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Climate-Induced Migration: A Threat to Peace and Security?

A Regional Analysis of the West African Sahel

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Abstract

Climate change stipulates a well-known global phenomenon. Global warming has already resulted in dramatic consequences in various parts of our planet, ranging from natural disasters to forced migrations. Countries that are most adversely affected by the climate change are mostly countries already undergoing crises like poverty, resource scarcity or political instability. Media coverage conveys an image of a mass climate-induced migration that leads to the outbreak of multiple armed conflicts. This thesis investigates the influences of climate-induced migration on peace and security in the West African Sahel, one of the most instable political regions, which is simultaneously most vulnerable to climate change implications. The research followed an interdisciplinary cross-literature review approach.

However, the conclusion of the research does not prove a causal correlation between climate-induced migration and peace and security in the West African Sahel.

The work makes a suggestion to the international community to continue with their efforts in supporting the region to establish a sustaining peace and extend the fight against increasing climate change to mitigate its effects on the livelihoods of local communities in the West African Sahel.

Keywords: Climate Change, Climate Migration, Climate-Induced Migration, Peace, Security, Migration, Refugee, International Law, International Human Rights Law, Human Rights

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List of Abbreviation

°C	Degree Celcius
AfDB	African Development Bank
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
ASF	African Standby Force
AU	African Union
CAS	Central African Sahel
CEWS	Continental Early Warning System
COP	Conference of Parties
DW	Deutsche Welle
EAS	Eastern African Sahel
EU	European Union
GSIM	The Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims
ICR	Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IHRL	International Human Rights Law
IL	International Law
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IRO	International Refugee Organization
ISGS	Islamic State in the Greater Sahara
JNIM	Jama'at Nusrat Al-Islam Wa Al-Muslimeen
LoN	League of Nations
micle	Migration, Climate and Environmental Changes in the Sahel
MINUSMA	Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MNJTF	Multinational Joint Task Force
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PSC	Peace and Security Council
UN	United Nations
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNOWAS	United Nations Office for Western Africa and the Sahel
UNRRA	United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration
WAS	West African Sahel

1. Introduction

Climate Change is a well-known and researched field that in recent years also received large media attention. Furthermore, many initiatives, activists and actions are being taken to tackle the issue of global climate change and to minimize it as much as possible - as soon as possible. Results from anthropogenic climate change differ in appearance. However, one prominent result of climate change is desertification, flooding and droughts; shortly – environmental degradation.¹

Environmental degradation can have an immense impact on people living in areas especially prone to climate change. In addition, many of the areas extremely vulnerable to climate change are already experiencing other struggles, leaving them even more vulnerable to adverse climatic developments. Struggles in countries extremely prone to climate change range from a high rate of poverty, high level of resource scarcity to political instability, restricted enjoyment of their human rights and armed conflicts.²

The ways people are adapting to impacts of climate change vary greatly, with migration being a very popular adaptation strategy to cope impacts of climate change. The majority of migration patterns due to climate change account to people migrating internally, leaving many internally displaced. However, research on internal migration due to climate change is already more advanced than research focusing on climate-induced migration on an international level. Moreover, people migrating inside their countries often account to people migrating on a more voluntary basis than people that follow migration patterns across state borders. Therefore, the scope of this thesis tries to investigate and provide more in-depth analysis on forced international climate-induced migration.³

Aim of this thesis is to contribute to the scholarly discussion of climate-induced migration and its effects on peace and security, by examining the research question whether climate-induced migration has an effect on peace and security.

Thereby, this work tries to provide further insight on the complexity of this matter and the interrelation between three key elements of climate change, migration and peace and security. This research is conducted by providing a case-study to one of the most vulnerable regions to

¹ Epule T E, Ford J D, and Lwasa S, 'Climate Change Stressors in the Sahel.', *GeoJournal* 83, no. 6 (2018): 1420.

² Epule T E, Ford J D, and Lwasa S, 1412.

³ Cheikh Guèye, Abdou Salam Fall, and Serigne Mansour Tall, 'Climatic Perturbation and Urbanization in Senegal', *The Geographical Journal* 173, no. 1 (March 2007): 88, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4959.2007.232_4.x.

climate change, the West African Sahel (WAS) region. Particular focal points of this thesis are the countries of Senegal and Mali in the western part of the Sahel region. The Sahel region was chosen as a case study to this thesis because it exemplifies the complex relationships between climate change, migration and peace and security. The security situation in the Sahel region is among the worst globally and it therefore is particularly interesting to assess the effects climate-induced migration in the region.⁴ To analyse the effects of climate-induced migration it is necessary to examine the basic phenomenon of climate-induced migration and its influential factors.

Since this thesis is focused on international migration it is from utmost importance to analyse the international legal framework and whether it provides environmental migrants protection and if so, to what extent.

In order to finally assess the impact of climate-induced migration on peace and security in the Sahel, a thorough analysis of the current geopolitical situation is necessary. Furthermore, it is relevant to examine the role of stakeholders involved in the region and what attempts are being made to stabilize this insecure political region in the West African Sahel.

1.1 Structure

The thesis is trying to provide a comprehensive structure in which the chapters are thematically build on each other. The work begins with one of the key issues of the entire problematic of climate-induced migration, the discussion about terminology and definition before then continuing to explain the methodological approach of the thesis.

The methodological approach is followed by chapter two *Climate Change, Migration and the Sahel region*.

This chapter tries to provide a comprehensive overview of the geographical situation of the Sahel region and particular vulnerability to climate change. Furthermore, chapter two defines the phenomenon of climate change and examines the difficulties in applicability and assessment of climate-induced migration.

Chapter three then builds on to the developed insights of climate-induced migration by assessing the international legal framework to the protection of environmental migrants. Thereby, in the beginning it explains the origins of refugee protection to provide a better understanding of cultural influences in the development of the international refugee protection framework. Chapter three is concluded with a regional analysis of the African

⁴ Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research, 'Conflict Barometer (2019)' (Heidelberg, Germany, 2020).

protection mechanism and what benefits it can bring to the protection of environmental migrants.

Following the analysis of the legal protection framework is chapter four, which tackles the issue of peace and security in the region. Chapter four tries to present a thorough analysis of the current conflicts occurring in the region, while focusing mainly on Mali. Furthermore, this chapter tries to link the complex phenomenon of climate-induced migration to peace and security, suggesting measures that could be taken to act preventively to possible effects of climate-induced migration.

The work is completed by a conclusion which briefly outlines the presented topic and presents recommendations to tackle possible effects of climate-induced migration.

1.2 Terminology and Definition

A crucial part of the scholarly discussion about the topic of climate change and migration is the question of terminology. It is here to say that in the discussion about climate change, migration and environmental degradation, there is no consensus in terminology nor definitions. The lack of common notions in the debate makes it very complicated to compare theories, approaches and possible solutions. A common and consistent terminology is of the utmost importance in this field because certain definitions and names of phenomenon change completely with different terms. Terms such as climate refugees or climate migrants are often used in media, but also in scholarly articles, journals and books.

However, these notions pose a certain inaccuracy and could eventually become harmful to people seeking political refugee who are exposed to the dangers arising from a lack of protection by extending the protection mechanism. ⁵

Some of the most discussed terms in this field are the terms: *climate refugees*, *climate migrants*, *environmental migrants*, *environmental refugees*, *climate-induced migrant* as well as many other notions that are being used across the literature. As later discussed in chapter three, which covers the legal protection of environmental migrants, the use of the term refugee is highly contestable and to be seen as very critical.

The notion of “refugee” attributes the characteristics of traditional refugees fleeing from political persecution to environment migrants, and thus threatens to weaken the protection of such traditional refugees, according to the *International Organisation for Migration*.⁶ Furthermore, the *Global Compact on Migration* stipulates:

⁵ International Organization for Migration, *Outlook on Migration, Environment and Climate Change* (Geneva: International Organization for Migration, 2014), 21–23.

⁶ International Organization for Migration, 21.

*“Refugees and migrants are entitled to the same universal human rights and fundamental freedoms, which must be respected, protected and fulfilled at all times. However, migrants and refugees are distinct groups governed by separate legal frameworks. Only refugees are entitled to the specific international protection defined by international refugee law.”*⁷

However, in extreme and desperate situations, as well as in the definition provided in regional mechanisms, it seems to be legitimate to include the terminology of refugee to some extent in the discussion. Therefore, this thesis follows the definition provided by Graeme Hugo. Hugo advocates to include the amount of force to which people are subject, as well as the variables of choice in timing in his terminology.

He suggests using the notions of environmentally motivated migrants, environmentally forced and environmental refugee.⁸ The distinction between these terms arises from the motivation and timing of departing the place of origin. Environmentally motivated migrants are people who choose to leave due to the environmental factors that play a supplementary issue. However, the choice that is being made is made on their own.⁹ By contrast, the term environmentally forced migrants refers to people leaving their homes due to damage caused by environmental destruction or the immediate likelihood of environmental destruction. Even though people leave their homes involuntarily, they mostly have to some extent a choice in the timing of their departure.¹⁰ Hugo defines the category that is left with no choice at all as environmental refugee. Environmental refugees do not have a choice whether they want to move nor when they want to move. They are not granted an opportunity to choose and the likelihood of returning in their case is very limited.¹¹ In addition to the definition provided by Hugo stands the definition given by the IOM. The IOM sees the use of the substantial part ‘refugee’ very critical and considers the term environmental migrant appropriate. However, the debate of the legal terminology and what impacts, implications and consequences come together with the notion is discussed further and in more detail in chapter three.¹²

Another inconsistent notion in the debate of climate-induced migration is the term climate migration, as well as the term migration in general in this context. Boas and her colleagues argue that the term migration does not capture the complex and diverse ways in which people

⁷ United Nations General Assembly, ‘Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration’, Pub. L. No. A/RES/73/195 (2018).

⁸ Graeme Hugo, ‘Climate Change-Induced Mobility and the Existing Migration Regime in Asia and the Pacific’, in *Climate Change and Displacement: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* (Oxford: Hart Pub., 2010), 13.

⁹ Hugo, 13.

¹⁰ Hugo, 13.

¹¹ Hugo, 13.

¹² International Organization for Migration, *Outlook on Migration, Environment and Climate Change*, 21–24.

are becoming mobile in the current globalized world. They argue in favour of avoiding the term climate migration and advocate to use the term climate mobility instead.¹³

They claim that

*“such a program would capture the multiple forms, directions and multiplicities of human movement in the context of climate change as well as the transformative character of mobility and its impact on places of origin, transit and destination”.*¹⁴

However, the term climate-induced migration is commonly used in papers, books and articles. It underlines the migratory aspect in the term, and therefore, also receives wide acceptance in the field and should be mentioned in the discussion about terminology. Additionally, the *2009 Human Development Report* uses the term migrant as well as migration to refer to individuals who changed their place of residence for at least 3 months. Hereby, the reports distinguish between international migration and internal migration. International migration refers to people moving across borders while internal migration refers to people migrating inside their countries by resettling to other municipalities, districts and parts of the country.¹⁵ Therefore, this thesis also uses the notion of climate-induced migration instead of the term climate mobility. This is not to criticize the approach proposed by Boas and her colleagues, but rather to recognize the element of migration while not understating the dilemma that often comes with the journey of migration.

Furthermore, this thesis focuses on forced migration due to sudden or slow-onset climatic events which then lead to a displacement of people of three months or longer.

In addition, it should be noted that only the most important debates on terminology are presented in this part of the work. A deepening of the academic discourse and terminological question will be taken up again and deepened in the respective chapters, linked with arguments important to the discussion.

1.3 Methodology

The field of climate-induced migration is a very complex and interrelated field of research. Therefore, to tackle the complexity of this issue, research needs to be conducted with an interdisciplinary approach. This thesis has chosen such an interdisciplinary approach since it is beneficial to understand the complex matters that arise within the field. A single disciplinary approach would most likely not produce a thorough explanation of the matter nor would it be

¹³ Ingrid Boas et al., ‘Climate Migration Myths’, *Nature Climate Change* 9, no. 12 (1 December 2019): 8, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-019-0633-3>.

¹⁴ Boas et al., 6.

¹⁵ UNDP, ed., *Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development*, Human Development Report 2009 (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

able to provide possible measures on how to advance in this field of research. Disciplines that are used to conduct research in this thesis belong to the academic fields of social sciences, political sciences as well as International Law (IL) and Human Rights Law. However, the use of an interdisciplinary research approach also has disadvantages. The use of several academic disciplines can sometimes lead to a lack of depth of analysis in the respective disciplines, as a thorough and detailed analysis on each discipline in the matter would go beyond the scope of this thesis.

The research method for this thesis is mainly an analysis of academic literature across multiple disciplines. The literature reviewed consists of books, journal articles, statements, studies, reports and legal documents. The point of the research was to create a thorough picture of the complex matters and the major stakeholders involved. Furthermore, through the interdisciplinary approach this thesis tries to provide different views on subject matters. Additionally, by examining multiple legal documents and final reports from international organizations this work tries to show and analyse opinions and attitudes from governments, international organizations as well as non-governmental organizations on the current status quo and future developments.

It remains to be said that the nature of this research topic is very dynamic and fast changing, hence the aim of this work is to try to examine and analyse publications that are as recent as possible. However, older literature was also considered, as it often provided thorough background knowledge on certain thematic aspects.

In chapter three the dominant discipline used was the legal analysis of the current international law and international human rights law framework. The legal analysis tries to focus on the relevant international legal documents as well as on national and domestic legal statuses.

2 Climate Change, migration and the Sahel Region

This Chapter provides a brief overview about the basic concepts of climate change, migration patterns, push and pull factors for migration and the geographical location in discussion in this thesis. In order to not go beyond the scope of this thesis, all concepts are related to the Sahel region, which serves as the focus. To provide this overview, this chapter will start with a general introduction to the region of the Sahel. After introducing the Sahel in western Africa, the author continues to identify consequences of climate change in the Sahel region as well as elaborating how these consequences have an impact on the livelihoods of the Sahel population.

The explanation of the concepts of climate change are followed by an attempt to link how climate change influences the already existing migration patterns in the region, and what remains to be criticized in the scholarly debate of the link between climate change and migration

2.1 The Sahel Region

The Sahel region is a strip of land that stretches across the African continent just south of the Sahara from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea. It is a transitional zone between the very arid Sahara Desert in the north and the Savanna, with a humid climate, to the south.¹⁶ The word Sahel (ساحل) is originally an Arabic word which has the meaning of shore, coast or border.¹⁷ Geographically the Sahel region lies between 12°N and 20°N.¹⁸ The Sahel is divided into three subparts: the western Sahel, central Sahel and eastern Sahel. All together the Sahel stretches across 12 countries (Mauritania, Senegal, the Gambia, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Chad, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti) and covers around 5500 km from the East to the West with a width of 450km.¹⁹ Characterized by an arid/semi-arid climate, the Sahel is one of the most vulnerable regions globally to the effects of climate change. Furthermore, political instability causes various struggles and instability in the region. Struggles in the Sahel region may vary in appearance but are mostly interrelated and interdependent. The Sahel region faces challenges of a socioeconomic nature as well as challenges of impacts of climate change.

¹⁶ Laurent. Bossard, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development., and Sahel and West Africa Club., *An Atlas of the Sahara-Sahel : Geography, Economics and Security.*, West African Studies, 2074-353X (Paris: OECD/Sahel and West Africa Club, 2014), 16, <http://site.ebrary.com/id/11015929>.

¹⁷ Hans-Georg Ehrhart, Michael Staack and Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, *Sicherheits- und Friedensordnungen in Afrika Nationale und regionale Herausforderungen.* (2019) 2.

¹⁸ 'Duden | Sahel | Rechtschreibung, Bedeutung, Definition, Herkunft' <<https://www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/Sahel>> accessed 23 July 2020.

¹⁹ Moustafa Kardjadj, Adama Diallo, and Renaud Lancelot, eds., *Transboundary Animal Diseases in Sahelian Africa and Connected Regions* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-25385-1>.

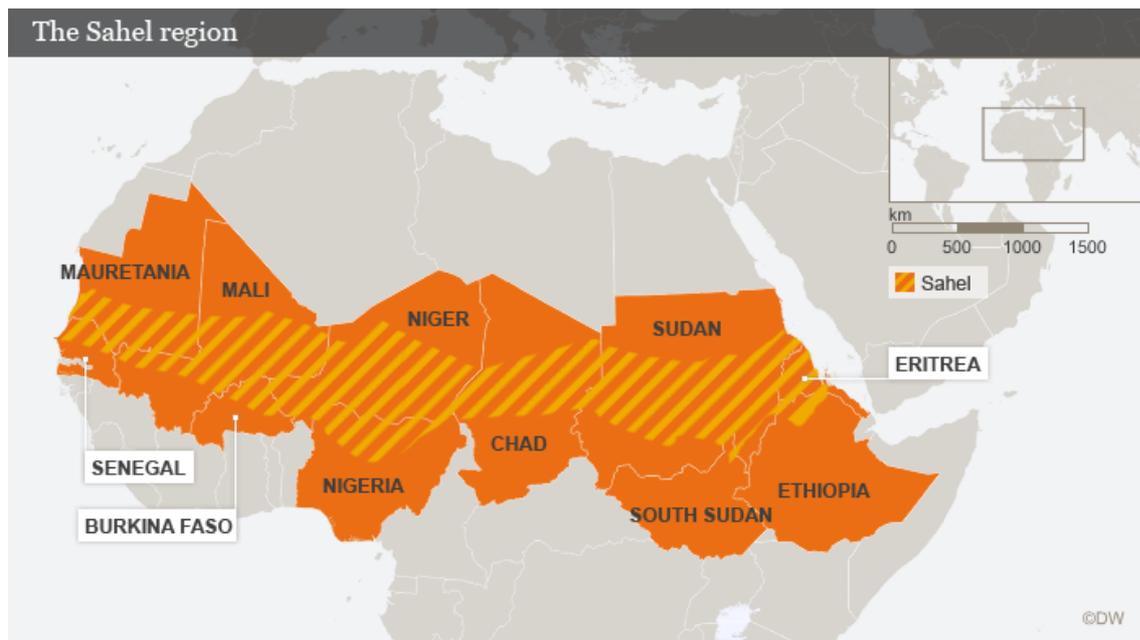


Table 1: Deutsche Welle (DW)²⁰

Socioeconomic challenges that arise in the Sahel are attributable to undereducation, fast demographic alteration, unemployment and poverty. These difficulties in the region are magnified by climate change related impacts, such as floods, droughts and land degradation.²¹ Recent armed conflicts and political instabilities in the Sahel countries have led to massive population movements and the destruction of already scarce livelihoods of millions of people.²² The amount of people that are living in movement throughout the region (either internally or internationally moving) has multiplied by three since 2012. It is estimated that around 4.5 million people are affected by these circumstances. The causes for migration are diverse but the general instability in the region has had a major impact on the movement of people. The devastating circumstances in Libya, Mali and Sudan are particularly noteworthy in influencing the increase of movement in the region.²³

However, it needs to be noted that migration and movement has a historical past in the Sahel, as many of its inhabitants are semi-nomadic communities that live in the harsh environment and move across the region (either internally or across borders to countries in the region) following the vegetation.²⁴

²⁰ Table 1: Deutsche Welle: <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-ponders-bigger-troop-mandate-in-africas-sahel/a-51828723>.

²¹ Clionadh Raleigh, 'Political Marginalization, Climate Change, and Conflict in African Sahel States', *International Studies Review* 12, no. 1 (2010): 69–86.

²² Frederic M. Wehrey and Anouar Boukhars, eds., *Perilous Desert: Insecurity in the Sahara* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2013).

²³ United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, *Conflict in the Sahel Region and the Developmental Consequences* (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Economic Commission for Africa, 2017).

²⁴ Lars Hein, Marc J. Metzger, and Rik Leemans, 'The Local Impacts of Climate Change in the Ferlo, Western Sahel', *Climatic Change* 93, no. 3–4 (April 2009): 465–83, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-008-9500-3>.

The Sahel region is believed to account for one of the poorest regions globally.²⁵ Additionally, the Sahel region is one of the areas most affected by climate change and has to deal with numerous impacts due to environmental reasons. A continuing environmental degradation will most likely have severe impacts to the livelihood of people in the Sahel region. One of the notable impacts is the increase in land degradation due to decreasing precipitation and increasing temperatures.²⁶ The livelihood of people is highly dependent on agriculture and its harvest. Hence, changes in the climate and resulting impacts, such as land degradation, will have major adverse consequences for people depending on harvesting, selling and eating their agricultural products.

The Sahel region has a history of being impacted by severe environmental catastrophes. In the last century the Sahel region has experienced four major droughts resulting in devastating effects on the environment, livestock and its people. Specifically, the drought in the 1970s and 1980s caused severe famine in the region.²⁷ As mentioned before, the livelihood, economy and food supply in the region is highly dependent on the agriculture, which is already subject to scarce agricultural land and resources to provide the food. Besides the land degradation and the destruction of agricultural land and resources by environmental change, another major influence on the scarce livelihoods in the region is the rapid population growth, which is adding more pressure on available resources.²⁸

To not exceed the scope of this thesis, the research is focused only on the West African Sahel region, specifically on the countries Senegal and Mali. Still, most of the issues discussed are also applicable for Central African Sahel (CAS) and Eastern African Sahel (EAS) but applying the discussion and research to those parts would go beyond the limit of this thesis and lack in depth of analysis.

2.2 Climate Change in the Sahel region

This section elaborates on the most important issues of climate change in the Sahel region and shows the difficulties the inhabitants face on a daily basis by living in this especially vulnerable region to climate change.

First of all, while tackling the issue of climate change it is important to provide a definition of climate change and briefly explain its impact on the Sahel region. According to the

²⁵ Victoria van der Land, *Migration and Environmental Change in the West African Sahel: Why Capabilities and Aspirations Matter* (London ; New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, earthscan from Routledge, 2018), 11.

²⁶ Land, 11.

²⁷ Land, 11.

²⁸ Land, 12.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC): “*Climate change refers to any change in climate over time, whether due to natural variability or as a result of human activity*”.²⁹ This definition given by the IPCC in 2007 was included in an assessment report given by the IPCC and its working groups. The IPCC is an intergovernmental body, that tries to assess and provide an objective and scientific perspective on climate change and its impacts on society and politics. The IPCC is under the auspices of the United Nations (UN).³⁰ It needs to be noted that the definition given by the IPCC is special in that it includes any change in climate over time. Other definitions such as the definition of climate change given by the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC) follow a more detailed approach in defining climate change. The UNFCCC states that:

*[...] climate change refers to a change of climate that is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and that is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.*³¹

In this definition, the element of human activity is instead the most important and most distinguishing element in comparison to the definition given by the IPCC in 2007.

This thesis follows the definition given by the UNFCCC because it sees the involvement of human activity in a definition of climate change as necessary. In the following parts, this thesis will also use the term anthropogenic climate change, or human-induced climate change, to stress the impacts of human activity in the field of climate change.

Climate change in Africa, but especially in the Sahel region, is one of the most urgent problems the local communities are facing on a daily basis. In general, it is noteworthy that although the entire Sahel region contributes some of the lowest carbon emission levels, it is affected the hardest by impacts of anthropogenic climate change.³² There are studies that predict extreme changes in climate in the Sahel, suggesting unprecedented climates that have not been seen anywhere else in the world so far. The Sahel is in danger of becoming a “hotspot”, so Donat

²⁹ M. L. Parry and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, eds., *Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability: Contribution of Working Group II to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (Cambridge, U.K. ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 6.

³⁰ Suiven John Paul Tume and Vincent Itai Tanyanyiwa, *Climate Change Perception and Changing Agents in Africa & South Asia*, Series on Climate Change and Society (Wilmington, Delaware: Vernon Press, 2018), <http://login.ezproxy.ub.unimaas.nl/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=2174152&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

³¹ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, ‘Fact Sheet: Climate Change Science - the Status of Climate Change Science Today’, 2011, 2.

³² G. Panthou, T. Vischel, and T. Lebel, ‘Recent Trends in the Regime of Extreme Rainfall in the Central Sahel: RECENT TRENDS OF EXTREME RAINFALL IN THE WEST AFRICAN SAHEL’, *International Journal of Climatology* 34, no. 15 (December 2014): 3998–4006, <https://doi.org/10.1002/joc.3984>.

and his colleagues claim.³³ The claim made by Donat and his colleagues is supported by evidence given by the IPCC in its 2007 Assessment Report. The IPCC states that the influence of climate change in the southern parts of the Sahara has led to increased temperatures between 0.2°C-2.0°C in the Sahel.³⁴ The increase of temperatures has various severe consequences for the population in the Sahel region. Predictions, according to studies, say that an increase in temperature by approximately 3% could lead to a decrease in food production in the Sahel region by 15-25%.³⁵

Furthermore, the continuous estimated rising of temperature in the region would be sufficient to increase the amount of malnourished people in the Sahel in 2050 by 95%.³⁶ The increasing temperatures due to climate change have severe impacts on the fertility of the farmland and hence the production of food. Also, other factors influenced by climate change have drastically impacted food production and livelihoods of Sahel inhabitants. One of the most drastic weather impacts due to climate change is the amount of precipitation. The annual quantity of precipitation rates is very variable but usually less than 400mm/year in the southern Sahel regions.³⁷ The amount of annual precipitation differs vastly between the southern borders of the Sahel and its northern borders. In the northern parts of the Sahel, closer located to the Sahara, the precipitation amounts to approximately 200mm/year.³⁸ Mamadou and colleagues claim that there are three stressors across Africa and the Sahel that are predominant. These stressors are droughts, floods and winds.³⁹ Globally the Sahel region is one of the most prone regions for droughts.⁴⁰

In addition, Epule, Ford and Lwasa claim with evidence deriving from their cross-literature study in 2017, that adaption strategies to climate change need to take the three predominant climate stressors (wind, drought, flood) into account whenever developing adaption policies for the Sahel region.⁴¹ Additionally, Epule, Ford and Lwasa present a point of view on climate change, environmental degradation and various environmental problems that provides a different approach on the perception of environmental problems in Africa, specifically the Sahel region.

³³ Markus G. Donat et al., 'More Extreme Precipitation in the World's Dry and Wet Regions', *Nature Climate Change* 6, no. 5 (May 2016): 508–13, <https://doi.org/10.1038/nclimate2941>.

³⁴ Epule T E, Ford J D, and Lwasa S, 'Climate Change Stressors in the Sahel.', 1412.

³⁵ Kardjadj, Diallo, and Lancelot, *Transboundary Animal Diseases in Sahelian Africa and Connected Regions*, 5.

³⁶ Buwen Dong and Rowan Sutton, 'Dominant Role of Greenhouse-Gas Forcing in the Recovery of Sahel Rainfall', *Nature Climate Change* 5, no. 8 (August 2015): 757–60, <https://doi.org/10.1038/nclimate2664>.

³⁷ Kardjadj, Diallo, and Lancelot, *Transboundary Animal Diseases in Sahelian Africa and Connected Regions*, 5.

³⁸ Bin Wang, 'Fundamental Challenge in Simulation and Prediction of Summer Monsoon Rainfall', *Geophysical Research Letters* 32, no. 15 (2005): L15711, <https://doi.org/10.1029/2005GL022734>.

³⁹ Epule T E, Ford J D, and Lwasa S, 'Climate Change Stressors in the Sahel.', 1412.

⁴⁰ Epule T E, Ford J D, and Lwasa S, 1412.

⁴¹ Epule T E, Ford J D, and Lwasa S, 1419.

In their study, Epule, Ford and Lwasa conclude that a vast majority of literature in the field argues that most of the problems of environmental degradation are caused by climate change.⁴² However, according to the scholars and their study, it becomes evident that non-climatic drivers are gaining prominence in the influence of environmental problems.⁴³ The authors state concretely:

*“There is concrete evidence in the scientific literature across Africa and the Sahel that shows that most of the problems that Africa and the Sahel are facing ranging from environmental degradation, loss in forests, food insecurity, pandemics and epidemics and poverty are mainly caused by non-climatic variables such as deforestation, population growth, wars and unsustainable methods of land tenure such as shifting cultivation and slash and burn cultivation inter alia with climate change only playing a reinforcing role.”*⁴⁴⁴⁵⁴⁶

These findings are very interesting in the light of human induced climate change as they once again substantiate the impact humanity has on the destruction of the environment in the Sahel. Concluding the brief overview of climate change in the Sahel, it is to be noted that Africa and the Sahel are considered to be one of the most vulnerable regions affected by climate change, and that if the trends are not reversed and stopped, Africa will continue facing serious and dangerous problems. Estimates say that Africa will only be able to provide 13% of its food needs by 2050 without regressive developments in this sector, or the adoption of problem-orientated policies.⁴⁷ However, a step into the right direction has been taken in the past years, as this theme has been prominent throughout the international community. A variety of interlocutors are currently trying to tackle the problems of environmental change in the Sahel through programs, policies and adaptations that are persistently focusing to reduce climate vulnerability and increase resilience in the region.⁴⁸ Examples of stakeholders involved in

⁴² Epule T E, Ford J D, and Lwasa S, 1420.

⁴³ Epule T E, Ford J D, and Lwasa S, 1420.

⁴⁴ Epule T E, Ford J D, and Lwasa S, 1420.

⁴⁵ Paolo Billi, Yonas Tadesse Alemu, and Rossano Ciampalini, ‘Increased Frequency of Flash Floods in Dire Dawa, Ethiopia: Change in Rainfall Intensity or Human Impact?’, *Natural Hazards : Journal of the International Society for the Prevention and Mitigation of Natural Hazards* 76, no. 2 (2015): 1373–94, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11069-014-1554-0>.

⁴⁶ F. Kaly et al., ‘Variability of Mineral Dust Concentrations over West Africa Monitored by the Sahelian Dust Transect’, *Atmospheric Research* 164–165 (October 2015): 226–41, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.atmosres.2015.05.011>.

⁴⁷ Amato T. Evan et al., ‘The Past, Present and Future of African Dust’, *Nature* 531, no. 7595 (March 2016): 493–95, <https://doi.org/10.1038/nature17149>.

⁴⁸ Shuaib Lwasa, ‘A Systematic Review of Research on Climate Change Adaptation Policy and Practice in Africa and South Asia Deltas’, *Regional Environmental Change* 15, no. 5 (June 2015): 815–24, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10113-014-0715-8>.

establishing policies in protection of the environment are: local governments, indigenous peoples, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the African Development Bank (AfDB), the World Bank, as well as international organizations such as the United Nations.⁴⁹ Additionally, the UNFCCC also supports research and the AfDB has taken a leading role in the organization of the African Climate Change Fund, which seeks to increase the access of international climate finance to African countries.⁵⁰ The Sahel region is supported in the fight against climate change and its impact by the majority of the international community. Another supporting element in the fight against the adverse effects of climate change in the Sahel region is *The Conference of Parties (COP)*. The *Conference of Parties* represents a body which is responsible for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing implementation of the UNFCCC and consists of vast membership of the international community. The COP meets on an annual basis since 1995 and its members are the signatory and partying countries to the *Framework Convention*.⁵¹

It remains noteworthy that even though climate stressors are still dominant in the impact of environmental problems, such as environmental degradation, other stressors also play a vital role in the problem. Hence, not only are climate stressors responsible for such a devastating situation in the region, but also the non-climate related stressors, such as agricultural expansion, deforestation, occasioned by rapid population growth, have had an immense impact on the fragile situation in the region.⁵²

All in all, it has shown that the Sahel regions is one of the most vulnerable regions globally to climate change and that the consequences of human-induced climate change have severe impacts on the livelihoods of inhabitants in the Sahel. The development of temperatures, precipitation, droughts, wind and extreme weather conditions in the Sahel have developed negatively over the last century, with links to non-climatic stressors that need to be researched in more depth by the academic scholarship.

2.3 Climate induced migration in the Sahel

As discussed in the previous part of this chapter, the Sahel region is one of the poorest regions in the world and one of the most affected by climate change. As the scholarly discussion in the previous section has shown, a continuous change of the climate will lead to an increase in land degradation as a result of decreasing precipitation and increasing temperatures.⁵³

⁴⁹ Epule T E, Ford J D, and Lwasa S, 'Climate Change Stressors in the Sahel.', 1412.

⁵⁰ Epule T E, Ford J D, and Lwasa S, 1413.

⁵¹ Tume and Tanyanyiwa, *Climate Change Perception and Changing Agents in Africa & South Asia*.

⁵² Epule T E, Ford J D, and Lwasa S, 'Climate Change Stressors in the Sahel.', 1412.

⁵³ Land, *Migration and Environmental Change in the West African Sahel*, 11.

Today, the impacts of climate change on inhabitants of the Sahel, as well as their livelihoods, is one of the major concerns in the region that influence migration patterns and migration activities of farmers and local communities in the region.

While focusing on the western part of Africa and the WAS it is to be noted that West Africa accounts to the most mobile part of the continent. Particularly the inhabitants of the WAS have a long tradition of mobility that has been applied through multiple forms of migration approaches.⁵⁴

On the one hand, migration and human mobility has played a substantial role in the history of the Sahel region. Especially for Senegal, it is noteworthy to mention that the country has transformed its primary migration approaches in the past decades. Senegal used to be an immigration country for other African migrants, but since the 1980s it has turned into an emigration country as well as a transit country for people migrating to the Maghreb⁵⁵ and European countries.⁵⁶ Furthermore, the destinations of the migrants emigrating out of Senegal has changed in recent years. As Senegalese emigration led mostly to other African countries in the 1990s, currently, a majority of people emigrating out of Senegal aim to migrate intercontinental, with Europe being the most popular destination.⁵⁷

On the other hand, Mali, the second focal country in this thesis, has always been an emigration country and is still an important transit country for other west African migrants to reach northern African or European countries.⁵⁸

When talking about the issue of migration and migration resulting from impacts of climate change, it is important to understand that a vast majority of migration patterns in the WAS are prioritizing migration within the country or to neighbouring countries, and occur often as a phenomenon of seasonal mobility during the dry season.⁵⁹ This is supported by a working paper from a group of German research institutions that conducted research on *Migration, Climate and Environmental Changes in the Sahel* (micle), in which they claim that mobility in western Africa has been common since pre-historic times and occurs in both cyclical migrations, which are directly linked to agricultural production styles, and more permanent movements, which are

⁵⁴ David Rain, *Eaters of the Dry Season: Circular Labor Migration in the West African Sahel* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999).

⁵⁵ Authors note: The Maghreb region is the region in the north-western part of Africa, consisting out of the countries Algeria, Libya, Mauretania, Morocco, and Tunisia. They are all part of the Arab Maghreb Union

⁵⁶ Land, *Migration and Environmental Change in the West African Sahel*, 22.

⁵⁷ Senegal. Direction de la prévision et de la statistique., *Rapport de synthèses de la deuxième enquête sénégalaise auprès des ménages (ESAM-II)* ([Dakar]: La Direction, 2004).

⁵⁸ Land, *Migration and Environmental Change in the West African Sahel*, 22.

⁵⁹ Land, 12.

linked to the search for better economic opportunities.⁶⁰ This is consistent with the fact that, as mentioned above, the main economic activity for people from the rural WAS is agriculture, and therefore, the need to provide food from harvesting crops is evident.⁶¹ Mostly, while following a circular migration pattern, migrants retain a very strong bond and relationship to their home countries and communities, which increases the likelihood of them returning if they're solemnly migrated due to the lack of food production.⁶²

This claim by van der Land can be supported with evidence that in Senegal and Mali, internal migration accounts for the largest portion of movements. Furthermore, people tend to migrate mostly from rural to urban areas.⁶³ The trend to leave rural areas and migrate towards urban regions could be influenced by the lack of food production, and therefore, severe presence of poverty in the region. Thus, people are migrating to cities to try to find a job and receive some form of income so that they can provide their families in their home villages with a sufficient amount of food, water and other necessary goods.

As it becomes evident that internal migration accounts for a majority of the given migration patterns in the region, this thesis does not set a focus on the issue of internal migration. The focal point of this thesis is external, international migration due to climate change. There are various reasons why this thesis does not cover the topic of internal migration. One reason why internal migration receives no special attention in this work is the limited scope of the thesis. Yet, the more relevant aspect is the current status of internal migration, a topic that already receives a vast amount of recognition in the international community, scholarship and research, as well as a greater extent of protection globally (e.g. the UN Guiding Principles of Internal Displaced Persons).

Obviously, the distinction is not always easy, and to some extent, it is also necessary to mention the concept and patterns of internal migration. This is important to provide a better picture of the overall thematic approach to climate induced migration.

Interestingly, long-distance migration streams to urban and international areas actually decreases during times of droughts.⁶⁴ Sara Vigil argues in the chapter *Climate Change and Migration: Insights from the Sahel* in the book "*Out of Africa – Why People Migrate*", that an explanation for the decrease of urban and international migration in times of droughts can be

⁶⁰ Institut für Sozial-Ökologische Forschung, 'Micle Working Paper Micle, Migration, Climate & Environment Change in the Sahel', 2012, 5, <http://www.micle-project.net/Downloads.7.0.html>.

⁶¹ Land, *Migration and Environmental Change in the West African Sahel*, 15.

⁶² Land, 11.

⁶³ Guèye, Fall, and Tall, 'Climatic Perturbation and Urbanization in Senegal'.

⁶⁴ Sally E. Findley, 'Does Drought Increase Migration? A Study of Migration from Rural Mali during the 1983-1985 Drought', *International Migration Review* 28, no. 3 (1994): 539+.

found in the prioritization of people who will use the few assets they have to cover necessary basic needs instead of investing those assets into a migration journey on an international scale.⁶⁵ Therefore, one can say that migration requires at least some financial capital and this financial capital is not available for everyone.⁶⁶ Furthermore, Vigil states the most vulnerable populations are often those who are not in a position to migrate in times of environmental stress, which leaves them, once again, in despair and helpless.⁶⁷ Once again, this shows how interrelated and interdependent the pressing problems in the Sahel region are, and it gives a first insight into the complexity of the migration process. In the case study of the Sahel region, one can see very well the multiplicity, as well as the complexity, of the matter. Especially when trying to link climate change to migration, it is very important to always take the multidisciplinary process of migration into consideration.

Throughout the scholarly discussion, a consensus exists that migration can almost never be attributed to a single factor, for it is always a complex, interdependent and interrelated process which is highly influenced by various variables such as politics, economy, social structures, demographic factors as well as environmental influences.⁶⁸ In light of the complexity of the matter, the definition of the term ‘*environmental migrant*’ given by the *International Organization for Migration* (IOM) provides further insight into the clarification of migration due to environmental change.

“Persons or groups of persons who, predominantly for reasons of sudden or progressive change 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”⁶⁹

Furthermore, the IOM not only defines the people that are migrating due to environmental change, but also delivers a brief definition of the entire process of climate-induced migration generally.

“The movement of persons or groups of persons who, predominantly for reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are forced to leave their places of habitual

⁶⁵ Giovanni Carbone, *Out of Africa: why people migrate* (Milano: ISPI, 2017), 59.

⁶⁶ Sara Vigil, ‘Climate Change and Migration: Insights from the Sahel’, in *Out of Africa - Why People Migrate* (Milano, Italy: Ledizioni LediPublishing, 2017), 62.

⁶⁷ Vigil, 62.

⁶⁸ Richard Black et al., ‘Migration as Adaptation’, *Nature* 478, no. 7370 (October 2011): 447–49, <https://doi.org/10.1038/478477a>.

⁶⁹ ‘Glossary on Migration (2019)’, International Organization for Migration, 2019, 64, <https://www.iom.int/glossary-migration-2019>.

*residence, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move within or outside their country of origin or habitual residence.”*⁷⁰

The two given definitions of the matter are very important, since they show recognition of the problem from an international organization. Such recognition is very important to advocate and promote changes and developments on the subject.

Nevertheless, climate induced migration is not simply a result of sudden on-set climatic events that occur and force people to leave their livelihood. Climate induced migration is a far more complicated and complex phenomenon. It involves climatic stressors, slow on-set environmental change, sudden on-set events and also socio-economic structures in the given country. The impact that climate change can have on population movement also highly depends on pre-existing vulnerabilities in the population.⁷¹ Vigil states in her chapter *Climate Change and Migration: Insights from the Sahel* in the book *Out of Africa - Why People Migrate*, edited by Giovanni Carbone, that the question of whether people are forced to migrate on a permanent basis from their homes is highly dependent on factors such as pre-existing social relations (i.e. who is the most vulnerable) and post-disaster responses (i.e. what kind of aid or support is provided and to whom is it provided).⁷² This insight into the complexity of climate induced migration shows once again that migration is never a single factor phenomenon.

In support of this argument, *The Government Office for Science* in London identifies and categorizes five key drivers of migration that show the interdependence and interrelation within this topic. The Office states that the drivers of migration with the most influence are economic, social, political, demographic and environmental drivers.⁷³ In particular, the environmental driver for migration states explicitly that the influence of the environmental driver is acute for economies that are highly dependent on agriculture, fisheries and forestry and that a change in the ecosystem through environmental change is directly affecting the well-being of the population and raises the demands of migration.⁷⁴ When applying these results to the case study and the situation in the Sahel region, one can guess what a tremendous effect the migration driver of environment in this region has, especially since large parts of its economy are based on agriculture. Furthermore, extreme and sudden-onset environmental events can also have a major influence in migration streams and displacement either on a short-term or a long-term

⁷⁰ ‘Glossary on Migration (2019)’, 65.

⁷¹ Vigil, ‘Climate Change and Migration: Insights from the Sahel’, 52.

⁷² Vigil, 52.

⁷³ The Government Office for Science, ‘Foresight: Migration and Global Environmental Change’, Final Project Report (London, 2011), 44–45.

⁷⁴ The Government Office for Science, 45.

basis.⁷⁵ In addition to this, it should be mentioned that migration is only one of several possible responses and adaptation strategies to such sudden-onset events, and is mostly the choice of last resort.⁷⁶ However, as mentioned before, migration is multi-dimensional and consists of the relationship between all of the factors above, and the question of who returns after a short-term migration or displacement strongly depends on the other factors.⁷⁷ A very important role in the question of returnees from short-term migration and displacement is the socio-economic structure as well as the political situation in a given country.⁷⁸ By applying the theoretical approach delivered by *The Government Office for Science* on the focused region of the WAS, it becomes evident that approximately half of the countries inside the Sahel are listed by the *World Bank* as fragile states. Fragile states are countries with an extreme level of weak governance, political structures as well as a very low income in the general population.⁷⁹ When examining the poor political conditions in the WAS combined with the major development of climate change, it can be concluded that the WAS is a particularly vulnerable region where the effects of climate change can have a significant impact on migration flows, as they are facilitated and supported by an already weak governance structure. In later parts of this paper, the question of how such migratory flows can affect weak governance and fragile states in terms of political instability and the risk of violent conflict will be assessed and discussed.

2.4 Critical Assessment of the Climate-Induced Migration Nexus

This sub-chapter provides an overview of false research approaches and narratives that are common in the nexus of climate-induced migration and provides an outlook on future research approaches that can help policy makers in developing policies according to the needs of the situation.

First, it is important to mention that the role of the media in establishing false narratives is immense. However, the analysis of the extent of the media's influence is not included in this thesis, as its basis lies with the research approach of social sciences, political sciences and legal analysis. Thus, an assessment of the media influence would not fit into the research approach of this paper and would go beyond the limit of this thesis. However, not only the media provides a substantial part of flaws in the thematic of climate-induced migration. Also, policy makers tend to refer to maximum figures of people migrating due to impacts of climate change, labeling

⁷⁵ The Government Office for Science, 45.

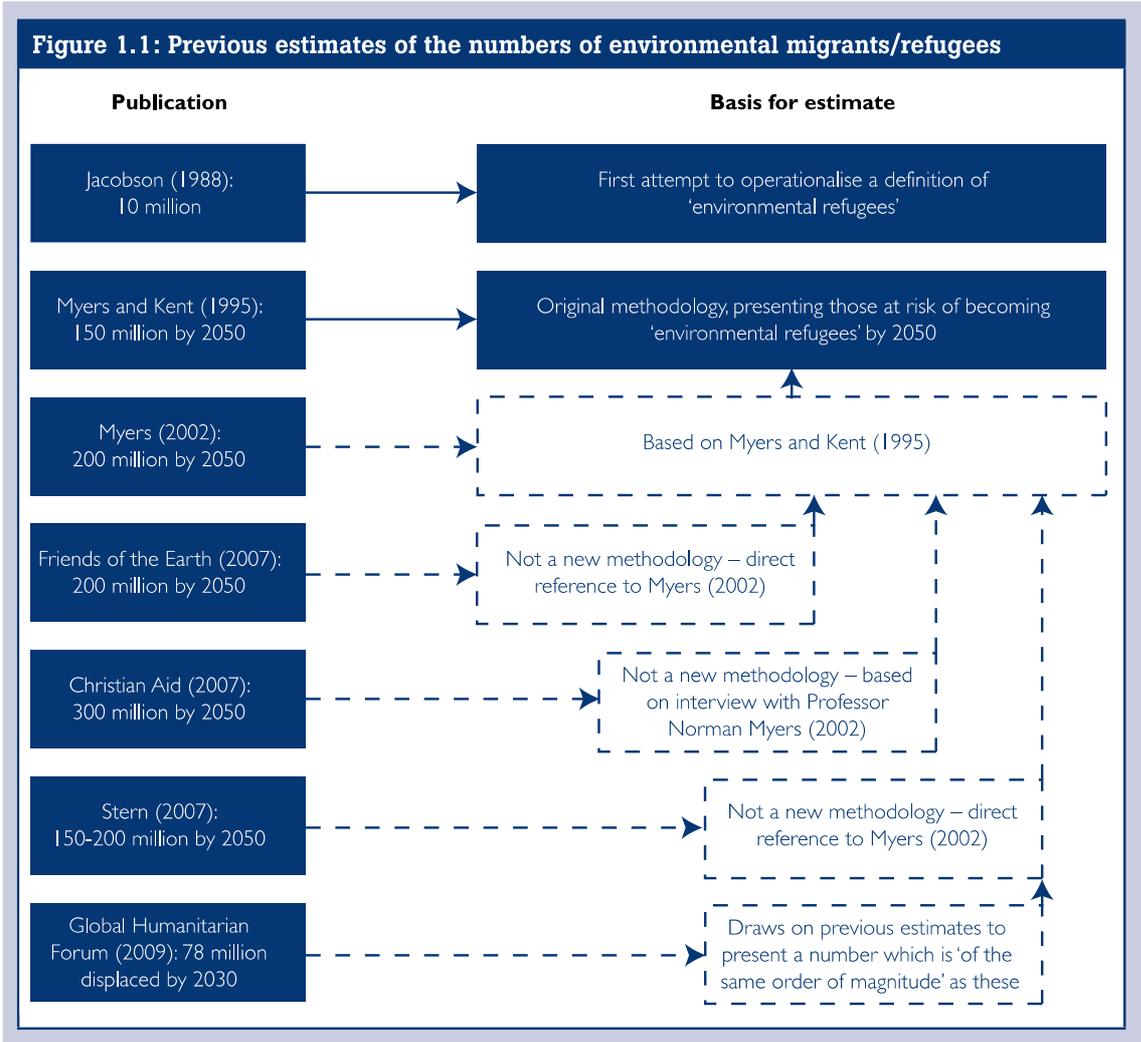
⁷⁶ The Government Office for Science, 45.

⁷⁷ The Government Office for Science, 45.

⁷⁸ The Government Office for Science, 45.

⁷⁹ Vigil, 'Climate Change and Migration: Insights from the Sahel', 54.

them as predictions.⁸⁰ Besides only referring to maximum figures of migrants, another problem in this approach of research and policy making arises as many of the existing estimates of environmental migrants only refer to one or two sources and therefore have been severely criticized.⁸¹ The final project report *Migration and Global Environmental Change* published by *The Government Office for Science* created a graphical figure which shows perfectly how the previous estimates have been conducted and how its flaws have influenced further literature ever since.



Graphic 2: *The Government Office for Science* (n57) 28.

It also shows the sources of the roots of many of the estimates and how this does not stand for a valid scientific set of data to provide for further estimate numbers of climate migrants. Additionally, scholars have criticised and questioned the validity of the estimates. One part of the critique is that the estimates do not distinguish between climate-induced migration and other

⁸⁰ Boas et al., 'Climate Migration Myths', 7.
⁸¹ The Government Office for Science, 'Foresight: Migration and Global Environmental Change', 27.

forms of migration.⁸² Furthermore, the general concept of estimated numbers is scrutinized. If one wants to establish a valid set of data to create a prediction of an estimated number of people migrating due to climate change, a distinction between climate-induced migration and other forms of migration must be made.⁸³ As discussed before in this thesis, it is very difficult to provide such a distinction, as the concept of migration is multidimensional, and hence, has multiple causes which make it almost impossible to predict a number of people fleeing their livelihoods solemnly due to environmental changes. In conclusion, the thematic aspect of the validity of the data and the usage of the data leads us to the question why media, governments and policy makers still use the data and predict estimated numbers of climate-induced migrants. The underlying motivation for policy makers to exaggerate such predictions has multiple sources. One of the most prominent, however, could be the intent of policy makers to take advantage of the exaggerations to support their politics, specifically the strengthening and the securitization of borders.⁸⁴ As this narrative creates the picture of climate-induced migration as a looming security crisis, it becomes evident that this narrative often lacks a sufficient empirical and scientific base.⁸⁵ Additionally, media and policy makers portray the migratory streams of climate-induced migration as streams that directly lead to violent conflicts. However, also in this portrayal of climate-induced migration, the lack of empirical data and evidence is major and such claims cannot be supported.⁸⁶ This leads to another flaw in the climate-induced migration research nexus that needs to be addressed in more articles.

All of the examples mentioned above share a common ground which can be identified as an oversimplified causal relationship between problems that are far more complex than the monocausal influence they are being attributed.

In addition to the critique already expressed, it is important to criticise the intention of research in the field of climate-induced migration and the arising challenges for peace and security. Boas and her colleagues claim that conducted research, with a focus on climate change and migration, often show political demands rather than trying to fill existing research gaps.⁸⁷ They support their argument with an example of a funding call from the *European Union* (EU) called *EU Horizon 2020* which follows the narrative of the securitization agenda and shows political interest rather than academic commitment to gain more “facts” in defence of their

⁸² The Government Office for Science, 28.

⁸³ The Government Office for Science, 30.

⁸⁴ Boas et al., ‘Climate Migration Myths’, 7.

⁸⁵ Boas et al., 4.

⁸⁶ François Gemenne et al., ‘Climate and Security: Evidence, Emerging Risks, and a New Agenda’, *Climatic Change : An Interdisciplinary, International Journal Devoted to the Description, Causes and Implications of Climatic Change* 123, no. 1 (2014): 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-014-1074-7>.

⁸⁷ Boas et al., ‘Climate Migration Myths’, 4.

interest in extending their border securitisation.⁸⁸ If the direction of research on climate-induced migration keeps moving in the direction of becoming a tool for political parties to justify border security measures, the danger enlarges, as such migration policies will be based on weak scientific data, and the narrative of climate-induced migration as a looming security crisis will persist.⁸⁹

Therefore, the scholarly field of climate-induced migration, and especially academics in consulting roles to policy makers, need to develop a new research approach that tackles the complex, interrelated and interconnected challenges from climate change and climate migration in future academic work. Boas and her colleagues present such an approach in their paper *Climate Migration Myths*.

They propose that this new approach to the research must first enable the question of whether climate change causes mass migration or not, thus deviating from reinforcing this assumption.⁹⁰ Secondly, the group of scholars around Boas proposes that the term migration does not capture the diverse ways in which people become mobile and should therefore be avoided.⁹¹ As mentioned in the chapter before, in the debate about terminology and definitions there is no consensus among scholars and the notion of climate migration is also commonly used.

As a third proposition in the new research approach, Boas and her colleagues claim that movement and migration belong to the globalized and interconnected world of today, and therefore, new research should address climate mobilities as the new normal rather than the exception.^{92,93}

The fourth point of their developed research approach tackles the problem of attempting to quantify and model mobility resulting from climate change. They argue that: “*Current climate migration models typically reinforce linear ‘crisis’ or ‘mass’-migration assumptions.*” Instead, policies should take the complexity and non-linear modelling into account.⁹⁴ Fifth, the group of scholars argue that in the new research approach, the involvement of affected populations, such as indigenous groups, local communities and farmers, needs to be emphasized and solutions to challenges posed by impacts of climate change, regardless of what nature, need to be developed together with the local communities.⁹⁵

⁸⁸ Boas et al., 5.

⁸⁹ Boas et al., 5.

⁹⁰ Boas et al., 6.

⁹¹ Boas et al., 6.

⁹² Boas et al., 7.

⁹³ Patrick Sakdapolrak et al., ‘Migration in a Changing Climate. Towards a Translocal Social Resilience Approach’, *DIE ERDE – Journal of the Geographical Society of Berlin* 147, no. 2 (30 June 2016): 81–94, <https://doi.org/10.12854/erde-147-6>.

⁹⁴ Boas et al., ‘Climate Migration Myths’, 7.

⁹⁵ Boas et al., 8.

Finally, the last proposition made by Boas and her colleagues states a shift of the focus from climate sensitive sending areas to the destination areas, mostly in the global north. They argue that climate mobility becomes a political or humanitarian problem through the policies developed by governments and international organisations, and that current global migration policies are defined by border securitisation, policies that shape an increasing fear of migrants among citizens.⁹⁶

Besides the group of scholars among Boas, other academics also advocate for a different research approach. For example, *The Government Office for Science* published their new conceptual approach which focuses on the current trends in migration rather than current developments in environmental changes. Secondly, it recognizes policy relevance rather than presuming migration as something that must be avoided.⁹⁷ Instead, migration can also be a mean of adaption to certain environmental stress.

In conclusion, it remains to be said that current research on the topic is often flawed and especially numerical predictions of climate migrants need to be viewed with a sceptical and critical eye. Furthermore, a shift of the research approach is desirable in the future towards a more academic perspective, rather than as a reinforcing tool for government policies to strengthen border securitisation, as is happening currently. Moreover, the trend of border securitisation raises another question: how are such people fleeing from impacts of climate change protected under the international legal framework.

3 International Law and Climate-Induced Migration

Due to environmental degradation, caused by humanity, many human beings in areas especially exposed to climate change are forcibly displaced. The resulting displaced persons are referred to as environmental migrants. They either become internally displaced persons (IDP's) inside domestic borders or cross international borders as a means of survival. Despite these migrants, migrating due to a lack of resources by various reasons, they are not directly protected under the international legal framework of refugee protection. Chapter 3 is aiming to analyze the current legal status of environmental migrants to provide an overview of the current rigid framework for the protection of environmental migrants. Furthermore, this chapter tries to assess developments, initiatives and some jurisprudence to display the efforts that are being taken by stakeholders in the field to ensure more protection to such a vulnerable group. To gain an overview of the current legal protection of environmental migrants, this chapter is assessing

⁹⁶ Boas et al., 8.

⁹⁷ The Government Office for Science, 'Foresight: Migration and Global Environmental Change', 31.

different international legal frameworks. First of all, the historical background of refugee protection is presented before then analyzing the protection granted under International Law, International Human Rights Law as well as domestic laws in the Sahel region. This chapter concludes with an outlook to possible shifts in International Law to ensure a greater protection for the vulnerable group of people threatened by anthropogenic climate change and the resulting degradation of land, sea level rise and destruction of crops for example by droughts.

3.1 Historical background of refugee protection

When thinking about the legal protection of refugees the most prominent protection mechanism to people is the 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*⁹⁸. However, the protection of refugees has been on the agenda of the international community long before 1951. Despite the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees being a major milestone in the protection of refugees the first international organization to address the importance and the protection of refugees was the *League of Nations*⁹⁹ (LoN). The *League of Nations* was founded after World War I ended, and the *Treaty of Versailles* was signed in the year 1919. The *League of Nations* was set out to establish peace after the devastating outcomes of World War I and followed the main goal of restoring and maintaining global peace. It was the first intergovernmental organization with members from all around the globe. In its establishment on January 10th, 1920, 42 member states founded the *League of Nations* after the 1919-1920 Paris Peace Conference.¹⁰⁰ After World War I, the Ottoman, the Austria-Hungarian as well as the Russian Empire collapsed. Followed by the collapse a big stream of populational flows occurred across Europe. Not only the fall of the Empire was cause to the movement of people but the reoccurring famines and civil wars after the fall of the empires took a substantial part.¹⁰¹ It is reported that after World War I and the fall of the Russian Empire, as many as one million Russian refugees fled their homeland and were distributed over entire Europe. Hence, those refugees were the first refugees in the 20th Century to receive international attention and protection.¹⁰²

As Labman continues to analyse in his book “*Looking Back, Moving Forward: The History and Future of Refugee Protection*” the *League of Nations* was in a situation in which it could tackle the issue of refugees. Therefore, in 1921 the *League of Nations* created a position called High

⁹⁸ UN General Assembly, ‘Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees’, Pub. L. No. Res 429(V) (1954).

⁹⁹ Shauna Labman, ‘Looking Back, Moving Forward: The History and Future of Refugee Protection’, *Looking Back*, n.d., 25., p. 2

¹⁰⁰ Ruth B. Henig, *The League of Nations*, 1 online resource (viii, 240 pages) : illustrations, maps. vols, Makers of the Modern World (London: Haus Pub., 2010), <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10491557>.

¹⁰¹ Labman, ‘Looking Back, Moving Forward: The History and Future of Refugee Protection’, 3.

¹⁰² Labman, 3.

Commissioner for Refugees and appointed the Norwegian Fridtjof Nansen as their High Commissioner.¹⁰³

Nansen incorporated and established many remarkable efforts in the protection of refugees. One of the widely known and most successful actions under Nansen's time in office was the so-called *Nansen Passport*. The *Nansen Passport* provided refugees with a document that allowed them to identify themselves and to travel across borders. In the beginning the Nansen Passport was only issued for Russian refugees but later was extended to be issued also for Armenians and other groups of refugees. However, the most important aspect of the *Nansen Passport* was that it gave refugees a legal document.¹⁰⁴

The policy practices of the *League of Nations* also in some part show an early picture of today's problems and debates in the refugee protection. It shows that the *League of Nation* understood the importance of equal distribution of refugees.¹⁰⁵ It is here to say that the above-mentioned *Nansen Passport* is known to be called as the "beginning of international refugee law".¹⁰⁶ The vast refugee crisis caused by the fall of the great empires after World War I gave Nansen and the League of Nations a taste of what was yet to come. With the seizure of power by Adolf Hitler's NSDAP-Party in Germany in 1933 the beginning of one of the darkest hours of history began.¹⁰⁷ With the Nazi regime in place in Germany a wave of migration started out of Germany in the 1930's. Hence, the protection and the scope of refugee's was extended to people fleeing out of Germany and since 1939 also Austria.¹⁰⁸ These developments were followed by the establishment of an *Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees* (ICR) during the Evian Conference in 1938, which primarily dealt with refugees from Germany and Austria who were in the fear of persecution due to their religion, political opinion or their race.¹⁰⁹

The extent of this refugee crisis only became clear with the end of World War II. The cruelties of the NS-Regime during World War II lead towards around 30 million refugees or displaced persons. Among them many soldiers who couldn't enter their home country due to a shift in geographical borders during the war.¹¹⁰

Already in 1943, the allied forces founded the *United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration* (UNRRA). The task of the UNRRA amounted to the repatriation of displaced

¹⁰³ Labman, 3.

¹⁰⁴ Labman, 3.

¹⁰⁵ Labman, 4.

¹⁰⁶ Claudena Skran, *Refugees in Inter-War Europe* (Oxford University Press, 1995), 105, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198273929.001.0001>.

¹⁰⁷ Michael Freund, *Das Dritte Reich, 1933-1939.*, Bücherei 'Bildung und Wissen' ([Gütersloh]: C. Bertelsmann, 1963), <http://swbplus.bsz-bw.de/bsz002011816inh.htm>.

¹⁰⁸ Nowak and Walter, „Flucht und Asyl in der Geschichte der Menschenrechte“, 173.

¹⁰⁹ Nowak and Walter, 173.

¹¹⁰ Nowak and Walter, 173.

persons.¹¹¹ It existed until 1947 and was replaced by *the International Refugee Organization* (IRO), which was founded in 1946 by the General Assembly of the United Nations as a UN specialized agency and took care of refugees in Europe and Asia as well as those people who had been left behind in camps¹¹². With the foundation of the United Nations in October 1945 the League of Nations was dissolved on April 18th, 1946.¹¹³ The foundation of the UN also marked the next milestone in the protection of refugees. In 1950 the *United Nations General Assembly* (UNGA) created the office for the *UN High Commissioner for Refugees* (UNHCR).¹¹⁴ This permanent institution substituted also the IRO and is up to this point still active and the key stakeholder in terms of protection of refugees.

Through the work of the UNHCR the UNGA adopted the *UN Convention on the Status of Refugees* in 1951. The Refugee Convention with its additional protocol adopted in 1967 marks one of the most important frameworks of refugee protection in International Law.

The following sub-chapter is analyzing the *UN Convention on the Status of Refugees* and its main provisions and principles before trying to point out the lack of recognition environmental migrants and refugees are facing under this convention.

3.2 International Refugee Law

As mentioned above the *United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* was established and adopted on July 28th, 1951.¹¹⁵ However it took almost three more years for the convention to come into force, which happened on April 22nd, 1954.

One of the major elements enshrined in the 1951 Convention is the definition of the term refugee. It defines which persons or group of persons are ought to be protected by the treaty. The 1951 Convention stipulates its definition of a refugee in its first chapter “General Provisions” in Article 1 (2) that it shall apply to any person who:

“As a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former

¹¹¹ Labman, ‘Looking Back, Moving Forward: The History and Future of Refugee Protection’, 8.

¹¹² Nowak and Walter, ‘Flucht und Asyl in der Geschichte der Menschenrechte’, 173.

¹¹³ ‘Vor 100 Jahren: Gründung Des Völkerbundes | Bpb’, accessed 29 June 2020, <https://www.bpb.de/politik/hintergrund-aktuell/302479/100-jahre-voelkerbund>.

¹¹⁴ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, ‘History of UNHCR’, UNHCR, accessed 29 June 2020, <https://www.unhcr.org/history-of-unhcr.html>.

¹¹⁵ UN General Assembly, Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

*habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.”*¹¹⁶

Before stipulating this definition on the term refugee, the UN Convention states that this definition is only attributable to persons affected by the occurred events in Europe before 1951.¹¹⁷ Hence, the scope for the protection of refugees remained very limited and was not to include refugee crisis and streams occurring after World War II. Therefore, the need for a revision of the 1951 Convention emerged shortly after. This much needed revision of the 1951 Convention was conducted through an additional protocol that was adopted in 1967. The 1967 *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees* removed the limitation in scope due to timely passed events.¹¹⁸ The Protocol ensured the universal application of the UN Convention on the Status of Refugees.

Before going into the analysis of the notion “refugee” and its relevance for environmental migrants, it is substantial to understand one of the most important principles that underpins the *1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*.

The principle of *non-refoulement* is defined by the *Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights* (OHCHR) as an essential protection under international human rights, refugee, humanitarian and customary law. Further, the OHCHR stipulates:

*“that the principle prohibits States from transferring or removing individuals from their jurisdiction or effective control when there are substantial grounds for believing that the person would be at risk of irreparable harm upon return, including persecution, torture, ill-treatment or other serious human rights violations“.*¹¹⁹

On a closer look to the UN Convention on the Status of Refugee’s this principle is enshrined in Article 33(1) which states that:

*“No Contracting State shall expel or return (“refouler”) a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion”*¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ UN General Assembly.

¹¹⁷ UN General Assembly.

¹¹⁸ UN General Assembly, ‘Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees’ (1967).

¹¹⁹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, ‘The Principle of Non-Refoulement under International Human Rights Law’ (Geneva: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, July 2018), <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Migration/GlobalCompactMigration/ThePrincipleNon-RefoulementUnderInternationalHumanRightsLaw.pdf>.

¹²⁰ Art (33) UN General Assembly, Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

It delivers the basis of refugee protection and is universally accepted as the groundwork of a functioning system of protection for people in desperate need, because they are not protected by their own state.

When considering the status of environmental migrants in international law it is necessary to reduce the use of terminology to a single notion. In this thesis I am using the notion of environmental migrant based on the arguments explained in the discussion about terminology in chapter 1.

Although it is known that the scholarly discussion delivers many different notions and terminology describing the flight from climate change, such as *climate-induced population movement, migration and climate change, climate change induced migrants, climate-induced displacement, climate migration* as well as many others, this work uses the notion of environmental migrants. Nevertheless, the discussion of the notion is developing rapidly and is from utmost importance as it brings different consequences with it. The background to the diversity of terminology is not only the difficulty, but also the resulting consequences under international law that need to be considered.¹²¹

By re-evaluating the definition of a “refugee” given by the *1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees* it prevails the consensus that environmental migrants do not fall under this definition of a conventional refugee. The definition set out by the Convention stresses that a refugee can only be considered as such if it is fleeing his or her home due to a well-founded fear of persecution.¹²² Therefore, it seems clear at first glance that environmental migrants are not considered as a refugee under the 1951 Convention. It seems to be impossible for environmental migrant to establish the necessary well-founded fear of persecution enshrined in the 1951 Convention.

Additionally, McAdam expresses that persons fleeing due to effects of climate change cannot be classified as refugees. The reasons pointed out by McAdam why people fleeing climate change cannot be categorized as refugees are consisting out of three different points.¹²³

- (1) The notion of refugee can only be applied to people who are fleeing across international borders.¹²⁴ Yet in most cases people fleeing from climate change are internally displaced.¹²⁵

¹²¹ Hanschel: Klimaflüchtlinge und das Völkerrecht (ZAR 2017, 1).

¹²² UN General Assembly, Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

¹²³ Jane McAdam, ‘Climate Change Displacement and International Law’, *UNHCR*, accessed 30 June 2020, <https://www.unhcr.org/4dff16e99.pdf>.

¹²⁴ McAdam, 7–8.

¹²⁵ McAdam, 6.

- (2) McAdam consents in the discussion and mentions the challenge as well in classification for climate change as a substantial ground of persecution. Even though, climate change leads to disasters and to displacement which is often harmful, they do not fulfill the definition of persecution.¹²⁶ In the scholarly discussion the consents about the identification of a so-called “persecutor” is still a key obstacle for people fleeing from climate change. However, such people are not being persecuted by their home government and therefore are not protected in the international legal refugee framework. Rather than being persecuted by their own state, the major contributions to accelerate climate change is deriving from industrial states in which climate refugees are eventually trying to receive protection from climate change. Thus, the persecuted person would to a certain extent flee into the arms of his persecutor, which is contrary to the provisions of the Refugee Convention.¹²⁷
- (3) Even if the impacts of climate change can be interpreted broadly as an aspect of persecution the international legal framework stipulates clearly that persecution is to be seen within the framework of religion, race, political opinion, nationality, or membership of a particular social group.¹²⁸ This is also in accordance to the opinion represented by the UNHCR which states that persecution is normally related to action by the authorities of a country. This is occurring either through direct persecution by authorities or through indirect persecution, in which the country allows people to be persecuted.¹²⁹

However, Addaney says in his work “The Legal Challenges of Offering Protection to Climate Refugees in Africa”, published recently in 2020 that the 1951 Convention needs to be interpreted in a broader more contemporary manner. He mentions the example of the conventions evolving interpretation of the term “refugee” by States which are starting to include various forms of gender-based violence in the interpretation of the definitional provision of persecution.¹³⁰

This point of view is contrary to McAdam’s who expressed her doubt in this matter in her report for the UNHCR in 2011. She argued:

¹²⁶ McAdam, ‘Climate Change Displacement and International Law’.

¹²⁷ Hanschel: Klimaflüchtlinge und das Völkerrecht, p.3.

¹²⁸ McAdam, ‘Climate Change Displacement and International Law’, 13.

¹²⁹ ‘Handbook on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status under the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol Relating...’, n.d., 39.

¹³⁰ Michael Addaney, ‘The Legal Challenges of Offering Protection to Climate Refugees in Africa’, in *Governance, Human Rights, and Political Transformation in Africa*, ed. Michael Addaney, Michael Gyan Nyarko, and Elsabé Boshoff (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2020), 333–58, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-27049-0_13, p.337

*“An argument that people affected by its impacts could constitute a ‘particular social group’ would be difficult to establish, because the law requires that the group must be connected by a fundamental, immutable characteristic other than the risk of persecution itself.”*¹³¹

In conclusion to the discussion of the applicability of, environmental migrants to the refugee protection mechanism, Hanschel summarizes the difficulties fittingly by stating that the challenges of escape caused by climate change are specific and require a response of their own. The situation may be different where the state reacts to climate-induced environmental change with serious human rights violations directed against a particular group.¹³²

Nonetheless, it has become evident that the *UN Convention on the Status of Refugees* does not offer any protection to people fleeing climate change. However, McAdam explains

“Since 2000, there have been a small number of cases in Australia and New Zealand where people from Tuvalu, Kiribati, and Tonga have sought to argue they should receive refugee protection from climate change impacts [...] All claims failed on the basis that the harm feared did not amount to persecution, and that there was no differential impact on the applicant”.¹³³

Also, it is unrealistic that the international community will be unified enough in its opinion to adopt an additional protocol to ensure people fleeing from climate change protection under the convention.

Furthermore, many state parties are in freight of adding a group of people to the legal framework of refugee protection, because they expect this to lead to a devaluing of the current protection for refugees.¹³⁴ Supporting this argumentation is also the reservation expressed by the UNHCR in their first report which is covering the topic of climate change, natural disaster and the terminological approach by the UNHCR. The UNHCR expressed its reservation for the terminology of refugee in a context of climate change as follows:

“UNHCR is actually of the opinion that the use of such terminology could potentially undermine the international legal regime for the protection of refugees whose rights and obligations are quite clearly defined and understood. It would also not be helpful to appear to imply a link and thus create confusion regarding the impact of climate change, environmental degradation and

¹³¹ McAdam, ‘Climate Change Displacement and International Law’, 13.

¹³² Hanschel: Klimaflüchtlinge und das Völkerrecht (ZAR 2017,1) p. 3

¹³³ Jane McAdam, *Climate Change, Forced Migration, and International Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 186.

¹³⁴ Addaney, ‘The Legal Challenges of Offering Protection to Climate Refugees in Africa’, 337.

migration and persecution that is at the root of a refugee fleeing a country of origin and seeking international protection “.¹³⁵

Addaney considers the reason for this attitude to be

*“the fear that expanding the conventional definition of ‘refugee’ to include both climate refugees and traditional refugees obscures elemental differences of experience between two groups especially as the nexus between climate refugees and their states has not been cut off through persecution.”*¹³⁶

An additional factor which is facilitating hesitation in this matter is the expected and vast increase in refugees if the group of environmental migrants would be incorporated in the definition of *the UN Convention on the Status of Refugees* by the international community.¹³⁷

After thoroughly evaluating the existing protection gaps in the *UN Convention on the Status of Refugees* for people fleeing climate change, the question arises if such people are somehow protected by other breaches of law.

In fact, a legal framework that offers protection to some extent is the International Human Rights Law (IHRL) framework.

3.3 International Human Rights Law

The enshrined rights in the IHRL are ought to be applicable and enjoyable by everyone. However, climate change can have severe impacts upon the enjoyment of human rights by individuals and groups.¹³⁸ The impacts can either be slow onset environmental degradation such as sea level rise, droughts and desertification, or rapid onset environmental degradation such as cyclones, hurricanes, tsunamis, storms and floods. Either way the degradation of the environment and therefore the livelihood of people living in areas especially vulnerable and affected by such events accelerated through climate change, have severe impacts on the enjoyment of various human rights. Rights restricted through such events can range between the right to food, water, health, housing and culture, but also to one of the biggest fundamental rights the right to life.¹³⁹

According to Addaney, climate refugees flee deprivation of their fundamental rights, such as the mentioned right to life, more than fleeing their home state to pursue a better standard of

¹³⁵ UNHCR, ‘Climate Change, Natural Disasters and Human Displacement: A UNHCR Perspective’, 14 August 2009, 9, <https://www.unhcr.org/4dff16e99.pdf>.

¹³⁶ Addaney (n 33) 337.

¹³⁷ Addaney, 337.

¹³⁸ Jane McAdam, ‘Climate Change, Forced Migration, and International Law’, *Utrecht Journal of International and European Law* 28 (29 June 2012): 52, <https://doi.org/10.5334/ujiel.bh>.

¹³⁹ ‘OHCHR | Committee Releases Statement on Climate Change and the Covenant’, accessed 8 July 2020, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23691&LangID=E>.

living in a more prosperous country.¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, Addaney states that climate refugees and political refugees share similarities in the need of legal protection. Addaney argues that the principle of non-refoulment should bear an equal moral requirement for political and climate refugees.¹⁴¹

In addition to this, recent development in the protection of climate refugee's shed a light of hope for the vulnerable, unprotected group. The UN Human Rights Committee issued a report of their views which caused new attention to the topic of the protection of climate refugees. The UN Human Rights Committee had received a complaint from a Kiribati individual in the year 2016 who was denied asylum in New Zealand and deported back to Kiribati.¹⁴² Following up on this individual communication, the Committee issued its report in January 2020, which gave hope for a breakthrough in the protection of climate refugees. The report stipulates that a state could be considered to breach its human rights obligation, if it sends an asylum seeker back to a country in which he/she is facing a serious risk to his/her life or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. This decision explicitly recognizes that a serious risk to life, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment could be seen due to effects of climate change.¹⁴³

Contrary to Addaney's point of view on the applicability of the principle of non-refoulment, the question arises whether the applicability of the non-refoulment under contemporary customary and treaty law for a climate refugee is given, since the principle of non-refoulment is stating a non-return to persecution, torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.¹⁴⁴ Clearly, climate-induced migration does not fulfil any of those required notions as climate induced displacement does not fulfil the criteria of the international definition of torture. The definition states the intentional infliction of severe pain or suffering practiced by a public official for a purpose such as obtaining a confession or punishing a certain individual.¹⁴⁵ The second element of the principle of non-refoulment, the cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment is also almost impossible to prove in the light of climate induced migration. To establish a claim of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment it needs to be shown that the treatment was causing bodily injury or intense physical or mental suffering or that the

¹⁴⁰ Addaney, 'The Legal Challenges of Offering Protection to Climate Refugees in Africa', 339.

¹⁴¹ Addaney, 339.

¹⁴² 'UN Landmark Case for People Displaced by Climate Change', accessed 21 July 2020, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/01/un-landmark-case-for-people-displaced-by-climate-change/>.

¹⁴³ United Nations Human Rights Committee, 'Ioane Teitiota v. New Zealand (Advance Unedited Version)', Pub. L. No. CCPR/C/127/D/2728/2016 (2020), /cases,HRC,5e26f7134.html.

¹⁴⁴ Guy S. Goodwin-Gill and Jane McAdam, *The Refugee in International Law*, 3rd ed (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 347–48.

¹⁴⁵ 'The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment' (Koninklijke Brill NV), Art. 1, accessed 20 July 2020, https://doi.org/10.1163/2210-7975_HRD-5555-20180011.

human dignity of the person was violated.¹⁴⁶ As all of the above mentioned criteria of the principle of non-refoulement are not fulfilled, one can say that the principle does not apply to the case of climate induced refugees. However, it is to be seen if the decision by the UN Human Rights Committee in January 2020 will change the status of the protection of climate refugees and give a change to provide climate refugees some protection under the international human rights framework.

3.4 International Law of Climate change

After evaluating the international human rights framework and its only broad protection of climate refugees, this thesis is now trying to establish to what extent environmental migrants are being protected by the international legal framework for climate change.

The amount of international law on climate change is scarce and hence does not offer specific protection for climate refugees. The international legal framework on the topic of climate change consists out of three major legal documents. *The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC), the *Kyoto Protocol* to the UNFCCC and the *2015 Paris Agreement*. Supplemented are these three legal documents with various agreements established during the annually meeting Conference of Parties.

All of the above do not directly target the problem of climate induced migration and the protection for climate refugees. However, the UNFCCC incorporated climate-induced migration into its agenda back in the year 2010 under an additional adaption framework (the Cancun Adaptation Framework).¹⁴⁷

Article 14 of the Cancun Adaptation Framework states:

*Invites all Parties to enhance action on adaption under the Cancun Adaptation Framework, taking into account their common but differentiated responsibilities and recent capabilities, and specific national and regional development priorities, objectives and circumstances, by undertaking, inter alia, the following:*¹⁴⁸

This section is followed by recommendations on how to address and plan actions to protect vulnerable groups, strengthen institutions and enhance capacity building.

¹⁴⁶ McAdam, *Climate Change, Forced Migration, and International Law*, 2012, 64.

¹⁴⁷ Addaney, 'The Legal Challenges of Offering Protection to Climate Refugees in Africa', 340.

¹⁴⁸ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 'Report of the Conference of the Parties on Its Sixteenth Session, Held in Cancun from 29 November to 10 December 2010', Pub. L. No. FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1, accessed 20 July 2020, <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf>.

Kälin argues that the recognition of climate induced migration is the key element of the Art. 14 of the Adaptation Framework and that the recognition in the Cancun Framework led to the 2012 UNFCCC Doha Decision which recognized climate-induced migration.¹⁴⁹

According to Addaney the 2015 Paris Agreement strengthens the UNFCCC mandate, as paragraph 50 is requesting the establishment of a task force. This task force shall “*develop recommendations for integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change*”.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore the 2015 Paris Agreement has reached progress on this matter by including migrants in its Preamble and acknowledging that climate change is a concern of humankind, especially to people in vulnerable situations.¹⁵¹ However, all of the legal frameworks on climate change which also tackle the issue of climate-induced migration mentioned above are yet from recommendational nature and do not offer a thorough protection framework for environmental migrants.

They show that parts of the international community are aware of the need of the protection and incorporation of climate refugees in the international legal framework, but so far there is no solid legal protection.

This leads to the question on how to fill the protection gap for environmental migrants in the international legal framework. The discussion on this topic is very diverse, however, many scholars share the view that the only valid possibility to legally protect environmental migrants is a new treaty specifically designed and established for environmental migrants, which could allocate them a separate category as refugees.

3.5 Proposals for International Legal Protection

Many scholars express that realistically the adoption of a new treaty is hard to achieve and propose alternatives on filling the protection.

Scholars represented in this discussion are on the one hand Giannini and Docherty who argue that the existing protection gap for environmental migrants can only be filled by adopting a new international treaty.¹⁵² On the other hand scholars such as Prieur argue in favour of adding a new human right to safe environment in connection with a new universal recognition of the human rights of environmental migrants.¹⁵³ On general terms this thesis agrees with the need

¹⁴⁹ Walter Kälin, ‘From the Nansen Principles to the Nansen Initiative’, no. 41 (2012): 49.

¹⁵⁰ Addaney, ‘The Legal Challenges of Offering Protection to Climate Refugees in Africa’, 341.

¹⁵¹ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, ‘Adoption of the Paris Agreement’ (2015), <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/109r01.pdf>.

¹⁵² B. Docherty and T. Giannini, ‘Confronting a Rising Tide: A Proposal for a Convention on Climate Change Refugees’, *HARVARD ENVIRONMENTAL LAW REVIEW* 33, no. 2 (2009): 349.

¹⁵³ Michel Prieur, ‘Draft Convention on the International Status of Environmentally-Displaced Persons’, *The Urban Lawyer* 42/43 (1 September 2010): 257, <https://doi.org/10.2307/41307740>.

for a new international treaty for the protection of climate refugees, yet a development of such a treaty takes a considerable amount of time but the process of climate induced migration and the suffering of climate refugees is already occurring globally.

Therefore, this work should take the position that the protection gap for climate refugees needs to be filled as soon as possible and this cannot be done by adopting a new treaty. A new treaty on climate refugees is a goal that needs to be achieved over the next years, if not decades, and is in desperate need of fulfillment but for the current protection of climate refugees other solutions need to be identified.

A suitable short-term solution as well as transit solution towards a treaty on the protection of climate refugees was given by Williams. She agrees on the general idea of a new treaty proposed by Docherty and Giannini but sees the solution towards the gap in the protection of climate refugees in regional agreements.¹⁵⁴ She bases her argumentation on her idea on the UNFCCC, in which she sees an effective instrument for the coordination of regional protections, and the Kyoto Protocol. She argues that both of those legal instruments ask for regional cooperation.¹⁵⁵ Williams is supported in her opinion by McAdam who argues “*that regional agreements can effectively fill the legal protection gaps for climate refugees due to similarities in cultural, geographical, and family ties within regions, adaptation capabilities of countries and the possibility of internal and migration to neighboring countries.*” Furthermore regional agreements have the possibility to facilitate the communication between countries on different factors.¹⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the question of how regional agreements can deliver protection in a phenomenon which has a global dimension is yet to be discussed in the coming years and the need for an international treaty on the protection for climate refugees is unmissable. Hence it can only be a matter of time before the international community will be compelled to deal with the establishment of such a treaty.

3.6 The Protection of Environmental Migrants in Regional Mechanisms: An African Approach

As this thesis is evaluating the effects of climate induced migration in the Sahel region in western Africa, the following sections tackle the regional protection mechanism by the African Union (AU) and tries to show efforts on filling the legal protection gap for climate refugees.

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the 1951 Refugee Convention only delivers a very narrow definition of people belonging to the protected group of refugees. However, the

¹⁵⁴ ANGELA WILLIAMS, ‘Turning the Tide: Recognizing Climate Change Refugees in International Law’, *Law & Policy* 30, no. 4 (2008): 502, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9930.2008.00290.x>.

¹⁵⁵ WILLIAMS, 502.

¹⁵⁶ Addaney, ‘The Legal Challenges of Offering Protection to Climate Refugees in Africa’, 342.

African regional instrument delivers a broader definition of refugees. Under this regional instrument people that are migrating or fleeing natural disasters have a potential protection.¹⁵⁷ The definition of the terminology of a refugee in the 1951 Refugee Convention is extended by the *Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa*.

The 1969 Convention of the *Organisation of African Unity* (OAU) delivers broader concept of refugees which can encompass environmental migrants. Article 1(2) of the OAU Convention tackles the definition of the term refugee. After restating in paragraph one the refugee definition provided by the 1951 Convention, the OAU Convention follows with paragraph two to extend the scope of the term.

*The term "refugee" shall also apply to every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality.*¹⁵⁸

A closer look at the OAU Convention raises assumption that there is a possibility of environmental migrants receiving protection in this regional framework.

Especially the section mentioning

*[...] events that are seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence to seek refuge [...]*¹⁵⁹

can encompass cross-border migration due to climate change, since they are triggered and accelerated by environmental disasters or slow-onset degradation. Furthermore Addaney outlines the importance of article 2(1) of the 1969 Convention as it stands for one of the most significant contributions to refugee jurisprudence.¹⁶⁰ Article 2(1) states that “*granting asylum to refugees is a peaceful and humanitarian act which shall not be treated as an unfriendly act by any member state*”.¹⁶¹

Addaney furthermore states that the principle of solidarity and humanitarianism, which has been demonstrated before during the struggle of liberation can become a central role in the discussion of regional mechanisms to protect climate refugees.¹⁶² Addaney continues by saying

¹⁵⁷ Addaney, 342.

¹⁵⁸ Organization of African Unity (OAU), ‘Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa’, Pub. L. No. 1001 U.N.T.S 45 (1969).

¹⁵⁹ Organization of African Unity (OAU).

¹⁶⁰ Addaney, ‘The Legal Challenges of Offering Protection to Climate Refugees in Africa’, 344.

¹⁶¹ ‘CONVENTION GOVERNING THE SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF REFUGEE PROBLEMS IN AFRICA’, n.d., 8. Art 2(1).

¹⁶² Addaney, ‘The Legal Challenges of Offering Protection to Climate Refugees in Africa’, 344.

that emerging regional solidarity could be invoked to justify a moral, possibly also legal, obligation of states to provide assistance to states that are more affected by climate change and thus climate induced migration, by admitting their citizens into their state on the humanitarian grounds.¹⁶³

Furthermore, to the 1969 OAU Convention, in 2009 the Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) was adopted and therefore provides a further development in the regional protection of environmental migrants. Even though the *Kampala Convention* mostly deals with internally displaced persons (IDPs), hence to people displaced inside state borders, Addaney examines that when read in combination with the 1969 OAU Convention as well as the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (African Charter), that numerous provisions in the Kampala Convention may offer some protection for climate refugees in Africa.¹⁶⁴

The provision mentioned by Addaney tackles the definition of IDPs and is enshrined in article 1(k) of the Kampala Convention and states as follows:

*“Internally Displaced Persons” means persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border;*¹⁶⁵

The significance in this provision of the Kampala Convention lies in the recognition of the link between climate change and migration.¹⁶⁶ However, the provision clearly states the scope of internally displaced persons and not across international borders. Strengthening the link between climate change and migration is also article 5(4) of the Kampala Convention which states that parties to the Convention shall take measures for IDPs due to natural disasters, as well as climate change. In this article climate change is once again specifically mentioned as well.

Addaney finally states the point that a case can be made in order to offer legal protection to climate refugees when reading the 1969 OAU Convention together with article 1(2) and article 5(4) of the Kampala Convention.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶³ Organization of African Unity (OAU), Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa.

¹⁶⁴ Addaney, 'The Legal Challenges of Offering Protection to Climate Refugees in Africa', 347.

¹⁶⁵ African Union, 'African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa ("Kampala Convention")' (2012).

¹⁶⁶ Addaney, 'The Legal Challenges of Offering Protection to Climate Refugees in Africa', 347.

¹⁶⁷ Addaney, 348.

In conclusion, it was elaborated that there is an existing protection gap for people fleeing their livelihoods due to effects of climate change. It is recognized by almost all scholars that climate refugees are not protected under the prominent 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees. Firstly, because the “perpetrators” (countries who are accelerating the effects of climate change due to their economical approach) are often countries in which people are seeking refuge. Secondly, and more importantly, because the definition of the 1951 Convention has a very limited and narrow definition of the term refugee which is not including the flight from climate change.

Despite not being protected by the 1951 Convention climate refugees are to some extent protected by the international human rights law framework. As every other individual they are enshrined to enjoy their human rights, which are universally recognized. In addition to this, the new ruling by the UN Human Rights committee is giving hope towards a change in the protection of climate refugees.

With a closer look to the protection of climate refugees in the Sahel region and Africa in general, the regional framework is in support of the protection of climate refugees as it is recognizing the cause of climate change as a definitory and substantial element of the notion of the concept of a refugee.

It remains to be said that the protection of climate refugees in international law is still insufficient and that there is a great need for renewal in this field.

4 Challenges for Peace and Security in the Sahel – The Influence of Climate-Induced Migration

The Sahel region is known as one of the most dangerous regions globally. Reaching from the eastern borders of Somalia, through Chad and Mali to the western borders of Mauritania, the region faces multiple armed conflicts, wars and political instability. Nonetheless, in recent developments, one can identify progress to some extent in promoting democracy and sustaining peace.

This chapter outlines the current situation of peace and security in the West African Sahel with a focal point of Mali. Furthermore, the general protection mechanisms for peace and security in Africa will be discussed to provide a detailed assessment of the current fragile political situation and the peace and security status. Thereby, the focus of this thesis lies on the geopolitical situation and the situation of peace, security and different forms of conflict in the region. It is to note that different notions of security play a vital role in the assessment of impacts due to climate-induced migration, such as the notion of human security. However, the

discussion of human security and impacts of climate change and migration do not find special attention in this work, as the focal point with regard to a peace and security approach is concentrated on national security.

After examining the protection mechanisms in place, the following sections investigate how climate-induced migration effects peace and security in the Sahel. This chapter concludes by introducing different stakeholders in the region, how their policies and actions influence the protection of peace and security, what measures have been conducted to promote peace, and which sections have been neglected and need to be addressed more dominantly in the future.

As discussed in previous chapters, climate-induced migration often becomes a very important adaptation strategy for people heavily affected by climate change. Furthermore, climate change also impacts situations of peace, security and political stability on multiple levels, mostly in regions that are already extremely vulnerable to other factors impacting instability such as weak governance and poverty.¹⁶⁸

4.1 Peace and Security Protection Mechanisms and the current Situation in the West African Sahel

The establishment of a stable peace and security mechanism does not develop through a single impetus. It is the result of historical developments, specifically, a dynamic interaction between multiple stakeholders, institutions, governments and local communities that are trying to interact on a basis of common interests.¹⁶⁹ In Europe, this peace and security protection mechanism has developed over decades since the eruption and end of World War II. In contrast to the European protection mechanism, which has been in place for some time, African states are still trying to establish such a protection mechanism on a multidimensional level. The protection mechanism covers national, sub regional and regional levels, with the African Union acting on a continental level.¹⁷⁰

The fundamental objectives of the African Union (AU), which was founded officially 2002 in Durban, are to:

“Promote peace, security, and stability on the continent;

Promote democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance;

¹⁶⁸ Valentina Bosetti, Cristina Cattaneo, and Giovanni Peri, *Should They Stay or Should They Go? : Climate Migrants and Local Conflicts*, NBER Working Paper Series ; 24447 (Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2018), 24, <http://papers.nber.org/papers/w24447>.

¹⁶⁹ Hans-Georg Ehrhart, Michael Staack, and Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, *Sicherheits- und Friedensordnungen in Afrika Nationale und regionale Herausforderungen.*, 2019, 7.

¹⁷⁰ Ehrhart, Staack, and Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 7.

Promote and protect human and peoples' rights in accordance with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and other relevant human rights instruments;"¹⁷¹

These objectives expressed directly by the AU show that the intergovernmental institution wants to emphasise their goal of establishing and consolidating a strong protection mechanism in terms of peace and security, hence the special attention that is given.

Furthermore, the AU forms the basis for the development of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). Also, the *Peace and Security Council* (PSC) of the AU has extensive authorities. The PSC mandates peacebuilding and peacekeeping operations on the entire continent and is the main pillar in the APSA. The APSA consists of five pillars, the other pillars being: *The Panel of the Wise*, *Continental Early Warning System* (CEWS), *African Standby Force* (ASF), and lastly *the Peace fund*.¹⁷²

Recent developments in the region with an increase in terrorism and crimes have led to the establishment of two regional initiatives in western Africa. On the one hand, in 2014 the G5-Sahel was established as an institutional framework for the coordination of regional cooperation in development policies and security matters in western Africa, with the goal of combatting terrorism and promoting democracy and good governance.¹⁷³ Members of the G5 Sahel are Mali, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad.¹⁷⁴

On the other hand, the second regional initiative that has been established in reaction to the increasing criminality, radicalism and terrorism in the region is the *Multinational Joint Task Force* (MNJTF). The main objective of MNJTF is to end the atrocities conducted by the terroristic group *Boko Haram*. This briefly describes the institutional framework of peace and security promotion and protection in Africa with a focal attention of WAS.

4.2 Current status on Peace and Security in the Sahel

According to the *Heidelberg Conflict Barometer*, the Sub-Saharan Africa region accounted for the third most violent conflicts and wars globally in 2019, with only the Middle East and the Maghreb region being more affected by violent conflicts.¹⁷⁵ Nevertheless, this negative portrayal does not entirely account for the developments in the region. Recent developments in successful elections have made vast progress in the consolidation of democracy in the Sahel region. Elections were held in Nigeria, which is not located in WAS but regardless has a huge

¹⁷¹ 'About the African Union | African Union', accessed 9 August 2020, <https://au.int/en/overview>.

¹⁷² 'The Peace & Security Council | African Union', accessed 9 August 2020, <https://au.int/en/psc>.

¹⁷³ 'G5 SAHEL - Accueil', accessed 9 August 2020, <https://g5sahel.org/presentation>.

¹⁷⁴ 'G5 SAHEL - Accueil'.

¹⁷⁵ Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research, 'Conflict Barometer (2019)', 56.

impact on the entire Sahel region as one of the most powerful and populated countries. Additionally, elections were held as well in Senegal and Mauritania.¹⁷⁶

However, armed conflicts and violence are to this date still prevailing in the Sahel region. Especially Mali has been under the influence of multiple violent confrontations. In addition to this, the *United Nations Office for Western Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS)* stated in 2019: “*the volatile security in the entire Sahel, where escalating violence and insecurity have sparked an unprecedented humanitarian crisis leaving a total of 5.1 million Burkinabe, Nigerians and Malians in need.*”¹⁷⁷

Additionally, the political instability in Mali has facilitated the rise of terrorist groups, which led to a spike of armed attacks against villagers in 2018.¹⁷⁸ This leads to the assumption, which in many violent conflicts becomes reality, that civilians are the most affected victims by unstable situations. This occurs either directly through the abovementioned attacks on their villages, or indirectly with people being forced to leave their livelihoods.¹⁷⁹ A reason for leaving their local communities is often the violent request of militias, terrorist groups or thieves to hand over cattle resulting in the inability to provide food production and harvest their fields.¹⁸⁰ Furthermore, local authorities in the form of village chiefs or religious leaders either lost their acceptance among their communities or became targets of terrorist groups. By targeting these individuals, a major pillar in local stabilization is diminished, resulting in turmoil on a regional and local level.¹⁸¹

However, not only civilians are in danger due to the violent attacks in Mali, but also security forces and government agents are a major target. An example from November 2019 in which at least 49 soldiers were killed during an attack on a military camp in northeast Mali is just one of many that shows the catastrophic development of the situation in the region.¹⁸²

At the same time, atrocities committed by armed forces during counter-terrorism operations also compounded the situation of human rights in Mali, according to a Human Rights Watch report published in 2019.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁶ ‘West Africa and the Sahel, between Security Challenges and the Need to Consolidate Peace’, UNOWAS, 3 December 2019, <https://unowas.unmissions.org/west-africa-and-sahel-between-security-challenges-and-need-consolidate-peace>.

¹⁷⁷ ‘West Africa and the Sahel, between Security Challenges and the Need to Consolidate Peace’.

¹⁷⁸ ‘World Report 2019: Rights Trends in Mali’, Human Rights Watch, 4 January 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/mali>.

¹⁷⁹ Thomas Schiller, ‘The Situation in the Sahel - Consequences for International Engagement in the Region’, International Reports (Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 4 July 2020), 60.

¹⁸⁰ Schiller, 60.

¹⁸¹ Schiller, 61.

¹⁸² Schiller, 60–61.

¹⁸³ ‘World Report 2019’.

The current instable and insecure status in Mali finds its origins in the past. International stakeholders and interlocutors have been involved in the Mali and in the Sahel since 2012-2013. January 2013 marks the beginning of the engagement of international armed forces in Mali. Former French president Hollande presented himself as a key actor and driving force in deciding on the deployment of troops to Mali with the aim of preventing terrorist groups in the northern part of Mali to advance to the southern part.¹⁸⁴ The military initiative, believed to have been successful, was named *Operation Serval*. According to Boeke and Schuurmann, a third of the approximately 2000 Islamic fighters were killed during the course of four months.¹⁸⁵ However, though on a short-term basis the military intervention was seen as successful, Boeke and Schuurmann claim:

*“As the interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq have shown, initial military success does not guarantee long-term strategic gain. France launched Operation ‘Serval’ to halt an Islamist offensive on politically fragile and embattled southern Mali. During the operation, these limited objectives expanded to reconquering of all of the territory held by rebel forces. By intervening, France secured key regional political and economic interests in the short term, at the cost of becoming coproprietor of a complex set of security and governance problems in Mali.”*¹⁸⁶

Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that, despite the engagement of the international community with the *Operation Serval* and its short-term success, the security situation in Mali and the Sahel in general has continued to worsen since the end of the operation in 2014. According to ACLED, an NGO that specializes in conflict analysis, the Sahel hosts more multiple, moving threats now than it did in 2018, with Mali being one of the top three states in the region in terms of violence rates.¹⁸⁷ This trend shows that the contemporary situation of political stability, peace and security has not improved. In addition to this, not only has violence increased in the Sahel in the last two years, but trends show that between 2014 and 2019 political violence in the Sahel has also increased drastically.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁴ Sergei Boeke and Bart Schuurman, ‘Operation “Serval”: A Strategic Analysis of the French Intervention in Mali, 2013–2014’, *Journal of Strategic Studies* 38, no. 6 (19 September 2015): 801, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2015.1045494>.

¹⁸⁵ Boeke and Schuurman, 801.

¹⁸⁶ Boeke and Schuurman, 802.

¹⁸⁷ ACLED, ‘Ten Conflicts to Worry About in 2020’ (ACLED, January 2020), 3.

¹⁸⁸ Schiller, ‘The Situation in the Sahel - Consequences for International Engagement in the Region’, 60.

A reason for this can also be found in the poor condition of the military in Mali. Substantial parts of the country have fallen under the territorial claim of terrorist groups. This leads to the fact that more and more self-defence is being organized through Militias, which inevitably continue to reduce stability and security in the country.¹⁸⁹

Many of the violent and armed groups in the region that are a major part of the instability and insecurity show to some extent Islamic tendencies. Islamist groups are prevailing in the region with their struggle for international power.¹⁹⁰ Particularly, in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger Islamist groups are targeting government facilities and agents, as well as civilians, leaving large number of people displaced.¹⁹¹ Islamist groups that are dominant in the region and are creating insecurity are: *The Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (GSIM)*, also known under the name: *Jama'at Nusrat Al-Islam Wa Al-Muslimeen (JNIM)* and *Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS)*.¹⁹² These groups are jihadist organizations, and some of them have a direct relationship as a subgroup of Al-Qaeda.¹⁹³ However, it remains to be stated that the instable and insecure situation in Mali and other parts of the Sahel is not simply a fight against terroristic organizations. It has a more diverse and complex background and is often fueled by local and ethnic conflicts between farmers, as well as armed militias and organized crime.¹⁹⁴ Nevertheless, as mentioned above, it is not a singular factor that causes instability and insecurity in the region. Despite the violent conflicts caused by armed groups, other factors also play a vital role in the emergence of conflict in the region. These factors are diverse and can be attributed to demographic growth and the increase of population, as well as the lack of prosperous futures for young people, and the incapability of the leadership in the region in providing education, assistance and safe structures.¹⁹⁵ All in all, one can note that Mali in particular can be considered as a fragile state, and therefore, is even more vulnerable to the outbreak of violence. Also, origins of the current crisis can be attributed to the history of fragility of states in the Sahel region.¹⁹⁶

¹⁸⁹ Schiller, 60.

¹⁹⁰ Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research, 'Conflict Barometer (2019)', 56.

¹⁹¹ Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research, 56.

¹⁹² European Council on Foreign Relations, 'The Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam Wa al-Muslimeen), JNIM) - Mapping Armed Groups in Mali and the Sahel', Mapping Armed Groups in Mali and the Sahel, accessed 10 August 2020, https://www.ecfr.eu/mena/sahel_mapping/jnim#menuarea.

¹⁹³ 'Mali : Amadou Koufa, Le Visage Peul d'Al-Qaïda – Jeune Afrique', accessed 10 August 2020, <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/mag/665565/politique/mali-amadou-koufa-le-visage-peul-dal-qaida/>.

¹⁹⁴ Schiller, 'The Situation in the Sahel - Consequences for International Engagement in the Region', 60.

¹⁹⁵ Schiller, 61.

¹⁹⁶ Schiller, 61–62.

Returning to the focal research topic of this thesis, the impact of climate-induced migration on conflicts will be examined to determine the extent to which climate-induced migration poses a threat to fragile states such as Mali.

4.3 The Influence of Climate-Induced Migration on Peace and Security

After discussing the existing protection mechanism for peace and security in the Sahel region with a focus on Mali as one of the most insecure and fragile states, the lack of scientific data surrounding climate-induced migration becomes particularly problematic and controversial, for it is more difficult to determine the direct effect of migration on the emergence of armed conflicts. The literature on this topic has shown different conclusions and drawn a lot of criticism of the validity of the data and of the flawed use of causal relationships.

Firstly, it is very important to consider the complexity of the phenomenon of climate-induced migration as explained in detail in chapter two of this thesis while evaluating the influence on peace and security and possible armed conflicts.

According to a report published by the *Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development* (OECD) in 2012, climate change has become a global political issue and the idea of a close link between environmental change and the outbreak of violent conflicts has emerged in international politics. Furthermore, the OECD argues that the Sahel region is an example where climate-driven conflicts are emerging.¹⁹⁷

In addition to this, the report additionally links the concept of *Malthusianism*¹⁹⁸ to the idea that climate change can lead to instability and endanger peace and security due to the scarcity of resources in food and water which then lead to poverty and fights for resources.¹⁹⁹

Nonetheless, the above-mentioned phenomenon of Malthusianism mainly focuses on the singular impact that climate change has on armed conflicts due to resource scarcity, and does not mention the link to migration, which is a supplemental factor leading to armed conflicts.

Also, in this article written by Heinrigs and colleagues and published by the OECD, many of the correlations are flawed, as they presume that climate change can be a direct cause for

¹⁹⁷ Philipp. Heinrigs et al., *Global Security Risks and West Africa : Development Challenges*, West African Studies, 2074-353X ([Paris]: OECD, Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat, 2012), 78, <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10559282>.

¹⁹⁸ Malthusianism: „Thomas Robert Malthus' (1766–1834) *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798) whose contribution is typically (and somewhat unfairly in light of his later writings) summarized as stating that natural checks, such as limited food production capabilities, will inevitably result in famines and wars, which will in turn reduce population sizes to much smaller and ultimately more sustainable levels” – extracted from: Pierre Desrochers and Christine Hoffbauer, ‘The Post War Intellectual Roots of the Population Bomb. Fairfield Osborn’s “Our Plundered Planet” and William Vogt’s “Road to Survival” in Retrospect’, *Electronic Journal of Sustainable Development* 1 (1 January 2009): 40.

¹⁹⁹ Heinrigs et al., *Global Security Risks and West Africa : Development Challenges*, 79.

conflicts. However, recent literature has shown that migration and climate change only play a supplemental role in emerging armed conflicts and studies could not provide a clear causal link between climate change, armed conflict and migration.²⁰⁰ The major causes of armed conflicts are almost always socio-economic and political in nature, and climate change plays only a facilitating role in revealing weak governances, infrastructures and other problems in the respective countries of the Sahel. Therefore, the Malthusian paradigm creates disagreement among researchers.²⁰¹

Nonetheless, other scholars state that climatic events such as warming, droughts and other extreme weather conditions can be identified as drivers that play a meaningful role in causing internal conflicts.²⁰² Nevertheless, Burke and colleagues state that climatic drivers can have a meaningful influence.

In addition to Burke's claims, the scholars Abel, Brottrager, Crespo and Cuaresma state that the lasting conflict in Syria has also drawn lots of attention in the link of climate change and conflict.²⁰³ According to Gleick and Kelly, recent studies have shown that mass migration from rural, agricultural dominated areas towards urban areas before the outbreak of the conflict shows a direct link to frequent droughts, crop failure and water scarcity.²⁰⁴²⁰⁵ Combined with unemployment, overpopulated urban centers had a major contribution to the outbreak of the conflict that has caused millions of displaced peoples and gross human rights violations.²⁰⁶ Nevertheless, the conflict in Syria is an example of internal migration can destabilize a region, whereas, this thesis is trying to investigate whether international migration, due to environmental change, has affects on conflicts in countries of destination.

In light of international migration due to environmental change, Bosetti and colleagues suspect in their research question that increasing flows of environmental migrants might result in effects of insecurity and instability in destination countries. They continue by asking whether demographic and economic pressure due to the flow of incoming migrants could possibly trigger tensions between ethnicities and different cultures, evoke conflicts or fuel already

²⁰⁰ Francis A. Galgano, ed., *The Environment-Conflict Nexus: Climate Change and the Emergent National Security Landscape*, Advances in Military Geosciences (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2019), 8.

²⁰¹ Galgano, 8.

²⁰² Marshall B. Burke et al., 'Warming Increases the Risk of Civil War in Africa', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 106, no. 49 (8 December 2009): 20670–74, <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.0907998106>.

²⁰³ Guy J. Abel et al., 'Climate, Conflict and Forced Migration', *Global Environmental Change* 54 (1 January 2019): 239, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2018.12.003>.

²⁰⁴ Colin P. Kelley et al., 'Climate Change in the Fertile Crescent and Implications of the Recent Syrian Drought', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 112, no. 11 (17 March 2015): 3241–46, <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1421533112>.

²⁰⁵ Peter H. Gleick, 'Water, Drought, Climate Change, and Conflict in Syria', *Weather, Climate, and Society* 6, no. 3 (1 July 2014): 331–40, <https://doi.org/10.1175/WCAS-D-13-00059.1>.

²⁰⁶ Abel et al., 'Climate, Conflict and Forced Migration', 239.

existing conflicts in the respective states.²⁰⁷ By assuming that flows of climate induced migration could fuel such ethnic tensions and applying this assumption on the case study of Mali and the Sahel, it becomes evident that this combination is highly risky in the Sahel, as ethnic and religious conflicts already cause problems.²⁰⁸ A massive flow of environmental migrants, therefore, could fuel those tensions in Mali or spread and generate new tensions in other Sahel countries that are currently in a relatively stable security situation.²⁰⁹ Furthermore, Fearon and Laitin claim that around 30 percent of all ethnic conflicts between 1945 and 2008 occurred between immigrants that recently entered the country and indigenous communities.²¹⁰ The environmental conflict model, proposed in 2001 by the political scientist Homer-Dixon states that climate-induced migration will most likely strain the already scarce resources in migrant-receiving countries and hence could become a primary source of instability.²¹¹

Adding to this, Abel and colleagues claim that Reuveny:

*“[...] emphasizes that in the context of neo Malthusian resource scarcity, climate change-induced migration is particularly prone to creating conflict in the destination area because large and rapid migration flows prevent the receiving areas to smoothly incorporate migrants.”*²¹²

However, it needs to be noted that Homer-Dixon’s theory was established in 2001 and also Reuveny’s claim lacks clear scientific evidence. Hence, recent data strongly contests these simplified relationships of environmental migrants becoming a primary source of instability in hosting country due to the scarce resources.²¹³ Furthermore, Abel and colleagues argue that the Reuvenys and Homer-Dixons assumptions are based on a theoretical model without support of empirical evidence. Also, these assumptions do not include a multidimensional approach to climate-induced migration and assume a phenomenon of climate-induced mass migration without supporting data.²¹⁴

Nonetheless, contemporary scholars and publications also take the view that an increased probability of civil war as well as interstate dispute can be linked to migration streams and

²⁰⁷ Bosetti, Cattaneo, and Peri, *Should They Stay or Should They Go? : Climate Migrants and Local Conflicts*, 2.

²⁰⁸ Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research, ‘Conflict Barometer (2019)’, 56.

²⁰⁹ ACLED, ‘Ten Conflicts to Worry About in 2020’.

²¹⁰ James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, ‘Sons of the Soil, Migrants, and Civil War’, *World Development* 39, no. 2 (2011): 199–211, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2009.11.031>.

²¹¹ Thomas Homer-Dixon, *Environment, Scarcity, and Violence*, Nachdr. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1999).

²¹² Abel et al., ‘Climate, Conflict and Forced Migration’, 241.

²¹³ Bosetti, Cattaneo, and Peri, *Should They Stay or Should They Go? : Climate Migrants and Local Conflicts*, 25.

²¹⁴ Abel et al., ‘Climate, Conflict and Forced Migration’, 241.

refugees.²¹⁵²¹⁶ Mostly, these theories are based on the basic assumption that forced migration, whether climatic drivers take a prevailing role or not, increases pressure on already scarce resources, infrastructure, economy and weak governance in destination countries and therefore instigates conflicts.²¹⁷²¹⁸

In addition to this, Docquier and colleagues claim to have found a correlation between migration and armed disputes between countries.²¹⁹ Nevertheless, these relationships and direct causalities are highly contestable as there has no scientific and empirical evidence been produced so far that strongly and directly connect climate-induced migration to measurable effects on peace and security and the emergence of violent conflicts.²²⁰

There are various reasons why there has not been clear empirical evidence of how climate-induced migration influences peace and security situations in countries of destination. One being the beforementioned reality that climate-induced migration can hardly be identified. Climate-induced migration is not a phenomenon that appears by itself. It is a very complex and multidimensional process. Hence, it is almost impossible to observe directly. Climate change is highlighted as the one of the major drivers and elements in climate-induced migration, but migration processes are even more dominantly influenced by political and socio-economical drivers, with climatic drivers, such as desertification, droughts and floods playing a supplementary role as one of the five key drivers for migration processes.²²¹

Therefore, the distinction between migrants that choose to leave their habitat because of economic despair could eventually be considered environmental migrants because the impacts of climate change fuelled their economic despair by disallowing them to harvest their agricultural areas, and hence resulting in less income.²²² However, they could likely not appear in statistics as climate-induced migrants because they would be categorized as people migrating due to economic reasons.²²³

²¹⁵ Idean Salehyan, 'The Externalities of Civil Strife: Refugees as a Source of International Conflict', *American Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 4 (2008): 787–801.

²¹⁶ Idean Salehyan and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, 'Refugees and the Spread of Civil War', *International Organization* 60, no. 02 (April 2006), <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818306060103>.

²¹⁷ Rafael Reuveny, 'Climate Change-Induced Migration and Violent Conflict', *Political Geography* 26, no. 6 (August 2007): 656–73, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2007.05.001>.

²¹⁸ Abel et al., 'Climate, Conflict and Forced Migration', 239.

²¹⁹ Docquier, Ruysen, and Schiff, 'International Migration: Pacifier or Trigger for Military Conflicts?', *Journal of Development Studies* 54, no. 9 (2018): 1657–79, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220388.2017.1355456>.

²²⁰ Cees Withagen, 'The Climate Change, Migration and Conflict Nexus', *Environment and Development Economics* 19, no. 3 (June 2014): 324–27, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1355770X14000321>.

²²¹ The Government Office for Science, 'Foresight: Migration and Global Environmental Change', 44–45.

²²² Boas et al., 'Climate Migration Myths', 19.

²²³ Bosetti, Cattaneo, and Peri, *Should They Stay or Should They Go? : Climate Migrants and Local Conflicts*, 19.

Interestingly, however, scholars are coming to a general consensus that countries of origins experience a positive effect on conflict due to climate-induced migration and numbers in these countries are decreasing with an increase of people migrating internationally.²²⁴²²⁵ These findings are consistent with the assumption that climate-induced migration poses an important adaptation strategy, as well as it presents a vital method of conflict mitigation.²²⁶

To sum up the influence of climate-induced migration on peace and security, it is crucial to acknowledge that many of the expressed models and theories are lacking sufficient empirical evidence to support their proposed claims.²²⁷

Furthermore, it is important to understand the complexity, interrelation and interdependence of the main variables (climate change, migration, political stability and governance and conflict) and how they influence each other.

This mutual relationship of factors is supported by the work of Galgano, who stated in his publication *The environment-conflict Nexus*:

*“The outcome of a potential environmental security scenario is influenced strongly by government policy, social structure, strength of governance, technology, and infrastructure.”*²²⁸

Especially in developing states, the interconnected relationship between demographic changes, resource scarcity and environmental stress becomes evident, making it very hard to ascribe the influences on a singular driver.

Furthermore, findings from a study conducted by Besotti, Cattaneo and Peri in 2018, who tried to gather empirical evidence on two research questions surrounding the causality of climate-induced migration on conflict internally and internationally, claim that there was no significant influence of climate migrants on conflicts in countries of destination.²²⁹ Instead, this study showed the important role of migration as adaptation strategies and provided insight on the positive role of migrants. ²³⁰ Adding to this is the claim that migration has the potential to contribute to better agricultural harvesting strategies in receiving countries.²³¹

²²⁴ Betsy Hartmann, ‘Rethinking Climate Refugees and Climate Conflict: Rhetoric, Reality and the Politics of Policy Discourse’, *Journal of International Development* 22, no. 2 (2010): 233–46, <https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.1676>.

²²⁵ Black et al., ‘Migration as Adaptation’.

²²⁶ Bosetti, Cattaneo, and Peri, *Should They Stay or Should They Go? : Climate Migrants and Local Conflicts*, 24.

²²⁷ Galgano, *The Environment-Conflict Nexus*, 8.

²²⁸ Galgano, 8.

²²⁹ Bosetti, Cattaneo, and Peri, *Should They Stay or Should They Go? : Climate Migrants and Local Conflicts*, 25.

²³⁰ Bosetti, Cattaneo, and Peri, 25.

²³¹ Kristine Juul, ‘Transhumance, Tubes and Telephones: Drought Related Migration as a Process of Innovation.’, in *Beyond Territory and Scarcity: Exploring Conflicts over Natural Resource Management* (Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute, 2005).

Finally, with the focal point of this thesis being the West African Sahel region, it is to be said that the political situation in WAS is generally instable and dominated by countries with weak political structures, poor economic situations and heavily effected by climate change.

All these factors play an important role in assessing the influence of climate-induced migration on generating, fuelling or strengthening conflicts in the region. After evaluating the existing literature, it cannot be proven that climate-induced migration has had an immense adverse effect on violent conflicts, for as the region is instable, it can be said that the combination of these factors poses a huge threat to peace and security in the entire region and the international community must take preventive action against it.

Nevertheless, the urgency of taking preventive measures and policies in the region has been understood and acknowledged internationally. This can be observed by evaluating the international presence in the region, which will conclude the final part of this chapter.

4.4 Presence of International Community in the Sahel

In the international community, Africa is increasingly seen as a security policy challenge. This is one of the reasons why a variety of international stakeholders support the establishment of African peace and security arrangements, whether in support of the AU and APSA or individual states such as Mali.²³² The support of the international community in the region varies greatly. Therefore, this section is intended to illustrate the diversity of support for international partners in the Sahel region and to assess its effectiveness. Since the focal point of this thesis lies with the WAS, this analysis is strongly focused on the WAS and its critical dependence on international presence.²³³ To provide a more in-depth analysis, only the international presence in Mali will be assessed, since it is the country affected with the greatest extent of insecurity, and receives the most international support as many initiatives have been started in WAS to establish a long-lasting security situation and stabilize the fragile political system.²³⁴

France is the strongest international partner represented in Mali. Furthermore, France was a driving force to ensure the engagement of international presence in Mali during the fourth Tuareg rebellion after being asked by the Malian government.²³⁵ It was due to France's engagement that the *Serval Mission* mentioned above was deployed to Mali to prevent Islamic

²³² Ehrhart, Staack, and Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, *Sicherheits- und Friedensordnungen in Afrika Nationale und regionale Herausforderungen.*, 9.

²³³ William Nomikos, 'Mali Country Report - Risks from the EU's Southern Border' (EU-LISTCO, January 2020), 33.

²³⁴ Ahmet Çonkar, 'Development And Security Challenges in the Sahel Region', Draft Report, Mediterranean and Middle East Special Group (GSM) (Nato Parliamentary Assembly, April 2020), 8, https://www.nato-pa.int/download-file?filename=sites/default/files/2020-06/042%20GSM%2020%20E%20-%20CHALLENGES%20IN%20THE%20SAHEL_0.pdf.

²³⁵ Çonkar, 13.

extremists to advance to the southern borders in January 2013.²³⁶ As discussed earlier in this chapter, the mission was a short-term success and the Islamic extremists scattered alongside the northern borders.²³⁷

However, the presence of France in the region is still ongoing, with an expansion of presence in July 2014 through operation *Barkhane*.²³⁸ However, this operation is only mentioned because it shows the diverse influence France has in the region. Operation *Barkhane* is not concentrated on Mali but follows a Sahel-wide approach to combat terror.²³⁹ ²⁴⁰In addition to this, according to a draft report from the *North Atlantic Treaty Organization* (NATO), operation *Barkhane* has had success on the ground and is a main reason that the situation in WAS, especially in Mali, has not worsened. Nevertheless, the report claims that the objective of the operation is limited, and consensus prevails that this operation alone cannot resolve the fragile situation.²⁴¹ *Barkhane* enjoys strong international support, for example, from the US and various European countries.²⁴²

Recent developments in increasing violent attacks on French and international military presence has led to the request by French President Macron for public support. This request was made during a summit together with the G5 Sahel leaders in January 2020.²⁴³ The most recent insight on the development of France's presence in the region has emerged in February 2020, as Mrs. Parly announced an additional deployment of 600 soldiers to the border areas.²⁴⁴

All of the engagements mentioned above show the pivotal role of the French presence in the region. The fundamental motivations for France to intervene with operation *Serval* and to become a pivotal force in Mali and the Sahel were officially to protect French citizens in Mali, to stop Islamist advances into the South and to help the Malian government to restore the control of the territory.²⁴⁵

While France took the lead of military support in the region, other important stakeholders also became active to aid Mali and the Sahel region. In contrast to France, the European Union (EU) provides more support through development cooperation and humanitarian aid in the region

²³⁶ Nomikos, 'Mali Country Report - Risks from the EU's Southern Border', 5–7.

²³⁷ Nomikos, 34–37.

²³⁸ Kalev Stoicescu, 'Stabilising the Sahel: The Role of International Military Operations', Analysis (Tallinn: International Centre for Defence and Security, n.d.), 7, https://icds.ee/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ICDS_Analysis_Stabilising_the_Sahel_Stoicescu_June_2020.pdf.

²³⁹ Schiller, 'The Situation in the Sahel - Consequences for International Engagement in the Region', 62.

²⁴⁰ Susanna D. Wing, 'French Intervention in Mali: Strategic Alliances, Long-Term Regional Presence?', *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 27, no. 1 (2 January 2016): 59–80, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2016.1123433>.

²⁴¹ Çonkar, 'Development And Security Challenges in the Sahel Region', 13.

²⁴² Çonkar, 13.

²⁴³ Çonkar, 14.

²⁴⁴ Çonkar, 14.

²⁴⁵ Nomikos, 'Mali Country Report - Risks from the EU's Southern Border', 33.

that it does with military forces. The EU, for example, provides training to Malian military with a goal of strengthening the security-sector. These training missions are known under the acronym EUTM Mali (*European Training Mission in Mali*).²⁴⁶ Unlike the EU, the UN acts on a different level in the region.

The UN established its *Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali* (MINUSMA) in April 2013 and currently the mission counts 15.365 personnel.²⁴⁷ MINUSMA operates under a Chapter VII mandate of the UN Charter, which is applied if serious threats to peace are assumed.²⁴⁸ It must be noted that MINUSMA requires a yearly renewal by the UN Security Council (UNSC).²⁴⁹ MINUSMA primary focus is to maintain order in Northern and Central Mali and re-establish State authority throughout the country.²⁵⁰ According to Tull, public opinion in Mali is very critical to the Mission. Often, it is criticized due to its passivity and the fact that the blue helmets²⁵¹ allegedly place their own safety above the protection of the civilian population. The government, however, occasionally yields to the temptation to use the mission as a scapegoat for its own failure. Still, the government came to the realization that MINUSMA provides more benefits than disadvantages. The presence of the Mission is an important factor in mobilizing international aid.²⁵²

By analysing the impacts that MINUSMA has had in the region, it is difficult to come to a definite conclusion on the effectiveness. The closest assumption is that the situation would be much worse without MINUSMA, which can neither be clearly proven nor disproved. Ultimately, however, this means that MINUSMA only curbs the deterioration of the security situation, which is universally acknowledged, but does not stop it.²⁵³

Finally, by evaluating the efforts the international community is undertaking in the Sahel region, it becomes evident that most of the engagements, operations and endeavors are concentrated on peace and security that have already emerged in the region. There is no sign that the international community is proactively working to prevent the consequences of climate-induced migration for peace and security policies in the area. However, it is important to mention that the effort of the international community in trying to ensure a sustaining peace in the region will essentially also lead to greater capacities of countries in the region receiving

²⁴⁶ Nomikos, 38.

²⁴⁷ Çonkar, 'Development And Security Challenges in the Sahel Region', 10.

²⁴⁸ G.R. Olsen, 'Fighting Terrorism in Africa by Proxy: The USA and the European Union in Somalia and Mali', *EUROPEAN SECURITY -ILFORD-* 23, no. 3 (2014): 290–306.

²⁴⁹ Çonkar, 'Development And Security Challenges in the Sahel Region', 10.

²⁵⁰ Nomikos, 'Mali Country Report - Risks from the EU's Southern Border', 36.

²⁵¹ Authors note: Blue helmets is the colloquial term for the armed forces deployed by the United Nations.

²⁵² Denis M. Tull and Stiftung Wissenschaft Und Politik, 'VN-Peacekeeping in Mali: Anpassungsbedarf für das neue Minusma-Mandat', *SWP-Aktuell*, 2019, 3, <https://doi.org/10.18449/2019A23>.

²⁵³ Tull and Stiftung Wissenschaft Und Politik, 3.

migrants. This is supported by the analysis that the major causes for conflicts are lying in weak governance, insufficient infrastructure and resource scarcity.²⁵⁴

This is not surprising, however, as the already existing conflicts in the region are dominant and are attributed increased urgency. Nevertheless, there is no trend that major international stakeholders are proactively addressing the threat of climate-induced migration and are prepared for the fact that the already existing instability in the region could be rekindled by this phenomenon.

4.5 Measures to Reduce the Impact of Climate-Induced Migration on Peace and Security

The final part of this chapter is dedicated to the measures that should be taken preventively by the international community to reduce the impact of climate-induced migration on the unstable and insecure political situation in the Sahel region.

As before mentioned multiple times throughout this thesis, climate-induced migration and the resulting impacts on peace and security are very complex and interrelated processes that demand multidimensional solutions.²⁵⁵ As there is no singular explanation to climate-induced migration or the emergence of conflicts, there can also be no singular solution for the impact of climate-induced migration on peace and security.

For the solution of the problem a system on a multidimensional level is required. The influential factors to be addressed are climate change, migration and geopolitical stability in the Sahel region. The dependent relationship between these pivotal factors then could have a real impact to the situation on the ground. To achieve progress on all levels it is from utmost importance that they are coordinated together including international organizations, national governments as well as civil society.

The minimization of climate change could provide the basis for a genuine change on the situation. In reducing anthropogenic climate change, preventive action is taken against future negative developments in countries particularly vulnerable to climate migration. In addition, the fear of a scenario such as mass migration can be alleviated, even if the assertion about such a scenario is very critical and not scientifically substantiated.²⁵⁶ By alleviating the impacts of climate change on the livelihoods of people, climate-induced migration presumably has the chance to decline, eventually allowing people already migrated to return to their homes.

²⁵⁴ Galgano, *The Environment-Conflict Nexus*, 8.

²⁵⁵ 'Migration and the Climate Crisis: The UN's Search for Solutions', UN News, 31 July 2019, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/07/1043551>.

²⁵⁶ Boas et al., 'Climate Migration Myths', 4.

The second pillar of an appropriate approach to reduce the impact on peace and security due to climate-induced migration should account to strengthening local capacities. It is essential to achieve a strong, stable and secure receiving country to people that need to flee their livelihoods, as fragile countries are more vulnerable to the emergence of violent outbreaks in general.²⁵⁷

Therefore, to strengthen local capacities by providing economical support or provide forms of international development cooperation, is substantial and not less important. Development cooperation can offer a great opportunity to stabilize the general situation in the region as quickly as possible. However, it is immensely important to use a sustainable development cooperation approach in the situation that also takes the ethnic and cultural situation into consideration. Without a sustainable development cooperation approach, a possible stabilization in the region could quickly be lost as soon as the development cooperation projects come to an end otherwise.²⁵⁸

Lastly, the level of geopolitical stabilization, shortly the situation of peace and security in the region needs further support as it is been provided currently from international missions such as MINUSMA and others. The continuous support is essential for the success of the levels mentioned before. Without a secure situation in the region, it is very difficult to tackle the issues of a sustainable development and the strengthening of local capacities. ²⁵⁹

In addition to this, stronger national governments with good governance and democratic elected leaders need to be represented throughout the region to secure a long-lasting process in the matter of peace and security and to adopt frameworks and decisions regarding the implementation of progress and the integration of environmental migrants in receiving countries. Hereby, first progressions are being made by establishing a *Global Compact on Migration*, which to some extent can alleviate and facilitate coordination of such a problem.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁷ Schiller, 'The Situation in the Sahel - Consequences for International Engagement in the Region', 61.

²⁵⁸ Vereinte Nationen, ed., *Sustainable Development Challenges*, World Economic and Social Survey 2013 (New York: United Nations, 2013).

²⁵⁹ Scott Jasper, ed., *Conflict and Cooperation in the Global Commons: A Comprehensive Approach for International Security* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2012).

²⁶⁰ Nicola Piper, 'The Global Compact on Migration', *Global Social Policy* 18, no. 3 (December 2018): 323, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468018118799413>.

5 Conclusion

This paper has provided an overview on the issue of climate-induced migration and analysed its effects on peace and security. It is important to mention that one of the key issues on this complex topic is the inconsistency of terminology. In the scholarly discussion various different terms are circulating, hence diffusing the debate and limiting its comparability between each other. Furthermore, it is astonishing to examine how many flawed causal relationships authors draw conclusions on. The scarce amount of valid scientific data thereby plays a vital role and needs to be extended in future research.

To sum up, climate-induced migration as a concept in general needs to be seen very critical. It is important to understand that climate-induced migration can hardly be conceptualized and scientifically proven, as processes of migration are always multi-dimensional. Adding to this, climate change is, besides of short-term migration after sudden onset climatic disasters, never a singular cause for people to migrate away from their livelihoods. Climate change plays a supplemental role in forcing people to migrate.

The pivotal roles in processes of migration are accounted to socio-economic and political drivers. However, climatic drivers also influence the political and economic drivers due to food production and economic assets of people.

While concentrated on forced international migration, this thesis identified a gap of protection in the international legal protection mechanism regarding the protection of environmental migrants. Environmental migrants are currently not specifically protected under International Law. However, International Human Rights Law as well as International Climate Change Law pose an opportunity to grant environmental migrants more protection yet yielding full protection. Recent developments contribute to this trend of recognizing environmental migrants as possible refugees. Earlier this year the *United Nations Human Rights Committee* commented on an individual complaint that “*Countries may not deport individuals who face climate change-induced conditions that violate the right to life.*”²⁶¹ This may mark a mile-stone in the protection and promotion of human rights of individuals endangered by the impacts of climate change. Nevertheless, it needs to be considered carefully as this statement does not provide any hard law mechanisms in the protection of environmental migrants. However, this thesis stipulates, in accordance with existing literature, that the adoption of a new treaty to ensure environmental migrants more rights, nevertheless not alleviating the current protection mechanism of traditional refugees, is inevitable. This challenge needs to be addressed with most

²⁶¹ ‘OHCHR | Historic UN Human Rights Case Opens Door to Climate Change Asylum Claims’, accessed 8 July 2020, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25482&LangID=E>.

urgency and discussed throughout the international community.

The thesis followed the investigative research question whether or not climate-induced migration has an impact on peace and security on the Sahel region.

In conclusion, the thesis does not find direct, scientific and empirical based evidence that attributes a direct causal relationship to climate-induced migration and peace and security. Regardless the focus on the Sahel it appears that there is no direct link between these two factors.

However, a reason why no direct link could be established between climate-induced migration and peace and security could find its roots in the complexity and interrelation of climate-induced migration. Nevertheless, migration and climate change play a vital role in influencing emerging conflicts due to resource scarcity or internal migration from rural to urban areas, as explained on the example of Syria.

Important to notice is that “mass migration” streams across the Sahel or Africa in general cannot be identified and are more likely to belong to media reporting conveying such crises, than academic theories.

Despite the absence of a direct correlation between climate migration and peace, the security situation in the Sahel region is very tense, with the focus on Mali. There is a large international presence in the region that is not very popular with the local population. However, efforts already taken by the international community are important in achieving some part of stable political situation. Anyway, those efforts do not directly target preventive measures to strengthen capabilities of building resilience to climate-induced migration. This capacity building approach to form a stable society needs to work simultaneously to ensure peace in the region, so environmental migrants can be received by countries in the region rather than forced to stay away. Capacities and resilience of local civil society could be strengthened through sustainable development cooperation projects in the region. However, the increase of development cooperation projects is related to the situation of peace and security in the region. Therefore, the main objective in supportive measures should focus to stabilize the political situation and reduce climate change globally.

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7 List of Tables

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