Climate accountability in media framing of climate migrants

MA Thesis

International Relations: Culture & Politics

Zuza Nazaruk, s2895048

z.nazaruk@umail.leidenuniv.nl

Word count: 12406 excl. appendix & bibliography

k, s2895048

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Aangepast 17 June 2021

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Abbreviations list

CDA – critical discourse analysis

GHG – greenhouse gases

LDM – loss and damage mechanisms

PPP – polluter pays principle

Polluting states – UK, EU, US

Introduction

The task force to the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts, established in 2015, was charged with developing "recommendations for integrated approaches to avert, minimise, and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change" (UNFCCC, n.d.). It was the first international effort to tackle climate migration, one of the most controversial effects of anthropogenic climate change. Despite predictions of large numbers of people displaced by climate change, climate migrants are currently not recognised by any international legal regime (Atapattu in Berhman & Kent, 2018, 35). Therefore, no country is obliged to contribute to loss and damage mechanisms (LDM) that support the protection of potential climate migrants (UNCHR, n.d.). These could be, for example, financing climate adaptation or taking in climate migrants. The latter proves especially politically sensitive – without an international legal framework in place, countries elude the responsibility of hosting migrants due to cultural and financial costs (Turk, 2018, 13). Yet, if no international agreement regulates third-party responsibility, climate migration has the potential of turning into an unprecedented humanitarian crisis.

Climate accountability can establish a country's responsibility towards climate migrants and their home countries. Thanks to its rooting in climate justice, climate accountability enforces more resilient and steady support than that offered for humanitarian or economic reasons (Williams, 2020, 8). Therefore, it is a valuable concept to guide the management of the upcoming migrant flows and, subsequently, prevent a humanitarian disaster. Building on liability in legal action and climate justice principles, climate accountability allows environmentally damaged countries to seek compensation from countries that have contributed to the damage (Williams, 2020, 7). The 'damaging' states are primarily the US, the EU, and the UK (henceforth 'polluting states'). The three political entities are the largest historical emitters of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, thus the main culprits for making climate migrants' home countries uninhabitable (Meyers & Roser, 2010, 237). Moreover, their carbon footprint drove their economic development, making polluting states able to spare the most material resources for LDM (Meyers & Roser, 2010, 243).

American and European policymakers elude climate accountability, especially in talks on climate migrants (Daigle, 2015). They do so with various techniques, from diplomatic power to the framing deployed in mainstream media. By offering an often-politicised interpretation

of events under cover of objectivity, media framing can turn neutral events into social problems (Iyengar, 1992, 22). The framing deployed in online newspapers is particularly potent, as online newspapers are primary carriers of democratic debates in democratic societies because they foster interaction between the elites and the citizens (Ruiz et al., 2011, 466). Therefore, through framing in online newspapers, the polluting states' media has the power to elude climate accountability, subsequently influencing parliamentary discussions and public opinion (Herrero-Jimenez et al., 2018, 65).

Academics have widely covered how climate migrants are framed in online newspapers, including stylistic devices used to deploy the framing and the framing's potential consequences (Høeg & Tulloch, 2018; Ransan-Cooper et al., 2015; Faber & Schlegel, 2017; Farbotko, 2010). Yet, climate accountability is missing from their analyses. Similarly, although the framing of responsibility for social problems has been extensively researched (Iyengar, 1990; Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017; Kim, 2015; Olausson, 2009), no study has yet dealt with climate accountability as applied to climate migration. Linking the two issues adds to the academic debate by exploring how accountability for social problems can be applied to environmental cases where no legal framework has yet been established. It also holds moral and humanitarian value by analysing how the media framing can influence the protective abilities of international legal regimes. This study aims to answer the following research question:

To what extent is climate accountability present in the media framing of climate migration in key American, pan-European, and British online newspapers since 2015?

This study draws on a body of literature bridging illegal migration, media framing, and climate adaptation debates. It employs critical discourse analysis as the primary research method. By critically analysing the media framing of climate migration in key newspapers from three main historically polluting countries, the study has found that climate accountability is a novel but rare frame of climate migrants. For the concept to be present in the framing, an article had to both attribute pollution to an actor and call on that actor to clean the pollution up. Articles that included climate accountability called on polluting states to contribute to LDM proportionally to their contributions to historical emissions. Yet, most analysed articles framed climate change as an abstract or natural event, hindering the possibility of attributing responsibility to a polluting actor. Eluding climate accountability perpetuated the unequal power structure

between polluting states and their climatically vulnerable counterparts by allowing the polluting states to continuously externalize their environmental damage onto third parties.

The study is organised as follows. Chapter 1 outlines, in line with green IR theory, how the unequal power structure between polluting states and their climatically vulnerable counterparts contributes to the lack of attributing climate accountability in the framing of climate migrants. The two analytical chapters are organised in gradation per the potential to establish climate accountability. Chapter 2 analyses instances where climate accountability is impossible to attribute because the polluting actor is omitted. It finds that when climate change is framed as an abstract, natural event, the responsibility for LDM is shifted to national governments and adaptive individuals. Chapter 3 deals with cases where attributing climate accountability is potentially within reach because the polluting actor is indicated. The chapter concludes that climate accountability is a novel frame that is currently only deployed by advocacy sources.

Chapter 1: climate accountability in an unequal power structure

This chapter argues that the unequal power structure between the polluting states and the environmentally vulnerable countries leads to the lack of attributing climate accountability in the framing of climate migration. This argument builds on climate justice principles in that polluting states should accept their climate accountability. It also outlines the necessary elements for fully establishing climate accountability: attributing pollution to an actor and building on this attribution to call on the actor to clean the pollution. Finally, the chapter shows how climate accountability can be obscured or highlighted by media framing by emphasising different elements of climate migration. The notions discussed in this chapter will guide the forthcoming analytical chapters.

Green IR theory

This research draws its devotion to corrective climate justice from green international relations (IR) theory in assuming the need for justice for vulnerable populations. The theory also guides the research's underlying conviction that polluting states should be held accountable for their climatic wrongdoings. Green scholarship tries to mitigate the "ecological blindness of IR theory" by reinterpreting key elements in IR and political science towards climate justice (Eckersley in Dunne et al., 2010, 266). Drawing on critical theory, green IR rejects singular approaches to ecological problems which do not address the dominant socio-economic structures (Eckersley in Dunne et al., 2010, 272).

One of the primary aims of green IR is to prevent cross-border ecological risks from their "externalisation and displacement, through space and time, onto innocent third parties" (Eckersley in Dunne et al., 2010, 271). In its greatest display of devotion to climate justice, green theory seeks compensation for vulnerable populations that suffer consequences of environmental injustices committed by the world's privileged, including leaving "oversized economic footprints" behind (Eckersley in Dunne et al., 2010, 271). It is in these pursuits of prevention and compensation, particularly the latter, that climate accountability plays out. Putting the needs of the 'innocent third parties' at the forefront stimulates a critical reflection on the responsibility of polluting states.

Responsibility of the polluters

With its key constitutive principle 'polluter pays', climate accountability allows for establishing polluting states' responsibility to contribute to loss and damage mechanisms (LDM) for vulnerable countries. Dictated by green IR's commitment to corrective climate justice, climate accountability describes actors owing restitution to climate-affected parties because of their contribution to past environmental failures (Williams, 2020, 7).

Several connections need to be drawn to establish climate accountability. The first step is an actor's recognition as a polluter. This means that an actor is recognised to have harmed with full knowledge of his action's consequences and the ability to avoid doing harm (Williams, 2020, 7). Secondly, the recognition of the actor's polluting acts needs to serve as a basis for claiming the actor's responsibility to clean up the damage they caused (Williams, 2020, 7). This definition outlines that the call for clean-up actions builds on the attribution of responsibility; the attribution, therefore, is a vital element without which climate accountability cannot be assumed. Climate accountability is encapsulated in the polluter pays principle (PPP), one of the most prominent concepts in environmental justice (Meyers & Roser, 2010, 237).

Per PPP, polluting countries are responsible for environmental collapses because they are the historical drivers of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (Meyers & Roser, 2010, 239). GHG emitted by developed countries or corporations registered on their territory have raised global temperatures, prompting rising sea levels and natural disasters of increased frequency and magnitude. Polluting states – the US, the UK, and the EU - are the most responsible because their emissions were globally the highest, and so their contribution to LDM for climatically devastated countries should be proportional to their contribution to polluting.

Rooting contributions to LDM in climate accountability increases the chances that countries will support vulnerable nations in a way adequate to the scale and timeline of the problem. This adequacy is particularly important for accepting climate migrants, the most contested issue among potential host countries (Turk, 2018, 13). LDM can be applied without climate accountability - for example, polluting states can invest in countries' resilient infrastructure due to economic or humanitarian motives. While this action benefits the recipients, the donors' motives do not address their historical responsibility for climatic devastation, and so they may prove frail (Williams, 2020, 8). The dynamic commitment problem, when a country withdraws

its humanitarian or economic support when its interests shift or its policies become unpopular among voters, showcases the most illustrative danger of not rooting LDM in climate accountability (Slantchev, 2005, 7). Contrarily, as a basis for binding international obligations, climate accountability can offer stable support. Because of its origin in corrective justice, climate accountability also allows to counterbalance power in an unequal power structure, such as that among polluting and climatically vulnerable states.

Polluter hegemony in the media

Due to an unequal power structure, polluting states enjoy a hegemonic position against climatically vulnerable countries. This hegemonic position allows polluting states to avoid climate accountability in the media discourse, despite their culpability per the PPP.

Polluting states' hegemonic position takes root in their ability to emit disproportionate GHG footprints and drive their economic development at the expense of destroying natural environments in distant countries. This externalisation of environmental costs perpetuates the hegemonic status quo: environmental destruction in third-party states gives polluting countries a relative advantage, deepening the economic disparities (Faber & Schlegel, 2017, 4).

The unequal power structure within the media landscape is rooted in those economic disparities: polluting states have more financial resources, infrastructure, and know-how to push their vision onto the global media agenda (Bryant & Oliver, 2009, 43). Subsequently, polluting states control the media discourse on climate migration. The topic is not a priority on the news agenda, rarely appearing in large global media outlets as individual stories (Høeg & Tulloch, 2018, 7). Apart from scarcity, major structural issues with the coverage persist. Journalists reporting on climate migration conducted scarce field research, mostly structuring their content around NGO reports, court rulings, or transnational meetings (Høeg & Tulloch, 2018, 10). Climate migrant voices were lacking, turning the debate away from global climate accountability into an elitist discussion about an issue deemed arbitrary (Høeg & Tulloch, 2018, 12).

Less coverage on climate migration lowers the chance for discussing climate accountability within migration's context. As media frames can offer various interpretations of reality, among

which climate accountability is only one, a low number of media stories on climate migration is likely to translate into an even lower frequency of discussing climate accountability. The silence on the topic perpetuates the unequal power structure. Without this debate, polluting states will continue to distance their attention, material resources, and territory away from the lethality of slow-onset environmental crises that they have primarily contributed to causing. Framing media stories in line with climate accountability can play a role in ensuring that such an unequal power structure does not continue.

Climate accountability and media framing

Because of its role in attributing meaning to events, media framing can wake the polluting countries' citizens up to their climate accountability; simultaneously, however, it can help perpetuate the hegemonic discourse on the topic (Nilsson & Enander, 2019, 74). The two roles suggest that media framing is an important conveyor of societal values. Green IR theory points at the role of the media as a "norm entrepreneur," able to persuade various societal actors (Eckersley in Dunne et al., 2010, 276). This persuasion occurs through framing, which offers a specific way of focusing the readers' attention on climate accountability.

Framing is the act of "select[ing] some aspects of a perceived reality and mak[ing] them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" (Entman, 1993, 52). It happens through emphasising parts of a story while de-emphasising or excluding others (El-Masry, 2013, 757). A "cognitive shortcut", framing can both help the audience to process complex information quickly and oversimplify the information, distracting the public (Lilleker, 2006, 82). Climate accountability in the media framing of climate migration would be visible, for example, in emphasising the role of polluting states' GHG emissions while de-emphasising the everyday life of displaced populations.

The media framing of climate migration holds the normative power to influence citizen responses and, subsequently, policymaking; its discussion of climate accountability in this context is, therefore, vital. Most adults learn about crucial issues, such as climate change or migration, from the media (Armstrong et al., 2018, 15). Public opinion is formed not based on the actual event but the pseudo-event, so the media framing (Bryant & Oliver, 2009,

2*)*. Framing, therefore, transforms neutral events into social problems (Faber & Schlegel, 2017, 8). It can prime the audience to establish responsibility for creating and solving social problems (Iyengar 1990, 20). This function of framing proves particularly salient when the covered issue is controversial, its policy unclear, or there is no political consensus on how to deal with it (Nilsson & Enander, 2019, 75). In such cases, framing offers normative prescriptions on approaching the given issue (Nilsson & Enander, 2019, 75). Climate migration, often quoted as the greatest policy challenge of the ongoing climate crisis, to which there is currently no international consensus on solutions, is a prime example of such a controversial issue. The controversy and lack of clarity make climate migration a topic where media framing can play a significant role in establishing social norms.

Simultaneously, through framing, the media plays a role in perpetuating hegemonic discourses on key social issues (Olausson, 2009, 7). Frame-building emphasises the exertion of political power in framing, where a frame implicitly showcases actors' interests that contributed to the text (Entman, 1993, 55). An illustrative example of frame-building is the attribution of responsibility for a social problem based on the newspaper's political orientation. Liberal newspapers tend to present social problems as a societal responsibility, while conservative ones highlight individual responsibility (Kim, 2015, 2). Political power in media framing can also be exerted more subtly through the frame's structure. Episodic framing presents a topic in a specific circumstance, such as an event or a personal story. Thematic framing, contrarily, places the topic in a broader societal context. The media's frequent use of episodic framing shifts the audience's focus away from the larger social context and focuses on individual accountability, promoting a specific outlook on a given problem (Iyengar, 1990, 23). This lack of discussion of larger context translates into the framing of climate migration omitting climate accountability.

Framing of climate migration

None of the identified frames on climate migrants deals extensively with climate accountability, implying the concept's scarcity in the news agenda. For a frame to be considered relevant, it needs to have identifiable characteristics, be commonly observed in the news, be reliably distinguishable from other frames, and be recognised by a large audience (de Vreese et al., 2011, 54). Scholars identified four frames of climate migrants so far, namely: victim and

security threat, originating in the framing of illegal migrants; scientific abstract, drawing from the framing of climate change events; and adaptive individual, a frame unique to the phenomenon of climate migration (Jacobsen, 2015; Horsti, 2007; Thorbjørnsrud, 2015; Høeg & Tulloch, 2018; Ransan-Cooper et al., 2015; Faber & Schlegel, 2017).

Climate migrants as illegal migrants

Framing climate migrants as illegal migrants omits the environmental element of their displacement, placing them in pre-defined media frames that often over-dramatise migration (Jacobsen, 2015, 888). The representation of illegal migrants mostly occurs in large numbers as 'objects of criminalisation, control, or charity' (Horsti, 2007, 149). Horsti's distinction highlights two key illegal migration frames: security threat and victim. As unauthorised migrants, climate migrants fall under both frames.

The security threat frame is 'problem-oriented' (Thorbjørnsrud, 2015, 776). It shows illegal migrants as threatening to the established social order and a blow to the welfare system (Bettini 2013, 63). It also highlights the immigrants' criminal potential, either real or imagined (Bettini 2013, 63). This frame is likely to use images of 'suspicious-looking, dark-skinned young men from the Global South' and nameless and faceless masses (Thorbjørnsrud & Figenschou, 2014, 5). Due to the decontextualised and stereotypical depictions of illegal migrants, the security threat frame can have a fear-mongering effect (Bettini 2013, 65). Such stereotypical depictions are particularly relevant to climate migrants, who come overwhelmingly from developing countries.

By "keeping <others> outside of <our> sphere of responsibility", the frame recreates hegemonic, ethnocentric perspectives on developed countries' security (Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017, 1166). The frame focuses on the national security of a host state, which causes the framing of migrants as a threat. Climate accountability, or environmental concerns generally, are absent from this framing, which instead focuses on the legal landscape regarding migration and border controls.

The victim frame is dichotomous to the security threat frame, especially regarding gender stereotypes (Thorbjørnsrud & Figenschou, 2014, 16). Women are usually portrayed through

this frame, while men are presented as threats (Thorbjørnsrud & Figenschou, 2014, 15). The victim frame showcases people who can be regarded as 'innocent', with a high emotional appeal (Moeller, 2006, 40). This 'classic victim template' includes children, women, or teenagers, often infantilised as clueless and helpless (Moeller, 2006, 39). Special attention is also given to the victims considered 'deserving', perceived as well-integrated, thus having earned their citizenship (Thorbjørnsrud & Figenschou, 2014, 13). This frame is most likely to use personal narratives and show migrants' faces, according to the centrality of the faces in the human rights discourse (Scherr, 2015, 5).

This frame stems from and appeals to humanitarian concerns over individual safety. It, too, omits climate accountability, focusing on individual vulnerability instead. While the frame calls on the host state's support to climate migrants, it does so on humanitarian grounds rather than historical climatic injustice. As described by the dynamic commitment problem, humanitarian motivation is not enough to ensure long-lasting support to climate migrants.

Climate migrants as a climate change event

The media framing of climate change depends on events (Olausson, 2009, 6). The events include environmental disasters, the coverage of which is usually linked with climate adaptation, or environmental summits, which typically trigger debates on climate mitigation (Olausson, 2009, 6). Slow-onset disasters rarely make it to the news (Olausson, 2009, 7). Doyle (2013, 3) observes that climate change is framed as an environmental problem, which creates an abundance of statistical and scientific details regarding the issue. At the same time, such framing indicates "no specific cause, effect, or responsible agent" or possible solutions (Kensicki, 2004, 65).

"Scientific abstract frame" describes the framing of climate migrants as climate change events (Høeg & Tulloch, 2018, 18). The frame's function is twofold: it either presents climate migrants as a natural rather than an anthropogenic phenomenon, or it uses climate migrants to prove the existence of climate change (Høeg & Tulloch, 2018, 19; Farbotko, 2010, 47). Both approaches reduce climate migrants to an abstract event, obstructing the link between human activity and the fleeing migrants.

This frame not only omits climate accountability but can block potential conversation on the topic. It denies the link between human action and environmental damage and omits the social dynamics behind disaster mitigation and response. Both are acts "of avoiding responsibility" (Smith, 2006, 3).

Climate migrants as adaptive individuals

"Adaptive individual" is a frame unique to climate migrants. It highlights individual agency to exercise labour mobility against environmental damage (Ransan-Cooper et al., 2015, 110). It also stresses the positive elements of environmental migration, such as remittances (Ransan-Cooper et al., 2015, 110). Some small islands developing states (SIDS), for example, Kiribati, endorsed the frame as 'migration with dignity'. Yet, the frame was criticised for its over-emphasis on positive solutions (Ransan-Cooper et al., 2015, 112). Over-reliance on individual adaptiveness may lead to too little improvements by global and local decision-makers (Ransan-Cooper et al., 2015, 110). Besides, Faber & Schlegel (2017, 6) highlight the neoliberal paradigm underlying the frame. Presenting climate migrants as labourers on the global market, which does not favour vulnerable populations, shifts the responsibility on individuals rather than state actors.

This frame burdens individuals with adaptation instead of acknowledging the responsibility of the world's polluters. As such, it, too, does not support the potential conversation on climate accountability. The frame further disrupts the issue by arguing that no climate accountability is necessary as individuals take care of themselves.

Methodology

Critical discourse analysis

This research's principal research method is critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA considers power structures to define social life (Wodak in Seale et al., 2006, 185). The method focuses on "the role of discourse in the reproduction and challenge of dominance" (Van Dijk, 1993, 249). The disparities among polluting and climatically vulnerable states make the power structure between them unequal. Therefore, analysing media framing of climate migration

through the lens of CDA requires asking questions about the power relations between polluting states and climate migrants' home countries. Due to their greater economic abilities, higher climatic safety, and possession of means of media production, polluting states dominate their climatically vulnerable counterparts. Their dominance is so great that their position can be deemed hegemonic – their actions continue to negatively affect climatically vulnerable states (Van Dijk, 1993, 254). This negative impact does not lead to calls for equality but rather deepens the economic disparities between countries (Faber & Schlegel, 2017, 3). Ethnocentrism - a belief that one group's beliefs or operating modes are superior to these of an out-group – often accompanies and helps perpetuate hegemonic positions (Faber & Schlegel, 2017, 4).

As a critical methodology, CDA assumes a set of ethics against which it evaluates power structures. This study derives its normative assumptions from green IR. Green IR advocates for protecting vulnerable populations from climatic risk imposed on them by more powerful, polluting actors. Simultaneously, the theory aims at equalising the power structures by offering compensation to vulnerable populations that have suffered climatic injustices (Eckersley in Dunne et al., 2010, 271).

Discourse plays a vital role in "prolonging the unequal power structures" (Wodak in Seale et al., 2006, 187). Media frames are part of the discourse; any discourse can include competing frames (Bryant & Oliver, 2009, 60). Framing presents events in different ways, supporting discourse's function as a transporter of knowledge (Bryant & Oliver, 2009, 61). Thus, through framing, discourse can shape collective and individual attitudes. Such attitudes, in turn, form the basis of collective and individual action and, subsequently, shared social reality (KhosraviNik, 2010, 4).

As the media holds a privileged position as a shaper of social knowledge rather than an objective observer, the news becomes "socially and culturally determined" (Bednarek & Caple, 2014, 3). Whoever has access to the media discourse can provide their version of the facts (Seale et al., 2006, 186). In the case of climate migration, where a disagreement over basic facts persists, acknowledging the phenomenon's very existence is a take on the topic. Dominance is present in media framing when elites can exercise their social power to limit "discourse rights" (Van Dijk, 1993, 252). Such limitation can happen when the less privileged are denied the ability to take part in societal debates (Van Dijk, 1993, 252). In the

framing of climate migration, discourse rights of climate migrants are limited when polluting states' media frames do not include their voices.

Sampling

The research sample was collected from crucial newspapers in the three world's most polluting political entities: the US, the UK, and the EU. Pan-European newspapers were chosen instead of key newspapers in selected EU countries for two reasons. Firstly, as EU will need to respond to climate migration as a bloc, the framing in pan-EU outlets reveals more about the EU policy line than singular national outlets (Brüggemann & Schulz-Forberg, 2009, 697). Secondly, nation-based newspapers will also discuss the reflection on their country's relationship with the EU, which is beyond the scope of this research and could, therefore, act as a confounding factor.

Per van der Wurff et al. (2008), only newspapers that emphasised journalistic standards were included. Relevant news outlets were identified through a literature review of media studies journals (Brüggemann & Schulz-Forberg, 2009; Chyi & Sylvie, 2000; Domingo, 2008; Ojala & Pantti, 2017; van der Wurff, 2008) and then corroborated by the media market database comScore. This purposive sampling allowed for finding newspapers that were considered key both by academia and the general public. These were: USAToday, Washington Post, New York Times, Wall Street Journal in the US; the Guardian, the Times, and the Telegraph in the UK; EUobserver, European Voice, and Politico.eu for the EU.

The timeframe for the sample was January 2015 to May 2021. The starting date corresponds to the year when climate migration entered global policymaking with the establishment of the task force to the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts (UNFCCC, n.d.). The end date was chosen to corroborate with the release date of a report connecting migration with climate change, seen as a driver of climate migration debate in mainstream policy (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2021). As such, the sample was positioned between two focal policy events, potentially corresponding to a spike of media interest.

A qualified article had to be written within the timeframe and cover climate migration as a key story. Articles were identified via keyword search: "climate migra*", "climate refug*", "climate change refug*", "environmental migra*", and "environmentally displaced". Articles that described climate migration without using keywords – for example, stories on displacement following an environmental disaster – were also included.

Eighty articles from 8 outlets were qualified. USA Today and Politico.eu were excluded as they did not contain any articles on climate migration. However, their lack of coverage offered insight into the scarcity of the topic of climate migration in the news agenda, so they were counted into the sampling.

Data analysis

The initial stage of this research was quantitative. Articles were categorised and counted according to their publication year to gain insights into the topic's scarcity by establishing its frequency of appearing on the news agenda. The articles were then coded qualitatively, using the qualitative data analysis software Atlas.ti.

This study explored the extent to which climate accountability was present in media framing of climate migrants. Climate accountability was operationalised as a responsibility to correct the damage that a given party inflicted on the environment. Per Williams' (2020, 7) definition, climate accountability can only be assumed when both the attribution of responsibility for polluting and the call for clean-up actions proportional to the polluting are present. Climate migrant was operationalised as anybody referred to as one per term's variations outlined in the keyword search.

Thanks to the abundant literature on the topic, the media frames were found deductively. The analysed frames were security threat, victim, adaptive individual, and scientific abstract. The frames allowed for analysing the power structure, discourse rights, and event interpretation in the larger discourse. Therefore, they constituted a departure point for analysing the notion of climate accountability in the following elements of CDA: Argumentation, Rhetorical figures, Storytelling, and Quotes (Van Dijk, 1993, 264).

CDA elements correspond to various aspects of frame-building, and so they help to understand various components that constitute a frame. In line with Entman's (1993, 52) definition of framing, Argumentation evaluates the problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation to reach a specific explanation of the presented facts. Through Argumentation, framing offers normative prescriptions on given issues and so transforms neutral events into social problems. Rhetorical figures are understatements, denials, or hyperboles that direct the text towards a particular interpretation. Frames often use specific rhetorical figures consistently, which allows for recognising a given frame quicker. For example, the victim frame is likely to overstate the migrants' innocence and vulnerability. Storytelling describes the narrative structure of a given article. For example, some articles may describe negative experiences from a personal angle. In the Storytelling, the emphasis on certain outlooks while de-emphasising others, a key characteristic of framing, is decided. Quotes are closely linked to discourse rights. Who is quoted, and how often, constructs a piece's credibility but also shows whose voice counts in the frame.

Chapter 2: Eluding climate accountability

This chapter describes cases where climate accountability, or the potential to establish it, were missing. It has found that climate accountability is primarily eluded by the authors' failure to attribute pollution to an actor**.** The elusion happens by framing climate change as a natural, abstract event in line with the scientific abstract frame. In the absence of climate accountability, loss and damage mechanisms (LDM) are framed as the responsibility of home country governments and adaptive individuals. In both cases, the framing reveals a hegemonic attitude that the polluting states' media displays towards climate migrants and their home governments**.**

Hegemony in the structure

The unequal power structure between polluting states' media and climate migrants was visible already on a structural level. The hegemonic position of polluting states dictated the sample's structural characteristics, namely material scarcity and the lack of yearly progression.

The relative material scarcity showcased the low importance of climate migration on the polluting states' media agenda. Not giving the topic the prominence it deserves, as the most profound consequence of climate change, perpetuated the unequal power structure by limiting the options to reach a consensus that would benefit all, not just the hegemons. Such a consensus can be reached when various parties discuss various aspects of climate justice. Climate accountability is one of many potential ways of framing climate migration. Therefore, naturally, climate migration needs to be a covered topic for the concept to be present in media coverage of climate migration. The keyword search in 10 prominent media outlets over six years yielded only 80 individual stories. The fewer media stories on climate migration exist, the less it is possible that they will be discussing climate accountability. Besides, little coverage means that the topic will not become widely known by mainstream audiences. Instead, the news on climate migration will reach small audiences, potentially those who are already interested in the topic.

Material scarcity was closely linked to the lack of yearly progression in the number of stories on climate migration. Without progression, the pool of knowledge on the issue, available through the discourse, remained limited, which meant that the existing hegemonic discourse

continued to prevail. The less the topic is covered, the fewer new frames presenting fresh outlooks on the societal problems appear – and so the smaller the chance that critical voices join the discussion. The same number of articles on climate migration appeared in 2015 and 2020. These numbers suggest that the topic has not been gaining prominence in media discourse, despite its increasing relevance to global policymaking, visible in the increasing and increasingly mediatised frequency of environmental disasters and extreme weather events. Therefore, although news about climate change continue to reach wider audiences, the phenomenon's most grave consequence, climate migration, is left out of the discourse. The rare instances where the topic is discussed used a framing that denied a link between human activity and climate change, effectively blocking the ability to hold any polluting actor accountable.

Blame it on climate change

A majority of the articles did not discuss the origin of climate change, employing the scientific abstract frame. By obscuring the link between human activity and climate change, such framing blocked any opportunity for establishing climate accountability. Climate accountability builds on the attribution of responsibility to a polluting actor. If a polluting actor is not recognised within the frame, no calls for clean-up actions based on the actor's pollution can occur. Subsequently, the debate emphasised other aspects of climate migration without framing the search for solutions within climate justice principles. By being complicit with a hegemonic structure, in which polluting states can drive other countries uninhabitable and face no responsibility for their destructive actions, such framing helped to perpetuate the unequal power balance.

The link between human activity and climate change was primarily obscured by employing the scientific abstract frame and its variations. 53 out of 80 articles used the frame as their main narrative lens. These articles presented climate migrants as a natural occurrence, happening without any outside interference: "people displaced by rising seas" (D48). According to this narrative, climate migration happened as a result of global warming or natural disasters brought by climate change: "From 2008 to 2014, an average of 26.4 million people were displaced each year by floods, storms, earthquakes and other natural disasters" (D10). This narrative suggested that nobody can be held responsible for causing or aggravating climate change since it frames the phenomenon as a force acting on its own. In such a responsibility vacuum, and without

considering the unequal contributions to climate change, climate accountability lost its validity as a guiding concept for LDM.

Employing the scientific abstract frame was often an instrumental representation aimed at making the story more relatable to the readers by dramatising climate change. Such dramatisation took two forms: tokenising climate migration as the evidence of the existence of climate change, and personifying climate change. Yet, as both forms of framing were variations on the scientific abstract frame, they distorted reality. Instead of presenting climate migrants as victims of disproportionate GHG footprints of polluting states, these forms of framing showcased them as exotic tokens for progressing, yet seemingly non-anthropogenic, climate change; or fighters in a lost struggle against a vicious natural force.

In line with Farbotko (2010, 47), tokenising climate migration aimed at convincing the readers that climate change is real by showing them the populations affected by it. For example, climate migrants were described as "at the frontline of global warming" (D63) or "canaries of climate-induced migration" (D46). This frame catered to polluting states' audiences by presenting the vulnerable populations as inhabiting exotic, holiday-like destinations. D17 offered the most illustrative example of this 'holiday spirit' within the framing: "You doubt climate change? Come to this island – but hurry before it disappears".

Personifying climate change was deployed to catch the readers' attention and increase the emotional value of a news piece. Framing climate change as a sentient force provided an outlet for emotional release, since the hard-to-understand phenomenon became a singular actor to whom to attribute blame. Although inaccurate - as a cluster of natural events enhanced by human activity, climate change in itself does not possess agency to inflict damage – the narrative is effective in blocking any attribution of climate accountability. If climate change acts on its own, the narrative suggested, there are no external actors that should be held responsible. Yet again, the complicity in accepting the hegemonic status quo supported its perpetuation.

Personifying climate change was a variation on the scientific abstract frame. Rather than presenting both climate change and climate migrants as an abstract and distant event, the articles presented climate change and its related events as sentient beings with agency. Such framing retains the impersonal character of the scientific abstract frame while increasing the

readers' connection with the piece by humanising the main topic. A majority of these 'humanising' cases included metaphors connected to eating, such as "rising seas swallowing coastal zones" (D38), "The rest have been choked by seawater" (D20), or "the seawater (…) gnawed at the legs of furniture" (D20). Some metaphors were linked to households, for example, "the sea knocked" (D80) or "the sea is at their doorstep" (D80). Other expressions presented climate change and its related events with a sinister tone, as if climate change was an evil force: "As sea levels rise, Fairbourne, sandwiched between mountains and the beach, is being returned to the waves" (D47) or a serial killer: "Like the subjects of my reporting, climate change had found me" (D3). Less dramatised expressions included climate change "driving" migration (D14) or "creating" desperate people (D15). In each example, climate change is presented as acting on its own, with no outside interference. Such representation considered attribution of responsibility for environmental destruction as neither needed nor appropriate.

Shifting responsibility

With climate change presented as an abstract event, the responsibility for dealing with its consequences was attributed to individual migrants and their local policymakers and national governments. Shifting responsibility for loss and damage mechanisms (LDM) on individuals and their home governments perpetuated the unequal power structure by allowing polluting states to continue their polluting actions with no consequences. Besides, the framing of both individuals and their home governments revealed the hegemonic attitudes of the polluting states' media**.** The accounts of individuals and local governments who assumed responsibility for ensuring their or their citizens' safety differed starkly among developed and developing countries, showing the polluting states' media's ethnocentric sense of superiority towards the latter.

Adaptive individuals

Apart from framing climate change as a natural event, polluting states' media blocked the potential to establish climate accountability by equating the hardship of climate migrants from developed and developing countries. This equating led to the framing of both groups of states' citizens as adaptive individuals. Although the framing served to victimise polluting states, it also revealed the ethnocentric bias of polluting states' media.

Both wealthy and vulnerable migrants were framed as similarly desperate, although large differences in safety nets were articulated. These differences were especially true for the US, the world's wealthiest state and the number-one historical GHG emitter. The country's climate migrants received excessive media coverage, taking up one-third (N=14) of stories that covered a particular world region or country (N=41). This framing victimised polluting states and suggested that a country that struggles with adverse effects of climate change should not be requested to pay the price for its historical emissions. Subsequently, the framing enforced the idea that each state should deal with its own climate breakdown, even if this breakdown was caused by third-party polluters.

An important element of victimising polluting states was framing their climate migrants as refugees. Such framing diluted the gravity of climate migration from the world's most vulnerable – economically and climatically – regions. It shifted the focus away from those in need to those who were already better off. It also solidified the non-discussion of climate accountability by alluding that polluting states' citizens are the ones in need. Using the term "refugee" to refer to internally displaced populations was a mistake, as the term only covers cross-border migrants fleeing life-threatening situations. Yet, the term evoked an emotional response by its connotations with suffering and hardship; it suggested that wealthy migrants' plight is as desperate and difficult as that of people fleeing persecution or wars. Paradoxically, the framing of wealthy citizens as refugees also showed an ethnocentric bias. Allusions such as "it is hard to imagine that climate refugees could come from developed countries" (D3) highlighted a sense of superiority over the developing world and maintained the division of "us vs them" propagated by the security threat frame.

The ethnocentric bias was also visible in framing the plight of migrants from developed countries as superior to that of migrants from developing ones. This dichotomy between equating the hardships and highlighting greater moving comfort acted as a reminder of developed states' superiority and pointed at the instrumental use of framing the hardship. The developed states' migrants' exodus would result in a "real estate boom" (D3) for their host regions. In contrast, climate migrants from developing countries, in stereotypical depictions within the security threat frame, would allegedly bring a humanitarian crisis and security risks, discussed in Chapter 3. Migrants from developed countries were framed as, contrarily to the initial equating of hardships, more comfortable to those from developing ones: "They will not

be the bedraggled families carrying their few possessions on their backs as we have seen in countless photos of people fleeing wars and ethnic cleansing, most recently in Myanmar and Syria (…). Instead, they will be well-off Americans driving to a new life in their cars, with moving trucks behind, carrying a lifetime of memories and possessions" (D60). Climate migrants from developed countries were adaptive individuals because they had the agency to vote on relocation schemes funded by their government (D7, D62, D86), could sell their property (D19, D25), and decide where and when to relocate (D25). The concerns that such climate migrants had were related to the market forces, not their very survival.

Depicting climate migrants from developing countries through the adaptive individual frame highlighted their dignity. Yet, despite the positive intention, the frame enhanced the dilution of polluting states' responsibility. Combined with the scientific abstract frame, the adaptive individual one painted climate migration as a natural occurrence with matching non-desperate labour choices. The frame's highlighting of labour mobility put the employment needs of potential – developed - host countries at the forefront, holding climate migrants and their home governments responsible for adjusting to the changing climate in a globalised, competitive economy. Subsequently, such framing cemented the denial that polluting states have any commitments towards climatically vulnerable ones.

Framing climate migrants from developing countries as adaptive individuals aimed at highlighting their humanity and skills (D41, D44): "the rest of the world seems to take notice of the I-Kiribati only to tell them they're doomed" (D34). The employability of climate migrants was promoted both by their national governments (D18) and supranational bodies such as the World Bank (D59). Climate migrants' home countries encouraged "residents to consider moving abroad with employable skills" (D18). The World Bank encouraged host states to take in climate migrants as labourers to "boost struggling island economies and prevent a later mass forced migration" (D59). In an alteration of the original adaptive individual frame, some articles pointed at the host country's needs to justify the calls for increased migration. D5 outlined demographic pressures on the developed countries' ageing population as the main argument for accepting 'climate labourers': "America's demographic decline suggests that more immigrants would play a productive role here". In line with filling in employment needs, D35 suggested that "large multinational corporations may hold far more lobbying powers to change visa regulations than poor nations affected by climate change". This approach, too, was

ethnocentric: it focused on the employment needs of developed host countries in a globalised economy rather than on the safety needs of fleeing migrants from developing countries.

National governments

Local and national governments were framed as key actors to assume responsibility for dealing with the negative impacts of climate change. With climate change framed as an abstract event, this responsibility was comparable to that a government would take in the aftermath of non-human-made disasters: "what is most critical – be it Hurricane Katrina (2015) (sic), the earthquake in Sichuan (2008), or drought in Syria (2008 - 2011) - is how politicians prepare and respond to natural disasters" (D82). This 'localised' discourse was backed up by statistics showing that climate migrants are most likely to relocate within their country (D5, D9, D10, D23, D41, D44). Shifting responsibility for LDM on home governments allowed polluting states to continue their polluting actions with no consequences, perpetuating the unequal power structure. Besides, as with the adaptive individual frame, the framing of developing governments' efforts towards LDM revealed hegemonic attitudes marked by a sense of superiority.

Developing countries' governments' role in climate adaptation and relocation efforts was framed as much less potent than that of developed countries' governments. The framing highlighted the developing governments' financial insecurity and political weakness. The former was subtly outlined while attributing funding: "Plans for adapting to climate change [in Tuvalu] include the ongoing – and much delayed – construction of a sea wall to protect the administrative centre of the capital, funded by the UNDP" (D63). The political weakness was made clear by describing how the looming environmental crisis exacerbated the existing tensions, such as gang violence in Central America (D58, D67), or increased poverty that was already present in the area (D23, D32). The capability of developing countries' governments was only highlighted when used as an excuse not to accept climate migrants, as in the case of Ioane Teitiota: "But the UN ruled that the timeframe left time for interventions that may save the islands or for the government to relocate the islanders" (D75).

As they could not enjoy the governmental support like climate migrants from developed countries, climate migrants from developing states were framed as without a choice, pushed to

migrate in fear for their survival as opposed to the developed countries' migration for increased living comfort. Yet, their framing as victims differed from the victim frame applied to unauthorised migrants. The environmental element defined the framing of climate migrants as resilient populations faced with "natural" hardship as opposed to helpless unauthorised migrants in the victim frame. Although such framing bore some characteristics of the victim frame, such as the focus on personal stories and individual vulnerability, the defining elements of the frame, such as infantilisation of victims and gender focus, were not present.

Governments in developed countries were framed as responsive and helpful towards their climatically vulnerable populations. One of the main groups of climate migrants in developed countries were homeowners who bought their houses in a disaster-prone area without their knowledge. These citizens expected the support of their home government and often received it: "There was a [government-run] buyout program for flood-prone houses and I'd applied after the 2015 flood" (D52). The developed states' governments were able to help with real estate issues (D19), organise voting for relocation and then subsidise it (D7, D62, D86), and put climate resilience plans in place (D5, D14).

Yet, the stories of how governments from developed countries treated their indigenous populations revealed a domestic, unequal power structure. The framing of indigenous populations inhabiting developed countries showed that hegemonic attitudes of polluting states' media were not limited to developing countries. Firstly, none of the articles discussed the disproportionate representation of indigenous communities in stories of climate migration from developed countries (D12, D19, D86). This disproportionate representation suggested an unequal power structure that led the indigenous to settle on the outskirts of developed countries, which became climatically vulnerable areas with time. Through its silence, the polluting states' media remained complicit with an unequal power structure favouring ethnocentric policymaking. Moreover, the framing fell short of criticising, or merely noticing the differential treatment, of the governmental support for indigenous communities as opposed to that offered to homeowners. Indigenous communities had different relocation needs than homeowners. The latter lamented the dropping prices of their real estate as they searched for a place to relocate safely. Indigenous populations, contrarily, highlighted the connection between their land and their culture and spirituality (D12, D19, D16). They perceived the relocation as the end to their traditional way of living. Their home governments were unable to offer any support in this regard. The polluting states' media did not frame this lack of ability as a governmental failure

but as a natural state of affairs, enforcing the sentiment that indigenous populations' needs are worth less than those of non-indigenous citizens.

To conclude, most of the sample used the scientific abstract frame, which hindered the possibility of establishing climate accountability by denying a link between human activity and climate change. Faced with negative consequences of a phenomenon that, according to the framing, no one is responsible for, the responsibility for LDM was framed as belonging to adaptive individuals and their home governments, as it would in the case of naturally occurring disasters. The unequal power structure was visible primarily in deploying the scientific abstract frame, but also in applying a hegemonic lens to the framing of climate migrants and their home governments from developing countries. Despite the initial equating of the hardship of the inhabitants of developed and developing countries, the polluting states' media was quick to highlight the weaknesses of developing countries' government in a showcase of a hegemonic sense of superiority.

Chapter 3: Potential for climate accountability

This chapter deals with cases where climate accountability could potentially be present because there is a possibility of attributing pollution to an actor. The chapter's main finding is that climate accountability is a novel and niche frame, which needs a certain degree of societal awareness to be deployed. This societal awareness is required because climate accountability proved to be a complicated frame. The complicatedness was visible in the follow-up to claiming that climate change is human-made and evoking of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Despite potential for building on these notions to call for climate accountability, the notions were found to not only be insufficient for establishing climate accountability but also used to distance the polluting states from their climatically vulnerable counterparts. This distancing happened by framing climatically vulnerable countries as victims or framing climate migrants as a security threat to polluting states.

Misplaced attributions

Only discussing GHG emissions, paradoxically, led to employing the scientific abstract frame, so circling back to attributing natural disasters to abstract, natural causes. As discussed in Chapter 2, such framing perpetuated the unequal power structure by being complicit with the polluting states' environmental impunity. Climate accountability consists of firstly, acknowledging the polluters' environmental wrongdoing and secondly, holding them responsible for cleaning up their pollution. Claiming that climate change is human-made and pointing at GHG emissions as the culprit implied creating a basis for attributing the emissions to a specific polluting actor. However, this chapter has found that such claims were insufficient for establishing climate accountability, pointing to the concept remaining niche and not well-understood in the mainstream discourse.

Despite discussing "floods powered by industrial GHG emissions" (D57) or "human activities, led by burning fossil fuels, as the main cause of global warming" (D65; also D83), some (N=7) articles still pointed at natural disasters as the culprits of population displacement. These articles framed GHG as driving natural disasters, but natural disasters, ultimately, as driving environmental destruction. This late deployment of the scientific abstract frame effectively contradicted the articles' initial claim that GHG emissions drive environmental destruction,

denying the need to discuss the responsibility for the emissions. Other articles that discussed GHG emissions skipped the emitting actor by presenting the emissions as an abstract, natural event, equal to global warming per the scientific abstract frame. For example, D86 claimed that "burning fossil fuels melt polar ice caps". Articles also discussed emissions as if they rose on their own: "if carbon emissions rise" (D3) or if they "continue unabated" (D5; also D8). Instead of serving as a basis for establishing climate accountability, GHG emissions were presented as yet another "natural occurrence" for which nobody can be held responsible. Without establishing a link between GHG emissions and the polluting actor, no responsibility for clean-up actions could be attributed.

Counterintuitively to the operationalisation of climate accountability, engaging with polluter responsibility did not necessarily lead to establishing the notion's presence. Articles that engaged with the notion either blamed industrial actors for environmental pollution or called on holding polluters responsible. The former failed to build on the attribution of blame to call on industrial actors to clean up. Acknowledging the responsibility for pollution without the commitment to re-distributing its negative consequences did not support transforming the unequal power structure. Subsequently, such fragmented framing allowed the power structure to continue in its current hegemonic form, where industries can pollute with no consequences. Calling on holding polluters responsible, on the other hand, was not rooted in argumentation of climatic wrongdoings. Therefore, it was ineffective against an unequal power structure that favours polluters: without rooting the calls for clean-up actions in climate accountability, the argument ran the danger of becoming obsolete when the political interests of the polluting states change, per the dynamic commitment problem (Slantchev, 2007, 7).

Articles that acknowledged industrial responsibility for pollution referred to localised cases where the 'industry' exacerbated existing environmental vulnerabilities rather than contributed to GHG emissions. D14 described how mining and agribusiness operations "consume much of what remains" of the reduced freshwater reserves in the Andes. D36, D52, D62, and D86 outlined instances where American oil companies contributed to deteriorating environmental conditions – yet, by dredging canals, not emitting GHG. Besides omitting the environmental wrongdoing that contributed most to the environmental collapses – the emissions – the articles failed to follow up on business responsibility. Land degradation caused by industrial activity was listed as yet another contributing factor to the environmental degradation, rather than an active endeavour for which a business can be held accountable.

On the other hand, D22, D45, and D61 called for holding polluting states responsible without explaining the argumentation behind their claim. D22 quoted the Guatemalan President saying that "rich nations were responsible for the increasing frequency of extreme weather"; similarly, D61 pointed at "the failure of the global community, and principally the rich countries". D45 quoted Bangladesh's finance minister calling on "Britain and other wealthy countries to accept millions of displaced people". Yet, none of the articles expanded on why wealthy countries should hold more responsibility, failing to bring climate accountability to the media discourse.

Instead of accountability

Rather than arguing for climate accountability, evoking disproportionate GHG emissions served to distance the polluting states from climatically vulnerable ones by deploying victim and security threat frames. Such framing revealed how deeply rooted the unequal power structure is – even comparing the disproportionate GHG emissions could be turned to polluting states' favour. By failing to hold the polluting states accountable despite the awareness of their responsibility, alongside evoking stereotypical depictions of climate migrants, the two frames helped to perpetuate the hegemonic status quo of polluting states.

Victim frame and humanitarianism

Deploying the victim frame towards countries, in a variation of a frame that usually covers individuals, perpetuated the unequal power structure by presenting climate migrants' home countries as helpless actors who depend on the generosity of the host states. The calls for humanitarian support missed the opportunity to attribute responsibility to the polluting states. Instead, the calls subjected the potential support with loss and damage mechanisms (LDM) to the dynamic commitment problem, where states can break off the deal when their domestic political or economic situation changes. No solutions were proposed; instead, the approach was regional, allowing polluting states to maintain their hegemony by acting as potential host countries or donors rather than global polluters. Such an approach cemented the "us vs them" divide between polluting states and their climatically vulnerable counterparts, distancing one from another. Besides, the humanitarian discourse focused on politicians' guilt. The suffering

and injustice faced by climate migrants were deployed instrumentally, not to look for ways to support vulnerable populations but to engage in a partisan critique.

Articles (N=7) that linked disproportionate carbon footprints to climate injustice used the comparison to increase the emotional load of the coverage on climate migration and then call for humanitarian support to vulnerable states per the victim frame. The frame was a variation on the original victim frame because it applied to nation-states, not individuals. By presenting developing countries as helpless victims against the enormous GHG footprints, the frame denied these countries agency and infantilised them. For example, Kiribati "has the smallest carbon footprint in the world, and yet it finds itself most gravely affected by a phenomenon it had nothing to do with" (D16). Similarly, "Bangladesh contributes just 0.4 metric tonnes per capita to the carbon emissions fuelling climate change (the US produces 17 and the UK 7.1), but will suffer its effects badly" (D55). More general statements claimed that those "who contribute almost nothing to warming the planet" (D17), such as the poor and developing countries (D23, D30, D84), would be the most negatively impacted.

The disproportionate emissions, combined with the ethnocentric perception of the weakness of developing states' governments described in Chapter 2, framed developing countries as unable to protect their vulnerable populations. The imagery of helpless, innocent countries-victims served as a basis for humanitarian claims on their behalf. Most authors advocating for humanitarian support drew parallels to past large-scale migrations, mainly the 1930s Dust Bowl (D3, D64) or the 2015 refugee crisis (D53, D61, D82). Images of migrants walking through continents and crossing the sea in unsafe boats aimed at evoking pity in readers. The recent refugee crisis was also instrumental in evoking guilt, reminding the readers of lives lost because of developed states' inaction and calling on politicians not to let this happen again (D4, D37, D41). Similarly, Trump's migration and climate policies were criticised for their insufficient tackling of both issues and, consequently, deepening the humanitarian disaster (D17, D64, D67). Yet, such critical framing failed to call for real solutions to the issue, suggesting that the partisan critique was a goal on its own rather than a means to bring attention to the fate of environmentally vulnerable populations.

Security threat frame and climate action

The security threat frame backed up calls on polluting states to offer LDM to climate migrants. Two types of supportive action were advocated for: climate mitigation and, should mitigation fail, climate adaptation. Although the effects were in line with those desired by a climate accountability approach, the security threat frame was deployed because of 'enlightened interest' rather than living up to one's climatic wrongdoings. Climate adaptation and mitigation would, supposedly, prevent the environmental degradation of climate migrants' home countries so outward migration will not happen on the predicted catastrophic scale: "Without adequate climate action, more people will seek to move in search of safety and a better life" (D84).

Such framing perpetuated the unequal power structure in several ways. Firstly, turning climate action into a matter of enlightened interest turned the action's primary function into safeguarding potential host countries rather than supporting climate migrants. Presenting climate migrants as a threat to national security rather than a vulnerable population distanced the potential host countries from those in need. Subsequently, action detrimental to climate migrants, such as hardening borders, could potentially follow polluting states' calls for climate action. Secondly, the calls for curbing GHG emissions put equal responsibility for climate mitigation on countries that historically emitted the least as on the most significant historical polluters. Such framing turned attention away from the historical responsibility of polluting states, allowing them to continue their polluting actions in impunity. Thirdly, promoting climate adaptation as a prestige issue to developing states' home governments showcased the hegemonic attitudes of polluting states' media. Developed countries set the global agenda by obstructing the historical responsibility of the polluting states. Then, they invited developing countries to the "winners table", but only if the subaltern countries first fulfil their hegemonic wishes and bear the costs of their polluting actions.

The worst effects of "the great wave" of climate migration (D82), the security threat frame suggested, could still be omitted if countries decisively reduce their GHG emissions and engage in climate adaptation. Such actions would prevent at least a part of climate migration by ensuring that climate migrants' home countries remain liveable. Quoting enormous-sized migrations (D5, D45), journalists reminded the readers of the "history" (D66) of disruption that large-scale movements bring. Migrants, as the security threat frame goes, overload infrastructure and resources (D32), increase the region's criminality to the point of potential for war (D66), and further strain already shrinking resources (D70). This framing considered that most climate migrants move close to their departure point, either within their country or as

South-South migration (D23, D69). The security threat frame prevailed even among nationals (D5). Besides, some articles acknowledged that climate migrants move to climatically vulnerable cities. There, they exacerbate resource scarcity and criminality and, sooner or later, are forced to move again – this time, to developed countries. Due to the world's increased interconnectivity, developing countries' volatility could cause "repercussions for developed countries, even if most of the economic damages occur in developing ones" (D53).

GHG emissions appeared in this narrative as the "root cause" of climate migration, so the leading proposed solution was to "try to limit climate change by reducing the use of fossil fuels" (D28; also D32, D39, D43, D47, D53, D61). This discourse put responsibility for climate mitigation on every country equally, creating a sense of unity by referring to the global actors as "we" (D16, 30, 43, 67, 68), "humans" (D53), or in impersonal, passive voice: "if strong action is taken" (D66, D70). By omitting the global disproportion in GHG emissions, this narrative did not engage with climate accountability and even obstructed it. Equal responsibility for GHG emissions meant that countries that historically emitted the least were framed as equally responsible for climate mitigation as the most significant historical polluters. For example, Kenya and Morocco were praised for their renewable energy plans (D69), although they emit a fraction of what the US, the EU, and the UK do.

Adaptation was framed as a crucial addition to climate mitigation (D30, D39, D61, D47, D82). It was framed mainly as a responsibility of national governments, similarly to the response that would be expected from a non-human-made disaster. According to the framing, successful adaptation could increase a country's international prestige (D30): "without the resources of the richer world, the Marshall Islands is taking the lead on global adaptation efforts against rising sea levels". This "adaptation leadership" was framed as especially valuable because developed countries need to learn climate adaptation (D47). Some articles mentioned developed countries' responsibility to support those governments with finances: "rich countries should be providing the financing and other assistance right now to help vulnerable countries and communities adapt to climate change" (D61). These claims were framed in line with the security threat frame – polluting states held 'enlightened interest' in avoiding large numbers of migrants destabilising the social order.

Climate accountability: vulnerabilities of a new frame

Climate accountability was found to be a novel yet niche frame. Calling for polluting states to contribute to LDM proportionally to the individual countries' emissions was an identifiable characteristic that distinguished climate accountability from the previously identified frames. Yet, as the frame is not yet commonly observed in the news, it was vulnerable to structural and argumentative choices. The low number of articles that discussed the notion was further compromised as less than half of these articles put climate accountability at the core of their argumentation. The articles that made climate accountability their central frame were written by advocacy sources. Such sources were engaged not only in environmental work but also had a deep knowledge of the socio-economic issues that surround environmental challenges. The overall low number of stories that used the 'climate accountability frame' suggests that authors needed to undertake a conscious effort to frame climate migration through the lens of climate accountability. As the advocacy sources have shown, people from the public sector, less attached to corporate interests, were more willing to take on this politically sensitive issue.

Articles (N=5) that framed climate migration in line with climate accountability all shared a premise, absent in other frames, that contributions to LDM should be proportional to the scale of a country's emissions, per the 'polluter pays' principle (PPP). This framing highlighted the large number of GHG emissions caused by developed countries and their industries. The greatest emissions, the discourse argued, should lead to the greatest responsibility for LDM, both in terms of climate adaptation through funding and taking in climate migrants when adaptation efforts fail: "There is a strong case for Britain to take a substantial number of climate refugees: as the first country to industrialise, we need to take historical responsibility for climate change and should take into account our historical carbon emissions and their effects when responding to mass climate migration" (D68). The framing highlighted the justness of such an approach: "Developing countries will not be able to make the investments needed to survive conditions brought on by global warming — nor should they have to do so alone, as a matter of fairness. Poor countries are responsible for only a small share of all GHG emissions. Industrialised nations bear the greatest responsibility for climate change" (D9).

As a novel and relatively underrepresented frame, climate accountability was vulnerable to structural choices. The placement of the frame within the text particularly influenced the strength of its reception and pointed at a necessary level of consciousness to deploy the frame

effectively. As many frames can coexist within an article, over a half of articles in the already scarce sample offered only marginal representation to the climate accountability frame. For example, D39 presented historical responsibility per PPP as yet another voice in the climate adaptation debate: "Many believe that rich nations should shoulder most of the responsibility. <<The UN protocol on refugees has to be revised, and responsibility for climate-change migrants has to be taken by the developed countries, who are responsible for climate emissions,>> said Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, head of COAST, a Bangladeshi organisation that aims to help people affected by climate change". Such marginal representation suggested that climate accountability, rather than a valuable approach to ensuring long-term LDM, is subjective. This framing of subjectivity, in turn, weakened the readers' reception of the argument.

Another crucial choice for the climate accountability frame was the framing of the argumentation and the ensuing solutions. The focus on real-life solutions and rooting the argumentation in legal instruments increased the framing's impact while generic calls for climate justice weakened it. The two articles that made the climate accountability frame central used different rhetorical figures and arrived at different solutions, which impacted the strength of their arguments.

D37, titled "America is the worst polluter in the history of the world. We should let climate change refugees resettle here", and written by an associate faculty chair at Columbia University's Earth Institute, offered the most robust case towards climate accountability. By appealing to historical responsibility and humanitarian concerns, the article advocated for industrialised countries "to pledge to take on a share of the displaced population equal to how much each nation has historically contributed to emissions of the GHG that are causing this crisis". This share would account for 27% of all displaced people for the US and 25% for the EU and the UK. The logic of relocation was based on the PPP: "The countries that spewed (or allowed or encouraged their corporations to spew) these chemicals into the air, and especially the countries that grew rich while doing so, should take responsibility for the consequences of their actions". The use of existing legal instruments and the focus on solutions distinguished the article from others discussing climate accountability and made its argumentation more plausible. On the other hand, D84, written by a director of environmental NGO Friends of the Earth Europe, fell short of proposing clear-cut solutions as D37 did. Although climate accountability was at the core of the author's argumentation, the author weakened her stance

by generically calling on world leaders to address "the fundamental drivers" of climate change rather than suggesting tangible action.

Conclusion & Discussion

Analysing to what extent climate accountability is present in the media framing of climate migrants ultimately poses questions about responsibility for a country's climatic destruction in an unequal power structure. Green international relations theory, the leading theoretical paradigm of this study, dictates that vulnerable populations should be compensated for the ecological destructions they faced as a result of actions externalised by the world's wealthiest. This study aimed to determine to what extent the essential step for such compensation – acknowledging a country's climate accountability – is present in the media framing of the greatest environmental culprits: the US, the UK, and the EU (the ‘polluting states’).

This research's main finding is that climate accountability is barely present in the media framing of climate migration. Online newspapers from polluting states framed climate migration in a way that eluded climate accountability and so, shifted responsibility away from polluting states and on the affected parties. Such shifting was a powerful display of the polluting states' hegemony: their disproportionate influence on the media allowed them to push their framing of the topic and, through the framing, influence public opinion. The framing also perpetuated the unequal power structure by allowing polluting states to continue their destructive actions with no consequences.

Yet, twisting the narrative could only happen if the topic ever occured on the media agenda. An initial quantitative analysis revealed an extreme material scarcity. Ten key outlets from the 3 most polluting entities together produced a limited number of individual media stories on climate migration. Moreover, the number did not progress in 6 years. This material scarcity, combined with a lack of yearly progression, showed that the pool of knowledge on the topic that the media discourse holds was limited. The limitation made it harder for new frames to appear, showcasing new perspectives on, or solutions to, the issue of climate migration.

Climate accountability can be considered a new frame because its main characteristics are distinguishable from the four pre-established frames: scientific abstract, adaptive individual,

victim, and security threat. The frame was considered to be present when an author acknowledged the polluting states' disproportionate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and allocated responsibility for loss and damage mechanisms (LDM) proportionally to a country's contribution to fuelling climate change. Yet, this study has found that climate accountability is a rare frame, deployed only by advocacy sources whose environmental work is supplemented by an understanding of socio-political issues surrounding climate change. Climate accountability was found to be a complicated concept. This complicatedness was best visible in instances where elements of climate accountability appeared but led the authors to reach different conclusions than those rooted in environmental justice.

The most striking example of such divergence from climate accountability was framing the disproportion in GHG emissions to distance the polluting states from their climatically vulnerable counterparts. Discussing large GHG footprints of polluting states did not lead to conclusions about climate injustice but rather served to frame climatically vulnerable states as victims or their inhabitants as security threats. In both cases, polluting states were framed as potential host countries or donors, whose generosity determined the fate of climate migrants – rather than as culprits whose emissions caused climate migrants' plight in the first place. This opaque framing was the most illustrative showcase of polluting states' hegemony. Their disproportionate media power allowed them to twist even evidence that pointed to their accountability. By putting polluting states' interests first, such framing could potentially exacerbate the suffering of the world's vulnerable, effectively perpetuating the unequal power structure. For example, calling for climate adaptation from a security perspective could result in hardening borders not to let climate migrants in.

Yet, the most far-reaching way of eluding climate accountability, which was also the most prevalent in the sample, was employing the scientific abstract frame. The frame denied the attribution of pollution to anthropogenic causes and so shut the discussion down at the level of core assumptions. For climate accountability to be present in the media framing of climate migrants, an article needed to both attribute responsibility for pollution to a third party and call for the third-party's accountability to clean the pollution up. Presenting climate change as a natural, abstract event attributed no responsibility for polluting and so made it impossible to draw conclusions on climate accountability.

The scientific abstract frame also enforced a particular treatment recommendation. When climate change was considered an abstract force of its own, the responsibility for LDM was shifted to the inhabitants and national governments of affected countries, as it would in the case of a non-human-made disaster. This responsibility shift perpetuated the unequal power structure: the framing remained complicit with a hegemonic state that allowed polluting states to face no consequences for their damaging actions, continuing the vicious circle where polluting states get richer off the environmental destruction pushed onto innocent third parties. Besides, developing and developed countries were framed as equally affected. Such framing enforced the avoidance of responsibility by suggesting that wealthy states, too, are victims of climate change, so they should not be held responsible for supporting others. Simultaneously, such framing revealed a sense of superiority that polluting states' media displayed towards climatically vulnerable countries. All in all, the polluting states' media used framing to deny the climate accountability of polluting states.

This research comes with several limitations. The main one is the focus on media outlets from polluting states. Such outlets will naturally favour their nation-states' perspectives. This limitation could be revised in a new study, which would analyse local newspapers in climate migrants' home countries, such as small Pacific island states, Central America, or the Himalaya basin. Such a study would give a better indication of media framing of climate accountability in climatically vulnerable states. Another limitation of this work is the sampling from only pan-European newspapers. Although a crucial indicator of EU policymaking, pan-European media remains less developed than EU nation-states' national outlets. Sampling from key newspapers in EU states with the most policymaking power, such as Le Monde (France), Der Spiegel (Germany), and El Pais (Spain), could have allowed the researcher to reach more in-depth insights into the state of the public acknowledgement of climate accountability in polluting states.

The finding of limited climate accountability in media framing of climate migrants leaves the researcher with additional questions. This research only dealt with frame-building, leaving framing effects aside. Subsequently, the impact of hegemonic coverage on the public perception of climate accountability remains unknown. A new study could explore how aware of their climate accountability polluting states' citizens are, using street interviews and controlled experiments.

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