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## Editorial Note

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The first issue of *LAPSS Politikon* was published over twenty years ago, at the time when democracy was believed to continue its spread and embedding among the political communities around the globe. The second issue, published a few months later that year, and the third issue published in 2002 entail considerable attention to challenges surrounding the war against terrorism in the aftermath of 9/11. Although, given a two-year break in publishing, *LAPSS Politikon* is yet to celebrate twenty years of publication, the above glimpses of its history illustrate not only its longevity but also its capacity to reflect on contemporary challenges within a relatively short period of time after they arise.

While the COVID-19 pandemic may be the first reference point for a ‘contemporary challenge’, climate change has anything but disappeared in 2020. While the immediate effects of the pandemic might not persist in the long term, climate change remains an undisputedly central point of focus for social science research and thinking. As a consequence, we are particularly pleased to publish a special section on Climate Justice in the present issue of the journal. Alix Gabaude introduces the context and content of this section in the following lines:

This special section brings together several papers which were presented at the first regional conference by IAPSS Europe on the 22<sup>nd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> of November 2019 in Stockholm, Sweden. This first conference was on the theme of “Paths to Climate Justice” and brought together 50 young scholars from all around the world for a series of academic, political, and NGO panels, as well as workshops. Three papers which were presented at the conference are shared in this special section. They all look at different issues arising with the changing climate and focusing on security risks, disaster management, and climate-induced migration.

Firstly, Melina Kotsinas in “Climate (In)justice: An Intersectional Feminist Analysis of Disaster Management in Antigua and Barbuda in the Aftermath of Hurricane Irma” studies disaster management and stakeholders working in this field in a Small Island Developing Nation, Antigua and Barbuda, following Hurricane Irma and how they understand and respond to crisis. She particularly ponders on how structures and power relations (such as gender, sexuality, (dis)ability, age, and socio-economic status) are reinforced or challenged. She does this by using an intersectional feminist theoretical framework and through semi-structure in-depth interviews and focus groups with actors

on the ground. She finds that some of her results concur with previous research and that women, along with older people and children, are portrayed as more vulnerable, although generalising about the vulnerability of female single-households overlooks context-specific dynamics. The intersectional framework brought age, family status, class/socioeconomic status, and occupation forward as being generally associated with gender with (dis)ability and sexuality being somewhat, but less so present.

Secondly, Lisa Carroll discusses in “Not Quite Migrant, Not Quite Refugee: Addressing the Protection Gap for Climate-Induced Movement; Conceptualisation, Governance, and the Case of Mr. Ioane Teitiota” the fact that the current international legal system cannot ‘effectively manage and sufficiently protect’ people moving due to climate and that the issue surrounding the definition of people undertaking this type of movement is doctrinal as well as definitional. She assesses the different terminologies used and the refugee-migrant debate. She identifies three primary issues for this gap in protection, firstly the emphasis by the main legal and policy mechanisms dealing with human movement on forced movement, secondly the emphasis on intra-state movement and the associated mechanisms on internally displaced persons, thirdly the lack of recognition of slow-onset events-induced movement over an emphasis on movement resulting of rapid-onset events. She focuses particularly on the Pacific Island States with a case study of the endeavour by Mr. Ioane Teitiota to claim refugee status in New Zealand. She finds that the terminological and related definitional issues presented in the first part of the study and the focus on forced movement due to rapid-onset events poses a major barrier to legal protection.

Last but not least, Lisa Nowag presents in her research note “From Climate Change to Conflict – Environmental Security Challenges in North-Western Kenya” a review of the past research on the links between environmental changes and violence as well arguments for and against the controversial climate-conflict nexus. She wonders ‘if and to what extent climate change can be regarded as a significant contributor to violent conflicts’. In addition to the review of the literature, she develops a case study looking at environmental security and more particularly on the climate-related effects on pastoral raiding in North-Western Kenya, several regions highly at-risk from climate change. She argues that the environmental changes due to the changing climate act as multipliers of already existing sociopolitical tensions, as exemplified by the cases of Turkana and Pokot. Something further enhanced by current lacking governmental coping mechanisms.

Alix Gabaude (University of Gothenburg, Panels Coordinator for the IAPSS Europe Regional Conference 2019)

The special section is followed by another research note by Chloé Bernadaux, providing insights into the operation of consociational systems in Northern Ireland and Lebanon from the perspective of their capacity to prevent conflicts along ethnonational lines. Why is it that in the former, this system is considered as contributing to political stability, while in the latter it is not? Unpacking this puzzle, Bernadaux argues that these two cases should be studied via a comparative Most Similar Systems Design, which then allows to zoom in on the exogenous factors that contributed to the differentiated outcome.

Finally, a glimpse on recent developments in the journal itself. We have introduced a promotional option in the journal for potential partners, and look forward to receiving expressions of interest based on the more detailed information [available at our website](#). In December 2020, we are furthermore pleased to welcome Nzube Chukwuma, Nabil Ferdaoussi and Nicasia Pizziano as new Editorial Assistants, resulting from our first open Call for Editorial Assistants with a connection to Africa, a region that has thus far been underrepresented in the editorial team, particularly in comparison to the number of submissions received with a focus on African politics. In 2021, the editorial team hopes to contribute to showcasing quality research from scholars of all backgrounds and generations, including the first contributions addressing questions in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Max Steuer  
Editor-in-Chief

## Climate (In)justice: An Intersectional Feminist Analysis of Disaster Management in Antigua and Barbuda in the Aftermath of Hurricane Irma

**Melina Kotsinas**

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*Melina Kotsinas, from Sweden is a master graduate of Stockholm University with experience from Barbados, Mozambique, Antigua and Barbuda. She received her Bachelor's degree in Economics and Political Science at Stockholm University in 2017. In 2019, she got her master's degree in Political Science at Stockholm University with her thesis entitled "Leaving No One Behind: A Minor Field Study with an Intersectional Feminist Analysis of Disaster Management in Antigua and Barbuda." Her research interests fall under International Relations, Critical and Gender studies, specifically climate justice, social justice, intersectionality and resilience. Currently, she is working at Plan International as a project officer and coordinator for an innovation project that focuses on girls and young women (and non-binary children and youth) living in fragile contexts at risk of environmental breakdown that will ideate solutions based on Girls-Centered Design that strengthen their resilience to shocks and stressors. E-mail: [melina.kotsinas@plansverige.org](mailto:melina.kotsinas@plansverige.org), [kotsinasm@gmail.com](mailto:kotsinasm@gmail.com).*

### Abstract

*This article discusses disaster management in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma in Antigua and Barbuda. Vulnerability and resilience of individuals and groups in relation to disaster management are placed within structures such as gender, sexuality, (dis)ability, age and socio-economic status, etc. How stakeholders within disaster management such as the Directorate of Gender Affairs, the National Office of Disaster Services, and District Coordinators, understand and respond to vulnerability and resilience might reinforce or challenge such structures and power relations. This study draws on insights from intersectional feminism to examine which social categories are made (in)visible, and how power relations are reproduced or challenged. It shows that some social categories (age, family status, class and occupation) in relation to gender gain more attention than others (disability and sexuality). The understandings and responses make some social categories that have previously been invisible visible, and heteronormative and patriarchal processes were both reproduced and challenged.*

### Keywords

Antigua and Barbuda; Climate Change; Disaster Management; Hurricane Irma; Intersectional Feminism; Resilience; SIDS; Vulnerability

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The term climate change no longer captures the reality, but climate and environmental breakdown is a more accurate description. No corner of the globe is immune to the devastating consequences of the climate crisis. Due to climate change and environmental degradation, disasters are predicted to increase the magnitude and intensity of floods, storms, droughts, and other severe weather events. Since the 1960s, the number of reported weather-related disasters has more than tripled, and some states are more vulnerable than others. Hence, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) face severe hurricanes, floods, landslides, and droughts (Climate Centre 2018; WHO 2017; Ruiz 2017). In less than a decade, the sea level rise and increased weather events could force thousands of people to mitigate SIDS (Steiner 2014). Even though SIDS are among the countries that are least responsible for climate change, they are most likely to suffer from the effects of climate change and become uninhabitable (UNDP 2010). The Caribbean region is one of the most disaster-prone areas in the world, and the threat of hurricanes is an annually occurring event (Enarson and Morrow 1998, 213). As for Antigua and Barbuda, the category five Hurricane Irma made landfall in September 2017, and it was one of the strongest storms ever recorded in the Atlantic. The hurricane destroyed 95 % of Barbuda's infrastructure, and all 1,600 residents were evacuated to shelters and homes in Antigua (ACAPS, OCHA and UNDP 2017, 18-19). In 2020, almost three years after the hurricane, Barbuda remains to some extent uninhabitable (ACAPS, OCHA and UNDP 2017, 5; Boger and Perdikaris 2019).

Environmental degradation and the climate crisis not only affect the planet and biodiversity, but are also a source of great social injustice. The climate and environmental crisis are a structural problem and have emerged from the interlocking systems of capitalism, colonialism, militarism, patriarchy, ableism, xenophobia, and white supremacy. The crisis affects countries, communities, and individuals differently according to their economic, cultural, social, and environmental context. Inequalities do not exist in a

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<sup>1</sup> An earlier draft "Climate (in)justice: An intersectional feminist analysis of disaster management in Antigua and Barbuda in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma" was submitted as a working paper to the IAPSS Regional Conference on "Pathways towards climate justice" in 2019, and this article is developed from my master thesis entitled "Leaving No One Behind: A Minor Field Study with an Intersectional Feminist Analysis of Disaster Management in Antigua and Barbuda," which was supervised by Maria Wendt at Stockholm University, Sweden. With deep gratitude and respect, I dedicate this to the individuals who shared their experiences, knowledge, feelings, and ideas, and who took the time to participate in this article. A special thanks to the reviewers as well.

vacuum, and neither does the climate crisis. Disaster and climate management may interact and exacerbate existing injustices and power relations in the society.

Intersectionality is a framework for understanding how gender and other characteristics interact in relation to disasters in a specific context, which in turn shapes people's access to resources and capabilities to be resilient. Thus, climate change is not gender-neutral. The ways in which the climate crisis impacts are experienced and responded to is due to intersectionalities of social difference, particularly gender (Enarson and Morrow 1998, 2-3; Jacobs 2017; UN Women Caribbean n.d.). The vulnerability and resilience of individuals and communities in relation to disaster management are placed within structures of gender, health, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and socio-economic status, etc. An intersectional approach to disaster management can contribute with knowledge and emphasise new positions and linkages that “[c]an facilitate alliances between voices that are usually marginalised in the dominant climate agenda” (Kaijser and Kronsell 2013, 219). The theoretical framework offers an understanding of how gender roles and power structures within disaster management may be reinforced, challenged and negotiated, and it enables to examine what serves as grounds for inclusion and exclusion (Kaijser and Kronsell 2013, 219). Thus, disaster management should strive to leave no one behind. As it will be outlined later in the article, a theoretical and empirical gap exists within the field of disaster research. Thus, the existence of the gap might result in a reinforcement of structures that overlook intersections of power, upholds marginalisation and injustices, and even exacerbates the outcomes of disasters.

### **Research Problem: The Complexity of Climate (In)justice**

Countries which have least contributed to the climate crisis are vulnerable to its impact along with people living in poverty, women, older persons, people living with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual and/or Allies +) persons, minority and indigenous people, young people and future generations (IIED 2019; Chaplin et al 2019). Disasters and the climate crisis do not impact men and women in uniform ways; furthermore, not all women are affected uniformly (UNDP 2015, 10-11). In post-disaster settings, women are more often overlooked as actors of change and stereotypes of women as passive victims result in gender-biased approaches that reproduce women's vulnerability instead of challenging it (Enarson and Morrow 1998, 46, 186; Sultana 2010, 44). Vulnerability is not a fixed characteristic of certain groups of people and it is not derived from a single social dimension of being e.g. rural, poor, young etc. Rather, vulnerability depends on the

structural social and historical practices, processes and power relations that reinforce some people to be more disadvantaged and vulnerable to risks than others. By understanding the environmental crisis in relation to social struggles against racism, sexism, classism, and heterosexism, one can recognise the injustices of power, privilege and oppression.

Simultaneously, in the event of disasters, traditional gender norms that are reinforced by patriarchal values can be challenged and new power dynamics created (Enarson and Chakrabati 2009, 3). It has been shown that women step out of their traditional roles in post-disaster settings, which could uphold the windows of opportunity and change. They result in an emancipation process that can empower women at the local level and build more disaster-resilient communities (Enarson and Chakrabati 2009). Girls and women have developed different contextual mechanisms for strengthening resilience, however these mechanisms are not always acknowledged in disaster management because the vulnerability reduction and resilience building discourse has been influenced and dominated by (patriarchal-) natural scientific and top-down approaches. An intersectional approach can locate the climate crisis within interlocking systems of oppression where girls' and women's situated knowledge is key to solving the climate crisis.

Previous studies have pointed out that there is a tendency for simplification (Djouidi et al. 2016; Gaillard et al. 2017). The gender aspect is reduced to heteronormative binaries of man/woman and where women are generally portrayed as vulnerable victims. The present analysis has been carried out in response to this call, aiming to contribute with knowledge and fill this gap.

The purpose of the article is to examine how social categories are made (in)visible and how power relations are reproduced and/or challenged in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma by focusing on the understanding of and response to the crisis by stakeholders in disaster management in Antigua and Barbuda. It answers the following questions: (1) Which social categories are included (or excluded) in the understanding and response of stakeholders in disaster management? (2) How are gender relations and other intersections of power reproduced, reinforced, or challenged in disaster management?

This article answers these questions by looking at how social categories are made (in)visible, and how power relations are reproduced or challenged via focusing on the understanding of and response to the crisis by stakeholders. Stakeholders such as the Directorate of Gender Affairs Antigua and Barbuda (DoGA), the National Office of Disaster Services (NODS), and Disaster District Coordinators (DDC) were interviewed. The article is structured as follows: the first section presents relevant background of the

context and highlights previous research on gender, intersectionality and disaster management. The second section presents the theoretical framework of intersectional feminism and how it relates to disaster management. This section mainly draws from feminist research that uses an intersectional framework whereas insights from postcolonial feminism, queer studies and critical masculinity studies are presented to show how they enrich and link to the theoretical framework. The third section outlines the methodology for the article, it is followed by a presentation of the empirical findings and analysis in the fourth section, demonstrating the complex and dynamic interactions between gender and different social categories and intersectionalities, which are made (in)visible in disaster management, yielding broader lessons for the concepts and processes of binaries, power relations, agency and stereotypes. This article concludes with presenting avenues for further research.

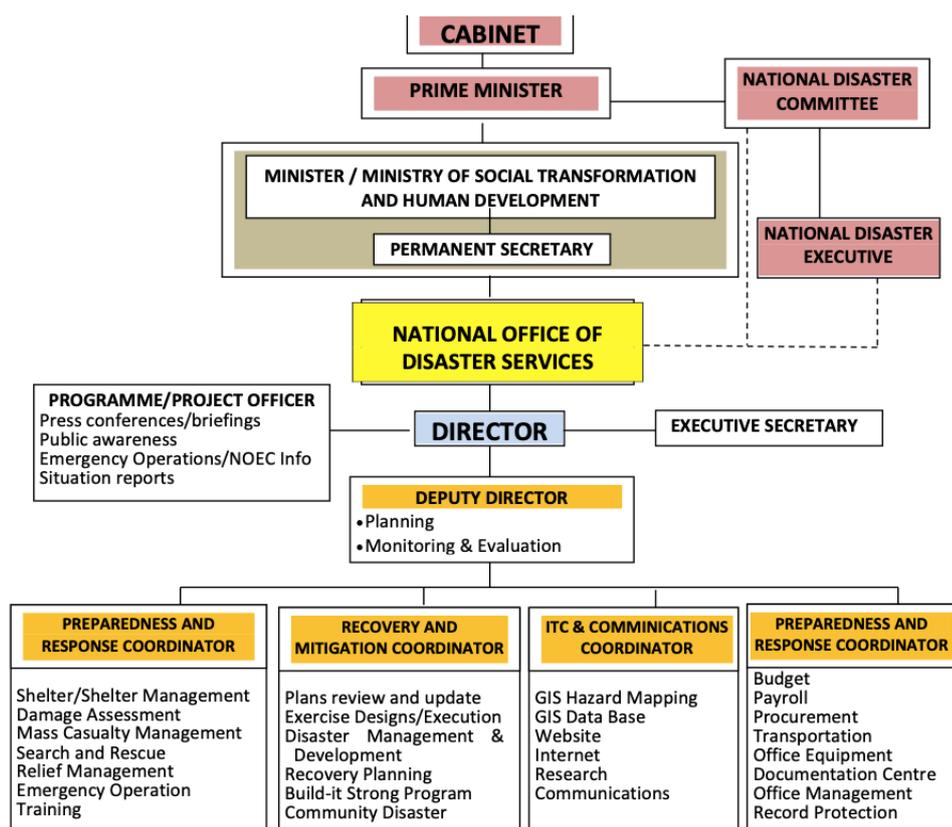
## Background

Antigua and Barbuda are located in the eastern Caribbean and are part of the Leeward Islands, between the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. The country consists of three islands, Antigua, Barbuda, and Redonda. The total population is estimated to be 101,000 (WHO 2018). Antigua and Barbuda are particularly exposed to hydro-meteorological hazards such as droughts and hurricanes. The state has experienced earthquakes, coastal erosion, and landslides. It is estimated that 100 % of the land and 100 % of the population are exposed to two or more hydro-meteorological hazards, and 80 % of the GDP is at risk from two or more hazards (O'Mardre 2017, 125-133).

In September 2017, two catastrophic category five hurricanes, Irma and Maria, impacted the Caribbean region. As for Antigua and Barbuda, the category five Hurricane Irma made landfall on September 6<sup>th</sup>. Two days later, Barbuda was hit again by Hurricane Jose, and followed two weeks after by Hurricane Maria. For the first time in 300 years, all 1,600 residents from Barbuda were evacuated to Antiguan shelters when Hurricane Jose was estimated to strike the islands (Lyons 2017). Hurricane Irma is one of the strongest and most powerful storms ever recorded in the Atlantic, with winds of 295 km/h. The hurricane destroyed 95 % of all public and private properties and damaged 40 % of the roads in Barbuda (ACAPS, OCHA and UNDP 2017, 18-19). Almost a year after the hurricanes Barbuda remains uninhabitable and newer information stress that the rebuilding process has been slow and there are still challenges remaining regarding lack of electricity and running water, as well as non-functional hospital and bank (ACAPS, OCHA and UNDP 2017; Boger and Perdikaris 2019).

### *Disaster Management in Antigua and Barbuda*

Disaster management mechanism on a national level is managed by the National Office of Disaster Services Coordinating Unit (NODS-CU), which is responsible for the mitigation of vulnerability in the case of natural hazards (O'Mardre 2017, 19, 109) (see Figure 1). NODS is supported by the District Disaster Committees which are established in 17 districts (including Barbuda), and where the volunteers facilitate with the coordination of community resources.



*Figure 1 Governance and Structure NODS (O'Mardre 2017, 110)*

### **Previous Research**

Previous research within the field of disaster management has shown that the gender dimension has been neglected in measures, projects, and research. These works stress the importance of recognising that men and women are affected differently by the event of a disaster, and that disaster management tends to be lacking gender-sensitive measures. It has also been shown that mainstream research tends to be quantitative and influenced by men's practices. In general, women's meanings and experiences have been epistemologically excluded from mainstream research according to feminist researchers, and disaster research confirms this claim (Enarson and Morrow 1998, 143-144). Hence,

“[t]his legacy of unexamined male bias in research, theory, and practice helps

explain why we have learned as little about men's emotional work during disaster recovery and as about women's physical work. Gender relations and gender power differences remain unexamined, particularly in disaster research and practice [...]" (Enarson and Morrow 1998, 4).

Fothergill (1998) stresses that little attention has been given to gender within disaster management. The literature review addressing gender in disaster research shows that several studies were conducted with survey or quantitative methods. These only includes gender as a standard demographic variable rather than applying a gender analysis (Enarson and Morrow 1998, 11-25).

Djoudi et al. (2016) reviewed the literature of how gender is framed using intersectionality as a lens on disasters and climate change research. The authors found that the "feminization of vulnerability" and the discourses of victimisation were reinforced rather than challenged. They concluded that there is a need for more intersectional and critical assessments to reveal agency and emancipation. More understanding is needed on how context-specific impacts of disasters shape and are shaped by existing power relations (Djoudi et al. 2016, 248-250). The lack of research exploring how disasters interact with intersectional systems of oppression and privilege can be compared to what the authors call the 'Vulnerability Olympics' where "[w]ithout embedding itself in societal, local and global inequalities and power relation analysis, research runs the risk of being reduced to a metaphor by simply pointing out the most vulnerable" (Djoudi et al. 2016, 254). Overall, the studies took an additive approach rather than an in-depth analysis of vulnerability and resilience. Arora-Jonsson (2011), cited in Djoudi, states that "[a] feminist response to global climate change must not only challenge masculine technical and expert knowledge about climate change, it must also question the tendency to reinforce gendered polarities, which work to maintain the status quo" (Djoudi et al. 2016, 259).

Gaillard et al. (2017) question the dominant understanding of gender derived from Western practices in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). Case studies from the Philippines, Indonesia, and Samoa highlight gender minorities' contextual patterns of vulnerability in relation to their marginalised position within society and the endogenous capacities the gender minorities possess. Furthermore, they stress that heteronormative values and norms make non-normative and gender minorities especially vulnerable in disasters where they face stigma, discrimination, and harassment (Gaillard et al. 2017, 430-432).

Moreno and Shaw (2018) examine gender relations changes following an earthquake and tsunami in Chile in 2010. Women's resilience is less documented in disaster research than women's vulnerability. By including resilience as well, it stresses that women

are not solely passive recipients of aid but rather active agents (Moreno and Shaw 2018, 205-207). The authors concluded that disasters could offer windows of opportunities that challenge power relations by building resilience over time; however, more empirical research and theorisation are required (Moreno and Shaw 2018, 221). Le Masson et al. (2016) stresses the importance of not only contextual vulnerability (e.g., how and why men and women are differently affected by disasters) but also contextual resilience and its impact on social relations. The authors highlight that social norms can change in the event of a disaster, for better or for worse. Disasters can open new opportunities where traditional gender roles can be challenged or increase inequalities leaving marginalised groups even more vulnerable (Moreno and Shaw 2018, 6).

The previous research section outlines the need for more contextualised vulnerability and resilience approaches, since existing research lacks sufficient gender and power relations considerations. There are theoretical as well as empirical gaps within the field of disaster research. Thus, by building on and challenging previous research, this article aims to examine how various stakeholders in disaster management understand and respond to vulnerability and resilience in post-disaster Antigua and Barbuda. But also, to generate a deeper knowledge of how stakeholders understand and respond to the layers of intersectional issues and identities, that in turn influence their ability to build a framework that does not further exacerbate the systems of privilege and oppression but rather subvert and overcome them.

### **Theoretical Framework**

In anti-racist and postcolonial feminist theory during the 1990s, the term intersectionality was used to respond to mainstream gender analysis, which often leaned upon binary categories of men/women, and class/race. Even though feminist studies had placed gender in relation to other power structures, the concept of intersectionality, created by Crenshaw (1991), provides a more complex and inclusive ontology (gender *and* ethnicity as opposed to gender *or* ethnicity) (De los Reyes and Mulinari 2005, 15; Crenshaw 1991). It also builds upon the understanding that social categories (i.e. gender, class, sexuality, (dis)ability, ethnicity, and age) are constructed and dynamic. They constantly co-constitute each other, creating unique social relations that vary according to context (Crenshaw 1991; Kaijser 2014, 29-30). This article strategically implements an intersectional feminist approach with gender as an analytical category and its interplay with other intersections to be of importance (ct. Lykke 2009, 106-107). Thus, intersectionality can be described as “[t]he interaction between gender, race, and other categories of difference in individual

lives, social practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies, and the outcomes of these interactions in the terms of power” (Kriszan et al. 2012, 18). Intersectionality offers a nuanced analysis of power that includes power over others and power with others, meaning that the same subject can experience both power and oppression at the same time (Djoudi et al. 2016, 249-251). Intersectionality offers a nuanced analysis of how an individual’s collection of identities interact with privilege and oppression in society, where there are favourable traits that increase privilege and less favourable ones that decrease privilege. An intersectional analysis of disaster management includes acknowledging how systems and methodologies for disaster management intertwine with already established systems of power (AWIS 2020).

Insights from anti-racist and postcolonial feminism, queer theory, and critical masculinity studies have contributed to enriching intersectionality in questioning and destabilising social categories and the constructs of ‘woman’ and ‘man’ as coherent and stable categories. The construction of women as one homogeneous group with a shared oppression due to the patriarchal system results in women being robbed on their historical and political agency (Mohanty 2003, 23; Freidenvall 2016). Therefore, by acknowledging women as non-essential opens for recognition of agency and change (Kajiser 2014, 37). Privilege and oppression are understood as intersectional rather than additive, and these dynamics are not separate but rather relational (Windsong 2018, 136-137).

Queer feminist studies challenge the mainstream notion of heteronormativity and its stigmatisation of queer relations in society. Heteronormativity emphasises the limitations of having binary categorisations of gender and sexuality and “[s]tress[es] the need to understand gender and sexuality as both socially relational and performatively constructed” (Hines 2010, 114). One example for disaster management could be the reproduction of having households represented in heteronormative and binary family constellations e.g. man/woman. The contribution from critical masculinity studies, positions, and critiques hegemonic power relations of masculinities, aiming to contribute to the disruption of hegemonic masculinity (Lykke 2009, 120-121).

### ***Intersectional Feminist Perspective on Disaster Management***

Disasters are socially situated events where both vulnerability and resilience can be revealed, and where the social experiences of disasters reflect and may disrupt gender relations and power structures (Enarson and Morrow 1998, 4). By studying not only actions but also normative assumptions within disaster management, the reinforcement of social categories and power structures that are embedded in everyday practices can be

understood (Kajiser and Kronsell 2013, 428). This means that an intersectional approach can move beyond identifying power structures towards questioning social categories and highlighting what serves as ground for agency around common objectives (Kajiser and Kronsell 2013, 423). This article draws on insights from intersectional feminism to examine which social categories are made (in)visible, and how power relations are reproduced or challenged by focusing on the understanding of and response to crisis.

### **Methodological Framework**

Qualitative research offers an interpretive epistemological position where the emphasis is on understanding the socially constructed world, how its participants interpret it, and how it is responded to. Constructivism being its ontological position, implies that social properties are the outcomes of interactions between persons rather than just something 'out there'. In other words, knowledge is derived from social practices (Bryman 2012, 380; Kajiser and Kronsell 2013, 219-220). Therefore, the qualitative feminist approach will add explanatory depth to the previous conducted quantitative (and qualitative) research (Kleinman 2007).

### ***Data Collection***

The empirical material was collected during fieldwork in Antigua and Barbuda carried out for ten weeks between September and November 2018. Interviews were conducted with stakeholders such as DoGA, NODS, and DDCs. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 individuals, as well as a focus group discussion with five participants (see Appendix A). The main body of the empirical material was gathered on the island of Antigua (nine individual interviews in Antigua and one in Barbuda, and one focus group discussion in Antigua). The process of data selection was a combination of identifying key stakeholders and snowball-sampling. The snowball-sampling turned out to be suitable to find people with relevant knowledge and experience in a situation of limited access to the field (ct. Blaikie 2009, 179).

### ***Respondents***

NODS is one of the most relevant and central stakeholders in disaster management in Antigua and Barbuda. It is responsible for the coordination and response of a disaster. NODS works closely with other stakeholders and manages how the work should be divided, meaning that the agency has the power to influence the outcomes of reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience.

NODS is supported by the DDCs, which are established in 17 districts, and where volunteers facilitate the coordination of community resources (O'Mardre 2017, 110, 160).

The DDCs were chosen to gain a multi-level data sampling, since they are between the levels of governmental agencies (top-down) and women and marginalised groups (bottom-up). They are in a position where multiple ways of agency and resistance might occur, making them central to generating critical insights and thus greater understanding (cf. Lempert 2007, 85). The DoGA is a relevant stakeholder because as a national gender agency, they take up an important space when it comes to framing gender in disaster management. To generate a deeper understanding of the data, documents, brochures, and organisational reports were collected.

### ***Semi-structured in-depth interviews and focus group***

The choice of using in-depth semi-structured interviews was based on the pursuit of flexible interview processes. When the interview process is flexible, it emphasises how the interviewee frames and attach meaning to issues and events (Harding 1987). This flexibility also allows interviewees to raise additional or complementary issues. The group interview was carried out with one DDC and their team, in a total of five persons. All interviews were conducted in English and recorded (except for Interview 7 and Interview 9, where the respondents did not give permission for recording), and later transcribed. Furthermore, before and after the interviews, field notes and reflections were written down. Both function as a control mechanism to foster reflexivity during subsequent analysis (see Appendix C for details on ethical considerations, self-reflexivity and limitations).

### ***Data Analysis***

During both the interview phase and transcriptions, reflections and thoughts were written down in field notes, and the interview guide was further developed. The empirical material (transcripts, field notes, and some documents) was approached by first reading everything, searching for salient themes, codes, and patterns that would be fruitful for analysis. This was repeated, searching for similarities and differences, different voices, paradoxes, as well as what was *not* said. The themes were then given different colours and functioned as coding for the material. The next step involved comparing the codes and forming them into new themes. The next step was to read through all the transcribed interviews again to see if there were any additional parts that could be coded.

### **Empirical Data and Analysis**

The first theme sheds light on the complex and dynamic interactions, to what extent social categories are linked to gender, and who are made (in)visible in this specific context of disaster management. The overall theme is divided into sub-themes, such as

*Heterogenous Categories and Binaries.* The following theme sheds light on the processes that reproduce and/or challenge power relations and is divided into sub-themes such as *Power Relations and Stereotypes, Agency, Contextual Challenges and Opportunities.*

### ***Heterogenous Categories***

The first sub-theme focuses on how the category of *gender* is interwoven with different social categories in terms of vulnerability and resilience. The balance of vulnerability respectively resilience depends on how much attention each part has been given in the answers of the respondents. Although, social categorisations have been divided below into separate sections to facilitate the analysis, it does not mean social categories should be additive and separate but rather mutual, dynamical and linked processes. It can be outlined from the informants' understandings and responses that *gender* categories such as 'women' and 'men' are linked to other social categories, however the extent to which different social categories occurs varies. Consequently, it can be noted that some social categories in relation to gender gain more attention than others in disaster management. The category that *gender* is most interlinked to is *age*, and mostly in terms of 'girls' and 'boys' or 'older women'. Other social categories frequently connected to gender are *family status, class/socioeconomic status* and *occupation*. Social categories of *(dis)ability* and *sexuality* are mentioned to a lesser extent in relation to gender. As outlined below, those who experience the interplays of different power systems might become (in)visible in disaster management, thus the understandings and responses run the risk of becoming fragmented.

*Age* is one of the social categories mentioned the most by the respondents in relation to *gender*; connections to young people are made more often than to older people. References to age are made almost exclusively to distinguish adults from children, such as 'women and men' and 'girls and boys'. When mentioned, older women (and the few cases with older men) are identified exclusively in terms of vulnerability, and not ever in relation to resilience. The possibility for older people to be considered as actors of change is diminished when resilience and agency are not included. This can be compared to Mohanty's (2003, 23) insight that when women are repeatedly constructed as vulnerable, powerless and with no agency to act, the construction of women as one homogenous group is reproduced. Each repetition of constructing older persons as solely vulnerable and powerless risks reproducing a predetermined power position that excludes the fluid and context-specific social status. These dichotomies run the risk of undermining the complexity of power relations and make the experiences and exposures of older people invisible in disaster management (Kaijser and Kronsell 2013, 421).

Other social categories that are frequently connected to gender are *family status*, *class/socioeconomic status*, and *occupation*. Gender and family status are mentioned both regarding vulnerability and resilience, and almost exclusively in terms of female (single) headed households. Overall, female-headed households are vulnerable due to several factors such as being responsible for the care of family members, especially the children and older people. For example:

“Women are also vulnerable in the sense of they have oftentimes young children that are dependent on them, and it is also a thing in Antigua and in the wider Caribbean that there is not a lot of males and fathers necessary present” (Interview 1).

Although agency and resilience of single female-headed households are shown in the understandings section (see ‘Agency’), there is still a tendency to link vulnerability to the absence of men and/or fathers. The interpretations of female single-households as vulnerable because of the absence of men, can be argued to be general and overlooks context-specific dynamics. When family constellations are described in terms of ‘men and women’ as the only and static binaries, they reproduce the normalisation of patriarchal and heteronormative processes. This could be interpreted as when the (heterosexual) household is fragmented, the notion of women depending on male protection is strengthened.

When women are described only in terms of being in the absence of men’s protection, and when the source of vulnerability is not problematised, the (in)equalities can be interpreted as already constituted instead of being produced through processes of power relations. The construction of women as a unified group based on the subordination of men, risk defining power in binary terms “[p]eople who have it (read: men) and people who do not (read: women)” (Mohanty 2003, 31). Hence, when talking about affected households only in terms of ‘men and women’ it reinforces heteronormative tendencies of only including (hetero-) men and women as the normal and sole family constellation, leaving everything else to othering. As Galliard et al. (2017, 432) states, “[t]hose who do not fit into this gender binary are stigmatised on the basis of sexuality and gender identity.”

*(Dis)ability* and *sexuality* are given less attention in relation to *gender* than family status, class, and occupation, which runs the risk of making them invisible and/or less prioritised in disaster management. In terms of gender and sexuality (and *gender identities*), the LGBTQIA+ community was referred to differently by respondents e.g., ‘LGBT’, ‘trans community’, and ‘gays’. ‘Women’ and ‘men’ (and ‘girls’ and ‘boys’) are mostly described by respondents as binary and the only categories of gender. In relation to ‘women’ and ‘men’, no other gender identities are included, it is only restricted with some few references to the

LGBTQIA+ community. This understanding tends to fix some gender identities as abnormal, risking reproducing norms of heterosexual and binary gender identities as superior. This restricts the possibilities of change in power relations and thus makes some individual and group invisible in disaster management. If only some types of oppressions and/or (in)equalities gain attention, the understandings and responses of stakeholders might run the risk of neglecting the interplays of differences in social categorisations and power relations, hence making them (in)visible. According to Kaijser and Kronsell (2013, 421), it might “[e]xclude those who do not fit in these static categories and den[y] social struggle, contestation and the complexity and fluidity of identities.”

### ***Binaries***

DoGA noticed a great need for dignity kits in the aftermath of hurricane Irma, although different aid products and items were distributed. They provided shelters around the island with dignity kits (toothpaste, soap, sanitary napkins etc.) that women and girls needed. DoGA acknowledges the need and the importance of having a gender lens on disaster management, which made the struggles of women and girls visible. The construction of the group ‘women’ in the case of DoGA was used for targeting the specific needs of women and girls in a hurricane setting that usually neglects e.g., sanitary napkins for persons that menstruate. This was done without exacerbating normative assumptions of them being victims but rather to shed light on the structures that neglect gender. Another recurring topic is that the larger society connects gender solely to women, meaning that it has become ‘women issues’ rather than ‘gender issues’:

“Sometimes it is hard to bring men to the forefront of gender advocacy and gender issues, and I think sometimes men and the larger society, hear on gender and they tend to associate it exclusively with women” (Interview 1).

Additionally, when gender becomes equal to women, it complicates agency beyond and across social categories. ‘Gender issues’ include not only those who define themselves to be women but also non-binary gender identities, broadening the understanding of vulnerability and resilience. Furthermore, heteronormative values and norms make non-normative and gender minorities especially vulnerable in disasters where they face stigma, discrimination, and harassment (Gaillard et al. 2017, 430-432). When women are only referred to as being vulnerable or victims, existing (gender) power structures are reinforced (Mohanty 2003, 37-39). Furthermore, when talking about ‘women’ and ‘men’ without including differences in heterogeneity, it makes these groups’ vulnerability and resilience invisible to disaster management. This also tends to reinforce heterosexuality and gender binarism as ‘normal’, which restricts the possibilities of change in power relations.

To conclude, some of the findings correspond with previous research. They show that women are portrayed as a single vulnerable group, often in contrast to other groups such as older people, children, and persons with disabilities. The categories that gender is most interlinked to are age, family status, class/socioeconomic status, and occupation. Social categories of *(dis)ability* and *sexuality* are mentioned, but to a lesser extent in relation to gender. If only some types of oppressions and/or (in)equalities gain attention, the understandings and responses of stakeholders might run the risk of neglecting the interplays of differences in social categorisations and power relations, hence making them (in)visible. Intersectional analysis matters; unless we examine the full breadth of diversity of experience in disaster management we risk becoming fragmented and reproduce heteronormative and patriarchal processes rather than challenge them.

### ***Power relations and Stereotypes***

In the aftermath of Hurricane Irma, gender relations and stereotypes were both reproduced and resisted in disaster management. Several of the respondents emphasised that men are expected to be ‘the protector’, ‘the breadwinner’, and ‘strong’ after hurricanes. There is a tendency of linking women with stereotypical beliefs of being the natural ‘caregivers’ that have the responsibility for children and older people. The process of naturalisation of some social categories contributes to homogenise women and treat all of those who belong to the category ‘women’ sharing natural attributes such as victim, caregiver etc. These categorical attributes, “[a]re often used for the construction of inclusionary/exclusionary boundaries that differentiate between self and other, determining what is ‘normal’ and what is not” (Berger and Guidroz 2009, 50).

As Mohanty stresses, by assuming that ‘women’ are an already essentialised and coherent group, focus shift from how women are constituted through these very structures to be instead placed outside social relations (Mohanty 2003, 40). Some respondents highlight toxic masculinities that derive from stereotypical and normative assumptions in society, meaning that men face pressure when they cannot fulfill these stereotypical roles and seek harmful coping strategies instead, e.g. drinking:

“Men are very often unable to work after a disaster because they cannot fulfill that breadwinner role so sometimes it can manifest in toxic masculinity, depression or aggressiveness [...] One of the issues that we did see post of Barbuda was a lot of drinking and Barbuda is a place where people drink a lot generally” (Interview 4).

By highlighting social *processes* in which masculinities are practiced, it is implied that the social construction of gender is constantly reproduced and performed. Insights from critical masculinity studies suggest an anti-essentialist approach where ‘men’ and ‘toxic

masculinities' are socially constructed in a fluid and changeable process (Lykke 2010, 62). Therefore, by focusing on processes, the anti-essentialist approach opens for the understandings and responses in disaster management to have a more dynamic and relational view on power structures. A prevalent topic mentioned when talking about gender roles and reaching out to different projects, activities, and awareness-raising was the stigmatisation of seeking psychosocial support in the aftermath of the hurricane, especially regarding men.

“The only thing I would say is that we predominately get women and I guess men do not necessary come as much as they could because there is a stigma attached to men looking to pursuing these types of services or maybe men feeling emasculated by actual having to come and report that they have been sexually assaulted or something along those lines” (Interview 1).

Processes of hegemonic masculinities run the risk of reproducing toxic masculinity, constructing men as striving to be strong and not needing psychosocial support. The processes of hegemonic masculinities thus legitimise the subordination of women and 'other' men (the ones seeking psychosocial support) (Lykke 2010, 64). However, one respondent reflected on an interesting finding during focus group discussions with Barbudians. The men were very open about their vulnerabilities but at the same time they reinforced the image of being the protector:

“When we went to the shelters in Barbuda, men were very open and vocal about how they felt impacted, some were very open around the fact that they had to use some very unhealthy way to cope with the trauma [...] they were also very careful to highlight the role that they had to play in providing reassurances in being the protector [...] ‘yes I’m being exposed and very open about my vulnerability but I’m also reinforcing my power and dominance in reminding you that I did play a significant role’” (Interview 6).

By also problematising how social constructions of hegemonic positionings claim to represent the normal, i.e. how men can show emotions but under the premises that they also are perceived to be strong and protective, the understanding and response question essential beliefs of what the image of “men” is (Lykke 2010, 63). When focusing on how power relations are articulated in different contexts and ‘doing gender’, it also includes the fact that these social relations create a naturalisation of dominance and subordination between men, women, and gender non-binary identities (Lykke 2010, 65). Hegemonic power structures uphold not only norms; they also reproduce stigmas of othering or deviancy. However, processes of stigmatisation can also be an act of challenging the status

quo (De los Reyes and Mulinari 2005, 43-45). The exercise of power and heteronormativity reproduces a legitimate order where anyone else “outside” upsets it (Lykke 2010, 60).

### ***Agency***

In contrast to previous research, where women are more than often overlooked as actors in disaster management, it is articulated by the respondents that women performed agency rather than being passive victims in the aftermath of hurricane Irma:

“So, they [women] are going out and basically defying the status quo and learning how to do these things. Learning the skills that are necessary to protect their house, protect their livelihood, protect their family. Ensure that they have resources to be able to provide, to be able to prepare” (Interview 1).

Emphasising agency and resilience of women, to some extent, challenges understandings of binary structures that only include “[p]ossessing power versus being powerless” (Mohanty 2003, 39), and where women are constructed as a powerless and coherent group. In comparison to *Family status*, where women are described to be powerless in the absence of men, the understanding of women as not only vulnerable but also resilient resists the essentialised and fixed notion of women as being powerless. By focusing on women’s agency and resilience, these understandings and responses can challenge patriarchal structures and hegemonic positionings.

### ***Contextual Challenges and Opportunities***

The understandings and responses of stakeholders in disaster management can challenge global structures that strive for Western norms by questioning power relations of both the subordination and domination roles of the Global North and the Global South. By including the oppressor and oppressed, a more relational understanding of power facilitating change of structures and inequalities can appear. Processes of meaning that systematically marginalise and anonymise developing nations are tied together at the present time. One respondent sheds light to the processes in which colonial legacies still influence the international arena: “Each country they didn't develop on their own they got resources from someone, they got assistance from somewhere” (Interview 5).

When including global structures that produce power differentials and positioning states to strive for the constructed unmarked Western norm in the international arena, normative assumptions such as “[d]eveloping countries (i.e., countries that should seek to ‘achieve’ the level of the industrialised West)” (Lykke 2010, 53), focus shifts not only to the excluded position but also to how the relations of dominance are constructed and reproduced for the included position (Lykke 2010, 56). Thus, it opens up to analyse ‘whiteness’ as a power position by making the domination of the West visible. Both

privilege and oppression need to be in focus since they are relational rather than separate processes (Windsong 2018, 137). The critique regarding the lack of representation of people of colour in the international arena challenge processes that counteract emancipation. Processes of essentialism, eurocentrism, and the reproduction of objectification of 'the other', systematically downgrade and marginalise non-Western people, making them invisible. One respondent emphasised the importance of having people of colour represented, especially women of colour:

“Because I think even this region specifically, it is important for women of colour to see themselves reflected at certain levels, to know that I can get to a point where I am a leading authority on climate change especially for the region because we are so deeply affected by climate change that it is empowering, it is important to have somebody who understands the cultural context and understands all the effects and all that leading these kinds of movement” (Interview 4).

Representation is crucial for emancipation, not only due to the (un)equal power relations between the Global North and Global South but also to distinguish differences of resistance. According to De los Reyes and Mulinari (2005, 93), “[b]y articulating a counterstory is a way to overcome distorted subjectivity and the right of problem formulation.” Therefore, a relational understanding of power and counter-stories stresses processes that make subordination, excluding women of colour and upholding hegemonic structures of whiteness possible. It also allows for questioning formations of meaning that naturalise how one perceives the world. One contextual challenge that disaster management faces refers to the exploitation of 'third world women' by the international community and stakeholders that came in after the hurricane:

“I think that a lot of time when international agencies are coming in with an agenda, not that it is a bad thing but you really cannot treat all the countries the same and treat all the populations the same, you need to provide service within the context.” (Interview 2)

This understanding problematises the international community's practice to treat women as a homogenous and static group with identical interests, rejecting context-specific and dynamical intersections. A generalised notion of subordination that connects women runs the risk of reproducing power differentials rather than challenging them, thus reproducing the construction of 'third world women' (Mohanty 2003, 21-30). By including the oppressor and oppressed, a relational understanding of power structures can be generated and challenged. The so called 'white saviour complex' reproduces the exploitation of women:

“So, one come in as the saviour, saving the day, it must stop because it’s not useful for anyone [...] we have to stop taking pictures of people crying we’re not in the 1980 anymore. We need to look at people of how they are being resilient and how people are bouncing back because people don’t want to see pictures of themselves like this, it is real exploitation.” (Interview 7)

This understanding brings attention to the fact that focus should be in shifting dialogue, how stories are framed, and what each country is doing for themselves rather than having ‘the West’ come in and save the day. The West’s ‘saviour’ role denies agency of the ones being ‘saved’ and appropriate women’s rights movements’ work, but it also generalises non-western countries and places ‘the West’ in the centre of attention. Therefore, this understanding challenges the notion of global inequalities and ‘saviour complex of the West’ by questioning them to be unproblematic and already constituted, in relation to the structures that uphold Western domination. Thus, the focus on processes and the inclusion of subordination and domination generate deeper contextual understanding with transformative potential. In comparison to intersectional feminism, not only does feminism claim to explain the (in)equalities but also to change the (un)equal gender system (De los Reyes and Mulinari 2005, 88).

Even though the hurricane brought challenges and exacerbated (in)equalities, it also functioned as a window of opportunities. The disruption of gender roles allowed for the creation of empowerment, where power relations can be challenged (Moreno and Shaw 2018, 209). The hurricane opened opportunities for events and projects that in normal conditions might not have taken place. For instance:

“We [DoGA] were not that present in Barbuda before the hurricane, it sort of came as an opportunity, unfortunate conditions but we had an opportunity to expand our work to Barbuda. One of the things that we did, we mapped out a referral pathway for Barbuda because there were a number of persons who went back over to live so we wanted to ensure that they were safe and felt empowered to make a report if anything happened especially for sexual violence, we wanted to ensure that prevention was key” (Interview 6).

Respondents emphasised how the opportunity to establish a referral pathway in Barbuda opened up pathways for conversations and dialogues around gender-based sexual violence (GBSV) and scale up the psychosocial support services. DoGA recognised the need for a safe space where boys can talk about issues and vulnerabilities they might face. Men Engage Summer Institute (MESI) was a pilot program that took place in the summer

2018. The camp engaged boys in critical topics such as gender, mental health, toxic masculinity and GBSV:

“Talking about how they feel, talking about how well they negotiate certain things in society, talking about masculinity, understanding the harmful masculinities, their performed masculinities and moving towards more positive masculinity”  
(Interview 6).

The program is a crucial step towards fighting gender inequality especially after the hurricanes where new issues might be created, and old ones reinforced. MESI is a way of resisting stereotypes of hyper masculinity, creating spaces for young boys and men to engage. The approach of the camp has an agenda that deconstructs and problematises social categories and intersections that occupy hegemonic positions.

### Concluding Discussion

*Which social categories are included (or excluded) in the understanding and response of stakeholders in disaster management?* Some of the findings correspond with previous research. The findings show that women are portrayed as one vulnerable group, often in comparison to other groups such as the older people and children. The categories that gender is most interlinked with are *age, family status, class/socioeconomic status* and *occupation*. Social categories of *(dis)ability* and *sexuality* are invoked to a lesser extent in relation to gender.

Furthermore, the interpretations of female single-households as vulnerable in the absence of men are generalising and overlook context-specific dynamics. The construction of gender categories such as ‘women’ should be anti-essentialist, heterogenous and fluid to facilitate political agency or otherwise some social categories might run the risk of become (in)visible in disaster management. Not only are family constellations described in terms of ‘men and women’ as the only and static binaries, but they also reproduce the normalisation of patriarchal and heteronormative processes. Moreover, gender identities are restricted with some few references to LGBTQIA+ community, and there is a tendency of simplification, whereby the aspect of gender is reduced to heteronormative binaries of man/woman, creating fixed essential categories. The varying attention given to social categories actualise the problem of ‘oppression Olympics’ where these categories compete against each other for recognition. Consequently, if only some types of oppressions and (in)equalities gain attention, stakeholders’ understandings and responses run the risk of neglecting the interplays of differences in social categorisations, hence making them (in)visible.

*How are gender relations and other intersections of power reproduced, reinforced, or challenged in disaster management?* The understandings and responses both reproduce and challenge gender

relations and stereotypes. The expectation that men and women are expected to perform different stereotypical roles in society when a disaster struck was challenged and reproduced in disaster management. Even though it can be interpreted as a focus on dynamics and change, this coincides with talking about patriarchal structures and norms as *traditional*. Such formulations do not include how (in)equalities are reinforced in present times, neglecting the processes in which hyper-masculinity and patriarchy can be challenged. Focus on processes becomes visible in relation to masculinity, particularly toxic masculinity. This focus allows for the understandings and responses in disaster management to have a more dynamic and relational view on power structures. The understandings and responses of stakeholders in disaster management in Antigua and Barbuda challenge the stigmatisation of men seeking psychosocial support through questioning, and emphasise the premises under which it is acceptable and implement actions that resist toxic masculinity, e.g. MESI. The project functions as a tool to resist and challenge stereotypes within disaster management and contribute to mitigate hazards.

When the understandings and responses within disaster management and humanitarian aid stress that privilege and oppression are relational rather than separate processes, focus shifts to how the relations of (Western) dominance are constructed and reproduced. Thus, it opens up the room to analyse 'whiteness' as a power position by making the domination of the west visible. A focus on domination and sub-domination processes and relational understanding of power enables contextual understanding that has transformative potential and thus facilitates change.

Some of the results are in line with previous research (ct. Galliard et al. 2017). Social categories of sexuality and gender identity have been neglected in disaster management, here they are given less attention than the other social categories, yet they are visible to some extent. Heteronormative and patriarchal tendencies are still influencing disaster management and stigmatising individuals and groups. As Moreno and Shaw (2018) emphasise, women's resilience has been less documented in disaster research, whereas it has been shown in responses and understandings that there is a prevalent focus on agency, resistance, and resilience of women, even though they are described more often in terms of vulnerability than men. This highlights the construction of women as solely victims to be challenged. Although, without having a relational, dynamical and complex understanding of social categories and power relations, the understandings and responses of stakeholders in disaster management run the risk of becoming fragmented and thus reproducing heteronormative and patriarchal processes rather than challenging them.

A well-informed understanding of structures of vulnerability and resilience in disaster management is one of the first steps towards mitigation and emancipation. However, the results presented in this article generate a dilemma or insoluble conflict between the need to make social categories visible and the risk of essentialise those categories. Therefore, constantly emphasising the category of ‘woman’ runs the risk of reinforcing fixed and unchangeable gender identities. Thus, it cannot reach beyond the power order of gender, whereby “[g]ender is produced as well as uncovered in feminist discourse” (Mohanty 2003, 108). On the one hand, the focus on making social categories visible runs the risk of reproducing inequalities. On the other hand, the invisibility of those social categories runs the risk of obscuring inequalities. The article does more than provide an answer to empirical questions; it also aims to generate knowledge that questions structures such as heterosexism, class, racism, sexism. Calling out those structures and making the dynamic and contextualised *intra*-action of agency, resistance, and inequalities visible is part of the transformative potential of intersectional analysis.

This article is a relevant contribution to disaster management research since it highlights how the understandings and responses of stakeholders in Antigua and Barbuda visualise some social categories that have previously been invisible. This contributes to a more contextualised understanding that can facilitate change. Future research could examine disaster management from an intersectional feminist perspective, starting from women’s experiences and marginalised groups’ everyday struggles. This type of study has the possibility and transformative potential to fill a research gap, as well as being relevant for mitigating hazards, challenging the status quo and leaving no one behind.

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## Appendices

### *Appendix 1: Table of Research Participants*

	Date	Position	Duration	Organisation/Agency
Interview 1	2018-10-04	Programme Officer and Gender & Climate Change Focal point	45 min	The Directorate of Gender Affairs, Antigua and Barbuda
Interview 2	2018-10-10	Representative from the Directorate of Gender Affairs	60 min	The Directorate of Gender Affairs, Antigua and Barbuda
Interview 3	2018-10-16	Director of the National Office of Disaster Services	80 min	The National Office of Disaster Services, Antigua and Barbuda
Interview 4	2018-10-23	Representative from the Directorate of Gender Affairs	60 min	The Directorate of Gender Affairs, Antigua and Barbuda
Interview 5	2018-10-25	Deputy Director of the National Office for Disaster Services	120 min	The National Office of Disaster Services, Antigua and Barbuda
Interview 6	2018-10-26	Acting Executive Director of the Directorate of Gender Affairs	60 min	The Directorate of Gender Affairs, Antigua and Barbuda
Interview 7	2018-11-06	Representative from UN Women	30 min	UN Women Multi-Country Office Caribbean, Barbados (Skype)
Interview 8	2018-11-08	District Disaster Coordinator	120 min	National Office of Disaster Services, Antigua

Interview 9	2018-11-15	Deputy Disaster District Coordinator	30 min	National Office of Disaster Services, Antigua
Interview 10	2018-11-17	District Disaster Coordinator and the team (Focus group, 5 persons)	45 min	National Office of Disaster Services, Antigua
Interview 11	2018-11-27	District Disaster Coordinator	30 min	National Office of Disaster Services, Barbuda

### ***Appendix 2: Interview Guide***

Date, time and place:

Name:

#### **Background**

- Tell me a little bit about yourself?
- How come you joined XXX? / How come you became XXX?

#### **Climate Change**

- What changes in the climate and weather have you observed over the last couple of years?

#### **Vulnerability**

- Which groups and/or individuals in the community would you say is most vulnerable to climate change? How are they vulnerable? Why do you think they are vulnerable?
- In relation to what you said earlier, which groups would you say were among the most vulnerable of last year's hurricanes in Antigua and Barbuda?
- In general, how did the work of XXX look like in the aftermath of hurricane Irma in Antigua and Barbuda?/How did the work look like for you in XXX?
- Where there any particular groups that were targeted? Do some groups face stigma or barriers when accessing this type of service? If yes, what and how?
- How was it to work with national and international agencies?
- Which challenges or resistance did XXX face in post-disaster settings?
- Have there been any opportunities in post-disaster settings?

**Resilience**

- To what extent have women and marginalised groups been included or having a say in the different projects or measures?
- Can you give some examples of what people expect from men and women in post-disaster settings? Are there any differences?
- Is that something that has changed/challenged the status quo after the hurricanes?
- In your opinion, what are the main challenges or barriers that needs to overcome in order for a community to be resilient?

**Ending Questions**

- What is the best achievement you have seen so far in your work?
- What do you think about the future?
- Is there something that you would like to add to the interview?

Thank you so much!

***Appendix 3*****Ethical Considerations**

Informed consent is important, and participants should be briefed about design, possible risks, obtaining voluntary participation, and the purpose of the research project (Kvale and Brinkman 2015, 95-97). In line with The Swedish Research Council's Ethical Guidelines (Vetenskapsrådet undated), before starting all the interviews, the respondents were informed about the article's purpose, that their participation is voluntary and if they wanted, they could interrupt the interviewer during the interview or contact her afterward if they changed their minds.

**Self-reflexivity and Limitations**

The researcher should strive for reciprocal relationships based on mutual respect and confidence between interviewer and interviewee. This requires that the respondent's worldview comes first, not the researchers (Bryman 2012, 399; Scheyvens and Leslie 2000). Reflexivity should be applied to all stages of the research, from the beginning to the end. The researcher's role needs to be critically examined since research is "[s]tructured by both the researcher and the research participants" (England 1994, 250), meaning what is being studied is the 'betweenness' of the world interpreted by the respondents and mine (England 1994, 251; Davies 2008; Gustafsson and Johannesson 2016). Therefore, this article views the interview as a process where both the interviewee and interviewer contribute to knowledge construction.

## Not Quite Migrant, Not Quite Refugee: Addressing the Protection Gap for Climate-Induced Movement; Conceptualisation, Governance, and the Case of Mr. Ioane Teitota

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### **Abstract**

*This article argues that climate-induced movement is neither strictly a refugee issue nor a migration issue; and that the current protection gap is linked to the fundamental mischaracterization of the movement under one of these pathways. Terminology plays a crucial role in the protections and pathways for movement that are made available for people. Not quite refugee, not quite migrant, persons undertaking climate-induced movement face a protection limbo; where the eventual need for movement is recognized yet, the movement itself is defined in such a way as to be deemed unnecessary, at least for now. The refugee status case of Mr. Ioane Teitota, a Kiribati national, is a critical example of this protection limbo. Characterized as voluntary, courts successively held up rulings that the adverse impacts he had attempted to escape were not yet sufficiently dangerous to warrant protection. Was Mr. Teitota supposed to simply come back later?*

### **Keywords**

Climate-induced Movement; Climate Justice; International Law; Migration; Refugee

## Introduction

Every year, millions of persons undertake climate-induced movement whether it be in anticipation of or in response to environmental stressors (IOM 2020, 253). Movement as a response to environmental change is not a new phenomenon; however, climate change is accelerating the rate of movement at a pace that has garnered widespread attention and shows no signs of slowing. While no one can know with certainty how climate change will affect human mobility (Brown 2008, 12), there is reliable scientific evidence indicating that the type of environmental events which pose threats to human environments and influence movement are increasing in frequency and intensity. In a special report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) noted with medium to high confidence that at present-day levels there has been a rise in the number of environmental events that threaten the human environment (IPCC 2018, 210-212). The IPCC noted with the same level of confidence that the number of events would be raised if the global temperature reaches the 1.5°C increase (IPCC 2018, 210-212). The increase in these events should be met with an expectation of an increase in the number of persons undertaking movement. In fact, in its most recent World Migration Report, the International Organisation for Migration affirmed that anthropogenic climate change is expected to progressively affect human movement as a management response to the risks posed by disrupted environmental events (IOM 2020, 253).

Climate change is now widely recognised as a significant driver of human mobility in both the political and academic spheres. Despite global engagement with the issue there remains no common definition of a person undertaking climate-induced movement (Klepp and Herbeck 2016, 58), no consensus on what factors constitute climate-related drivers of movement, and no internationally coordinated effort to provide pathways for movement or a legally binding instrument to provide protections for persons undertaking movement. In lieu of a globally coordinated effort, a fragmented system of regional agreements and soft-law approaches have emerged (Klepp 2017, 18). Whilst providing essential protections for many persons undertaking movement, these agreements too have no common definition of climate-induced movement. Often overlapping in their scope of protection, these agreements leave significant protection gaps in the overall system. This article begins from the position that the current system of international law, understood as the entire system of legal agreements between states, is not equipped to effectively manage and sufficiently protect all persons undertaking climate-induced movement (Podesta 2019, 4). This article also begins from the position that the protection gap is as much a result of definitional

issues as it is doctrinal issues; it is as much about how climate-induced movement and the persons undertaking it are conceptualised as it is about the existing legal system.

The purpose of this article is to examine the academic debate surrounding the conceptualisation of climate-induced movement. Specifically, it studies how conceptualisations have been operationalized as political and legal approaches to governing this movement. There are three distinctions this article makes with regard to how climate-induced movement is conceptualised: between temporary and permanent movement, within-state and cross-border movement, and voluntary and forced movement. These distinctions are derived from a review of the academic debate surrounding the conceptualising of climate-induced movement and are discussed further in relation to the definitional debate between the use of the terminology refugee or migrant for persons undertaking movement. Examining these conceptual distinctions in light of current governance mechanisms in place for climate-induced movement this article identifies three primary issues contributing to the protection gap: the emphasis on forced movement over voluntary movement by the primary legal and policy mechanisms for human mobility, the emphasis on within-state movement leading to a reliance on mechanisms concerning internally displaced persons (IDPs) over the recognition of cross-border movement, and the emphasis on movement due to rapid-onset events through disaster response mechanisms over the recognition of movement due to slow-onset events.

Whilst not being the only persons vulnerable to falling into the protection gap, this article focuses on persons from Small Island Developing States, specifically the Pacific Island States. Climate-induced movement occurring from these states poses a particular challenge to current conceptualisations in both the academic debate and the existing governance system. The Pacific Island States illustrate these issues in that movement from these states is in response to slow-onset events namely sea-level rise, is largely considered voluntary, and due to loss of territory will increasingly become cross-border. The difficulties faced by persons undertaking climate-induced movement from these states will be further illustrated in this article through an examination of the claim to refugee status of Mr. Ioane Teitiota in New Zealand. It is critical to address these issues as slow-onset events, such as the rate of sea-level rise experienced by the Pacific Island States, are largely considered irreversible (IDMC 2018, 2), thus, a degree movement from these areas should be considered inevitable and accounted for with an adequate governance mechanism.

This article is structured into a two-part literature review and a three-part analysis of the implications of the issues identified in the literature for the protections and pathways

extended to persons undertaking movement in response to slow-onset events. Following this introduction, the first part of the literature review addresses the current state of the international response to climate-induced movement. The second part addresses the specific issues facing movement in response to slow-onset events. In particular this article identifies three problematic distinctions from literature reviewed in this section. Using a socio-legal approach, outlined briefly after the literature review, the article then analyses the three distinctions in light of their implications for conceptualisation and operationalisation. This analysis, firstly, assesses the terminological refugee-migrant debate focusing on the conceptualisation of each term and the definitional issues each faces. Secondly, it addresses how the three problematic distinctions have led to the gaps in the scope of protection in the current government regime for slow-onset movement. Finally, it applies the issues identified in the preceding two sections to the case of Mr. Teitiota and finds that his appeal to refugee status was greatly impacted by the definitional issues identified in the article. In particular, the conceptualisation of forced movement poses a major barrier to accessing protections and pathways for persons such as Mr. Teitiota, undertaking movement in response to slow-onset events.

### **Setting the Scene: The International Response to Climate-Induced Movement**

The relationship between climate change and human mobility is well-established and widely recognised across political spheres. Yet, there remains no internationally coordinated effort to manage climate-induced movement and to provide sufficient protections for persons undertaking movement. The impact of climate change on human mobility has been featured in the global political sphere as early as 1989 when the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) attempted to predict the number of persons moving due the effects of climate change (Ionesco et al. 2017, 13). In 1990, the magnitude of the issue was emphasised by the IPCC which noted that the single greatest impact of climate change could be on human movement (Brown 2008, 11). While human mobility in response to environmental change did not disappear from the international agenda, it took until 2015 for the United Nations (UN) to commission a formal task force on displacement. The Task Force on Displacement (TFD) under the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts (WIM), was approved at the 21<sup>st</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and since has entered the second phase of its implementation due to run until 2021. The TFD has as part of its mandate the issuing of

recommendations on how to minimise but also manage human mobility related to climate change which have been presented and approved at COP24 and COP25. Despite this, there remains doubt that a genuine move towards an internationally coordinated effort to manage climate-induced movement will occur soon. This doubt is solidified by the failure of the 2019 UN Climate Action Summit to adequately address the need for climate-induced migration pathways and protections during the summit (UN 2019, 6-7) or integrate it into its priority areas for action in 2020 (UN 2019, 10).

### ***Critiquing the International Response: The Role of Narratives and Discourses***

The academic sphere has been highly critical of the international response to climate-induced movement. One of the dominant themes that emerged from the literature is the role that discourses, and narratives play in forming national and international responses to movement. Narratives around movement differ greatly between the Global North and Global South. For many states in the Global South, movement in response to environmental change is a normal human mobility behaviour whereas in the Global North it is often represented as a last resort measure (Farquhar 2015, 43). Although climate-induced movement occurs primarily within and between states in the Global South, the problematic narratives of the Global North which dominate international discourse (Farbotko and Lazrus 2012, 1).

The securitization discourse is among the more prominent ones in the Global North. Under this discourse, security concerns regarding impact of climate change on the adaptive capacity states have been extended to include persons undertaking movement. The effect of the securitization discourse on human mobility governance is two-fold; firstly, it allows for states to continue with development interventions which in many instances simply delay movement instead of preventing it. Secondly, it allows states to depoliticise the issue, thus distracting from their responsibilities. Oels (2012, 186), McAdam (2012a, 4), and McNamara and Gibson (2009, 478) have attributed the emergence of climate change and mobility as security issues to attempts by environmental organisations to spur apathetic polluting states to take mitigation action. In order to solicit a response from major polluting states, environmental organisations presented the issue of climate change in a way that would appeal to the interests of those states, the threat of human movement (McNamara and Gibson 2009, 478). The organisations' attempts to put a human face on climate change resulted in alarmist claims that millions of climate refugees will be produced in the future and that states in the Global North will be "flooded by climate refugees" (Klepp 2017, 9; McAdam 2012a, 4). Effectively the organisations did

achieve their end in that states began to engage with mitigation and adaption efforts; however, McAdam (2012a, 4) notes that the alarmist focus on mass mobility has actually reduced adaption measures by closing down movement pathways. This can be seen in the continued emphasis on in-state adaption and climate resilience as international responses to prevent movement, even though it is already occurring. Klepp (2017, 1), and Klepp and Herbeck (2016, 55) take the securitization discourse a step further, arguing that the Global North uses the securitization discourse to depoliticise the issue. By framing the issue as a matter of security, states shift their responsibility to focus on their own citizens (Klepp and Herbeck 2016, 55), thus distracting from their responsibility as historic emitters towards persons impacted by the resulting climate change. The depoliticization effect serves to stagnate negotiations, providing a potential explanatory avenue for the lack of a global mobility management mechanism. The securitization discourse has a more insidious effect, in that it may serve as an explanation for why existing governance mechanisms overwhelming focus on within-state movement over cross-border movement.

### **Establishing the Problems for Movement in Response to Slow-Onset Events**

This article is primarily concerned with climate-induced movement in response to slow-onset events, such as the movement occurring from the Pacific Island States. Movement in response to slow-onset events is underrepresented in current mobility governance mechanisms, leaving significant gaps in current regimes' scope of protection. This underrepresentation occurs outside of governance mechanisms and may serve as further explanations as to why the protection gap persists for persons undertaking this type of movement.

#### ***Quantifying Climate-Induced Movement: Methodological and Definitional Challenges***

Quantifying climate-induced migration faces significant challenges. Existing estimates of the number of persons who have undertaken movement and projections of persons likely to move in the future vary considerably from one another. One of the most cited figures is 150 million to 200 million persons displaced by climate by 2050. This figure has been frequently used by the IPCC (GHF 2009, 49; Brown 2008, 11) and has reached totemic status owing to its prolific use across media, advocacy and political platforms (Ionesco et al. 2017, 13). Professor Myers, the analyst who produced this figure has warned against treating this figure as certain or absolute. Speaking to an author preparing a report for the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Myers stated that this figure is

tentative as it is based on *heroic extrapolations* (Brown 2008, 12). Another frequently cited figure, according to which between 25 million and 1 billion persons will undertake movement due to climate change by 2050, highlights the volatility of projection practices. This figure varies by a factor of 40 which is considerably high but owes the variance to the fact that the estimates which comprise the figure are largely dependent on IPCC projected scenarios of the effects of climate change (IOM 2009, 16).

Ionesco et al. (2017, 12) contend that methodological progress is being made in the area of quantifying climate-induced movement but the attainment of a precise figure is impossible. They argue that ascertaining a figure requires the existence of a strict definition of persons undertaking movement, and an ability to isolate climate change as a distinct driver for movement (Ionesco et al. 2017, 12). As previously stated, there is no common definition of a person undertaking climate-induced movement, nor is there consensus on what factors can be designated climate-induced drivers for movement. Thus, estimates and projections often reflect more on the researchers' assumptions about movement than the actual state of persons undertaking it. Data availability also hinders the attainment of even a more general estimate. Reliable figures have been produced with regard to movement in the wake of rapid-onset events as the relationship between the event and movement is on the surface linear; however, figures for movement in response to slow-onset events are uncertain at best. Even the IOM (2020, 257), arguably the most important body for tracking global human mobility, have admitted that it continues to have gaps in its knowledge with regard to movement induced by slow-onset events. Ionesco et al. (2017, 12) note that increasingly qualitative research methods have been utilised to establish quantitative results. This article contends that in order to use these qualitative methods, underlying assumptions about the nature and causality of movement need to be adequately addressed.

### ***Examining the Temporal Distinction: Isolating Climate Change as Driver of Mobility***

Challenges exist for quantifying and climate-induced movement as there are few instances of climate change as a sole driving factor for movement (Podesta 2019, 3). The temporal distinction between rapid-onset and slow-onset events is often used in a way to isolate climate change as a driver from other drivers of movement. The temporal distinction disproportionately favours the inclusion of movement in the wake of rapid-onset events as the cause of movement, the natural event, is more tangible. Establishing the causality between slow-onset events and movement is more difficult than with rapid-onset,

as isolating the event as the driver is inherently complex given how slow-onset events manifest (Nishimura 2018, 5). Slow-onset events manifest as environmental stressors, developmental stressors, and even as rapid-onset events. The by-effects of slow-onset events are often environmental stressors felt before the direct effect. In the case of sea level-rise as a slow-onset event, water salination as a by-effect leading to a scarcity in fresh water is likely to be felt sooner than the territory loss which is a direct-effect of sea-level rise. Environmental stressors directly impact livelihood outcomes, especially in places where livelihood is highly reliant on the natural environment, but they also contribute to less obvious developmental stressors. Many states experiencing sea-level rise are also experiencing high rates of urbanisation, fuelled by the diminishing ability to derive a livelihood from the natural environment due to the by-effects such as water salination but also the direct effect of the loss of territory. The term used to describe these interactions is climate change as a threat multiplier. The social, economic, and political circumstances of a region are the identifiable drivers for movement, but any vulnerabilities in these circumstances are exacerbated by climate change (Foresight 2011, 9). As these vulnerabilities interact with environmental stressors and shape movement decisions (IOM 2020, 253), it becomes nearly impossible to distinguish persons whose movement is induced solely by climate change as a driver (Foresight 2011, 9). Setting aside additional factors, using the temporal distinction between rapid-onset and slow-onset events as a method of determining causality is flawed. Rapid-onset events are often manifestations of slow-onset events, such as extreme flooding in places suffering from sea-level rise (IDMC 2018, 4). In these cases, it is difficult to discern whether movement is in direct response to the flood or in response to the increased risk of flooding owing to the sea-level rise.

Movement owing to slow-onset events is particularly difficult to quantify as it interacts with underlying assumptions regarding forced and voluntary movement. Where a person displaced by a rapid-onset event is considered to have undertaken forced and necessary movement, persons using movement as a management response to the effects of slow-onset events are seen as voluntarily undertaking movement that although will improve their livelihoods, is not necessary. The difficulties in quantifying climate-induced movement, especially movement in response to slow-onset events, serve as explanations for why existing governance mechanisms primarily address movement in response to rapid-onset events. The use of the temporal distinction has crucial implications for conceptualisation as it informs assumptions about the nature of movement and by extension the nature of the decision-making surrounding this movement.

*Climate-Induced Movement and Decision-Making: The Forced-Voluntary Dichotomy*

Curtain and Dornan (2019), in engaging with the topic of decision-making surrounding climate-induced movement, have been critical of the use of the temporal distinction to characterise decision-making. The distinction between forced and voluntary derived from the temporal distinction reduces a complex decision-making process to a matter of a single factor. With the exception of a singular threat, Curtain and Dornan (2019, 4) argue that all movement decisions should be seen as based on a variety of push and pull factors, highly interrelated and specific to each individual undertaking movement. Farbotko and Lazrus (2012, 6) take this further stating that climate change should never be viewed as a unidirectional driver of human mobility. For them, climate change is part of a web of other drivers specific to the decision-maker, their origin point, and the power relations they experience (Farbotko and Lazrus 2012, 6). The usefulness of such a polar distinction has been questioned throughout the literature. Hugo (1996) argued that the distinction was arbitrary as the majority of human movement could not be considered either totally voluntary or totally forced. Disparaging of the forced-voluntary dichotomy in migration scholarship and typology, he proposed mobility be arranged along a continuum based on the degree of choice available to the person undertaking movement (Hugo 1996, 107). Biermann and Boas (2010, 65) advocated for a similar approach, proposing a scale on which movement could be judged as voluntary, anticipatory, or forced based on climate change being determined the main or an additional cause of movement. Biermann and Boas' (2010) approach is closer in scope to climate-induced movement; however, as this article addresses the protection gap facing persons movement in response to slow-onset events, measuring the degree to which climate change can be a cause for movement will not contribute to the closing of this gap. By emphasising the degree and freedom of choice, Hugo's (1996) continuum facilitates a better conceptualisation of movement occurring in response to slow-onset events. Hugo recognises that not all climate-induced movement is a result of a decision-making process. This article does not deny the existence of climate refugees who have had no choice in undertaking movement, but it will not address forced movements such as these. Owing to the focus on Pacific Island States and slow-onset processes, this article uses a notion of forced decision making along the lines of Hugo's (1996) continuum. Climate-induced movement in this article thus refers to movement resulting from decisions influenced by climate change impacts, not explicitly driven by them. Given the difficulties, and seemingly impossibility of defining climate-induced

movement, the question remains as to why the project continues to be undertaken. Seeking a definition is not just an academic exercise. How climate-induced movement is conceptualised has critical implications for the pathways for movement and protections extended to persons undertaking movement. Policy and legal instruments require sets of criteria to be met by persons seeking assistance under them. By setting criteria, these instruments do not just specify who is included, but inevitably who is excluded. This exclusion most often affects the least visible persons impacted by climate change, persons who can be said as falling through the protection gap.

## Methodology

This article utilises a socio-legal approach in analysing the conceptual and operational issues facing climate-induced movement. Socio-legal research views law as a social institution, embracing multiple disciplines in its interrogation of the processes which shape law and are shaped by law (O'Donovan 2016, 108). Law is not abstract from the conditions and assumptions under which it is made. Legal rules assume a factual situation to which they apply in order to produce a certain outcome (Murty 1982, 63). Interrogating these assumptions is important with regard to human mobility governance as it is an area of law particularly subject to narrative and discourses around persons undertaking movement. A major inspiration by socio-legal research in this article is that examining the law outside of a purely doctrinal approach can uncover potential extra-legal factors and the role they play in what is often assumed as neutral legal reasoning (O'Donovan 2016, 112). As this article contends that the protection gap is as much a result of definitional issues as it is of doctrinal issues, an approach which embraces disciplines outside the legal field provides a more holistic understanding of how conceptualisations of climate-induced movement produce legal outcomes.

This article first conducted a literature review, gathering academic writings from various disciplines and relevant political documents and institutional reports on the topic of climate change and human mobility. The literature review was separated into two thematic areas; the first addressing the state of climate change and human mobility more generally, and the second addressing the specific challenges faced by movement in response to slow-onset events. Following the literature review, this article contains three sections, each addressing the three problematic distinctions identified in the literature as contributing to the protection gap. The following section discusses issues with conceptualisation. It assesses the terminological refugee-migrant debate in the literature, focusing on definitional issues each term has. Subsequently, the three problematic distinctions that have led to the gaps in the scope of protection in the current governance regime for slow-onset movement

are discussed. For this section, governance instruments were identified through the literature and through an independent review of the agreements that constitute them. Finally, an examination of the doctrinal effect of the definitional issues facing mobility in response to slow-onset events is undertaken. Original legal sources, particularly with regard to the case of Mr. Ioane Teitiota, were examined independently and in light of the legal opinions of the case.

### **Conceptualising Climate-Induced Movement: Refugee, Migrant or Something In-between?**

The way a phenomenon is conceptualised is central to the way its regulation is approached (McAdam 2012a, 17). Terminology is at the centre of much of the academic and legal debate surrounding climate-induced movement. Normative notions around the terms refugee and migrant and the legal protections they extend, form one of the central terminological and definitional debates in the scholarship. This article contends that climate-induced movement is neither strictly a refugee nor a migration issue under the traditional application of the terminology, and it is the fundamental mischaracterisation of the movement under these terminologies which has led to the protection gap for persons undertaking movement in response to slow-onset events. Given the prominence of the refugee-migrant definitional debate in the literature, this section will discuss the debate in light of the three distinctions drawn from the literature in the first half of this article: between temporary and permanent movement, between within-state and cross-border movement, and between voluntary and forced movement. The normative implications of the term in everyday discourse will also be highlighted as it is central to the adoption or rejection of the terms.

#### ***Refugee***

The term environmental refugee or climate refugee has widely been used to characterise persons undertaking climate-induced movement; however, it is important to note that under the current refugee regime it has no legal weight. Refugee is a defined legal term relating to political refugees governed by and characterised under the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (Atapattu 2018, 37). To avail of the legal protections extended under the term refugee, a person must meet five criteria derived from the definition of refugee under Article 1.A.2 of the 1951 Convention (UNHCR 2011, 2). Proponents of extending the 1951 Geneva Convention have argued that under a broad understanding, persons undertaking climate-induced movement could be included in the legal protection regime. The doctrinal

operationalisation of the term will be discussed in full in following section on governance. This section addresses the conceptual issues for using the term refugee to characterise persons undertaking movement, outlining three arguments as to why the issue should not be characterised as a refugee issue.

Firstly, refugees invoke notions of forced, cross-border movement. Specifically mobilised in the literature it has been used to describe persons displaced by both rapid-onset and slow-onset climate events (Farbotko and Lazrus 2012, 5). However, in everyday discourse the term can be understood as primarily describing fleeing populations from an imminent threat. In the wake of a rapid-onset event, persons undertaking movement can be fairly characterised as refugees. Movement in the wake of rapid-onset events represents only a sub-set of persons undertaking climate-induced movement. Protection afforded through using this term will therefore be restricted to this sub-set, leaving many persons vulnerable. Furthermore, refugee implies temporary movement; though often not the case in practice, the legal protection of refugee status is subject to the possibility of the person returning to their origin-state provided the non-refoulement principle is not violated. This is therefore fundamentally inappropriate for persons undertaking movement in response to slow-onset events, the focus of this article.

Secondly, the implication of forced movement inherent in the term refugee ignores the complexity involved in the decision-making of persons undertaking climate-induced movement particularly movement in response to slow-onset events. Refugees are largely considered in popular discourse to have no choice but to undertake movement. Under narrow definitions of refugee movement is in response to conflict or persecution, though broad definitions such as Olson's (1979) which includes environmental changes as a factor limiting free choice are prominent in the academic literature. Of the five compulsions that can create refugees, Olson (1979, 130) identifies three as typical of the legal application of the term: religious persecution, ethnic persecution, and ideological persecution. The other two are atypical compulsions; physical danger and economic insufficiency refer to environmental events that could be characterised as rapid-onset and slow-onset respectively (Olson 1979, 130). The question that remains largely unaddressed in the literature is the threshold upon which deteriorating environmental conditions become a serious and imminent enough threat to invoke a notion of forced decision making. Many definitions of refugee invoke a notion of a sudden uprootedness due a threat (Hugo 1996, 107). This is not consistent with many persons undertaking movement.

Thirdly, and most simply, the term refugee has been outwardly rejected and resisted by the persons it has been imposed upon (McNamara and Gibson 2009, 481). A discourse analysis conducted by McNamara and Gibson (2009, 481) illustrated that depictions of climate refugees often have victimhood and vulnerability as subtexts. The Pacific Island States have been particularly vocal in rejecting this victimising narrative spurred through the use of the term refugee. McNamara and Gibson (2009, 482) in interviewing seven ambassadors representing Pacific Small Island States at the UN, found that each ambassador directly opposed the conceptualisation of persons in their states as *refugees in waiting*. McAdam (2012a, 40-41) noted that resistance in Kiribati was due to refugee contradicting a strong sense of Pacific pride. In a 2009 interview with McAdam, President Tong of Kiribati reiterated the will of the I-Kiribati to retain dignity in the face of displacement (McAdam 2012b, 1). The history of movement as a management mechanism for environmental change is erased with the term refugee. It invokes a sense of weakness, portraying persons undertaking movement as helpless victims rather than as active agents in their movement and adaption strategies (Ni 2015, 335) which is clearly important to these persons. There is an important note to be made related to this victimization narrative in that similar to the securitization narrative it distracts from the real economic and political causes of climate change and the actors responsible for it (Hartmann 2010, 235). This has not gone unnoticed, in the same 2009 interview with McAdam, President Tong stated in talking about climate refugees *you're putting the stigma on the victims, not the offender* (McAdam 2012b, 1).

### ***Migrant***

There is no legal definition of migrant under international law (Kälin 2010, 89; UNHCR 2016, 2), nor are there international legal duties for states toward migrants beyond their obligations under human rights law which is owed to all persons on its territory and under its jurisdiction (McAdam 2012a, 6). The term migrant as a purely descriptive label for a person who lacks citizenship to their host-country (Anderson and Blinder 2015, 3) could easily apply to persons undertaking climate-induced movement; however, the utility of the term is questionable as it invokes no real responsibility to provide protections and pathways for movement. Furthermore, migrant has been argued to be a neutral term though in practice there are a variety of applications and conceptualisations of the term. Migrant is often assigned a pre-fix in common discourse which signifies the cause for movement, for example, an economic migrant is someone largely considered to have moved in order to improve their standard of living. It can be argued that pre-fixing climate

or environment to migrant can signal that the push and pull factors considered during the decision-making process are largely related to the deteriorating conditions of life and economic opportunities available as a result of climate change. Persons undertaking this movement can thus be seen as enacting coping strategies in response to environmental and economic changes triggered by climate change (Kälén 2010, 89) and attributed more agency than under the term refugee. The utility of this agency is questionable when many persons undertaking climate-induced movement are unlikely to meet the criteria for entering a traditional immigration pathway as they largely originate from less developed states than the ones they are entering.

### **Governing Climate-Induced Movement: Protections and Pathways**

The current governance system for human mobility provides insufficient protection for all persons undertaking climate-induced movement, but gaps in the scope of its protection exist in particular for movement in response to slow-onset events. This article has identified three primary issues with the current governance system which contributes to the protection gap: the emphasis on forced movement over voluntary movement by the primary legal and policy mechanisms for human mobility, the emphasis on within-state movement leading to a reliance on mechanisms concerning internally displaced persons (IDPs) over the recognition of cross-border movement, and the emphasis on movement due to rapid-onset events through disaster response mechanisms over the recognition of movement induced by slow-onset events.

#### ***International Legal and Policy Regimes***

Current international law and protection regimes provide marginal protection to persons undertaking climate-induced movement, usually predicated on meeting the requirements set for in the 1951 Refugee Convention. As aforementioned, refugee is a legal term subject to a specific legal regime thus there are cogent legal reasons why persons undertaking this type of movement are not assisted by international refugee law (McAdam 2016, 1536). Refugee law is unsuitable in that it requires the establishment of a well-founded fear of being persecuted owing to reasons of race religion, national, political opinion or membership of a social group (1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, Article 1.A.2). Persons undertaking climate-induced movement do not meet these five convention grounds but furthermore, the notion of persecution is difficult to ascertain with regard to climate change. Persecution requires agency, with regard to the Convention this must be human agency (Ni 2015, 338-339), which cannot be assigned to climate change. Even if accepted, the indiscriminate nature of its impact precludes it from

being termed persecution on the basis of one of the five convention grounds (Farquhar 2015, 33). Arguments have been made that the concept of refugee under the 1951 Convention could be expanded to include persons who can be designated climate refugees. This argument is not without precedent; the IOM, as a related agency of the UN, has always included refugees from environmental and climate considerations in its mandate. Furthermore, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has previously expanded its mandate to include humanitarian refugees resulting from severe weather events and armed conflict (Atapattu 2018, 41). This expansion is still heavily based on the conceptualisation of forced movement and thus unsuitable for a large proportion of persons undertaking climate-induced movement.

International human rights law can be seen as filling some of the gaps left by refugee law through complementary protection. International human rights law requires no specific criterion to be met by those protected under it therefore, applicable to a broader range of persons undertaking movement whether they be designated forced refugee or voluntary migrant. McAdam (2016, 1537; 2015, 135) has asserted in her work that human rights law has the greatest capacity in protecting persons from return to life-threatening circumstances as it expands a state's protection obligations to include persons at risk of arbitrary deprivation of life, torture, or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. It is important to note that although these protections do have the potential McAdam attributes to them, currently states are only obligated to extend these protections to persons already on their territory or under their jurisdiction. Furthermore, the threshold in establishing that a human right will be violated upon return to the origin-state is considerably high. Slow-onset events often do not meet this threshold as they are not yet a sufficient or imminent enough threat to a human right.

### ***The Emphasis on Within-State Movement***

There is a tendency on behalf of states in the Global North to assume that human mobility flows are directed toward them. The assumption is largely informed by the securitization discourse discussed above in this article, but it also fuels this narrative. The emphasis on within-state movement therefore cannot only be attributed to the empirical fact that within-state movement occurs more frequently (Atapattu 2018, 38). A majority of persons undertaking climate-induced movement are IDPs (UNHCR 2015, 8). These persons should come under the OHCHR's 1998 Guiding Principles of Internal Displacement (Biermann and Boas 2012, 74); however, the principles are restricted in that references to climate-induced movement are confined to rapid-onset events (Atapattu

2018, 42). The 2013 Peninsula Principles of Climate Change Displacement explicitly addresses climate-induced movement owing to rapid-onset and slow-onset events. The principles take care to account for the multicausality of movement, paying less attention to notions of forced or voluntary decision-making implicit in a temporal focus taken by the 1998 Guiding Principles. However, the Peninsula Principles are also confined to internal displacement (Atapattu 2018, 46).

Facilitating persons to stay in their origin-states is a key element of a climate justice approach. As Klepp (2017, 19) states, the Peninsula Principles underline the shared responsibility of the global community and the origin-state of the displaced person. However, their restriction to within-state movement results in the principles being unsuitable to cover the type of climate-induced movement that is likely to occur in the future due to territory loss.

### ***The Emphasis to Rapid-Onset Events***

The primary UN mechanisms governing movement are the 1951 Refugee Convention, the 1998 Guiding Principles on IDPs, and the 2006 Operational Guidelines on Human Rights and Natural Disasters. All focus on conceptualisations of forced mobility resulting from rapid-onset events. While these are important protection mechanisms for many individuals undertaking climate-induced movement, they address only a subset of persons and do little to address long-term strategies and policies for human mobility (Klepp 2017, 17). Regional instruments have been more effective in creating long-term strategies, however, they have largely focused on within-state movement. The 2012 Nansen Initiative gained traction in this area as it was the only framework that sought to apply a set of principles, many of which had been reiterated in other instruments, to cross-border movement. In 2015 the introduction of the Agenda for Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change challenged criticisms that the initiative was over-focused on rapid-onset events as it included slow-onset events such as sea-level rise, as well as the by-effects, in its conceptualisation of climate-induced movement. Interestingly, it recognises movement induced by slow-onset events as forced decisions to an extent stating that decisions are often not made with complete freedom. The 2015 Protection Agenda, while not fully integrating the circumstances or needs of persons undertaking slow-onset induced movement (Atapattu 2018, 44), presents the most positive attempt for this article. Its rejection of the forced-voluntary dichotomy and recognition of forced-decisions over forced movement overcomes the most problematic

distinction this article identified with regard to the protection gap for persons undertaking movement in response to slow-onset events.

### **New Zealand and the Legal Case of Mr. Ioane Teitiota**

In 2015, the legal case of Mr. Ioane Teitiota, a Kiribati national in New Zealand gained international recognition as one of the most comprehensive legal claims to refugee status under climate change considerations. The case of Mr. Teitiota demonstrated the capacity of the legal framework of New Zealand to respond to climate-induced movement as the courts interpreted the legal requirements in a rather broad sense. It also sharply illustrated where the limits are (McAdam 2015, 137). In this article, persons undertaking movement in response to slow-onset events have been demonstrated to have no specifically designated pathways for movement. In lieu of a specific mechanism, persons undertaking movement must avail of legal regimes which are not suited to account for their circumstances. This article began from the position that the protection gap is as much a result of definitional issues as it is of doctrinal issues. The case of Mr. Teitiota demonstrates this as it was the conceptualisation and mischaracterisation of Mr. Teitiota's movement that prevented him from coming under the 1951 Refugee Convention.

Mr. Teitiota was a legal migrant in New Zealand until his and his wife's visas expired, and they remained unlawfully in the state. Facing deportation, Mr. Teitiota made a claim to refugee status under section 129 of the 2009 Immigration Act, citing the degrading environmental and economic conditions of his home state Kiribati as a threat to himself and his family if forced to return. The Immigration Act defines refugee in line with Article 129.1 of the 1951 Refugee Convention. In practice, the courts claimed to have taken a broader reading of the convention as opposed to a narrow one. Yet, Mr. Teitiota's claim was rejected on the grounds that even under a broad reading, he did not meet the criteria under the 1951 Refugee Convention. Mr. Teitiota was granted multiple leaves to appeal resulting in his case succeeding to the highest legal level in New Zealand, the Supreme Court. Each court upheld the others judgement that Mr. Teitiota was ineligible for refugee status, leading to his deportation in 2015.

While there have been numerous cases similar to Mr. Teitiota's, his case is of particular interest owing to the judgements' frequent reference to environmental conditions being possible triggers for a state's protection obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention or human rights law. In fact, the Immigration and Protection Tribunal (IPT), the High Court, and the Supreme Court stated that despite the failure of Mr. Teitiota's case, environmental degradation could not be ruled out as being able to create a pathway

under the 1951 Refugee Convention or similar protection frameworks (NZSC 107 2015, 13). It was ultimately decided that in spite of this recognition and the degrading conditions in Kiribati, Mr. Teitiota's circumstances, if returned, would not be considered a sufficient threat to invoke these obligations – yet (NZSC 107 2015, 12).

Mr Teitiota's case clearly demonstrates the fundamental mischaracterisation of climate-induced movement discussed in this article. Mr. Teitiota was initially designated a migrant owing to his cross-border movement into New Zealand under the legal immigration pathway. Unable to avail of the governance mechanisms discussed in the previous section, owing to his movement being cross-border, in response to slow-onset events, and conceived as voluntary, Mr. Teitiota turned to the 1951 Refugee Convention. The courts did take a broad reading of the convention, recognising the potential for slow-onset events to amount to a significant threat and recognising to a degree the forced decision-making on behalf of Mr. Teitiota. Despite this broader interpretation his movement was again mischaracterised. The IPT characterised his movement as *voluntary adaptive movement*, though they did recognise there was a *degree of compulsion* in his decision (NZIPT 800413 2013, 49). This compulsion was recognised by the courts as the degrading environmental conditions, and resulting livelihood pressures, in Kiribati, with the High Court even deeming Mr. Teitiota a *sociological refugee* (NZHC 3125 2013, 54). It is clear from a reading of the judgements that Mr. Teitiota's movement was not only understandable but considered necessary owing to the conditions he experienced in his origin-state. Despite this, the threat was only recognised as warranting a movement under migration pathways, not sufficiently imminent to warrant protection as a refugee or protected person.

With regard to Mr. Teitiota's claim to protected status, this article identifies two primary issues resulting from the mischaracterisation of climate-induced movement which undermined his claim: the notion of persecution and the timing of his claim. Both relate to the arbitrary division between voluntary and forced movement. As aforementioned, the notion of persecution cannot be assigned to climate change which lacks agency; however, under a human rights consideration the courts took a broader reading of this requirement, considering the role of the Kiribati Government and whether it had abdicated their duty to protect their citizens from known harm (McAdam 2015, 134). The IPT found that the Government had not failed in taking adequate measures to protect Mr. Teitiota (NZIPT 800413 2013, 75) and this finding was upheld in subsequent judgements. There remains a question as to whether it is enough to simply address if the government is taking measures or should the capacity of the Government to implement sufficient measures be considered.

Kiribati is one of the poorest states in the world, despite receiving support in developing environmental interventions, the capacity of the government to respond effectively seems low. This raises further questions of justice and responsibility. In front of the Court of Appeal, Mr. Teitiota argued that the role of the international community in contributing to climate change should be considered tantamount to the notion of persecution under the 1951 Refugee Convention. This argument was rejected as an *attempt to stand the Convention on its head* (NZCA 173 2014, 40) as, under a traditional reading, a refugee would not seek protection from the alleged persecuting state (NZCA 173 2014, 40). Furthermore, the international community was declared to have lacked any motivation to harm states such as Kiribati (Ni 2015, 339). While legally this judgement might be correct, the claim nevertheless demonstrates an awareness of the role of climate justice in these decisions on behalf of Mr. Teitiota, and presents an interesting argument in favour of states recognising their historic responsibility and extending concessions to those most affected. Where the harm may not have been intentional in historic terms, the weak mitigation efforts on behalf of states in the Global North, despite their awareness of the severe adverse impacts on these countries, does challenge this intentionality of harm.

According to article 131.1 of the 2009 New Zealand Immigration Act, the protection obligations of New Zealand can also be triggered under the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights if there are substantial grounds for believing that a person would be subjected to arbitrary deprivation of life or cruel treatment if deported. This is akin to the well-founded fear test in refugee law, and similarly, requires the threat to be relatively imminent (McAdam 2015, 138). Of primary importance to this article is the statement from the IPT that the environmental conditions do not hinder Mr. Teitiota in resuming his prior subsistence life with dignity though the living conditions would be lower than that enjoyed in New Zealand (NZIPT 800413 2013, 74). This statement alludes to the previous discussion of the term migrant and demonstrates how Mr. Teitiota's movement was mischaracterised and how individual-decision making processes are often too simplistically understood. Mr. Teitiota can be seen as undertaking climate-induced movement not in response to an imminent threat, and not simply to gain a better standard of living in New Zealand, but in anticipation of a severe reduction in quality of life and security in his origin-state which had empirically been proven to be occurring. Mr. Teitiota's claim was damaged by his characterisation as a migrant, as in New Zealand an immigrant may be permitted to stay if they can invoke humanitarian grounds. Mr. Teitiota could have cited degrading

conditions in Kiribati as humanitarian grounds but he was precluded from doing so as he had invalidated his migrant status by overstaying his visa (Ni 2015, 343).

While New Zealand's jurisprudence in this area is considered to offer the most comprehensive analysis of the scope and content of protection for people undertaking climate-induced movement (McAdam 2015, 132), as demonstrated by the broad interpretation of the Convention grounds in the judgements, the overarching question for the Supreme Court remained whether Mr. Teitiota could bring himself within the terms of the Refugee Convention (Baker-Jones and Baker-Jones 2015, 104). It is clear that despite this broad reading Mr. Teitiota could not do so, nor could he appeal to alternative protection frameworks owing to his invalidation of his migrant status. Not quite migrant, not quite refugee, Mr. Teitiota fell into the protection gap prevalent in climate-induced movement. His movement was recognised as adaptive, the conditions in Kiribati he was responding to were considered grave but not sufficiently dangerous to warrant protection. As each court recognised that an appropriate case could invoke protection under the refugee regime in the future, is Mr. Teitiota simply supposed to come back later?

## Conclusion

This article began from the position that the current system of international law, understood as the entire system of legal agreements between states, is not equipped to effectively manage and sufficiently protect all persons undertaking climate-induced movement (Podesta 2019, 4). Persons undertaking movement in response to slow-onset events have been demonstrated to have neither specifically designated pathways for movement, nor a sufficient protection regime. In lieu of a specific mechanism, persons undertaking movement must avail of the current governance system which has significant gaps in its scope of protection. This article also argued that the protection gap is as much a result of definitional issues as it is of doctrinal issues. Not quite refugee, not quite migrant, persons undertaking climate-induced movement, particularly in response slow-onset events, have been designated an inappropriate terminology which has greatly impacted their ability to access to protection and pathways for movement. The case of Mr. Teitiota demonstrated the capacity of the courts to respond to this movement and extend their protection frameworks. This jurisprudential advance in New Zealand is positive for persons undertaking climate-induced movement but questions still need to be addressed as to the threshold that has to be met for a person's circumstances to be considered significant and imminent enough to warrant protection. In examining the definitional issues, this article concludes that doctrinal advances will continue to be restricted by

definitional issues, unless the mischaracterisation of movement in response to slow-onset events is adequately addressed and the extra-legal factors underlying legal reasoning are uncovered and dispelled of.

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## From Climate Change to Conflict – Environmental Security Challenges in North-Western Kenya

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### Abstract

*In recent years, debate and research on the effects of climate change have intensified. By contributing to natural disasters, sea-level rise and resource scarcity, changes in climate are anticipated to become a significant threat to environmental security. However, existing literature and case studies on the effects of climate change in relation to violence find diverging results. This research note therefore asks if and to what extent climate change can be regarded as a significant contributor to violent conflicts. By investigating climate-related effects on pastoral raiding in North-Western Kenya, the overall relationship between climate change and conflict is analysed on the basis of a practical case study. This analysis supports that climate change is a decisive factor in increasing violence. By multiplying previously existing socio-political tensions and triggering the outbreak of latent conflict, climate change can have impacts on both environmental and civil security. However, its effects are often not directly visible.*

### Keywords

Climate Change; Climate-Conflict Nexus; East Africa; Environment; North-Western Kenya; Pastoral Conflicts; Raiding; Resource Scarcity; Security

## Introduction

“Climate stress may well represent a challenge to international security just as dangerous – and more intractable – than the arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War or the proliferation of nuclear weapons among rogue states today” (Homer-Dixon 2007).

This statement of political scientist and ecologist Thomas Homer-Dixon, published by *The New York Times*, represents the rise of public debates as well as scientific research on the effects of climate change in recent years. While some consequences, such as increasing global temperatures, became apparent and undeniable, others remain hidden or are not directly related to climate change. An example of the later is a higher potential for the eruption of violent conflicts.

Discussed controversially by the international community, some scholars state that the capacity for environment-related factors to be drivers for conflict has been overemphasised since conflicts are deeply rooted within societal and governmental structures (Salehyan 2008, 317). Nevertheless, scientific literature on the topic is dominated by reports, books and articles supporting a strong linkage between climate change and conflicts. By contributing to natural disasters, sea-level rise and increasing resource scarcity, changes in climate are perceived as a significant threat to environmental security (Theisen et al. 2013, 615). Exposed to this threat are mainly those countries and communities which contribute less to climate change but suffer from poverty and poor governance. An especially affected region is East Africa due to its “high dependence on natural ecosystem resources, its history of violence, high levels of poverty and limited state capacity for climate change adaptation” (van Baalen and Mobjörk 2016, 10).

The aim of this research note is to contribute to the literature on the relationship between climate change and conflict through a case study of pastoral conflicts in North-Western Kenya. The structure of the research note reflects this two-step approach of theory and praxis. Following the introduction and methodology, the literature review presents and evaluates relevant research and alternative narratives on climate conflicts in general. The case study is then more practically orientated as it focuses on an example in Kenya. While climate-related environmental security challenges and their effects on Kenyan land and life will be analysed in the second section, measures of climate adaptation and conflict handling are taken into consideration in the third. Both parts of the case study aim to reflect on the overall research question of this research note: to what extent and under which conditions can climate change be regarded as a significant contributor to violent conflicts? Bringing theoretical aspects and practical insights of environmental security

challenges in North-Western Kenya together, the conclusion will give an outlook on future climate conflict projections as well as on the transferability of knowledge obtained onto other cases.

## **Methodology**

In order to cope with the complexity of the chosen topic, case study research has been chosen as the methodological approach of the research note. Constituting one of the predominant methods in international politics, case study research is useful for understanding and analysing complex phenomena while complementing theories with practical examples. Thereby, case studies can be used either to generate new hypotheses or to test whether existing theories are able to correctly explain processes and conclusions of one or several particular cases (Bennett 2008, 22). The present research note applies a deductive approach by first considering theories of the climate-conflict nexus prevailing in scientific literature and then examining their applicability to the influence of climate change on pastoral raiding in North-Western Kenya.

For the first part, a comparative scientific literature review was conducted. The review draws on studies from peace and conflict scholarship as well as on more general political and ecological literature and aims to create a general overview of interrelations between data on climate-induced environmental changes and violent conflict. In order to draw conclusions about the impact of climate change on the likelihood of conflicts that go beyond theoretical assumptions, an analysis of different empirical studies and scientific reports on one specific case have been elaborated as a second step. Due to the limited framework of this research note, data and information were gathered by analysis of previously conducted research instead of carrying out an independent study. While this can be considered a weakness and a lack of originality, the research note nevertheless attempts to fill a current research gap with the combination of theoretical and practical assumptions in one coherent argumentation.

The research area chosen for this note is situated in East Africa, a part of the world severely affected by climate change and communal conflict. In particular, a region in North-Western Kenya consisting of the counties Turkana and Pokot will be investigated. This region presents a suitable case for the framework of the present research note because of its high sensitivity to climatic changes and the importance of natural resources for pastoralist communities living in this area. The effects of climate change on environment, population and conflict can therefore be easily observed and analysed.

## Literature Review: Climate Change as a Cause of Conflict?

Having its roots in the 1960s, the idea of an interdependence between climate change and conflict has evolved quickly since the end of the Cold War and caused controversial debates in recent years (Raleigh and Urdal 2007, 675). In order to give a theoretical introduction to the topic, this section deals with the development of the climate-conflict nexus, including arguments in favour as well as criticism. The question of whether climate change poses a security threat relies on assumptions of interrelations between environmental changes and violence, which are therefore presented in the first subchapter. With ongoing scientific research, the argument that climate change has a crucial effect on the eruption of conflicts evolved over the last decades. The rise of the climate-conflict nexus will therefore be evaluated in a second step. In addition, the last part of this chapter deals with alternative narratives on the relationship between climate change and conflict, including critical approaches.

### *Interrelation between Environmental Changes and Violence*

The connection between environmental changes and violence came up in peace and conflict research during the 1990s with studies from scholars like Günther Bächler and Thomas Homer-Dixon. Environmental changes in their early sense, however, focused on resource scarcities caused by humans, rather than changes in climate. According to this perspective, Homer-Dixon defines environmental change as “a human-induced decline in the quantity or quality of a renewable resource that occurs faster than it is renewed by natural processes” (Homer-Dixon 1994, 8). The development of environmental transformations can therefore be characterized as exponential, while resource production in general is a linear procedure. Additional factors contributing to resource scarcities are population growth and unequal resource distribution which occur relatively exponentially rather than linearly and are thus difficult to estimate. Even with no reference to climate change, Homer-Dixon directly relates environmental scarcities to a rising potential of violence:

“Environmental scarcities are already contributing to violent conflicts in many parts of the developing world. These conflicts are probably the early signs of an upsurge of violence in the coming decades that will be induced or aggravated by scarcity. [...] Poor societies will be particularly affected since they are less able to buffer themselves from environmental scarcities and the social crises they cause” (Homer-Dixon 1994, 6).

Moreover, he defines three different types of conflicts erupting in reaction to environmental changes: interstate scarcity conflicts due to decreasing resources, such as

clean water and agricultural land, ethnic clashes as a result of population movements caused by environmental stress and intrastate insurgencies or civil strifes provoked by economic deprivation (Homer-Dixon 1994, 6).

Building on Homer-Dixon's arguments, Günther Bächler states that environmental transformations and conflicts are mutually dependent or at least facilitate each other, calling their interrelation a security dilemma. While environmental changes contribute to the emergence as well as to the intensification of violent conflicts on the one hand, peace and security challenges induced by social and political maldevelopment further environmental disruption on the other (Bächler 1998, 24). While Homer-Dixon only focused on environmental aspects leading to an increase in violence, Bächler also emphasizes the significance of sociopolitical factors:

“Environmental degradation may be a background reason for a certain conflict, it may be a factor leading to channeling or cleavages along lines between distinct groups, and it may even be a triggering factor to a conflict dynamic. However, passing the threshold of violence definitely depends on sociopolitical factors and not on the degree of environmental degradation as such” (Bächler 1998, 32).

Keeping in mind the importance of sociopolitical factors, such as institutional capacities, for the eruption of violence, Bächler calls for an in-depth examination of the point at which environmental conflicts turn violent (Bächler 1998). Despite questioning the influence of resource scarcities on the outburst of violence, he generally also argues that there is a correlation between environmental degradation and conflict.

In later research, the early approaches of Homer-Dixon were often criticized for being too speculative, lacking scientific evidence and presenting only a one-sided perspective of the environment-conflict relation (Gleditsch 2007, 181). However, with scholars like Bächler building upon his assumptions, his work served as a major reference point for future studies on climate change as an amplifier of conflicts.

### ***The Climate-Conflict Nexus***

The discourse shifted from interrelations of human-induced environmental changes and violence to the direct notion of climate change as a contributor to armed conflicts in the early 2000s. Mainly influenced by reports of the “Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change” (IPCC) on the effects of climate change, peace and conflict scholars started to build up the climate-conflict nexus. Renowned authors in this field are Nils Petter Gleditsch, Ole Magnus Theisen and Halvard Buhaug among others.

The climate-conflict nexus is based on the assumption that climate change leads to the “loss of livelihood, economic decline, and increased insecurity either directly or through

forced migration” (Theisen et al. 2013, 615). Scholars argue that as a result of the climate-induced reduction in resources, such as land or water, affected societies are likely to fight over the remaining ones. Even if communities try to resolve the problem of resource scarcity in a peaceful way by partially migrating to another area, they might create new scarcities and conflicts when settling in already inhabited territories, where resources might be constrained as well (Theisen et al. 2013, 615). In addition, migration always bears the risk of ethnic clashes between migrants and hosting communities. Hence, climate refugees increase the likelihood of conflicts in their new areas of residences (Barnett and Adger 2007, 643).

Research connecting climate change and conflict also focuses on other aspects and arguments besides the main theory on resource scarcity. For example, a linkage often made in psychological literature is the connection between hot temperatures and individual aggression which leads to the assumption that global warming automatically contributes to increased violence due to personal discomfort (Anderson 2001). This theory was adopted in several interdisciplinary studies. For example, a research by Marshall Burke et al. (2009) found strong historical interrelations between temperature and the outburst of civil wars in Sub-Saharan Africa, concluding with the prognosis that, based on current projections of future temperature trends, there will be an increase in violent conflicts of roughly 54 percent by 2030 (Burke et al. 2009). However, such statistics should only be seen as possible development trends rather than reliable predictions of the future. Whether and to what extent violence really increases depends most likely on other factors besides heat-related individual aggression.

Other scholars focus on the impacts of weather extremes, such as large shifts in the frequency and strength of rainfall. Rainfall deviations can be regarded as especially problematic for rural communities because they are dependent on rain-fed agriculture, whether for food production or income (Fjelde and Uexkull 2012, 445). As a result, people affected by severe precipitation anomalies often suffer from hunger and poverty, and communal conflicts are more likely to arise. Slighter changes in rainfall, however, are controversially discussed in peace and conflict scholarship. While some scholars argue that violence is expected to occur in rather dry years, others claim there is an increase in violence during times which are wetter than usual (Theisen et al. 2013, 616ff.).

Two other important effects of climate change that might contribute to the eruption of violent conflicts in certain cases are higher risks of natural disasters and rising sea-levels. However, there is a lack of in-depth research on those aspects. Further studies

are therefore necessary to give a well-founded statement on whether they enhance the potential of conflict or not (Theisen et al. 2013, 619ff.). Moreover, natural disasters as well as rising sea-levels are mainly affecting islands and coastal areas of Asian countries. As the focus of this research note lays on climate-related conflicts in East Africa, where these factors are less relevant, they will not be further elaborated in the present framework.

### *Alternative Narratives: Disillusioning the Climate-Conflict Nexus*

Despite the arguments describing a relationship between environmental transformations through climate change and violent conflicts presented in the previous chapters, the climate-conflict nexus is not accepted without criticism. The key critique addresses especially the lack of scientific sources when it comes to conclusions about climate change and conflict. As stated before, studies on the climate-conflict nexus are mainly based on IPCC reports. However, critical scholars question if the IPCC had sufficient access to peer-reviewed sources when composing their publications. According to sociologist and political scientist Nils Petter Gleditsch:

“the IPCC is not charged with the task of doing research; rather it ‘reviews and assesses the most recent scientific, technical and socio-economic information produced worldwide’ [quoted from the IPCC homepage]. In an area where little or no research has been conducted, the IPCC has a poor basis for an assessment” (Gleditsch 2012, 3).

On the other side, autonomous studies by peace and conflict scholars largely focus on specific cases and are therefore perceived as not suitable to draw general conclusions from. In fact, recent empirical analyses come to diverse and diverging results. “The general impression left by this new wave of research is that direct links are few and weak; causal pathways are complex and contingent on a host of additional factors” (Salehyan 2008, 316).

The notion of additional factors furthering violent conflicts in climate change-affected areas leads to the second point of criticism. Critics state that when climate change is linked to armed conflict the role of coping mechanisms is often ignored. Such mechanisms are, for example, the capability of governmental institutions to handle environmental stress, the level of technological progress or the range of human agency (Fjelde and Uexkull 2012, 444; Salehyan 2008, 317). Variations in the effectiveness of these coping mechanisms might explain the fact that climate change poses a potential security threat in some regions, while other areas do not seem to be affected at all. In this sense, “economic, political and social factors determine how countries handle resource scarcity. Wealthy and democratic countries are likely to be more capable both to adapt to resource scarcity and to mitigate conflict” (Raleigh and Urdal 2007, 675).

While the previous points criticize the deterministic character of arguments within the climate-conflict nexus but admit that climate change can in fact act as a multiplier of violent conflicts under certain conditions, there are alternative narratives. Some research even states that climate change should not only be disregarded as contributing to conflicts, but on the contrary is supposed to strengthen peace. A strong advocate of this theory is Erik Gartzke, who states that critical challenges for citizens and policymakers – such as climate change – further economic development and international cooperation (Gartzke 2012). When applying climate adaptation and mitigation measures, societies are thus believed to interact in a more peaceful manner.

To conclude the preceding literature review of theories supporting or rejecting the climate-conflict nexus, there is no academic consensus on the relation between rising conflict potentials and environmental degradation through climate change. However, a deterministic perspective on climate change—unreflectively describing it as a direct cause of violent conflict—is widely present within political discussions in the international community. One reason for this might be that the potential of climate change to exacerbate violent conflicts can be used as a convincing argument in public debates and often serves as a rhetorical device for politicians and social activists to support their claims and policy proposals for increased environmental protection (Salehyan 2008, 317f.). In order not to follow this determinism, the present research note holds back general assumptions but rather focuses on one specific case which will be analysed in the following section.

### **Case Study: Environmental Security in North-Western Kenya**

“Kenya has witnessed an alarming upsurge in the incidence and severity of extreme climatic events caused by climate change. [...] In Northern Kenya, longer and more frequent droughts continue to ravage pastoralist populations. [...] With over 70 percent of Kenyans dependent for their livelihoods on agriculture, the long-term health of the country’s environment and natural resources are critical to its very survival” (Kenyan Ministry of Environment and Mineral Resources 2009, cited after Campbell et al. 2009, 7).

As stated in an announcement of the National Climate Change Response Strategy (NCCRS), published in 2010, Kenya is highly sensitive to environmental transformations. Especially affected are its North-Western regions Turkana and Pokot which were therefore selected as the research subject of this analysis. Since the two counties are characterized by high temperatures, low precipitation levels and arid to semi-arid climate, landscapes are mainly consisting of shrubland, savanna and desert (Schilling et al. 2014, 246). Most of the people in Turkana and Pokot are pastoralists, earning their living by cattle herding. Their

livelihood is therefore strongly dependent on natural resources, such as agricultural land and sufficient rainfall, which is needed to feed and maintain their livestock (Njiru 2012, 514). However, these already dry areas are extremely vulnerable when it comes to changes in climate and precipitation. Thus, climate change has recently led to severe environmental and social transformations in North-Western Kenya. The following section studies ways these changes are affecting Kenyan land and life, and climate adaptation measures of the country and its inhabitants towards the occurring transformations. Moreover, it attempts to answer the question of whether climate change is a cause of conflict in Kenya.

### ***Effects of Climate Change on Kenyan Land and Life***

In North-Western Kenya two major impacts of climate change can be observed in the last decades: temperature rise and rainfall variability. Several scientific reports found that there has been an increase in temperature by approximately 1°C from 1960 until 2010 in Kenya (Campbell et al. 2009, 6; McSweeney et al. 2008, 2). Future projections assume that at the current state of climate change adaptation and mitigation, temperatures in East Africa will rise by 2.8°C by 2060 and by 4.5 °C by 2100 (Schilling et al. 2014, 243). As a result of the country's warming, "the frequency and intensity of drought periods in northern Kenya does appear to have been increasing: the region recorded 28 major droughts in the last century, four of which have occurred in the last decade" (Campbell et al. 2009, 7f.). A higher rate of droughts has large impacts on the pastoralist communities in Turkana and Pokot. Since dry periods lead to natural resource scarcities, pastoralists suffer from livestock loss, which is even more difficult to compensate and to recover from if intervals between droughts are getting shorter (Schilling et al. 2014, 245).

This development is only intensified through the effects of a higher variation in precipitation. In fact, no significant change in the annual amount of rainfall can be observed statistically since the 1960s. However, the precipitation levels during rain seasons—from March to May and October to December—has increased, while the quantity of rainfall between those wet seasons has decreased (Schilling et al. 2014, 243f.). As heavy rainfall events are projected to arise more often in the future, scientists predict an overall increase in the proportion of annual rainfall in Kenya on a range of 1 to 13 percent by 2090 (McSweeney et al. 2008, 3). It could be assumed that the environment as well as pastoralists and their livestock benefit from higher rainfall amounts since water scarcity is reduced. However, as mentioned above, rainfall occurs unequally over the course of the year. As a matter of fact, "strong rainfall events followed by extended dry periods increase

the likelihood of floods and droughts, especially in combination with the strong warming trend” (Schilling et al. 2014, 245).

Connecting these observations to Homer-Dixon’s scarcity theory presented in the literature review, the effects of climate change in North-Western Kenya can be considered to further the likelihood of violence. As most people rely on rain-fed agriculture to ensure their livelihoods, transformations in the frequency of droughts and the availability of water are likely to cause resource conflicts. This connection is also stated in a report by the International Institute of Sustainable Development (IISD), which argues that “on the one hand, climate change is one of a range of factors causing natural resource scarcity and competition; on the other, natural resource scarcity and competition is one of a range of factors causing conflict” (Campbell et al. 2009, 12). Emphasizing that climate change, however, is only one among several factors contributing to resource scarcity and thus to conflict, the ISSD’s observations also reflects the critical position towards the deterministic designation of climate change as a cause of conflict presented in this research note. However, conflicts over natural resources in Kenya’s North-Western regions Turkana and Pokot, such as violent attempts to gain the control over water sources, have strong potential to threaten food security on the one side and human safety on the other (Campbell et al. 2009, 10).

Moreover, conflicts between different ethnic groups in Turkana and Pokot are more likely to arise due to the effects of climate change. Environmental scientist Janpeter Schilling, who conducted several researches on the linkage of climate change and conflict in North-Western Kenya, found a strong interrelation between environmental transformations and increasing violent raids. Even though pastoralist raiding has a long history between the communities in Turkana and Pokot, incidents appear to increase with rising temperatures and changes in precipitation (Schilling et al. 2014, 248ff.). Scholars supporting the theory that climate change contributes more to peace than it causes or exacerbates violence argue that raiding in pastoral communities is less likely during droughts. According to this argumentation, pastoralists have less economic incentive to steal cattle in dry years because feeding options are limited and might be even insufficient for one’s own herd (Theisen 2012, 84). Being aware of such theories, Schilling states:

“In regular years with sufficient rain, raiding is mostly conducted before and during the rainy seasons because animals are healthier, they can travel longer distances and raiders find cover for their attacks. But when rains partly or completely fail and a certain threshold of resource scarcity is reached, raids are conducted despite less fortunate raiding conditions. The raids during dry periods

do not primarily serve the purpose of restocking but rather aim at gaining or securing control over scarce pasture and water resources” (Schilling et al. 2014, 256).

According to Schilling’s research, violent conflicts between pastoralists in Turkana and Pokot are even more recurrent in recent years due to both a higher frequency of droughts leading to resource scarcity on the one hand and increasing precipitation during rain seasons leading to temporary resource rich environments on the other hand. Having analysed the effects of climate change on Kenyan land and life, I conclude that climate change clearly contributes to the likelihood of conflicts in this particular case. However, it is not the only cause and rather acts as a multiplier of already existing violent tensions in Turkana and Pokot.

### ***Climate Adaptation and Conflict Handling***

To get an overall image of how conflict in North-Western Kenya is affected by climate change, it is important to look at climate adaptation and mitigation measures and evaluate in which ways they can contribute to the peaceful handling of conflicts. In Turkana and Pokot, a high level of local adaptation procedures can be observed while the central government fails to take efficient action and to provide security (Eriksen and Lind 2009, 830).

As a result of climate change-induced environmental changes presented in the previous chapter, pastoral communities started to diversify their livelihoods, “developed a highly flexible social system and an elaborate set of both individual and collective-based survival strategies” (Omolo 2010, 89). Such strategies include for example the expansion of grazing ranges and an adjustment of the wandering of herds and are therefore dependent on enhanced cooperation and interaction with neighbouring groups. Increased interactions might strengthen friendly relationships between different communities, when having “a cooperative character in the form of reciprocal grazing arrangements” (Schilling et al. 2014, 253). However, they are also likely to contribute to intercommunal conflict, since the expansion of grazing areas is perceived as invasive by groups that are not engaged in grazing associations (Schilling et al. 2014).

Despite high internal efforts to respond to the threat of raiding through the social organization of resource use, an increase in conflicts cannot be prevented without any form of governmental engagement. In fact, the Kenyan government is well aware of the threats of climate change. This becomes especially clear when looking at the earlier mentioned National Climate Change Response Strategy (NCCRS), which shows not only the intention to deal with climate change-induced environmental destruction and resource scarcity, but

also presents an explicit policy approach (GoK 2010). Moreover, the country is constantly working on the implementation of adaption and mitigation measures within the framework of its National Climate Change Action Plans (NCCAPs) (GoK 2013; GoK 2018). While NCCAP I (2013-2017) largely focused on the reduction of carbon emissions and mitigation actions like reforestation, NCCAP II (2018-2022) aims to reach change on the legislative level by the development of a policy and regulatory framework in order to better equip government and stakeholders for the control and elimination of potential causes of climate change.

However, government strategies are so far failing to effectively reach the county level where support would be needed for the creation of legislation appropriate to the respective local contexts. On the contrary, pastoralist communities have been significantly marginalised by the central government when it comes to economic and political adaptation strategies (Schilling et al. 2014, 246). The political marginalisation of the regions Turkana and Pokot exists not only since environmental security challenges in recent years but is deeply manifested in the country's structure and the government's negative overall attitude towards pastoralism (Eriksen and Lind 2009, 831). For example, the national government fails to supply basic civil services like education, healthcare provisions and insurances to the North-Western regions. As pastoralists suffer from substantial livelihood losses due to an increased frequency of droughts, the implementation of a social security system could help to compensate environmental scarcities (Schilling et al. 2014, 253). But since government support is non-existent, pastoralists might feel even greater pressure to secure resources for their livestock through raiding. Moreover, the lack of governmental institutions can be seen as another conflict furthering aspect:

“In general, enforcement of the rule of law in these areas is weak and access to justice is limited. In this context, conflict actors are able to operate relatively freely and with a high degree of impunity. Communities often defend themselves by mobilising and arming their youth, increasing the number of conflict actors and making the use of violence to resolve disputes far more likely” (Campbell et al. 2009, 6).

Being limited in their power to implement the compliance of official grazing rules and regulations for the use of resources, local capacities are largely left alone in dealing with the effects of climate change. A successful adaptation to recent environmental transformations which would decrease the potential of violent conflicts, however, appears to be only possible through cooperation between the national and the local level.

## Conclusion

The aim of this research note was to contribute to literature on the climate-conflict nexus through an in-depth case study on North-Western Kenya. The underlying research question has been 'to what extent and under which conditions can climate change be regarded as a significant contributor to violent conflicts?' By first reviewing this nexus from a theoretical perspective, the controversy of the research topic became obvious. While scholars like Homer-Dixon argue that there is a strong link between environmental transformations and the eruption of violence, others stress the importance of additional factors like social and political structures. Connections drawn in scientific literature primarily focus on the effects of rising temperatures and variations in rainfall since several studies have shown that such changes facilitate the likelihood of droughts and floods which contribute to severe resource scarcities. Whether climate change-induced resource scarcities are in fact the sole cause for the eruption of violent conflict is debatable, and in academia, there is no consensus on this question yet.

Instead of following deterministic approaches on the climate-conflict nexus, this research note argues that environmental transformations caused by climate change are multipliers of existing sociopolitical tensions. As such tensions exist in many cohabiting communities but are often latent and thus not visible, the effects of climate change can also act as triggers for the eruption of violence. In this sense, climate change is indeed contributing to conflict but rarely as a direct cause. In addition, IGOs and NGOs working in affected regions are often cautious in naming climate change as a decisive factor for violence because downplaying internal causes of conflict, for example, hostile behaviour, could reinforce conflicts.

The analysis of environmental security challenges in North-Western Kenya, conducted in the second part of this note, supports the perception of climate change as a conflict multiplier. As Kenya's rural population largely relies on rain-fed agriculture to secure their livelihoods, the slightest changes in climate and ensuing transformations of environmental conditions can have intense effects on the people's propensity to violence. Tensions between the pastoralist communities in Turkana and Pokot are deeply rooted in history and are therefore likely to escalate under extreme conditions. Moreover, the North-Western part of Kenya is generally marginalised by the country's government and receives no support in adapting to the effects of climate change. In conclusion, this case suggests that climate change is enhancing existing conflict potential on the one hand, while on the

other hand the simultaneous lack of governmental coping mechanisms is leading to the eruption of conflicts.

Bringing together the theoretical examination of the climate-conflict nexus and the example of climate-affected intensified pastoral conflicts in Kenya, this research note finds that climate change contributes to conflict to a limited extent but is never the sole cause. The intensity of its effects strongly depends when there are co-existing environmental, social, political and even cultural circumstances in each specific region and its communities. Areas that are already suffering from environmental scarcities as well as poor governance are more likely to turn violent because of the multiplier effect of climate change than resource rich regions with a stable government and political system. As a consequence, countries in the Global South are, in most cases, more vulnerable to climate change due to their geographic location and lower governmental adaptation and mitigation capacities. On the contrary, countries in the Global North are in general able to compensate changes in climate and less dependent on natural resources in order to secure their living. Arguments of scientists and politicians coming from less-affected countries, which deny the potential of climate change to aggravate violent conflicts, thus have to be seen critically (Lewandowsky et al. 2015). However, there are also governments from states in the Global South, such as India or Mozambique, who oppose the idea of climate change as a conflict multiplier even if there is significant evidence. It can thus be said that states in general tend to neglect the effects of climate change, if mitigation measures are not consistent with their current policy lines.

This research note analysed the increase in violent conflicts through climate change-induced resource scarcity. As already mentioned, other interesting factors to study within the climate-conflict nexus would be the rise of sea-levels as well as the increase of natural disasters. The investigation of these additional consequences of climate change would also open up another research area—namely South East Asia, a region extremely vulnerable to sea-level rise and natural disasters. Further research could also elaborate and compare different aspects of climate change and their effects on the likelihood of violence and conflicts. Moreover, the question how to efficiently handle conflicts related to climate change remains open for further studies.

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## The Relative Success of Consociational Institutions in Deeply Divided Societies: A Comparative Study of Northern Ireland and Lebanon

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### Abstract

*Lebanon and Northern Ireland conjure opposite images on consociationalism in the minds of many political scientists. While in Lebanon, the consociational system widely proved inefficient in preventing the outbreak of ethno-national conflicts, the Northern Ireland's experience of consociationalism remains vastly positive. Following a "Most Similar Systems Design" defined by Adam Przeworski and Henry Teune (2000), this research note tests the hypothesis that the positive nature of exogenous influences participates to a higher political stability in Northern Ireland relative to Lebanon, where external influences of negative nature had the reverse effect. For the sake of this study, the developments taking place after the signature of the agreements shaping both consociational systems – the Ta'if Agreement of 1989 in Lebanon and the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 in Northern Ireland – are analysed through a particular focus on elites' external relations with patron states and their interactions with their regional or global environments.*

### Keywords

Comparative Politics; Consociational Democracies; Divided Societies; Good Friday Agreement; Ta'if Agreement

## Introduction

The age-old question of why deeply divided societies almost always dissolve into conflict has been approached from many angles. One of the most promising solutions for restoring political stability in such environments may be found in consociationalism, defined here, for the purposes of this analysis, as a form of democratic system regulating the sharing of power between elites from different groups (ethnic, religious or regional).

Northern Ireland and Lebanon, both qualifying as divided societies, reflect differing levels of political stability that may be attributed to correspondingly different levels of consociationalism in each context. In both countries, political organizations are formed across the divisive lines of religious or ethnic identities, whose allegiances have derived from binaries resulting from the memory of communities clashing.

Northern Ireland's contemporary religious-political tensions root as far back as the 12<sup>th</sup> century, up to the recent 1998 Good Friday Agreement (GFA). Similarly, Lebanese society has long been subject to ethnic-religious clashes and tensions that culminated into the long 1975 and 1990 war – a domestic political conflict interacting with the Arab-Israeli conflict, which ended with the Ta'if Agreement. In both cases, a consociational system was implemented through various agreements in order to regulate ethno- or religious-national conflicts.

In Northern Ireland, deeply entrenched tensions between Protestants and Catholics since the 12<sup>th</sup>-century Anglo-Norman invasion culminated into the most recent conflict known as “*Na Trioblóidí*” or “The Troubles” that emerged during the campaign led by the Catholic minority to end discrimination by the country's Protestant government (Wallenfeldt 2019). Met by violent response from Protestant loyalists, this movement resulted in a pervasive conflict along religious lines centered around the decision to remain or leave the United Kingdom. The “low-intensity” conflict between Protestant unionists and Catholic republicans ended in 1998 with the GFA, providing for the creation of the Northern Ireland Assembly, based on a power-sharing consensus.

After its declaration of independence from France in 1943, the new Lebanese Republic adopted a rigid power-sharing constitution defining the parliamentary democracy. Granting more parliamentary seats to Christians and the presidency to a Maronite Christian despite the roughly equal demographic balance, this arrangement induced resistance from Muslim communities, willing to obtain a stronger representation within state institutions. These tensions between religious communities intensified as the flow of Palestinian refugees into the country following the 1967 and 1970 Arab-Israeli wars destabilized the

Lebanese fragile demographic balance. Regular clashes between Christian and Palestinian militias culminated into urban warfare and civil war in 1975, following the *Ayn el Remmaneh* incident in Beirut. After nearly 15 years of conflict, the Ta'if Agreement provided the basis for the end of the Lebanese civil war and laid the foundations for constitutional amendments to the consociational system established in 1943.

Consociationalism consists in the representation of the different collective identities within a given society through the use of the electoral system and the formation of political coalitions. In contrast to majoritarian systems aiming at integrating minorities, consociationalism lies in accommodating minorities through the granting of collective rights (Mainwaring 2001). Elites in a consociational system adopt a coalescent political behaviour, according to which they are committed to an overarching cooperation with other sectarian elites, in contrast to adopting an adversarial behavior (Lijphart 1969, 175). In this framework, the rationale for establishing a consociational system in deeply-divided societies derives from the hypothesis that cross-cutting social cleavages – in contrast to mutually-reinforcing cleavages – prevent communal conflicts, and heavy demands ought, hence, to be placed on sectarian elites for moderating these conflicts (Daalder 1974).

Lebanon and Northern Ireland conjure opposite images on consociationalism in the minds of many political scientists. While in Lebanon, the consociational system widely proved inefficient in preventing the outbreak of ethno-national conflicts, the Northern Ireland's experience of consociationalism remains vastly positive. Understanding the causes for this divergence is, therefore, essential for policymakers to assess whether consociationalism is an appropriate approach to moderate conflicts in plural and deeply divided societies.

This comparative study aims at questioning the work of Arend Lijphart (1969) and his model based on nine factors determining the success of consociational democracy. This typology almost exclusively emphasizes internal dynamics, and, I argue here, remains highly irrelevant to account for the drift between Northern Ireland's and Lebanon's experiences of the consociational approach from an empirical perspective.

While much of the contemporary literature on Lebanese and Northern Irish consociational systems emphasizes the presence or absence of endogenous factors theorized in Lijphart's model, this research note focuses instead on the ways in which the nature of exogenous influences impacts the interactions between external and internal elites, and, most particularly, the political behavior of the former.

Following a “Most Similar Systems Design” defined by Adam Przeworski and Henry Teune (2000) derived from John Stuart Mill’s system of logic, this research note tests the hypothesis that the positive nature of exogenous influences participates to a higher political stability in Northern Ireland relative to Lebanon, while external influences of negative nature had the reverse effect. Based on this design as a *method* of identifying both similarities and differences between the Lebanese and Northern Irish consociational systems, this research thus identifies political stability as the dependent variable and considers different types of exogeneous influences as independent variables.

In the context of this study, the success of the consociational agreement is measured against the concept of political stability encompassing four dimensions: (1) the level of political violence and tensions within society, including political assassination and violent demonstrations, (2) the propensity of regime or government change, (3) the instability of policies including a high frequency of changes (Kostad 2007), and (4) the presence of sectarian tensions since the agreement’s signature. Literature on post-1998 Northern Ireland accounts for a relatively high level of political stability, with the decommissioning of the paramilitary force IRA (Irish Republican Army), the settlement and solidity of policies on welfare reform and finance, the regime stability, and the absence of major sectarian conflict between Catholics and Protestants since 1998 (Kelly 2019). While a more nuanced view on the stability of Northern Ireland’s consociational system is adequate in view of the numerous political deadlocks and clashes between the two main parties—the Democratic Unionist Party and Sinn Féin’s nationalist party since 1998—this is still in stark contrast when compared to the Lebanese experience of consociationalism.

Literature on Lebanese consociationalism (Dekmejian 1978; Jabbra and Jabbra 2001; Salamey 2015) is univocal on the failure of the system to provide political stability in the country according to the four factors identified. Several aspects attest to this deeply-entrenched volatility – from the 2005 war to the prevalence of political assassinations such as Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri’s (whose investigation has still not been settled), the 2011 Uprising of Dignity influenced by the Arab Spring, the looming sectarian tensions particularly since the collapse of Saad Hariri’s government in 2011, the immobilism of Lebanese parliament characterized by its incapacity to adopt policies and reforms, the massive demonstrations across the country calling for systemic change in the face of elite corruption since October 2019, and the frequent government’s resignations.

McGarry and O’Leary (2006) suggested that the different natures of consociational agreements reached in both cases account for the different outcomes in terms of success

and, thus, exclude the role of external factors. A study on consociationalism in Iraq, however, referred to the malign intervention by external actors and their role in polarizing communities and contributing to the failure of the system (Ltaif 2015).

This research note critically questions the developments unfolding after the signature of consociational agreements in Lebanon and Northern Ireland. For the sake of this study, the two last agreements that have shaped both consociational systems—the Ta'if Agreement of 1989 in the case of Lebanon and the GFA of 1998 in Northern Ireland—are analysed in light of the developments taking place since their signature, with a particular focus on how these have come to reflect elites' external relations with patron states and their interactions with regional dynamics.

### **Basis for Comparison**

Northern Ireland and Lebanon are two cases of divided societies characterized by the existence of particularistic loyalties along ethnic or religious lines. The demographic characteristics of both countries are similar, in the absence of a solid religious or ethnic majority in society, with a balance of 45 % of Catholics and 48 % of Protestants in Northern Ireland in 2011 (Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, 2011). Similarly, in Lebanon, the CIA World Factbook (2018) estimated the Sunni population at 30.6 % of the country's population, the Shia at 30.5 %, the Christian population at 33.7 % (20 % Maronites and 10 % Eastern Orthodox), and the Druze at 5.2 %.

In both cases, a consociational power-sharing approach was taken in order to regulate ethno-national conflicts. In Northern Ireland, the latest period of violence between Protestant Unionists and Catholic Republicans started in 1968. On April 10<sup>th</sup> of 1998, representatives of both parties, as well as the governments of the Irish Republic and the UK, concluded the GFA, also known as the “Belfast Agreement”. This agreement shaped the consociational system and provided for the formation of a coalition government involving and accommodating all sides of the conflict. Emerging against the background of “The Troubles,” defining the period of irregular war and political violence since the 1960s, it also committed participants to “exclusively democratic and peaceful means of resolving differences on political issues” (GFA 1998, 2). A consociational system in Northern Ireland – or rather, a consociational democracy – was then established on the basis of:

- “(a) a permanent grand coalition vis-à-vis the power-sharing Assembly and Executive; (b) the considerable degree of autonomy particularly in the areas of education and culture enjoyed by the two main ethno-national groups; (c) the

extensive use of evidence of proportional representation; and (d) the introduction of the principle of mutual consent” (Zuhair 2008, 53).

In the case of Lebanon, the Ta’if Agreement reiterated the sect-based governance system or consociational system, first established in the National Pact of 1943 (Bahout 2016). The Ta’if Agreement, in fact, responded to the growing opposition to the political hegemony of the Maronites by redistributing seats among Christian and Muslim communities according to a 50-50 formula (Ghosn and Khoury 2011, 383). By responding to demographic changes within Lebanese society, this agreement provided “the basis for the ending of the civil war and the return to political normalcy in Lebanon”, according to Krayem (2015, 412).

In both cases, engaging in consociation enabled paramilitaries to “wind down military campaigns and to collect the political rewards of constitutional politics” (Kerr 2013, 185), reflecting the similar positions of the Northern Irish nationalist party, Sinn Féin, and the Shi’a parties, Hizballah and Amal, in Lebanon.

Another commonality among these cases lies in the fact that both agreements were externally engineered (Kerr 2013). In the case of Northern Ireland, the GFA was, to a large extent, imposed by British authorities, through the threat to re-implement direct rule if both parties would not live up to their commitments, ranging from the decommissioning of weapons to the wider moral obligation to “the mutual respect, the civil rights and the religious liberties of everyone in the community” (GFA, 1989). In the case of Lebanon, the provisions in the Ta’if Agreement were largely imposed and re-interpreted by pro-Syrian figures within the Lebanese government. In fact, Syria imposed a de facto protectorate over Lebanon in the post-civil war period and acted as a power broker, subtly playing a balancing act between Christians and Muslims (Bahout 2016).

### **Divergence in the Consociational Experience**

Large disparities in Northern Ireland’s and Lebanon’s respective experiences of consociationalism are observable. In the case of Northern Ireland, the GFA of 1998 paved the way for the formation of a more inclusive society and for the successful resolution of the conflict (Zuhair 2008, 54). Authors such as Lijphart (1975) argue that political stability in Northern Ireland was permitted through the mutual character of the GFA, contrasting with the previous Sunningdale Agreement of 1973, which lacked support among Protestants. Since 1998, no major conflict has taken place between Catholics and Protestants and positive political developments such as the reopening of cross border

roads, the closure of security bases and the departure of British troops took place (Zuhair 2008, 54).

In contrast, the Lebanese consociational system remains under constant distress. Ghosn and Khoury (2011, 396) have argued that the Ta'if Agreement has left Lebanon with a “negative peace”, based on the “priority placed on the short-term absence of war rather than long-term stability”. Sunni-Shia tensions were increasingly observable, developments that were attributed, to a large extent, to the post-war order established by the Ta'if Agreement and “Syria’s possessive grip” over the country (Norton 1991, 473). Moreover, the assassination of Rafik Hariri in 2005 further destabilized the Sunni-Shia balancing act and is considered by Bahout (2016, 14) as “the clinical death of Ta'if”, as, for Sunnis in Lebanon, the indifference of the Shia Lebanese to the protests at Martyr’s Square in Beirut following Hariri’s death contributed to the downfall of the peaceful coexistence.

In fact, between Syria’s departure from Lebanon and the 2011 uprisings, uncertainty and sectarian violence characterised the political situation in the country, as exemplified in 2008, when Hezbollah opened fire on Sunni neighborhoods as a response to the government’s decision to shut down Hezbollah's telecommunication network, leading Saad Hariri to seek the protection of the army. Furthermore, the absence of national reconciliation was observable in multiple instances since the Ta'if agreement, such as the political clashes and tensions between sectarian groups following the collapse of Hariri’s government in 2011 before the vote of confidence of the new cabinet (Ghosn and Khoury 2011, 397). A series of political assassinations paralyzing the political life in Lebanon also took place – ranging from journalists to politicians identifiably hostile to Hezbollah (Bahout 2016, 15). Further, the 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah – backed by Syria’s Bashar al-Assad – refueled sectarian grievances.

To sum up, while Northern Ireland’s political system has become highly stable, consociationalism in the Lebanese case has become “a term for a pathology of fragmentation and destruction” (Norton 1991, 473).

### **Developing a Hypothesis**

A very significant difference is observable in the cases of Northern Ireland and Lebanon: the nature of their external influences. Up until today, consociational theorists have largely neglected the role of external actors and dynamics in the promotion and operation of consociational agreements. In Lijphart’s model based on his observations of West European countries, eight out of the nine criteria listed as the elements conducive to consociationalism are endogenous. The only external criterium is “the perception of a

common threat from an external source” which would “increase internal unity” (Lijphart 1977, 124). However, Lijphart, as most other theorists, have failed to take into account the significant role of outside forces through pressures, mediation or incentives (McGarry and O’Leary 2006).

While a positive external climate shaped the compromise in the case of the GFA, a rather negative external climate is observable in the case of Ta’if. The negative and positive influences of external factors can be categorized along different types. In the determination of the terms of the agreement, external intervention is observable through specific external actors’ promotion or discouragement of political inclusivity within the consociational system (1), as well as through their promotion or limitation of the autonomy and/or sovereignty of the subject (2). In the long-run operationalization of the agreement, the exogenous factor is observable through the regional environment’s role in promoting the sustainability of the agreement, such as with the imposition of democratic constraints and human rights protection (3), and, lastly, through the region’s own political and security stability (4). I argue that these levels are intrinsically tied to each other as specific external state actors’ decisions (or lack thereof) shape an inclusive consociational system and promote autonomy and sovereignty – indeed, both Ireland and Lebanon are impacted by the political and security stability of their respective regional environments.

First, the positive influence of external actors in the promotion and framing of the agreement has largely participated to the success of consociationalism in Northern Ireland. In the case of the GFA, the UK government undertook a constructive role as it realized that no military solution would succeed in providing a sustainable solution to the conflict. Furthermore, the UK’s participation in the Anglo-Irish Agreement – which consisted in giving a limited role in the Republic of Ireland in policy-making in Northern Ireland, as well as in promoting an agreement on devolved governments shared between unionists and nationalists – had a positive impact on both camps’ willingness to engage in consociational power-sharing (McGarry and O’Leary 2006). In this context, the US administration— influenced by weighty Irish-American lobbies established since the Clinton era—also exerted a positive role in increasing the confidence of Irish republicans in negotiations. In fact, it was the Clinton’s administration that persuaded the Senate Majority leader, George Mitchell, to chair a commission to arbitrate disputes between the UK and Irish governments (McGarry and O’Leary 2006). For both camps of the conflict, US participation increased their perception of the agreement’s impartiality.

The GFA was in fact not designed to retain sovereignty or exclude Northern Irish elites, and, thus, was highly successful in satisfying contradictory claims of self-determination (Kerr 2013). In this respect, the UK was instrumental in promoting political inclusivity. The adoption of the principle of autonomy by both the governments of Ireland and the UK, with British sovereignty being “legally defined, not imposed” (Bishara 2018, 21) contrasts with the Lebanese experience.

In contrast to the GFA, Parts II and IV of the Ta’if Agreement were inherently designed to pose limitations to Lebanese’s sovereignty, as it largely bounded Lebanon to political coordination with Syria. In fact, whereas the GFA highly motivated elites in Northern Ireland to engage in consociational politics, in the case of Lebanon the linkage between accepting a consociational political reform and Syria’s withdrawal was missing for Christian and Sunni Lebanese (Kerr 2013). Here, rather, the political representation of communal groups determined by the Ta’if Agreement was highly reflective of the strength of their ties with external backers, particularly with hegemonic Syria. In fact, the small Alawite community received two seats, largely as a result of its direct links with Syria’s leadership (Kerr 2013). As Dekmejian (1978, 255) had already advanced, “the pattern is clear: as soon as Lebanese politicians lose in the elite cartel, they will try to broaden the scope of conflict to attract foreign supporters in an attempt to defeat their opponents.” In this framework, it comes as no surprise that the agreement was perceived as illegitimate by several communities. Furthermore, the Syrian veto to some aspects negotiated at Ta’if left some issues regarding the functioning of the consociational system in Lebanon unresolved (Kerr 2013).

Authors (McGarry and O’Leary 2006) have argued for the influence of the nature of consociational agreements on the success of consociationalism. While this remains true, I argue that an observation of the external factors leading to this difference is necessary. In fact, while Ta’if aimed to consolidate sectarian coexistence with a “law above the law” through the concession of state sovereignty, the GFA aimed at devolving power to administrative bodies, and hence successfully linked the establishment of a consociational system with the accommodation of rival claims of self-determination (Kerr 2013). This difference can be largely attributed to the contrast between UK’s acceptance to leave the question of sovereignty open, with Assad’s Syria imposing a power-sharing framework that established a hegemony in pursuit of its own interests.

Reasoning beyond the sole focus on external actors, regional environments also participated to the success or failure of the consociational arrangements in both cases. In

the case of Northern Ireland, the democratic nature of its surrounding environment largely contributed to the success of the consociational system. In fact, the democratic culture of both the Irish and British governments framed the consociational agreement and ensured that no consociational power-sharing agreement could exist outside of the framework of democracy (Bishari 2018). This democratic environment promoted the formation of an inclusive society, the strengthening of anti-discrimination laws and the expansion of social rights – factors which largely account for the stability of Northern Ireland’s consociational system today (ibid.). In this respect, Kerr (2013) has argued that the cordial Anglo-Irish relations, as well as the democratic and stabilizing environment of the EU highly boosted the success of consociationalism in Northern Ireland.

However, in the case of Lebanon, hegemonic Syria had no democratic constraints for imposing its own terms in Ta’if and promoted an agreement that reflected its own interests. The Ta’if Agreement, hence, remains highly undemocratic, since it was not based on equal citizenship and established a system that remained exclusively managed by ruling families of each confessions (Bishari 2018).

Once the consociational agreement was signed and enforced, the nature of the influence of external dynamics and actors remained relevant to explain the continental drift between the Northern Irish and Lebanese experiences. In the case of Northern Ireland, external actors such as EU institutions and some governments have remained instrumental in ensuring the sustainability of the consociational agreement in its operation phase, as, in its early operationalization, a Monitoring Body including members from the UK, the Irish and the US governments, as well as Northern Ireland’s, successfully ensured the surveillance and prevention of paramilitary activities.

The EU also played a vital role in ensuring the sustainability of the GFA. First, the European Court of Human Rights was paramount in guaranteeing the protection of human rights in Northern Ireland. Second, the European Union exerted a positive influence in the stabilization of peace through the establishment of a special Commission Task Force first approved in 1995 and continued under the names Peace II in 1999 and Peace III until 2015, with the objective to implement cross-border cooperation between Ireland and the UK. The EU’s PEACE program was thus highly instrumental in strengthening the cohesion between communities involved in the conflict and contributed to economic and social stability.

In the case of Lebanon, the operation of the agreement remained highly subjected to the turbulent environment of the Middle East, based on regional balances of power. The

Arab-Israeli conflict, especially, has influenced the stability of consociationalism in Lebanon. As Dekmejian (1978, 261) puts it:

“The problem which most sharply differentiated Lebanon from consociationalism in theory and practice is its turbulent environment and the related Palestinian issue. Since World War II, partly due to the American defense umbrella, the small West European states [such as Northern Ireland in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century] have developed in a remarkably stable milieu, free of outside interference. None of these states is burdened with the flow of Palestinian refugees, who are frequently used as pawns by outside powers to disturb the country’s communal balance. This aspect is further reinforced by the legal restraints imposed on Palestinians locking them into the status of refugee and a permanent non-assimilated community within the country. The survival of some form of consociational democracy in Lebanon is closely linked to the ultimate settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict”.

This is best exemplified by the 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah, which fostered deeper sectarian conflict in Lebanon. Furthermore, the former tensions between Syria and Saudi Arabia, as well as Saudi-Iranian tensions today, have played a large role in activating sectarian Sunni-Shia divides inside of Lebanon (Saouli 2006).

Based on this comparative analysis, I argue that the positive nature of external dynamics, environments and actors in both the promotion and operation of consociational agreements has facilitated political stability in Northern Ireland, whereas the negative nature of external influences caused further destabilization in the case of Lebanon.

### **Additional Factors for Consideration**

Certain authors have argued that the presence of a long-standing “culture of coexistence” is crucial for the success of a consociational system (Lijphart 1981). However, in the cases of Lebanon and Northern Ireland, this factor proves irrelevant. In fact, Lebanon, since its independence, experienced a long period of coexistence based on the shared grievances of Muslim, Christian and Druze communities – stemming from colonialism. In contrast, Northern Irish parties lacked these shared grievances, and only engaged in reconciliation in 1998, while largely relying on exogenous forces in the operation of this political transition. In Lebanon, however, one can observe that this shared experience of colonialism and grievances did not prevent communities from cultivating links with foreign patrons in order to strengthen their own domestic strength (Kerr 2013).

Furthermore, the presence of external threats – by promoting internal unity – was considered by some literature as conducive to a successful consociational system (Siaroff 2000, 321). One can, however, observe that, while Lebanon experienced external threats

stemming from its highly turbulent regional environment (Saouli 2006), no real external threat is to be observed in the case of Northern Ireland. The presence of external threats as conducive to internal unity is, hence, highly irrelevant as a singular explanatory factor to account for the success of the consociational system in Northern Ireland and its failure in Lebanon.

### **Inferring causation**

This comparison between Northern Ireland and Lebanon has limitations in proving the causality between the positive nature of external influence and the stability of the consociational system. However, Dekmejian (1978, 251) has pointed to how communal conflicts have often been exacerbated by their immediate environment and neighboring states, as well as great powers which have “made intervention in ethnic problems part of their national policies”. Furthermore, there is support from other comparative research that exogenous action has facilitated power-sharing agreements in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia through the positive democratic influence of the EU and the willingness of these countries to strive to meet the ascension requirements of the *acquis communautaire* in order to obtain EU membership and its benefits (McEvoy 2015) This, at least in terms of third party mediation, seems to corroborate this research note’s findings in Northern Ireland. In fact, consociational arrangements in Bosnia-Herzegovina were, to a large extent, presided over by external high representatives from the EU (Hays and Crosby 2006), and external EU representation was guaranteed in both Bosnia’s Supreme Court and Central Bank (Balázs 2008, 111-118). Hence, I suggest that the hypothesis revolving around the nature of exogenous factors is particularly applicable in this context of globalization – where countries’ interests become increasingly intertwined and where foreign meddling into the internal politics of these divided society takes place. In this respect, I argue that the impact of negative exogenous factors is most relevant in countries of strategic or economic relevance for its neighbors, such as Lebanon.

### **Rival Hypothesis: The Level of “Elite Consensus”**

Several scholars have considered the level of elite consensus as the most important element to explain the success or failure of consociationalism. This literature was particularly influenced by the work of Arend Lijphart, for whom the success of consociationalism lies in the “disposition among elites towards collaborative or cooperative, rather than authoritative or majoritarian, modes of decision-making” (McRae 1979, 520). The study of Lijphart and Crepaz (1991) entitled “Corporatism and Consensus Democracy in Eighteen Countries: Conceptual and Empirical” is particularly illustrative of

this scholarship. However, I argue that, although consociational failure seems to originate from the cessation of elite consensus, exogenous factors in both cases treated in this study represent an illustration of “antecedent variables that contribute to elite dissension and ultimately regime collapse” (Seaver 2000, 249). Rather than emphasizing a proximate cause, this explanation revolving around exogenous factors aims to account for the deeper origins of elite fragmentation, and the instability of power-sharing arrangements and, thus, subsumes this rival hypothesis derived from Lijphart’s studies.

### **The Role of the Corporate/Liberal Nature of Consociational Systems and their Interaction with External Dynamics**

Literature on the success of consociational systems (McGarry and O’Leary 2006) has pointed to the role of their corporate or liberal nature. In the case of Northern Ireland, a “liberal” consociational system laid down by the GFA created the foundation for the self-determination of the different groups, rather than their pre-determination. In the Northern Irish liberal consociational system, voters can select candidates from a common pool, with no specific number of seats attributed to specific groups. Similarly, the executive roles distributed among parties are solely based on their performance during elections. In this respect, the liberal consociational system, based upon the predicate of “parity of esteem”, grants equal recognition to different sectarian identity (Ruohomäki 2010). Easily adaptable to demographic and spatial changes, this system is the most flexible form of consociational politics.

The corporate consociational system established in Lebanon since the 1943 National Pact presents a sharp contrast. The aim of this special system lies in freezing group identities in order to maintain the power balance between different sectarian groups. The rigid quota system for the attribution of legislative and executive positions for each main group as well as the power of group veto granted for important issues decided by the cabinet have built a static edifice – incapable of adapting to its changing environment (Salamey 2015).

This inflexible system remains highly unresponsive in the face of demographic and spatial changes. The issue of rural-to-urban migration of the Shia – amplified by Israeli invasions in the South—has in fact not been properly tackled by the corporate consociational system. The Shia community—which had moved to Beirut—was demographically growing in urban centers while remaining politically deprived (Bogaards 2019). This inflexibility could therefore be considered as one of the causes of the growing sectarian tensions in West Beirut between Shia and Sunni Muslims in 2006.

This rigid system also led communities to implement new demographic strategies by purchasing real estate in strategic areas—such has been the Hezbollah’s strategy in the South. The corporate confessional state was unable to respond to sectarian geopolitical struggles – with the Shia asserting their hold in the South and providing the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) with a safe corridor to wage guerrilla warfare against Israel (Salamey 2015, 89). This corporate state structure—by enabling the close linkage between domestic competition and regional politics—constitutes hence a highly conflict-ridden solution in a context of regional turbulence.

In this respect, the downfall of the Lebanese system is attributed to the fluidity of population and space. Internal demographic and spatial changes in the country—combined with the inflexibility of the consociational agreement itself—can produce “a conflict-ridden form of power-sharing agreement” (Salamey 2015, 87).

Hence, while the nature of the system itself combined with demographic and spatial changes can impact the success of consociationalism, this factor is reinforced and made particularly salient in the context of an unstable and contested regional environment. Combined, external dynamics and the nature of corporate system have contributed to the downfall of the Lebanese consociational system.

## Conclusion

To conclude, this comparative analysis has shown how external factors determine the prospects of successful power sharing in a consociational system. Northern Ireland experienced positive coercive and external pressures that contributed to the success of consociationalism. This experience highly contrasts with the negative nature of foreign agents in the case of Lebanon, who, through their constant involvement into the Lebanese balance of power, have caused tremendous tensions and conflicts among different sects.

In its European application, the consociational model originally developed by Lijphart assumes the absence of regional turmoil and turbulence in the regional environments – probably since this theory was framed in the Cold War period where “benign” interventions remained rare.

Considering the interaction between the consociational system and its external milieu is however of crucial importance in accounting for the success of consociationalism. In this respect, policymakers should give larger attention to extra-systemic influences in order to assess whether consociationalism is the best solution for a conflict-ridden and deeply divided society.

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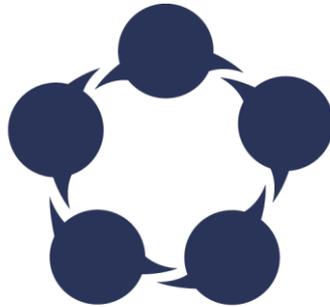
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