



Universiteit  
Leiden  
Humanities

## The 'threat' of Climate Induced Migration

Case studies on the process of (de) securitization of climate migrants  
and the path to recognising 'Climate Refugees' in the EU and  
Australia

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Word count: 12,721

July 2019

## **Abstract**

The debate on climate change and migration has been a recurring theme in recent public discourse. Henceforth, through the utilisation of (de) securitization framework, this thesis observes the perceptions of climate change and migration by the EU and Australia towards climate induced migration and the process of securitizing it as a threat. Consequently, it creates awareness and urges policy makers to realise the gravity of the issue and understand climate induced migrants as vulnerable populations. Hence, employing the process of de-securitization. Finally, by facilitating the process of de-securitization of climate induced migration, progress towards recognising 'Climate refugees' in the future could occur.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

*“Climate change is expected to trigger growing population movements within and across borders, as a result of such factors as increasing intensity of extreme weather events, sea-level rise and acceleration of environmental degradation” (IOM, 2016).*

Climate change has unsurprisingly taken a very prominent position as the largest problem of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. There is unequivocal evidence of exponential intensification of rise in sea levels, droughts, shrinkage of fresh water resources, desertification and many other extreme weather events. One of the consequences of climate change that has recently attracted scholarly attention is the mobility occurring there from, which has been characterised as producing climate migrants (Farbotko & Lazrus, 2012). The most life changing results are visible in low-lying and coastal areas and in Less Developed Countries (LDC's) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) (EJF, 2011). The displacement of millions of people, depicts the evidence of a climate crisis, with Tuvaluans being the first future ‘Climate refugees’ (Farbotko, 2010). Based on literature to date, the wave of ‘Climate refugees’ is expected to surpass any other refugee crisis situation the world has experienced so far (Biermann & Boas, 2010). Needless, to say, climate change is becoming more conspicuous, as a ‘threat multiplier’ that requires serious attention (Youngs, 2014).

In the current Western political debate on climate change, climate migrants are often framed as a threat to (supra) national security. They are perceived as a ‘side effect’ of the broader security concern of climate change. Consequently, over the past decades, an evolution transforming climate change into a security concern has occurred. The impact of climate change as a major concern was first introduced by environmental movements in the 1960s. Thereafter, following the Cold War, climate issues were being more widely addressed: in scholarly articles, among the public and, in other public discourses, widening the security agenda (Durant, 2017). Durant (2017) emphasised, that it was possible for a non-military concern, namely, climate change, to enter the security arena and pose as a threat to a country. Since 2007, the relationship between climate change and security took a turn in the importance attributed to it; stating that if climate change was not addressed immediately, it would eventually lead to wars and mass migration (Brzoska, 2009).

Scholars have defined this process in which climate change has come to be known as a threat, as the process of ‘securitization’. This development emphasises that climate change is given more scrutiny within the public debate. However, this does have the implication that

people affected by the devastating effects of climate change have also become part of the securitized discourse. People fleeing from extreme climate change events, namely, more rapid-onset disasters, floods and tsunamis or slow-onset disasters, expanding drought or deforestation are being portrayed as dangerous and a menace, rather than populations in jeopardy. As a result of this detraction, the implications to people seeking refuge from adverse climate change events, do not receive the required assistance, to ensure their safety and survival. As will be evident in Chapter 3, Australia is one such actor who has been greatly reluctant in comprehending climate change and its consequences to its population and other populations around the Pacific space.

The securitization of climate change discourse has the undesired side effect of people suffering from its consequences to be denied the help they desperately need. This thesis will address this problem, by analysing present day securitization discourse and providing de-securitization of discursive practices as an alternative. More specifically, I will argue that the recognition of ‘Climate refugees’, is crucial to this reconsideration of discourse in the debate on climate change and migration. When put simply, my research question is, ‘If migration induced by climate change securitizes climate change as a threat, could then perceptions of climate change consequences as a threat, pose the opportunity to de-securitize climate induced migration as vulnerable populations and recognise them as ‘Climate refugees’?

By addressing this question, I aim to point out the human aspect to the climate change debate. In more concrete terms, in this thesis I will analyse the way in which the process of securitization is reflected in the public discourse on migration and climate change in the EU and Australia. The ultimate goal of this thesis is not focused on making actual policy recommendations, it is merely about creating awareness and stimulating a new thought process, that there is an alternative way of thinking about climate migrants, as victims, rather than as perpetrators.

In order to analyse the way in which the securitization discourse is reflected in EU and Australian public discourse I will address the following four sub questions: (1) How do the EU and Australia perceive an adequate securitization of climate change? (2) Do the EU and Australia acknowledge the existence of climate induced migration (hereafter CIM)? (3) Do the relevant discursive products (documents, speeches, etc.) show evidence of securitization of migration in general, and does this in turn extend negative feelings and pave a path for the securitization of climate induced migration? Lastly, (4) Could the acknowledgment of their

situation of vulnerability and the recognition and protection of 'Climate refugees' be inferred through the de-securitization of climate induced migration.

The research question of this paper highlights a very salient and delicate matter to political and security studies. Scholarly debates on securitization and de-securitization concepts present an array of theoretical possibilities of discussing climate change and migration. Analysing climate change, migration and climate induced migration through these concepts will place greater importance on these issues and highlight them in the political arena. This topic is socially relevant, as it addresses the value of human beings, acting as a starting point and demands significant efforts from policy makers and governmental bodies to be exercised. By drawing attention to this underexplored issue, this paper will contribute to newly emerging literature on the controversial topics of climate change, climate induced migration, and its effects as a threat to States around the world. This way, this paper aims to pave the way for future research on the crossroads of climate change and migration, in addition to opening more avenues to inform policy makers of the required policy implementations and understanding the reflections of such issues on society.

Within this thesis, specific terms vital to understanding the ideas presented need to be introduced and defined. Hence, the concepts securitization, de-securitization and climate migrants are central to this thesis and require further explanation. One such term is 'Securitization'. This is defined as the way in which an actor declares a particular issue to be an 'existential threat' to a particular referent object (Waever, 1995). Referent object as described by Buzan, Weaver and de Wilde (1998), are the objects that are seen to be existentially threatened and have the legitimate claim to survive. The acceptance of such as issue as a threat by a specific audience, increases the prospects of it being addressed on a larger scale. This demonstrates that, in order for an issue to be securitized, it is essential that it is perceived by an audience. De-securitization is also an important term in this thesis. According to the Copenhagen School, it refers to the process by which a specific issue that once was securitized, is no longer considered a security threat and becomes part and parcel of 'normal politics' (Williams, 2008). Hereby, illustrating that, in order to introduce new policies and frameworks to recognise 'Climate refugees', the de-securitization of climate induced migration should occur. With reference to climate induced migrants, "Climate migrants or Environmental migrants, are persons or groups of persons predominantly for reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affects their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who

move either within their country or abroad” (IOM, 2014:13). These terms are crucial to understanding the overarching concepts and interpretations made in this thesis.

Next, chapter 2 will discuss the methodology used. This section will outline the relevance of my topic, purposes for my case selection and sources used. Chapter 3 will elaborate on the main theoretical frameworks and introduce the case studies central to this thesis: the EU and Australia. This chapter will make use of the theoretical framework introduced by Buzan et al. (1998) represented in the Copenhagen School of Security Studies respectively. In a comparative view, it will illustrate the securitization of climate change and climate induced migration, but also touch upon the significance of the securitization of migration on a general scale and the perceptions displayed by the countries. Chapter 4, the analysis, will comprise of an examination of the EU and Australia’s framing of CIM, utilising a plethora of varying sources, ranging from policy documents to historical sources and data centre polls, which will assist me in presenting my contribution to this paper. This chapter serves to provide an opportunity for Australia and the EU to recognise; how the securitization of climate change and CIM will impact acknowledging vulnerable populations and recognise ‘Climate refugees’.

This recognition of ‘Climate refugee’ is crucial to forging a breakthrough in the debate on climate change and migration, as it enables academics as well as policy makers to overcome the dominant security-discourse and forces authorities to incorporate and observe climate migrants as jeopardised by consequences of climate change, and in urgent need of assistance to ensure survival.

The results of this study, will exhibit the existence of securitization of CIM, by identifying climate change as a threat, and in turn point out that contrary to CIM being securitized, the de-securitization of climate induced migration should follow, through the securitization of climate change. This in turn assists in distinguishing a newly discovered classification, ‘Climate refugees’, remedying the view that climate induced migration is a threat to a State.

## Chapter 2: Methodology

This paper analyses how the EU and Australia perceive the situation of climate induced migration along with the impact it has on the security of these States. This research topic was chosen for two reasons. First, although migration linked to climate change is currently considered as the new international security problem, the paucity of the legal and institutional systems are greatly lacking. Second, although academic literature is scarce on climate induced migration, climate migrants or refugees, there appears to be a strong sense of urgency and priority being given to this topic in the literature that does address the problem. This, indicates the need for stronger efforts to resolving this issue. For example, a right to be protected should not be pushed to the background only because the devastating effects of climate change would have severe repercussions on selected populations. With this in mind, I aim to create a new sense of awareness in recognising the vulnerable populations and de-securitizing them as a threat to a nation. Thereby, encourage the establishment of a new category or dedicate similar rights and protection policies to a 'Climate refugee' as is granted to refugees recognised under the UN 1951 Refugee Convention. In the wake of the recent scholarly tendency acknowledging the relationship between climate change and migration, some authors have argued that it is possible to establish the securitization of climate change as a security threat, and in turn the possible de-securitization of climate induced migration.

The prominence of a non-militarised concept, specifically climate change becoming a State priority illustrates the saliency of addressing this situation. Hence, utilising the securitization framework introduced by Buzan, Weaver and de Wilde (1998), I will assess how climate change can be securitized and viewed as a threat, in turn opening avenues to take an alternative stance to viewing those harmed by climate change events, not as threats, rather as at-risk populations in need of assistance.

The main area of focus of this paper will be on the European Union (EU) and Australia. I examine the EU region as a whole, rather than a single national state within the Union, as this is the most common unit of analysis in the literature relevant to climate change, migration and the recognising refugees. Moreover, the EU is expected to have influxes from Less Developed Countries (LDC's, such from the Maghreb region in Northern Africa), making it my preferred choice. Australia was selected as it is a very prominent migrant destination (Kasic, 2014). Australia's proximity to many of the SIDS (Pacific Islands) in the Pacific region and coastal cities with large populations are expected to experience the brunt of climate change events.



Hence, future climate induced migration will originate from these destinations and target countries such as, Australia and many of the countries in the EU, due to their proximity to the more vulnerable States (Hugo, 2008). Hence, making the EU and Australia ideal actors for assessment in my research.

The EU has been a popular destination for migration and has attracted migrants for long periods of time, from within and outside the Union. The EU has most certainly identified not only a link between climate change and migration patterns, and the risks it poses to the national security of the EU States, but also the international impact of it on the security policies of the region. Therefore, I focus on the European Union (EU) as it is considered the world's most developed form of regionalised, supranational governance, which united multiple countries within a common migration policy (Geddes & Somerville, 2012). The EU provides a collective view on policy making behaviour and enforcement, when faced with existential threats (Sperling & Webber, 2019).

Similarly, the severe climatic changes expected to cause large population movements in the South-West Pacific region, from the islands, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Nauru etc., but also from South-East Asian countries, dictates the relevance of Australia as a subject in this paper (Moore & Smith, 1995). In this study, the strategy of discourse analysis serves to understand how the EU and Australia perceive the situation of climate induced migration along with the impact it has on the security of these States. The explicit and implicit nature of the perceptions displayed by these countries indicated that it would be an interesting comparison to examine.

In this thesis I utilised discourse analysis, which analysed a plethora of written articles, in various forms. Through searches on numerous databases including Google Scholar, the Leiden University catalogue and other Research Institute websites, I searched for key terms such as climate change, migration, securitization, de-securitization. This allowed me to gain an in-depth understanding in to the process of the securitization of climate change and how its subsequent migrant crisis should be de-securitized. I also examined a heterogeneous collection of sources, including policy papers and documents, historical documents, multiple institutional polls and information from data centres to EU and international bodies of research, such as the OECD, IOM, European Council and Commission reports, data on the history of the department of immigration and migration heritage with specific reference to Australia. These sources were examined as a whole in portraying the perceptions towards climate change, migration and climate induced migration, under the label of public discourse.

I refrained from distinguishing between these sources, due to pragmatic reasons. More specifically sources concerning Australian policy are very limited, thus resulting in drawing information and evidence from other available sources. However, a drawback of utilising such varying sources, complicates the ability to compare different political and social institutions engaging in public discourse on this topic. Nevertheless, despite these limitations, this research could be of added value as a first exploration of the framing of climate induced migration activities by the EU and Australia, which in turn would open avenues to taking an alternative approach to perceiving migrants of climate change disasters and providing the necessary protection and they require.

## **Chapter 3: Theoretical framework**

### **3.1 Securitization theory**

This section will first delineate the theories of securitization and de-securitization. Secondly, it will examine the controversial and complex process of linking climate change and migration. Lastly, it will focus on the two case studies, the EU and Australia.

#### **3.1.1 Securitization**

The securitization framework of the Copenhagen School (CS) was developed based on the foundational texts of securitization theory – ‘Security: A New Framework for Analysis’ introduced by Buzan, Weaver and de Wilde (1998). Security studies has identified two approaches: the traditional military view of security and the more recent approach, expanding the definition of threat to a more general formulation. According to the definition of securitization, advocated by this last approach, threats can arise from military and non-military issues, for instance, the environment, in this case. In relation to issues classified beyond the political category, the environment, is often faced with the question of it being politicised or securitized; where securitization is perceived as a more extreme version of politicisation (Buzan et al., 1998).

An issue is strictly recognised as a security issue, when it fulfils certain criteria. The main criterium is that an existential threat is perceived to a referent object by a securitizing actor. It began by showing the rhetorical structure of decision makers in framing an issue and attempting to convince an audience to inspect the issue beyond the field of politics; this is what a speech act is, 'saying the words' (Buzan et al., 1998). The CS originally identified a 'speech act' as securitization itself, but as securitizing moves by 1998, indicating that an issue would be securitized only through acceptance by an audience (Williams, 2008). Simply recognising an issue does not securitize it, in fact it identifies it as a securitizing move. Once identified and perceived by an audience as an existential threat that requires extraordinary measures, then is the securitization process complete (Buzan et al., 1998). Utilising the term 'security' infers the right for a securitizing actor to declare a State of emergency, thereby engaging in necessary measures to defend the individual, society or State from this threat and justifies the use of extreme measures to control it (Buzan et al., 1998; Weaver, 1995). The meaning of something being securitized is not how people think of it, but how it is implicitly used in some ways and not in others. A self-referential practice which allows an issue to become a security issue, not because an existential threat exists, but because the issue is presented to be such. Moreover, it is possible to identify certain issues of security to be of higher relevance, which stimulates actors to then take extraordinary measures (Weaver, 1995).

Accordingly, the Copenhagen School aims to outline a theoretical framework that delineates similar understanding of the concept based on the underlying ideas introduced by Buzan et al. (1998). This framework is the study of security from a constructivist viewpoint, which aims to include a range of concerns, such as, environmental change, human rights and poverty on the security agenda. According to the CS, the concept of securitization is different to 'politicisation' or 'normal politics', as defined by the rule of law or by a Western liberal democratic State. The extent of applicability of the framework is similar to, 'how Western political leaders characterise an issue as an existential threat to the sovereignty of a State and the national identity and cohesion of the nation'. Further research into the securitization theory describes how securitization addresses these key questions; What makes something a security issue? What kind of responses does this call for? What are the consequences of treating something as a security issue? (Balzacq, Léonard, Ruzicka, 2016).

This concept is also relevant for immigration, which, if examined under security studies would be categorised differently, but may still be addressed in the traditional sense, as a security 'threat' (Williams, 2008). For example, Europe and Australia have implemented severe border measures, as responses to immigrants and asylum-seekers in the post 9/11

context. It could be deduced, that following an event like 9/11, feelings of threat were certainly enhanced (Huysmans, 2006). When addressing the referent object, the State is considered the most important object that is focused upon. However, what if there is a diversion of interest to a different referent object, such as, the environment? The environment is vital for the survival of human beings; therefore, it has to exist and should be given priority over other issues. In the event that the realm of normal politics is unable to solve this issue, it indicates that extreme measures would be required (Buzan et al., 1998). This indicates the process of securitization with relevance to climate change and migration.

### **3.1.2 De-securitization**

In detecting a mechanism to dismiss climate induced migration from the political arena, I examine the concept of de-securitization. This concept could exhibit higher prospects for recognising and providing a position of safety in policy improvements and law to climate refugees. This process of de-securitization is concerned with encouraging authorities to incorporate and observe climate migrants not as a threat, rather as vulnerable populations in urgent need of assistance to ensure survival.

The Copenhagen School argues, that “security should be seen as a negative, a failure to deal with issues of normal politics” (Weaver, 1995). For the CS, de-securitization is important and identified as the removal of a certain issue from the security realm, and returning it to ‘normal politics’. Thereby, unhinging it from emergency mode (Weaver, 1995; Buzan et al., 1998). According to Balzacq et al. (2016), it appears that literature on de-securitization addresses the concept in three questions: What counts as de-securitization (identifying the phenomenon)? Why should there be de-securitization (ethics)? and How can de-securitization be achieved (transformative practice)? Based on these questions, I address the concept of de-securitization, what issues can be categorised under such de-securitization, and whether this will provide the possible acknowledgment of a category known as, ‘Climate refugees’.

The Copenhagen School convincingly outlined the need for de-securitization when compared to securitization. I include here an excerpt of the lengthy quote in which the CS explicitly explains its stance, “.... *In some cases, securitization of issues are unavoidable.... Because of its prioritising imperative, securitization also has tactical attractions- for example, as a way to obtain sufficient attention for environment problems. But de-securitization is the*

*optimal long-range option, since it means not to have issues phrased as ‘threats against which we have countermeasures’ but to move them out of these threat-defence sequences and into the ordinary public sphere”* [emphasis added] (Buzan et al., 1998). This indicates that the CS has highlighted the imperative of returning an issue to the realm of ‘normal politics’, emphasising on issues connected to the climate. Therefore, this could be applied to CIM accordingly.

Further, Ole Weaver (2000) highlights strategies of de-securitization that would support the ideas of this paper. First, not speaking about an issue, second, managing the securitization process to prevent it from spiralling, and lastly, moving a securitized issue back to normal politics. Weaver then goes on to describe four categories of perceiving de-securitization and categorises the potential de-securitization of securitized immigration policy from a de-constructivist and emancipatory category. In doing so, Huysmans (1995) elaborates on the de-constructivist strategy of de-securitization. Specific attention to migrants in a general sense, securitizes them as the Other, breaching the inner sphere, as a ‘threatening other’ that threatened the identity of Europe. He suggests the de-securitizing of migrant identity can take place by dissolving this “unified cultural alien” and replacing it with multiple identities. Behnke (2006) introduces emancipatory strategy, which focuses on eliminating the differences of the identity of the Other and acceptance into the society with, no one dominant identity. Therefore, according to Huysmans (1995) and Behnke (2006) it is evident, that much of the securitization of migration occurs due to the threatening of the European identity, and in order to de-securitize an issue, such as, climate induced migration to the EU, it is necessary to change the population perceptions. Nevertheless, this indicates as to how de-securitization of migration may occur, which could then be applied to climate induced migration.

### **3.2 Case studies**

The following case studies of the EU and Australia discuss how climate change and its relationship to migration is viewed by public discourse. By examining these case studies, this section seeks to illustrate that climate change and migration have influenced the perception of climate induced migration as a threat.

### **3.2.1 Securitization of migration**

In the following section, I present a general framework which highlights the way in which both migration and climate change as separate phenomena have been securitized over the past decades, in the EU (or Europe) and Australia. This will function as the basis for the analysis (Chapter 4), that will analyse both EU and Australia's framing of climate induced migration. The case studies utilised below will demonstrate the apparent mutual perceptions and understanding displayed towards migration.

### **3.2.2 The EU**

In the 1950s and 1960s, immigrants were primarily required as extra workforce in most West European countries, insofar that certain countries even used a promotional migration policy (Huysmans, 2006). However, by the 1960s and 1970s, immigration became a public concern, with legislation and policy for foreign workers already in place for 'economic migrants'. By the mid-1980s the focus shifted, and immigration became more and more politicised, and this was due to the confusion of immigration and asylum, where asylum was an alternative route for economic immigration into the EU, viewing it as a threat (den Boer, 1995). This significant change since the 1980s was a result of the Europeanisation of migration policy (Huysmans, 2006), characterised by deeper border controls by the EU, building fences, deploying patrols and state of the art technology (for example, the Schengen Information System, a passport control regime). For Europe, this was the beginning of such securitization. Incidents in the late 1990s caused security issues to progress and in the 2000s immigration policy was securitized further.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, policy priorities were based around four headings, of which, one emphasised on managing the external borders: in specific, the manner in which migration is perceived and securitized as a threat, and as requiring border control measures (Léonard, 2011). The development of the EU common migration policy displays characteristic actions of securitization, which may have resulted in the creation of a strong EU identity, the 'we identity'. This could lead to increased fear towards outsiders. Thereby, securitizing the concept of migration and perceiving it as a threat (Léonard, 2011). An increased Europeanisation

process of EU citizens recognised themselves on an individual level, projecting the ‘Other’ to be a threat to the European identity (Weaver et al., 1993).

Recognising migration as a threat and securitizing it, renders it a prominent position on the political agenda, culminating severe policies and border control, such as, The European Border and Coast Guard Agency [i.e. Frontex] (Buzan et al., 1998). Frontex is used as the main tool in displaying the securitizing practices of migration by the EU (Léonard, 2011). More and more studies were developing ideas of the perceptions of the immigrant as the ‘Other’ and basing policy decisions around that idea, which changed ideas of acceptance and sympathy to panic (Buonfino, 2004; Frontex, 2014). Migratory flows of many varieties, ranging from asylum seekers to labour or irregular migrants have been identified. It should be understood, that it is a political and social dynamic, reinstating migration as a security question and endangering the Western European societies. The social construction and negative connotations attached to migration present it as a barrier to public order and identity. Hence, securitizing migration as a threat (Huysmans, 2000).

### **3.2.3 Australia**

Australia has had a long history of migration, but the attitudes towards migration have drastically changed over the past two centuries. Policies for immigration have been very harsh in the past. For example, the “White Australian Policy”, which was established during the colonial period allowed exclusively British and Irish immigrants. In addition to this, a Pacific Island Labourers Act to prohibit contract workers and deport any Islanders already residing in Australia was exercised. This displays the stringent measures taken by Australia in the past and the similar inflexible policies it continues to take at present (NSW Migration Heritage Centre, 2010).

Following World War II, Australia’s immigration policies have been transitioning. There are stringent border control measures and new policies introduced in managing and restricting immigrants. Since 2005 the humanitarian settlement programme supported those migrating to the country or fleeing dire situations that were life threatening. The leniency in their policies attracted many unauthorised arrivals and visa over-stayers. As a result, the exploitation of this programme eventually stirred sentiments of threat among the Australian population. By the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, these growing negative sentiments resulted in

hardening policy measures. The Pacific Strategy, which became known as the ‘Pacific Solution’, led to offshore processing centres (OPC), which were detention centres for unlawful non-citizens. More rigorous measures were visible with the establishment of the Australian Border Force (A History of the Department of Immigration-Managing Migration to Australia, 2015). The emergence of such procedures, sheds light on the possible threat discourses and the possible sentiments of a national security threat to be developed by Australians.

According to the aforementioned delineations, it is clear that migration is perceived as a threat by both Australia and the EU, although it does appear that Australia displays a harsher attitude toward migration than the EU.

### **3.2.4 Securitization of climate change**

Prior to discussing the securitization of climate change, I believe demonstrating the link of climate change on migration is vital to observing climate change as a threat, providing more evidence for climate induced migration to exist. Hence, the following section contextualises the evolution of the contentious debate on climate change and migration, with the broader intentions of de-securitizing climate induced migration.

Afifi and Warner (2008) provided evidence for climate-driven international migration, using a tool known as the gravity model. This model has been the most commonly-used paradigm for understanding and observing gross migration flows across regions (Poot et al., 2016). On the other hand, Beine and Parsons (2015), rejected a connection between climate change and international migration. Nevertheless, Maurel and Tuccio (2016) stated that despite certain authors displaying evidence of a direct link between climate change and international migration, it is more likely that the link is indirect. According to Hulme (2010), climate change became a synecdoche for environmental change, representing environmental degradation, which also led to further assumptions about climate induced migration to develop. El-Hinnawi (1985), stated that, “all displaced people can be described as environmental refugees, having being forced to leave their original habitat (or having left voluntarily), to protect themselves from harm and/ or to seek better quality of life”. Hence, arguing that climate change is in fact a driver of population movements.

It is believed that in the past, climate induced migration was initially an internal occurrence, rather than international migratory movements. This provides the underlying



reasons as to why there might be limitations in knowledge and literature demonstrating how migration and the environment interact. However, the increased scale of environmental change led to an increase in climate influenced migration (Hugo, 1996). Hugo (2008) indicates, that population mobility lies along a continuum, with two extremes, totally voluntary migration and totally forced migration. Climate induced migration lies on the extreme of forced migration. It was also argued from very early on, that the impacts of climate change could trigger mass migrations. Since 1988, ideas that millions of ‘Climate refugees’ could pose as security threats were portrayed by environmental non-profit organisations, for instance, Worldwatch Institute, the Climate Institute, the Earth Policy Institute, the New Economics Foundation in London and also Friends of the Earth in Australia (McNamara & Gibson, 2009). It now seems impossible to turn a blind eye on the unavoidable consequences of climate change.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report (IPCC, 2007), indicates that climate change will have an influence on migration, resulting in human relocation not only within national boundaries, but also between countries. Thus, climate change impacts are extremely likely to cause migration, for example, rising sea levels, frequency of extreme weather conditions, decreased or increased rainfall, temperature change etc. The effects of rising sea levels could displace between 470 and 760 million people (Strauss et al., 2015), forcing intra- and inter-State migration (Preston et al., 2006). Although knowledge on this relationship is limited (Döös, 1997), it is apparent that food crises from droughts or floods can be understood to cause grave danger to human lives and cause forced migration. Hence, emphasising that climate change is a factor that could be threatening and result in long term migration.

Identifying and realising the complex relationship between climate change-migration, could increase the attention given towards viewing climate change as a security threat, not in a political sense, rather in a human security sense. Thus, placing greater prominence on climate induced migration in policy circles and popular media than ever before. Despite the scepticism on the relationship between climate change and migration, establishing this connection would also enhance the opportunity to de-securitize climate induced migration and recognise ‘Climate refugees’. In conclusion, it could be inferred, that through the observation of a connection between climate change and migration, climate change could be viewed as harmful to certain populations and their livelihoods, resulting in migration would also incur strong perceptions towards climate induced migration as a threat.

A crucial aspect in understanding the EUs and Australia's stance on climate induced migration, is the manner in which they securitize climate change in a more general sense. Many scholars including Scott (2012), have debated on the impact the securitization of climate change might have on world politics and policy responses. According to White (2012), policy makers have taken climate change seriously and are moving beyond climate sceptics and deniers to address the issue. The previous chapter explained the theory and process of securitization; how an issue is securitized and gains prominence in the political arena. Following the evidence depicting a link between climate change and migration to exist, I will now examine how the securitization of climate change is viewed by the EU and Australia. What are the perceptions of it being a threat to their national security?

Much of the process involved in securitizing climate change began at the World Conference of the Changing Atmosphere: Implications for the Climate Change, in 1988. Following this, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was formed (Scott, 2012). International bodies, such as, the UN Security Council have taken various measures to highlight the gravity of securitizing climate change and how it is perceived by the international arena (Scott, 2012). For example, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Kyoto Protocol (1997), as well as, the most recent Paris Agreement (2015) are strategies expected to instil greater knowledge and act as the most plausible commitments, to counter climate change. I will not go into detail on the actions and the discussions engaged by the international authorities around the securitization of climate change. However, climate change and the securitization of it, has triggered the global community to react and recognise it as an existential threat. Additionally, speech acts were undoubtedly a major contributor to the many international strategies adopted. Thereby, globally recognizing climate change as an existential threat (Oels, 2012).

### **3.2.5 The EU**

According to various European policy Statements, for example, the German Ministry for the Environment (BMU-2002), climate change was a '*major challenge to human security*' and could not '*be solved with the traditional mind-set.... of military services*' (Tanzler et al., 2002). This in a way is a depiction of a European mind-set on climate security. Following BMU's interpretation, it was promoted and established as a security issue, that which has no military solution (Durant, 2017).

The securitization of climate change within the EU should be perceived as part of a broader global development. The securitization of climate change has risen to the pinnacle of the world's most urgent concerns over the past few decades. Apart from entering the international agenda, it has now also impacted and been highly prioritised individually by multiple countries' politics and policies. Analysing governmental discourse, Trombetta (2008) argues, that the securitization of climate change is transforming security practices and the reactive measures taken accordingly. As argued by many, if climate change is not addressed immediately, it will result in irreversible consequences, such as, mass migration and conflicts. Therefore, in order to prevent such occurrences, it is vital that countries identify climate change as threat and forcefully address it (Brzoska, 2009).

Efforts to indicate that climate change is a potential future threat, has been made very clear. In light of the above, States in the European Union would be encouraged to take action within the Union and move toward the securitization of climate change (Scott, 2012). It might be safe to assume that the wide spread discussion of climate change has led to the securitization of it to a certain degree. The EU observes climate change to have largely impacted the European security policy concerns. For example, the 2008 joint-report on Climate Change and International Security, by the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the European Commission (EC) (Council of European Union, European Commission, 2008) laid the foundational stones for securitizing climate change in the EU (OECD, 2012). Therefore, with the development of such reports and attempts to act upon them, it is apparent that the securitization of climate change is gathering momentum; indicating the plausibility of it being securitized. An example of such a security document that decided to include climate change in its strategy is, the European Security Strategy (European Commission, 2008).

This provides evidence that there is a continuous demonstration of climate change concerns in European security planning and has propagated the securitization of the issue. Multiple reports, speeches, policy papers etc., display climate change as an existential threat to the EU and its populations (OECD, 2012). Further, the Member states through the European Council, as well as the EU civil society, have played a significant role in securitizing climate change. Hence, making it relatively easy to address climate change and prioritise policies accordingly. Incorporating these perceptions, the EU is trying deeply to influence other international communities to take immediate action. Although climate change has been securitized and it has entered the political agenda, it is not being attended to using traditional security measures as imagined, instead a more cooperative method is adopted. Nevertheless,

with climate change entering the political agenda, it has created a sense of urgency around the issue, exerting pressure for higher precautions and more progressive solutions to be developed (OECD, 2012).

Extensive speech acts have managed to communicate the pertinence of climate change and the securitization thereof. Consequently, resulting in the EU to become more unified and driving the securitization of climate change, to the centre of the EU's security agenda (Dupont, 2018). The supranational nature and collective action processes induced by the EU, indicates how they face challenges and are willing to adopt the required policies. Dupont (2018) goes on to mention, that through the adoption of rather ambitious policies, the EU displays collective securitization of climate change. For example, the Centre for European Studies, which assembled various powerful actors (parliamentarians, military officers, civil society etc.) to 'reframe the international discourse on climate change, to listen to the concerns and ideas of the security sector and to discuss the need, to reform international and European institutions for responding efficiently, to climate change threats (European Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee, 2012).

Moreover, the advancement of climate policy by the EU Commission, demonstrates the pressure exerted upon other governmental bodies, i.e. the EU Council and Parliament, to act collectively against climate change. In addition, the many Treaties (Maastricht, 1992; Amsterdam, 1999; Nice, 2003 and Lisbon, 2008) endorsed throughout the past decades, represent the vitality of securitizing moves in instigating policies and implementing same. Discourses surrounding climate change continue to develop, from a 'risk' to a 'threat'. This idea continues to ignite interest among various European bodies, urging an instantaneous response. The development of internal and external climate policies are accurate indications of the recurrent perceptions of climate change as a securitized and high politics issue (Dupont, 2018). Hence, a successful securitization of climate change, by convincing audiences through these speech acts. Eurobarometer polls, displayed the support EU climate policies have received over the years and how audiences were swayed into accepting climate change as an existential threat (Eurobarometer, 2008, 2011, 2015).

Furthermore, much attention has been drawn to climate change and the security implications it brings about. The German Advisory Council on Global Change (WBGU, 2007) report stated, that climate change can be evidently understood as a threat to national and international security to a very high degree. Other nations in the EU have also begun taking measures, by including it in their national security agenda. For example, the UK argues that

climate change is the largest potential security threat in the world (Government of the United Kingdom, 2008) and France, recognises climate change as a new risk and its potential to lead to violent conflicts in the French White Paper on Defence and National Security (Government of the French Republic, 2008). As reported in a myriad of documents, policy papers and newsletters, climate change needs to be the central topic of Europe's preventive policy (European Parliament, 2009). Discourses in these documents explicitly display the severity of climate change and the extent to which it would affect the stability of individual countries and regions. Following countries such as, the UK, Germany and France, who have been successful in pushing for the inclusion of climate change in their respective national security strategies, the EU is expected to gradually implement the necessary transnational policies and methods too. Thus, reacting to the situation as a region.

### **3.2.6 Australia**

The under-exploration of the Pacific area in scholarship, may also be attributed to the unlikelihood of the region being exposed to significant international threats. Nevertheless, other tools have assisted in explicating the vital role the audience plays in the securitization process of climate change. Reports and speeches illustrate that Australia and its social and political elite were rather reluctant in addressing climate change as a grave danger. The low degree of importance placed on climate change in Australia is predominantly visible through various Australian political discourses, in which, terrorism was at the forefront of political concerns, compared to climate change (McDonald, 2012). It is also likely that the elite of Australia are hesitant in considering climate change as a security threat, due to the consequences it would have on the country. Concerns as to whether this would mean a state of emergency for the country, resulting in international bodies such as, the UNSC to interfere and dictate the terms on which measures are to be taken against climate change, creates a sense of unease among the audience (Peretko, 2016).

Following this, I will investigate some key information from a speech given by the Australian Prime Minister John Howard. In 2007 Howard announced a number of policies with reference to climate change. These measures indicated, that there was a sense of urgency in viewing climate change as an issue that required direct and rapid attention (Thomas, 2017). The necessity for policy changes on climate change also became apparent, when Howard (2007) in a press release realised that a "new international consensus" was needed, followed

by the launching of the “Sydney Declaration”. Howard recognised climate change as a long-term issue that requires long-term responses, but never explicitly expressed this in his speeches, as a ‘security threat’ (Thomas, 2017). However, a higher priority beyond public debate or tailored policies were not expressed (Macintosh et al., 2010). The examination of one such political view, does not allow me to generalise the perceptions of climate change to a majority, but such influential perceptions could create an impact on the securitization process of climate change. Acknowledging climate change as a long-term issue, meant that it was excluded and not referenced as a ‘security threat’ in any of the defence policies during Howard’s period in office, as Prime Minister.

Following Howard, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd had a different outlook on climate change. In December 2007, Rudd ratifies the Kyoto Protocol (1997), which signified that he was accepting climate change to be a threat to the national interests of Australia and that there would be various negative consequences if it was not addressed immediately (Rudd, 2008a). The ratifying of the Protocol was a step to show a sense of urgency to Australia being affected by climate change, but this also triggered opportunities for the Australian authorities to make policy changes and address, climate-induced migration. Rudd also rendered higher priority and framed climate change as a pressing security issue, in comparison to Howard, who described it as a long-term issue (Thomas, 2017). Therefore, the moment a referent object is perceived by an influential audience, it would gather interest and momentum among society too. Thus, increasing the prospects of entering the political agenda. As a result, securitized as a threat. Furthermore, these concerns led Rudd to rapidly incorporate climate change into the Australian national security agenda, as significant climate change would result in ‘unregulated population movements and other catastrophes’ (Rudd, 2008b).

Additionally, based on a Lowy Institute poll (2019), a greater number of the Australian population is beginning to identify climate change as threat to the national and human security of the country. The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), revolves around the Pacific Islands and its regional powers, Australia and New Zealand. This forum included topics varying from political governance to security and recently climate change. The Pacific Island nations focus on climate change was rather mild, until it decided to jointly acknowledge it with the EU. Thereafter, it was more intently examined; along with accepting that climate change and sea-level rise, would significantly affect these Island States in the future. In addition, the Joint EU-Pacific Initiative on Climate Change established in 2010 demonstrated the urgency and sense of immediacy required towards this issue (Camprubí, 2016).

Australia's hesitant debates in securitizing climate change gradually transformed into providing climate change more prominence, due to the fact that it poses grave dangers upon its own populations. For example, in 2018, Australia battled "its worst draught in living memory" (Climate Reality Project, 2019), which was an indication of the need to act quickly, primarily by securitizing climate change as a threat. Certain discourses, for instance, speeches by authoritative figures indicate the extent to which an issue can be securitized and incorporated into the political arena. Further, an article by Elliott (2011) indicates, that as a result of an increased adoption of government policies in assisting developing countries, Australia has recognised climate change as a threat. Hence, stipulating the probability of climate change being securitized as a priority.

As was mentioned above, the EU highlights climate change as a threat, as they are allocating resources and preparing to deal with the consequences in the future, whereas, Australia perceives climate change as an existing and persisting threat to its populations and needs to address it immediately, due to its high proneness. For example, the country is already experiencing internal migrations as result of less rainfall, droughts and bush fires (Rebecca, 2013).

## **Chapter 4: Analysis**

The case studies presented an overview of how both the EU and Australia perceive migration in general and climate change as a threat. Here, I will analyse the way in which climate induced migrants are framed in the EU and Australian public discourse. Understanding the individual elements of the climate change-migration dynamic, will contribute to interpreting the broader topic of climate induced migration and 'Climate refugees'.

### **4.1 The EU**

Europe is likely to experience unprecedented flows of CIM with the largest ratio expected to be entering the region from Northern Africa (Maghreb region). Through the ideas of insecurity expressed towards mundane ideas such as, migration; these same perceptions could securitize climate induced migration. The new sense of security and discourse towards

CIM were more visible following 9/11. The thoughts following this event were still very prominent in the eyes of the Europeans as a result of extending the strong perceptions of migration and intense immigration policies upon climate induced migration (den Boer, 1995). Therefore, projecting a greater sense of unease among countries and regions expected to experience any population flows as a result of climate change as well. Thereby, further complicating the process of assisting such vulnerable populations and recognising them as 'Climate refugees'.

Furthermore, following funded research on climate induced migration (EACH-FOR, 2009), the EU Commission announced the severity of climate change and migration with the intention of producing a 'Communication', highlighting the effects of climate change on international migration (Geddes and Somerville, 2012). Furthermore, the European Parliament (2011) also proceeded on the matter through a study on climate migrants, following a 2009 Resolution 'Environmentally induced migration and displacement: a 21<sup>st</sup> century challenge'. Youngs (2014) argued, that the migration policies among the EU member states have grown more stringent, and as a result this could depict the strictness extended and applied to climate induced migration too. Hence, displaying explicitly the attitudes that the EU has towards climate induced migration, as a threat to EU security. Thereby, securitizing climate induced migration. However, Floyd (2011) and Roe (2012) illustrate, that securitization is not necessarily negative, as this is the indication that through the securitization of climate change, the de-securitization of climate induced migration could occur.

## **4.2 Australia**

In the case of Australia, a lack of literature on the specific topic of climate induced migration contributes to the complexity of securitizing it. Nevertheless, as was mentioned by another school of thought, the Paris School (Bigo, 2002), the securitization of migration in general, increases the likelihood of directing those similar perceptions towards climate induced migrants. This is not to say that there is an obvious link, but it is the most plausible reason to delineate how and why CIM might be securitized in Australia. Nonetheless, despite the lack of literature and nascent nature of the topic with regard to the continent down-under, much attention is expected to be drawn on such groups and trigger the widening of a national security radar for many other nations too (Humphrey, 2013). We can now assume that the perceptions towards migration in general, influence the perceptions of observing climate induced migration



as a threat too, resulting in the securitization of it. Therefore, illustrating that the awareness and securitization of climate induced migration would generate complications in providing protection and recognition to people fleeing climate change events in the future.

It is believed, that people migrating due to climate change are special cases and are seen as threats who are most likely to receive similar treatment to other irregular migrants entering the country. Hence, extending feelings of threat to climate induced migrants. The securitization of climate induced migration is also fuelled by the sporadic nature of the generation of migrants as a consequence of climate change, and the inability to categorise them under any normative categories ignites feelings of threat. Australia securitizing migration in general has widened its scope and securitized climate induced migration too. This is visible in the very stringent policies it has towards migrants, irregular, asylum seekers, unwanted refugees etc. Thus, it is appropriate to assume that as a consequence of migration being securitized, it would only render stronger sentiments of threat towards climate induced migrants as well.

In the context of climate change, although Australia is observed to be rather implicit and hesitant in expecting climate change to cause migration, projected climate change will influence large population movements, internally as well as, internationally (Bardsely & Hugo, 2010). The record high influx of migrants expected globally, demonstrates increased attitudes of threat and the securitization of CIM. Australia is likely to experience heavy population flows in the near future, and its under preparedness may result in expanding stringent border control measures and policies, with efforts to prevent climate induced migrants from entering the country. The process of perceiving one concept as a threat, could and has led to sharing these same ideas in perceiving another concept as a threat, i.e. migration and climate induced migration. However, the securitization of CIM, could also be attributed to the securitization of climate change, through the perceptions of climate change as a threat, which would inevitably securitize migration resulting from it.

Contrary to the EU, Australia is more implicit and hesitant in observing climate induced migrants as a threat resulting from climate change consequences. Australian discourse tends to describe climate induced migration in rather vague terms, addressing them as irregular migrants and displaying negative attitudes as they would, to migrants in general.

### **4.3 Explanation of the framing of climate induced migration**

Following the illustrations above, the differences in the framing of climate migrants of the EU and Australia can be explained through their different history of migration and perceptions of climate change in general, as was pointed out in the previous chapter.

Australia traditionally has a more rigid stance towards migration than the EU. As described, the scepticism and difficulty portrayed by Australia in securitizing climate change as a threat would evidently, demonstrate the inability to de-securitize climate induced migration, due to assuming a lack in the connection between climate change and migration. Therefore, recognizing climate change as source of migration, would imply that it has a weaker ground to deny these migrants into the country. Australia securitizes migration in general as a threat to its national security and by way of securitizing migration in general, it tends to categorise those seeking refuge from climate change events, i.e. climate induced migrants as threats too. Thereby, displaying a much harsher stance towards climate induced migrants, in comparison to the EU. The other factor that greatly influences the way Australia perceives climate induced migration is attached to the manner in which they observe climate change to be a threat. In the past, they had more sceptical outlooks towards it, but with the government change under Rudd, it became evident that Australia was beginning to face climate change more and more as a present threat. Climate change consequences are more apparent in the Pacific region and pose a great threat to Australia as they are now aware of the climate change effects taking place and its implications in their own surrounding and should prepare to experience climate induced migration from other countries in the Pacific space.

Based on the findings from the European Union (OECD, 2012; Dupont, 2018), it is clear that policy measures and new mechanisms are required to grapple with the existential threat of climate change. Securitization has the ability to magnify less urgent threats, such as, climate change; demonstrating that if unattended to, it could interfere with the survival of the referent object (Ejdus, 2018). Myers (1993) forecasted, that the displacement of millions harmed by climate change events, assumes a major link between climate change, migration and security. According to Trombetta (2012), it was the post-Cold War environmental degradation and the resulting migration that reoriented the perceptions of migration as a threat to global order and the likely flows of refugees from the “southern barbaric other” that further threatened the Western societies (Barnett, 2001). This depicts that through the EU observing climate change consequences as a threat, it would securitize the migration occurring from it as a threat too. To the EU, the harm from climate change consequences, i.e. migration, appears to present

itself more as a future threat. Multiple European think tanks (Christian Aid, 2007; Foresight, 2011; WBGU (German Advisory Council on Global Change, 2007) engaged in examining the extent to which this issue was to be securitized. The WBGU (2007), took the initiative to warn and encourage Europe against the rising migratory pressures from the most vulnerable regions of the world, which in turn would be a burden to national and supranational security on a different magnitude. The EU acknowledges climate change as a threat, more in a visionary sense and how best to prepare for it, as they are currently not facing threats of climate induced migrants.

Similar to Australia, the EU demonstrates negative feelings towards migration in general too. As was depicted through the historical overview of how migration was perceived, the EU does not greatly differ from Australia in securitizing climate induced migrants as threat, as they follow the existing attitudes expressed towards migration in general. However, the perceptions of threat portrayed by them is milder than that of Australia.

In general, the migration patterns the EU and Australian society has been known to encounter up to date, are mostly economic and political in nature. Some of these migrations have been occurring for generations based on the social networks established by ancestors (Massey et al., 1993), whilst others were a result of sudden threats to populations, such as, wars or political turmoil. As a result of the intolerance and negativity exhibited towards migrants under the above-mentioned circumstances, and the sentiments of insecurity created overtime, the EU and Australia could conveniently extend these perceptions to people migrating from climate change disasters in search of a safe haven (Bardsely & Hugo, 2010), i.e. 'Climate migrants'.

In contrast to the EU holding a more visionary, or futuristic idea of climate change, the consequences of climate change are more visible and perceived more as an *actual* threat in Australia. Therefore, the implications of acknowledging climate migrants are not experienced by the EU as directly as they are in Australia.

The securitization of climate change and migration in general has allowed for the securitization of climate induced migration to occur. Hence, this thesis aims to create awareness and indicate the possibility of observing those fleeing climate change consequences, as vulnerable populations in desperate need of assistance. In accordance with the evidence and case studies presented above, it illustrates the likelihood of observing these at-risk populations in an alternative manner. Thereby, de-securitizing them as a threat to a nation and its security, and identifying frameworks and changing perceptions to incorporate them into society and

provide protection to them from the harmful climate change occurrences. Thus, the de-securitization of CIM, demonstrates and promotes the ability to acknowledge those vulnerable populations of climate change disasters and recognise them as future ‘Climate refugees’.

It is needless to mention, that climate change is a highly contested topic and questions on whether it is forcing people to cross international borders is a recurring query. Is it then time that we took into account these unprecedented flows of people and attempt to understand them as ‘Climate refugees’? In so doing, are they entitled to protection? Or are they to be detained in offshore campsites and detention centres? It is evident that such questions have risen due to the novelty and inevitability of climate change impacts on society, disrupting the livelihoods of millions of people. Hence, providing tangible evidence that climate induced migration (CIM) exists and is in reality a large concern that requires immediate attention from policy makers and authorities around the world. This also creates further affirmation that climate change is a potent factor of international migration flows (White, 2012).

In creating further awareness of the extreme consequences faced by the populations believed to be at risk, informing the EU and Australia of their moral obligations, as partial contributors to climate change (anthropogenic in nature), could signal these States to take more responsibility towards observing the most vulnerable victims of climate change events (Lewis, 2015). This in turn would convey the necessity to perceive such individuals as requiring assistance and respond to the situation appropriately. Hence, de-securitizing them and acknowledging their unfortunate situation.

However, in setting the scene for understanding ‘Climate refugees’, in addition to initially requiring a de-securitization process of climate induced migrants as a threat to occur, problems with the terminology on how to classify people moving in the context of climate change need to be taken in to account. This in turn would simplify the manner in which ‘Climate refugees’ could be recognised. This is fundamentally attributed to the lack of a universally accepted definition of who is a ‘Climate refugee’ and the legal gap in protecting such personnel. Various organisations have suggested some terms, ‘climate refugee’, ‘climate migrant’ and even the term ‘climate change refugee to-be’ (Salsbury & Randall, 2014). The last term assesses the futurology of the situation, adding to the complexity in identifying such individuals. Why is it so problematic and arduous to identify and offer necessary rights and protection to those perceived to be suffering from the consequences of climate change? According to Bettini, Nash & Gioli (2016), a ‘Climate refugee’ is best explained as, a person victimised by climate induced displacement, due to the vulnerable uninhabitable areas they

reside in. Thus, illustrating that a legal definition is vital in recognising and ensuring assistance to such a group. Additionally, Bettini et al., (2017) mentions, that a 'Climate refugee' is analytically flawed, normatively problematic and legally impracticable. Moreover, EU law and policy pointed out that the term, 'Climate refugee' is legally unrecognised, outlining that there is a visible protection gap regarding climate refugees (EPRS, 2018).

From a legal perspective, as mentioned above, the concept of 'Climate refugee' does not exist. The 1951 UN Refugee Convention, refers to refugees as, individuals having a well-founded fear of being prosecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion (UNHCR), thereby excluding internal migration, economic and social persecution and victims of climate related natural disasters (Biermann & Boas, 2012). Hence, exhibiting the complexity in creating new laws and policy frameworks to recognise and manage these groups of people at risk.

Despite the barriers in establishing a definition, some legal propositions to advocate identification have been expressed, the process of de-securitizing those affected by climate change effects could receive recognition. Some endorsed an extension in the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, to incorporate those displaced by climate change (Williams, 2008), whilst others advocated for a tailored ad hoc protocol or convention, to recognise the rights of climate refugees (Biermann & Boas, 2010). Moreover, the European Free Alliance (EFA) Group made attempts through a declaration as early on as 2008, requesting the European and international organisations to "organise legal protection for the victims of climate disruptions and of possible displaced persons (current and future), who do not benefit today from any recognition" (Sgro, 2008). In Australia, a Special Assistance Category (SAC) was introduced in 1991 as part of the humanitarian programme mentioned previously, to accommodate and assist individuals falling outside the typical categories of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention. These individuals were considered 'exceptional cases presenting features of threat to personal security and intense personal hardship' (A History of the Department of Immigration-Managing Migration to Australia, 2015). Such classifications present the opportunity to reduce parochial attitudes towards climate induced migration and recognise them as 'Climate refugees' in future policy measures.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

This Master thesis aimed to analyse the connection between the securitization of climate change and the possibility of the de-securitization of climate induced migration and the acknowledgement of ‘Climate refugees’ in the EU and Australian national policy. In this conclusion, the findings of the analysis will be summarised and a brief insight into the policy recommendations and future research suggestions will be illustrated.

Although there is a growing awareness (United Nations, 2018) of the connection between climate change and migration, the coupling of both is certainly considered controversial. Some experts have for example, severely critiqued this linkage for its incongruity. Salbury & Randall (2014) argued that although evidence depicts that climate factors interact with other factors to create human movement and that it is unlikely that large numbers will move *en masse* internationally, solely because of climate change. Similarly, labelling someone as a ‘climate migrant’, insinuates that climate factors are the underlying cause of population movements internally, as well as, internationally. This paper showed that the existence of a connection could be observed, as addressed in the World Compact on migration in 2018 (United Nations, 2018) and may be assumed as inevitable in the near future, highlighting that irrespective of the adaptation policies to climate change, migration may be the only viable solution available to the affected populations in the event of extreme climate change.

Climate change and migration is indeterminate, implying that its realness is *virtual* and not *actual*. It is not implausible for such a connection to exist, but the difficulty arises in disaffiliating it with other productions of human migration (Baldwin, 2017). As identified in the analysis on Australia, there is much difficulty in observing environmental change as a direct cause of migration, which adds to the scepticism and difficulty in securitizing it. A report by Foresight (2011) demonstrated that, climate change was simply one factor that affects migration in complex socio-economic and political contexts. Thereby, suggesting that climate induced migration is a likely occurrence.

Nevertheless, the concepts securitization and de-securitization, developed by the Copenhagen School, proved vital to illustrate a clearer image on the securitization of climate change and migration, followed by securitizing climate induced migration as a threat, and stating that a de-securitization of climate induced migration should be the alternative route based on the previous observations. The impact of climate change and the relation it has to

migration is expanded using the securitization theory. Moreover, utilising this theory, it depicts the way speech acts and audience acceptance contributes to the perceptions displayed by both, the EU and Australia, on climate induced migration, thereby, making it a self-evident security issue and calling for extraordinary measures to be adopted (Trombetta, 2014). Speech acts were instrumental in revealing climate change as a security threat to Europe and Australia, as it indicates the use of security language. This language contributes to the process of securitizing an issue, as is the case here with relevance to climate change.

The examination of the EU and Australia provided great insight to how climate change is perceived by each country. As discussed, the EU was evidently more conscious and responsive in identifying climate change as a threat, which led to its securitization. On the other hand, the Australian perceptions on climate change were more reserved, as it was perceived more as a long-term security concern. Nevertheless, with speech acts and acceptance by audiences becoming more significant, Australia has been gradually steering towards securitizing climate change. More specifically, it is apparent, that Australia has a rather parochial outlook on climate change and its impacts (incremental or non-linear) to populations around the Pacific region. This outlook initially was observed in the speech acts of the political elite (powerful audience), deciding on the significance of an issue being securitized. Thereby, also depicting the perceptions that were exhibited by the populations of Australia and the likelihood in de-securitizing CIM and recognising climate refugees, displaying the low priority given to the amalgamation of climate change and migration.

The EU agenda has also given the climate change-migration relationship insufficient precedence. Although the EU is believed to have collective power to provide an insight into this matter, it has not done so; neither have the individual member-states of the EU. This resonates that the EU & Australia are unprepared for and uncommitted, in dealing with the consequences of securitizing climate change. In addition, it is pertinent to note, that contrary to the belief that the EU is indeed capable of engaging in the most suitable practices to de-securitize climate induced migration, some authors signify that climate induced migration remains a minor concern, with currently no proposals being administered to this area of policy. Thereby, diminishing the importance of the issue (Geddes & Somerville, 2012).

Based on the evidence presented in this paper and the extensive analysis, it is apparent that those fleeing a country due to climate change, should be acknowledged as at-risk populations and recognised as 'Climate refugees', thereby, obtaining the necessary rights and protection, as they have no alternative option. Moreover, the recognition would illustrate the

obligations placed upon authorities to act on it as well, encouraging policy makers to implement a system that would accommodate these groups of people. Through the de-securitization of climate induced migration, the recognition and implementation of a new category tailored to 'Climate refugees', could and should be established. However, the hesitation in doing so, illuminates from the humanitarian admissions into host countries being exclusively towards refugees and asylum seekers, as categorised under the 1951 UN Refugee Convention. Thereby, attributing to the unlikelihood of those endangered by climate change disruptions to meet the conditions and legal definitions of a refugee as displayed under international law (Martin, 2010). A great deal of the convolutedness in forming a category known as 'Climate refugees' is based on the strong presence of a legal gap. Hence, displaying the pertinence in addressing legal complications surrounding this issue, to adequately recognise 'Climate refugees'.

The EU and Australia both, need to invest more resources to develop policy approaches that address climate induced migration as vulnerable people and understand the gaps present in legal protection; particularly identifying populations at risk and supporting migration as an adaptive response. These associations elucidate the under-explored aspects of security studies that could illuminate and shape a new path in law and policy making with regard to migration and environmental studies. Therefore, demanding climate change policies to observe climate induced migration, as a rational adaptation strategy to the devastating consequences of climate change, rather than perceiving it as a threat.

If this gap is not closed, these legal and policy gaps will result in widening the humanitarian crises (Ammer & Mayrhofer, 2014). Since the end of the Cold War, the plausibility of associating movements of people from climate change consequences with unwanted refugees has been rather high, and policy implications display evidence of appeals made to include climate induced migrants into the existing immigration policies. However, this could be a rather sluggish or a doubtful process, as policy measures are more concerned with reducing the number of migrants, rather than altering perceptions and creating new categories to protect them (Trombetta, 2014). Hence, suggesting that de-securitizing climate induced migration will be a problematic process, thereby inferring that recognising 'Climate refugees' would be difficult too.

However, the policy recommendations suggested, are in line with addressing climate change as a threat and resolving the issue in conjunction with de-securitizing climate induced migration and recognising 'Climate refugees'. In doing so, it is pertinent to create a humane system, suitable to climate change effects, by developing approaches and setting up rules of



how and when to provide refuge and protection during such disasters (Salsbury and Randall, 2014). Moreover, the gaps evident, indicate that much more attention needs to be placed on identifying and testing new frameworks, to manage potential movements, which could evidently be supported by the alternative approach of not observing or categorising people seeking refuge from climate change consequences as a threat. Recognising the appropriate admission policies in destination countries, i.e. the EU and Australia in this case, as well as, placing priority on identifying likely patterns of migration that informs governing bodies of migration in the future is crucial.

Furthermore, the progressive nature of climate change and weak legal measures and institutions will accelerate internal and international migration. This highlights the urgency for establishing new modes of international cooperation, relevant guidelines pertaining to the development of policies, and an effective system in response to climate migration (Martin, 2010). With reference to Australia's international climate change assistance, more research and climate policies need to be actively engaged in. Although the Australian government appears to employ the concept of neighbourliness, to date there has been inadequate attention and no commitment to accept and acknowledge 'Climate refugees' as yet (Lewis, 2015).

To reiterate, the analysis highlighted the public discourses of climate induced migration, where the EU and Australia have varying explicit and implicit attitudes on climate induced migration. This allowed for climate change and migration to influence securitization of climate induced migration as a threat. The complexity in addressing climate change to be a threat to migration, especially in Australia, would then be attributed to the unsolved challenge of de-securitizing climate induced migration and henceforth recognising a 'Climate refugee'. Regardless of this thesis providing a conclusive answer to the research question, it identifies and contributes to a vital segment for future migration studies. Moreover, it is also relevant in observing the development of the perceptions and comprehending how these attitudes on climate change and migration as security concerns and threats are analysed and influence the policy making process on climate induced migration in the EU and Australia.

Migration studies were shaped by the lack of addressing the environment, but following the introduction of the term 'environmental refugee' by El-Hinnawi (1985), whereby it gained some prominence. Therefore, it can be assumed that exploring this topic has accomplished the task of promoting awareness on the situation and urging more pro-active climate policies and new legal regulations to be developed; in order to de-securitize climate induced migration, i.e. realise these individuals not as a threat and recognise them as 'Climate refugees'.

Apart from the findings and conclusions made from this research, some limitations of this thesis and the theoretical framework need to be outlined. Hence, this paragraph outlines some limitations of my thesis and criticisms that could be addressed when conducting future research. The Copenhagen School has been criticised by some, for its narrow framework and preferring de-securitization, although in theory it propagates securitization (Williams, 2008). Thereby, categorising the issues under normal politics, rather than in the security realm. In addition to these criticisms, Salter (2008) adds, that ‘the actual politics of acceptance [by the audience] are left radically under-determined by [the CS]’. Along with Salter (2008), McDonald (2008) agrees that, ‘how we know when [securitization] happens [is] radically under-theorized’, in the context of designating security as a threat. In other words, the criteria introduced by Buzan et al., (1998), is rather vague. Thereby, making CS theory of securitization rather inefficient as a framework and adding difficulty in reifying its intentions.

Moreover, regarding the sources utilised, although they were diverse in nature, it could be problematic to future research when comparing the sources, due to its variance in type and importance attributed by each researcher. The indistinguishability of the sources utilised could be identified as the main limitation in this thesis. Additionally, discourses are often rigid and subjective in nature.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that, this thesis aimed at providing insight in to the perceptions of climate change and migration supported by securitization and de-securitization theory. The outcome of this research allows one to observe the processes by which issues are portrayed in the political arena and are attributed a sense of urgency, requiring instantaneous attention. The creation of awareness among the national and international communities to understand the repercussions of climate change consequences on populations as life threatening, and in urgent need of emergency measures to be adopted, i.e. acknowledging their situation and assisting them as endangered and unprotected, rather than a risk to the unity of a country or collection of countries is heavily emphasised. Thereby, proposing a new and alternative stance to be considered, the de-securitization of climate induced migration, which as a result would gradually transform into recognising ‘Climate refugees’.

