8; Tamma & Oroschakoff, 2019; Varoufakis & Adler, 2020). Equally, the EU continuously aims to be an ardent international human rights protector (European Union, 2000; Lerch, 2019). Hence, the main goal of this article is to critically examine the assumed EU normativeness on a real case which combines the two issue areas.

By applying Manners' normative power EU (NPE) concept and the securitization approach of the Copenhagen School of Security Studies, I assess the EU approach to such migration between the years 1999 and 2019. In turn, a qualitative discourse analysis (QDA) applied to twenty years of EU discourse provides insight into the (non)reflection of environmental migration in the EU agenda in areas of climate change and migration management. This article therefore addresses the question of whether the EU meets the standards it sets for itself on the case of environmental migration. By doing so it contributes to the existing literature on the topic of EU power conceptions including NPE (Manners, 2002; Manners, 2008; Sjursen, 2006; Pace, 2007; Tocci, 2008), on (de-)securitization (Deudney, 1990; Wæver, 1995; Buzan, et al., 1998; Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2010; Oels, 2012), and environmental migration (Trombetta, 2014; Dupont, 2019; Klepp & Herbeck, 2016; Bettini, 2013). Likewise, it provides insight on the application of qualitative discourse analysis methods in migration discourses (Machin & Mayr, 2012; van Dijk, 2018; van Leeuwen, 1996; van Leeuwen, 2008; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). The article starts with a concise explanation of the environmental migration phenomenon. From there it goes on to the overview of the three main conceptions of European power in foreign policy. In particular, it highlights the connection between NPE and securitization, as defined by the Copenhagen School of Security Studies. A methodological section follows, describing the QDA application. The last part of the article explains the results and elaborates the relevance of the drawn conclusions in the post-analysis period.

Environmental Migration as a Phenomenon

Environmental changes, further enhanced by climate change, negatively affect human life in a multitude of ways, one of which is displacement/migration (Bachelet, 2021). Among the most threatened people susceptible to such effects are inhabitants of small island states (Eckersley, 2015, p. 482), coastal and deltaic regions, low-lying islands and sub-Saharan Africa (Gemenne, 2011, p. 183). From Homer Dixon's perspective, poor countries would be the ones most impacted by environmental changes and experience population displacement (Homer-Dixon, 1991, p. 78). While I address such people as environmental migrants in this article, the term has no universal agreed legal definition (Klepp & Herbeck, 2016, p. 58; Apap, 2019, p. 3; Apap & du Perron de Revel, 2021). In the relevant literature it is possible to come across classifications of environmental refugees, migrants, or displaced persons. Likewise, the adjective climate and environmental tend to be used interchangeably, depending on the author and type of discourse, some of which may justify Western development interventions or reinforce negative post-colonial images of the 'other' (Bettini, 2013, pp. 64-65, 70; Hartmann, 2010, p. 239).

Internationally, environmental migration was recognized as a phenomenon since the 1970s, but it entered the EU discourse only in the year 1999 (European Commission, 2013b, p. 6; Kraler, et al., 2011, p. 53). At the time when the EU took interest in the topic and started analyzing it on its own through the early 2000s (Brugger & Le Naour, 2015), the international context surrounding environmental migrants has already been alarmist. It was also rather pessimistic about their future (Bettini, 2013). The most referenced reports, e.g. the UK Stern Review (2006) or the World in Transition – Climate Change as a Security Risk report by the German Advisory Council (2007) foresaw hundreds of millions of environmental migrants by the year 2050. At the time, the most commonly estimated number was approximately 200-250 million which was drawn from contemporary quantitative analyses (Baldwin, et al., 2014, p. 56; Scheffran, 2008, p. 19; Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population, 2008, p. 2; German Advisory Council on Global Change, 2008, p. 72). Yet, others predicted the number could reach one billion by the same date (Christian Aid, 2007, p. 1). Accordingly, politicians and certain scholars warned of an *approaching crisis* (Gleditsch, Nordås, and Salehyan in Reuveny, 2007, p. 656; Durbin, 2007; Gore, 2007). Some as Myers (1995) called it a *global environmental exodus* (Baldwin, et al., 2014, p. 56), while the Deputy High Commissioner for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2008) publicly spoke of an ensuing *global-scale emergency* (Sgro, 2008). The Council of Europe (2008) warned the international community not to ignore the issue that could become one of the *greatest demographic and humanitarian challenges of the century worldwide* (Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population, 2008, p. 7). Although the biggest concerns were connected to the least developed countries also called hot spots, Europe was also alerted to the consequences of climate change including environmentally induced migration. Correspondingly, Europe would be susceptible to these *dangers* too (Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population, 2008, pp. 1-2; Scheffran, 2008, p. 22). This article in turn provides an insight into the internal discourse held within the EU about environmental migrants, where I identify the migrants as the main victims of environmental and climate change. By doing so, I aim to highlight the contrast between the self-imposed normative image created by the EU in both environmental and human rights questions versus the language used to describe such persons.

The Three European Power Conceptions

The argumentation and meaning of this article are built on the normative conception of power and the way how it is used by the EU. Before the normative power EU concept was born however, there were alternative approaches that led to the NPE genesis. Due to its so-called sui

generis nature, the European Union has always been an outlier when it came to its involvement in foreign policy and the types of power it exerted (Orbie, 2006). Introduced by Duchêne (1972), the initial conception labelled the EU a civilian power. At the core of this type of power, Duchêne argued, is a strong economic potency and the desire for peaceful resolution of conflicts. In the pursuit of such goals, diplomacy heavily depends on multilateralism and involves international organizations (Duchêne, 1972 in Orbie, 2006, p. 124). Another significant feature why the concept was created was the fact that the EU did not possess any form of supranational army. Instead, individual states retained control over their military capabilities, which at the same time were comparatively weaker than the American or Soviet ones. According to Maull who was another proponent of the civilian power concept, post-war Japan and Germany had to accept cooperation with others through peaceful means as it was the best option to achieve their objectives (Maull, 1990). Equally, the European community as a whole was in a comparable situation and had to rely on a 'softer' approach. In turn, trade and development policies came to the forefront of EU foreign policies.

Despite the initial success, in the changing Cold war environment of the 1980s-1990s, the civilian conception became largely criticized by authors such as Bull (1982). The return to power politics underlined the need for hard power, meaning a civilian actor would not stand a chance in the arena against such opponents. Consequently, if the EU wanted to successfully assert its dominance, it had to become traditionally stronger. Reliance on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, hence the USA, as the main security provider was seen as insufficient (Bull, 1982, pp. 151-152). This is where the fantasy about an EU army arose as well (Tsakaloyannis, 1989 in Orbie, 2006, p. 124). Moreover, according to the critics, civilian capabilities such as peacekeeping forces were blending with the traditional military capabilities anyway. Labelling the EU as a civilian power was thus seemingly incorrect. But as the civilian conception before, the military power concept was substituted a few decades later.

In 2002 a third (normative) conception was created in response to both the civilian and military power concepts. As Manners (2002) argued what made the EU different from other international actors is its dedication to norms. His suggestion that the EU tries to define standards of 'good' behavior, as well as to define what is 'normal' (Manners, 2002, pp. 236, 239). These goals are based on universal norms and principles derived from the United Nations, namely peace, liberty, democracy, rule of law, and human rights. Furthermore, social solidarity, anti-discrimination, good governance, and sustainable development arguably form the rest of the main EU agenda (Manners, 2008, p. 46). In terms of foreign policy, the proponents claim, the EU tries to spread

these norms abroad through various means. Most importantly however, it is trying to lead by the normative example, often at the expense of own profits (Zielonka, 2011, p. 287). Such a willingness to bind oneself, not only others, to rules and moral practices thus distinguishes EU as a different kind of actor. While on one hand there are arguments which speak in favor of such a normative power conception, as was the Turkish abolition of the death penalty in 2004 (Manners, 2002), there are important counterarguments as well. Among some of the most telling ones is the normative conditionality in trade and development policies which is viewed by many developing countries as a form of interference in their internal affairs. Aside from that, the EU has also been criticized for not following through when its proclaimed norms such as protection of human rights or environmental concerns were met with economic interests (Meunier & Nicolaïdis, 2017).

It is hence in this light, that this article critically addresses the NPE conception on the case of environmental migration. As such, environmental migration binds together two types of norms the EU ostensibly stands for, i.e. environmental protection/climate protection and human rights. In fact, the EU has been securitizing climate change as a ‘threat multiplier’ ever since 2008 (European Union, 2008, p. 5; Mogherini, 2016, p. 29; Oels, 2012, pp. 188-189). Tackling climate change was/is seen by the European Commission (EC) as *this generation’s defining task* (2019a, p. 2). Hence, climate change has been appearing in the EU’s publications connecting the phenomenon to numerous security issues (Trombetta, 2014, p. 131). Phrases such as *new urgency*, *essential* or *the EU cannot do this alone* implying higher stakes were added too (European Union, 2008, pp. 5-6). The 2016 EU Global Strategy named climate change among the main current threats *endangering our [EU] people and territory* (Mogherini, 2016, p. 9). Moreover, by describing climate change as an existential threat, the EU has attributed itself a role of an active player in the fight against it. It has also acknowledged the existence of environmental migrants as a result of climate change and environmental degradation. In turn, it is meaningful to ask how (or if) the EU reflects such securitization on concrete human beings who are undeniably and existentially threatened by such changes.

The Threat-Multiplier and the Referent Object

In 1998 Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde suggested a new understanding of security where the focus was on a broader spectrum of issue areas, i.e. military, political, economic, environmental, and societal, (Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2010, p. 80) as well as a bigger number of relevant actors other than states. Crucial within their approach is the intersubjective nature of security issues (Diskaya, 2013, p. 2), which is created by an actor and might be based

on objective or subjective arguments, hence intersubjective. Furthermore, Buzan et al. explained that taking an *issue* and turning it into a *security issue* requires *securitization* which is a process that is built on multiple steps. Firstly, a *securitizing actor* must make a *securitizing move* (via a so-called *speech act*) in which they present an *existential threat* to a *referent object*. Speech acts in this sense are the basis of communication. They are the utterances which lead to actions (Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2010, p. 77) taken by Buzan et al. from the speech act theory. Secondly, the threat must in turn be solved by means of *extraordinary measures*. In addition, a specific *audience* who is the receiver of the speech act, must be *convinced* of the need for the measures to be taken (Buzan, et al., 1998). As Buzan et al. point out, this is "... the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics." (1998, p. 23)

Although Buzan et al. explain that the goal in politics is not securitization, but rather de-securitization, there are debates among academics about whether, in some situations, securitization may serve a morally just cause (Floyd, 2011; Hansen, 2012; Olsen, 2018). After all, Wæver himself admitted that there might be scenarios sufficiently worrisome, in which securitization will be a responsible reaction to block *the worst* (Hansen, 2012, p. 534). Moreover, Bettini points out how securitization needs apocalyptic narratives. Without them, the securitization discourses lose much weight (2013, p. 66), thus also importance. At the same time, Hartmann warns that playing with fear is like playing with fire, because the consequences can be hardly controlled (2010, p. 239). Considering the EU's international appeals and explicit moral justification for the fight against climate change and the general interest in human rights protection, I argue that the EU has taken such a *just cause* approach of trying to prevent the worst, and that the intense justification of the fight against climate change serves as the foundation for the extraordinary measures in the securitization. On top of that, other actors such as environmentalists (Lambert, 2002), human rights activists or academics (Brugger & Le Naour, 2015; Sgro, 2008; Manners, 2008; Byravan & Rajan, 2015; Dupont, 2019) reiterated the EU's own normative expectations and stressed the need to act on environmental migration. What is questioned in this article is to what extent did the EU pursue and fulfill the normative expectations it creates for itself and receives from others. I argue that the analysis of the past twenty years of discourse provides a contrasting picture when it comes to the undeniable victims, the environmental migrants.

Environmental Migration and the EU Discourse

Migration discourses do not merely describe migration, they also constitute it as a phenomenon (van Dijk, 2018, p. 230). Depending on how the issue is defined, i.e. who is the referent and what is the threat, such discourses may take on strong anti-migrant nature, underline antidemocratic or antihumanitarian rationales and measures (Bettini, 2013, p. 68; Hartmann, 2010, p. 236). As it goes, “problems of the South” gain attention once they are portrayed as “threatening Northern security/interests” (Oels, 2012, p. 185; Klepp & Herbeck, 2016, p. 55). I argue that a critical analysis of the assumingly normative EU discourse is thus called for. Based on the writings by Jones (2012), Machin & Mayr (2012), van Dijk (2018), Wodak & Meyer (2009), and van Leeuwen (1996, 2008), this paper assessed numerous EU positions through seven discursive properties, namely the context, structure, style, format/mode, modalities, descriptions, and implications, each of them having several analytical subcategories. The analysis itself was qualitative, with a sample of twenty documents selected for the 20-year period covered. All data were collected from the official EU websites and databases, but only those stating official EU positions were included. Subsequently, the discourse segments which mentioned environmental migration were classified according to the securitization logic. The EU was defined as the securitizing actor, climate change as the existential threat and environmental migrants as the referents. The analysis focused on official formal and written published documents (speech acts) as more long-lasting than oral statements. What is more, I classified the audience receiving the speech acts as the broader internal EU population. Under extra ordinary measures I categorized increasing investments into research, early-warning systems and resilience/adaptation building mechanisms. Based on these conditions, the analysis produced findings which challenge the normative image.

A (Non-)Normative EU

The primary object of investigation was the context in which the EU has been forming its own discourse about environmental migration. Here the analysis has shown a correlation of the international and European deterministic/alarmist context in the early 2000s. I suggest this correlation because of multiple indicators where the European Parliament (EP) (2006) took notice of the UNHCR predictions (European Parliament, 2006, p. 4), and the Commission (2007) used references to both the UN prognosis and the German Advisory Council which in turn referred to the Stern Review and Myers’ Environmental Exodus (High Representative and the European Commission, 2007, p. 8). Equally, the 2010s showed a shift toward a rather reserved, pragmatic, and less dooming approach both globally and in the EU. Among the most

significant realizations for the EU was that environmental migrants most likely stay in the so-called Global South. Another finding was that predicting precise numbers of such people is extremely difficult due to a combination of driving forces (European Commission, 2013b, p. 3). Similarly, a UN University study (2015) admitted, that there are no reliable estimates, neither for the moment nor for the future due to the lack of intra-country data and the complex combination of drivers (IPSNEWS.NET, 2017; Kamal, 2017; Oels, 2012, pp. 187-188; Apap, 2019, p. 3). In turn, the EU started investing into its own research on the topic, particularly the creation of methods for how to assess the likelihood of environmental displacements around the world (Brugger & Le Naour, 2015). The Commission's recognition of the previously 'faulty' methodologies, which omitted the multiplicity of drivers, was especially important in this regard (European Commission, 2013b, p. 9). The EC explanation was that "... policy-makers need to know the magnitude of environmentally-induced migration to be convinced of the importance of the phenomenon and to design action." (European Commission, 2013b, p. 13) What is more, the Union continued funding environmental migration research over the years (Presidency of the Council of the European Union, 2009, p. 63; European Commission, 2013a, pp. 15-16; High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 2017, p. 10), and started referring to assumingly more sophisticated methodological approaches such as the 2011 UK Foresight study which implied that environmental causes have not direct effects on migration. Rather, the British study claimed, they tend to be combined with social, political, and economic drivers (European Commission, 2013b, pp. 7-8). Consequently, the EU invested in multiple programs aimed at adaptation and resilience building in countries of migrants' origin as well as transit. Other projects dealt with data collection, scenario assessments, and strengthening of cooperation with third countries to prevent flows towards the EU (Brown, 2008, p. 37; European Commission, 2013b, p. 7; Science for Environment Policy, 2015, p. 10; Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre & Norwegian Refugee Council, 2018, p. 46; European Commission, 2019b). Yet, funding of projects has fluctuated over time. Moreover, it came from a multitude of sources, e.g. co-funding by EU with member states or other organizations, and a variety of instruments. A clear information about how many projects/studies relevant to environmental migration the EU was/still is involved was not found. I thus infer that this makes it difficult to track what the EU did/does for such migrants. Another problem was unclarity about how much the EU has spent, since not all projects stated allocated funds. Ipso facto, I could not establish any accurate trend in the expenditures. The third part of the issue was related to one of the requirements of securitization (Buzan, et al., 1998), i.e. the audience's approval for extraordinary measures. Considering the complicated EU structure and

decision-making processes, plus the nature of the primary audience (internal EU population), this would require at least a Eurobarometer survey on the topic. Nonetheless, for the twenty years covered, I was not able to find any dedicated questionnaires. Besides, neither the surveys on migration nor climate change included questions about environmental migration. The audience, I infer, was thus omitted from the assumed securitization.

In relation to the context described above, I analyzed the remaining six discursive properties. Initially, the structure showed that higher frequencies of dedicated references to environmental migration were rather uncommon. Only one document from 2013 was fully dedicated to the topic. It addressed the complexity, the threats climate change poses to environmental migrants, and the EU's actions taken in the past as well as recommendations for the future. It might be noteworthy that 2013 was also the year in which the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts was established at the COP 19, which is a series of UN Climate Change Conferences of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UN Climate Change, n.d.). Nonetheless, the remainder of the sampled documents contained only short, and vague references to the topic. References were scattered throughout the texts under varying headings such as *analysis*, *climate change*, *global challenges*, *resilience*, or *united approach of the Union toward climate change*, sometimes as a few out of tens even hundreds of items covered. Moreover, they were usually located in the main body which is considered as less attention catching compared to titles, introductions, or endings (van Dijk, 2018, p. 236). In line with the alarmist-pragmatic contextual changes observed, the period until 2013 has been more dominant in terms of the structural factors than the later years. All three documents scoring the highest on the reference scale were found until 2013 which could resemble a more securitized discourse and that in turn points to a decreasing prioritization afterwards.

In terms of style, the analysis showed that throughout the whole period the EU has been predominantly addressing itself in an impersonal manner (*the Union*, *the EU*, *the Member States*, *the Council*). There have been only four documents where more personal indications to the EU and its parts appeared (*we*, *our*, *I*), implying a deeper connection to the issue. Thereupon, I suggest, the EU uses a predominantly formal style in its discourse to appear as an impersonal expert authority without close relations to the audience or the referents. According to existing discourse literature, this may be interpreted as a tool of professional persuasion (van Dijk, 2018, p. 229; Purdue University, n.d.; Jones, 2012, p. 17). In addition to professional persuasion, the EU used mainly argumentative and expository formats to convey its messages about the

topic. In the earlier period (2000 – 2014) documents were dominated by exposition. This meant references were fact based, usually relating to the causes, effects, problems, and solutions of climate change on migration. Implications on different states, regions, or the EU as a whole were likewise included. However, post-2014 the approach changed, and argumentation became more frequent. From this point on, the EU's arguments were stressed through opinions, requests, recommendations, positions, commitments, and promises. According to the Copenhagen School, the securitizing actor should be persuasive toward the audience to achieve the desired results. What can be thus said is that until 2013 the EU attempted to securitize particularly through the information about environmental migration. Yet later, the discourse became more argumentative, supporting the Union's responsiveness, and making it more normative. I therefore suggest a parallel with the changing international context which was firstly deterministic/pessimistic about the phenomenon and its effects, but as time went on it became more pragmatic. This, I suggest, could have been the result of the new methodologies and data, however more research is necessary to confirm a causal connection.

By the same token, my assessment of modalities showed further correlation with the changing context. Overall I derived twelve categories from modality meanings. Listed according to the frequency of appearance these were *possibility, future, quantity, necessity, desirability, ability, frequency, and obligation*. In terms of the degrees, an overwhelming majority of them belonged to the high degree, followed by the medium and low degrees. Throughout the 20 years I observed that the lower specificity/frequency/quantity appeared between 2000 – 2013, and the medium and high degrees were spread more evenly across the whole 20-year time span. Consequently, the specific usage of the words made the post-2013 period visibly dominated by the high and medium degrees of modality. I interpret this as a growing certainty and specificity on behalf of the EU within its references, as it was letting go of less certain language over time. Moreover, I argue that the most frequent and obvious reappearance of the two categories quantity (2007-2016), resembled by words with a medium to high degree such as *much, many, most, some*, and possibility (2000-2016) resembled by words with a low to medium degree of modality such as *likely, can, could, may or potential*, can be derived from the impact of the earlier alarmist, yet unreliable, context in which the discourse was created. Hence, I connect these modalities with the more securitized period. On the other hand, post-2016 I found the category future as most prominent, mainly relating to what the EU *will do*, followed by the second most recurring category necessity, that stated what the EU *has to do*. I thus argue that

the overall pattern of the categories can be interpreted as a move to a more normative and task-oriented EU discourse in the later years (post-2013).

Regarding the EU's normative self-identification, the analysis has shown corresponding patterns also in terms of inclusion-exclusion and agency activation-passivation (van Leeuwen, 2008, pp. 28, 33). At the center of focus in the discourse were environmental migrants (referents), albeit they were described as passive and always being influenced by consistently active climate change. The threat received equal amounts of attention in the speech acts. On the other side, the most absent was the EU (actor), who was more-often-than not portrayed as an active respondent in the situation. Such positioning of the active actor in relation to the passive referents endangered by the ever-present threat coincides with the ideas about a just securitization and the normative image of self as a savior and expert. Furthermore, extraordinary measures were implied through appropriation of policies, need for research, resilience, and adaptation building. In general the references were prevalently specific, which in turn made them more convincing in line with the EU's image of an expert authority as was observed in the used style before. At the same time, the small frequency of actor appearance may imply a form of distancing and limit the involvement of the EU in what happens to the environmental migrants.

Moving on to another discursive property, i.e. descriptions which enable uncovering held attitudes (van Dijk, 2018, pp. 241-242; van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 33), the analysis showed four different types of narratives. I noted a trend whereby negative connotations were found mainly in the earlier sources pre-2015. The neutral and positive ones came more so in the later stages. Overall, this corresponds to the 1999-2013 (securitization) and 2013-2019 (normativity) division with only a slight 2-year delay. On top of that, descriptions of how serious the situation was portrayed implied a similar pattern. Earlier years (2000-2011) involved descriptions of high urgency, e.g. *threaten stability*, *significant impact*, *large-scale*, *intensify*, *aggravated*, *exacerbating* or *very important*. Since 2013, neutrality was more dominant, mentioning both negative impact and positive opportunities of the phenomenon. After the initial assessment, the descriptions were coded too. Accordingly, until 2011 the code danger prevailed. From 2013 onwards the labels norm/response and complexity replaced it. What is more, the two labels appeared often together, which meant that the references addressed the multiplicity of drivers for environmental migration as was expected from newer methodologies. This made the code norm/reference the most repeated category overall, but mainly after 2013, tying it together with results from other discursive properties.

While six of the properties have fallen in line, the seventh property (implications) did not follow suit. Overall, the distribution of rhetorical devices in the EU discourse about environmental migration did not resemble a coherent pattern from which I could draw a clear connection to the results of other parts of my analysis, and thus draw onto the securitized pre-2013 and normative post-2013 periods. What can be said is that the metaphors persistently implied negative images, e.g. *root cause(s)*, *driver(s)*, *flow(s)*, *pressure(s)*, or *trigger(s/-ed)*, that are typically found also in other migration discourses by different actors (Kainz, 2016). While two documents categorized as positive, due to the devices they incorporated, did appear in the post 2013 period, the negative implications dominated most of the documents throughout the twenty years and therefore did not underline the securitization-normativity division observed in the other parts of the analysis.

Failed Securitization?

The overall assessment of this research is that in the case of environmental migrants, the EU's actions did not meet its own normative goals which are meant for the protection of human rights as well as protection of the environment. At the same time, I argue that the successful securitization of climate change towards environmental migrants has not reached the required extent throughout the whole 20-year period as it was defined by Buzan et al. (1998). Thus, it can be said that the EU discourse contained merely securitization attempts. All things considered, the EU attempted securitizing the issue mainly during the earlier period, predominantly in a negative/pressing manner. I infer plausible influences of international alarmism at this stage. For example, a noticeable characteristic of the references was their lack of straightforwardness, frequency, and consistency. Based on the strong EU focus on climate change over the past decades however, this outcome was not expected. Aside from environmental migrants, attention was given to other referents of climate change threats, e.g. the impacts on the EU at large, its citizens, the environment in general, as well as developing countries and the people living there through resource shortages, energy supplies, food insecurity and so on (Solana, 2003; Mogherini, 2016; European Commission, 2019a). However, for a successful securitization move, the referent should be clearer, more coherent, and not as distant or ambiguous to the audience as has been the case with environmental migrants in the EU discourse. Neither should the main actor (EU) be as absent as it was when compared to the referents and the threat. The references to environmental migration were also more-often-than-not brief, and located in the main body of the documents, which made them blend in with the rest of the information. With respect to the extraordinary measures, the EU pursued initially

extensive research into the topic, and invested into resilience building and early warning systems via already existing tools, e.g. foreign and development policies. Yet, no new tools were found, and it was not possible to find exact expenditures. Arguably, if an outstandingly large amount has been spent on extraordinary measures, this would most likely be publicized in order to underline the importance of the cause as is the case in all other crises. What is more, absence of a feedback instrument such as Eurobarometer surveys on the topic likewise undermines the role of audiences in securitization. Besides, there were only two consistent discursive properties (negative implications and formal style) observed through the whole 20-year period, which in itself shows a lack of a finite and coherent EU position toward the phenomenon. This obstructs a convincing securitized message to any audience which also builds on the Copenhagen School's own observations that securitization of climate change has supposedly not reached exceptionality just yet (Oels, 2012, p. 193).

Even more so, post-2013 the topic has been declining in interest, the language has become more neutral to positive, and the general approach has switched to pragmatism as could be also observed in the international context. The changed EU position towards the complex nature of factors which cause environmental migration can be viewed as in line with contemporary scientific findings. Bettini argues that this can have positive de-politicizing effects because much of the early international discourse was not based on facts. Instead, mere hypotheses of catastrophic outcomes used to be presented as given (2013, p. 69; Hartmann, 2010, p. 235). On the other hand, this position is being questioned by parts of academia as it may be undermining the importance of the root environmental causes on the phenomenon, and instead shifting attention to other causes, e.g. social or political (Klepp & Herbeck, 2016, pp. 58-59). Once again, this supports the claim that the change of methodologies and international context likely impacted EU discourse. Nonetheless, in order to definitely confirm such causality, further research is crucial. For that, interviews with relevant EU officials could be particularly meaningful.

With regard to the ideas of a just or normative securitization, it remains true that the EU pursued securitization of climate change and its impacts in a normative manner. It has proclaimed its dedication to continually do so and to convince partners beyond the EU to follow suit. Even so, the normative securitized fight against climate change did not reflect onto environmental migrants as much. In the references, the normative commitment to help or protect them appeared only since 2014, i.e. in the period with lesser focus. This might have been due to a number of factors such as the uncertainty about how environmental migration might ensue and

how it should be dealt with, or the prevention through resilience/adaptation measures. Simultaneously, the commitment was not always binding (*we/the EU will*). Instead, it often relied on modal verbs like *should, ought, need to, must, shall* etc. While the use of modal verbs implied what is for example the right/moral/normative thing to do, what is possible or desirable, they have not consistently done so, at least not in the earlier period (pre-2013). Only since 2015 the EU turned more to expressions about what it will actually do, rather than what it should/might do. Nevertheless, the norms (what should/will be done by the EU for environmental migrants) have been limited, which is a reappearing finding across research done on the topic. For example, the EU has not included any promises that would involve advocacy for the rights of environmental migrants or a creation of a separate protection status (Klepp & Herbeck, 2016, p. 60), whether in EU legislation or in international fora such as the UN. Although, this has been clearly voiced as a desired step by the most affected states in the Global South, and it was even mentioned in an EC publication (2007), as well as by the EP (2006). Equally as meaningful is the fact that where environmental migrants were referenced, the possibility of unavoidable permanent damage to them or their homeland has not been acknowledged, a problem particular to inhabitants of small island states in the South of the Pacific Ocean (Bradley, 2012; Gemenne, 2011; Vaha, 2015). There is an additional debate that addresses the right to cultural heritage of people inhabiting small island states that are being overflowed. Some question whether the islanders' should not be provided with territory from other states, possibly those who contributed the most to the climate change (Angell, 2017). This has not been mentioned in the EU discourse either.

Post-2019

While the analysis covered the initial twenty years of European Discourse up until the creation of the von der Leyen Commission and publication of its European Green Deal, there have been additional developments in the past three years which ought to be addressed. Most notably, since 2020 the world was significantly impacted by several waves of the Covid-19 pandemic. While EC president claimed that the Green Deal remains the pinnacle of pro-environment policy should remain on top of the EU agenda despite the pandemic, this document did not give much attention to environmental migration (Krukowska & Chrysoloras, 2020). The 2020 EU New Pact on Migration and Asylum, a centerpiece for contemporary migration policies in the Union, did not include any direct references to climate or environmentally induced migration either (European Commission, 2020). What is more, during the past few years the world experienced hundreds of devastating environmental disasters (Apap & du Perron de Revel,

2021). Due to political and social tensions unrests and conflicts broke out. The most significant hit for the EU specifically was Russia's invasion of Ukraine (2022) which started the biggest open conflict on European soil since WWII. Consequently, millions of people fled Ukraine and found refuge in EU member states (Analysis and Research Team, 2023).

Nonetheless, the discourse around environmental migration continues on the international as well as European scenes. The World Bank and UN agencies such as the International Organization for Migration and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights have been continuously acknowledging the possibility of climate induced displacements (International Organization for Migration, 2023b). Similarly EU research services, especially for the EP, have produced documents addressing the topic in this period, albeit they did not represent the official view of the EU as an institution (Apap & du Perron de Revel, 2021; Noonan & Rusu, 2022; Kraler, et al., 2020). In terms of EU involvement, the papers implied the EU should have a crucial role for it could prevent conflicts and migration waves [to its own shores/borders]. After all, it is likely to experience large influxes of *climate migrants*. Thus, the EU should continue with emission mitigation policies, support resilience measures in vulnerable countries, and get involved in joint environmental research and knowledge/technology sharing (Noonan & Rusu, 2022). Importantly, the papers acknowledged the importance of a dedicated legal framework for environmental migrants but noted that the EU still did not recognize climate stress as reason for seeking refugee status so far (Noonan & Rusu, 2022).

The topic was also included in the UN COP conferences. In Glasgow at the COP 26 (2021), the EU co-sponsored a side event with OHCHR addressing climate impacts as drivers of migration (Bachelet, 2021). On the following COP 27 in Sharm El-Sheikh, the EU co-sponsored another event titled *Addressing displacement and migration related to the adverse impacts of climate change: partnerships and integrated approaches for action and support* (International Organization for Migration, 2023a; Platform on Disaster Displacement, 2022). In regard to this latest COP, the EP produced a resolution in October 2022 which suggested that “... *global action to reduce GHG emissions could dramatically slow the rise in internal climate migrants by as much as 80 % by 2050*” (European Parliament, 2022). While the resolution acknowledged negative impacts on human rights of the affected persons, no further specificities were included (European Parliament, 2022). At the same time, the conference was a turning point in the sense that the most affected developing countries unitedly demanded funding from the biggest emission producers to prepare for and recover from climate driven disasters. Most importantly, people who were themselves displaced due to environmental/climate factors came and spoke

out at the conference. They also demanded to be included in negotiations about their fate and to have seats at the COP 28 table (Siegfried, 2022).

Conclusions

In conclusion, the results of this analysis have implied that while the EU still pursues international protection of human rights and securitizes climate change as a just cause, environmental migrants are not a primary concern in this sense. Instead, they are pushed aside by a multiplicity of other threatened subjects. While environmental migrants are still being mentioned from time to time, and there have been observed proclamations to act on behalf of the EU, they were rather occasional, typically nonbinding, and also general in nature. This analysis thus showed that successful securitization as described by the Copenhagen School was not achieved. What is more, the times when the securitization attempts were more prominent (1999-2013), the narratives related to environmental migration were rather negative. They became normative only once new data suggested that environmental migration might not have as significant and negative impacts on the EU as was initially believed. The reason behind it could be the change in international discourse from alarmism to more pragmatism caused by new qualitative methodologies that addressed the complexity of factors behind the phenomenon, and consequently produced different data. I argue that the initial predictions about environmental migrants' numbers in the coming decades were no longer certain, and thus seemingly decreased the urgency of the issue in the Global North. Also, at the point when normativity appeared in the EU discourse (post-2013), the topic has been receding into the background. Still, in the instances when environmental migration was included, the EU has not responded to the requests made by the referents, i.e. the need for a legal status attributed to environmental migrants, a problem that has been well-known in the international community for years. Neither has the EU bound itself to concrete actions. More so, it continuously focused on prevention and adaptation measures dealing with climate change impacts while keeping affected people in place. I therefore argue that the EU normativity, as it has been described by Manners and requested by Green MEPs along with civil society from the EU in the early 2000s is difficult to claim, despite the EU's growing interest in humanitarian and environmental protection. According to the findings, the self-set standards in the two issue areas are simply not being met when it comes to environmental migrants. All in all, there is still a long way forward when it comes to the analysis of environmental migration in international relations. The topic will certainly remain current due to continuous climate change. It is questionable

though whether the EU will take up the issue again in the future, unless there is a migration flow towards the EU undeniably caused by some environmental effects.

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