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Translocal resilience: considering alternatives within the environment-migration nexus

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Abstract

Beschleunigte Umweltveränderungen machen viele Küstenregionen zunehmend unbewohnbar und machen Migration zu einer zentralen Anpassungsstrategie. Dennoch stellen politische Narrative Mobilität häufig durch Angst- schüren und Fremdenfeindlichkeit dar, wodurch ihr Potenzial zur Stärkung der Resilienz verdeckt wird. Diese Arbeit untersucht Migration aus der Perspektive der translokalen Resilienz, eines Rahmens, der aufzeigt, wie migrierende Menschen Verbindungen über mehrere Orte und entlang von Migrationsrouten aufrechterhalten. Als natürliches Experiment wird die Explosion von Beirut im Jahr 2020 – ein plötzlicher Umwelt- und soziopolitischer Schock in einer niedrig gelegenen Küstenstadt – herangezogen. Wir kombinieren ethnografische Interviews mit einer Netzwerk-Analyse informeller Mobilitäts-kanäle. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass (i) vertriebene Familien mehr-ortige soziale Bindungen behalten, die eine schnelle Umverteilung von Ressourcen ermöglichen, (ii) informelle Netzwerke als „Mobilitäts-Korridore“ fungieren, die den Verlust von Lebensgrundlagen abmildern, und (iii) politische Maßnahmen, die diese Korridore formalisieren und diasporagestützte Mikro-Finanzierung fördern, die Anpassungsfähigkeit deutlich steigern. Indem Migration als ein konstruktiver Prozess des Resilienz-aufbaus positioniert wird, liefert die Studie ein Modell für minimal invasive, maximal adaptive Politiken, die die Handlungsfähigkeit den Migranten überlassen und ihren Beitrag zur sozialen Resilienz nutzen.

Accelerated environmental change is rendering many coastal zones increasingly uninhabitable, making migration a central adaptation strategy. Yet policy narratives often portray mobility through fear-mongering and xenophobia, obscuring its potential to build resilience. This thesis interrogates migration through the lens of translocal resilience, a framework that highlights how displaced peoples sustain connections across multiple locales and along migration routes. Using the 2020 Beirut explosion—a sudden environmental and sociopolitical shock in a low-elevation coastal city—as a natural experiment, we combine ethnographic interviews and network analysis of informal mobility channels. Findings reveal that (i) displaced families retain multi-site social ties that enable rapid resource redistribution, (ii) informal networks function as “mobility corridors” that mitigate loss of livelihood, and (iii) policy interventions that formalize these corridors and support diaspora-mediated micro-financing markedly improve adaptive capacity. By positioning migration as a constructive resilience-building process, the study offers a template for minimally disruptive, maximally adaptive policies that place agency in the hands of migrants and harness their contribution to social resilience.

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Introduction

"Migration is an expression of the human aspiration for dignity, safety and a better future. It is part of the social fabric, part of our very make-up as a human family. [...] It is our collective responsibility to make migration work for the benefit of migrants and countries alike" (Ban Ki Moon, 2013)

"I also think massive migration is inevitable. As sea levels rise, as climate change happens, as fertile fields become arid, as wars are fought, people are going to move. They always have. I think we should be prepared, given environmental and political change for large-scale migration. If sea levels rise and 200 million people in Bangladesh and 300 million people in Indonesia need to move, and the entire Chinese seaboard, New York City—that's going to be *huge.* So I thought it was important to imagine a future of immense migration and compress that into just a couple of years. And to imagine this future not as just a dystopian horror, but as something more complicated—that might even have elements of hope" (Sammon, 2017)



Alarming reports of increasing numbers of migrants moving, especially to developed countries, have circulated throughout media, political and social discourses, often resulting in restrictive immigration and border policies. According to these discourses, a number of "refugee crises" have ensued within this century, and they have largely resulted in international confusion and finger-pointing as to who is responsible to accept individuals, how many, and where they are allowed to go in the first place. The media continuously warn of migration flows beyond anything we have seen before and their massive effects on nations ("Climate Migrants Could Face a World of Closing Doors," 2022; Lustgarten, 2020; Parker, 2018; Vince, 2022). According to the International Organisation for Migration, there is an estimated number of 281 million international migrants and 763 million internal migrants, which means that one in every 28 persons is currently a migrant living abroad and one in every seven individuals is an internal migrant (IOM, 2020). These numbers do not include the 26 million refugees and 50.4 million internally displaced people which were counted in 2019 (IOM, 2020). Looking solely at these numbers, it is somewhat understandable that the international community has repeatedly expressed hesitation regarding admission of migrants and refugees and that countries of destination have implemented increasingly strict immigration and refugee policies. However, such numbers are abstract measurements and do not include the fact that migration itself is

not a new phenomenon and that it has been occurring historically both internally and cross-border. In addition to that, it does not take into consideration where people migrate to and that the largest brunt of migrants move within their countries of origin or to neighbouring countries. Similarly, they do not allow for a nuanced understanding of why people chose to move, where they chose to move to, how long they wish to stay and how such decisions are formed in the first place, amongst other things. Even though, the effects of climate change on migration and human mobility have been studied since the 80s, much of its focus was placed on the global security aspect (Scissa, 2022). Understanding the more human-centred intricate dynamics behind migration decisions can give policy makers and researchers insights into the possible shaping of future movements, thereby facilitating policy actions and supporting (or thwarting) such movement. Uncertainty often sparks fear and fear has the power to result in restrictive measures in order to 'protect' those who 'belong' from those that do not.

Although these trends have changed over the course of this century, I have come to find that most migration discourses have historically revolved around political or economic migrants (especially when refugees are included) and there is a disregard of a third group of migrants which is that of environmental migrants. There are different types of migrants who can be categorized based on a variety of factors, which is further explained in box 1. While these categories are not mutually exclusive and it is very rare to find migrants who solely fall under one category, for the sake of brevity, this thesis shall place focus on environmental migrant or those whose mobility decisions are influenced by environmental changes. Furthermore, since environmental change can encompass a variety of phenomena ranging from climate change to extreme weather events to human-induced environmental disasters and is experienced in a plethora of localities, the focus here shall be placed on low-lying nations, more specifically Beirut, Lebanon and a human-induced environmental disaster which occurred in April 2020. Due to the complex environmental, economic and social effects of this explosion, political or economic reasons for migration (amongst others) will not be completely disregarded with respect to cause for movement, but much rather the focus is placed on individuals who claim environmental reasons as part of their initial reason to move.

This thesis is not an attempt to further define or limit the scope of what environmental migration entails. Neither shall it be seen as a critique of environmental migration itself or of the policies and regulations which surround it. Much rather, throughout my research, I have come to find that the causality of migration is often oversimplified and in order to better understand and direct future migratory movements, which will increasingly include those influenced by environmental changes, there is a need to understand both the complexity of reasons why people move and the intricacies which are created by migrants along already existing pathways which are constantly configured and reconfigured along corridors of migration. This will be done by applying the concept of translocality to the migratory movements created by this tragic event, which allows for a more nuanced understanding of migration flows, beyond the good/bad dichotomy. It must be pointed out that environmental changes are also a part of natural developments -whether it be climate change, changes in biodiversity (usually loss thereof), ocean acidification, changes in land use and soil degradation, or freshwater depletion- which have historically occurred. Such change has been happening over the evolution of our planet, clearly visible in more extreme time periods such as the ice age and the gradual increase in global temperatures from that time onwards. This is not to say that humans are innocent bystanders of these phenomena however; with the rise in greenhouse gas emissions and other damaging gases which have increased due to industrialization and exploitation of resources, environmental changes have reached unprecedented levels which, if not addressed immediately, will have further far-reaching effects on humanity and the planet as a whole. As a matter of fact, "a survey, representing over half the world's population, found that almost two-thirds of people across 50 countries view climate change as an emergency, compared to just over half across 23 countries in 2013" ("Point of Departure and Key Concepts," p. 126). What this shows is that in accordance with the increasing number of environmental changes which we are experiencing and witnessing, social awareness towards the subject has increased as well, with governments, businesses and civil society responding to such demands. However, social awareness of these issues does not necessarily correlate with positive or effective policies with regards to migrants, but also with

regards to industrialization as a whole. While acknowledgement of the significance of these issues has increased, "current climate policies and actions alone are not sufficient to meet stated policy goals" ("Point of Departure and Key Concepts," p. 126). While pushing for the implementation of policies to decrease greenhouse gas emissions, limit the consumption of single-use plastic, and regulate fishing practices, amongst other things, is important, it is also imperative to secure human livelihoods as they exist today. This can be done through a variety of adaptation, development, mitigation and resilience strategies. The difficulty with such strategies is their inherently subjective nature as different ecosystems, cultural practices, political systems or economic structures require different approaches. This thesis is an attempt to dissect the multicausality of migration itself, to shed light on the productive (and destructive) nature which migration can have, and to use the theoretical principle of translocality, specifically translocal resilience, which is flexible enough to incorporate such diverse needs while also having the potential of being a clear guiding principle for policy makers and their like.

With real impacts of environmental change being increasingly common, the international community has brought forth numerous Agreements and Protocols which refer to the protection of environmental migrants and especially climate migrants. Some of the most significant will be briefly addressed. The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change, which was adopted on Dec, 12 2015 by 196 Parties at the COP21 in Paris (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change). It recognized the global scope of climate change and the need for global action under the common concern of human rights. The 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, which was adopted in 2015 and the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants called on states to protect and provide solutions for those affected by climate change. It recognized the need for national and international cooperation with regards to forced migration influenced by increasingly hostile environments (United Nations; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). The first time that environmental change was inter-governmentally recognised as a driver of migration, was in the 2018 Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and it was considered as a breakthrough in the field (United Nations). The Joint Statement on Human Rights and Climate

Change, which was issued in 2019 “encouraged States to offer complementary protection mechanisms for migrant workers […] displaced across international borders in the context of climate change and disasters” (Scissa, 2022). In 2020 a document called “Legal considerations regarding claims for international protection made in the context of the adverse effects of climate change and disasters” was issued by UNHCR which focused on the applicability of international and regional refugee and human rights law in the scope of cross-border displacement (UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 2020). Finally, in 2022, the COP27 climate summit in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt “concluded with a historic breakthrough to help vulnerable countries deal with losses and damages from the impacts of climate change” (Natalia Alayza et al., 2022). However, even with this ‘breakthrough’, there was much disappointment uttered by stakeholders regarding the lack of progress on adaptation and any actual steps taken towards curbing global emissions (Natalia Alayza et al., 2022). What this shows is that even though there have been real attempts to create global consensus for the need for action, it is still exceedingly difficult to force states to act upon such guidelines in order to limit temperature rise beyond 1.5 degrees C.

The first section of this thesis shall be a brief explanation of the methodology and data collection strategies which were employed. There will be a brief explanation as to the choice of locality and interview subjects with regards to migration and translocality and the methodology through which the data was obtained. Following that, there will be a discussion of the influences which environmental change can have on human mobility and immobility, with examples drawn from other low-lying coastal zones and a focus on Beirut, amongst other things. This is followed by an attempt to situate this argument within a concrete scope of application, in this case Beirut, Lebanon and to give some background information about the events which led to this choice of location. Finally, there will be discussion of how migration can be considered using the lens of translocality as both a potential source for- and limitation of change. Through this I hope to establish a different, perhaps more nuanced narrative from that which we have often been exposed to, where migration is regarded as a failure to adapt to environmental changes, and perhaps promote a perception of migration as something which

can be beneficial not only to migrants but also to those who remain and to destination locales themselves.

Box 1. Definitions

Migrant

"An umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. The term includes a number of well-defined legal categories of people, such as migrant workers; persons whose particular types of movements are legally-defined, such as smuggled migrants; as well as those whose status or means of movement are not specifically defined under international law, such as international students" (International Organization for Migration).

Refugee

Refugees are often considered a subcategory of migrants and is defined as "someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion" (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees).

Migration

It is difficult to find only one definition of migration, but for the purposes of this paper, it shall be as follows:

"Migration is the crossing of the boundary of a predefined spatial unit by one or more persons involved in a change of residence" (KOK, 1997).

There are multiple ways of classifying migration based on direction (s.a. circular, internal, external) or motivation (s.a. forced, voluntary, environmental, economic) amongst other things (Drew, 2022).

Environmental Migrant

"[…] persons or groups of persons who, predominantly for reasons of sudden or progressive change in the environment that adversely affects their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad". (Scissa 2022)

It is important to note that there is no legally accepted definition of what it means to be an environmental migrant and as such, no legal framework under which international protection of such individuals falls.

Methodology

In order to better understand how this thesis came to be, this section will explain the methods which were employed for data collection. In addition to that, there will be a clarification for the scope of the fieldwork which was done and the research subjects who will be referred to throughout. This thesis was synthesized with the use of both primary and secondary resources. Initially, I had planned to write this thesis solely with secondary data as I had the idea of attempting to create a new framework under which a new understanding of environmental migration could take place. An understanding which would see migrants not as something to fear or a threat to sovereignty, but which allows for migration to be seen as an adaptation strategy, a way for individuals to secure their livelihoods. All too often, migration discourse (especially with regards to environmental changes) will place migrants in the position of victims who, because of circumstance, have no choice but to move. This removes their individual agency and often paints a picture of despair and desperation. As a result, countries who are seen as receiving nations of migration, frame such movements as being burdens or even worse, threats to national sovereignty. I wanted to return some agency to the migrants and portray their choice to move as active adaptation strategies which are employed in situations of environmental stress. As I moved along in my research however, I found it exceedingly difficult to come up with such a framework and I realised the mammoth task which I had placed upon myself. In addition to that, I found that there were already a myriad of theories through which environmental migration can be analysed and I decided that I would not be so bold as to attempt to add yet another one. Rather, I decided to use a concept which I found to be interesting, namely that of translocality, and to expand upon and apply it. I was then left with the feeling that I had to include primary data to illustrate its scope of applicability better, rather than maintain the abstract concept I had in mind to begin with.

Since my field of interest has always included environment and the changes which we are experiencing it was not difficult for me to narrow migration into that

scope of application. Much of the literature which deals with environmental migration has to do with climate change and extreme weather events and although this is important, I wanted to place my focus on somewhere which was perhaps not so readily associated with environmental change and include other understandings of what environmental change could entail. As I am partly Lebanese and have lived in Beirut for most of my life, I have a connection to the region and I saw that there was a lack of information discussing it, especially if it did not have to do with drought, water scarcity or desertification. Following the explosion on April 4, 2020 and the lack of data which was produced thereafter, pertaining not only to the environmental effects it had but also the migratory movements which followed, I hope that I have created a valuable contribution to this discourse.

I wish to highlight here, that there was no massive out-flux of random migration, but much rather that migration was used by individuals as an adaptation strategy which was selectively employed to sustain themselves and also those that remained behind. With the application of the concept of tranlsocality, I wish to illuminate some of the decisions which influenced such movements with regards to causality and choice of destination, amongst other things. The blast is considered to be one of the largest non-nuclear explosions in human history, its effects were reportedly felt in a radius of around 9 or 10 km ("What the Beirut Blast Radius Would Look Like If It Occurred in Canadian Port Cities," 2020) and is illustrated in figure 1. With such a large radius, I had to limit my scope of research in order to proceed with my fieldwork. As such, I focused on looking for individuals who resided in direct proximity to the blast in the areas most affected, such as Mar Mikhael, Gemmayze, and Achrafiyeh. In addition to that, I tried finding people of different age groups to uncover if perhaps more migration took place among certain age groups as opposed to others. All interviewees were of Lebanese nationality in order to allow for similar legal parameters with regards to international mobility.

One limitation which must be pointed out, is the fact that this research was done over 2 years after the event, which means that I had to rely on my social capital to find individuals who had already left and were still willing to be part of the interview process. This is not to say that I did not interview individuals who remained in Beirut, but in order to find some that had left, they had to be recommended to me. What this means, is that this is not a representative cross-section of the population as whole, due to the fact that it relied on social connections. As such, the poorest and the wealthiest part of the population are not adequately represented through the fieldwork, however they will be touched upon through the secondary literary resources.

The secondary research is based upon a number of sources ranging from scientific journals, to books, reports, newspaper articles, to personal information and images. I attempted to include a wide range of resources to formulate an interesting argument and to include and synthesize ideas which have perhaps not been traditionally combined, especially with regards to Lebanon. With the large number of works already produced, I hope that this thesis results in some stimulating arguments which can perhaps allow for a more nuanced, understanding of environmental migration.

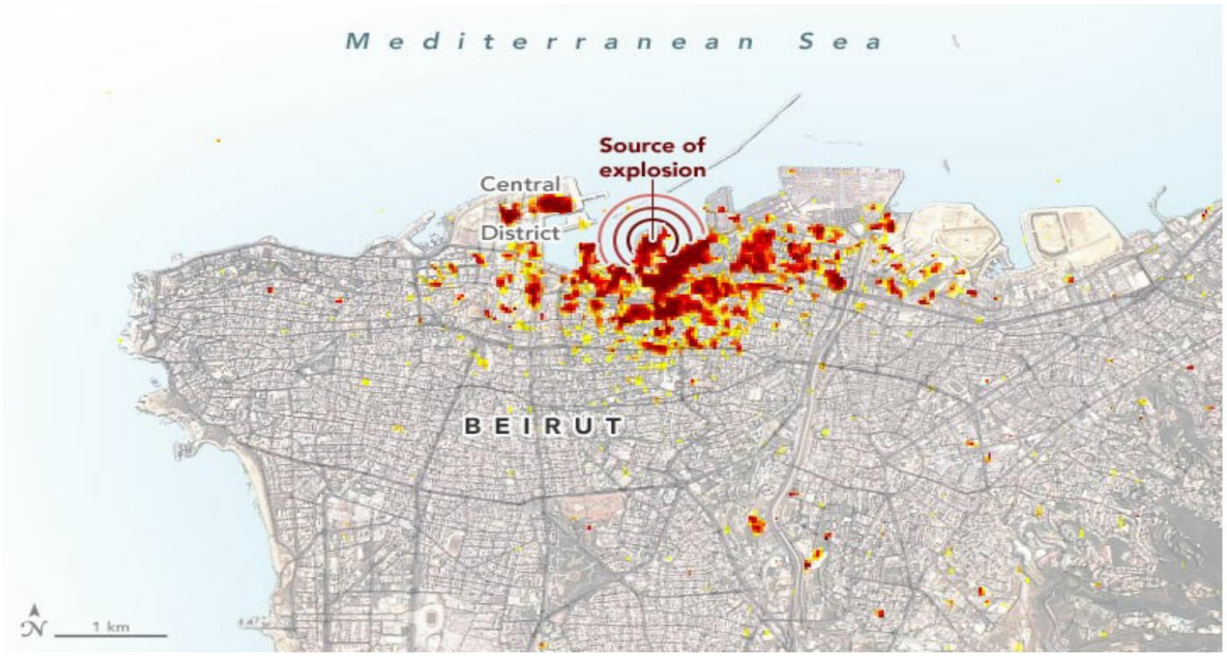


Figure 1: Range of Beirut 2020 blast(NASA)

Environmental Change and Human Mobility/Immobility

In order to understand the possible effects that future environmental changes could have on all aspects of migration, and to produce sound scientific data, this section will explore the reasons behind why people migrate to begin with. Traditional migration studies have often focused on attempting to predict numbers of environmental migrants by determining where evident effects of environmental change are occurring, how many people are living in those areas, and then estimating the number of 'at risk' individuals who are likely to move (Foresight, 2011, p. 27). As a matter of fact, according to the Foresight Report, much of the existing data regarding environmental migration numbers is based on two main sources; Jacobson (1988), and Myers and Kent (1995) (Foresight, 2011, p. 27). As researchers have developed methodological and conceptual frameworks for a variety of subtopics within the environment-migration nexus, those frameworks were largely based on the aforementioned texts, meaning that the methods for estimation or data collection themselves have not been altered and their viability was much taken for granted. This is not to deny their significance in the development of the field and although this does allow for some numerological predictions, the outcomes of these approaches are problematic for a variety of reasons which will be discussed shortly. Here, I wish to use a different approach, which starts with the premise of migration (or inability to migrate) followed by the determination of a variety of stressors- which may or may not include environmental change- in order to have a more well-rounded idea of what causes people to move (or not). First, there will be a brief outline of some methodological shortcomings of the traditional understanding of the environment-migration nexus. This will be followed by description of the maximalist and the minimalist view, which are two major schools of thought through which the causal effect of environmental change on migration can be understood. After that, an outline of the framework which will be adopted throughout this thesis in order to understand what causes people to move will be discussed, namely that of the drivers of migration.

Then, there will be a brief excursion into the security aspects which increasing migratory movements could bring. It must be pointed out that security here will refer to the effect of environmental migration on global security or the outbreak (or lack thereof) of violence, rather than the security of the migrants themselves. The final subchapter of this section will briefly address duration, direction and agency, which are large topics in themselves and could warrant their own paper, however they must be mentioned to better understand the intricacies, possibilities and limitations of such migration.

Methodological shortcomings

First of all, it is difficult to make assumptions regarding causality of migration due to methodological shortcomings, which shall be mentioned briefly. It is exceedingly difficult to determine who migrated as a direct result of environmental change. For example, in a case study conducted in 2015 in Tuvalu regarding the vulnerability to climate change in the context of multiple stressors, researchers found that the most frequent stressors mentioned by locals pertained to the economy, and more specifically, poverty, the high costs of living and the movement towards a cash economy (63%). This was followed by mentions of the struggles of obtaining and growing food (55%), water scarcity and storage difficulties and overcrowding both at 42%, cultural obligations to support the family and community (34%), extreme sea-levels (29%), coastal erosion (29%), strong winds and cyclones (16%) and temperature and unpredictable weather both at 11% (McCubbin et al., 2015). What this exemplifies, is the fact that although environmental change related stressors such as water, food and temperature fluctuations, among other things, are identified by locals, the most significant stressor to them was an economic one. This is especially significant, due to that fact that Tuvalu has been a hot topic in the discourse of environmental- and more specifically- climate migration because of its location in the much-affected Pacific region and even more so due to its geographic feature as a low-lying atoll nation. In the media and also oftentimes in scientific

discourse, the focus of the struggles of Pacific Islanders emphasises “disappearing islands”, “sinking islands”, and “unliveable islands” and although the significance of these detrimental issues is not being contested here, one should - especially in the anthropological field – consider the vulnerabilities inhabitants themselves view as paramount in order to better adapt future migration and adaptation policies in the most undisruptive and productive manner possible (“The Climate Crisis Is Making the Pacific Islands Uninhabitable. Who Will Help Preserve Our Nations?,” 2022; Knowles, 2021; Mala, 2022).

> “While people in Funafuti are exposed and sensitive to a variety of climatic conditions, it is non-climatic forces that are most affecting their livelihoods. A suite of interconnected socioeconomic and cultural stressors (i.e. economic hardship, food insecurity, overcrowding, and cultural forces) greatly influences the well-being of people. Even when respondents referred to climatic conditions, these were woven into the fabric of the underlying historical, socioeconomic, and cultural context of the community” (McCubbin et al., 2015, p. 52).

By solely focusing on “scenario-based climate change impacts in Tuvalu” important entry points of actual long-term adaptation run the risk of being overlooked (McCubbin et al., 2015, p. 52). There is a need to integrate climate change adaptation strategies into overall development, livelihood enhancement and disaster risk reduction strategies in order to have more well-rounded, and long-term results which are also accepted and then enforced by the local community (McCubbin et al., 2015, p. 52).

Just as in Tuvalu, individuals and families all over migrate all the time and not only are the reasons why people migrate manifold, it is rarely ever the case that one singular factor will cause people to migrate. Much rather, the interplay of a variety causal factors and stressors has the potential to lead individuals and households to choose migration as their most viable option. In addition to that, save for a few cases, where environmental change will make areas completely uninhabitable, it is exceedingly difficult to determine what proportion of inhabitants will move. This is

the case because in order to determine habitability, there are external factors which need to be taken into consideration, such as water availability, temperatures, soil-quality, subsidies, land-availability, established migration routes, etc. but there are also personal factors, such as income, social/familial support, education, connections to other migrants, etc. which determine adaptability and as such the capacity to remain or move. Not only is it difficult to pinpoint the plethora of external causal factors which come into play in a given scenario, identifying them in the first place is a menial and difficult task. In addition to the deterministic nature of this approach, there is also a stark disregard for individual agency. In other words, according to these predictions, all inhabitants of an area experiencing effects of climate change will react similarly with regards to migration decisions and will choose to migrate at approximately equal thresholds and, effectively will chose the same destinations. However, in reality this is seldom the case, as individuals and households have varying levels of adaptation capacity and thresholds of resilience.

Secondly, some shortcoming regarding policy and policy creation need to be pointed out. Often times, existing migration flows and channels are not taken into consideration which could result in non-specific, non-desirable policy effects such as border securitization and stricter migration policies, in general, rather than locally and regionally adapted policies. On the one hand, if established channels of migration can be determined, it is easier for policy makers to target specific issues relevant to certain situations, rather than over-generalised generic policies, which will then, likely, have to be situationally adapted. On the other hand, if no such channels are established or if those that exist are not considered significant enough, generalised policies are more likely to be implemented which often means a wider range of applicability but a smaller range of accuracy. The difficulty of using generic estimations to determine possible movement and the discrepancies which would be overlooked, are evident in this excerpt from a Foresight research:

> "Recent advancements in the study of migration associated with environmental change have been enabled through the utilisation of rich datasets at the local and household level. For example, Gray has examined the relationship between environmental factors and migration using household data in the southern Ecuadorian Andes, Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia. In Ecuador, whilst both local and national migration flows increased with fluctuations in agricultural harvests, international migration was unchanged. In Kenya, migration was significantly lower in places with better soil quality, but in Uganda it was marginally higher. Henry *et al.* found that in drought years in Burkina Faso the volume of longerterm migration, especially by men, tended to fall, yet the short-term mobility of women and children increased. Van der Geest, as part of the EACH-FOR project, examined migration from the north of Ghana in the 1970s and 1980s and found that migration did not increase despite severe environmental circumstances. [...] Unfortunately, the datasets required to do this analysis most effectively, using large longitudinal samples, are notably absent for many parts of the world."
> (Foresight, 2011, p. 30).

Considering the foundational elements of anthropology to be the study of societies and cultures over time, the significance of these principles in this case are evident and can be of great use here. The collection and evaluation of anthropological data with regards to the environment-migration nexus is important and can be used in order to assist policy-makers to make more targeted and effective policy strategies. The (often times large) number of environmental migrants which are usually estimated by such approaches has the potential to result in in restrictive migration policies and increased border securitization, due to the fact that migration or those that migrate are seen as a problem to be taken care of or controlled. However, limiting mobility through restrictive policies has the potential to result in the establishment of illegal migration channels which are dangerous and breeding grounds for all kinds of human exploitation. With regards to policy-making, the temporal aspect must also be taken into consideration; it is important for policy makers to not only know where people are migrating to, but also how long they will choose to stay. That, of course, is dependent on the viability of habitability of the destination areas but it also has much to do with the possibility of return.

Finally, after highlighting some methodological shortcomings regarding the causality of movement, there is another group of people who have not yet been mentioned in this section but who need to be discussed in this context. The importance of producing estimate numbers of climate migrants in order to anticipate possible areas of conflict or hotspots of migration cannot be denied, but in order to tackle the largest possible number of affected individuals, those that remain need to be considered as well. Mobility and migration specifically, are often taken for granted and considered as inherent aspects of human capacity, however this is not the case. Migration is not readily available to all individuals who want to migrate. Here, it is important to note, that there are different types of migration and that certain external stipulations, such as owning a passport, financial support, or social support, have the power to impede, but do not stop migration. For example, individuals who wish to migrate may not have a passport or the proper documentation, but they may nevertheless attempt to do so anyway through illegal channels. The legality or illegality of migration is not of importance here, much rather, the significance of those who cannot or do not move is highlighted and the precarities that those who chose to migrate (whether legally or illegally) are exposed to. Often overlooked in the environment-migration nexus since they remain stagnant, those that do not move hold valuable information which should not be disregarded.

Maximalist and Minimalist perspective

Although the debate on whether climate change is a real issue or not has mostly quieted down, due to the vast body of proof in its favour, there are still opposing views as to climate change being a factor of migration. This section will be broadly based on Astri Suhrke's outline of the two opposing views. According to Suhrke, there is the minimalist view and the maximalist view (Suhrke, 1993).

The minimalist view "sees environmental change as a contextual variable that can contribute to migration, but warns that we lack sufficient knowledge about the process to draw firm conclusions" (Suhrke, 1993). This means that in order for migration to occur, multiple factors have to interact with one another. A linear understanding of migration may not be sufficient to explain the complexity of migration. This can be demonstrated in the example of two low-lying countries which have repeatedly suffered from flooding. The first one, the Netherlands, has constantly been vulnerable to water level fluctuations due to the fact that it lies below sea level. Here, people have opted on building damns and protectors from the ocean rather than moving (Butzengeiger & Horstmann, 2004). In a similar situation, Bangladesh has been the victim of ever rising water levels. Although it is part of its nature to be temporarily flooded, the degree to which water is taking over land-mass is increasing and the speed at which it once again reclines is decreasing (Butzengeiger & Horstmann, 2004). There has been continual movement out of these regions and into others where living might not be a risk. Why is this the case? Why do the people of two countries with similar situations respond in ways that are so different from one another? In order to adequately answer this question, the minimalist model can be put to use. Other factors, such as poverty, economic opportunities and the strength of their countries' institutions all factor in. The combination and interplay of these reasons, paired with living standards that are beyond adequate, leaves many poor Bangladeshi people no choice but to look for more suitable places to live. This is only a brief example, but it exemplifies the difficulty of determining whether migration is directly caused by environmental change and also the complex nature of research which must be done in order to do so. Minimalists tend to focus on particular processes of environmental change such as land degradation or deforestation in order to find linkages between these factors and migration. In conclusion, minimalists believe that a number of social, political and economic factors have to be present and evident enough to cause migration.

On the other hand, the maximalist view argues "that environmental degradation has already displaced millions of people, and more displacement is on the way" (Suhrke, 1993). The people that tend to describe the reasons for migration using this theory tend to speak of "unnatural disasters" (Suhrke, 1993). An unnatural disaster is a disaster which was caused by climate change and which would probably not have occurred to this extent or with this frequency otherwise. This seems to me rather hypothetical because it is impossible to guess whether or not an event may have occurred if climate change were not present. There are a large number of "what ifs" in this theory, and it does not seem to have a concrete base. Perhaps it focuses on natural (or unnatural) disasters because this is a clear moment in time where a climate related event will cause migration (although this is not necessarily the case after a natural disaster). In line with this theory, the previous example can be used as well if it is framed in a different way. If one considers Bangladesh on its own, one could measure the rising sea levels and also the people who have migrated out of these areas. If one finds that these numbers have increased and the sea level has risen (which is the case), one could conclude that this is the cause of migration. However, if one does use this type of methodology, one risks to overgeneralize and miss out on nuances which might influence change. This type of thinking can possibly be explained in context with the time period it came about. When this concept was first brought up, more and more researchers had started to discuss this topic and the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) focused international attention on it as well (Suhrke, 1993). The figures and conclusions that the IPCC and the researchers came up with in the beginning were based on broad categorizations of what a climate refugee was. "Broad categorizations invite large numbers" and that, coupled with the shock-effect these reports had on the public, created enough noise to highlight their importance. Although this noise was short-lived due to its inherently deterministic nature, perhaps the fear that it had instilled in the people is the reason as to why climate change and climate migration remained hot-topics.

This paper aligns more with the minimalistic view, however neither view fully explain the intricacies of push and pull factors and the ensuing migratory flows which may occur in the future. Different factors which may all vary both in frequency and intensity are all important in determining why migration occurs. Also, it gives researchers more leeway to determine solutions for the issues. If environmental change is the only reason for migration, then such change is the only topic which must be addressed to fix this dilemma. To further expand on the minimalist view, the different drivers of migration will be discussed shortly to see their dependency and interplay with environmental change and the mobility which could occur in the future.

Drivers of Migration

As previously mentioned, throughout this research a different approach shall be taken; rather than attempting the mammoth task of predicting estimations of numbers or localities of future migrants, which requires large longitudinal case studies and in-depth multi-faceted research, the focus is placed on existing migration patterns (national or trans-national). Instead of promoting generalised and generic policy options, closed borders and increased securitization of migration overall, I wish to highlight the positive economic and social power which migrants may hold. Rather than attempting to limit mobility, cooperation within and across borders along current and future migration channels is necessary in order to establish migrants who are seen as assets to their destination areas, allowing receiving areas to harness this power rather than fear it.

Within the field of migration studies, regardless of environmental change, be it in its anthropological, economic or political form, a plethora of theories have been proposed attempting to dissect the reasons why people migrate. Something which has become quite undeniable throughout this research, is the multi-causal, non-

linear nature of migration and the importance of human agency itself. What multicausality refers to, is that the decision to migrate, be it within or across borders, does not usually depend on a singular factor, but rather a number of factors which come into play, albeit to varying degrees of importance. This aligns with the minimalist view which was previously mentioned. In addition, not only are there different causal factors experienced by individuals, but also their individual agency needs to be taken into consideration. The non-linear nature of migration refers to the fact that the actual path which is taken by migrants to get from point A to point B, is rarely ever the exact same as different individuals have different experiences and connections which they can call upon on their journey. In addition to that, migration is, in itself, rarely a direct movement from point A to B and those that do arrive at their areas of destination are not bound to stay there permanently and may even chose to return eventually. The threshold of when people choose to- or have to-move may greatly vary depending on the resources they have available to them whether material or abstract. How these factors are categorised or classified and how much influence they actually have on migration varies depending on which theory is employed. One conceptual framework, which has garnered much popularity with regards to migratory movement and its causality, and which shall also be referred to in this paper, is that of the drivers of migration, illustrated in figure 2.

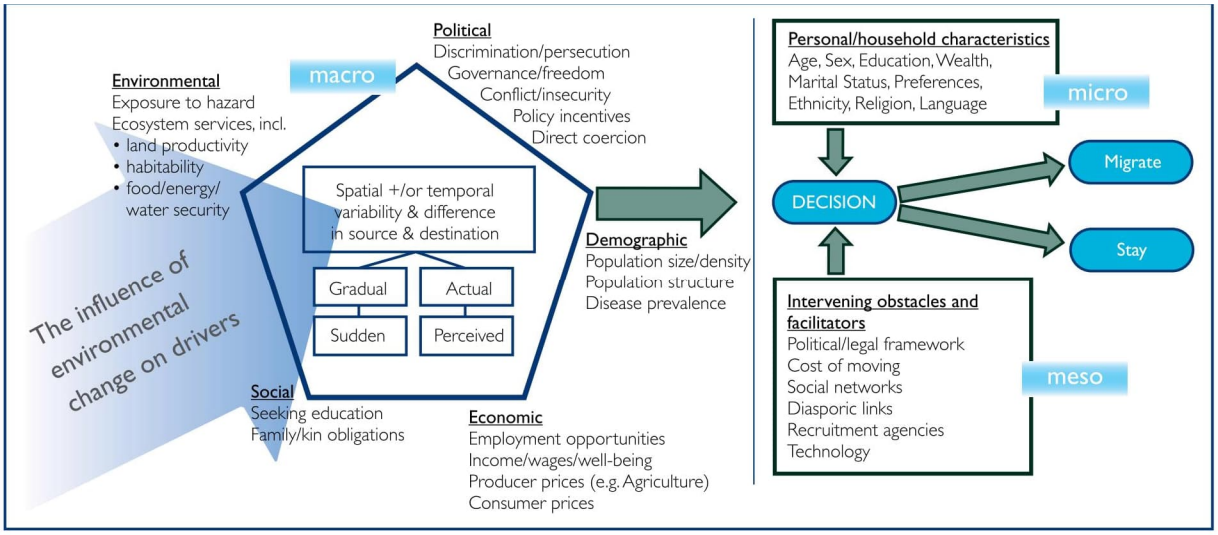


Figure 2: Conceptual framework for the 'drivers' of migration - Migration.jpg (Foresight, 2011, p. 32)

Within this framework, migration is said to be affected by five sets of migration drivers, each consisting of a variety of factors which come into play and influence one another in different real and perceived ways "[...] it is the actual or perceived spatial and temporal variability and difference between the source and destination which influences movement" (Foresight, 2011, p. 42). These drivers are briefly discussed in this section including some of their correlations and interdependencies affecting migration. I do not wish to presume that this thesis will pose a solution to the issues concerning the migration-environmental change nexus, however, throughout the research, it has become evident that there is a lack of regard for the connections which anthropological data has to migration movements. Specifically in this case, how anthropological concepts such as transnationalism can be used as actual entry points for migration policy and how such movements influenced by environmental changes can be harnessed and directed into something productive rather than disruptive. Anthropological data is invaluable for the establishment of such channels and policies, in the sense that cultural and social customs are considered which can be reflected upon local and regional norms in order to establish best practice policies.

Economic Drivers

These drivers are often considered to be the one of the main drivers of migration. They include both pull and push factors, meaning that they are dependent on the perception of opportunities in destination areas as well as the perceived vulnerabilities of places of origin. One model regarding economic drivers suggests that it is a strategy for the minimisation of risk and to "overcome market failures in non-labour markets" (Foresight, 2011, p. 42). Some economic drivers include the price of living, better employment opportunities and higher wages (Horwood, 2020). According to IOM, there are an estimated 164 million people worldwide who are currently classified as economic migrants (M. J. McAuliffe & Khadria, 2019).

Social Drivers

Social drivers of migration are also heavily dependent on both pull and push factors. Some of those factors include the search for better education opportunities, family reunification or familial obligations (in the sense that the individual who leaves is expected to take care of those who remained in places of origin). On the other hand, sending states (which are often developing countries) often equate migration with status and better opportunity resulting in a "culture of migration" whereby migration can be considered as a status symbol or a "rite of passage" (Foresight, 2011, p. 42). The sending and receiving of information between places of origin and places of destination creates 'translocal communities' which are constantly reconfigured and redefined as perceptions of localities change. Interestingly enough, the pursuit of education can be both a positively and negatively correlated with migratory aspirations (Foresight, 2011, p. 42). Social drivers are largely dependent on social and personal perceptions which are fluid and are constantly shaped and reshaped according to information which is passed along existing channels of migration.

Political Drivers

Public policies are a political aspect of migration which can both promote or limit mobility through the facilitation or constriction of movement. These policies can address both internal and cross-border mobility as well as permanent or circular movement (Foresight, 2011, p. 42). In addition to that, policies control both emigration and immigration patterns. Political instability, conflict and persecution are also considered political drivers and individuals who face violence, human rights violations or persecution in their countries of origin may choose to migrate in search of protection and safety. Similar to the pursuit of education in social drivers of migration, conflict has the potential to both promote and hinder migration. This is so because conflict can result in the breakdown of government structures which can result in displacement or forced migration. On the other hand, such a breakdown can also increase repression and limit out-migration resulting in involuntary immobility (Foresight, 2011, p. 42). Discrimination, marginalisation and legal restrictions also have the real power to influence migration flows. Most refugees are considered as political migrants, due to their fear of persecution and escaping from violence. According to the UNHCR the number of refugees world-wide increased from 20.7 million in 2020 to 21.3 million by the end of 2021 (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2021).

Demographic drivers

Traditional theories of migration have often drawn from the idea of Malthusian pressures which are considered as 'root causes' of human mobility (Foresight, 2011, p. 42). Malthusian pressures refers to the idea that the rate of population growth is faster than the rate of food production or the resource capacity of the land, which will lead to resource depletion, environmental degradation and a failure to support entire populations, eventually resulting in social frictions and out-migration (Malthus, 1798). Even though these principles hold true to some degree,

they are also criticised by modern scholars due to their deterministic and pessimistic nature (Foresight, 2011, p. 42). Rather than considering demographic changes to be the cause of migration, one can consider them a driver thereof which is mixed with the influence of other drivers. As a matter of fact, the Foresight report states that "most migration related to demographic pressures [occurs] internally and many migrants [move] from areas of relatively low population densities to areas of relatively higher population densities", which does not fully correlate with Malthus's ideas (Foresight, 2011, p. 42).

Other demographic factors which affect migration can include; age and gender, with younger populations to be a source of migrants and countries with older populations in need of migrants; family size and structure, with younger families being more likely to move together; urbanization, with an ever growing urban sphere where patterns are now shifting from rural-urban migration to urban-urban migration; education levels, with highly skilled workers being more likely to migrate in search for better work opportunities; migration history, whereby some communities have 'traditions' of moving to certain countries, making it more likely that others will follow; and risk of diseases (Horwood, 2020; M. J. McAuliffe & Khadria, 2019).

Environmental Drivers

Environmental drivers refer mainly to the exposure of hazards and the productivity and habitability of land (Horwood, 2020). Acute displacements can be triggered by rapid-onset environmental events such as earthquakes, floods, wildfires, and landslides and also by slow-onset environmental events, such as desertification, ocean acidification, and pollution (Foresight, 2011). Even though a significant number of people is displaced by such events each year, permanent migration is usually considered the last resort as people tend to want to remain in their homes whenever possible. In addition to environmental events, the stability of ecosystems and their services, especially for economies who are dependent on agriculture, fisheries and

forestry, is vital for sustenance and the ability to remain in those locations. Such economies are often found in developing countries and perversely those countries are experiencing the largest ecological deterioration (Foresight, 2011). This is not to say that all developing are solely victims of circumstance, as misuse and abuse of resources is also predominant, but one has to consider the structural, economic and political limitation under which many of these countries operate.

Interaction of drivers

The challenge in discerning migration patterns and their causality lies in the fact that the drivers of migration interact with one another in complex ways. Their interaction exists on different levels and is heavily influenced by the perceptions of individuals and institutional opportunities and limitations which are imposed both within countries and by countries of destination.

> "Political, social and economic factors that facilitate or constrain migration — often described as mediating drivers — include those that act independently of climate change, as well as regulations and policies made in contemplation of climate-related migration (such as those envisaged under the Compact). Mediating drivers are thus a key variable in determining whether climate change stimulates new flows of future migration, and whether migration along existing routes increases, declines or remains steady. It is in this respect that current trends in border enforcement and anti-immigration policies clash directly with the potential for building greater global adaptive capacity through safe and managed migration." (McLeman, 2019, p. 913)

Factors that drive migration in some places may have restrictive influences in other places, or no influence at all (Black et al., 2011, p. 435). Environmental changes and climatic events interact with the social, economic, political and demographic drivers in a multitude of ways, all being contextually specific. Not only that, as previously mentioned it is not only the real effects of such drivers which has to be taken into account but also the perception of these drivers by individuals matters. It is almost impossible to isolate one independent driver with any movements which have taken place, further increasing the complexity of the subject. Especially due to this

complexity there is a real need for longitudinal case studies which incorporate as many forces as possible interacting with one another at any given time and within a delineated space. Such case studies are exceedingly difficult and require a lot of cultural knowledge and sensitivity. Even in cases of sudden-onset extreme environmental events which cause movement, migration and displacement patterns may vary greatly depending on socio-economic and political factors, resulting in permanent or temporary migration, into-, out of-, and within areas. This is what some researchers refer to as migration churn (McLeman, 2019, p. 912). The complexity of these interactions of a variety of factors makes it exceedingly difficult to adequately predict any sort of migratory patterns which could occur in the future. The complexity of these patterns is further highlighted by the ethnographic data which was collected in Beirut.

As previously mentioned, the relative importance of the varying drivers of migration is heavily context specific, however research has shown that certain drivers are perceived by individuals as being more significant than others. According to the Foresight report, economic drivers are often perceived as the most influential with regards to migration especially when rapid economic growth (or perception thereof) exists in destination countries (Foresight, 2011). The influence of economic factors is closely followed and sometimes overshadowed by social drivers, especially in cases of internal migration (Foresight, 2011). What is important to point out, is that the existence of established transnational migration networks, facilitates not only mobility but also promotes channels of technological exchange, the sending and receiving of remittances, and a sense of security for those who want to move. Political drivers, although often considered as being heavily influential on international migration due to the general classification of refugees as political migrants, rarely cause movement in isolation but rather in combination with other factors, especially economic ones. Conflict for example does not inherently cause people to move, but combined with environmental degradation and/or the loss of

economic opportunities is much more likely to result in mobility. On the other hand, the implementation of development policies, even in the presence of conflict can have ameliorating effects on habitability, poverty and security in general (Foresight, 2011). Similarly, demographic shifts are rarely considered as being primary influencers on mobility, but rather their interaction with other factors is what causes movement. For example, developing countries who experience what is often called 'demographic transition' in the early stages, whereby mortality rates decrease but fertility remains high are subject to increasing internal pressures in order to adequately provide economic opportunities and ecological stability. However, such pressures are more likely to result in international migration if they are also coupled with policies of receiving states, such as was the case in the guest-worker programs which were implemented in Germany in the 1950s (Foresight, 2011). Such policies inviting workers from high-density nations (usually developing countries) can be a real resource for many European countries who are experiencing a demographic shift towards aging populations. What is necessary here though is increased cooperation between sending and receiving states with regards not only to the facilitation of migration but also in the preparation of such migrants. In other words, if channels of migration are created between states, it is important to provide education opportunities for individuals in sending states which could prepare them for employment in receiving states.

With regards to environmental drivers and their interaction with the other drivers of migration, there are a number of points of intersection. As previously mentioned, individuals have historically not often perceived the natural environment as being a direct cause for migration (yet), so it is often not considered. However, the ability for people to stay depends on the availability of ecosystem services such as access to fresh water, access to firewood and land access, especially in many developing countries where subsistence farming is still prevalent. Here too, policies must provide adequate and equal access to resources in order to limit out-migration

(if that is what is desired). In the future, it is predicted that increasing effects of environmental change will occur in the shape of long-term changes, such as climatic shifts and ecological alterations, but also in the frequency and magnitude of quick onset changes such as extreme weather events. Sea level rise, changes in tropical storm and cyclone intensity, altered rainfall patterns, land degradation, coastal and marine degradation and melting of glacier will have an increasing effect on risk-assessment of individuals with regards to maintaining and thriving in the locations of origin. Environmental drivers of migration interact with all of the other drivers in different real and perceived ways, illustrated in figure 3, but their interaction with economic drivers seems to be the most significant. This can be explained through the impact which environmental change will have on agricultural productivity. As mentioned before, many developing countries are highly dependent upon agriculture which means that ecological resource availability and the quality of the soil are paramount to maintain economic wellbeing. Not only agriculture is expected to be affected, but also communities which depend on fishing and other aquatic resources are highly vulnerable to such changes. The threat of these resources diminishing has the likelihood to result in wages decreasing in sending states but also prices to increase in receiving states (Foresight, 2011). In such cases where low economic growth and limited opportunities coincide with environmental depletion and degradation, households may choose to move in order to counteract those risks. It is important to point out that permanent out-migration is not the only outcome to such changes, as farmers can also employ adaptive strategies such as diversification or temporary migration schemes. However, such adaptation strategies are difficult to be employed by individuals alone and usually require structural and political support to be successful (Foresight, 2011). It is clear that the interaction of environmental change with the other drivers of migration is complex and should not be separated in order to promote holistic forms of adaptation, be it through migration or not. The challenge of separating individual drivers will become more evident throughout the case study later in this thesis.

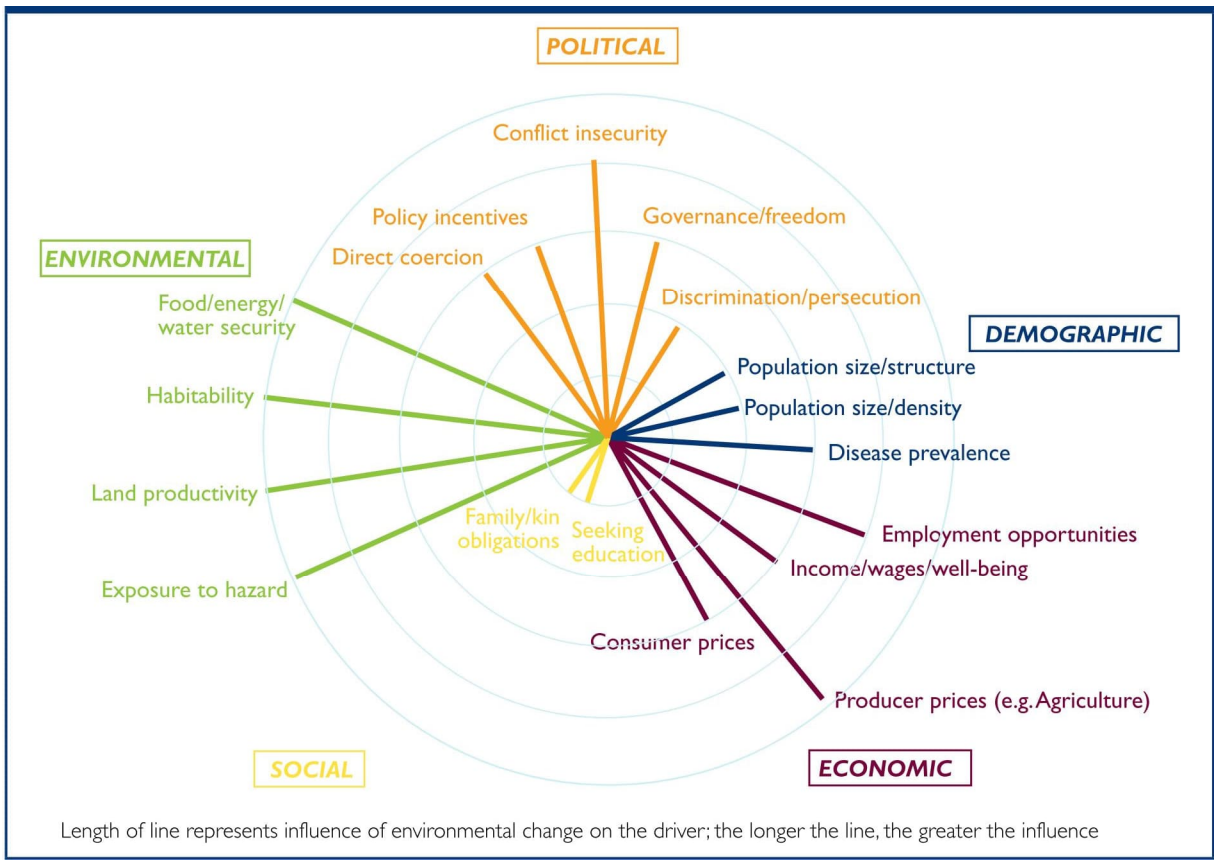


Figure 3: The relative influences of environmental change on the drivers of migration (Foresight, 2011, p. 52)

Immobility

It has become clear throughout the thesis that mobility in the context of environmental change is a complex phenomenon influenced and directed by a number of interacting drivers. Another group which has not yet been discussed are those who remain *in situ* in the face of environmental change. It may seem paradoxical to discuss immobility in the context of migration, however it has become clear throughout the research that those who migrate (whether individually or as a larger group) are often employing migration as an adaptation strategy in the face of vulnerability. Of course, displacement as a result of rapid-onset disasters or extreme weather events cannot be considered as individual employment of agency since there is no other option, but for the purposes of this thesis not much focus will be

placed on voluntary vs. involuntary migration. It must be pointed out that not all forms of immobility are involuntary, as some individuals may choose to stay even in the face of increasing threats. In the case of Beirut for example, an interesting paradox emerged from the ethnographic research. While a large part of those who remained *in situ* did not have another option (and shall be further discussed shortly), many of those who are considered wealthy and among the more powerful within society chose to stay as well. Interviewee 4 pointed to this by saying, "Most of the people that I know that have money in Lebanon, stay in Lebanon because they can pay people off and do whatever they want and make even more money. I'm not saying that that's right or that that's what we do, but if you ever have a problem with like taxes or need a permit or something like that, and the cops come, you can just pay them like 100 dollars and that's it". This section will now discuss those individuals who remain in their places of origin not as a choice, but rather as a result of their limited adaptive capacities which "may be just as important in terms of exposure to mortality, morbidity or economic loss, and therefore just as important in public policy terms" (Black et al., 2013, S36). Those who remain are sometimes defined as 'trapped' population and it is often extremely difficult to distinguish whether they choose to stay or simply cannot move. However, they must be mentioned in order to allow for a well-rounded understanding of migration in the context of environmental change.

There is much consensus on the fact that vulnerability to extreme environmental events is often inversely correlated with wealth.

> "One example is provided by a study of the response to droughts by herders in Kenya in the 1980s, where Herren (1991) identified four wealth ranks – rich, medium, poor and very poor. Migration amongst medium and poor households took off in response to drought in 1964, and proved an effective way of earning money to restock cattle numbers, although it was less effective in response to the 'double shock' of droughts in 1981 and 1984, coupled with the collapse of the cattle marketing system. Yet it was the very poor, who remained largely sedentary, who were worst affected by the

> crisis, most prone to malnutrition and least likely to be able to rebuild their cattle stocks after the rains returned. Their immobility left them exposed to subsequent (and more problematic) displacement than those who moved in response to the initial environmental shock." (Black et al., 2013, S37)

What this means is that in order to find out who was most affected by certain events, one should consider those who were displaced or have moved, but also those who remained in the most affected areas in order to formulate best-practice adaptation strategies. As a matter of fact, with regards to social protection, human security and other provisional services such as healthcare and education, much focus has been placed on those proportions of the population who have moved, which is not inherently a bad thing. "The problem is that whilst these legal and regulatory developments [such as 'freedom of movement'] extend protection and assistance to those displaced internally [and internationally], they treat immobility as essentially unproblematic" using this as an excuse for inaction and often disregarding the root causes, such as corrupt practices, for such inaction (Black et al., 2013, S39). Another factor which has a large impact on the possibility of mobility is that of political restraints. Policies within a country can support or hinder the ability to move and the ability to settle (and remain) somewhere. Not only must internal policies be considered in this scope, also border- and immigration/emigration policies play a large role with regards to facilitating or limiting mobility. The presence of policies which allow and/or regulate mobility have the potential to create safer pathways of migration, whereas restrictive policies have the potential to promote illegal migration routes (which are often fraught with risks) or completely stop movement from occurring. Where such restrictive policies exist, there must be others which promote development and a rebuilding of public services in order to sustain adequate living conditions (Foresight, 2011). Interestingly enough, perception of vulnerability also plays a large role when faced with the decision whether to move or not, as populations who *perceive* their socio-political surrounding as being equipped to deal with environmental changes will be less likely to move, even if that is not the case. "For example, whilst the example of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans is partly one of

vulnerable people being trapped in the face of the storm, more broadly it is arguably one of a much larger population having a false sense of security that it could remain in New Orleans, with many hundreds of thousands being displaced when the flood defenses broke" (Foresight, 2011, p. 118). This shows once again the complexity of the relationship between environmental change and migration and the agency which individuals have or perceive as having clearly justifying the need for in-depth longitudinal case studies in such hotspots.

Environmental Change and Migration in Low-elevation Coastal Zones

Situating this paper within a scope of application, I wish to introduce the geographic region specific to this thesis, namely that of low-elevation coastal zones. Low-elevation coastal zones (LECZ) are defined as "a coastal strip of land that is less than 10 metres above sea level and within 100 kilometres of the shoreline" (Nicholls, 1995). According to the United Nations Environmental Program Report issued in 2019, approximately 40% of the worlds' population live within 100 kilometres of a coastline (UN Environment, 2019). This includes low-elevation coastal zones and other coastal areas. LECZ specifically, are especially vulnerable to fluctuations in water levels and the degradation of marine and coastal ecosystems, which can include but is not limited to the loss of marine and coastal species and habitats and vulnerability to the effects of coastal storms. The rise in sea level can also have adverse effects on coastal ecosystems and resources, such as the erosion of coastal habitats, increased risks of flooding and the salinization of low-lying soils (Foresight, 2011).

Currently, over 220 million people are living in LECZ world-wide and two-thirds of the worlds cities with populations over 5 million people are partially located in such zones (Foresight, 2011). In the case of Lebanon the coastal area is especially significant, since it spans over the length of the entire country, being over 210

kilometres long. Its area constitutes about 8% of the total area of the country but was home to a staggering 55% of the total population in 2005, with the assumption that this has only increased (UNEP/MAP, 2005). Interestingly enough, as opposed to emigration trends witnessed in dryland regions due to environmental changes, coastal regions have historically been popular places of in-migration. In addition to this overall trend, Beirut is the capital of Lebanon and is considered the most popular place to live. This can cause the interaction of many drivers such as; economic drivers, such as job opportunities and better chances of education, that are coupled with political drivers, such as policies focusing on urban development and social drivers, such as established migration networks and family reunification. Environmental drivers will have and increasing effect on the other drivers, resulting in unequal distributions of resources and increased vulnerabilities. Environmental changes can add to demographic pressures as rising sea-levels could encroach on infrastructure, making larger areas uninhabitable. The proximity of the coastal infrastructure of Beirut to the water can be seen in figure 4.



Figure 4: Manara, Beirut, Lebanon (Karam, 2016)

"Migration in low-elevation coastal zones, including islands and delta regions, is often a strategy to secure incomes in response to economic circumstances. Environmental change is likely to influence environmental and economic drivers to increase the desire for this form of migration" (Foresight, 2011, p. 78). Studies have shown that environmental change in LECZs is a direct trigger of livelihood stress, which can be a direct cause of migration at the household level (Foresight, 2011). In the case of Bangladesh for example, a study showed that, following exposure from an environmental hazard, a member of the household will often be sent away as a temporary worker to provide income for the family, illustrating the importance of migration as an economic coping strategy (Foresight, 2011, p. 78). Considering the fact that extreme weather events, and water-level rises are expected to increase in the future, it must be assumed that the implementation of such coping strategies is only to increase. However, it must be pointed out that in addition to migration, the number of displaced people is also likely to increase as a result of environmental changes. Depending on the habitability of these zones, one must consider that short-term migration and long-term migration are a possibility. Some regions will no longer allow human occupancy as they might not exist anymore, become too risky, or not provide enough ecological resources to sufficiently promote habitation. Especially small-island states, which are often considered some of the most vulnerable with regards to environmental change, will experience permanent land-loss and as such migratory movements. It is important to point out here, that extreme weather events have occurred historically and are not a new phenomenon in themselves, neither is there enough proof to determine increasing frequency of such events. There is however evidence that suggests that the intensity of such events is likely to increase in the future, exacerbated by climate change (Foresight, 2011, p. 80). Migration, in accordance with other adaptation measures and climate change mitigation strategies, may be a proactive option for households to diversify their income and ultimately remain *in situ,* rather than being displaced (Foresight, 2011, p. 82). If

trends of migrating into coastal cities are to remain as is, there must be anticipation for these increasing demographic pressures couple with environmental changes. The situational complexity of different scenarios affecting LECZ countries, requires in-depth area studies outlining a variety of scenarios and effective policy action to counteract negative outcomes and protect vulnerable populations. Figure 5 shows some possible scenarios for low-elevation coastal zones.

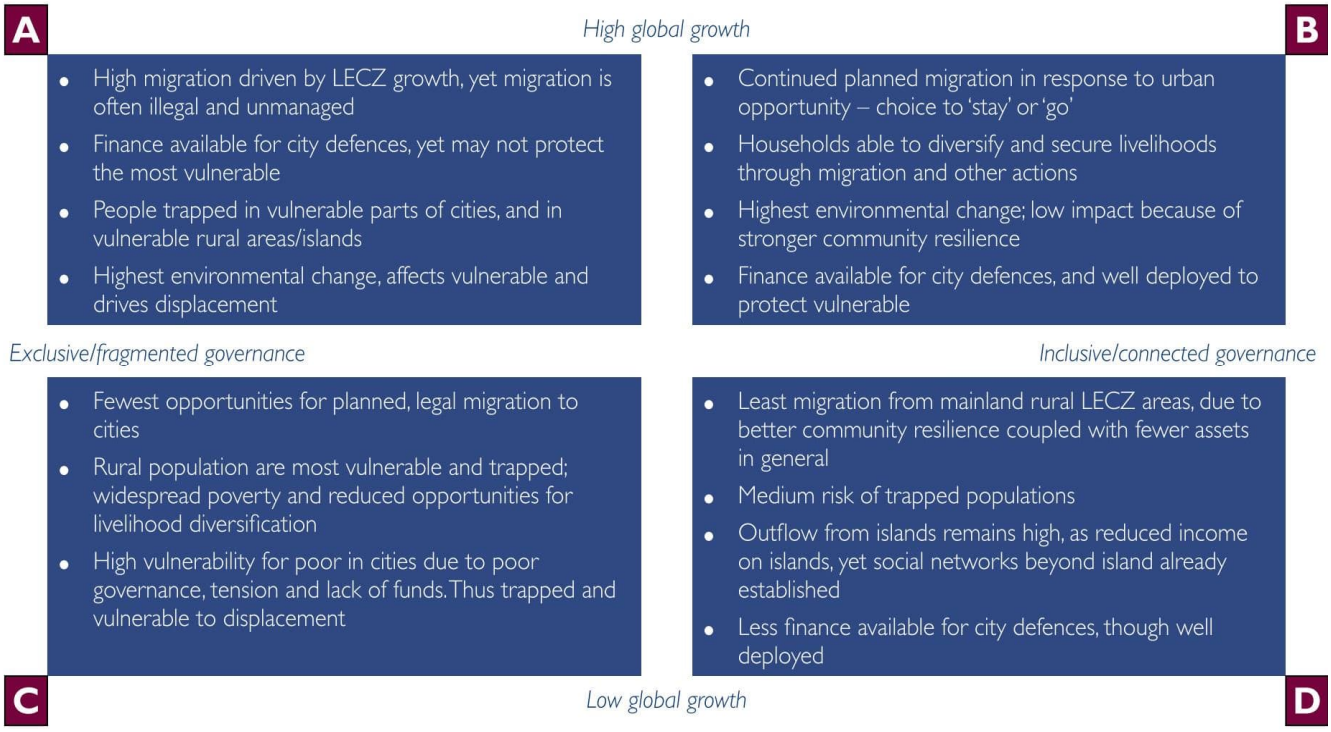


Figure 5: Plausible future scenarios for low-elevation coastal zones (Foresight, 2011, p. 87)

Environmental Change, Migration and Conflict

The nexus of environmental change, migration and conflict with regards to migration drivers will be briefly explored within this section in order to better understand possible future global vulnerabilities. Environmental changes, whether natural or human-induced are inevitably dependent on the relationship which humanity has with its natural ecosystems. In other words, environmental change and especially climate change are a natural part of the Earth's system and development, however the Anthropocene is marked by the unprecedented levels of greenhouse gas emissions and climate change caused and exacerbated by human activity. As such, we need to be aware of the long-term effects which such changes will have on global systems and security. The most evident ways environmental changes affect global security are often related to mobility and resource depletion. Some examples of resource depletion include; increased water scarcity, often a result of water mismanagement and population growth; land degradation, which is caused by increasing demographic pressures and unsustainable land-use practices often exacerbated by climate change; deforestation, driven by capitalistic agricultural practices such as logging and mining and as a direct result of the need for more land due to population growth; and extractive industries, categorised by unsustainable extraction of non-renewable resources such as minerals, oils and gas and also coupled with exploitative human practices. Such examples of resource depletion and exploitation of ecological systems are often found in developing countries. This is not to say that developing countries themselves are necessarily the ones instigating such practices, but developed countries often abuse their relative power in order to cheaply extract such resources for their own use. Migration as a result of environmental change can be coupled to these practices of resource depletion and ecological degradation since individuals are no longer able to maintain adequate living standards for themselves and their families *in situ*. However, migration is not only an outcome of such ecological aspects of environmental change, it can also be

affected by other aspects of such change, for example as a result of extreme weather events, sea-level rise, droughts, floods and desertification, resulting in a decrease in habitable land and causing subsequent migration flows. Overall, environmental change and resource scarcity have the potential to exacerbate existing structural discrimination within and between countries, which has the potential to fan discontent among people. With regards to any kind of movement, one needs to consider both the country of origin and the country of destination and their relative adaptive and absorptive capacities. On the side of the location of origin, it is important to distinguish between the types of people which will most be affected by climatic changes. According to most studies, there will be a disproportionately large number of developing countries which will be affected by extreme climate change rather than already developed ones. Furthermore, the poorest sections of society will be more affected than others since they have limited resources and limited adaptive capacity. Some African leaders have even gone as far as to say that climate change is "an act of aggression by the developed world against the developing world" (BROWN et al., 2007). This is the case because their social, political and environmental capabilities are more vulnerable and developing countries often still rely on agriculture and subsistence economies, while at the same time often being exploited for their natural resources.

Socially, developing countries usually have higher poverty rates than developed countries and individuals are limited in their capabilities to improve living standards. When environmental change causes alterations to their natural ecosystems, their limited adaptive capacities do not allow them to acclimatize fast enough to maintain the status quo, let alone improve living standards. Often, it is assumed that those individuals will then move to developed countries where tensions rise as those countries claim that they cannot come up with resources for the migrants. However, more often than not, the poorest individuals do not have the means to move, especially across long distances and as such remain 'trapped' in their current locations or move to neighbouring cities or adjacent countries. On the side of receiving

location, especially with regards to cross-border migration, it is often argued that an influx of migrants will cause violence. Such arguments are largely based on the idea of 'national identity' and the ways in which it is threatened by such migratory inflows. However, identity is and has always been malleable, it is constantly changing and adapting, incorporating some ideas and eliminating others. As such, "identity conflicts are in no way natural outcomes of inter-group mixing, rather they are the product of political forces seeking to gain power or defend against perceived threats to power" (Barnett, 2003, p. 12). This points to the fact that the receptiveness of both immigrant and host communities on a social level and a political level are paramount for peaceful settlement and sustainable relocations. Other social factors that come with poverty are malnutrition, disease, and lower education. All of these factors make it more difficult for people to actively choose safe paths of migration and have the potential to enhance unrest among the people.

Economically, too, the adaptive capabilities of developing countries are rather limited due to limited education or professional expertise in certain domains, especially when considering cross-border rural-urban migration. This often creates a narrative of poor migrants moving into cities and being unequipped to properly navigate within the system causing strain on the social fabric. This could potentially cause strain on receiving communities. As previously mentioned however, poverty does usually not allow for long-distance, permanent international migration, but much rather temporary and circular migration strategies are employed (Mcadam, 2012). Such evidence points to the fact that the deterministic narrative must be changed as it is other developing countries who are more affected by such migration flows as opposed to developed countries. The example of Bangladesh is one where such kinds of movements can be seen. Due to rising water levels, and its low-lying geography, many regions in Bangladesh have become uninhabitable, causing many people to move both within the country and across the border to India in search of security. This resulted in India putting up fences at its borders to stop uncontrolled migration (Pike, 2023; Tiwary, 2021). Considering the fact that people used to

migrate freely between the two countries this was met with outrage claiming to increase vulnerabilities of the Bangladeshi people.

Politically, weak institutions, which is more likely to be a characteristic of developing countries, and inadequate policies play a large role with regards to security and conflict. If the political institutions are strong enough, adaptive capacities are much higher. This can be seen in the case of the Netherlands, which largely lies below the sea-level and as such is considered a LECZ, highly vulnerable to sea-level rises. However, due to its strong institutions, they have been able to counteract such vulnerabilities through the construction of dams and dikes, allowing people to remain situated. If political institutions themselves are weak they are not in a position to provide security for their people. Furthermore, if populations *perceive* their political institutions as being weak this will cause mistrust of the people in these institutions and, if there is no trust, anything that is attempted to be done by these institutions might be rejected by the people and lead to violence. This can also be witnessed in the case of Lebanon, which will be discussed later on. In addition to that, as mentioned in the social aspects, policies and political narratives play a pivotal role in the implementation of peaceful immigration. The have the power to promote xenophobia and fear of the 'other' through their regulations and also through the discourses which are circulated throughout society. "The receptiveness of leaders of both immigrant and host groups is very important for peaceful adaptation and settlement" and prior negotiation and policy implementation has the potential to counteract such discourses and promote peaceful and sustainable relocations (Barnett, 2003, p. 12). In addition to policies affecting internal aspects of migration such as perception and hurdles to integration, there are also limitations which are placed upon migrants before even entering other countries. Difficulties in obtaining visas and rights to entry are often placed upon those most vulnerable or coming from 'undesired' countries. Interviewee 5 mentioned that it took him three years to finally obtain a working permit to the UK allowing him to move: "I just moved here [...] last

week, its been a week. […] it took three years to actually be able to get a chance to leave [Beirut]".

The above-mentioned arguments can be summarised in two main schools of debates regarding the environmental change-conflict nexus. The first one argues that environmental changes will disproportionately affect poorer sections of society, enhancing pre-existing cleavages, increase resource competition, reduce state legitimacy and will eventually trigger mass-movements that may magnify tensions within receiving areas (Thalheimer & Webersik, 2020). The other argument (which has faced more critiques) claims that changes in temperature or rainfall patters themselves have the potential to lead to armed conflict (for example Miguel et al, 2004; Burke et al, 2009; Hsiang et al, 2011) as seen in (Thalheimer & Webersik, 2020). Although some points of friction have been outlined throughout this section, which could have the potential to cause resistance and result in outright conflict, it is not inherently so. Minimal conclusive evidence has been found that migration exacerbated by climate change will provoke or exaggerate violent conflict. It has been argued "that those who will be displaced are the poor and marginalized, and so will have little capacity to wage conflict of any significant kind. Nor do they have any incentive to fight as their ability to build new lives for themselves, or to provide for themselves temporarily, depends very much on the cooperation of their local hosts" (Barnett & Webber, 2010, p. 22). Environmental change is largely considered a threat multiplier rather than a direct causal factor of conflict because other determinants such as weak institutions, resource deterioration and socioeconomic disparities must be present as well for conflict to erupt. "Despite the role of climate change in conflict being researched for over 30 years, research results are contested and remain inconclusive" (Thalheimer & Webersik, 2020, p. 62). Even though environmental change is not a direct causal factor of conflict, the opposite does hold true, namely that conflict can be considered as a causal factor for environmental deterioration ("Seven Things You Need to Know About Climate Change and Conflict," 2020). This is

why this thesis suggests a different perspective whereby, rather than considering the possible outcomes of migration as being good or bad, the channels and translocal connections which are created by such migratory movements are highlighted in order to find both benefits and vulnerabilities of already existing channels of mobility and using those as entry points for possible policy adaptation. Historically, migration has not always resulted in conflict. If it is tackled the correct way, it may lead to new forms of co-existence and assimilation. The valuable habits which migrants and refugees can bring with them may aid in the positive development of the receiving culture. Also, migration away from uninhabitable areas, where reversible ecological deterioration has occurred (for example deforestation) may be beneficial for those areas allowing them to regenerate and become inhabitable once again. Of course this only pertains to situations where climatic events have not made land disappear or irreversibly uninhabitable.

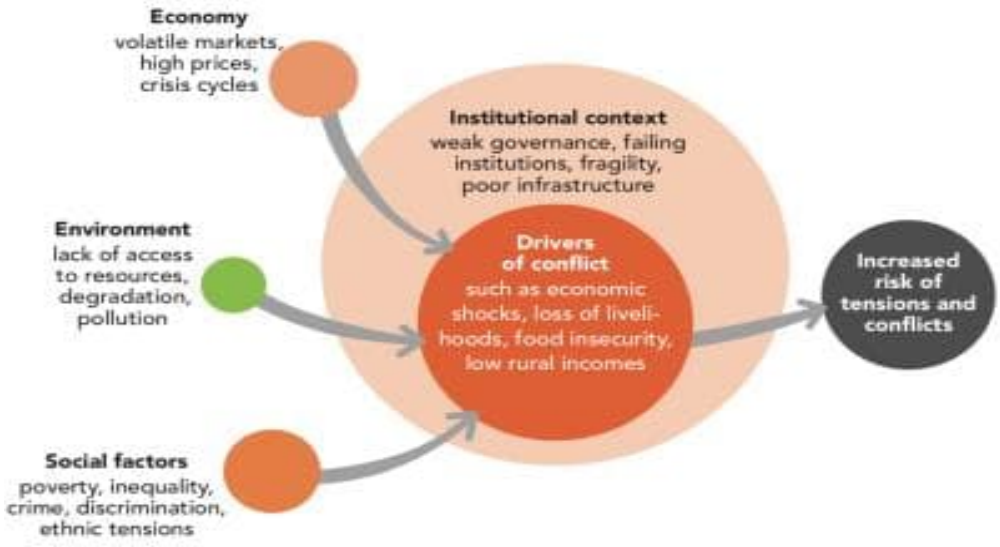


Figure 6: Environmental Change and Conflict (Kohli et al., 2018)

Setting the stage: Beirut, Lebanon

Since the fieldwork for this research was based in Lebanon, this section will introduce some of the relevant data and historical facts pertaining to migration and environmental change. For the most part, there will be a focus on Beirut as that is the parameter of this thesis, but some general data about Lebanon will be mentioned as well. It must be highlighted here, that there is an extreme lack of data pertaining to Lebanon and the information which can be found is sporadic and not regularly obtained, making it difficult to draw direct comparisons, between certain years for example. I did try to connect with some UN agencies such as UNDP and UNHCR in order to perhaps obtain some statistical reports or data which is not available to the general public, but I did not receive any replies. I was however able to get in contact with an employee from the United Nations Resident Coordinators office, specifically the 3RF department (Reform, Recovery, and Reconstruction Framework) who was able to send me some reports pertaining to the rebuilding of Beirut after the explosion. However, she was clear to point out that the conversations we had were all off the record and as such I have to point out that any referrals to our conversation do not represent the opinions of the UN and her employers in general and she merely helped direct my attention.

Although much information is present about the refugee situation in the country, there is a dire lack of consistent information pertaining to the environment and its actual development/deterioration. There are few to no longitudinal case studies done which makes the anthropological aspect of this thesis extremely difficult. I did not however let this stop me, much rather I see this as an incentive to call for more research which needs to be done here, especially pertaining to the Lebanese population itself (as opposed to the refugees present within its borders) as they are also exceedingly vulnerable and in need of assistance. As a matter of fact, I

have worked with a French NGO in Lebanon for about a year and it became clear to me that there was much focus directed towards refugees, while Lebanese citizens were living in the same living conditions as the refugees who received assistance from a multitude of international organisations. I do not wish to diminish the importance of assisting refugees, as their plight is real, but this discrepancy must be pointed out as it creates tensions between vulnerable locals and the refugees present in the same areas. While a conversation with an ex-colleague of mine (from the French NGO) revealed to me that this has somewhat changed and there are now more projects focusing on providing assistance for host-communities as well, no such official data was found and as such I believe that there is still much to be done in this sphere.

The lack of data to be found pertaining to the environment was very shocking as the ecological deterioration which has been steadily increasing is strikingly obvious to me. While there is a plethora of information to be found concerning the environment in neighbouring countries, whether considering the 'Mediterranean region' or the 'Arab region' country-specific data for Lebanon in particular was lacking. Similarly, anthropological studies pertaining to Lebanon are somewhat non-existent making it very difficult to synthesize enough valuable information. Also in global media (usually perpetuated by 'western' standards) not much has been said about Lebanon, even though it has been steadily and rapidly deteriorating within the past half-decade in socio-political and economical aspects. Much of the information here stems from newspaper articles, which must be pointed out in order to know their validity. However, I hope that this thesis can serve as a contribution to the limited existing data and to instigate more research. In order to synthesize valuable information longitudinal in-depth case studies must be done, which are beyond my personal capabilities considering both time and space as limitations. In other words, Lebanese migratory experiences are so varied with regards to institutional parameters and also personal experiences that I do not wish to presume that this

thesis will create a well-rounded idea of the subject of translocal migration. But I do wish to spark some interest in the topic and perhaps create a new perspective or entry point for future research.

This section will attempt to synthesize some information about the migration patterns which have emerged from Lebanon (focusing mostly on emigration) and highlight some important demographic developments which have occurred. Then some information pertaining to the explosion which devastated much of the city on August 4, 2020 shall be presented, followed by an attempt to raise some awareness about the environmental outcomes of this event and the consecutive migratory flows which ensued.

Lebanon is a small country of about 10,450 square kilometres (as comparison, Austria has a surface area of 83,880 square kilometres) on the Mediterranean Sea bordering Syria to the northeast and Palestine to the south. As previously mentioned, Lebanon has a coastal strip of 210 km which is about 8% of the total surface area but holds more than half of the national population. It is a relatively young state, which had its frontiers defined in the 1920s following the Franco-British colonial partition of the Middle East. These borders now encompassed a number of religious groups, who had prior to these border-creations, not identified themselves as belonging to one 'nation' (Trabulsi, 2012), and was a part of the French mandate until the year 1943 when it gained its independence. The French influence is still heavily present and expressed through the education and language systems. Lebanon has a long and culturally rich history whose economy was booming prior to the outbreak of the civil war in 1975. Its GDP consisted mainly of agricultural production and traditional manufactures and it enjoyed the highest literacy rate among the Arab countries (Youssef, 2020) and was once known as 'Paris of the Middle East'. As a matter of fact this description is still fondly used today by many, which indicates an idealistic reminiscence present throughout the population. Lebanon has been filled with strife throughout its history, experiencing a civil war from 1975-1990, which still shapes

much of the sectarian political system under which it 'operates' today. 15 years of war has shaped the current socio-political spheres immensely, forming a paternalistic political system based on nepotism and sectarianism, which has continuously created and intensified cleavages among the people. There are currently eighteen recognized sects in Lebanon, which includes five Islamic sects (Sunni, Shia, Druze, Alawite and Ismaili); twelve Christian sects (including the Maronites, Armenian Orthodox, Armenian Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Melkite Catholic groups); and the Jewish community (Alexander D. M. Henley, 2016), all of which (except the Jewish) are guaranteed representation due Lebanon's confessional political structure. This brief history is already an insight into the complex social and religious makeup of the country which, as so many other post-colonial states, was not a natural creation and which continuously creates institutionalized cleavages further promoted by clientelism.

With regards to migratory flows into Lebanon, it is exceedingly difficult to synthesize concrete comprehensive data, especially of modern mobility flows. However, it is important to mention the main groups of people who have migrated into Lebanon, mainly in the form of refugees and domestic workers. As a matter of fact, Lebanon hosts the largest number of refugees per capita word-wide (UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 2022). There are an estimated number of 1.5 million Syrian refugees, 208,000 Palestinian refugees, and 20,000 refugees of other nationalities currently residing within Lebanon (European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, 2023). I must point out however, through my working experience with refugees, I am certain that those numbers are much higher. Every refugee family I have visited had at least one member who was not registered. This is excluding those families where no member was registered because we had no way of contacting them. In addition to that, there are an estimated number of 250, 000 migrant domestic workers in the country, primarily from Ethiopia, the Philippines, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, who still operate under the very restrictive *kafala* (sponsorship) system, which is excluded from the protection of Lebanon's labour law and ties the legal residency of these workers to their employers ("World Report 2022: Rights Trends in Lebanon," 2021). These extremely large numbers have placed increasing pressures on the already unstable socio-economic systems of Lebanon, such as the healthcare

and education sectors. Much of the modern economic structure of Lebanon is cash oriented and based on tourism, banking and services (Youssef, 2020), which are all highly unstable and dependent upon perceptions of the state of security within the country. Lebanon scored 28 out of 100 in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) of Transparency International 2018, with zero CPI considered to be highly corrupted and 100 as being completely transparent (Youssef, 2020). It is clear that with its geographical location, surrounded by countries filled with long-term war and illegal occupants, its internal makeup of sectarian parties and nepotistic action, and vast cultural differences of self-identification (whereby some Lebanese consider themselves as 'Arab' while others do not), Lebanon is highly volatile and vulnerable to internal and external forces.

Considering patterns of Lebanese emigration is even more significant with regards to this thesis. The Lebanese population residing within Lebanon is currently estimated to be at around 6,744,679 (*Lebanon Population (2023)*, 2023). Estimates regarding the population of Lebanese citizens living abroad vary widely, but the most common assumption is that there are around 3 to 4 million Lebanese living abroad (Verdeil et al., 2019). However, many assume that these numbers are much larger, considering those individuals who have obtained other nationalities or are second and third generation emigrants. Historically, Lebanon has witnessed three waves of emigration; the first one reached its climax at the end of the 19th century as a result of a severe famine which was caused by the Ottoman blockade during WWI ; while the second wave of emigration was a direct result of the establishment of the French Mandate (Verdeil et al., 2019). During the first wave of emigration, it is estimated that about a fourth of the total population left the region (Pearlman, 2013). The main areas of destination during those movements were North America, specifically the United States and South America, specifically Brazil and Argentina (Verdeil et al., 2019). As a matter of fact, Brazil still holds the largest pocket of Lebanese diaspora world-wide and some even say that there are more Lebanese in Brazil than there are in Lebanon (around 7 million). However, other sources point out to be weary of such generalizations due to the complication of assuming relatedness from descendants of Lebanese emigrants. The third wave of emigration was cause by the Civil War

forming new mobility patterns with North America still being a main destination region, however Canada became more popular than the United States, in addition to large numbers moving to Australia (Verdeil et al., 2019). In addition to those already established routes, the Gulf countries too emerged as a popular destination for emigrants as well as some countries in Western Europe (specifically the UK, France, and Germany) and Africa (Verdeil et al., 2019). Many who left were educated individuals who assumed managerial and technical positions, with the notable exception of Australia, Sweden and Germany who accepted poorer migrants as well as Palestinian refugees coming from Lebanon (Verdeil et al., 2019). What is interesting to note, in addition to the actual numbers of emigrants, is the *expectation* of individuals to seek work or settle abroad. According to the research institute MADMA, which conducted sixteen polls between 1997 and 2007, thirty-nine percent of respondents had thought about emigrating and twenty-two percent had actually take steps towards doing so (Pearlman, 2013). Some speak of a new and fourth wave of emigration starting in 2019 as a result of numerous crises including a garbage crisis, healthcare crisis and political crisis and culminating in the October revolution of 2019. As a matter of fact, the years 2019 and 2020 are the only years recorded, dating back to 1955, where there has been a negative percentage of migration (*Lebanon Population (2023)*, 2023). In other words, even though the population grew numerically, the number of individuals who left the country exceeded those that were born and immigrated combined.

In order to understand the relationship of migration and environmental change, there must also be some mention of the Lebanese climate in general and how it has changed over the years. Again, there is minimal and sporadic data which does not exist on an annual basis, making it very hard to draw definitive conclusions. It is important to point out that although Lebanon is a small country, it has much topographic variation (ranging from coastal areas to mountainous ones) which results in the creation of micro-climates which may vary from the Mediterranean climate. The general climate of Lebanon is considered a Mediterranean-type climate which is characterized by hot and dry summers and cool and rainy winters (The World Bank, 2023). The mean annual rainfall varies slightly between coastal areas and inland areas,

with a range of 700 to 1000 mm and 1600 mm respectively and 70 % of the average rainfall occurring between November and March (usually in the form of violet storms and heavy cloudbursts) (The World Bank, 2023). Since the early 20th century, mean temperature has increased by over 1.5^{o}C from 13.5^{o}C in 1905 to 15.8^{o}C in 2019, illustrated in figure 7 (The World Bank, 2023). Whether this is a result of climate change or a natural evolution is beyond my scope of knowledge to determine but temperatures are steadily increasing which does affect the natural ecosystems. In addition to that, as previously mentioned, a large strip of the country is located on LECZ, which means that it is vulnerable to water rising. The importance of coastal security for Lebanon becomes even more clear when one considers the fact that all of its major cities are located on the coast (Beirut, Tripoli, Sidon, and Tyre) and 74 % of Lebanon's GDP is created from those areas (through commercial and financial activities, large industrial zones, important agricultural lands as well as fishing and tourism) (Ministry of Environment, 2011). There is very little to no data on the actual extent of environmental changes which are occurring across the shoreline but some vulnerabilities can be determined. Much of the effects of environmental changes are due to mismanagement of agricultural activities, urban sprawl and rural-urban migration, resulting in the disappearance of coastal agricultural lands (Ministry of Environment, 2011). Such agricultural coastal zones are important buffers against water infiltration and flooding, which would be absorbed into the ground in the events of heavy rainfall. Similarly, in the case of sea levels rising, such agricultural zones would have the capacity to alleviate some pressures with regards to protecting coastal infrastructure, and shore-erosion. Another environmental vulnerability relevant to coastlines is the salinification of groundwater aquifers which are often over-utilized and mismanaged (Ministry of Environment, 2011). With regards to the water itself, climatic changes such as water temperature increases and human-induced environmental changes such as inadequate waste-water management, overfishing, and pollution are also threatening marine biodiversity and aquatic ecosystems in LECZ, resulting in algal blooms and increasing jellyfish populations (Ministry of Environment, 2011). However, there is some evidence that thermophilic species such as Sardines could become more abundant if water temperatures were to increase (Ministry of Environment, 2011). These changes will not only affect fishing practices, but also water-tourism will decrease.

Since these issues could be expanded upon in their own right in the form of a thesis, I will not delve into them any further. However this brief outline of the Lebanese political structure, migration flows in and out of the country and environmental changes pertaining to coastal zones was intended to create a brief outline to better understand the effect the explosion on August 4, 2020 had.

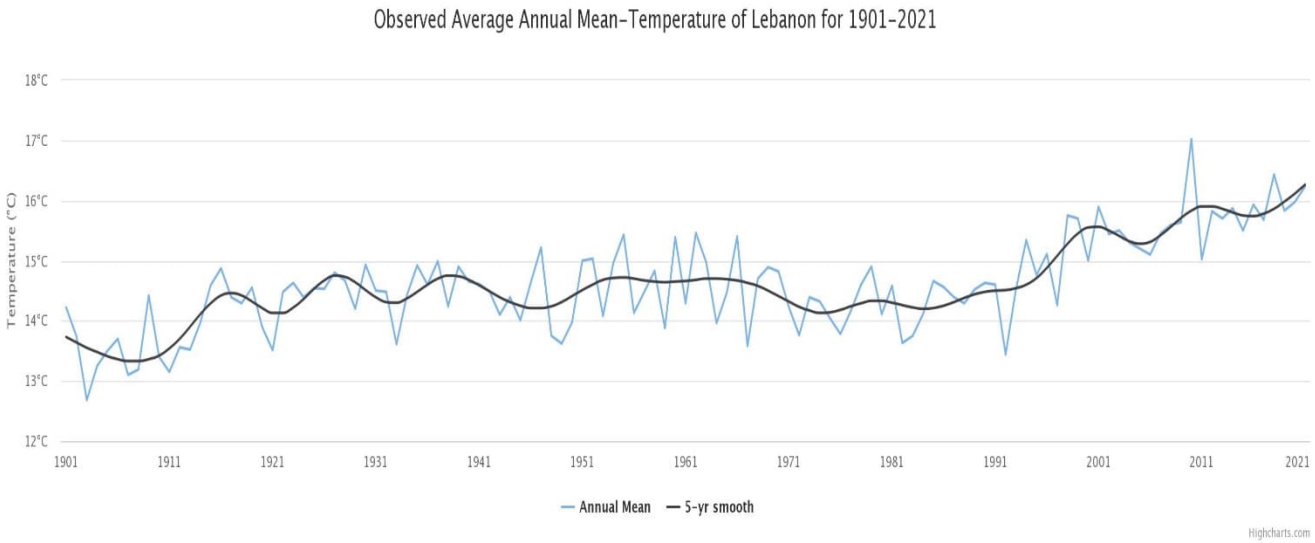


Figure 7: Observed Average Annual Temperature Lebanon (The World Bank, 2023)

The Final Straw

I wish to use the explosion which shook the country as an entry point for this thesis in order to limit the scope of discussion and as a starting point for the most recent 'wave' of emigration. It is not an independent event in itself and one should not make the mistake to consider that the resulting migratory flows were solely caused by the explosion alone. Much rather, it is a culmination of discontent which was highly volatile and already visible. In October of 2019 thousands of Lebanese took to the streets in what became known as the October Revolution. For the first time in Lebanese modern day history people of all religious beliefs, stemming from all corners of the country and from all social 'classes' came together in protest

to demand a new government, a new political structure which was no longer lead by sectarianism and nepotism. "According to the Central Intelligence Agency 2017, Lebanon ranked the 3rd highest country with Debt to GDP ratio as it recorded 152.8% "(Youssef, 2020). The constant lack of basic services, social stratification, infrastructures which were accessible only to the local elites, and ever increasing poverty rates were enough to create a boiling population which could no longer be contained. The culmination of this discontent was the attempt to impose tax on Whatsapp calls, which is the main source of communication for Lebanese within the country and abroad (as there are only two phone providers in the country who work under private ownership affiliated with political leaders, have no real competition and as such set high fees for communication). The slogan "killon ya'ane killon" (everyone means everyone) was heard throughout the streets and was referring to the fall of ALL party leaders who had been in power more or less since the civil war had ended. This was a time of hope, a time when civil society came together. A number of interviewees mentioned the feeling of support which they felt from the people when they took to the streets. Groups were organising themselves, providing food and drinks, cleaning the roads and even providing free psychological support for those in need. The revolution was mainly organised through social media, which allowed Lebanese who were living abroad to witness daily struggles and to feel like they could be a part of it in a way. However, sadly, the political elite did not respond to any of the demands and in hindsight it seems as though they were allowing this to happen, waiting. As if they knew that this was just the outlet people needed in order to fall back into the previous structures. Interviewee 4 states that, "for once, even in my family where usually everyone supports a different politician, when the [demonstrations] started everyone was neutral […] but after the explosion it changed because everything started again, politicians got their hands on the people and started dividing them again while at first, in the first couple of months everyone loved each other and wanted to bring the 'old' Lebanon back. Even the people that were protesting started protesting in the name of political parties". As corona hit, and the Lebanese healthcare system was direly underprepared and under-funded the 'revolution' lost momentum and slowly fizzled out. Things seemed to be returning to the

insufficient status-quo until and event, which shocked the country to its core completely derailed any sort of hope for permanent political change.

On august 4, 2020 the largest non-nuclear explosion in modern human history detonated in Beirut at around 6 pm. Almost 3,000 tons of ammonium nitrate, which had been stored in the Port of Beirut exploded in a blast that was felt all the way to Cyprus, almost 160km away (Cheaito & Al-Hajj, 2020). The radius of destruction extended up to 10 km (illustrated in figure 1) and resulted in damages estimated at around 4.6 billion dollars (Cheaito & Al-Hajj, 2020), not only to residential buildings but also schools, health care facilities, cultural institutions and heritage sites were damaged or destroyed. 220 people lost their lives, over 6,500 were injured and more than 300,000 individuals were displaced of which around 80,000 were children (Al-Hajj et al., 2021). In addition to that, Lebanon is heavily dependent on grain imports as only 10% of the local requirement is produced locally and the silos which stored around 80% of the imported grains were located in direct proximity to the warehouse where the ammonium nitrate was stored. Following the explosion, there was an air of confusion as to what had happened? Who had tried to kill us this time? “The hours after the explosion were brutal. Everyone I love lived in Beirut and trying to get a hold of them and making sure they were safe was taxing to the body, mind and soul that night and for months to come. Heading down to Beirut the next day to help clean the city, I broke into tears as soon as I met my friend on the street. It was a scene from hell”, interviewee 3 recalls. Some say they heard the sound of a rocket few second before the blast. Others claim to have seen smoke for minutes before the explosion. Friends recall their experience saying that while walking on the streets, filled with glass and debris, stepping over dead bodies, they still experienced the kindness of strangers who, on motorcycles, were trying to bring as many people to safety as possible. “I found glass in my hair for the next couple of days”, mentions interviewee 5. But where was ‘safety’? At home (?), where bullet holes are scattered through the walls stemming from years of sporadic violence, but have remained standing and inhabitable? Home was no longer a place of safety. In the hospitals (?), which were overwrought with injured individuals and whose infrastructure was unsound. Interviewee 1 told me that he was not in Beirut as the blast happened but when

he returned to his apartment he could not recognise it. He only went back that one time. Stories like that were abound and videos circulated the media. Ayah Bdeir, who was a part of the revolution and all that came with it published a post in Instagram which sums up the situation:

"Help, we are being held hostage: The Lebanese people are being held hostage by our corrupt ruling class. 9 months ago millions went down to the streets to revolt and demand change. We did everything right: we camped on the streets for months, we stood under politicians homes, we prepared corruption investigations, we lobbied the international community, we formed NGOs and lawyer groups and platforms to organize, we delivered files to the World Bank and Human Rights Watch and the UN, we kicked politicians out of restaurants, we withheld taxes, we organized protests in hundreds of international embassies, we wrote petitions, formed independent political groups, led political debate, we dabbled in violence but then held it together when it got out of hand, because we had to be more responsible than our ruling class. It is not working. We need help. We are being held hostage by a ruling class that refuse to leave. In the meantime we had one of the biggest forest fires in our history, the economy collapsed, our buildings collapsed, we are being detained and beaten by police, 50% of the population is in poverty, the currency lost 80% of its value, our life savings are wiped, we are not allowed to withdraw more than 1000$ a month if we are lucky, the lucky ones are those of us that emigrated to any country that would take us, our elderly are begging for food. All while there is a global pandemic and recession going on.

Now the port exploded [...]due to poion or negligence [...]. Less than 12 hours later, people are opening their homes, setting up donation drives, raising hundreds of thousands of dollars to do what the government will not do, organizing volunteer clean-up crews.

We need help.

We are being held hostage.

We are being cleansed by our own government." (Bdeir, 2020)

Interviewee 5 also pointed out the utter frustration that he felt following the explosion and the inaction by the government which followed in the days thereafter. "I don't know if you remember but on the 8th of august, [there was a very big demonstration] after we finished cleaning up the mess [...]. I'd never been violent before in the [previous] protests but then I lost my shit completely. We hadn't slept in four days and they [the army] started shooting live rounds at the protestors and one was shot in the neck and that's when I said 'I'm done, I'm out' [...] I just wanted to get out of this country". Some more personal experiences will be

mentioned in the next section as well where there will be an attempt to adopt the framework of translocal resilience to better understand mobility outcomes and how they are affecting Lebanon. However, prior there must be a brief discussion regarding the environmental effects the explosion had.

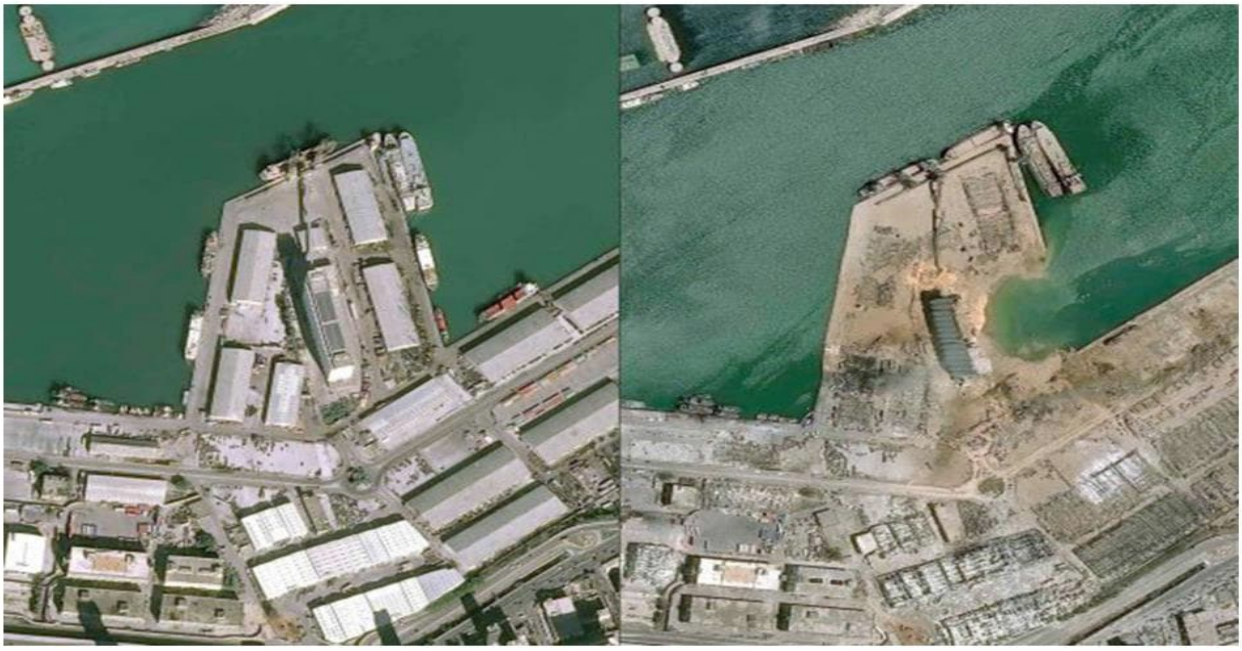


Figure 8: Satellite picture for the Beirut explosion (before and after) (Al-Hajj et al., 2021, p. 3)

Environmental outcomes

Interestingly enough, when participants were asked about the environmental effects of the explosion, only two of the interviewees mentioned such effects. Interviewee 1 said that the plants in his garden on his balcony (at least those that survived the immediate effects of the explosion) would not grow anymore. In addition to that, he claimed that there was a cloud of smog unlike any he had seen before, which hung over Beirut for the next week or so. Interviewee 5 mentioned the rain which occurred so a couple of days after the explosion: "of course [I noticed changes in the environment}, it rained a couple of days after. This happens after a semi-nuclear explosion. We created a microclimate. Usually after a nuclear explosion, where a lot of pressure is released into the atmosphere, what happens is called a nuclear winter (even though here it was not an actual nuclear bomb, it was smaller, but it had the same

effect), which includes rainfall. I also had troubles breathing, I mean the air we were breathing was poison". Similarly, not a lot of research has been done about the long term effects the explosion had on the environment and it is clear that there is much room for improvement, especially with regards to its effects on the surrounding marine ecosystems. A study was done explaining the possible environmental outcomes such an explosion can have focusing mainly on air pollution, however not much real data was presented as to the actual amounts of toxic gases in the air. It states, that although ammonium nitrate is not a highly reactive substance, and under normal circumstances has the capability of quickly disintegrating into relatively harmless gases, the reaction of ammonium nitrate with extremely high temperatures and faulty storing has the potential to create other reactions, whereby toxic gases are produced (Al-Hajj et al., 2021). The two most hazardous gases which can result from such a reaction are nitric oxide (NO) and nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) both of which were likely to have occurred as a result of the explosion (Al-Hajj et al., 2021). These gases are heavier than air and as such move down towards the ground, making it especially dangerous for children, who also have a larger lung surface area than adults (Al-Hajj et al., 2021). The inhalation of these gases can have both immediate and long-term effects which can manifest in a number of ways. Immediate effects of inhalation can include damaging of the alveolar structure, abdominal pain, nausea, fatigue, and obstruction of the upper airways (Al-Hajj et al., 2021). Long-term effects may include increased vulnerability to lung infections which could also include more severe outbreaks of COVID-19 (Al-Hajj et al., 2021). As a matter of fact, exactly 10 days after the explosion there was a surge in COVID-19 cases which could also be attributed to the effects of such gas inhalation (Al-Hajj et al., 2021). In addition to the toxic gases, large amounts of particles, consisting of sulfates, nitrates, ammonia, sodium chloride, black carbon and mineral dust, were suspended into the air and remained there for days being inhaled by individuals. These particles have the potential of moving into the bloodstream and remaining there for extended period of time, increasing the risk of "cardiopulmonary morbidity and mortality" especially for already vulnerable individuals (Al-Hajj et al., 2021). This study called for increased research regarding the long-term effects which might be related to air pollution resulting from the explosion, however it is extremely difficult not only with regards to funding, but also with regards to determining

whether individuals suffering from any of these symptoms are a result of the explosion or simply due to the already polluted nature of the air in Beirut.

Another study, done for the Ecotoxicology and Environmental Safety journal specifically points to the fact that the effects of chemical gas inhalations, especially in small amounts, can take months to manifest into physiological problems, not to mention the psychological effects such an event can have on individuals (ur Rehman et al., 2021). This report confirms the speculations which interviewee 1 had regarding the 'smog' cloud which he had seen. The report states that the nitrogen oxides which were released into the atmosphere react with other particles in daylight and cause ground-level ozone (O_3) which leads to smog (ur Rehman et al., 2021). The report warns about the real long-term effects which the exposure to such chemicals can have when they leak into the soil and seawater, however no data has been collected pertaining to these issues (ur Rehman et al., 2021). According to ur Rehman et. Al. although still lacking, it is easier to measure effects which make themselves noticeable within humans as opposed to the mammoth undertaking of determining soil and water-pollution. The report does however point to the effect such pollution has on the already declining species of amphibians living on the coast of Beirut. Another study which tested the toxicity of inorganic nitrogen (including ammonium) found that exposure to such chemicals in high numbers do have effects on amphibian creatures (Daam et al., 2020). Ur Rehman et. Al. also compared findings to other ammonium nitrate explosions which have occurred, where more research has been done in order to anticipate possible environmental effects. A study done after such an explosion in Tianjin, China, recorded levels of nitrates in groundwater aquifers, whereby the explosion in Beirut was of a much larger magnitude (ur Rehman et al., 2021). Something to consider is the fact that ammonia and nitrates are naturally found in the body of animals and fish and in small quantities are non-disruptive. It is the accumulation of such particles, especially ammonia which may cause permanent damage (ur Rehman et al., 2021).

Overall, it seems as though environmental change was not an initial point of consideration for those interviewed with regards to mobility and immobility, however when asked further questions, most of them mentioned environmental issues. Whether it was plants not growing (interviewee 1), troubles breathing (interviewee 5), being sick of the garbage which was not collected and disposed of properly, or the lack of 'clean' water (which cannot be ingested but is used for other domestic purposes such as cleaning and washing), the environment was definitely an influence in their discontent. As such, one can see that in accordance with the literature discussed, the environment is usually not a main driver of migration but it is definitely a threat multiplier und underlying factor affecting migration decisions due to its effect on living quality. Environmental issues such as air pollution, inadequate waste management and water scarcity are major environmental issues in Beirut. In addition to these factors which are directly caused by the inability of the government to adequately manage and provide resources, climate change is having very real effects on the city (as discussed in the section of LECZ) such as ocean acidification and temperatures rising, which will have long-term effects on productivity and habitability. Clearly, minimal effort was and is being employed by the Lebanese governments in order to understand the actual environmental effects the explosion had on ecosystems and our natural surroundings and the other effects which their direct inaction in combination with climate change is having. Much of the research was drawn from studies discussing explosions of similar origins rather than specifically focused on Beirut. In order for proper understanding of long-term effects of such a catastrophe, there is a need to conduct research regarding air, soil, water and biological impact which required much funding and organisation (both of which cannot be expected from the Lebanese government). In addition to that, solid waste which was collected from ground 0 has reportedly been dumped into the ocean and it seems reasonable to assume the contamination of such matter. Proper solid waste analysis and management is also detrimental to ensure that the effects of this event will not drag out for generations to come. In the next section, there will be an exploration of the concept of translocal resilience in the context of Beirut, focusing on mobilities which have occurred following the explosion. There will be an attempt to discern both positive and

negative outcomes of such connections and how they can be understood to understand possible future mobility patterns.

Analytical framework: Translocal Resilience

In order to situate the previous discussion within a concrete scope of application an analytical framework must be employed. In the following and final section, the framework of translocal resilience shall be utilised to better understand the complex nature of migration flows and identity employed by Lebanese. The embodiment of identity and imagination of belonging is often overlooked in the study of translocality as it was found in the empirical research, however in this section I wish to point to the significance of such understanding and how it has changed following the explosion in 2020 in order to better understand possible future migratory pathways and to illustrate the complexity of the subject at hand. This section will begin by outlining some definitions important for the understanding of translocalism and translocal resilience. This will include an explanation for the choice of translocality as opposed to transnationalism. It must be pointed out that this pertains solely to my understanding of the two and their scopes of implementation, as the understanding and definition of these terms is rather fluid and can be contextualised in a variety of valuable ways. This will be followed by laying out some points of limitation and potential with regards to social and political transformation as a result of translocal connections and how it may enhance or thwart resilience. All of these will be accompanied by examples of mobility and translocal connectedness from the fieldwork in Beirut, Lebanon in order to identify a concrete scope of application. Due to the subjective nature of this framework and its contextual dependency on both spatial and temporal levels in accordance with structural limitations and other influences such as histories and imaginations, among other things, such studies should be employed on a case-by-case basis. However, I understand that there is also a need to develop some sort of structural guidelines, which would facilitate policy formation or comparative studies but this is beyond my scope of possibility due to the limited resources I am operating under. The collection of this type of multi-cited, multi-level, long-term ethnographic data is rather difficult and as such is not often done. This thesis is an attempt to start such an understanding for the case of Beirut and to situate it within the environment-migration nexus although in a rather perfunctory and simplistic manner, in dire need of more in-depth study.

Box 2. Definitions

Vulnerability

Generally refers to the condition of being susceptible to harm or disadvantage due to various factors such as social, economic, political, or environmental circumstances. According to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), vulnerability is "the diminished capacity of an individual or group to anticipate, cope with, resist, and recover from the impact of a natural or man-made hazard" (Cannon & Schipper, 2014). Refugee-like situations can be constituted as situations of high vulnerability and migrant situations as states of lower vulnerability (Adamo, 2010).

Social Vulnerability refers to "the characteristics of a person or group in terms of their capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist, and recover from the impact of a natural hazard" (Cutter et al., 2003). This definition emphasizes the importance of social and economic factors in shaping vulnerability to natural hazards but one should also include broader political and social structures in order to understand the dynamics which shape social vulnerability.

Resilience

The UNDRR defines resilience as "the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management" (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction). This includes chronic stressors, such as the effects of climate change and poverty and acute shocks, such as natural and man-made disasters. It is a dynamic process which includes the capacity to absorb and bounce back from disturbances, as well as to transform and learn from such experiences (Folke et al., 2010)

Social resilience is closely linked to the concept of adaptive capacity, which refers to the ability of social systems to adjust to changing circumstances and to learn from experience (Folke et al., 2010). Building social resilience and adaptive capacity can help to reduce vulnerability and increase the capacity of communities to respond to and recover from disasters, climate change impacts, and other shocks and stresses while maintaining essential structures and identities. Strengthening social networks, the promotion of social capital and collective action, and the enhancement of social diversity and inclusivity are all strategies which can be employed to strengthen social resilience (Cutter & Finch, 2008).

Exploring translocality

As opposed to the tendencies of environmentally induced migration (and other forms of migration) occurring within rather than between countries, for those living in Beirut migration is commonly expressed in a different manner. There is very little intra-state migration from people moving out of Beirut to other regions of the country, as Beirut is usually the destination of internal migrants. There is also a very established history of emigration, which has been mentioned previously. In addition to that, due to its geographical location and the countries that it borders, inter-state regional migration is highly unlikely to impossible. As such, the mobility flows of Lebanese people, especially from Beirut, do not coincide with the usual findings of migratory patterns, making this an exceedingly complex field of study and signifying the need for not only country based, but also city or regional based ethnographic studies more adept to understanding the detailed mechanisms and imagination behind these movements in order to better anticipate and/or manage future flows. It is imperative to address these flows before the environmental pressures within Beirut become so high that people will not have places to live anymore. Since the 'government' cannot be relied upon for the implementation of adequate adaptation strategies, let alone pre-emptive adaptation and risk alleviation strategies such as manged retreat strategies[1], the agency of the people is vital for their long-term survival. In other words, the lack of willingness of the government to implement adaptation strategies in any form that does not directly benefit them makes it necessary for individual adaptation or adaptation on the community level. Such adaptation requires planning, organising and funding which is difficult to implement by governments in general and even more so by civil society groups or actors.

Within this thesis, the framework of translocalism is used in order to better understand the mobility flows which have emerged in Lebanon from 2020. Since 2020, Lebanon has

[1] "Managed retreat is defined as a risk management strategy that tackles the exposure element of risk by removing people, buildings and infrastructure exposed to rising and more frequent coastal hazards or flood hazards, with the opportunity to also address vulnerability by enhancing societal resilience. Abandonment and gradual voluntary movement of people away from the coast by attrition constitutes unmanaged retreat". Lawrence et al. (2020, p. 67).

constantly experienced negative migration rates, meaning that more people have emigrated than immigrated (Macrotrends LLC, 2023). “In 2021 alone 77,777 Lebanese, i.e., around 40% of the total emigrants between 2018 and 2021, booked their one-way ticket” (Mendelek, 2022). These trends and the lack of consistent research produced for Lebanon clearly show the significance of the need to better understand the effect that such mobility flows have and the potential which they hold. The concept of translocalism was first explicitly mentioned in 1991 (Hoerder, 2013) and has since been employed to better understand mobility flows. Mobility refers not only to human mobility but also the flow of information, goods and services, cultural exchange and economic organization, amongst other things. The concept closely relates to the idea of transnationalism, which is a well-known and more widely used term in the context of mobility studies than that of translocalism. To better understand the conceptualization of translocality as employed here, transnationalism must be discussed as well as they build on one another and are not clearly distinguishable depending on their conceptualization. In addition to that, transnationalism has received more interest in migration research up to date resulting in more data available pertaining to the topic which can be incorporated into the understanding of translocality as it shall be understood within this thesis.

Understanding transnationalism

The idea of transnationalism emerged as a result of attempting to better understand the interconnectedness which individuals maintained while moving across borders by analysing multi-level and multi-local ties, activities and networks (Caglar, 2022). In an increasing era of globalization and the mobility resulting from these processes, it is an attempt to explain the movement of people, goods, and ideas across borders and the effects such movement can have on identity formation, and political, social and economic organization. In addition to focusing on migrants, transnationalism opened space to include individuals and groups that remained in locations of origin as a part of the formation of transnational social fields. As opposed to

assimilation[2], whereby there is an eventual 'absorption' of migrants into their areas of destination, transnationalism leaves room for the maintenance of places of origin into the spheres of destination countries. In addition to that, transnationalism increased the understanding of the connections which are made not only between areas of origin and areas of destination, but also along those routes of mobility with other actors such as governments, NGOs, individuals and other collective actors and the power structures which are created, maintained or disrupted through such connections. This is not to say that there is no assimilation whatsoever, as it is somewhat inevitable that host communities, those moving and communities of origin will change and develop in accordance and also in spite of one another (Thiruvengadam & Alamelu, 2020). However transnationalism leaves room for the fact that connections not only remain between locations of origin and locations of destination, but that they could also be strengthened as a result of such movement. This idea of simultaneity and being situated in realms beyond the boundaries of nation-states allows for more nuanced understanding of mobility and identity formation and reconfiguration. In addition to that, the pluri-local character of transnational connections eliminates the need of having a clear centre or core regarding organisation and focuses on "dense and durable social entanglements" (Pries, 2015, p. 2). The rate at which people, information, effects of environmental change, amongst other things, we are experiencing and as such this concept continues to be significant for the understanding of such processes.

The discussions highlighting increasing numbers of migrants and refugees seeking out new places to live has also been accompanied by a resurgent nationalist agenda. Politicians and media, especially in Europe and the United States discuss the 'threat' of migrants to national security and their need for integration (Glick Schiller, 2007). In light of such narratives and the emergent popularity of neo-nationalism the significance of the nation-state and the protection

[2] "Assimilation, [...] is the process whereby individuals or groups of differing ethnic heritage are absorbed into the dominant culture of a society. The process of assimilating involves taking on the traits of the dominant culture to such a degree that the assimilating group becomes socially indistinguishable from other members of the society" Pauls (2022)

thereof has gained much traction for populist leaders. Through the ideological lens of what Glick Schiller calls methodological nationalism contemporary nation-state building policies which are based upon the idea that historical and social processes are contained within nations are often justified, facilitating; "(1) the homogenization of national culture (2) the homogenization of migrants into ethnic groups – seen as bearers of discrete cultures – who arrive bearing cultural, class, and religious differences, and (3) the use of national statistics organized so that ethnic difference appears as an independent variable in the reporting of levels of education, health status, degrees of employment, and level of immobility" (Glick Schiller, 2007). To elaborate further, such an understanding of individuals within a nation being homogenous and sharing the same culture and histories justifies the exclusion of those that do not fit within those parameters. This has the potential to result in hardening borders to keep 'unwanted' individuals out, implementing separationist policies and instigating social discontent by promoting the differences between 'natives' and 'foreigners'. As a matter of fact, such an instrumentalisation of 'otherness' can be clearly seen with the rise and fall of migratory restrictions such as immigration visas. In the mid-19th century with the rise of globalisation, the movement of individuals across and within borders was not much restricted and even more than that, there was a general understanding that migrants maintained ties by sending money, supporting village projects and initiating businesses to their places of origin (Glick Schiller, 2007). Only with the increasing rise of unequal distributions of wealth, power and the environmental effects of capitalism between sending and receiving states, in accordance with the rise of migration studies, which was largely situated within and between nation-states in the early 20th century, did the differentiation between natives and foreigners gain significance (Glick Schiller, 2007). By using terms such as race and nationality interchangeably (Glick Schiller, 2007), and studying 'endemic' populations as opposed to 'non-native' ones, differences were created, highlighted and cemented forming increasing notions of the necessity of 'social cohesion' and communal identity formation. Even today, ethnicity or ethnic groups remain as some of the major units of analysis for studying "and describ[ing] migration settlement, transnational migration, and diaspora" (Glick Schiller, 2007) which does not only support the notion of methodological nationalism but may also lead to an oversight of "broader

restructuring processes" which are occurring and an overall homogenisation of the social fabric (Caglar, 2013). Such an identification of ethnicity does not hold when discussing Lebanese people for example because their self-identification varies greatly and even historically groups such as Arabs, Turks, Armenians, Assyrians, Kurds, and Phoenicians have settled in this region for a long time in addition to the intermingling of European colonisers and settlers, making it extremely difficult to maintain clear 'ethnic' boundaries. Such complexity is not exclusive to Lebanon as many countries have long histories of in- and outmigration, colonisation, and mixing with other individuals (such as traders or sailors for example) which makes the analytical concept of ethnicity quite redundant and subjective.

A translocal approach

I do not wish to denounce the importance the nation-state may hold or suggest that it is withering away as a whole, nor question the applicability of the concept of transnationalism in all its understanding which was only briefly discussed above. However, for the scope of this thesis there is an attempt to consciously move away from the boundaries of the state and the ethnic lens which it is often associated with. Only if one acknowledges the presence and power of the nation can transnationalism be acknowledged. This is the case not only due to the discursive and political power nationalism once again holds, but also due to the self-identification which was determined among the interviewees. Building on Anderson's (1983) concept of 'imagined communities' which refers to collective identities and their formation as a structure that determines belonging to a certain community and further to a nation, through similarities such as language, religion, ethnic identity, culture, and tradition (Pries, 2015),the self-identification and 'imagination of belonging' is of significance here. As will be discussed further shortly, the nation-state "Lebanon" is no longer what individuals identify with and as such a different terminology than transnational will be used. As "identities are not fixed or frozen in time. Rather, they should be understood as fluid and flexible, shaped by history, a given context, and multiple external factors" (Yoshida, 2002), there is a clear and purposeful attempt, especially in this situation, to move away from the notion of the state in order to align with the self-identification the interviewees have expressed. In addition to that, by using the

term of translocality, I wish to highlight the incompetency of the Lebanese national government and to limit their scope of involvement with regards to nation-building and support by moving beyond the concept of nation-state as the primary unit of analysis. It must be pointed out here that I am aware of the fact that by considering translocal ties and movements, there is also an inherent assumption that individuals moving away from Beirut maintain some sort of connection, allowing them to be utilised as a unit of analysis. Whether these ties are bound by the nation, by real or imagined histories or by cultural or religious affiliation can be argued for and disputed. However, for the sake of analysis such a connection must be made and in this case it shall be the locality of origin being Beirut and the shared experience of the blast. Since this thesis is not an attempt to provide a basis for comparative studies on transnationalism or translocality, but rather an attempt to understand the use of the concept of translocality for resilience within the environment-migration nexus, the comparative limitations which these concepts hold are not under discussion[3].

Similar to transnationalism, translocality promotes a simultaneity of embeddedness for migrants on various levels, scales and localities. In my understanding of the term, it incorporates all of the previously mentioned aspects of transnationalism with the exception of further removing focus from the nation-state as the main bounding factor for migrants. Although it must be mentioned that transnationalism too emerged as a critique of the use of the nation and its ethnic uniformity as the main unit of analysis of migratory and settlement processes as it focused more on global power dynamics making it a more relational perspective on migration (Caglar, 2022), its success in separating from the nation-state is limited. In addition to that, as previously mentioned for the case of Beirut, the removal from the national is a conscious effort to align with both the self-identification of the interviewees and to signify the legislative irrelevance of the political sphere of the country. The concept of translocality places increased importance on the connection between the local and the global in a way which goes beyond the limits of the state. It takes into account socio-spatial levels and boundaries of

[3] For a more critical discussion of the comparative limitations of methodological nationalism, transnationalism and translocality in space and time, see Caglar (2013) and Glick Schiller (2007)

localities and their contexts of multi-embeddedness through day-to-day practices across multiple places simultaneously (Porst, 2020). It has also been suggested that translocalism takes a more "grounded" approach to transnationalism by focusing on the situatedness and local contexts of actors (Greiner & Sakdapolrak, 2013), making this approach more actor oriented. The understanding of culture within translocalism involves an understanding of its fluidity and hybridity which can change over time depending on internal and external influences (Samu Kytölä, 2016, 2016). This means that culture is not based solely on territories or national boundaries and as such, it has the potential to change according to where and how it is expressed. Such an understanding once again supports the simultaneity of individuals having connections, being influenced by- and influencing a number of places at the same time. The multi-scalar nature of embeddedness means that individuals can be affected and affect structures at a variety of levels for example within the nuclear family, a community, across borders and in organisations just to name a few. Such an understanding of embeddedness makes translocality complex and diverse and allows for multiple entry points of research but also for easier oversight of vital aspects of social organisation and 'belonging'. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, translocality includes not only physical boundedness but can also include imagined histories, boundaries and cultural understanding (Samu Kytölä, 2016). It is an attempt to integrate "notions of fluidity and discontinuity associated with mobilities, movements and flows on the one hand with notions of fixity, groundedness and situatedness in particular settings on the other" (Greiner & Sakdapolrak, 2013, p. 376). This includes not only the mobility and flows of individuals but also material flows, such as goods, and symbolic flows, such as ideas.

To summarise, translocality can be understood in a variety of ways, however elements of place, mobility, connections (Porst, 2020), and time, and specifically their interconnectedness are present in all translocality studies. First, the concept of place can be understood in the elements of situatedness and the multiplicity thereof. It consists of the locations where people and ideas are embedded, from where they reach out and from whence they are received. Places are not static as the scope of spatial and scalar boundaries shift and

are reconfigured through; action and inaction, mobility and immobility, connections and the rupture thereof, to name a few. In addition to material places, they can also be understood as being symbolic. They can be delineated by ideas, feelings and narratives of belonging and situatedness which go beyond physical realms but are just as real. This means that as people become more mobile, localities do as well, stretching out beyond bounded territories. Second, the idea of connections refers to the multiplicity of embeddedness which is created through mobility and also immobility. As previously mentioned, translocal spaces are created through everyday interactions and routines that span across multiple places. They have the power to influence and shape mobility routes of individuals, goods and services, and abstractions (such as trends, ideas and music) and are also influenced and shaped by them. Connections are created not only through mobility but also by being situated in certain locales, such as the positionality of immobile populations and migrants in their respective surroundings. Thirdly, mobility refers to the movement of goods, people, ideas, or symbols which span across spatial and temporal distances. It does not exclusively entail actual physical movement, but rather the connections that are created and maintained across and between places. In this understanding of mobility, those that remain situated are also significant actors within this framework as they contribute to the creation and flow of physical and abstract goods and services. Fourthly and finally, time, or the temporal aspect of 'being', is extremely important and not much elaborated upon for the understanding of translocality. What is meant by this is twofold; first of all temporality across spatial distances matters as the flow individuals, goods, services and ideas (to mention a few) is not always necessarily equal. In other words, while certain actual and abstract notions may travel in one direction they may not necessarily move in an equal and opposite temporal manner. Certain trends for example may increase in popularity in one locale while, although being acknowledged in other places, gain traction there at a later point in time (or not at all). Second, time also refers to temporal connections which go beyond the present, such as the connection and/or rupture to (real and imagined) histories and futures. Such temporal connections which are created among and between communities and individuals have extremely high potential to maintain or rupture connections to places and also the understanding of identity.

Translocal resilience

As the understanding of migration has expanded, its potential benefits and risks have also been increasingly explored, some of which shall be discussed in this section. The increasing instrumentalisation of methodological nationalism as a political tool for border control and limiting immigration has given rise to alternative discourses which point to the fact that, despite some discourses, migration itself is not a new phenomenon and can actually be a form of adaptation rather than simply a reactional measure. The idea of migration as adaptation is not new but the increasing effects of environmental and climate change have reinvigorated such an understanding of mobility. An important thing to consider within the environment-migration nexus is the fact that if migration is acknowledged as an adaptation scheme without adequate legislative regulation, it runs the risk of shifting responsibility from states and collective actors to individuals and those who are most vulnerable by utilising the translocal spaces which are being shaped and reshaped. This is also what is happening in the case of Lebanon. This disadvantage will be touched upon again later when discussing the limitations of translocal resilience. Translocal spaces however are not only produced by migrants or refugees, as it is often portrayed. They are also produced by musicians, artists, and even sport figures, by individuals within cultural, social and political fields (Greiner & Sakdapolrak, 2013, p. 378). When considering translocal spaces one must consider all of these interactions and also keep in mind local structures of governance and inequalities. Such inequalities also generate varying vulnerabilities with regards to environmental and climate hazards "and the specific range of available adaptation options are shaped by cultural, economic, political and social processes operating at local to global scales. […] Different types of climate hazards generate diverse migration outcomes in different places, and a single climate event may generate a variety of migration responses within the affected population" (McLeman, 2019, p. 912). For a well-rounded translocal resilience approach, multi-cited ethnographic and scientific research is necessary, focusing on the identification of:

- vulnerability and resilience to climate risks and environmental changes
- migration networks and social resilience

- social practices of translocality
- governance structures (Sakdapolrak, 2014)
- identity formation and translocal subjectivities,

amongst other things. All of these shall be briefly discussed whether individually, or in combination with one another, except for governance structures. The identification of governance structures, although equally important as the other points of identification, have some connections to anthropological data but are more based in other fields of study such as political structures, policy and governance. The governance structure of Lebanon was briefly explored in the section introducing Lebanon and Beirut and shall not be further discussed here. This once again is an argument for the necessity of collaboration between various arenas of research in order to collect comprehensive, well-rounded data.

The vulnerability to environmental changes is minimised (and enhanced) through a variety of ways and such actions can be implemented by individuals, communities, governance structures or non-governmental organisations. Throughout my research it has become clear that this connection between translocal resilience and the migration-environment nexus is not widely discussed and deserves more exploration as it holds valuable perspectives not only for migration within the context of environmental change but also in a broader sense. For the purposes of this thesis, it is an interaction of the understanding of social resilience as it is mentioned in box 2 and the concept of translocality. Translocal resilience can be understood "as the ability of individuals, households, and communities to deal with stress and risks and to maintain or increase their wellbeing stemming from their translocal distribution, connections, and exchanges" (Sakdapolrak & Sterly, 2020). As in the discourse of translocality, translocal resilience acknowledges the fact that migration is not a new phenomenon and does not only occur during times of crisis. Much rather the existence and maintenance of translocalised lives is an integral part of the ongoing diversification of livelihood strategies. This can be seen in a variety of countries that experience social vulnerability such as Thailand and Bangladesh (Milan et al., 2016; Porst, 2020), for example and is also the case for emigration from Beirut where, as

previously mentioned, such mobility has an ongoing historical presence. All individuals interviewed mentioned the fact that they have close family and friends who have been or have lived abroad even prior to the extreme economic deterioration of the country following the explosion. “All of my friends have left, I have maybe one or two people that are still here but those are trying to leave as well. My brother and sister were already gone before all of this happened”, interviewee 1 stated. Interviewee 7 also said “my sister and her children were already gone, I don’t have any other family here but I don’t want to leave and start somewhere new, even though I could go back to England. I am too old for that now. If I was younger I might go”. Since migration is not solely dependent on environmental change, it is important to have a good understanding of existing migration patterns and their drivers. If there is an increased risk of environmental change, such as sea-levels rising or changing rainfall patterns, vulnerability (both real and imagined) is likely to increase as well, resulting in different adaptation methods (in this case out-migration).

Understanding pre-existing patterns of mobility, connections, and various scales of place and time, as it was previously discussed, will allow for a better understanding or anticipation of such flows if they are to increase as a result from environmental events. This touches upon an intersection of migration networks and social practices which are formed and maintained across translocal routes. In addition to mobility, translocal resilience places an emphasis on pre-existing vulnerabilities which, in this case, can be exacerbated by environmental changes. Especially in countries where there is a history of out-migration, one must not overlook individuals who are unable to move, as those will include the most vulnerable. “Those who stay [in Lebanon] are either already rich or will never be financially stable until they leave, […] If you see someone and he’s poor, you know he has no one outside. If you see someone and he’s rich, you know his kids are abroad [resulting in] a strange disconnect in Lebanon between salaries and income” (Pearlman, 2013). In addition to understanding vulnerabilities in places of origin, social vulnerabilities in a variety of contexts and places along mobility routes must be taken into consideration, as well as in destination areas and temporary areas of settlement. The complexity of mobility under the analytical framework of translocal resilience requires

incorporation of multi-scalar understanding of local dynamics, dynamics along mobility routes and dynamics within destination localities while also keeping in mind other processes such as histories, identity formation and governance structures. In addition to that, the simultaneous embeddedness of individuals and groups in order to understand processes of identity formation and 'belonging' must be discerned. Departure from a specific locale does not necessarily mean a rupture with it, but rather, people remain situated within a socio-spatial unit, here understood as the translocal social field, which is produced and reproduced by social networks and personal relations, among other things (Milan et al., 2016). Forming an exact methodology in order to eventually produce comparative analyses is extremely difficult (and is not considered the end-goal in this line of research), much rather, one has to be aware of the multiple points of applicability such an approach can entail in order to incorporate as many factors as possible. Especially anthropological data proves invaluable for understanding the intricate processes occurring. As such, […] "translocal social resilience as a critical analytical framework, [can be considered as a proposal] to create a comprehensive understanding of migration in the context of environment and climate change, which could provide evidence for policy-making beyond the neo-liberal agenda" (Sakdapolrak et al., 2016, p. 83).

With regards to identity formation and translocal subjectivities, as with many other anthropological aspects within the translocal resilience approach, adequate understanding is dependent on in-depth research which spans across temporal and spatial scales. Throughout the research, the importance of identity and identification is not much discussed with regards to translocal resilience and I wish to place it within this scope of study as a significant aspect to be considered in order to understand the complexity of the environment-migration nexus. Mobility has often been equated with rupture or a 'loss of home', however in the case of communities where migration is an already established reality of life (which are communities often heavily dependent on and influenced by the environment, such as is the case with coastal regions like Lebanon, Bangladesh and Thailand), such an understanding of rupture is often not the case. In the case of Beirut, the 'rupture' between individuals and their locales of residence has already occurred in a very interesting manner prior to actual movement. When asked, the

majority of interviewees stated that they no longer identify with Lebanon as a political entity or even on a national level. The constant rupture Lebanese citizens have faced with regard to their country, through wars, explosions, crises, etc. has created an alternative perception of identity which is no longer rooted in a geographical location but in abstract notions of family and belonging. "Abstract notions of family" may seem contradictory in the sense that what makes up a family is individuals and individuals cannot be abstractions. However, the notion of what a family is and how they are physically and spatially bounded is an abstraction which is created within each nuclear family. In other words, the characteristics which make a family a 'family' are not the same for everyone and can also change with time. For example, proximity to other family members may be essential for a family to consider themselves as a unit while it may not be as important within other families. "Abstract notions of belonging" may be easier to understand as the concept of imagination has been widely discussed within the realms of identity formation and belonging. Interviewee 3 mentions that, "the hardest part has been grappling with the loss of a country as we know it, and the community it had, with the chain of events we'd experienced starting with the revolution and how quickly things changed, followed by the explosion. Lastly, the difficulty in coming to terms with how permanent these changes now feel and how we all collectively look back at a time that once was". It is not only a physical loss that was experienced but also a mental one. Interviewee 5 points out that, "it [being Lebanese] doesn't mean anything. It just means what has happened to me in the course of my life here. […] No sense of belonging. I mean this is what we slowly started to realise during the protests […] that it takes just a small push for people to go back to civil war mentality […] depending on their sectarian leaders […] and I do not think that that will ever change". Especially the explosion, which was facilitated by the negligence of the Lebanese political ruling class and their subsequent inaction in assisting with reparations has (perhaps irreparably) severed any remaining sense of loyalty for the country specifically among the younger generations entering the work force. "For me, I thought leave it like this (referring to the destruction visible after the explosion). It was an accurate reflection of what Beirut actually looks like and the government has been trying to hide it the whole time. [During clean-up] the government didn't do anything, they placed army at the beginning and the end of the road and

they were just watching the people clean. There were some people who were coming to Beirut every day with food and things to give to those working and in need and the army would even take some of that food. People started becoming pretty aggressive towards them and at some point they were even afraid to walk by themselves. You would see people even 'spitting at them', it was disgusting, they were placed there by the government to watch the people that's it", interviewee 5 exclaimed. He went on to say, "it just so happens that I am [Lebanese]. That's what I am on paper, legally. But that is as far as it goes". He goes on to say that, "they [his parents] don't want to [move]. It's the civil war generation, they are never going to leave. If they (the Lebanese people) have one good skill, it's to sweep trauma under the rug and move on. They don't talk about things like that, my parents never once asked me how I was feeling after the explosion. […] The main concern after the explosion was clean up and continue and that was one of the main reasons why I wanted to leave. I didn't want to do that anymore". This statement clearly illustrates the significance which history has and how it interacts with imaginary narratives to create alternative realities. The parents, who have been exposed to decades of unrest and instability, have rooted their sense of belonging within the historical narratives which are created, while the child (interviewee 5) does not deem such narratives to be strong enough to maintain a sense of belonging when confronted with the realities of actual events. Considering such opinions, one may assume that the rupture of self-identification with Lebanon will result in diminishing connections to the country by those that moved and as such diminishing forms of assistance. However, this is not the case. There is an imaginary narrative which is being disseminated subconsciously through food culture and traditions which has taken over loyalty to a locale within and beyond the city. Especially among the older generations, an idea of history, of how Lebanon and Beirut once were seems prevalent in maintaining loyalty and self-identification. Such an example of imagined histories can be considered a positive thing in the sense that it maintains a sense of belonging or loyalty beyond the occurrence of disruptive events. Indirectly however, the Lebanese status-quo is perpetuated by such abstractions of identity and history, through the connections which are maintained between those that remain and those that have left. In other words, the maintenance of historical narratives has the potential to promote complacency and compliance

with situations which may not be favourable to the majority of individuals. For example, the idea of Beirut being the "Switzerland or Paris of the middle East" is a historical narrative which still widely circulates. While this narrative is not in itself a negative one, it is often dispersed through political discourse in order to maintain a sense of pride which is based solely on history and promotes complacency towards the inadequacy of the government. It is important for researchers and policy makers to consider both changing and persistent forms of identity which are situated geographically but also to allow for the incorporation of such forms of identification which are more abstract.

This section has discussed the notion of translocal resilience as it is understood and applied within the context of this thesis. First, the concept of transnationalism was discussed in order to point out some of its scope of application but also some shortcomings in order to situate it within the discussion at large. Following that, the concept of translocality and translocal resilience were situated within the argument in order to understand the differentiation which is maintained between the varying concepts. Due to the multi-faceted nature of many of these concepts, a variety of possible entry points for data collection have been laid out and discussed in order to delineate a more concrete scope and method of application. These entry points have been briefly discussed to clarify their understanding and applicability within an actual scope of study. In the following, final section of this thesis, some benefits and limitations of translocality and translocal resilience within the scope of 'migration as adaptation' shall be pointed out and discussed. This list is not comprehensive and also very much situational, meaning that some benefits or limitations are not discussed while others may be considered positive in some situations while being negative in others. Such variations are not evidence of errors but much rather once again point to the subjective nature of this field of study and the necessity for in-depth case studies for best-possible policy action. Throughout this thesis, both positive and negative aspects of the understanding of translocal resilience within the migration as adaptation discourse with regards to environmental change have been mentioned and (more or less) discussed. Some of these elements (both limiting and beneficial) will be briefly outlined in this section.

Advantages of utilising the concept of translocal resilience within the migration as adaptation discourse

Many benefits of the application of translocal resilience which are pertinent, have already been mentioned and discussed (to varying degrees) in the previous section. Therefore, they shall not be further discussed in much detail. This section aims to compile and highlight some benefits in a concise manner in order to have a relatively simple (non-exhaustive) overview.

To begin with, as mentioned multiple times, considering the concept of translocality allows for an understanding of the pathways and dynamics which are formed between both mobile and immobile individuals at various scales and between varying locales. Such pathways are both literal and symbolic encompassing the movement of individuals and both material and non-materials goods, often referred to as remittances (typically from those who migrated to those that remained in their places of origin). In its most well-known form, remittances are considered as being financial assistance sent to individuals in locales of origin. However, remittances can also take the form of knowledge, ideas, and other non-tangible resources which, in combination with financial remittances, can be employed by immobile individuals to "enhance a household's living standard, to enable investment in new business or in improved agricultural techniques, for instance, and to trigger long-term development processes, including initiatives for infrastructural improvements, fostering political participation, promoting equal rights, e.g. gender equality, and ultimately feeding into a household's ability to cope with and adapt to climate change" (Porst, 2020). Although there are limitations (as will be mentioned later), the potential benefits of remittances are widely discussed with regards to development but also collective action (Barnett & Webber, 2010; Farbotko et al., 2022; McDowell et al., 2018; Pearlman, 2013; Porst, 2020) and can be considered as an essential aspect of translocal resilience. In the case of Lebanon too, remittances, especially in their monetary form, play a vital role in the maintenance of subsistence levels of households. "[…] Remittances support import payments and foreign debt repayment. Remittances have acted as a critical insurance

mechanism for Lebanese residents during crises since the 1970s. In contemporary Lebanon, remittances play an important role in sustaining the livelihoods of a large number of Lebanese families amid the collapse of the Lebanese pound (LBP) and erosion of wages and purchasing power" (Mercy Corps, 2023, p. 4). As such, using the translocal resilience lens allows for the recognition of pathways which are established and reestablished between mobile and immobile individuals and the flow of goods and services across those pathways. By discerning and following translocal pathways across scales, researchers and policy makers can find actual entry points for effective legislative actions, along those paths and also in the respective locales.

While remittances usually move from migrants to places of origin, translocalism, in its rather holistic approach, also focuses on the dynamic connections which are formed in the opposite direction and which are vital for establishing and maintaining bonds between locales of destination and origin. These connections play a crucial role for migrants by providing emotional, practical and social support while they navigate challenges and uncertainties associated with migration. In addition to that, by following existing translocal pathways and connections, possible future trends can be predicted and receiving areas could anticipate needs of migrants and hosts. "An influx of migrants constitutes both an opportunity and a challenge for cities. Increasing diversity, expertise, motivation, and creativity; but creating a challenge for city planners to plan and execute for a population that keeps on increasing sharply" (Foresight, 2011, p. 161). Some examples of how migrants could be considered as opportunities for receiving communities are by bringing new skills and knowledge to receiving communities (Levitt, 2015), and filling demographic and economic gaps (Todaro et al., 1992; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2020). "Where migrants find work and pay taxes they contribute positively to growth and the provision of public goods" (Barnett & Webber, 2010, p. 28). Policies promoting certain skills, facilitating mobility routes, or education programs which are focused on filling specific labour gaps can be utilised in order to support the improvement of receiving communities and migrants alike. "Services that can help migrants and host communities develop include short term job creation to assist with immediate needs (for

example as labourers in public works developments), micro-finance, skills training, health care, and agricultural extension. The provision of such services can have the effect of attracting further migrants" (Barnett & Webber, 2010, pp. 39–40). Alternative mobility schemes such as those of circular and/or temporary migration are often considered as viable options to alleviate pressures. Of course, the effectiveness of such actions and integrative potential heavily depend on the narratives and policies which circulate and are implemented and "a critical factor in the successful integration of migrants is that the rate of growth in employment is commensurate with the increase in population; otherwise there can be increased scarcity in the labour market, which is blamed on migrants" (Barnett & Webber, 2010, p. 28). Anticipatory policies targeting issues such as resource and land distribution (Barnett & Webber, 2010), urban planning (Foresight, 2011), planned relocation (Adger et al., 2020), community building and awareness (Boas et al., 2019) and protection are vital in order to minimize tensions and maximise benefits for all parties involved. Tackling such issues necessitates legislative reforms not only within countries but also between them, as much collaboration is needed to fill current protection and employment gaps.

Using the lens of translocalism allows researchers to identify already existing mobility pathways and structures and to build upon those, rather than having to identify and develop new ones. Following such routes of individuals, information, goods and services which are established by the migrants and their counterparts themselves seems to be less invasive and more attune to the needs of those involved. The concept of translocality holds much potential to facilitate real points of entry and practical applications through which resilience across locales can be maintained and strengthened. It is imperative for future policy makers and researchers to implement actions whereby communal norms and practices are taken into consideration in order to limit the disruption of already vulnerable communities, making the need for adequate anthropological data essential. Translocalism gives room for the utilisation of already existing dynamics which are previously established but which remain flexible. It incorporates agency of individuals who are often overlooked and leaves room for the inclusion of cultural and societal practices. Due to the subjective nature of this field, anthropological data

remains invaluable as a source of information and to determine the needs of individuals involved. Throughout this thesis, the potential benefits of translocalism and translocal resilience have been identified and discussed at large. In the following subsection however, some limitations of translocalism and translocal resilience within the environment-migration nexus shall be introduced.

Limitations of utilising the concept of translocal resilience within the migration as adaptation discourse

Considering the fact that environmental changes are causing increasing pressures on habitability, it is anticipated that mobility dynamics will increase as well. Alternative frameworks to the increasingly prevalent securitization trends we are witnessing globally, such as that of translocalism and translocal resilience, give researchers and policy makers new vantage points from whence the potential of migration can be explored. Throughout this thesis, there has been an attempt to identify entry points of application for translocalism using the example of low-lying coastal zones and more specifically Beirut, Lebanon. The value of this framework in relation to environmental change has been highlighted and attempts were made at drawing connections. However, in order to have a well-rounded grasp of the framework, some limitations should be highlighted as well. This is not to diminish the potential applicability of this framework, but rather to bring awareness to possible restrictions.

First of all, a significant point of critique regarding the utilisation of translocal resilience as an adaptation response to environmental change is that of responsibility; more specifically, who is to be held responsible? Responsibility here is a complex and loaded concept which can refer to a number of things. On a global scale, this includes the responsibility of those who have played the largest parts in causing anthropogenic environmental change. While the global North is largely responsible for these changes, its effects are disproportionately felt by poor countries in the global South. This discrepancy of exposure to environmental changes, goes hand in hand with responsibility for action (both pre-emptive and reactionary). Action in the

face of environmental changes, especially slow-onset environmental changes, is often placed upon those most vulnerable, making it both ethically and politically charged (Black et al., 2011, p. 431). This ambiguity is possible due to the complex nature of environmental change and the sheer scope of factors which come into play, resulting in a constant shift of blame and responsibility and often-times inaction. In addition to that, even if there is acknowledgement of responsibility, states cannot be forced to comply to set action plans. It could be argued for example, that countries in the global North are instrumentalising migration. Through closed borders and strict migration policies, immigration is portrayed as the end-goal, the ultimate prize, rather than the means to an end or a temporary solution. In doing so even more global inequality and dependency structures are created. In addition to this global aspect of shifted responsibility, there is also a local one to consider. In locales where out-migration is prevalent (be it as a form of adaptation, reactionary or a pre-existing norm), responsibility for protection from environmental changes may shift from state or collective actors to individuals and those already overburdened (Sakdapolrak et al., 2016, pp. 82–83). This individualization of risks and shift of responsibility is considered as part of the neoliberal narrative which is prevalently disseminated and which promotes free trade, minimal state intervention and deregulation. This is not in itself a bad thing, however here neoliberalism is being used as an excuse for inaction. This can also be seen in the case of Lebanon, whereby the large emigration flows are acting as pressure relief for the government. Often times the corollary of emigration, remittances sent from abroad "keep the economy functioning at a higher level than the existing level of risk in the country should allow. They are a lifeline from abroad allowing people to maintain their standards of living." (Pearlman, 2013, pp. 199). Keeping in mind such shifts of responsibility is essential in order to maintain a nuanced understanding of mobility and connections across various spatiotemporal scales.

Another limit of translocalism pertains to one of its core aspects; mobility. Since mobility is an integral part of translocalism much emphasis has been placed on understanding its various facets. Even though some of the benefits of migration as adaptation in the context of environmental change have been discussed throughout the thesis, one must be wary of relying solely on mobility as the best adaptation strategy to environmental changes. Migration should

not be considered as a universal remedy, "because migration itself reflects power relations and reproduces disparities" (Porst, 2020), while also concealing the root causes of why people migrate in the first place. Rather than focusing on tackling core issues in locales of origin and migration being an option or outcome of adaptation, migration is seen as the solution. The 'resilience paradigm' which is hereby promoted, leans on the concepts of neo-liberal ideas of self-regulating markets and individualism (Porst, 2020). In other words, it maintains the assumption that individuals are responsible for improving their livelihoods and adapting to climatic changes through migration by making well-informed decisions and as a result of that, the market will even out inequalities. What this means, is that not only is migration seen as the ultimate solution to environmental pressures, the responsibility to take such action is placed solely on the individual or household level. This individualisation of responsibility also translates to multi-dimensional insecurity both in and outside of the work place of migrants, encompassing things such as "ambiguous employment relationships, unpredictability of working hours and the period of employment, income insecurity, unsafe and unhealthy work conditions, lacking access to or low level of social protection, […] mental stability and social contracts" (Porst, 2020). While the agency of individuals is important, they cannot adequately address these insecurities in a holistic manner. In addition to the critique of the overall emphasis placed on mobility as being "the solution" to environmental adaptation, one must also mention misleading narratives regarding mobility routes in general. Current popular migration discourse focuses largely on international migration as being the outcome of mobility. Such narratives lead to misinterpretation and the assumption that cross-border and international migration occur more frequently than internal migration, even though research has continuously shown the contrary (M. McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou, 2021). The result of such discourse is often increased xenophobia and border-securitization. As such, while mobility is a core aspect in the context of translocal resilience, researchers must be wary of over-emphasizing its efficiency as the ultimate answer in the presence of environmental changes and presenting migration as the only form of adaptation, in addition to being conscious of the various forms of existing mobility patterns.

The third, and final limitation regarding translocal resilience in the context of environmental change which will be mentioned here, pertains to the situational complexity which this concept holds especially with regards to research. What is meant by this, is that there cannot be a one-size-fits-all standard practice with regards to policy implementation and mobility regulation which can be followed. Much rather, research in this field has to be context specific in a variety of ways ranging from geographic specifications, to cultural practices, to political limitations, just to name a few. While seemingly simple in theory, translocal resilience can be challenging to achieve in practice, as it requires collaboration and cooperation among diverse groups with different power dynamics and interests while also taking into consideration geographic and ecological factors. It is assumed that environmental changes are more likely to affect already existing translocal mobility routes, rather than forming new ones. This suggests that research must be location and context specific in order to yield the least invasive outcomes. Considering translocal patterns and using them to find entry points for climate resilience can have a lot of value due to its subjectively adaptive nature, however it also maintains the need for copious amounts of research. In other words, while the potential of translocal resilience is vast, the research required to adequately address such resilience is even vaster. In fact, it could be argued that it is the complex nature of research required to adequately understand and identify translocal mobility routes, which limits its utilisation and application. I wish to suggest here that rather than creating a general framework for translocal resilience whereby a given set of customary policy actions are established, perhaps it would be more beneficial to create a framework for the research of translocal resilience. Establishing a set of research questions and methods which can then be utilised in any context could assist researchers and policy makers by limiting the scope of research while at the same time fdmaintaining enough space for context-specific adaptation policies. Anthropological research is especially valuable within this context both for the establishment of a general research framework and for the understanding of the specific circumstances.

While there are other limitations to translocal resilience within the environment-migration nexus which cannot and should not be overlooked, the above mentioned points of

criticism are some of the most prevalent and definitely those which pertain most to the topic at hand. The value which anthropological research maintains has become clear throughout the thesis but to fully understand the potential translocal resilience holds, its limitations had to be discerned as well. Attempting to understand translocal dynamics gives rise to a plethora of questions, some of which were addressed here while others remain open. Such an understanding was attempted in this section whereby the positive and negative aspects of translocal resilience were laid out and discussed.

Conclusion

Since the establishment of nation-states and national boundaries, the subject of migration and mobility has always been a controversial topic and the importance which it maintains both in national and international discourse is evident. The arguable disintegration of the nation-state as the sole body of governance over individuals moving both within and without its boundaries and the challenges regarding jurisdiction have long been discussed in migration studies. Considering the unprecedented and exponential environmental changes which are occurring this issue is not likely to diminish. There is value in considering possible future scenarios of environmental change affecting migration (whether directly or indirectly) and to prepare for such scenarios. Although such speculations are based on scientific data and knowledge, there is much room for error and false interpretation since the assumptions under which such scenarios are developed, is future-oriented and dependent upon a variety of variables which have the potential to interact with each other with varying outcomes. It is likely that numbers of migrants and refugees will increase in light with the global trends of environmental change and economic globalisation however one must be careful with making hypothetical numerical assumptions. Firstly, estimates, although substantiated by data, may lack an adequate empirical basis and often times the methods of estimation are neither discussed nor revealed. Second, migration is often portrayed as a linear one-directional process resulting in environmental determinism. Such assumptions are generally overly simplistic which do not take into account political, social, economic, cultural and spatial drivers and limitations. Finally, the reasons why people migrate (or remain) are not considered in their full contextual scope. In addition to that, the degree of voluntariness of mobility and immobility is often overlooked even when considering displacement due to environmental events agency must be taken into consideration.

Here, I have suggested a different approach whereby the focus is placed on already established channels of migration, which can be used in order to collect information regarding patterns which already exist and which can be built upon. As shown throughout the thesis, collecting anthropological data is invaluable in this situation and has the potential to assist policy development in the sense of both facilitating and thwarting movement but with a targeted scope. Focusing on migration patterns and preparing for the facilitation and control of such movement is vital in achieving maximum adaptation and minimum negative disruption in the lives of those directly experiencing environmental change and those affected by the movements which are directly or indirectly influenced by environmental change. In addition to the importance of migratory policies and regulation, other aspects should be considered in the face of environmental change and adaptation. For example; immobile populations (whether voluntary or involuntary) must be part of these considerations; development, adaptation, and resilience policies in locations of origin (which includes political, social and economic stability); and an overall acknowledgement of responsibility regarding major pollutant countries and action on their behalf. While the scope of this thesis did not include all aspects of this very large issue, I hope to have highlighted the importance of having a holistic approach, which would also include, but not be exclusive to, adaptation and resilience strategies and policies which need to be employed on-site of affected areas in order to decrease vulnerability and increase adaptability at the sites of origin (or affected areas). These are especially important for trapped populations, which have also been mentioned briefly within this thesis. Also policies, which ensure proper preparation for host communities or destination areas, allowing them to not only predict and adapt to fluctuating population pressures, but also to benefit from such movements whenever possible are vital in ensuring minimal disruption and maximum benefits. Such anticipation and preparation is a difficult task, and it takes coordination between sending and receiving areas or countries and the willingness to act in order to ensure maximum benefit for all parties involved.

The concept of translocalism has garnered increasing popularity in the migration-environment discourse due to its nuanced understanding but vast applicability. However popular translocalism is, translocal resilience is a concept which is not often applied to this context. In this thesis there has been an attempt to add a more nuanced understanding of the environment-migration nexus by introducing said framework. It has become clear that such an understanding seeks to move beyond the geo-deterministic and simplistic narratives which are prevalent, especially in the public arena and allows for an alternative understanding which places agency in the hands of the migrants and their potential for building social resilience. The seemingly contradictory evidence of the precarity of migration on the one hand and its potential on the other can be better understood using translocal resilience as it draws from the simultaneous embeddedness of migrants in multiple locales. Translocality and specifically translocal resilience allows for the integration of multiple analytical dimensions such as micro- and macro trends and practices which shape everyday experiences. The connectedness of individuals across varying spatial and temporal levels implies a convoluted and complex relationship on the empirical as well as conceptual levels, making data collection a challenging undertaking. I suggest here that, rather than having an indiscriminate, standard policy action plan with regards to migration-environment issues, it could be beneficial to use the framework of translocal resilience to gather valuable information and come up with adapted policy actions. Here, I wish to point out that there is a lack of valuable data which can be used for such purposes. It is vital for the future of migration studies to promote the collection of anthropological data which is not only context-specific but also takes into consideration temporal and spatial aspects. Implementing the concept of translocal resilience could be a start to a new understanding of mobility which focuses not on the promotion of xenophobia and securitisation, but rather on the potential which migratory movements may hold and new ways of utilising such potential. Movement across and within borders has always occurred and will always remain. It is time to change the negative connotation which it is so often associated

with and to focus on how translocal connections can establish and maintain resilience.

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