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RESEARCH ARTICLE

The collective securitisation of climate change: Implications for climate adaptation policy in the United Nations and European Union

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Abstract
This article advances research on 'collective securitisation' by theorising how ostensibly separate securitisation processes within different international organisations (IOs) interact and shape each other's policy outcomes. Focusing on climate change adaptation within the United Nations (UN) and European Union (EU), the study uses an extensive database of documents (1972–2023) and interviews with officials to trace these dynamics. The analysis reveals that the UN initially securitised climate change through a risk-oriented approach emphasising long-term risk management, subsequently influencing the EU's adaptation policies. Conversely, the EU intermittently reintroduced threat-based framing into the UN, highlighting recursive interactions between these organisations. Findings suggest key moments of cross-organisational influence, notably during the audience acceptance and policy output stages. By incorporating insights from transnational policy learning and norm diffusion, the paper theorises precisely how and when these interactions occur, enriching the analytical framework of Collective Securitisation. This article contributes to understanding how international organisations' securitisation processes interact and shape climate adaptation policies, emphasising the nuanced interplay between threat-based and risk-based logics.

Keywords: climate adaptation; climate change; European Union; securitisation; United Nations

Introduction

Securitisation theory has undergone significant revision and expansion in recent years.[1] One such revision concerns the 'Collective Securitisation' framework, developed to explain how actors undertake securitisation collectively in multilateral fora. This framework sheds light on international organisations acting as securitising agents, ranging from the African Union (AU)[2] and the

[1]Rita Floyd, 'Securitisation and the function of functional actors', *Critical Studies on Security*, 9:2 (2021), pp. 81–97; Frank A. Stengel, 'Securitization as discursive (re)articulation: Explaining the relative effectiveness of threat construction', *New Political Science*, 41:2 (2019), pp. 294–312; Thierry Balzacq, Sarah Léonard, and Jan Ruzicka, "Securitization" revisited: Theory and cases', *International Relations*, 30:4 (2016), pp. 494–531.

[2]Jürgen Haacke and Paul D. Williams, 'Regional arrangements, securitization, and transnational security challenges: The African Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations compared', *Security Studies*, 17:4 (2008), pp. 775–809.

United Nations (UN)[3] to the European Union (EU)[4] and NATO[5] It has been applied to issues spanning cyber-security,[6] migration,[7] and public health,[8] demonstrating how supranational actors construct security issues, marshal authority, and generate new policy outcomes.[9] Despite its contributions, Collective Securitisation has predominantly been used to understand single cases, focusing on dynamics within individual organisations. This narrow application overlooks a critical dimension of global governance: the mutually constitutive interactions among international organisations.

This study addresses that oversight by theorising how Collective Securitisation processes in separate international organisations might intersect to shape respective outcomes. It theorises when and at which stages of the Collective Securitisation process – such as the securitising move, audience acceptance, or new policy outputs – these intersections are likely to occur. To explain how such interactions unfold, the study incorporates insights from transnational policy learning and norm diffusion. The adapted framework is then applied to better understand climate change adaptation policy in the UN and the EU. Climate adaptation, defined as adjusting to current or expected climate change and its effects,[10] provides a compelling case for exploring these dynamics. While the securitisation of climate change has been extensively studied,[11] less attention has been paid to whether and how this securitisation within institutional contexts such as the UN and EU has shaped adaptation policies.

The Collective Securitisation framework helps to disaggregate these processes, enabling a closer examination of how securitisation dynamics unfold across different stages, making it well suited for analysing policy responses. However, it has not yet been applied to understanding how these dynamics might interact with Collective Securitisation processes in other international organisations.

Thus, the primary aim of this study is to deepen understanding of how ostensibly separate Collective Securitisation processes may relate to one another. By focusing on climate change adaptation, it also engages with research on the link between the securitisation of an issue, such as climate change, and the securitised character of the policies such as adaptation that follow.[12] In this way, the study contributes to both the development of Collective Securitisation as a framework and

[3]Cesare M. Scartozzi, 'Climate change in the UN Security Council: An analysis of discourses and organizational trends', *International Studies Perspectives*, 23:3 (2022), pp. 290–312.

[4]Claire Dupont, 'The EU's collective securitisation of climate change', *West European Politics*, 42:2 (2018), pp. 369–390.

[5]James Sperling and Mark Webber, 'NATO and the Ukraine crisis: Collective securitisation', *European Journal of International Security*, 2:1 (2017), pp. 19–46.

[6]George Christou, 'The collective securitisation of cyberspace in the European Union', *West European Politics*, 42:2 (2019), pp. 278–301.

[7]Michela Ceccorulli, 'Back to Schengen: The collective securitisation of the EU free-border area', *West European Politics*, 42:2 (2019), pp. 302–22.

[8]Louise Bengtsson and Mark Rhinard, 'Securitisation across borders: The case of "health security" cooperation in the European Union', *West European Politics*, 42:2 (2019), pp. 346–68.

[9]Sonia Lucarelli, James Sperling, and Mark Webber, *Collective Securitisation and Security Governance in the European Union* (London: Routledge, 2020).

[10]Nina Hall and Åsa Persson, 'Global climate adaptation governance: Why is it not legally binding?', *European Journal of International Relations*, 24:3 (2018), pp. 540–66; IPCC, *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[11]Thomas Diez, Franziskus von Lucke, and Zehra Wellmann, *The Securitisation of Climate Change: Actors, Processes and Consequences* (London: Routledge, 2016); Judith Nora Hardt, Cameron Harrington, Fransizkus von Lucke, Adrien Estève, and Nicholas P. Simpson, 'Introduction: A framework for assessing climate security', in Judith Nora Hardt, Cameron Harrington, Franziskus von Lucke, Adrien Estève, and Nicholas P. Simpson (eds), *Climate Security in the Anthropocene: Exploring the Approaches of United Nations Security Council Member-States* (Cham: Springer, 2023), pp. 1–23; Matt McDonald, 'Discourses of climate security', *Political Geography*, 33:1 (2013), pp. 42–51; Matt McDonald, *Ecological Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021); Mary E. Pettenger, 'Framing global climate security' in Anthony Burke and Rita Parker (eds), *Global Insecurity: Futures of Global Chaos and Governance* (London: Palgrave, 2017), pp. 119–37.

[12]Hardt et al.,'Introduction'; Pauline Sophie Heinrichs, 'Energy security, climate change, and routines as maladaptive politics', *Global Studies Quarterly*, 4:3 (2024), https://doi.org/10.1093/isagsq/ksae050; McDonald, *Ecological Security*.

our knowledge of how securitisation shapes not only narratives but also the substantive design of policy responses.

Building on the most comprehensive database of its kind, we analysed major climate change and adaptation texts from both the UN and EU over a 40-year period. Supplementing this with triangulated insights from semi-structured interviews with UN and EU officials, we conducted both quantitative and qualitative analyses to uncover evidence of Collective Securitisation processes.

Our analysis confirms existing findings that the UN securitised climate change as an issue earlier than the EU, while offering the novel insight that its subsequent climate adaptation policies reflected this framing. This process influenced the EU through the adoption of similar discourses, the engagement of an active stakeholder network, and the sharing of analytical models that shaped the EU's adaptation approach. We demonstrate that the Collective Securitisation processes of the UN and EU intersected at key points in the Collective Securitisation model, producing mutually constitutive effects that shaped their respective policy outputs. Notably, the UN's initial framing of climate change as a challenge requiring a risk-oriented approach to adaptation later influenced the EU. Over time, however, the EU reintroduced threat-oriented perspectives into the UN. Our findings thus illustrate the bidirectional nature of Collective Securitisation processes and the varied ways in which securitisation may manifest.

The article is organised as follows: the next section reviews the literature on Collective Securitisation, highlighting its strengths and identifying two key weaknesses. We then supplement this framework with insights from international policy learning and norm diffusion to address its empirical blind spots. The following section outlines the research design, detailing the methodological approach as well as the tools and processes used for data collection, coding, and analysis. The empirical analysis, presented in the fourth section, examines first the UN's and then the EU's Collective Securitisation processes, organised in line with the Collective Securitisation framework to illustrate their interconnections. Finally, we conclude with a summary of findings, analytical reflections, and recommendations for future research.

Theoretical perspectives

Collective securitisation

The theoretical starting point for this study is the literature on Collective Securitisation. Collective Securitisation offers a phase-model that revises the traditional understanding of securitisation as the process by which an actor identifies a 'threat', attributes a special status to that threat, and, by so doing, is able to justify 'urgent and exceptional measures' in response.[13] The Collective Securitisation model widens how and where securitisation takes place and helps to capture its effects on outcomes – especially policy outcomes. It theorises how multiple actors, themselves with individual securitising imperatives, may empower a third entity to act on their behalf in securitised ways. Collective Securitisation is thus the process of aggregating these multiple securitisations and giving them authoritative status through public articulation[14] – and so is most obviously undertaken by formal international organisations.[15]

Collective Securitisation highlights the dynamic of states acting *collectively* within organisations to bring attention to certain concerns as security questions – and to leverage collective attention and resources accordingly. Haacke and Williams first drew attention to this dynamic, showing how securitisation can take place in regional organisations such as the African Union and

[13] Barry Buzan, and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[14] James Sperling and Mark Webber, 'The European Union: Security governance and collective securitisation', *West European Politics*, 42:2 (2019), pp. 228–60.

[15] Collective securitisation focuses on how institutionalised organisations coordinate member states to construct and address shared threats, offering a more systematic and collaborative framework than the broad, top-down narratives of macro-securitisation. See Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, 'Macrosecuritization and security constellations: Reconsidering scale in securitization theory', *Review of International Studies*, 35:2 (2009), pp. 253–76.

the Association of Southeast Asian States.[16] Since then, studies on Collective Securitisation have identified 'thin' and 'thick' versions. The thin version refers to a state or small group of states promoting their security concerns within an international organisation, eliciting supportive responses and empowering the organisation to address the issue without granting it autonomy or agency.[17] Conversely, the thick version views the organisation as possessing distinct influence and agency, acting as a securitising actor in its own right.[18] Research on the EU[19] and UN[20] often applies the thick version due to the substantial political agency and coercive authority both organisations wield in implementing security measures.[21] This study adopts the thick version of Collective Securitisation.

Sperling and Webber added theoretical depth and analytical precision to the Collective Securitisation approach by developing a stage-based analytical framework that theorises the various steps in the thick version of Collective Securitisation (see Figure 1).[22] They show how international organisations may act as securitising agents, with member states serving as the audience that either accepts or rejects securitising moves from actors in and around the organisation. Emphasising intersubjectivity over unilateral speech act acceptance, Sperling and Webber introduce the notion of 'recursive interaction', whereby the securitising actor and the audience influence and shape one another, effectively blurring the actor–audience distinction.[23] This recursive process not only facilitates audience acceptance but also leads to the production of new policy outputs that concretise securitisation and establish a new status quo. Moreover, including and emphasising the effect of securitising moves on new policy outputs, Sperling and Webber explicitly linked securitisation processes to the nature of resulting policies, asserting that the latter should reflect and embody the characteristics of the former. Figure 1 represents these process phases, which our study builds upon.

For this study, the Collective Securitisation framework provides a critical lens for analysing whether and how UN and EU adaptation policies mirrored the broader securitisation of climate change. Framing an issue as a security matter at the supranational level not only shapes the tools utilised, the resources allocated, and the strategies implemented but also significantly impacts how the issue is addressed at national[24] and local levels.[25] Understanding these international processes is vital for assessing how urgent global challenges are managed in the public interest.

[16]Haacke and Williams, 'Regional arrangements, securitization, and transnational security challenges'.

[17]Sabrina B. Arias, 'Who securitizes? climate change discourse in the United Nations', *International Studies Quarterly*, 66:2 (2022), http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3992549; Christian Enemark, 'Is pandemic flu a security threat?', *Survival*, 51:1 (2009), pp. 191–214.

[18]Sperling and Webber, 'The European Union'.

[19]Ceccorulli, 'Back to Schengen'; Didem Doğanyılmaz Duman, Gökhan Duman, and Gül Oral , 'Dealing with migration at an institutional level: The collective securitization actions of the European Union, https://doi.org/10.1515/ngs-2022-0032 ', *New Global Studies*, 18:1 (2023), pp. 1-17; Dupont, 'The EU's collective securitisation of climate change'; Stephanie C. Hofmann and Ueli Staeger, 'Frame contestation and collective securitisation: The case of EU energy policy', *West European Politics*, 42:2 (2019), pp. 323–45.

[20]Pettenger, 'Framing global climate security'; Scartozzi, 'Climate change in the UN Security Council'.

[21]Whether such dynamics would apply to less institutionalised IGOs is a question revisited in the conclusion.

[22]Sperling and Webber,'NATO and the Ukraine crisis'; Sperling and Webber, 'The European Union'.

[23]Thierry Balzacq and Stefano Guzzini, 'Introduction: "What kind of theory – if any – is securitization?"' *International Relations*, 29:1 (2015), pp. 97–102; Sperling and Webber, 'NATO and the Ukraine crisis'.

[24]Mathilda Englund and Karina Barquet, 'Threatification, riskification, or normal politics? A review of Swedish climate adaptation policy 2005–2022', *Climate Risk Management*, 40:2–3 (2023), 100492; Heleen Mees and Jana Surian, 'Dutch national climate change adaptation policy through a securitization lens: Variations of securitization', *Frontiers in Climate*, 5 (2023), 1080754.

[25]Cathrine W. Karlson, Claudia Morsut, and Ole Andreas Engen, 'Politics of climate risk management in local government: A case study of the municipality of Stavanger', *Frontiers in Climate*, 5 (2023), 10.3389.

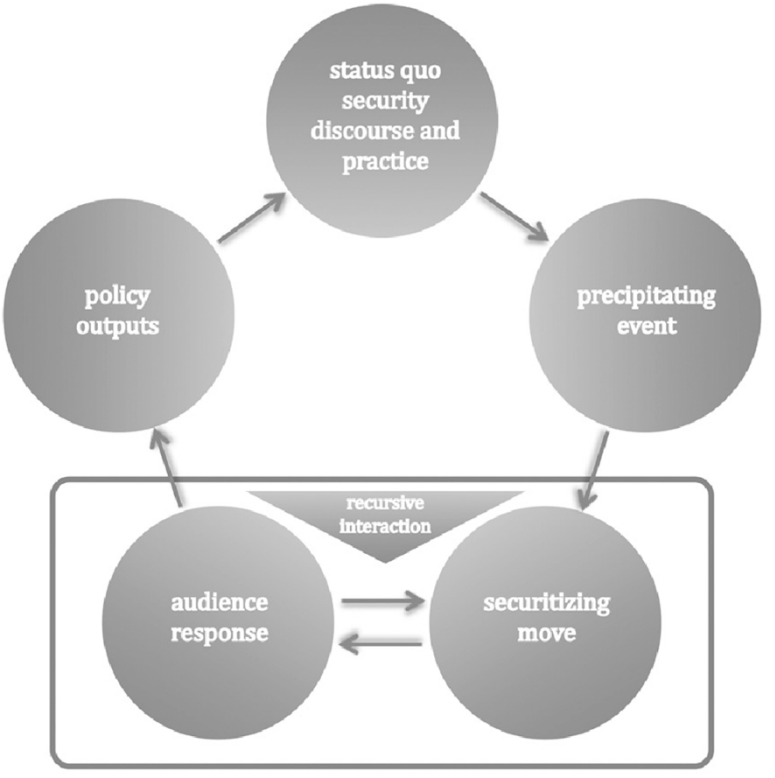

Figure 1. The process of Collective Securitisation.
Source: developed by Sperling and Webber, 'NATO and the Ukraine crisis'; Sperling and Webber, 'The European Union'; from Sperling and Webber, 'The European Union', p. 246.

Limitations of Collective Securitisation

We see the need to address two limitations in the Collective Securitisation literature, however. One is a tendency to view international organisations as closed systems. Analysis often focuses on discrete contexts, such as the World Health Organization,[26] NATO,[27] or the UN,[28] and how Collective Securitisation unfolds within each. Singular focus offers empirical richness, but it is difficult to square with common understandings of the international institutional environment as dense and overlapping. Multiple international organisations govern across policy areas, even if memberships, remits, and levels of authority differ.[29] The international policy environment is notably open, with overlapping regimes,[30] epistemic communities traversing jurisdictions to

[26]Tine Hanrieder and Christian Kreuder-Sonnen, 'WHO decides on the exception? Securitization and emergency governance in global health', *Security Dialogue*, 45:4 (2014), pp. 331–48.

[27]Sperling and Webber, 'NATO and the Ukraine crisis'.

[28]Christo Odeyemi, 'Conceptualising climate-riskification for analysing climate security', *International Social Science Journal*, 71:239–240 (2021), pp. 77–90; Scartozzi, 'Climate change in the UN Security Council'.

[29]Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, 'Ordering global governance complexes: The evolution of the governance complex for international civil aviation', *The Review of International Organizations*, 17:2 (2022), pp. 293–311.

[30]Vinod K. Aggarwal, 'Reconciling multiple institutions: Bargaining, linkages, and nesting', in Vinod K. Aggarwal (ed), *Institutional Designs for a Complex World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019), pp. 1–31.

influence international policy,[31] and intersecting policy instruments challenging governance.[32] Indeed, an entire research field explores international organisations' interaction with and influence on one another.[33]

Collective Securitisation research insufficiently addresses how international organisations interact within securitisation processes. Insights from norm diffusion and policy learning literature can help clarify when, where, and why these interactions occur. Norm diffusion research, although focused mainly on diffusion across countries, highlights several dynamics that may prompt a process of diffusion. One is the onset of an internal policy failure or an external shock that triggers a search for solutions.[34] Another reflects altered pay-offs and a concern for reputation. The adoption of a policy by a growing number of governments changes the pay-off for those left behind. What once seemed like a costly endeavour – the adoption of new policies and attendant norms – is less so once it appears that like-minded authorities are doing the same.[35] Finally, learning from the experience of others may trigger diffusion as new information of successful adoption becomes available.[36]

The literature discussed above offers valuable insights into when interaction between the Collective Securitisation process in one IO may initiate or interact with a similar process in another. Such interactions, we argue, can be mapped onto key stages of Sperling and Webber's model, highlighting potential points of overlap or influence. Specifically, three possible points of interaction emerge. First, these interactions can occur at the *'securitising move' stage* (see Figure 1), where an IO reframes an issue, introducing new discourses that may inspire or prompt another IO to adopt similar securitising language. The emulation of discourses and framing from one IO to another often reflects dynamics of diffusion or institutional learning, with securitising moves in one venue setting the stage for comparable actions in another.

Second, interactions may rise in the *'audience response' stage*. Securitisation theory identifies audience acceptance as a necessary condition for successful securitisation. In the context of Collective Securitisation, the audience comprises member states of an IO, whose representatives, including diplomats and national policymakers, often participate in multiple IOs.[37] Approval or disapproval of a securitising move in one IO may travel with these representatives, influencing the audience response in another IO and thereby facilitating (or hindering) a parallel securitisation process.

Third, interaction may take place at the '*new policy outputs' stage*. Following successful securitisation, IOs often produce new policies or instruments that reflect the securitised framing. Insights from the transnational policy learning literature show that IOs frequently reference one another's positions to enhance legitimacy or adapt proven solutions.[38] Policy tools and arguments developed

[31] Peter M. Haas , Steinar Andresen, and Norichika Kanie, 'Actor configurations and global environmental governance', in Norichika Kanie, Steinar Andresen and Peter M. Haas (eds), *Improving Global Environmental Governance* (London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 1–30.

[32] Sesbatian Oberthür, Lukas Hermwille, and Tim Rayner, 'A sectoral perspective on global climate governance: Analytical foundation', *Earth System Governance*, 8 (2021), 100104.

[33] See, for instance, Rafael Biermann and Joachim A. Koops, 'Studying relations among international organizations in world politics' in Rafael Biermann and Joachim A. Koops (eds), *Palgrave Handbook of Inter-Organizational Relations in World Politics* (London: Palgrave, 2017), pp. 1–46.

[34] Zachary Elkins and Beth A. Simmons, 'On waves, clusters, and diffusion: A conceptual framework', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 598 (2005), pp. 33–51; Lisa L. Martin and Beth A. Simmons, 'Theories and empirical studies of international institutions', *International Organization*, 52:4 (1998), pp. 729–57.

[35] Biermann and Koops, 'Studying relations among international organizations in world politics'.

[36] Elkins and Simmons, 'On waves, clusters, and diffusion'.

[37] Jörg Michael Dostal, 'Campaigning on expertise: How the OECD framed EU welfare and labour market policies – and why success could trigger failure', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 11:3 (2004), pp. 440–60; Kamil Zwolski and Christian Kaunert, 'The EU and climate security: A case of successful norm entrepreneurship?', *European Security*, 20:1 (2011), pp. 21–43.

[38] Monika Heupel, 'With power comes responsibility: Human rights protection in United Nations sanctions policy', *European Journal of International Relations*, 19:4 (2013), pp. 773–96.

Table 1. IGO interactions during Collective Securitisation processes.

Phase	Securitising move	Audience response	New policy outputs
Explanation	One organisation reframes an issue, introducing new discourses that are subsequently adopted by other organisations.	Organisational interactions, led by overlapping actor networks, facilitate recursive exchanges that shape and reinforce securitisation moves.	After audience acceptance, organisations adopt new policy outputs, such as tools and methodologies, reflecting shared discourses.
Evidence	Emergence of similar discourses on climate change and/or adaptation, evoking similar imageries, reflecting shared understandings of the issue.	Evidence of climate and adaptation experts contributing to multiple organisations; same government officials, e.g. ministers, sitting on multiple decision bodies.	Adoption of tools, methodologies, decision-making frameworks, and guidelines resembling or inspired by those in other IOs.

Source: *Created by the authors.*

in one IO are often 'borrowed' by another IO via emulation and attention from networks of like-minded actors, thus reinforcing connections between their respective securitisation processes.[39] In this way, at this stage, the discourses and policy outputs of one IO may inspire or directly shape the policies of another.[40]

In sum, the literature enables us to pinpoint when interaction between Collective Securitisation processes might occur: at the stages of securitising moves, audience response, and/or new policy outputs. These stages reflect potential pathways for emulation, diffusion, and cross-organisational influence within the framework of Collective Securitisation (see Table 1 for a summary).

The second limitation of Collective Securitisation is a lack of specification in what constitutes securitisation. To be fair, Sperling and Webber's version of Collective Securitisation relaxes the Copenhagen School's conventional argument that an 'existential construction' of a new threat is required. Sperling and Webber follow recent theorising in Critical Security Studies showing that a range of referent objects may be securitised and that securitised outcomes need not be 'urgent and exceptional' nor dramatic in character.[41] Outcomes evolve incrementally over time and reflect a kind of routine politics focused on reducing harm through a wide range of measures. Such security concerns include a wide array of control strategies and 'risk management' approaches attached to governments' efforts to address a span of current public policy problems.[42] This open approach to measuring and defining securitisation offers advantages in capturing a wide range of acts, practices, and outcomes. However, it also runs the risk of categorising any new practices as securitisation without providing clear criteria for distinguishing these acts, practices, and policy outcomes as genuinely 'securitised'.[43]

To address the second limitation in Collective Securitisation research, we advocate for the inclusion of measures that capture both traditional threat-based approaches *and* risk-based approaches to securitisation, the latter associated with the concept of 'riskification'. Drawing on the securitisation continuum proposed by Diez et al., we propose distinct empirical indicators for both

[39] Biermann and Koops, 'Studying relations among international organizations in world politics'.

[40] Elkins and Simmons, 'On waves, clusters, and diffusion'.

[41] Sperling and Webber, 'NATO and the Ukraine crisis'; Sperling and Webber, 'The European Union'. See, for instance, Diez et al., *Securitisation of Climate Change*; Jef Huysmans, *Security Unbound: Enacting Democratic Limits* (London: Routledge, 2014).

[42] Jessica Kirk, 'From threat to risk? Exceptionalism and logics of health security', *International Studies Quarterly*, 64:2 (2020), pp. 266–76; Karen Lund Petersen, 'Risk analysis: A field within security studies?', *European Journal of International Relations*, 18:4 (2012), pp. 693–717. Some scholars refer to this as, or imply it to be, 'second-order security' issues. On the latter point, see Olaf Corry, 'Securitisation and "riskification": Second-order security and the politics of climate change', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 40:2 (2012), pp. 235–58.

[43] Kirk, 'From threat to risk?'; Michael C. Williams, 'Words, images, enemies: Securitization and international politics', *International Studies Quarterly*, 47:4 (2003), pp. 511–31.

threatification (threat-oriented securitisation) and riskification (risk-oriented securitisation) to more comprehensively measure securitised outcomes.[44] The riskification literature systematically updates the traditional threat-based model of securitisation – characterised by urgency and existential threat – by recognising how public policy problems are increasingly framed and managed through the lens of risk and precaution[45] This approach is defined by policy frameworks rooted in calculative rationality, where decisions are guided by probabilities, risk assessments, and cost–benefit analyses.[46] Policymakers often deploy tools designed to identify, measure, address, and predict risks.[47] The riskification literature is crucial as it provides a nuanced understanding of how contemporary public policy challenges are increasingly approached through proactive and precautionary measures, offering a complementary framework to traditional threat-based models of securitisation. To operationalise the distinction between threat and risk logics in climate change and adaptation policy discussions, we identify three key analytical indicators that help differentiate between risk-oriented and threat-oriented securitisation.

The *first* analytical indicator is a discursive shift from framing issues as existential threats with dramatic imagery, and calls for immediate action, towards emphasising inherent vulnerabilities that require ongoing management, monitoring, and assessment. The *second* analytical indicator is signs of a reliance on and belief in expertise and technical knowledge in addressing vulnerabilities, rather than the higher-level authorities and resources (often military, in cases of traditional threat-based securitisation). A riskification of an issue frequently elevates actors with scientific expertise or close connections to such experts, highlighting a shift in focus from immediate responses to calculated, ongoing management.

The *third* analytical indicator emphasises the importance of examining not only the actors and their discourses but also the tools and instruments deployed to address perceived security problems.[48] In contrast to the military tools commonly associated with threat-based approaches, risk management instruments often include analytical models, prescriptive guidelines, and assessment matrices – each reflecting assumptions about the nature of the problem and how it should be managed.[49] Indicators of riskification, alongside traditional threatification, can thus be identified and analysed, providing a more nuanced understanding of the specific effects generated by a securitisation process.[50] See Table 2.

[44]Diez et al., *Securitisation of Climate Change*. Indeed, we align with scholars such as Diez et al. who view risk- and threat-based framings as a spectrum of securitisation outcomes rather than distinct processes, as in Corry, 'Securitisation and "riskification"'.

[45]Louise Amoore and Marieke De Goede, *Risk and the War on Terror* (London: Routledge, 2008); Corry, 'Securitisation and "riskification"'; Anne Hammerstad and Ingrid Boas, 'National security risks? Uncertainty, austerity and other logics of risk in the UK government's National Security Strategy', *Cooperation and Conflict*, 50:4 (2015), pp. 475–91; Maria Julia Trombetta, 'Environmental security and climate change: Analysing the discourse', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 21:4 (2009), pp. 585–602.

[46]Nicole Detraz and Michele M. Betsill, 'Climate change and environmental security: For whom the discourse shifts', *International Studies Perspectives*, 10:3 (2009), pp. 303–20; Angela Oels, 'From "securitization" of climate change to "climatization" of the security field: Comparing three theoretical perspectives', in Jürgen Scheffran, Michael Brzoska, Hans Günter Brauch, Peter Michael Link, Janpeter Schilling (eds), *Climate Change, Human Security and Violence* (Berlin: Springer, 2012), pp. 185–205; Delf Rothe, *Securitizing Global Warming: A Climate of Complexity* (London: Routledge, 2015).

[47]Stephan Davidshofer, Julien Jeandesboz, and Francesco Ragazzi, 'Technology and security practices: Situating the technological imperative', in Tugba Basaran, Didier Bigo, Emmanuel-Pierre Guittet, and R. B. J. Walker (eds), *International Political Sociology: Tranversal Lines* (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 205–27.

[48]Rocco Bellanova and Marieke De Goede, 'The algorithmic regulation of security: An infrastructural perspective', *Regulation & Governance*, 16:1 (2022), pp. 102–18.

[49]Anthony Amicelle, Claudia Aradau, and Julien Jeandesboz, 'Questioning security devices: Performativity, resistance, politics', *Security Dialogue*, 46:4 (2015), pp. 293–306; Amoore and De Goede, *Risk and the War on Terror*; Petersen, 'Risk analysis'.

[50]Diez et al., *Securitisation of Climate Change*.

Table 2. Examples of threat-oriented versus risk-oriented securitisation.

	Securitisation	
	Threat-oriented securitisation	Risk-oriented securitisation
Definition	A version of securitisation that follows a threat-logic, considering direct causes of harm. Prioritises short-term reactive measures.	A version of securitisation that follows a risk-logic, identifying constitutive causes of harm. Endorses long-term, proactive, and cautious actions.
Discourse	Threat, security, short-term, immediately, urgent, existential, extraordinary, danger, direct, certain, clear-cut, clear, inevitable, emergency, emergency measures, survival, defence, destruction, eradicate, adaptation as threat minimiser	Risk, risk management, long-term, resilience, probability, risk groups, risk areas, uncertainty, contingency, statistics, unclear, indirect, scenario planning, tolerance of uncertainty, precautionary principle, precaution, risk reduction, preparedness, manageable, cross-border risks, decision-making under uncertainty
Actors	Military officials, home army engagement, police officials, command-and-control organisation, etc.	Risk management officials, risk scientists, insurance companies, etc.
Tools	Military surveillance tools, measurement techniques, civil defence budgets, defence department grants, etc.	Adoption of techniques, models, and matrices for risk measurement, assessment, and management

Source: *Created by the authors, building on Diez et al., Securitisation of Climate Change.*

Our analysis below applies this supplemented version of Collective Securitisation that can account for interaction across organisations and measure securitisation in a more precise fashion. We study carefully where securitisation moves, audience acceptance, and new outcomes may be shaped by Collective Securitisation processes unfolding in other international organisations.

Methods

Our study relies on a novel database of climate adaptation documents systematically collected from UN and EU sources, for the period 1972–2023 – the most extensive of its kind. Our document collection strategy captured high-level speech acts, mid-level bureaucratic texts, and lower-level administrative documents to reflect the broad brush of securitisation dynamics, including both securitisation of the issue and the securitisation of resulting policy outcomes. We were careful to select only documents where the effects of a changing climate and the need for responses (such as adaptation) were captured in the discussion. For the UN, we drew data from publicly available databases associated with UN bodies including the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the UN Security Council (UNSC), and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) . Data collection was facilitated by official efforts to compile relevant documents on purpose-built websites (such as the UN's Climate Adaptation webpage).[51] Obtaining older documents required in-depth searches of UN databases and the use of third-party websites. For the EU, the process was similar, with the Commission's climate adaptation website the first port of entry, supplemented by a new EU Climate-ADAPT site with collected documents. During the process of manually coding each document, additional documents were identified through citations, such as legislative acts, minutes of network events (e.g. international, and regional conferences), project initiatives, and partnerships between organisations. Document collection resulted in 219 UN-related documents, including over 70 UNFCCC documents of decisions from the Conference of the Parties (CoP) sessions, and 169 EU-related documents.

[51] https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/climate-adaptation.

Coding and analysis of 388 documents was done using NVivo14, executed initially using two keyword searches. The first searched the stem word 'adapt' to confirm relevance and to identify paragraph units that were associated with adaptation. The second searched the risk-based and threat-based securitisation keywords (see Annex 1) to identify relevant paragraph units. Thereafter, each of the identified paragraph units were manually coded as exhibiting threatification or riskification language, or the paragraph units were ignored if neither was present. Next, each document was again manually coded to indicate whether the document featured mainly riskification or mainly threatification language overall. The coding scheme used to decipher threat-oriented versus risk-oriented indicators is similar to that used in previous studies with a similar objective.[52] The scheme relies not only on words directly related to 'risk' or 'threat' but also concepts, images, metaphors, and certain material emphases (see Annex 1). Finally, the analysis traced the securitisation moves by studying network interactions, and technologies and tools (e.g. methodological frameworks, formulas, and programmes), that were identified through the manual coding of the text analysis. Discourse visualisations were created using Python software. Some examples of texts analysed are provided in Annex 2.

In the course of document analysis, we compiled recurring names and affiliations, in order to build an image of how networks emerged and spread, along with geographical locations where certain individuals reappeared and networks periodically 'landed'.[53] Most of these names were scholars serving as expert witnesses and as report authors. We also uncovered public officials, representing either supranational organisations or certain member states, whose names repeatedly appear in conference proceedings, for instance. Some networks are formalised and documented (through, for instance, the website Climate Diplomacy).[54]

Finally, to initially scope the viability of the study and later to triangulate and verify our sources, semi-structured interviews were conducted with UN (four) and EU (seven) civil servants working with climate change adaptation (see Annex 3) between March 2021 and September 2022 to verify the findings of the text analysis, tool assessment, and network formation studies. Interviews were conducted in line with EU GDPR and ethical guidelines associated with our respective universities.[55] A figure depicting our methodological steps can be found in Figure 2.

Analysis of Collective Securitisation in the UN and the EU

The UN and climate change adaptation

Research shows the UN has pursued a securitised approach to climate change generally,[56] but this approach conforms mainly to a risk-oriented perspective rather than a threat-based one.[57] To what extent do such findings carry over to the question of climate adaptation policy per se? Our analysis

[52] Corry, 'Securitisation and "riskification"'; Diez et al., *Securitisation of Climate Change*; Jonatan Stiglund, 'Threats versus risks in Swedish security policy', in Sebastian Larsson and Mark Rhinard (Eds.), *Convergence and Divergence in Nordic Societal Security* (London: Routledge, 2022), pp. 34–53; Trombetta, 'Environmental security and climate change'.

[53] Stephen P. Borgatti, Filip Agneessens, Jeffrey C. Johnson, and Martin G. Everett, *Analyzing Social Networks*, (New York: Sage, 2024).

[54] See https://climate-diplomacy.org/.

[55] Due to space constraints, we do not present quantitative word- and phrase-count tables here. Instead, we present visual depictions of quantitative discourse trends alongside qualitative examples from texts, both of which are drawn from our database.

[56] Hardt et al.,'Introduction'; G. Kurtz, 'Securitization of climate change in the United Nations 2007–2010, in Jürgen Scheffran, Michael Brzoska, Hans Günter Brauch, Peter Michael Link, Janpeter Schilling (eds), *Climate Change, Human Security and Violence* (Berlin: Springer, 2012) , pp. 669–84.

[57] See Matt McDonald, 'Discourses of climate security', *Political Geography*, 33:1 (2013), pp. 42–51; Delf Rothe, *Securitizing Global Warming: A Climate of Complexity* (London: Routledge, 2015); Scartozzi, 'Climate change in the UN Security Council'. Some findings of the UN's approach to climate change suggest an inverted relationship: the climatisation of security policies or even the climatisation of UN policies in general. See for instance, Stefan C. Aykut and Lucile Maertens, *The Climatization of Global Politics* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023); and Lucile Maertens, 'Climatizing the UN Security Council', *International Politics*, 58:4 (2021), pp. 640–60. Most of these accounts detect at least some degree of risk-oriented logics in policy discourses.

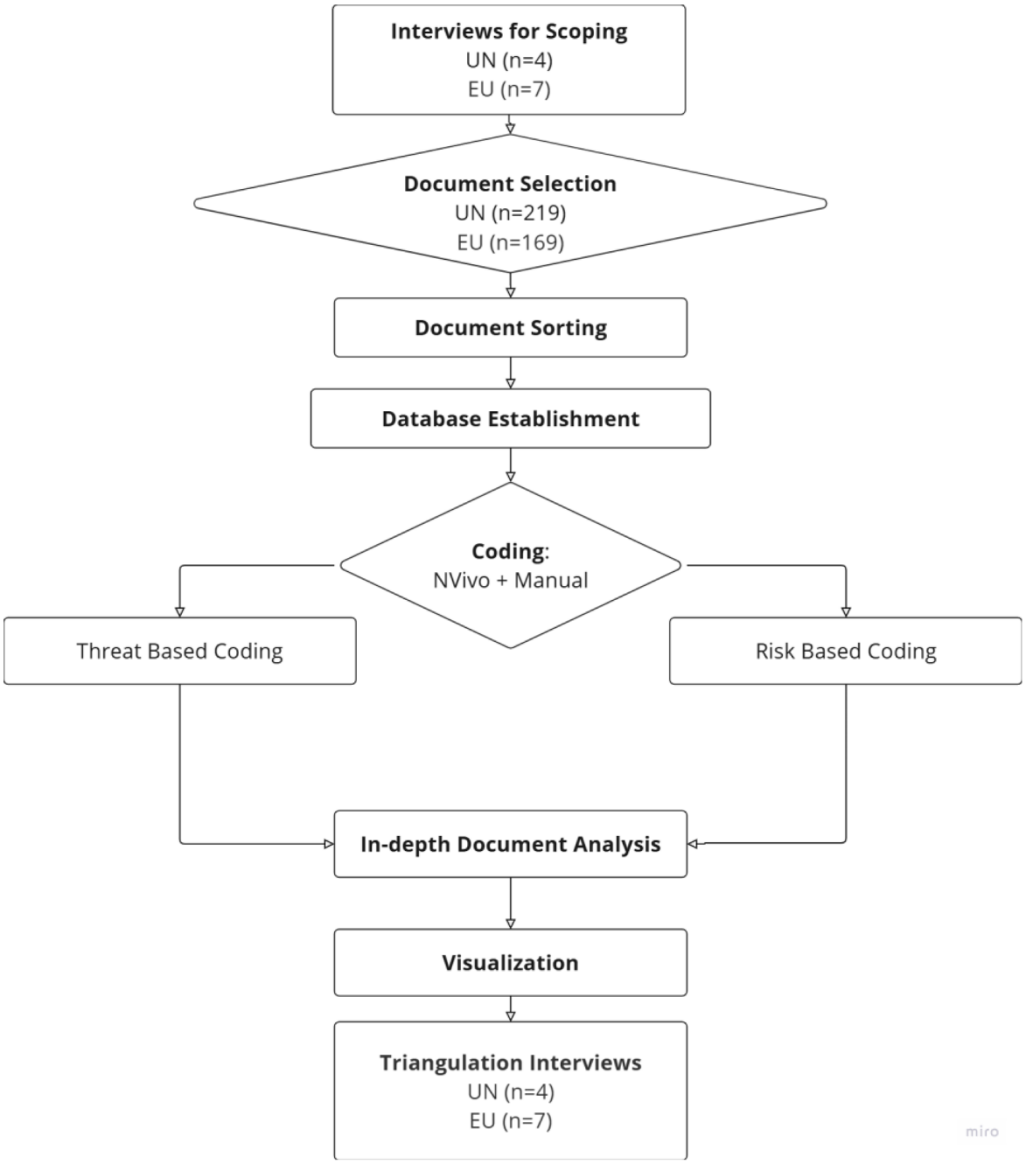

Figure 2. Methodological steps.

shows that the UN's attention to climate adaptation, which preceded the EU's in terms of depth and scope, was subject to a process of Collective Securitisation that played out over decades rather than years. Furthermore, we find that UN processes resulted in a specific kind of securitisation – namely, riskification – which reflected a specific set of discourses carried by certain actors and prioritising risk management tools rather than security management practices.

The starting point for applying the Collective Securitisation framework to the UN's approach to climate change adaptation requires an understanding of the *status quo* prior to evidence of securitised outcomes. Before the 1980s, the UN's engagement with climate change was growing, but its interest in adaptation as a response was marked by neglect, as climate change had yet to achieve

public salience and other pressing global issues dominated its agenda.[58] Political attention grew slowly through the 1980s, as climate change mitigation, associated with greenhouse gas emissions, climbed the international policy agenda.[59] Even though attention to mitigation grew, adaptation was addressed only sporadically and within a small group of technical experts associated with the UN.[60]

For instance, the UNEP, together with the WMO and International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU), organised an 'International Conference on the Assessment of the Role of Carbon Dioxide and of Other Greenhouse Gases in Climate Variations and Associated Impacts' in 1985 with scientists from 29 countries, including European states, participating. Uniquely for that time, the conference called for improved analysis of the impacts of climate change, including immediate assessments of the 'widest possible range of social responses aimed at preventing or *adapting* to climate change'.[61] The 1987 Brundtland Report on sustainable development also served as a pivotal moment in the UN's development of its adaptation policy. The report's conclusions stated that several strategies must accompany climate stabilisation, including plans for adaptation to climate change 'in the event that mitigation policies cannot be implemented rapidly'.[62] The report features language related to the security effects of climate change, arguing that the reduction of global warming was, then, an 'essential task to reduce the risks of conflict'.[63] Yet such language in documents from that period was rare. These years resemble a moment in time when no clear securitisation had yet taken place.

The situation changed in the late 1980s as scientific evidence accumulated, confirming that mitigation targets would be missed, and as belief spread among actor networks that effective mitigation was impossible.[64] This rapidly growing realisation, reflected in our observation of a widening network of actors and a steep increase in press coverage,[65] can be interpreted as a *precipitating event* that directed newfound attention to climate change adaptation, specifically. We find that discourses shifted from adaptation as a secondary concern towards an 'urgent issue' that must be addressed by 'unprepared populations' as the failure of climate mitigation grew apparent. This was the central theme emerging from a text analysis of events and reports held in the late 1980s, for instance, including widely attended events in 1987 such as the UNEP, WMO, and ICSU workshops on 'Developing Policies for Responding to Climate Change' (in Bellagio, Italy, and Villach, Austria) and, in 1988, at the UNEP and WMO Toronto conference on 'The Changing Atmosphere: Implications for Global Security'.[66]

[58]Ian Burton, 'The growth of adaptation capacity: Practice and policy', in Joel B. Smith, Neeloo Bhatti, Gennady V. Menzhulin, Ron Benioff, Max Campos, Bubu Jallow, Frank Rijsberman, Mikhail I. Budyko, R. K. Dixon (eds), *Adapting to Climate Change* (New York: Springer, 1996), pp. 55–67; Richard J.T. Klein, Kevin M. Adams, Adis Dzebo, Marion Davis, and Clarisse Kehler Siebert, 'Advancing climate adaptation practices and solutions: Emerging research priorities', Stockholm Environment Institute, Working Paper, 2017(07) (2017), p. 28.

[59]Timothy R. Carter and Kirsi Makinen, K. 'Approaches to climate change impact, adaptation and vulnerability assessment: Towards a classification framework to serve decision-making', MEDIATION Technical Report No. 2.1, (2) (2011).

[60]It is interesting to note that a coalition of Small Island Developing States was one of the first concerted efforts to place adaptation on the agenda within the UN. See Adelle Thomas, April Baptiste, Rosanne Martyr-Koller, Patrick Pringle, and Kevon Rhiney, 'Climate change and Small Island Developing States', *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 45:1 (2020), pp. 1–27.

[61]WMO, *Report of the International Conference on the Assessment of Climate Variations, Villach, 9–15 October 1985. World Meterological Organization Reports, No. 661* (Geneva: International Council of Scientific Unions, 1986), p. 12.

[62]UN, *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future. The Brundtland Report* (1987), p. 2.

[63]UN, *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development*, p. 3.

[64]IPCC, 'Climate change: Impacts, adaptation & vulnerability', IPCC Working Group, 10032 (2001); UNFCCC, *25 Years of Adaptation under the UNFCCC: Report by the Adaptation Committee* (2019); WMO, *Report of the International Conference on the Assessment of Climate Variations*.

[65]Ian Burton, Saleemul Huq, Bo Lim, Olga Pilifosova, and Emma Lisa Schipper, 'From impacts assessment to adaptation priorities: The shaping of adaptation policy', *Climate Policy*, 2:2–3 (2002), pp. 145–59.

[66]See events detailed in WMO, *Proceedings of the World Conference on Climate: The Changing Atmosphere: Implications for Global Security* (Geneva: Secretariat of the World Meteorological Organization, 1988).

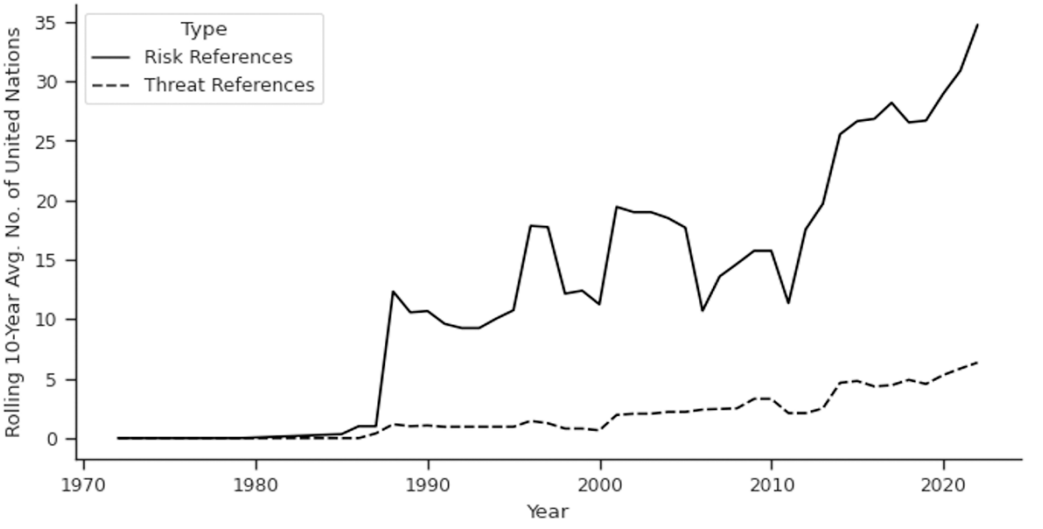

Figure 3. 10–year rolling average number of securitisation references in texts by the United Nations (1972–2023), coded in line with coding scheme in Annex 1.
Source*: Created by the authors.*

Not only was attention and analysis growing, but a clear *securitising move* can be detected. This followed on from a framing of climate change as an 'existential risk', yet one that, with anticipation and preparation, could be managed with proper analysis and attention. Along with growing networks of experts, policymakers, and a (initially slow but emerging) group of civil society representatives, focus was placed on 'decision-making under uncertainties'[67] identifying 'possible' and the 'most probable impacts',[68] assessing risks, managing 'anticipatory adaptation',[69] 'minimizing adverse effects', and avoiding 'forced adaptation'.[70] The risk framing of anticipation is particularly strong in official adaptation documents during this period (see Figure 3), corresponding with a belief that the world faced a plethora of problems linked to climate change, across societies, but that risk management tools could help avoid the worst.[71] In short, this marked the beginning of a risk-oriented discourse that would position adaptation as a central response to the escalating challenges associated with climate change.

Through the 1990s, the UN's securitising move quickened as risk-related discourses grew and experts focused on developing technical tools as an apparent solution to the adaptation challenge. The first IPCC report, published in 1990, kicks off the decade, while the second report in 1992 codifies the risk-oriented discourses emerging from previous reports and conferences. This seminal report treats climate adaptation not as a normal public policy problem, nor as an existential issue requiring extraordinary action, but rather as an issue best managed through risk thinking. It encourages 'immediate responses' to the 'inevitable danger' of climate change and asks member states to focus on adaptation, including likely impacts, based on ongoing risk assessment and risk analysis, and by continuing research on risk impact.[72] The second World Climate Conference in

[67]WMO, *Report of the International Conference on the Assessment of Climate Variations*, p. 10; see also WMO, *Proceedings of the World Conference on Climate*.

[68]WMO, *Report of the International Conference on the Assessment of Climate Variations*, pp. 2, 6.

[69]Jill Jäger, 'Anticipating climatic change', *Environment*, 30:7 (1988), pp. 12–33 (p. 14).

[70]WMO., *Report of the International Conference on the Assessment of Climate Variations*, pp. 2, 4.

[71]Mathilda Englund and Karina Barquet, 'Threatification, riskification, or normal politics? A review of Swedish climate adaptation policy 2005–2022', *Climate Risk Management*, 40:2–3 (2023), 100492.

[72]IPCC, *Climate Change: The 1990 and 1992 IPCC Assessments. The World Environment 1972–1992* (World Meteorological Organization; United Nations Environment Programme, 1992), pp. 2, 5.

1990 was timed to coincide with that inaugural IPCC report and brought together the key actors grouping around the adaptation question. Actors arrived from UN bodies, including the UNEP, the FAO, WMO, and notably the EU, and reappeared in both conference proceedings and subsequent years' texts in the form of recurring names and titles (see below).

The UN's framing of climate change as a risk-laden issue requiring adaptation-focused strategies evolved significantly in the early 1990s, characterised by a shift towards tool-based methodologies and the institutionalisation of risk-oriented frameworks through the efforts of the IPCC and the UNFCCC. The IPCC advanced its work by establishing an expert group and issuing its 'Preliminary Guidelines for Assessing Impacts of Climate Change',[73] the first significant step towards a tool-focused approach to adaptation rather than policy strategies. Two years later, the IPCC released its 'Technical Guidelines for Assessing Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation' (1994), which refined the earlier guidelines and provided detailed recommendations for conducting vulnerability analyses. These guidelines laid the foundation for what scholars later termed the 'first generation' of adaptation risk frameworks adopted by the UN.[74] By 1997, the second meeting of the UNFCCC's Conference of the Parties (CoP) requested the UN secretariat to 'accelerat[e] the development of methodologies of adaptation technologies, in particular decision tools to evaluate alternative adaptation strategies'.[75] A surge of guidelines and reports, many issued by the UNFCCC's newly established secretariat, further cemented the use of risk-based language and analytical tools in adaptation efforts. Simultaneously, the network of actors addressing the issue expanded significantly, bringing in several increasingly active international organisations.

Alongside the growing use of risk-oriented language, UN bodies increasingly pushed for the adoption of specific models to identify and address adaptation challenges[76] – a further indicator of a risk-oriented approach to securitisation (see Table 2). The UNEP, drawing on many of the same experts participating in the IPCC, and cooperating with the UNFCCC secretariat, developed in 1998 a 'handbook' containing guidance on the practical methods of impact and adaptation assessment.[77] That effort would merge with work done by the IPCC in 1998, effectively consolidating the position of adaptation experts, requisite language, and a technological approach to solving the problem. These trends accelerated through the 2000s. By 2001, the IPCC meetings released their third assessment report focused primarily on adaptation. The risk language is remarkably consistent, with little to no threat-oriented language that a more classical securitisation approach would identify.

The evolution of methodological tools for addressing climate adaptation took a major step in the early 2000s when several UN bodies published what is considered the 'second generation' of adaptation risk frameworks, which focused less on top-down predictions of climate change impacts (including narrow cost–benefit analyses) and more on general risk management of physical and social impacts, using a bottom-up perspective.[78] These reports move fully towards the principle of risk-based modelling for climate adaptation, urging members to apply those models as part of 'National Adaptation Programmes of Action' (NAPAs).

[73] IPCC, *Climate Change: The 1990 and 1992 IPCC Assessments*. That year featured the start of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which became the main platform for global climate change mitigation efforts and, over time, adaptation efforts as well.

[74] Carter and Makinen, 'Approaches to climate change impact'.

[75] UNFCCC, 'Report of the Conference of the Parties on its third session', Kyoto, 11 December 1997, FCCC/CP/19(Add.1) (1997), p. 3.

[76] Interview UN3, 2022. See Annex 3 for interview details.

[77] UNEP, *Handbook on Methods for Climate Change Impact Assessment and Adaptation Strategies* (New York: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 1998).

[78] Roger N. Jones and Benjamin L. Preston, 'Adaptation and risk management', *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*, 2:2 (2011), pp. 296–308; UNDP, *Adaptation Policy Frameworks for Climate Change: Developing Strategies, Policies and Measures* (Geneva, 2004); UNFCCC, *Annotated Guidelines for the Preparation of National Adaptation Programmes of Action* (2002), p. 1.

By 2007, and following vigorous debate over the various risk frameworks available,[79] an integrated 'risk management' approach that incorporates local capacities, likely vulnerabilities, and potential impacts was adopted in the IPCC's Adaptation Report 4, which constituted the third generation of adaptation risk frameworks adopted – and a major methodological milestone in the UN's approach to adaption.[80] The 1990s and 2000s thus showcased a prolonged but clearly discernible set of securitising moves, including continued use of risk-based terminology and the promotion of risk management tools and practices by actors coalescing around key UN platforms.

The Collective Securitisation approach posits that securitising moves are significant only when accepted by the intended audience, typically the formal decision-making body in an organisation.[81] However, *audience acceptance* of a security move is usually preceded by *recursive interactions* between securitising actors (usually taken to be bureaucratic actors and entrepreneurial experts) and the audience. By the mid- to late 2000s, evidence shows national leaders were adopting the language and tools associated with a risk-oriented version of securitisation.[82] A pivotal moment occurred during the first Security Council debate on climate change, highlighting a confirmation in the discourse shift and high-level approval of the risk approach to adaptation. The UN Secretary General's High-Level Event in September 2007 brought the Security Council and General Assembly together to debate the exigencies of climate change a 'growing and existential risk' requiring urgent 'risk management' and adaptation – in contrast to threat preparation.[83]

Subsequent events in 2008, including discussions at the UNFCCC, led to the creation of the 'Compendium on Methods and Tools to Evaluate Impacts of, and Vulnerability and Adaptation to, Climate Change', endorsing 'risk management' as the 'best' decision-making framework.[84] By the late 2000s, a risk-oriented approach to climate adaptation was the firmly established UN norm,[85] exemplifying risk-oriented securitisation as it advanced to the *new policy outputs* stage in the Collective Securitisation phase-model. The central outputs are well documented in the UNFCCC's own history of climate change adaptation policy[86] and are reflected in the risk-oriented language present in the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, in which adaptation was included as a fully independent objective for the first time.[87]

The EU and climate change adaptation

We now turn to the EU's own Collective Securitisation process, again employing our revised Collective Securitisation framework to explore how the UN and EU processes influenced one another as climate change adaptation entered the agenda. Until the mid-2000s, the EU paid little attention to climate change adaptation and exhibited no clear preference for either risk- or threat-oriented approaches. However, this began to change in 2005, following the UN's *audience acceptance* moment, when a risk-oriented approach to climate change adaptation was adopted at the highest level. As we show, this development appears to have prompted the start of a securitising

[79] Timothy R. Carter, Roger N. Jones, Xianfu Lu, Suruchi Bhadwal, Cecilia Conde, Linda O. Mearns, Brian C. O'Neill, Mark D.A. Rounsevell, Monika B. Zurek, 'New assessment methods and the characterisation of future conditions', *Group*, 1:2 (2007), pp. 133–71.

[80] Jones and Preston, 'Adaptation and risk management'.

[81] Sperling and Webber, 'The European Union'.

[82] Hardt et al.'Introduction'; Kurtz, 'Securitization of climate change in the United Nations 2007–2010'.

[83] Interview UN1, 2021.

[84] IPCC, *Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report* (Core Writing Team, R. Pachauri and A. Reisinger, eds) (Geneva, Switzerland, 2007), pp. 2, 11. See also UNFCCC, 'Compendium on methods and tools to evaluate impacts of, and vulnerability and adaptation to, climate change', Draft Report of the UNFCCC Secretariat (Regularly Updated), SC10341(10341) (2008), p. 155.

[85] UNFCCC, *25 Years of Adaptation under the UNFCCC*; Interview UN4, 2022; Interview EU3, 2022.

[86] UNFCCC, *25 Years of Adaptation under the UNFCCC*.

[87] Lisa Maria Dellmuth and Maria-Therese Gustafsson, 'Global adaptation governance: How intergovernmental organizations mainstream climate change adaptation', *Climate Policy*, 21:7 (2021), pp. 868–83; UN, Paris Agreement (2015).

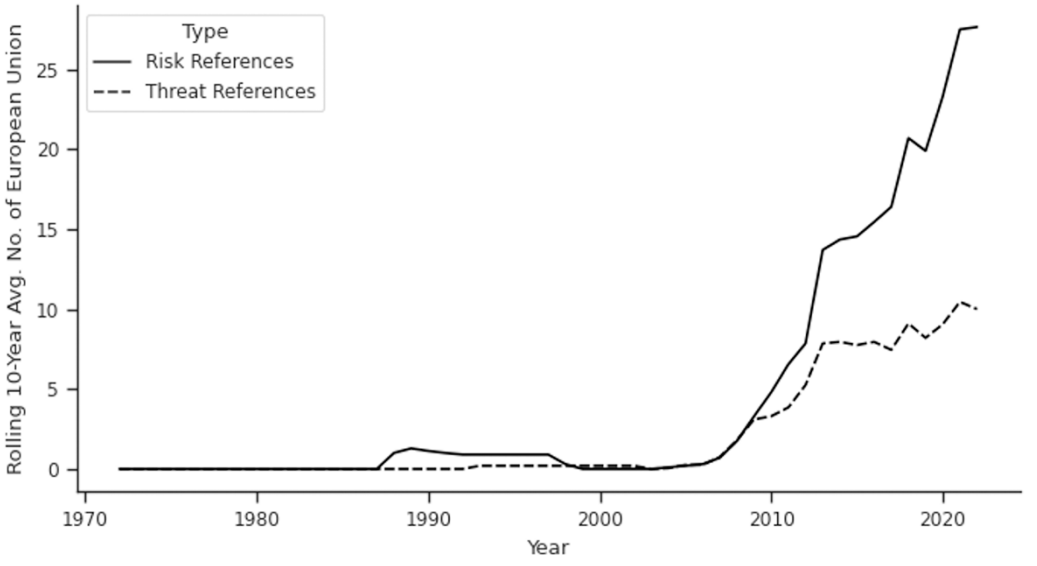

Figure 4. 10–year rolling average number of securitisation references in texts by the European Union (1972–2023), coded in line with coding scheme in Annex 1.
Source*: Created by the authors*.

move in the EU in 2007. In doing so, the EU initially mirrored the UN's risk-oriented approach, reflecting how Collective Securitisation processes can shape and intersect with one another. This section traces that evolution, unpacking the EU's securitising move and subsequent steps to shed light on the interconnected dynamics of these processes.

Applying the Collective Securitisation framework, we begin by examining the EU's initial *status quo* on climate change adaptation, which was characterised by non-securitisation and the absence of risk or threat language in EU texts on the topic during the 2000s (see Figure 4). This is explained mainly by the overall neglect of climate adaptation science and policy development. An exception is the work by officials in the Commission's Directorate-General for Research (DG Research), which has an expert-led approach to investigating policy problems.[88] Scientists from DG Research attended the early UN symposia on the matter (and even organised some of their own) in the 1990s. Several were involved in providing input into the early UN reports on the need to shift focus towards climate adaptation.[89] For the most part, however, there is only scattered mention of adaptation in EU policies and no clear signs of securitisation. Striking evidence of this stems from the EU's first major position on climate change, in early 2005, when it published 'Winning the Battle against Global Climate Change'.[90] This text focuses mainly on mitigation, with only a passing reference to adaptation.

Between 2007 and 2008, however, the EU's approach to climate change adaptation underwent a notable transformation, with key policy texts reflecting a sharp increase in security-focused language that balanced threat-oriented and risk-oriented discourses. A series of texts, including a 2007 staff working document prepared by the Commission, titled 'Adaptation to Climate Change in

[88] Angela Liberatore, 'Climate change, security and peace: The role of the European Union', *Review of European Studies*, 5:3 (2013), pp. 83-94.

[89] For example, P. Morel from ENS France, R. Fantechi from DG Research, and P. Bourdeau from DG Environment, whose names recurringly appear in documents at that time.

[90] Commission, 'Winning the battle against global climate change', Commission Communication COM(2005) 35 Final, (2005).

Europe',[91] and a 2008 publication by the Commission and Council together, titled 'Climate Change and International Security', signalled a sharp uptick in security-laden language, including references that suggest both 'the inescapable threat of climate change' requiring 'extraordinary action' alongside the need to 'implement long term strategies' to understand and act upon 'the multiplying implications' of climate risks.[92]

What happened in this two-year interval? Our evidence suggests that the UN's high-level acceptance of securitising moves in 2007 (see previous section) served as a precipitating event for the EU's own Collective Securitisation process. This interaction demonstrates the influence of cross-institution change mechanisms outlined in the theory section. The UN's framing of adaptation as a risk management response to a securitised climate problem signalled a shift to the EU, altering the EU's perceived pay-off calculations and encouraging policy mimeticism. This was further encouraged by growing stakeholder networks working across organisations.

Indeed it is no coincidence that shared stakeholder networks converged on a major EU climate conference in late 2006.[93] Both UN and EU officials joined with climate scientists and activists to address 'Future Climate, Impacts and Responses', which emphasised the need 'to improve Europe-wide risk, impact and cost/benefit assessment for adaptation responses, as compared with no action'.[94] In a clear sign of the mechanism of emulation, UN risk management language and concepts such as 'the goal of building societal resilience', 'calculating growing climate risks', and 'anticipatory governance' were subsequently incorporated into the Commission's 2007 staff working document,[95] among other texts, likely facilitated by academic experts drawn upon by both organisations in an example of entrepreneurial networks crossing institutional boundaries (see discussion above, circa footnote 89).

From there, the EU engaged in its own set of *securitising moves*. Many of these actions correspond with the promotion of risk-oriented discourses and the same kind of risk management matrices established by the UN. However, in the early years of the EU's securitising moves, we see not only risk concepts featured, but also those associated with threat-oriented versions of securitisation. The 2008 publication mentioned above, 'Climate Change and International Security', discusses climate change as a 'threat multiplier', i.e. a 'threat to security' in a plethora of ways, and emphasises the need for adaptation assistance.[96] This threat-based approach to climate change generally, and adaptation specifically, is unique to the EU; it can be explained partly by the position of a High Representative for the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy and, later, the role of the EU's security-oriented External Action Service in EU policy outcomes. The EU's contribution to a UN Secretary-General Report on 'Climate Change and International Security', in 2009, showcases some of the same perspectives, including the treatment of climate adaptation as a way to downgrade 'the security threats created by climate change'.[97]

For the most part, however, the securitising moves initiated by EU actors reflected risk thinking (see Figure 4). The preparation for the 2009 climate change negotiations in Copenhagen (CoP15) resulted in a flurry of texts, balancing the EU's extant focus on mitigation with equal treatment to adaptation. The EU's own negotiation position, written by the Commission with member state

[91] Commission, 'Adapting to climate change in Europe: Options for EU action', Communication from the Commission COM(2007) 354, (2007).

[92] Council and Commission, 'Climate change and international security', Paper from the High Representative and the European Commission to the European Council (S113/08), (2008), pp. 2, 6, 9.

[93] Commission, 'Climate change research challenges: International symposium', RTD Info, (February 2006), pp. 1–98.

[94] Commission. 'Integrated climate change research following the release of the 4th Assessment Report of the IPCC and most recent research developments', Commission Staff Working Document, (2008), p. 29.

[95] Commission, 'Adapting to climate change in Europe'. See discourses captured on pp. 2, 5, 13, 17, for example.

[96] Council and Commission, 'Climate change and international security', p. 12.

[97] EU, 'EU contribution to the UN Secretary General's report on climate change and international security', United Nations Archives (2009), https://www.un.org/esa/dsd/resources/res_pdfs/ga-64/cc-inputs/EU_CCIS.pdf, pp. 1–4, see p. 2.

input, called for an 'Adaptation Framework' to be agreed.[98] Soon thereafter, the first adaptation-specific policy statement emerged from the Commission in the form of a 2009 White Paper on 'Adapting to Climate Change'.[99] A text analysis of this document shows significant overlap with the UN's UNFCCC documents of that time, including risk-based language, proposals for specific kinds of impact and vulnerability analysis, and other risk management tools. An internal working paper in the Commission in 2009 provided the basis for the more formal 'Impact Assessment on Adapting to Climate Change' requirement, which demands adaptation to be measured and categorised according to risk management matrices.[100]

These moves mirrored the 'third generation' of adaptation tools propagated by the UN, drawing on the UNDP's 2008–9 guidelines on 'Designing Climate Change Adaptation Initiatives: A UNDP toolkit for practitioners' and successive IPCC reports on climate change (combined and republished in 2010).[101] The IPCC's 2012 special report advises all member states to reduce uncertainty about adaptation by applying risk management measurement tools. Titled 'Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation', it suggests integrating climate risks into decision-making processes with tools like decision support maps, predictive instruments, scenario planning, and scenario exercises.[102] This approach was adopted almost entirely by the European Commission's first formal proposal for an EU-wide climate change adaptation strategy in 2013. The document parrots the verbiage used by the UNFCCC and IPCC, with references to 'managing uncertainty', 'preparing for the inevitable', and the criticality of 'investing in … risk assessments and tools to build up capacities for adaption'.[103] One interviewee confirmed that the EU 'used' many of the UN texts, especially IPCC reports, since 'the process behind the IPCC reports is solid and sound and there is a political agreement by all the parties in the reports'.[104]

When a Commission proposal for legislation is formulated, generally speaking, supranational officials engage closely with national officials to (informally) test the boundaries of political acceptance. In this case, the Commission gathered key figures from the EU's national governments (partly via its expert group on climate change) along with officials from the IPCC and the European Environmental Agency, in 2012 and 2013, in a series of meetings and workshops to help 'sell' the contents of a climate adaptation strategy.[105] Analytically, this process resembles one of *recursive interaction*, when, according to the Collective Securitisation framework, securitising moves are accepted or rejected by the relevant audience. Such interaction was on full display as the Commission and member state officials worked almost side by side to devise the EU's strategy for climate change adaptation.

There are two notable features of this process. The first is the direct emulation of much of the UN's risk-related discourses (as shown by text analysis, see Figure 5) along with risk management tools, described earlier. A common finding in our text analyses is the importance of applying an 'asset-based' needs assessment. In other words, the technological tools propagated in this process were very much part of the securitising move and the object of discussion in the process of recursive interaction. The second feature is the broadly consensual nature of this interaction, since'the usual

[98]Commission, 'Towards a comprehensive climate change agreement in Copenhagen. *Proposal from the Commission* (COM/2009/0039 final) (2009).

[99]Commission, 'Impact assessment of "Adapting to climate change: Towards a European framework for action", Commission Working Paper, COM(2009)1 (SEC(2009)388) (2009).

[100]Commission, 'Impact assessment of "Adapting to climate change"'.

[101]UNDP, 'Designing climate change adaptation initiatives', A UNDP Toolkit for Practitioners (2010), p. 58.

[102]IPCC, *Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation*, A Special Report of Working Groups I & II of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, edited by Christopher B. Field, Vicente Barros, Thomas F. Stocker, et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023).

[103]Commission, 'The implementation of the EU Strategy on adaptation to climate change', Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and Council, 2018(COM(2018) 738 final) (2018), 55, pp. 3, 11, 12.

[104]Interview EU3, 2022; Interview EU6, 2022 confirmed this.

[105]Interview EU7, 2022. These events included, for instance, the European Climate Change Adaptation Conference (ECCA) held in Hamburg in 2012.

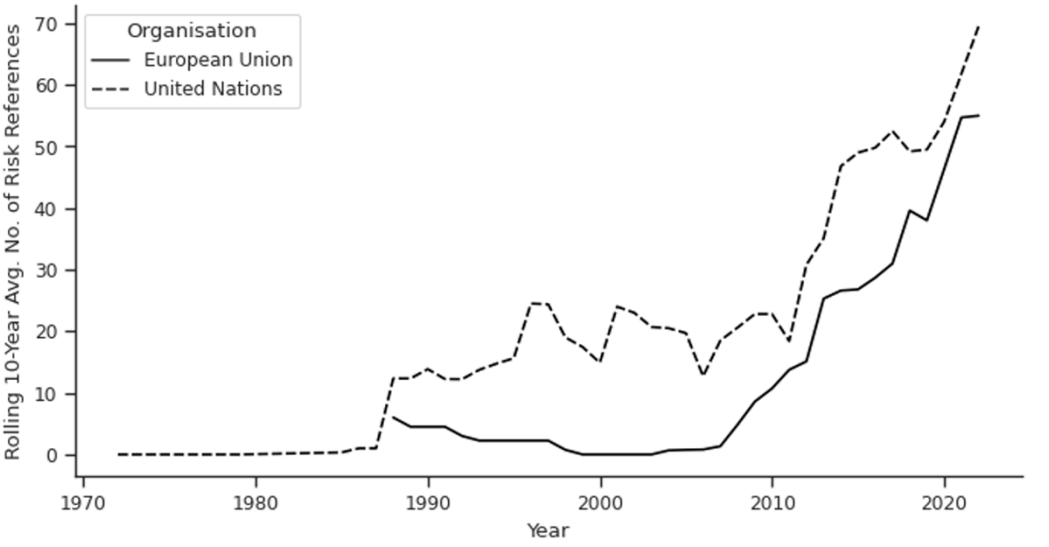

Figure 5. 10–year rolling average number of risk-based securitisation references in texts by organisation (1972–2023), coded in line with coding scheme in Annex 1.
Source: *Created by authors.*

suspects'[106] engaged in this interaction, including EU member state officials, EU supranational policymakers, and experts – many of whom also engaged in the earlier UN securitisation processes and represent the kinds of networked actors theorised earlier. As the Collective Securitisation framework suggests, within international organisations it is often supranational officials as 'securitisers' and national representatives as 'audience' working intimately in a process of recursive interaction.

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, the *acceptance* of the securitising act can be documented soon thereafter. Two formal acts connote high-level acceptance. One was the Council's approval of the Commission's proposal in the form of an 'EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change' (2013),[107] thereby signalling member state approval both formally and informally.[108] That document contains very similar texts that take a risk-based perspective on adaptation challenges and promotes the same kinds of technical approaches for managing those challenges. Another act was the Council's adoption of a policy on 'Climate Diplomacy' (2013), which argues that tackling climate adaptation challenges is 'a necessary condition for peace and security, development, and prosperity'.[109] Such language reintroduces the threat-based language that appeared years earlier (an effect of this document being produced mainly by the European External Action Service, which was temporarily involved in the debate) and of which we find some evidence in subsequent UN documents at the time – a seeming case of 'recursive interaction' as proposed by our framework.[110] The preponderance of evidence, however, points to the acceptance of a risk-oriented version of securitisation taking place in the EU regarding climate adaptation policy.

With this acceptance came a *new normal* in the EU's Collective Securitisation process, one characterised by a close alignment of UN and EU efforts. In 2013 and 2014, the UN and EU

[106]Interview EU7, 2022.
[107]Commission, An EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change (COM(2013) 216 final) (2013).
[108]Interview EU3, 2021.
[109]Council, 'Council conclusions on climate diplomacy', Foreign Affairs Council Meeting Luxembourg, 24 June 2013, Doc. 137587.
[110]UNFCCC, *25 Years of Adaptation under the UNFCCC*; K. Zwolski and C. Kaunert, 'The EU and climate security: A case of successful norm entrepreneurship?', *European Security*, 20:1 (2011), pp. 21–43.

collaborated to distil existing adaptation research into actionable guidelines under various dissemination programmes, including the 'Provia' initiatives,[111] addressing vulnerability and impacts in a widely adopted 'User's Companion'. Simultaneously, the EU's 'Mediation' project devised methodologies for effective climate decision-making. These guidelines were consolidated in Provia's 2014 'Support for NAP Development with the Provia Guidance', offering risk management models for national and local officials. The EU and UN jointly supported Adaptation Futures conferences from 2010 to 2021, indicating an expansion of risk management models globally. In the latter years of the 2010s, more collaborative efforts, such as the 2017 EU/UN Partnership on Climate Change and Security,[112] emerged to combat climate change and promote adaptation projects abroad, with funding contingent on adopting the EU and UN's risk management analysis frameworks.[113]

However, in 2018, threat language found its way back into EU documents as the EU's previous adaptation strategy was reviewed and updated. The EEA's evaluation of the old strategy, for example, states that the security angle of adaptation needs more focus, considering how 'international climate adaptation issues' are closely linked to 'migration risks, risk to global value chains, and security risks'.[114] This type of language, reflected in several EU documents of that period, is more explicit and more directly linked to security per se than the more subtle risk discourse identified previously. The Commission's own review of the strategy comes to a similar conclusion, arguing that 'Europe is vulnerable to climate change impacts beyond its borders through, for example, trade, international financial flows, migration, and security'.[115] A tension between climate change adaptation at home, and adaptation abroad, is more pronounced for the EU and can be attributed to growing geopolitical conflict on the EU's borders.[116] See Figure 6 for a depiction of the EU leading the UN in threat language, although at a much lower overall rate compared to risk language in general.[117]

Indeed, subsequent climate adaptation policies in the EU and UN return to a focus on earlier risk management methodologies. The EU refined its methods using guidelines from UNFCCC, IPCC, and UNDP, consolidating tools under the Climate Change and Vulnerability Assessment (CCIV) label. These CCIV tools involve assessing current and future climate conditions and potential impacts on vulnerable sectors, and analysing underlying factors influencing climate risks.[118] In the mid-2010s, there was a debate on international modelling tools, but by 2018, focus converged on a specific set of tools for measuring, prioritising, and addressing adaptation needs. Notably, collaboration on adaptation modelling intensified through joint efforts of the UNFCCC, EU (especially the European Environmental Agency), and the International Standards Organization (ISO) in workshops and conferences from 2018 to 2020. An interviewee described this intersection as a 'feedback loop' between the two IOs within which individual EU member states can raise adaptation issues at the UN and then issues 'come back' to the EU and vice versa.[119] France, Germany, and Sweden tend to be the most engaged members states, although our research shows that groups

[111] UNEP, *The PROVIA Guidance on Assessing Vulnerability, Impacts and Adaptation to Climate Change* (Geneva, 2013).

[112] UNEP/EU, 'Climate Change and Security Partnership Project', *Final Report: March 2017–1 February 2022*, (2022), pp. 1–56.

[113] B. Pérez de las Heras, 'Climate security in the European Union's foreign policy: Addressing the responsibility to prepare for conflict prevention', *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 28:3, (2020), pp. 335–47.

[114] Commission, 'The implementation of the EU Strategy on adaptation to climate change'.

[115] Commission, 'The implementation of the EU Strategy on adaptation to climate change', p. 2.

[116] Tim Rayner, 'Adaptation to climate change: EU policy on a mission towards transformation?', *NPJ Climate Action*, 2:1 (2023), pp. 1–4.

[117] See Annex 4 for a visualisation comparing risk and threat language over time, in both organisations combined, illustrating the overall dominance of risk-oriented language.

[118] Hans-Martin Füssel, 'National climate change vulnerability and risk assessments in Europe, 2018', EEA Reports, 2018(1) (2018), p. 76.

[119] Interview EU2, 2021.

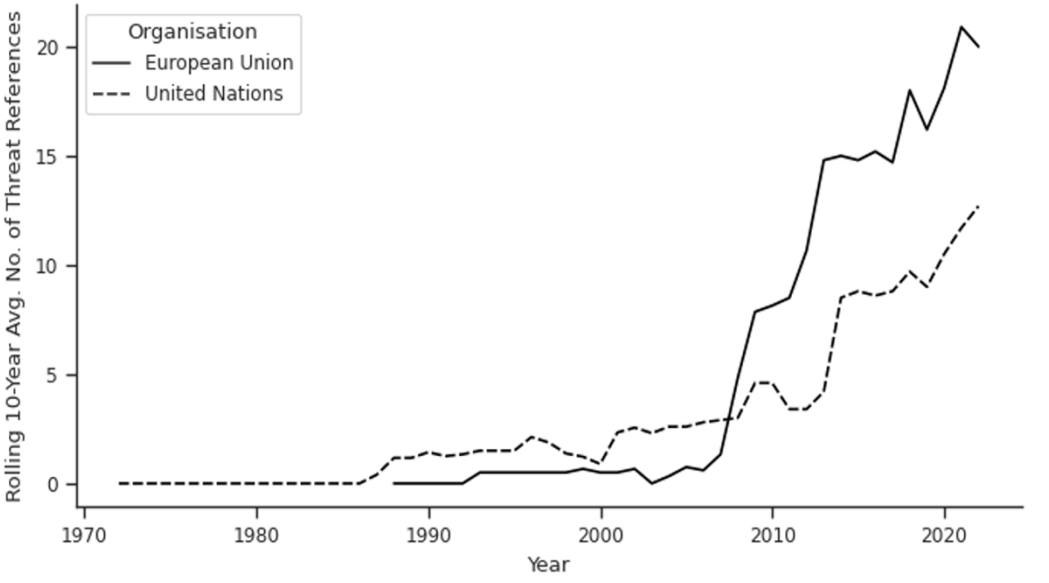

Figure 6. 10–year rolling average number of threat-based securitisation references in texts by each organisation (1972–2023), coded in line with coding scheme in Annex 1.
Source*: Created by the authors.*

of individual bureaucratic and academic actors tend to be the conduits for these securitising dynamics.[120]

In a clear instance of cross-organisational influence, the CCIV research and emerging EU approaches for measuring adaptation[121] shaped the ISO's 2021 'norm' for climate change assessment protocols.[122] This ISO norm specified risk modelling parameters, emphasising a shift towards 'asset-level modeling' for states addressing prominent climate-related issues. Such modelling approaches were then reflected in EU and UN policy cooperation by the early 2020s. The EU's second 'Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change' (2021) exemplifies this, focusing on improving the policy cycle through enhanced knowledge and data, support for policy development, and accelerated adaptation action.[123] The strategy underscores the importance of using 'state-of-the-art adaptation modeling and risk assessment tools', aligning with the 2013 strategy's emphasis on asset-level modelling. This risk-oriented approach became the foundation for subsequent 'action plans' and work programmes. In contrast to earlier threat-focused language, the 2021 EU strategy adopted more risk-oriented discourses, viewing adaptation efforts as a series of proactive measures rather than a one-time emergency response.[124]

In short, our data reveals clear intersections of UN and EU Collective Securitisation processes, with the EU's process staggered temporally, kicking off roughly halfway through the UN's process in 2007. That intersection seems to be led through several of our hypothesised dynamics, including the UN's audience acceptance serving as the EU's precipitating event and the diffusion and use of

[120]See Javier Cifuentes-Faura, 'European Union policies and their role in combating climate change over the years', *Air Quality, Atmosphere & Health*, 15:8 (2022), pp. 1333–40. It was also noted this was a predominantly Western European-dominated process.

[121]CENELEC (2021). 'New standard helps adapting to climate change'. Press Release (2021).

[122]ISO, Adaptation to Climate Change: Guidelines on Vulnerability, Impacts and Risk Assessment. ISO 14091:2021 (2021); see p. 5, for example.

[123]Commission, 'Forging a climate-resilient Europe: The new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change', Communication from the Commission, COM(2021)82 Final (52021DC0082) (2021).

[124]Commission, 'Forging a climate-resilient Europe'.

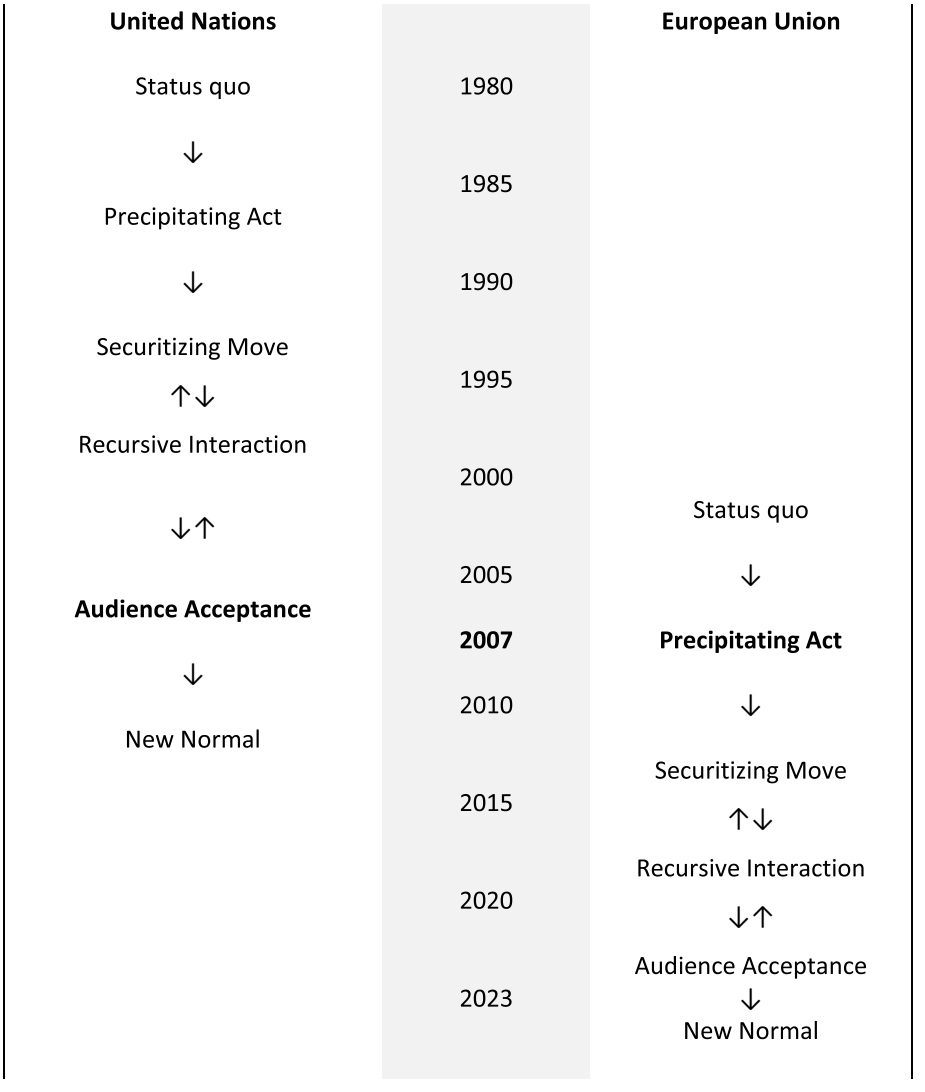

Figure 7. Collective Securitisation of climate change adaptation in the UN and EU.
Source: *Created by the authors.*

certain tools and the cross-institutional interaction of key actors. See Figure 7 for a representation of how the respective Collective Securitisation processes overlap.

Discussion and conclusion

This article set out to examine an important and illustrative case of inter-institutional influence between two ostensibly separate processes of Collective Securitisation. Too often, instances of Collective Securitisation are treated in isolation, despite the dense institutional environment of the international system and the overlapping responsibilities of global governance actors. We hypothesised when and how such interactions might occur, using the Collective Securitisation analytical framework as a foundation while also developing it to demonstrate how three of its stages – precipitating event, securitising moves, and audience acceptance – can create windows of mutual influence. By constructing a database of UN and EU climate adaptation documents

published over a 40-year period and analysing them in conjunction with interviews, we gained a robust view of how discourse trends evolve between the two organisations and whether these discourses reflect threat- or risk-oriented logics in response to the pressing issue of climate adaptation.

Our empirical findings confirm that the UN and EU's Collective Securitisation processes intersected at key moments and in ways that broadly confirm our expectations. Certain stages of the securitisation process, particularly recursive interaction, opened opportunities for cross-organisational influence, as suggested by institutional learning and norm diffusion theories. This was evident in how the UN's audience acceptance phase set the stage for the EU's precipitating moment, and in how the EU's securitising moves directly built upon the UN's discourses and practices. Constituent members of both organisations acted as conduits of influence, transferring new framings and policy tools across institutions.

Beyond shared discourse, inter-institutional influence extended to the promotion of technological tools shaping adaptation policies. The UN's risk-oriented approach to climate adaptation pre-dated the EU's, creating a discursive foundation that the EU later adopted. Over time, both organisations prioritised risk-based frameworks, though threat-oriented language briefly resurfaced in the EU's adaptation policy during the 2010s before risk images regained prominence. This shift underscores how risk-oriented securitisation, and its emphasis on ongoing management rather than existential threat, became the dominant framing in both organisations.

This article makes three key contributions to advancing the study of Collective Securitisation. First, we theorise how securitisation processes within international organisations interact, extending the literature and strengthening the analytical foundations of this research agenda. Second, we identify specific points of interaction between these securitisation processes and demonstrate how policy learning and norm diffusion mechanisms drive those interactions. Finally, we contribute to a broader understanding of the downstream effects of the securitisation of climate change, showing how securitisation shapes policy responses on adaptation. In doing so, we engage directly with the growing debate on the implications of different approaches to climate governance.[125]

Future research could further explore the mechanisms and conditions under which inter-institutional influence occurs in securitisation processes. While this study focused on the UN and EU – two relatively institutionalised actors – future work could examine whether similar dynamics apply in less formalised or weaker international organisations. Additionally, greater attention should be given to the role of document types in shaping policy spillovers. High-level decision documents may exert greater influence on diffusion processes than technical reports, but this remains an open question. More broadly, the long-term trajectory of risk-based securitisation in climate adaptation policy warrants further investigation, particularly in the face of increasing political contestation over climate governance. Examining whether securitisation remains primarily risk-based or shifts back towards threat-oriented framings could provide valuable insights into the evolving nature of climate adaptation strategies in international governance.

Finally, our findings at the international level invite closer engagement with recent studies examining securitisation processes at the national level.[126] Future research could productively explore how the collective securitisation observed within the UN and EU aligns or contrasts with national securitisation practices, especially given insights from recent studies on climate

[125]Olaf Corry, 'The international politics of geoengineering: The feasibility of Plan B for tackling climate change', *Security Dialogue*, 48:4 (2017), pp. 297–315; Heinrichs, 'Energy security, climate change, and routines as maladaptive politics'.

[126]Yamani Amakrane and Robbert Biesbroek, 'How is the military and defence sector of EU member states adapting to climate risks?', *Climate Risk Management*, 44 (2024), 100609; Judith N. Hardt, Dhanasree Jayaram, Cameron Harrington, Duncan McLaren, Nicholas P. Simpson, Alistair D. B. Cook, Maria Cecilia Oliveira, Franziskus von Lucke, Maria Julia Trombetta, Marwa Daoudy, Rita Floyd, Chinwe Philomina Oramah, Mely Caballero Anthony, and Adrien Estève, 'The challenges of the increasing institutionalization of climate security', *PLOS Climate*, 3:4 (2024), e0000402; Anselm Vogler, 'Barking up the tree wrongly? How national security strategies frame climate and other environmental change as security issues', *Political Geography*, 105 (2023), 102893.

securitisation at member-state levels. Such comparative analyses would provide further insights into whether and how international securitisation discourses resonate with national policy implementation.

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Annexes

Annex 1. Operationalisation/Coding Sheet of Climate Security Discourse (summary)

	Logics of Securitisation	
	Threatification	Riskification
Definition	A version of securitisation that follows a threat-logic, considering direct causes of harm. Prioritises to short-term reactive measures.	A version of securitisation that follows a risk-logic, identifying constitutive causes of harm. Endorses long-term, proactive, and cautious actions.
Keywords analysed		
Timing (short- vs long-term)	Short-term, immediately, immediate, urgent, urgency, quickly, faster, directly, early, pressing, priority, acutely, swift, already	Long-term, future, predict, probability, chance, distant, indeterminate, outlook, prospect
Problem description (danger vs.risk)	Threat, security, survival, emergency, eradicate, direct, danger, destruction, conflict, endangering, destroying, clear, sobering, ambitious, disproportionate impact, significant, major, high, failure, widening gap, significantly, severe, deep, crucial, necessary, ominous, irreversible, pervasive, exploit	Risk, indirect, consequences, imbalances, exposure, hazards, scenario, circumstance, potential impact
Problem-solving action	Emergency measures, defence, military action, eradication, scale up, drastic measures	Risk governance, resilience, precaution, precautionary principle, risk reduction, preparedness, management, preserving, detection, assessment, statistics, calculation, long-term strategy, insurance, loss and damage management, planned
Tools/devices	Defence policies, military surveillance tools and techniques, and civil defence budgets	Risk modelling, scenario-planning, risk assessment, risk analysis, risk matrices, risk management, risk evaluation, CCAIV assessments
Magnitude of problem	Existential, extraordinary, insurmountable, unmanageable, substantial, central, unavoidable, adverse	Manageable
Likelihood of event	Inevitable, reality, anticipated, expected, likely, very probable	Uncertain, uncertainty, contingency, probability, unclear, unforeseeable, potential, potentially, chance

Source: *Adapted from Corry 2012, 'Securitisation and "riskification"'; Diez at al. 2016, The Securitisation of Climate Change; von Lucke, Franziskus., Wellmann, Zehra., & Diez, Thomas (2014). What's at Stake in Securitising Climate Change? Towards a Differentiated Approach. Geopolitics, 19(4), 857–884. https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2014.913028*> , and Stiglund 2022, 'Threats versus risks in Swedish security policy'.

Annex 2. Examples of Documents (N = 388).

Due to space constrains we cannot report all the 388 documents.

Organisation	United Nations	European Union
Adaptation-specific documents	PROVIA Guidance on Assessing Vulnerability, Impacts and Adaptation to Climate Change (UNEP, 2013)	Green Paper from the Commission – Adapting to Climate Change in Europe – Options for EU Action {SEC(2007) 849} (Commission, 2007)
	Managing the Risks of Extreme Events Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation Special Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2012)	Study on Adaptation Modelling Comprehensive Desk Review: Climate Adaptation Models and Tools (Commission, 2020)
	Compendium of Decision Tools to Evaluate Strategies for Adaptation to Climate Change (UNFCCC, 1999)	An EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change {COM/2013/0216 final} (Commission, 2013)
Climate change-specific documents	The UN Security Council and Climate Change: Tracking the Agenda after the 2021 Veto (UNSC, 2022)	Communication to the Council 'The Greenhouse Effect and the Community' {COM(88) q56 final} (Commission, 1988)
	Climate Change and its Possible Security Implications Report of the Secretary-General (UNSC, 2009)	EU Contribution to the UN Secretary General's Report on Climate Change and International Security (Commission, 2009)
	Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future (UNDP, 1987)	Commission Staff Working Document Climate Change, Environmental Degradation, and Migration (Commission, 2013)

Source: *Created by the authors.*

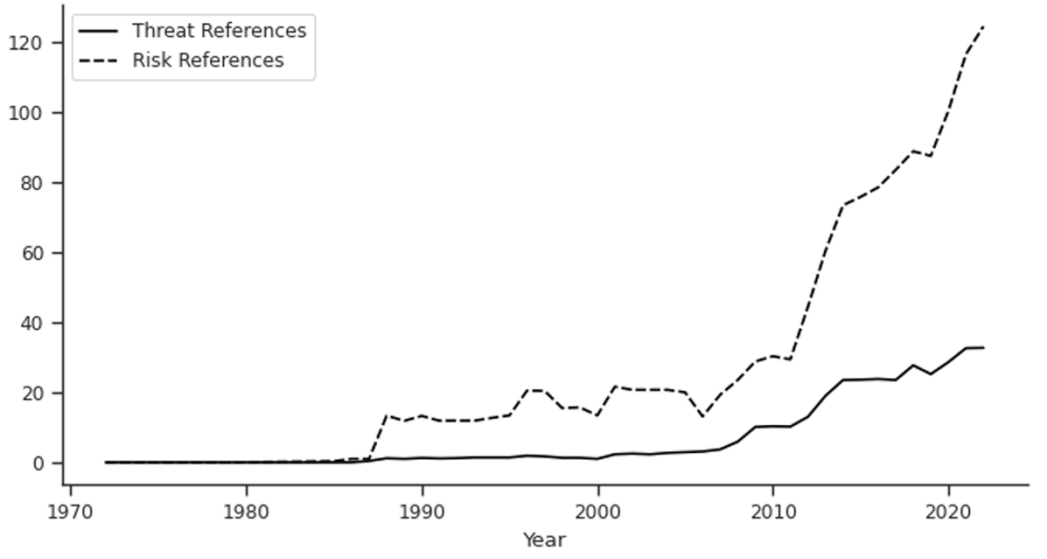
Annex 3. Interviewees (exact administrative unit withheld for confidentiality reasons)

Date	International Organisation	Coding Number
21 December 2021	United Nations (UNDRR)	UN1, 2021
27 January 2022	United Nations (Adaptation Committee)	UN2, 2022
25 February 2022	United Nations (UNEP)	UN3, 2022
8 March 2022	United Nations (UNFCCC)	UN4, 2022
2 December 2021	European Union (DG Clima)	EU1, 2021
24 November 2021	European Union (DG Clima)	EU2, 2021
10 January 2022	European Union (DG Clima)	EU3, 2022
07 January 2022	European Union (DG Clima)	EU4, 2022
12 January 2022	European Union N/A	EU5, 2022
18 February 2022	European Union (DG ECHO)	EU6, 2022
22 September 2022	European Union (DG Home)	EU7, 2022

Source: *Created by the authors.*

Annex 4. Supplemental data visualisations

10-year rolling average number of Securitisation references by type, both organisations (1972–2023)



Source: Created by authors.

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