Towards Just Climate Futures: Exploring Islanders' Narratives of Hope, Movement and Loss

PhD Thesis in International Development

School of Agriculture, Policy and Development

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July 2021

Declaration

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

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Abstract

The future of island communities has been declared finite, predicting that climate change will result in the uninhabitability of many small island developing states (SIDS). As a result, islanders are left with few options but to move or to drown. This thesis attempts to challenge this pre-determined future by deconstructing the idea of future foreclosure to gain a comprehensive understanding of what is required in relation to justice in the context of climate change and SIDS. In particular, it focuses on the potential scenario of climate-related migration and displacement from a variety of standpoints. First, it explores islanders' future hopes, aspirations, and imaginings, considering the role of climate change and mobility within those. Second, it analyses the implications of leaving the islands behind by examining movement and loss. Third, it investigates justice considerations for the potential scenario of climate-related migration and displacement on both empirical and normative grounds.

By researching these themes with a range of qualitative methods and a focus on the non-material and symbolic dimensions of climate change and life on the islands, this thesis argues that the only future that might be considered just is a future on the islands and any form of a future that takes place *elsewhere* constitutes a moral wrong and results in an unjust climate future. In building this claim, the thesis sets out the following findings. Islanders' think of their futures in terms of continuity of place and way of life. Further, movement represents a rupture to such way of life and climate-related migration and displacement would carry a set of incommensurable losses that go well beyond material and economic properties and encompass a range of practices and meanings of considerable value to affected populations. Thus, if a future on the islands is impossible, then some form of justice-based response will be needed. This thesis outlines a form of a reparation effort that foregrounds satisfaction measures in attempting to repair non-material and symbolic loss.

Dedication

Para ti Mama, tu amor, dedicación y compromiso hacia mi desarrollo y crecimiento se merece más de lo que jamás pueda devolverte. Per tu Catalina, és el teu orgull que en silenci em sosté càlida i reconfortada quan entren el dubte i la por. I per mon pare, és de la teva mort que he après del mal de l'absència i de la importància del record.

To my mother, whose unconditional love, commitment, and support towards my growth deserves more than I will ever be able to give back. To Catalina, whose pride in my work and being holds me silently in moments of doubt and fear. And to my father, from whose death I learnt of the deep and painful reality of grief and of the importance of memory and remembering.

Acknowledgments

I owe acknowledgment to many people who have in one way or another shaped the years that I have been working on this thesis. I want to thank my two supervisors, Alex Arnall and Andrew Ainslie. I am immensely grateful for your support, commitment, and guidance whilst I navigated the different stages of this project. I often left meetings feeling most privileged for having both of your minds engaging with my work. I am deeply grateful for all I have learnt from you both.

I mainly owe words of gratitude to those I met on the islands. To Shai, who besides all her help, was my very first friend. It fills my heart to remember you and to see your boys grow. To Sobee, for her dedication to this project and the care and joy she brought to my time in Thulusdhoo. I am longing for the days I see you both again. Of special mention is also Shaheena, who accompanied me daily in Rinbudhoo. To all the other women and their children, for the warmest welcome and goodbye. I hope, for the years to come, to be able to share parts of my life with you in the same way you shared yours with me.

I am also most grateful for being part of the Leverhulme Trust Climate Justice Programme and its financial support. This research, and I as an academic, have gained enormously from the interactions amongst scholars on the programme and visiting professors. In particular, I am indebted to Jamie Draper, Alex McLaughlin and Callum Nolan for reading, commenting and discussing my work with me.

I am also indebted to Maxine Burkett for her interest and engagement in my work. I am most grateful for her kind review and insightful suggestions for Chapter VI of this thesis. Similarly, this research has benefited hugely from detailed discussions with Grady Walker. I am thankful for his guidance on visual methods and his comments on Chapter III of this thesis.

I also owe acknowledgment and gratitude to Sarah Smith, for proofreading the entirety of this thesis and her valuable suggestions on how to improve my writing. I am beyond grateful for the generosity of your time and kind engagement with this thesis.

There are a number of other people whom I met during my time at Reading that have contributed to the years of the PhD in important ways. My colleagues in Agriculture, Policy and Development and particularly Emma Bryant for her care and support throughout. Oana Tanasache and Carlota Gonzalez Noguer, with whom I shared many days in the office and gave me a sense of community.

Zainab Aliyu and Rahmah, who fill my memory of Reading with so much lightness and laughter, I miss you both. Faye Bird, for our shared interests and your help in navigating feminist literatures. Rob Boyd and Sammi Rees, whose presence in Reading brought much joy to my time there. Lastly, Xander Ryan, whose support and care sustained me at a much needed time and whose approach to academia inspires me in many ways.

I also owe much of my wellbeing to Jill Fowler, who has been a source of stability, support, and reassurance. I think of the last few years as the most formative in my life so far, both in professional and personal terms, and I am deeply indebted to you for the later.

There is also a group of people from outside Reading whom I wish to thank here too. To my friends Ines, Mar, Eulari, Cati and Catalina, with whom I share a sense of home. I am grateful for having had a chance to share this important stage of my life with you. Thank you for filling some of the last few months with joy, laughter, and warmth. Eleanor and Yarra, to think of you always fills me with tenderness and affection. Thank you for your thoughtfulness in caring for me throughout these years, despite the distance. Ian, you have brought a sense of permanence and reliability to my life for which I am very grateful. Josephine, it has always meant a great deal to have you alongside me in the academic journey. Since the very first day in Leeds, I found comfort and resonance in you. I also owe infinite amounts to Anisha Sankar, for our friendship and all she has taught me and her patience and love whilst doing so. If there is any good of an academic in me, it is because of her.

I also wish to thank my family, in Mallorca and in Madrid. You bring an incredibly grounded sense of support to my endeavours and shared joy in my achievements. To my mum, grandparents, uncles, aunties, cousins, godsons, and goddaughters, it is only because of your belief and sustenance throughout the years that I am able to be here today.

Finally, I would especially like to thank Will Finlay, who has been patiently by my side throughout these years. For the love, care, thoughtfulness, and sense of safety that you bring to my life, I am immensely grateful. Your confidence in me and constant reassurance means more than I can say here. Thank you for your support throughout but particularly in the last months and weeks, you have been a source of joy and relief amongst times of stress and difficulty.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AOSIS	Alliance of Small Island Developing States
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ILC	International Law Commission
MFC	Maldives Floating City
MNU	Maldives National University
SIDS	Small Island Developing State
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WIM	Warsaw International Mechanism

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Chapter I. Introduction

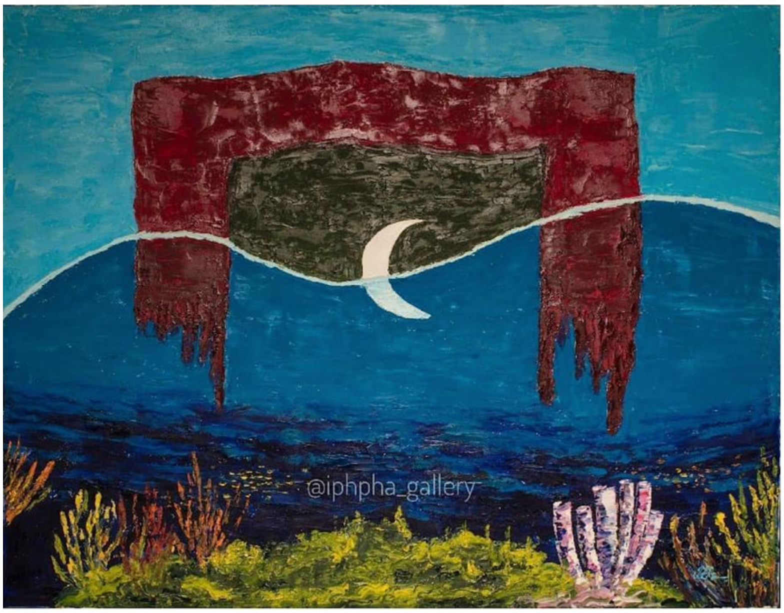


Figure 1: Underwater painting by Hussain Ifhal

1.1. Introduction

I introduce this study by displaying a painting made underwater by Hussain Ihfal in 2017. After being inspired by the French artist Andre Laban, who was the first person to paint underwater, Hussain decided to create seven different paintings in the waters of Vaavu Atoll to raise awareness of global warming and sea-level rise in the Maldives. The location of the case study of this research is the Maldives, where I met Hussain on my first visit in October 2018. We met on one of my first mornings in the Maldives. We had been in touch prior to my arrival and he kindly agreed to meet me when I told him I had arrived in Male, the capital of the Maldives. He suggested we meet for breakfast in a café by the ocean. We sat down on the terrace overlooking the water and the nearby islands and started talking about life in the Maldives, climate change and the different ways his art reflected his concerns for these topics. As our conversation came to an end, he gave me a booklet of his underwater paintings, where I found the painting displayed above.

Hussain's painting reflects many important elements of this thesis. The rising waves melt away the flag of the Maldives, hinting towards the possibility of the disappearance of the country. The threat that climate change poses towards the existence or at least inhabitability of the Maldives, amongst other Small Island Developing States (SIDS), is what informs this research. If the islands become uninhabitable, their populations would have to migrate or be displaced. This study is concerned about the future of islanders in the context of climate-related migration and displacement from the standpoint of justice. The painting also embraces a defining aspect of this research: the non-material and symbolic dimensions of climate-related migration and displacement. The visual components of this research are also hinted within the painting. It is through a range of qualitative methods, including participatory photography, that I engaged with the participants of my study. The photographs that islanders took as part of this research will feature as data and artefacts throughout the chapters. It is by examining climate-related migration and displacement through this particular approach and methodology that this study moves the literature on climate-related migration and displacement from SIDS forward in a number of areas.

1.2. Climate-related migration and displacement from SIDS

The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicts that by 2100, in the best-case scenario global mean sea-level could rise from 0.26m to 0.55m, and from 0.52m to 0.98m, in the worst-case scenario (IPCC, 2013, p. 1140). As introduced above, this threatens the existence or at least inhabitability of a group of SIDS, including the Republic of the Maldives in the Indian Ocean. If the islands are to become uninhabitable, their populations would necessarily have to migrate or be displaced.

Migration is one of the predicted impacts of climate change. Global warming - and the climate emergency more generally - is causing desertification, deforestation, extreme storms, earthquakes and floods amongst other impacts that are first inviting or pressuring and then forcing individuals, families and entire populations to move (IPCC, 2014). This results in a type of movement where changes in the environment, due to climate change, play a role in mobility decisions (Kelman *et al.*, 2015). Climate-related migration and displacement is expected to occur around the world. Although the geographical focus of this thesis is on the islands of the Maldives, the findings contribute towards the broader literature on climate-related migration and displacement from SIDS and other areas expected to suffer equivalent climate change impacts.

SIDS are a distinct group of 38 UN Member States and 20 Non-UN Members and Associate Members of regional commissions facing unique social, economic, and environmental vulnerabilities. The geographical regions in which SIDS are located are the Caribbean, Pacific, and the Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea. SIDS' climate is altered by variations in air and ocean temperatures, ocean chemistry, rainfall, wind strength direction, sea level and wave climate, particularly tropical cyclones, but also drought, and distant storm swell events (IPCC, 2014). Furthermore, populations, agricultural lands and infrastructures tend to be concentrated near the coast; sea-level rise thus has a significant impact on settlements, living conditions and island economies. The above together with their size, geography, relative insularity and remoteness and particular socio-economic characteristics, position SIDS amongst the most vulnerable to climate change (UN-Habitat, 2015).

Sea-level rise is the most well-known threat to SIDS. However, although there are relatively precise predictions of global mean sea level rise, less information is available about the changes in regional sea-level rise. The IPCCC AR5 report stated that it is very likely that in the 21st century and beyond, sea level change will have a strong regional pattern, with some places experiencing significant differences from global mean change. In the Indian Ocean, estimated sea-level rise is around 1.5 mm/yr (UN-Habitat, 2015). As well as being at risk of sea-level rise and its threats such as salinization, flooding and erosion, SIDS are also vulnerable to other stressors such as oceanic warming, cyclones and mass coral bleaching and mortality (Hoegh-Guldberg *et al.*, 2018). Altogether, these impacts of climate change represent a threat to the inhabitability of the islands, leading to the distinct prospect of future migration and displacement.

It is also worth noting that although climate-related migration and displacement is expected around the world, the particular case of SIDS brings with it a set of unique features. Unlike in certain climate-related migration and displacement cases where only part of a country is predicted to become uninhabitable, in the case of SIDS, it is possible that entire states will be uninhabitable ruling out the possibility of in-country relocation. It is also likely that there would be no option of return, unlike other types of migration where the relocation may only be considered to be temporary. Lastly, it is not only the entire population, as individuals and families, but also the political community that would be permanently displaced. It is not difficult to see how these issues might raise important questions of justice. I turn to this matter in the next section.

1.3. A matter of justice

Since the early 1990s, scholars have approached the phenomenon of climate change from the standpoint of ethics and justice, identifying a range of issues worthy of concern. The term ‘justice’, however, is not one that lends itself to simple definition. Generally, justice is understood as a family of related moral concepts, and I will outline some of these below. An initial issue is what

Gardiner (2011) calls *dispersion of causes and effects*. This refers to the fact that greenhouse gas emissions from any geographical location affect the climate globally. In fact, it is also the case that those with highest emissions are not likely to be the ones to suffer from the worst effects. Instead, it is the regions that contribute the least to climate change that are predicted to receive the most severe impacts. As introduced above, such is the case of SIDS. Whilst they only account for less than 1% of greenhouse gas emissions, it could be argued that facing the disappearance of an entire country represents one of the most severe impacts of climate change. At little to no fault of their own, island communities around the world might be displaced. I assume for the purposes of this study that this is a clear and uncontroversial instance of climate injustice (Heyward, 2014).

Aware of climate change impacts such as the one mentioned above, scholars have engaged with a range of climate justice questions both to prevent and respond to these impacts. The fact that climate impacts lead to often severe injustice means people and countries incur obligations. One set of obligations is to prevent these impacts coming about, which can be discharged through bearing mitigation burdens. A different set of obligations demands that people take action to prevent impacts leading to harm. These obligations can be discharged through shouldering adaptation burdens (Caney, 2012). It is important to clarify here the meanings of mitigation and adaptation. Mitigation refers to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions or the creation of greenhouse gas sinks. Adaptation refers to adjusting to actual or expected climate and its effects (IPCC, 2014). For example, this might involve building seawalls to protect communities from wave action and coastal erosion. In addition to a concern about impacts, scholars are aware that the costs of mitigation and adaptation will be spread unfairly across the global population (Shue, 1999; Page, 2008; Caney, 2010). This has led to questions of distributive justice, which regard the just distribution of resources and responsibilities (Byskov *et al.*, 2019). Accounts of distributive justice have been developed that aim to share these costs according to certain principles. The main principles that have been suggested are the polluter pays principle (PPP), the beneficiary pays principle (BPP) and the ability to pay principle (APP) (Mechler et al., 2019).

Questions of procedural justice also arise in relation to mitigation and adaptation. Unlike questions of distributive justice, which I indicated are driven by finding fairness in outcomes or resource allocation, questions of procedural justice are motivated by fairness in processes. An example of this would be seeking fair representation and participation in decision-making processes (Byskov *et al.*, 2019). The two core elements of procedural justice are recognition and participation (Fraser, 2001; Paavola and Adger, 2006; Schlosberg, 2012). Recognition is understood as the acknowledgment of a group or individual as having an independent and legitimate body of thought regarding a subject matter. To fulfil climate justice however, procedural justice needs to go beyond recognition and be turned into participation, implying involvement in decision-making processes. In the context of climate change, this might be relevant in climate policy negotiations or in developing adaptation plans for a particular region or country.

So far, I have outlined questions of distributive and procedural justice in mitigation and adaptation domains. It is possible however that human societies fail to mitigate enough to prevent intolerable climatic changes and it is equally possible that they also fail to devise appropriate or required adaptation measures so people can continue their ways of life. This implies both a new realm for climate change discussions, known as loss and damage, and a new domain for climate justice (Mechler et al., 2019). At this point, the assumption is that neither mitigation nor adaptation efforts have sufficed to ensure the continuity of a community's way of life. Instead, as a result of climate change, this community has suffered an unjustified disruption which has resulted in a range of losses and damages.

A common example of loss and damage can be seen in the case of SIDS. If climatic changes reach a point where the islands become uninhabitable and affected communities are displaced, they will suffer a range of losses and damages (García-Portela, 2020). I endorse the view that these climatic losses and damages are morally significant given the impact they have on people's ability to pursue their valuable ends (Page and Heyward, 2017). I take this to be an uncontroversial view, endorsed by a range of perspectives. Loss and damage concerns might be framed in terms of their impacts on 'human security', human development, human rights, or capabilities. All these views share the assumption that objects and resources gain their importance through how they contribute to a range of significant human ends. When these resources are threatened, as they are in cases of loss and damage, the important ends are threatened too. This is why climate-related migration and displacement, by incurring a range of losses and damages, is such a serious case of climate injustice: when the islanders' important ends have been threatened through the actions of others, they have been seriously wronged. Under such a scenario, a new dimension of justice becomes increasingly important, that of corrective justice.

The role of corrective justice is to respond to a wrong or injury to a person or group. In the context of climate change, the aim of corrective justice and the goal of loss and damage interventions can be thought of in terms of 'making a victim whole again' (Page and Heyward, 2017). In the particular context of climate-related migration and displacement from SIDS, some broad relevant question towards corrective justice might read: What particular losses and damages might affected populations suffer from? How ought these to be 'corrected'? What does justice look like for a community after it has been displaced due to climate change? What measures are required, from a justice perspective, to respond to the moral wrong of climate-related migration and displacement?

These sets of justice-related question give a rather brief overview of the different dimensions of justice relevant to climate change and the particular case of climate-related migration and displacement. However, it should be clear that they do not represent an exhaustive list of climate justice question and concerns. It is the job of the next chapter to more carefully review the justice literature and analyse it in relation to the particularities of climate-related migration and displacement from SIDS.

1.4. Future Foreclosure: the rationale behind this thesis

This study departs from the starting point that current ways of portraying, thinking, and researching climate-related migration and displacement are foreclosing of islanders' futures. This is the result of a substantive and methodological imbalance, in favour of a focus on the material and economic dimensions of climate change, and a related overemphasis to date on the importance of quantitative research. Islands are predicted to submerge and so their populations have no choice but to move or to drown. As Methmann & Oels (2015, p. 64) put it, the question for islanders becomes whether 'to stay or to go'; 'to live or to die'. In this sense, the notion of sinking islands has become an emblematic narrative of the impacts of climate change to which government leaders, the media and grey literatures have often adhered to (Purvis, 2016). The end of life on the islands is assumed, and so the futures of their populations become pre-determined.

It is important to recognise that this represents one particular narrative of climate change and small islands and that there can be other ways by which to make sense of the same relationship. Narratives are thought of as ways by which people make sense of the world or of a phenomenon. As Bettini (2013, p.68) puts it: "narratives serve for making sense of raw and confused empirical elements and assembling an intelligible story". To a certain extent, it is a process by which complex phenomenon are simplified into an image or story that is comprehensible. This process, however, is not neutral. As Jackson (2015, p.487) states: "particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others". It is important thus to question who do certain narratives serve and what implications they have on a range of agents. Similarly, it is important to recognise the role that narratives play towards future-making. The way a problem is framed impacts the knowledge that is valuable to tackle it and the range of solutions that are valid or even imaginable (Nightingale *et al.*, 2020). In that sense, narratives influence our capacity to think about the future (Jackson 2015).

In the context of climate change, scholars have identified a range of characteristics of dominant narratives which limit the range of thinkable possible climate futures. For instance, some argue current framings are rooted in a careful separation of nature and society and of science and politics, which in turn leads to a hierarchy of knowledge which prioritises and excludes certain ways of knowing (Bravo, 2009; Nightingale *et al.*, 2020). In Nightingale et al.'s (2020, p.347) words: "[framings of climate change] have influenced the expertise that is brought to bear, the questions that can be asked, the people assumed to need assistance, versus those with important knowledge to govern change, and the scales at which responses should be organised". Relatedly, Hulme (2011) speaks about a hegemony that the predictive natural and biological sciences hold over visions of the future. In the particular context of climate change, he argues these disciplines through system models have a wider epistemological reach than the social sciences or humanities. As a result, he explains that it is tempting to base visions of the future on this type of knowledge. As he states: "Lots of things will change in the future, but since we have credible and quantitative knowledge about future climate, let us examine, also quantitatively, what the consequences of these climates for societies might be".

In the case of SIDS, the consequences of these climate changes mean ceasing to exist. The foreclosure of islands' futures can no doubt be seen as an issue in itself; in turn, however, it also raises a range of other concerns. I discuss these briefly here and elaborate on them at greater length in Chapter II. One concern when the future of a particular person, country or community is pre-determined, is that their capacity to aspire and imagine risks being significantly affected, reducing in turn the possibility of alternative futures. Future foreclosure in the context of climate-related migration and displacement hinders islanders' right to imagine and have visions and aspirations for their own futures or create their own narratives. A second consequence of assuming the disappearance of islands is that movement and loss are taken for granted. The idea that migration or displacement will take place is expected and as a result it becomes an 'unfortunate but acceptable' solution to climate change (McNamara & Gibson, 2009, p. 482). Something similar happens with loss. Borrowing Barnett's phrasing, it becomes 'normalised' (Barnett, 2017). In taking both movement and loss for granted, the significance or weight of moving due to the disappearance of one's homeland is largely dissipated. In turn, this leads to a risk of failing to acknowledge the unfairness of climate-related migration and displacement. Its *justice character* becomes obfuscated. To foreclose the islands' futures shifts attention away from islanders' rights to remain at home and the international communities' responsibility to ensure such right.

It might follow from this that it is important to deconstruct the notion of future foreclosure and to continue to explore possible futures on the islands. In other words, to explore alternative narratives about climate change, small islands and the future. This coincides with Nightingale et al. (2020) suggestion to focus on ontological plurality as a way of dealing of uncertainty. As she states: "plural framings offer better possibilities to deal with the multiple uncertainties of climate change" (Nightingale, 2020, p.346). It also fits within the call from many scholars to hold the future open and pluralise its visions (Boyd *et al.*, 2009; Hulme, 2011; Methmann and Oels, 2015). Baldwin (2014, p. 526) suggests that one way to do so is by remaining "faithful to the future as a site of infinite contestability, to conceive of the future as a site of infinite potential rather than foreclosure". However, a tension emerges here. Despite the concerns that follow from assuming the end of life on the islands as outlined above, some scientific predictions suggest that it is only a matter of time until the islands submerge. Ought we to hold the possibility of futures *in situ* open against what scientific projections seems to suggest? Is to hold the future of the islands open wishful thinking? Would this mean placing too much faith in political, social, and scientific institutions that have so far failed to respond to the severity and urgency of climate change? Alternatively, is it premature to foreclose the future of the islands amongst high levels of regional scientific uncertainty? Would it mean attributing too much power to scientific projections and not enough belief in human societies being innovative and resilient in their own ways? This thesis explores this tension with the aim not to isolate these scenarios from one another but to place them in dialogue with each other. In doing so, this thesis explores how one might inform the other, how understandings of what the future might look like *here*, on the islands of the Maldives, might inform a fairer version of what a future might like look like *elsewhere*.

1.5. Research aims, objectives and questions

As explained above, the aim of this thesis is to contribute to the deconstruction of future foreclosure in order to further understanding of what might be required of justice in the context of climate-related migration and displacement from SIDS. To be clear, to deconstruct future foreclosure does not mean to disregard the scientific predictions. Instead, to hold the future open implies the very possibility that islands might become uninhabitable. Yet this represents only one possible future accompanied by others. In attempting to achieve the aim established above, the thesis is organised around three objectives: to understand the ways islanders think about and imagine their future; to examine the implications of leaving the islands behind and to explore the justice considerations towards a future elsewhere.

1.5.1. To understand the ways islanders think about and imagine their futures

The first objective of this thesis responds to the first concern highlighted in relation to future foreclosure. Against reductive narratives of what islanders' futures will look like, through the following range of research questions, I sought to understand how islanders themselves conceive of their futures. It is intended that this knowledge will contribute towards exploring alternative futures and gaining awareness of what is of value to islanders, through exploring their aspirations, hopes and imaginings. Questions within this objective include: Where do islanders imagine their futures? What does the future look like at national, local and individual levels for islanders? What hopes and aspirations do islanders hold? What role does mobility play in islanders' future imaginings?

1.5.2. To examine the implications of leaving the islands behind

This objective responds to the second concern raised in relation to future foreclosure regarding movement and loss being taken for granted. Certain beliefs about islanders' relationship to movement have greatly influenced the literature on the subject matter. My first aim in this section is to re-examine the relationship islanders have towards movement, including moving away and returning. My second aim is to engage with the loss that islanders predict they might encounter if affected by climate-related migration and displacement. Questions within this objective include: What are islanders' previous experiences of movement, both internally and internationally? What role does return play in islanders' experiences of movement? What is it that islanders fear losing if faced by climate-related migration and displacement? What do islanders wish to hold on to and remember if the islands disappear?

1.5.3. To explore justice considerations for a future elsewhere

The last objective corresponds to the third concern developed in relation to future foreclosure, the way in which it seems to diminish the unjust character of climate-related migration and displacement. Further, it maintains engagement with the scientific predictions suggesting that the islands might become uninhabitable. Under this objective, I do two things. The first is to understand what islanders think about a future *elsewhere* and what justice considerations they raise in relation to the prospect of climate-related migration and displacement. The second is to reflect normatively about what is required of justice when the future takes place *elsewhere*. What is important to islanders about a potential future *elsewhere?* What justice-based considerations do they articulate in relation to both the process and scenario of climate-related migration and displacement? What does justice look like in the potential scenario of climate-related migration and displacement? What measures, tools and resources of justice are available to respond to the unfairness of the matter?

1.6. Research approach, methods and case studies

By investigating the objectives set out above, I sketch out in this section the research approach and methods and introduce the Maldives as a case study (see Chapter III for a more detailed treatment of my research methodology).

In response to the substantive and methodological imbalance I have outlined in research of the climate change and migration nexus, I focus on the non-material and symbolic dimensions of life on the islands and attend to the topic of climate-related migration and displacement with a qualitative approach. In particular, I develop a range of creative and participatory methodologies including oral histories and oral futures, participatory photography, key informant interviews and workshops with students at the Maldives National University (MNU). Besides a focus on the non-material and symbolic dimensions of climate change and a qualitative approach, Tschakert et al. (2017, p. 3) have stated that what is needed is "a grounded, context-specific lens that makes visible what people themselves value and in turn what they deem to be intolerable outcomes from climate change". Responding to this need, this research is based on the Maldives as a case study with a focus on two islands, Thulusdhoo and Rinbudhoo, with additional data generated via workshops and interviews in the capital city of Male.

The Maldives is an archipelagic state in the Indian Ocean, lying southwest of Sri Lanka and India and it is one of the SIDS predicted to be submerged, following the worst-case scenario laid out by the IPCC. As such, alongside other SIDS in the Pacific, it is seen to be at the forefront of climate change. Recognised as a vulnerable nation against sea-level rise and other climate change impacts, much climate-related research has been conducted in the Maldives (Arnall & Kothari, 2015; Kelman et al., 2017; Kothari, 2014). There have also been a growing number of studies of climate-related mobility in the region, with scholars attempting to understand islanders' perceptions of climate change and the causes and rationales behind mobility and non-mobility choices, amongst others (Kelman et al., 2017; Stojanov et al. 2017). However, there is a lack of focus on justice in empirical work taking place in the particular context of the Maldives. Unlike islands in the Pacific which have been the subjects of research on climate justice (Barnett, 2017; Farbotko & McMichael, 2019; Klepp & Herbeck, 2016; Karen Elizabeth McNamara & Gibson, 2009), the same focus has not as yet translated to the regional context of the Maldives. This made it a suitable context to explore the particular research questions this study sets out to address.

Another reason why the Maldives is an appropriate location is because certain communities have already experienced relocation. The 2004 tsunami had a big impact on the country, inundating some islands that have since ceased to be inhabited. Others, although severely affected, recovered and are still home to some islanders. Such is the case of Rinbudhoo, an island in Dhaalu Atoll, around 150km southwest of Male. In 2006, the Maldivian government offered the population of Rinbudhoo the option of relocating to Thulusdhoo, another island situated closer to Male. Around a third of the population chose to relocate to Thulusdhoo, whilst the remaining population elected to stay and re-build the community and facilities in Rinbudhoo. I spent the first month of my stay in the Maldives in Thulusdhoo, speaking to both the original community and the community that had relocated fifteen years ago. After my stay in Thulusdhoo, I went to Rinbudhoo for another month, to engage with the community that had decided to remain there.

It is from the empirical data generated in the Maldives, that this study engages with justice. There have been a range of normative justifications of why climate-related migration and displacement constitute an injustice and what potential responses to this injustice might look like (De Shalit, 2011; Zellentin, 2015; Heyward and Ödalen, 2016). In this thesis, I draw on empirical data generated in the Maldives in order to contribute towards understanding the nature and extent of this injustice. By foregrounding the perspectives of those predicted to experience climate impacts, it is possible to more clearly see what is at stake for these communities and how they understand their futures in light of challenges they face. Such information will be indispensable for any account that seeks to respond seriously and appropriately to the injustice experienced by communities in the Maldives. Indeed, political theorists have recently called for a closer engagement with empirical data in order to develop normative theories that are grounded in and address the concerns of real-world political actors in relation to justice (Ackerly *et al.*, 2021). This thesis can be interpreted as one contribution to such a project, hoping to shed light on important justice considerations regarding the future of islanders in the context of climate-related migration and displacement.

1.7. Outline of the thesis

The thesis is organised into seven chapters, including this Introduction. Chapter II presents a critical review of the literature on climate-related migration and displacement and develops the rationale and narrative behind this thesis. It starts by following the way framings of climate-related migration have evolved and entered different spaces. The two main analysed positions on the subject matter are the maximalist and minimalist perspectives, looking at their defining ways of understanding and portraying climate-related migration and critiques that have been raised in relation to them. I highlight two imbalances in the broad field. Firstly, a predominant focus on the material and economic dimensions of climate change. Secondly, an over-reliance on quantitative methods in trying to understand the subject matter. Following this analysis, I make the argument that current ways of thinking and researching climate-related migration and displacement are foreclosing of islanders' futures. As a result, I raise three concerns: that islanders' capacity to aspire is being reduced, movement and loss is being take for granted and the justice character of climate-related migration and displacement is being side-lined. The chapter proceeds by exploring the literature in each of these themes, which serves as a theoretical background against which the findings are interpreted.

Chapter III does two things: it introduces the location of the case study in detail, and it lays out the research design and methodological considerations. In presenting the case study of the Maldives, I review the social, political, cultural and economic characteristics of the country. I also introduce in detail Thulusdhoo and Rinbudhoo as the two islands where the majority of data generation takes place. In the second half of the chapter, I present and explain the research strategy and design of the study. I offer my reflections on positionality, set out the methods employed, lay out the sampling strategy and data analysis procedure. I also highlight the limitations of the study and ethical considerations.

Chapter IV is the first chapter where I present findings from the empirical work conducted in the Maldives. It responds to the first objective of this thesis, that is, to understand the ways in which islanders think about and imagine their futures. In doing so, it locates the future in the Maldives and presents' islanders visions, hopes and aspirations at national, local and individual levels. These three scales represent the different sections of this chapter, the analysis of each highlighting the need to re-think certain assumptions or core elements of the climate-related migration and displacement literature. The national story challenges the narrative on sinking islands, the local story re-thinks certain conceptualisations of resilience, and finally the individual story questions what is important in islanders' sense of development and growth.

Chapter V responds to the second objective of the thesis. It engages with the possibility of the disappearance of the islands and presents islander's views on movement and loss, as prominent implications of having to leave the islands behind. The first part, focusing on movement, evaluates the way in which islanders' relationship to movement has changed across time and reflects on whether it is permanency or mobility that characterises islanders' current relationship to dwelling. It also discusses the differences between the movement that islanders' encounter in their everyday lives and the movement that climate change would imply. The second part presents the findings of an in-depth, qualitative engagement with loss that is context-specific to the Maldives. I develop the three main themes that emerged out of the data in terms of what islanders feared losing: the coconut tree, the shoreline and the home.

Chapter VI responds to the third objective of the thesis. It explores the idea that human habitation of the islands will not be possible in the long-term future and draws from the previous two chapters as well as on the literature on reparations to explore what might be required of justice in such scenario. In that sense, there is both an empirical and a normative component to this chapter. By empirical, I mean a continuation of the way the thesis has proceeded thus far, drawing on empirical data to reach certain conclusions. The second, more normative, part of this chapter, draws from literature on reparations to think about justice considerations. The first half presents islanders' perceptions of what the process and prospect of climate-related migration and displacement should take into account. The second half moves on to critically explore and learn from the realm of reparations, about what tools, measures and resources are available to respond to islanders' identified concerns.

Chapter VII concludes the thesis. I review a summary of the thesis and the key findings, reflect on the contributions made to field of climate-related migration and displacement from SIDS and outline some areas of future research.

Chapter II. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I review the literature on the climate change and migration nexus and carve out the need and argument and rationale for this thesis. In Section 2.2. I examine the different established ways of researching and understanding climate-related migration and displacement. I first look at the maximalist reasoning which characterises the initial take on the subject matter and explore a number of critiques. I then turn to the minimalist reasoning, which follows from the integration of mobility and non-mobility literatures into the climate change and migration nexus and also outline a series of critiques. I follow with a discussion that points towards future foreclosure as an overarching implication of current ways of thinking about and researching climate-related migration and displacement. In particular, I shed light on how future foreclosure has an impact on islanders' capacity to aspire, the way movement and loss are perceived and portrayed in the literature and the engagement with questions of justice. Section 2.3., 2.4. and 2.5. analyse these themes respectively, reviewing the existing literature and establishing the theoretical backdrop against which the findings of the thesis will sit. Section 2.6. concludes the chapter.

2.2. Ways of understanding climate-related migration and displacement

As stated in Chapter I, in the first IPCC report, Working Group II pointed at migration as one of the impacts of climate change, stating that out-migration would be the only solution for many small islands (Tegart, Sheldon and Griffiths, 1990). Ever since, concern over the subject matter has been rising. In this section, I review the different ways in which climate-related migration and displacement has been understood, portrayed and criticised. I develop the different ways framings have evolved or moved into different spaces. Altogether, this builds an analysis of current ways of thinking about and researching climate-related migration and displacement. I close this section by drawing two observations on such ways of thinking about and researching climate-related migration and displacement that establish the basis and rationale of this thesis.

2.2.1. An initial take on climate-related migration and displacement

The first defining publications discussing climate-related migration and displacement date back to the 1990s and early 2000s. In 1993, Norman Myers combined the science on sea-level rise and population increase to predict that there would be 150 million environmental refugees by 2050 and later updated this figure to 250 million (Myers, 2002). As part of his study, Myers (1993, p. 752) defined environmental refugees as:

> "People who can no longer gain secure livelihood in their erstwhile homelands because of drought, soil erosion, desertification, and other environmental problems. In their desperation, they feel they have no alternative but to seek sanctuary elsewhere, however hazardous the attempt. Not all of them have fled their countries; many are internally displaced. But all have abandoned their homelands on a semi-permanent if not permanent basis, having little hope of foreseeable return"

This description paints a very particular picture of what climate-related migration and displacement would look like. Those affected will be forced to abandon their homelands fuelled in desperation and have to seek refuge elsewhere. This characterisation of 'environmental refugees' coupled with the high numbers of people predicted to be affected established the grounds for scholars to raise a range of security issues in relation to climate-related migration and displacement. For instance, Myers (2002) claims that such large numbers of refugees condensed into crowded spaces could easily lead to violence, crime and disorder.

This particular take on the subject matter is often understood as representing a deterministic, alarmist or maximalist position (Suhrke and Hazarika, 1993) and has been labelled as the 'maximalist school' (Sciaccaluga, 2020). The main characteristic of this way of thinking is the mono-causal relationship that it holds between climate change and migration. The act of migrating is extracted from a social, political, and economic context and attributed only to climate. The predictions put forward by Myers (2002) do not take into account a range of factors or wider context. Instead, they determine what places on earth will become uninhabitable due to climate change and deduce how many people will have to migrate as a result of this exclusively. This is an example of what Hulme describes as climate reductionism, defined as "a form of analysis and prediction in which climate is first extracted from the matrix of inter-dependencies that shape human life within the physical world. Once isolated, climate is then elevated to the role of dominant predictor variable" (Hulme, 2011, p. 247). Hulme alongside other scholars have challenged this approach towards attempting to understand the future and the phenomenon of climate-related migration and displacement. Therefore, despite having served the purpose of raising interest in both academic and political contexts, the maximalist reasoning has received a number of critiques.

An initial critique of the maximalist reasoning has been its focus on security issues, which has led to an apocalyptic imaginary of climate-related migration and to a catastrophic portrayal of the future (Bettini, 2013; Methmann and Oels, 2015). There are many titles in both academic and grey literature that represent this idea such as: 'Here comes the flood' (Bogardi and Warner, 2009), 'The Human Tide' (Christian Aid, 2007) or 'The Human Tsunami' (Knight, 2009), amongst many others. This particular framing of the phenomenon of climate-related migration and displacement has been critiqued to create and perpetuate a negative sentiment towards movement, partly due to the threat that it represents to state security. A number of scholars have reflected on this issue. Bettini (2013), for instance, reflects on how these narratives resonate with the Malthusian rationale. The rationale suggests that by worsening the lower classes conditions, ecological stressors incite migration which in turn can lead to conflict. Hartmann (2010, p. 234) also reflects on this reasoning of climate-related migration and how it creates a story of 'environmental refugees' being a source of political instability:

> "Drawing an old colonial stereotype of destructive Third World peasants and herders, degradation narratives go something like this: population-pressure induced poverty makes Third World peasants degrade their environments by over-farming or over-grazing marginal lands. The ensuing soil depletion and desertification then lead them to migrate elsewhere as 'environmental refugees', either to other ecologically vulnerable rural areas where the vicious cycle is once again set in motion or to cities where they strain scarce resources and become a primary source of political instability"

Following this rationale, migration and displacement, this time caused by environmental change, pose a significant threat to the well-being and safety of host states and those on the move are portrayed as sources of danger and conflict.

A second critique of the maximalist reasoning stems from the terminology of environmental or climate *refugees*. As *refugees*, affected populations are seen as victims with little to no agency. A range of scholars have pointed towards this issue. For instance, Johnson (2011) views the use of the refugee terminology resulting in individuals being seen as non-political subjects with no voice or agency over their own lives and futures. Similarly, Baldwin (2012) and Farbotko and Lazrus (2012) reflect on the victimisation and de-individualisation of affected populations. The rationale here is that this portrayal of vulnerability, against an apocalyptic vision of fear, under emphasises the climate refugee's individuality who gets dissolved into the image of ´the human tide´ or ´the human tsunami´. Altogether, postcolonial imaginaries of *the other* are reinforced, again being characterised by desperation and a complete lack of political agency (Bettini, 2013). These issues are particularly concerning for the populations of SIDS, as they would not only become climate refugees but stateless persons. The landscape of the island is used to create an even stronger imaginary around the desperation of their populations. As Farbotko (2010, p. 58) puts it, islanders are being "fictionalised into victim populations fleeing inundation, desperate for dry land, even drowned". Importantly, this directly speaks to islanders' futures which, as introduced in Chapter I, seem to be reduced to 'moving or drowning', 'leaving or dying' (Methmann and Oels, 2015). Further to these issues, international law scholars have also raised concerns over the suitability of the *refugee* terminology on the basis that the current refugee convention does not include the environment as a reason upon which to claim refugee status. Instead, a 'refugee' is defined by the "Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees" of the United Nations from (Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951, p. 14) as:

> "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such gear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return"

Therefore, a range of concerns from different disciplines have been raised in relation to the *refugee* terminology embraced by the maximalist reasoning.

A third critique is centred around the inadequate and unrepresentative mono-causal analysis it develops on the phenomenon of climate-related migration and displacement. As introduced above, maximalist predictions are known to have been achieved by reducing our understanding of climate-related migration and displacement to environmental drivers only. However, it has been recognised that migration is a much more complex phenomenon, which cannot be reduced to one single factor. The objection against the mono-causal relationship between climate and migration is particularly important when understood in the historical context of environmental determinism. Environmental determinism was a line of thought amongst geographers characteristic of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century that viewed the environment as cause for social and cultural differentiations. These were applied to migration. Ellsworth Huntington (1908), being one of the major scholars in this line of thought, considered the role of climate in shaping settlement patterns in China, using unsound methodologies and explanations to support her claims. For example, Huntington (1924) compared the relationship between global temperatures and industrial output, showing that highest industrial outputs matched cooler and more moderate climates. A result was to dismiss social, political and economic circumstances, including slavery and colonialism, and associate climate to the level of hard-work of individuals and societies, with tropical climates thought to cause laziness and promiscuity (Hulme, 2011; McLeman, 2013). There is therefore an obvious dangerous connotation to using a mono-causal explanation between the environment, in this particular case climate change, and migration which led scholars to move away from using the natural environment in migration studies. Piguet (2013) gives an extended account of this, exposing the 'decoupling' of nature and society and the naivety of mono-causal explanations as main reasons for the demise of determinism.

These concerns thus gave rise to a shift in academic understandings of the climate change and migration nexus. The messages associated with the maximalist reasoning have moved into different spaces and have had much uptake in the media and national and international security institutions. Boas et al. (2019) argue that the emphasis on securitization is being perpetuated by public funding schemes with the intention to influence policy development. For instance, framing climate-related movement as a security risk, they explain, is becoming a common rationale to implement measures to strengthen and protect borders in the Global North. Despite this uptake in arguably more influential contexts, the maximalist reasoning is almost obsolete in academic circles. Instead, scholars have expanded on the understanding of climate-related migration and displacement in a way that moved away from determinism, or climate reductionism, towards complexity. Baldwin (2014) identifies this shift in the treatment of migration in which he explains that scholars are distancing themselves from the language of causal determinism and are trying to understand climate-related migration in the language of complexity. This shift was motivated by furthering the knowledge and understanding regarding the causes of migration in the context of climate change, for which the mobility and non-mobility literatures were called to play an important role.

2.2.2. Integrating mobility and non-mobility literatures

The dissatisfaction over the mono-causal analysis of climate-related migration and displacement held by the maximalist orientation led to a call for the mobility and non-mobility literature to be integrated into thinking about and researching climate-related migration and displacement. This meant rejecting the mono-causal relationship and embracing a variety of factors in understanding migration. The economic, social, political and cultural contexts were starting to be considered, together with climate change, in thinking about migration. This was accompanied by other deviations from the maximalist orientation. The language of climate *refugees* starts to be substituted by the language of climate *migrants* and the concern over state security starts to be replaced by a concern over the human security of affected populations. Altogether, these changes lead to conceptualising migration not necessarily as a problem but even as a potential adaptive response. Migration is treated as a possibility amongst others to adjust to climate change, it is no longer something to be avoided and resisted. Instead, it can be conceptualised as a solution and encouraged as a way of adapting to climate change (Black, 2001; Tacoli, 2009; Foresight, 2011).

McLeman (2014) argues that this is consistent with the way in which migration has evolved within the IPCC and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). As mentioned above, the very first IPCC spoke of out-migration as the only solution for islanders. Twenty years later the Cancun Agreement (2010) was the first to mention migration in the context of adaptation. As stated, the Conference of the Parties:

> 14. Invites all Parties to enhance action on adaptation under the Cancun Adaptation Framework taking into account their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, and specific national and regional development priorities, objectives and circumstances, by undertaking, inter alia, the following:
> (f) Measures to enhance understanding, coordination and cooperation with regard to climate change induced displacement, migration and planned relocation, where appropriate, at the national, regional and international levels.

In this statement, the international community explicitly places migration within adaptation policy making and embraces framing migration as an adaptation measure. Other claims in the literature contribute towards this understanding of climate-related migration. For instance, a key learning from the minimalist reasoning has been that islanders have a history of mobility, or as Connell (2008) calls it ‘a culture of migration’, where movement is seen as an extension of island life as opposed to a rupture of it. Against this backdrop, some scholars have argued that mobility is at the core of islanders' identity and therefore populations from SIDS are well suited to this form of adaptation. The mobile culture of island communities can be enhanced in order to increase resilience against climate change (Black *et al.*, 2011). Another lesson from the mobility and non-mobility literature is that it is a combination of factors that lead someone to move or not to move, as opposed to one singled out element. It follows from this reasoning that climate change is just another driver influencing islanders' mobility and non-mobility decision-making, as opposed to it being a mono-cause to movement. As Kelman et al. (2015, p. 585) put it: "climate change nonetheless brings little substantive which is new to discussions of islander mobilities. Instead, islander mobilities under climate change will be understood best by placing climate change in context as one driver amongst many of mobility and non-mobility". Altogether, the framing of migration as adaptation gained traction and was also embraced in the Foresight Report on migration and global environmental change produced by the UK's Government Office for Science (Foresight, 2011). The authors of the report portray migration as a choice people currently make for a range of reasons including being closer to family, improving their livelihoods, escaping persecution and avoiding environmental and other threats (Foresight, 2011, 1). In the context of climate change, they present migration as bringing opportunities as well as challenges, arguing that regardless it is the most effective way of allowing individuals and communities to diversify income and build resilience. Therefore, they insist on the need to create channels for voluntary migration available. Scholars have identified a range of benefits that accompany migration, for both the migrants, the original and the host community such as the diversification of income, a chance for learning and the development of human travelling through acquiring new skills while migrating (Warner, 2012). Another example of how the Foresight report authors argue that migration could benefit a community is by an individual migrating to obtain money and goods that could be sent back to the place of origin. This, the authors claim, would additionally benefit host countries where there might be demographic deficits and labour shortages.

The integration of the mobility and non-mobility literatures represents an overarching shift from the maximalist to the minimalist reasoning, which as Methmann & Oels (2015) put it goes from 'fearing' to 'empowering' migration and those on the move in academic circles. However, although the minimalist school reasoning brings important insight into the climate change and migration nexus, it has also received a number of criticisms.

The shift from the climate *refugee* to the climate *migrant* terminology, characteristic of the minimalist reasoning and the framing of migration as adaptation, attempts to overcome the concern developed above over the victimisation of affected populations. The terminology of 'migrants' no longer carries connotations of victimhood or desperation, but awakens the agency, power and individuality of affected populations. However, although this is in some ways the case, scholars have suggested that similar assumptions or perceptions of passivity still underpin the framing of migration as adaptation. An example of this is the language of *trapped populations* used in the 2011 Foresight report. The language of *trapped* is being used to refer to those households for whom migration is not an available strategy to improve the well-being of their families (Adams, 2016). Therefore, a similar sense of 'victimhood' and lack of agency remains. What the framing of *trapped* populations fails to capture is that such immobility might be voluntary instead of being due an inability to move. Farbotko & McMichael (2019) look at this issue, reflecting on a spectrum of immobile populations. At one end of this spectrum there is 'voluntary immobility', which refers to those who choose to stay, and at the other end there are 'trapped populations', who instead are forced to stay. Within this spectrum, the authors highlight that the focus has been placed on those forced to stay without acknowledging it being part of a spectrum. Along similar lines, Adams (2016) argues that this 'immobility' is only part of a continuum, at the other end of which there are socio-physiological reasons connected to place attachment and consistent with migration decision-making processes. By suggesting those that do not move are *trapped*, an assumption is made that all individuals share the same 'interests, rationality and aspirations' (Felli & Castree, 2012, p. 4). Furthermore, their agency continues to be affected in downplaying or undermining the rights of individuals in making their own decisions (Adams, 2016). Farbotko & McMichael (2019) in fact argue that 'voluntary immobility' can be seen as a new type of agency in taking the rights and wishes of people who do not wish to leave their homes and homelands. McMichael et al. (2021) speak about island communities demonstrating a commitment to remaining in place and scholars have advanced the need to pay more attention to the idea of 'immobility' in order to know how best to support it as a matter of climate justice (Farbotko and McMichael, 2019; Suliman *et al.*, 2019).

A second critique of the minimalist reasoning or the migration as adaptation framing is developed around its new conceptualisation of climate-related migration and displacement not as a problem but as a potential adaptation strategy. The leading concern here is that this new conceptualisation might lead to the responsibility and liability of adaptation to climate change to be shifted away from those responsible and placed on individuals or affected communities, who ought to become adaptable human subjects. Felli and Castree (2012) in their response to the Foresight Report in their commentary piece titled 'Neoliberalising adaptation to environmental change: foresight or foreclosure?' argue that the language and logic of the report falls within the neoliberal views in contemporary environmental governance circles. The focus falls on individuals, their resilience and adaptive capacity. Those affected by climate change are supposed to make themselves able to adapt and fit into a labour market in a potential host country, by developing skills and assets that will make the process easier for them. There is a risk of portraying the physical and emotional burden of adapting to climate change under the language of agency and capacity. In turn, this risks driving attention away from questions of justice, including responsibility, liability and accountability in addressing the impacts of climate change (Bettini et al. 2017; Baldwin et al., 2019) Furthermore, Farbotko et al. (2020) raise the idea that planned relocation, in the name of climate change adaptation, also risks becoming 'a self-legitimizing tool of population and territorial control'. The implied risks include a form of relocation which instead of reducing vulnerability, it in fact increases it whilst dismissing socially, culturally, and spiritually important elements.

Therefore, although the shift from maximalist to minimalist reasoning overcomes the mono-causal limitations of climate reductionism, it brings with it a new set of limitations that, if concerned with climate justice, ought to be tended to.

2.2.3. Discussion: Future Foreclosure

Having reviewed the different ways of understanding the climate change and migration nexus, I turn now to discuss overall tendencies and limitations in current ways of thinking, researching and portraying climate-related migration and displacement.

The maximalist reasoning, despite its weaknesses, was able to highlight the pivotal role of climate change as a cause for migration and thus allows a conversation about rights and responsibilities. The minimalist reasoning provided a more complex picture of the relationship between climate change and migration and shifted the framing of migration from it being a problem to it being a solution. A commonality of both reasonings is the foreclosure of islanders' futures. On the one hand, and following the maximalist school orientation, scientific predictions tell us that islanders are destined to move or drown, becoming climate refugees desperately seeking a new home whilst posing a security threat to the state and the international system (Myers & Kent, 1995; Myers, 2002). On the other hand, following the minimalist school rationale, and under the language of migration management, islanders ought to become resilient by increasing their adaptive capacity by moving to another country where they will find better education, employment and health facilities, whilst at the same time filling labour shortages in the host country (Foresight, 2011). Following either of those rationales, the future is predetermined. The end of human life on the islands assumed, and the future of islanders foreclosed.

An important contributing characteristic of both the maximalist and minimalist reasonings towards future foreclosure is the focus on the material and economic dimensions of climate change as well as an overall predominance of quantitative methods. The predictions of climate refugees put forward by maximalist scholars came out of computer modelling. The rationale behind modelling future climate migrant flows is that gathering data is a useful step towards "transforming discussion of future climate change migration from informed speculation to evidence-based policy-planning" (McLeman, 2012, p. 608). Scholarship falling under the minimalist orientation has also used computer modelling as a methodology, although accompanied by household surveys and other qualitative methods that do gather people's perceptions and interpretations and are of growing interest (Klepp, 2017). The focus in both schools however has often been on the material and economic dimensions of climate change, defined by the UNFCCC (2013) as "resources, goods and services that are commonly traded in markets". It refers therefore to that which is tangible such as housing or other socioeconomic dimensions as opposed to other issues such as heritage or sense of place, which would be categorised under 'non-economic'. The overall predominance of quantitative methodologies, and focus on the material and economic resembles the idea of 'climate reductionism' by Hulme (2011) introduced in Chapter I, which ties with the idea being developed here of future foreclosure. Hulme (2011, p. 245) states: "climate reductionism is driven by the hegemony exercised by the predictive natural sciences over contingent, imaginative, and humanistic accounts of social life and visions of the future". In many ways therefore, the dominance of a certain type of method and particular focus on what is researched have an effect on people´s futures which are being predicted following only one way of understanding and approaching the future. A range of scholars recognise this arguing for the need to find new ways of thinking, to put society back into the future with human creativity and imagination creating different narratives, stories and fictions (Boyd, 2009; Hulme, 2011; Swyngedouw, 2010; Klepp, 2017, Boas et al., 2019).

Following the discussion above, the argument I am making here is that current ways of thinking and researching climate-related migration and displacement are foreclosing of islanders' futures. In turn, I argue that this future foreclosure leads to three particular identified issues. Firstly, islanders' 'capacity to aspire' is at risk of being taken away and the content of their aspirations to no longer matter, for the future already looks a very specific way and is not theirs to make. Secondly, movement and loss are taken for granted. Migration is thought of as an 'unfortunate but acceptable solution' (McNamara & Gibson, 2009) to climate change whilst loss is also accepted and 'normalised' (Barnett, 2017). Thirdly, a dimension of justice concerns are side-lined. On the one hand, giving up on a future in the islands obscures both the right of islanders to such a future and the responsibilities of the international community to ensure it. On the other hand, and following from the previous point, the taking for granted of movement and loss takes away attention for the moral wrong of climate-related migration and displacement, which have become matters of 'fortune' as opposed to matters of justice and fairness. The following sections turn to review the state of the art of each of the three issues identified, serving as the theoretical context upon which this thesis builds.

2.3. Aspirations, hopes and imaginings of the future

The first identified problem following future foreclosure is the potential impact it can have on island communities' capacity to aspire, hope and imagine, both individually and as a collective. In assuming the end of life on the islands, their population's futures become reduced to climate and predetermined in ways that leave islanders' aspirations, hopes and imaginings no longer relevant. The value of aspirations and imaginings, however, has been recognised by a number of scholars. Appadurai (2004) speaks of the importance of having a 'capacity to aspire' , Hulme (2011) refers to the value of the human imagination in future making and Nussbaum (2003) identifies 'imagination' as a central capability, the infringement of which could represent a matter of human rights. Section 2.3.1. reflects on an intrinsic and an instrumental value in aspirations, hopes and imaginings. Section 2.3.2. discusses the current empirical knowledge on how islanders think about their futures.

2.3.1. The value of aspirations, hopes and imaginings

I highlight, in this section, an intrinsic and an instrumental value in aspirations, hopes and imaginings. The intrinsic value lies in the process of aspiring or imagining and draws on Appadurai's understanding of the capacity to aspire as a navigational capacity. The instrumental value lies in the content of the aspirations, hopes and imaginings as sources of knowledge of affected populations' valued human ends.

Appadurai develops that the more privileged one is, the more used one is to exploring the future more frequently and realistically. Therefore, the situation of the poor, as opposed to the situation of the privileged and the rich, allows for less experiments and having less facility for the archiving of alternative futures. In turn, this leads to less opportunities to practice this navigational capacity and consequently to a more 'brittle horizon of aspirations'. In the case of climate related migration and displacement, the 'brittle horizon of aspirations' is not necessarily due to privilege and wealth, although of course this might still be relevant, but to the fact that the world has declared the islands' futures finite. There is a risk that islanders might cease to have the capacity to aspire as a way to navigate the future for themselves. It is the process of aspiring that is being compromised, which we learn from psychology, is a core component of our functioning of self-identity (D'Argembeau et al. 2012). In the same way that it is well established that memories play a crucial role in our perceptions of who we are, self-defining future projections, hopes and aspirations play an equally important role towards our sense of self and identity. When the future is predetermined and there is no room for one's own self-defining future projections, like it is the case for those who might be affected by climate-related migration and displacement, a part of the functioning of self-identity is negatively impacted.

A second important value of aspirations is instrumental, which is two-fold. On the one hand, engaging with islanders' aspirations and imaginings of the future contributes towards resisting the dichotomy of 'moving or drowning' and might shed light on a range of alternative futures. This is in line with the call introduced in Chapter I to hold the future open and pluralise its visions (Boyd *et al.*, 2009; Hulme, 2011; Methmann and Oels, 2015) On the other hand, an instrumental value of engaging with aspirations lies in their potential to reveal affected populations valued human ends. As established in Chapter I, climate-related migration and displacement, and its consequent losses and damage, are morally significant because of their impact on a range of important ends. In attempting to understand both what valued ends are at risk of being lost, and what an appropriate justice response might look like, it is important to engage with affected populations' aspirations, hopes and imaginings. Therefore, the value of aspirations lies here in the content of the aspirations themselves, as a means to shed light on that which is valued and at risk of being lost. Embracing islanders' capacity to aspire and imagine is a way of seeking that knowledge. In this sense, the value of aspirations goes beyond the particularities of how their future might play out. Even if the islands become uninhabitable, and islanders' alternative future visions impossible, the content of islanders' aspirations, hopes and imaginings matter in highlighting that which has been lost and can guide a justice response.

I have shown in this section intrinsic and instrumental values that might be attributed to hopes, imaginings and having a capacity to aspire. I now turn to explore existing empirical knowledge on islanders' aspirations, hopes and imaginings of the future.

2.3.2. Islanders' aspirations, hopes and imaginings

Having established the rationale and importance behind aspirations and having the capacity to aspire, I turn to review empirical knowledge on the content of islanders' aspirations. The identified gap in the literature is precisely this, that there is scarce knowledge about islanders' aspirations and ways of imagining the future. Although empirical studies concerned about the views of islanders on climate-related migration and displacement are increasing and every time more present in the literature, the focus of the majority of the research on this field has focused on understanding the causes of migration (Shen and Gemenne, 2011; McCubbin, Smit and Pearce, 2014) and the role that climate change plays in people's mobility and non-mobility choices (Kelman, Webersik, *et al.*, 2017). Significantly less attention has been paid to understanding the ways islanders think about their futures and how climate-related migration and displacement sits alongside their aspirations. There are however a few key long-established and strong messages about the way islanders think about their futures. A well-established message in the literature is that islanders wish to remain in their homelands and accordingly oppose migration as a solution to climate change, broadly speaking (Arnall & Kothari, 2015; McNamara & Gibson, 2009). Islanders share strong rational and emotional connections to their islands and clearly state that 'being islanders comes first' (Kelman et al., 2017). Former Maldivian President Gayoom was in fact one of the first to establish this message internationally. In 1998, in a keynote address to the Small States Conferences on Sea Level rise, he shared:

> "We don't want no sea level rise. There must be a way out. Neither the Maldives nor any small island nation wants to drown. That's for sure. Neither do we want our land eroded, or our economies destroyed. Nor do we want to become environmental refugees either. We want to stand up and fight. All we ask is that the more affluent nations and the international community in general, help us in this fight" (Gayoom, 1998, p. 29)

Since, this overall sentiment has remained consistent amongst SIDS, with other SIDS governments having actively decided not to plan for migration. For example, the Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), a coalition of 44 small island and low-lying coastal developing states, stated:

> "We haven't looked into the aspect of migration. I think we all are proud islanders and it's not that we want to just look for another place to migrate to. No, I think that what we want it more how we can protect our islands, how we can ensure the sustainability of our islands, how we can ensure the survival of our community. It is not just a question of running away and finding another place and asking the big countries to open their gates to us. No, I don't think that question is something that all islanders would suddenly want to do, leave their own countries and let them drown or whatever" (McNamara & Gibson, 2009, p. 481)

Another example is the case of the Marshall Islands who, as Rudiak-Gould (2013, p. 150) explains, "relocation is not just not planned for, it is deliberately unplanned for". President Kessai Note said, in 2007, that no evacuation should be planned or undertaken in this generation and that all efforts should be placed on mitigation instead (Rudiak-Gould, 2013, p. 150). Similarly McNamara & Gibson (2009) in their analysis of how Pacific ambassadors at the United Nations responded to the category of climate refugees, conclude they assert a vision of the future which is centred on retaining their territory, nationality and cultural identity. There is therefore a strong sense of resistance towards the foreclosure of islanders' futures and the possibility of migration as a solution to climate change, grounded in a strong desire to continue to inhabit the islands.

This message has also been strong outside of academic and governance contexts. For instance, the Pacific Climate Warriors famous slogan represents this: "We are not drowning, we are fighting". Similarly, through her poetry, Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner transmits a similar sentiment and intention powerfully. A first poem sheds light on islanders' desire to remain in their islands. The poem starts with a gift sent to some friends in America, consisting of dangling earrings and baskets from the Marshall Islands and asking their friends to wear them and when anyone asks, to tell them that they are from the Marshall Islands, to tell them about their people and to tell them about the water:

Tell them about the water – how we have seen it rising
Flooding across our cemeteries
Gushing over the sea walls

And crashing against our homes
Tell them what it's like
To see the entire ocean_level_with the land
Tell them we are afraid
Tell them we don't know
Of the politics
Or the science
But tell them we see what is in our own backyard
Tell them that some of us
are old fishermen who believe that God
made us a promise
Tell them some of us
Are a little bit more skeptical
But most importantly you tell them
We don't want to leave
We've never wanted to leave
And that we
Are nothing
Without islands
(Jetñil-Kijiner, 2017)

A second poem, addressed her baby daughter, illustrates the resistance towards this prescribed future:

No one's drowning, baby
no one's moving
no one's losing
their homeland
no one's gonna become
a climate change refugee
(Jetñil-Kijiner, 2017)

A second set of assertions made in the literature refer to islanders' preferences in relation to climate-related movement. A study in the Maldives actively asked participants to engage with the idea of climate-related migration and displacement and found that despite their desire to remain at home, some islanders have also acknowledged the possibility of having to move (Kelman, Upadhyay, *et al.*, 2017). Stojanov et al., (2017) conducted a study of local perceptions on climate change impacts and migration patterns in Malé, Maldives. When asked about moving en masse in response to sea-level rise, 47.84% of respondents agreed that they would have to move. If forced to migrate, their decision about whether to go seems to be motivated by its proximity to home, proximity being understood not only geographically but also in terms of values. In Kelman et al.'s (2017) research, islanders from Dhuvafaaru preferred to migrate within the Maldives and if that was not possible, they wanted to go to another country perceived to have similar culture and religious values, such as Saudi Arabia, India or Sri Lanka. It is also important to note that they mentioned their desire to move together saying that the community was good and strong and so they should all stay together (Kelman, Upadhyay, et al., 2017, p. 295). Another strong message put forward in the literature is that if islanders must move, they claim a right to 'migrate with dignity'. This motto or strategy has been particularly popular in the Pacific region, initiated by the government of Kiribati to resist a 'refugee' label and a future where their populations live in refugee centres and are dependent on host societies. Instead, through 'long-term' planning and migration programmes, islanders can 'up-skill' and embark on migration journeys grounded in a sense of merit, dignity and self-determination (Klepp and Herbeck, 2016).

Following the first identified consequence of future foreclosure, this section has reviewed the different values we might attach to aspirations, hopes and imaginings and the current empirical knowledge on islanders' future thinking in the context of climate change. It has established that aspirations and hopes matter both in terms of the process of aspiring towards one's functioning of self-identity and in terms of the content of the aspirations themselves towards resisting the dichotomy of 'moving or drowning' and understanding the particular human ends valued by affected populations, which might be at risk due to climate-related migration and displacement. In looking at islanders' aspirations, despite a few general key messages, the lack of knowledge on how islanders think about their futures and their individual and collective aspirations has been identified as a key gap in the literature that this thesis attempts to address.

2.4. Movement and loss taken for granted

The second issue identified as a result of future foreclosure is the idea that migration and loss are taken for granted. By this I mean that assuming the disappearance of the islands as something unavoidable results in treating climate-related displacement and loss as acceptable phenomena. As

McNamara & Gibson (2009, p. 482) put it: "future visions of a climate change affected world" are legitimised, "in which mass population mobility and loss of homelands are considered unfortunate, but acceptable 'solutions' to the problems of the social impacts of climate change". Other scholars have referred to this using different language. Barnett (2017) speaks of 'normalisation' and Felli (2013) refers to it being 'naturalised'. This gets exacerbated when migration is framed as an adaptation solution. In the context of SIDS, this has happened when movement is considered as a normal facet of society that takes place in most people's life courses, and so as it is not something exceptional, it can be thought of as a positive solution to climate change. As a result, the literature is treating migration and loss almost as something normal, casual, stripping away the significance and weight that it holds for those affected. The focus lies on the gains and benefits of migration, drifting attention away from the losses that affected populations would face if confronted by climate-related migration and displacement. Therefore, a relatively new question has been raised in the debate, whether migration should fall under adaptation or loss and damage instead, which has gained prominence alongside increasing attention to the theme of loss. This section first reviews this new framing and how it relates to thinking about migration as adaptation, and then turns to analyse the current knowledge on loss and particularly non-economic loss.

2.4.1. Migration and displacement: adaptation or loss and damage?

I showed earlier that a better understanding of the causes of migration led some scholars to argue that migration can be thought about as an adaptation strategy. It has been well demonstrated that people have moved throughout history to improve their livelihoods and adapt to a variety of challenges, so climate-related migration seen in this context, could be understood as having adaptation potential. However, the concern here is that framing migration as adaptation carries with it a set of implications or limitations that leave certain aspects of migration in the dark. Therefore, more recently an alternative conceptualisation for migration has been put forward: that it might be framed under loss and damage instead.

Loss and Damage emerged in the 1990s when the Alliance of Small Island Developing States led a discussion around the idea of establishing an insurance pool in order to compensate small islands from the impacts of sea-level rise. However, despite its emergence around thirty years ago, it is only fairly recently that concrete policy proposals have emerged such as the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage, which was established in the 2013 Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC. UNFCCC's current working definition of loss and damage refers to: "The actual and/or potential manifestation of impacts associated with climate change in developing countries that negatively affect human and natural systems" (UNFCCC, 2012). However, two years later, the UNFCCC expanded the conceptualisation of loss and damage stating that: "Loss & Damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change includes, and in some cases involves more than, that which can be reduced by adaptation" (UNFCCC, 2014, p. 6). This extended the framing of loss and damage going beyond not just the climate change impacts to loss and damage but also the impacts that occur beyond adaptation (McNamara & Jackson, 2018). Following a quantitative review of the literature on loss and damage and climate change conducted by McNamara & Jackson (2018), this understanding coincides with the conceptualisation of loss and damage most found in publications, with almost half (45.1%) of all publications aligning with the idea of loss and damage "being the residual effects that occur after the "limits to adaptation" have been reached. Other conceptualisations, following Boyd et al's (2017) typology include: adaptation and mitigation (where current efforts are sufficient to prevent loss and damage), risk management (climate change as risk driver, drawing on disaster risk reduction and adaptation humanitarian tools) and existential (referring to losses and damages that are happening now, inevitable and permanent, especially non-economic losses and compensation). One rationale behind thinking about migration under the pillar of loss and damage is therefore that displacement incurs a range of costs that surpass the limits of adaptation. Accordingly, migration cannot be thought of as an adaptive solution but requires instead a different kind of framing which allows accounting for the experience of displacement comprehensively. The core dilemma in understanding whether migration falls under adaptation or loss and damage seems to be therefore around identifying the limits to adaptation.

Like loss and damage, adaptation can also be conceptualised in a variety of ways. A well-established aim of adaptation is however to protect that which people value (Hartzell-Nichols, 2011). Accordingly, how adaptation is understood will depend on "who or what we value and who or what is adapting" (Hartzell-Nichols, 2011, p. 689). A specific approach to this aim is understanding adaptation as "primarily intended to reduce climate-related risks to things we value" and adaptation processes viewed as "attempts to keep risks to valued objectives – such as a home by the beach or a profitable forestry business – at a tolerable level in the face of climate-related threats" (Dow et al., 2013, p. 305). A "tolerable level" is understood within the context of three categories of risk and tolerance: acceptable risks, where risks are deemed low enough that adaptive efforts in the form of risk reductions are not justified; tolerable risks, where risk-reduction efforts are necessary to keep the risks within reasonable levels; and intolerable risks, where risks threaten a private or social norm such as the continuity of traditions regardless of adaptive action having taken place (Klinke and Renn, 2002). It follows therefore that an adaptation limit is understood as the point adaptation efforts fail to protect things that stakeholders value (Barnett *et al.*, 2015). I reflected in the previous section on aspirations being a way of seeking knowledge on that which is of value, which becomes relevant here as well. Thus, what do islanders' value? How does that relate to their understandings of adaptation? Do they have a clear sense of where its limits lie? These become key questions for this thesis in attempting to deepen understandings of the climate change and migration and displacement nexus.

This is not to say however that determining the limits of adaptation would give a definite and clear-cut answer to whether migration is to be thought of as adaptation or loss and damage. Indeed, scholars have resisted such polarisation and argued that migration might hold elements of both, adaptation and loss and damage. For instance, McNamara et al (2018, p. 114-5) argue that migration can be both adaptation and loss and damage, stating: "The involuntary or voluntary relocation of populations away from hazardous locations may be considered as an adaptation strategy that can protect lives in the long term. However, the ability to adapt through relocation does not mean that people do not suffer from loss and damage". On the other hand, Pill (2020) develops a spectrum by which to understand the range from human mobility as an adaptive response to forced migration as loss and damage. Pill (2020) identifies eight relational components depending on which migration will be inclined more towards adaptation or loss and damage. These components are: community-driven vs. forced, planned ahead vs. within short timeframe/rushed, communicated vs. no consultation and within institutional land ownership vs. outside institutional land ownership. Building on this, the intention in understandings islanders' conceptions of adaptation and its limits, is not to determine in absolute terms whether migration falls under adaptation or loss and damage, but to recognise the different elements that migration holds of each. Furthermore, whilst there has been a lot of attention on illustrating the ways migration might be an adaptation strategy and the benefits that might follow migration, there has been less dedication to developing the ways in which it relates to loss and damage. In particular, as introduced above, in understanding non-economic losses. The next section turns to review these.

2.4.1. Non-economic losses

As earlier introduced, there is a well-established distinction that differentiates between economic and noneconomic losses, also referred to as tangible and nontangible losses (McNamara &

Jackson, 2018). As defined above, the UNFCCC refers to economic losses as "the loss of resources, goods and services that are commonly traded in markets" and to noneconomic losses as: "items that are not commonly traded in markets" (UNFCCC, 2013, p. 3). A key finding in McNamara & Jackson's (2018) review of the loss and damage literature was that there is a disparity between research being conducted on economic loss and damage, in relation to non-economic loss and damage, with only four publications focusing exclusively on the latter. They attribute this to the difference in ease in quantifying and accounting for economic losses in relation to non-economic losses. McNamara & Jackson (2018) develop a list of losses and damage. This includes: life, human health, human mobility, territory, biodiversity, ecosystem services, indigenous knowledge, cultural heritage, sense of place, social cohesion. Pill (2020), based on a review of key literature on loss and damage as well, adds to the list of non-economic losses: physical and physiological well-being, destruction of cultural sites and culturally important landscapes, identity and collective problem solving, knowledge and ways of thinking that are part of lost livelihood systems, a peacefully functioning society, education, traditions and religions, social bonds and relationships and changed labour conditions. A few of these issues have been explored in detail.

One of the most common issues recognised as what would be lost is a sense of place (Bell, 2004; Adger *et al.*, 2011; De Shalit, 2011; Barnett *et al.*, 2016); and what these places allow for, such as culture (Adger *et al.*, 2011; Barnett *et al.*, 2016) and a functioning of self-identity (De Shalit, 2011). Scholars have suggested that places should be understood as "localities within which people and communities have particular affective relationships" (Hess in Adger et al., 2011, p. 3), and emphasised the need to understand climate change and mobility in the context of a sense of place (Dandy, Horwitz, Campbell, Drake, & Leviston, 2019; Stojanov et al. 2017). One of the key messages in relation to place is that it must be understood as a constituent of one's identity and therefore it needs to be understood as a vital indicator of health and well-being (Cunsolo Willox *et al.*, 2012). For instance, De Shalit (2011) developed the relationship between sense of place and the loss of the functioning of self-identity, stating that the potential of losing a sense of place is a meaningful harm to one's self identity. This is because harming a sense of place means harming one's ability to understand their own environment and therefore their sense of identity. As he states:

> "Suffice it to say that place is vital to human identity because it bonds us to our values, history, personal and collective memory, language, natural surroundings, to things we are familiar with and at ease with. It provides a sense of belonging to something greater than

> ourselves individually. It offers a sense of home. This inevitably leads to feelings of concern, involvement, and commitment that are missing when we leave our "place" (De Shalit, 2011, p. 318)

Windsor & McVey (2005) in their study of forced relocation of Aboriginal peoples in British Columbia found that the loss of place can lead to devastating impacts on the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of affected communities as well as result in higher rates of economic suffering and incidences of suicide. In a similar way than place, the loss of way of life has also been recognised in the literature. Heyward (2014, p. 152) is concerned about this, which she terms 'traditional ways of life' and defines its loss as the following: "a community [that] can no longer engage in its traditional practices because of environmental changes and potentially its members must adopt other ways of life in order to survive". She argues that this is a core component of a cultural injustice that communities being territorially disposed due to climate change will face.

Despite these more detailed analyses of particular losses outlined in the paragraph above, the broader tendency in engaging with non-economic loss is to create 'lists' of potential issues. As Tschakert et al. (2017, p. 3) put it: "thus far, scholarly attempts to address indirect, intangible, and noneconomic/market L&D under climate change have generated illustrative examples, snapshots, category listings, and typologies. They tend to present possible loss categories as discrete entities that appear more suitable for rapid-assessment check lists than carefully targeted policies". Therefore, a more in-depth, context-specific and grounded engagement with non-economic loss is required that goes beyond identifying and naming a particular issue but embraces it comprehensively. Tschakert et al. (2017) state that loss and damage is intrinsically about values and point towards the importance of engaging with people's everyday lives, practices and encounters to reveal a range of meanings that people attach to their lives, the places where they live and their well-being. This thesis responds to Tschakert et al.'s (2017) call to engage with loss through the locus of the everyday as the space where to explore a range of values that risk being obscured by scientific assessments of climate impact studies and policy discourses on adaptation priorities.

2.5. Justice side-lined

The third and last issue raised in relation to future foreclosure was the idea of justice concerns being side-lined, which was also in turn understood as a result of movement and loss being taken for granted. By foreclosing the future of the islands and accepting migration and loss, islanders' rights to live in their islands and the moral wrong of displacement get side-lined. They are treated as unfortunate as opposed to unjust phenomena and the responsibilities the international community holds to avoid displacement are obscured. This is not to say however that literature on climate-related migration and displacement and justice is non-existent. In fact, there is a set of literature that looks at climate-related migration and displacement from the standpoint of justice. This section turns to review the work of political theorists and philosophers on the subject matter and highlight where it leaves us and what still might require further thought. First, I look at comprehensive proposals that have been developed to govern climate-related migration. Secondly, I turn to analyse suggestions specific to the case of SIDS. I close by highlighting that these approaches respond to the concerns shared mainly by experts and elites and are to a certain extent reduced to solving the formal and legal consequences of the disappearance of SIDS, as opposed to the trauma and grief that affected communities might encounter.

2.5.1. Governance

In attempting to govern the phenomena of climate-related migration and displacement, scholars have endeavoured to answer a range of key questions: How should we think about this 'new category' of refugees or migrants? Should we extend the current understanding and definition of refugees under the Geneva convention to include those to be displaced by environmental or climate change? Should there be instead a separate category that represents 'climate refugees' only? Similarly, are we to adapt existing legal frameworks so they can respond to the phenomenon of climate-related displacement? Or would it be better to create stand-alone institutions or frameworks to tackle the issue? Political theorists have come up with different suggestions and proposals to these questions, attempting to draw up principles and governing structures.

Biermann and Boas (2008, 2010) propose a Sui Generis regime for governing the climate refugee crisis. Their starting point is that currently, the legal regime on refugees provides marginal protections and has no specific mandate to climate refugees. Furthermore, the responsibility is placed within the refugee's home countries, which fails to consider that the majority of those to be displaced by climate change, particularly for the case of SIDS, have contributed the least to climate change and should not bear the burden for addressing it. As raised above, an option would nonetheless be to reform the existing institutional setting by expanding the 1951 Geneva Convention and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to include the particular case of climate refugees. Biermann and Boas, however, argue against this on the basis of the special character of "climate refugees". Contrary to the case of political refugees, a significant amount of those to be displaced can remain within the home country and thus enjoy protection from their state. Additionally, climate-related migration can be planned and organised in a way that political or religious prosecution cannot. This leads Biermann and Boas to argue that climate refugees require a particular kind of protection. Accordingly, they propose the establishment of a new legal instrument: a Protocol on Recognition, Protection and Resettlement of Climate Refugees to the UNFCCC and a separate funding mechanism: the Climate Refugee Protection and Resettlement Fund.

Docherty & Giannini (2009) develop a similar proposal in its rejection of the extension of the Geneva Convention to include climate refugees. Instead, they propose the establishment of a new legal instrument which also stands apart from the UNFCCC, which they critique is 'neither people-centred nor remedial in nature' (Docherty & Giannini, 2009, p. 402). They set out the aims of the proposed instrument which consist of: creating obligations to deal with both prevention and remediation of the climate change refugee problem, establishing guarantees of human rights protections and humanitarian aid, spreading the burden of fulfilling those guarantees between the home state, host state and the international community and finally forming institutions to implement the provisions, including a global fund, a coordination agency and a body of scientific experts.

Lastly, Byravan & Rajan (2010, 2015) develop a different proposal which involves the granting of a special right of free global movement and resettlement in regions and countries. They speak of 'climate exiles' and define them as: 'stateless persons, individuals who are stripped of rights' (Byravan & Rajan, 2010, p. 252). The authors understand its uniqueness this time in relation to the permanent, as opposed to temporary, condition of statelessness. Consequently, they argue there is a need for a mechanism to provide climate exiles with a new set of economic, political and civil rights as well as a choice as to where they wish to resettle. This would mean that the problem is not dealt with on an ad hoc basis and instead climate exiles would be given accelerated immigration benefits (Byravan and Rajan, 2015). These responsibilities ought to be shared among host countries according to a host country's historic contribution to climate change through cumulative greenhouse gas emissions.

These proposals attempt to tackle the issue of climate-related migration and displacement holistically and comprehensively, that is they set out proposals for legal institutions designed to address climate-related migration and displacement in its entirety. As well as these proposals, which address general governance questions, there have been proposals specific for the case of SIDS. The next section turns to examining those.

2.5.2. Proposals specific to SIDS

This section reviews the proposals that have been developed in tackling climate-related migration and displacement from SIDS. Firstly, it looks at the different ways the key moral problem has been conceptualised and secondly it looks at the specific proposals in relation to questions of territory and whether migration should be granted on individual or collective grounds. Overall, the identified issue at stake here regards the disappearance or inhabitability of SIDS. Scholars however have labelled the key moral problem differently. For instance, Willcox (2016) speaks of 'self-determination' on the basis that atoll island populations are self-determining peoples and argued for the need to recognise that climate change inundation poses an external threat against it. Wündisch (2019) refers to 'territorial loss' as a particularly 'vexing kind' of loss amongst other serious losses and damages. On the other hand, Vaha (2015, 2018) speaks of 'state extinction' as "a situation in which a state faces a very real and imminent threat of literal disappearance from the surface of the Earth" (Vaha, 2015, p. 206). Her intention is to guide attention away from territory and respond to the language and concerns raised by SIDS of climate change representing an existential threat for them, going beyond issues of territory and self-determination. As AOSIS' closing statement on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action in June 2013 demonstrates:

> "The deadly flooding unfolding here in Germany, as well as the Czech Republic, Austria, Slovakia, and Hungary is a graphic reminder of what is at stake at these negotiations and our hearts go out to all those impacted. But we remind the parties here that what is at stake for SIDS is existential; once the high water mark is reached for many of our small island nationals and coastal communities these waters will never recede" (AOSIS, 2013 in Vaha, 2015, p. 208)

This is not to suggest that the authors cited above neglect this *existentiality* component. Of course, these different conceptualisations are not exclusive and imply one another. It is interesting to note nonetheless the different elements that have been emphasized and see the different proposals and suggestions that have emerged respectively.

In response to these different laid out moral problems, different propositions have been developed, including both ideal and non-ideal theorising. This differentiation between ideal and non-ideal approaches to political philosophy comes from Rawls. According to Rawls (1999), ideal theory corresponds to one operating under two assumptions: full compliance and favourable circumstances. By full compliance is meant that all act in accordance with the demands of justice whilst favourable circumstances refer to the conditions that are required to maintain a well-ordered society such as moderate scarcity. Correspondingly, non-ideal theorising refers to what agents should do if either of those assumptions, full compliance or favourable circumstances, do not apply. For instance, in the context of climate change, 'ideal theory' might refer to thinking about what the 'optimum' of justice is without taking into account feasibility considerations such as financial constraints. 'Non-ideal' theory might refer to developing a 'realistic' response that is grounded in what current practices suggest might be possible. It is also important to note that these different types of theorising might work together, for some approaches use ideal theory to guide non-ideal theory.

A first set of these proposals are centred around questions of territory. For instance, what happens to the state when it no longer has a territory? Does it cease to exist or is it possible to maintain sovereignty over the uninhabitable territory or otherwise its waters? What territory are affected communities to occupy if their original territory is no longer habitable? Are there normative and legal grounds to oblige states to surrender territory?

Ödalen (2014) has tackled the question of sovereignty and asked whether the people of SIDS, once displaced and their territory abandoned, can continue to exercise sovereign control over such territory. He develops a non-ideal solution called the 'Deterritorialized State Proposal'. This proposal makes two claims:

> "(1) the people of a vanishing island state could continue to exercise sovereign control over their abandoned, now uninhabitable territory, and (2) when the island state eventually becomes completely inundated (if it ever happens) the people could continue to exercise sovereign control over what used to be their territorial waters" (Ödalen, 2014, p. 226).

The latter is also developed by Rayfuse (2010, p. 12) who argues for the establishment and maintenance of maritime entitlements as a 'quintessential hallmark of statehood'. Although non-ideal, the benefits of such proposals include: on the one hand, sovereign control over their territorial waters which could be seen as an 'exclusive economic zone', with rights over the sea bed and natural resources of the waters (Yamamoto and Esteban, 2010) and on the other hand, an opportunity to maintain an abstract connection to their homeland.

A range of other scholars have looked at the normative and legal grounds for territory compensation through 'host' states ceding part of their current territories. Nine (2010, p. 359) has tackled this matter from the point of view of 'self-determination', posing the following question: 'What may the people of an ecological refugee state legitimately claim on the basis of their right to self-determination?' On the basis of an adapted version of the Lockean proviso, she argues that indeed ecological refugee states may opt to claim sovereignty over a new territory after their original territory becomes uninhabitable. Willcox (2016) presents this as one of the three available options to atoll island peoples, which have been developed grounded in law but with the flexibility of re-interpreting existing legal tools. She argues that a preferable way of maintaining a sovereign and independent state is through a treaty of cession by which states transfer full territorial sovereignty to the endangered state. Dietrich & Wündisch (2015) reach a similar conclusion, that claims to territorial compensation are well founded. The rationale in this instance is that destroying the physical basis of a territory (a territory being a necessary condition for exercising the right to political self-determination) constitutes an unjustified harm and that unjustified harms are to be compensated. Wündisch (2019) has agreed on the legitimacy of territorial compensation yet argued they represent ideal theory, for within the realities of non-compliance, he deems them unachievable at the present moment.

A second set of proposals are centred around the idea of migration and displacement and particularly focus on whether it should be granted on individual or collective grounds. Risse (2009) led this conversation proposing that individuals hold a right to relocation based on their status as co-owners of the Earth. The principle behind common ownership as developed by Risse is that "all co-owners ought to have an equal opportunity to satisfy basic needs to the extent that this turns on obtaining collectively owned resources" (Risse, 2009, p.286). Eckersley (2015) also argues for the right to relocation on the part of climate refugees and to choose their host state in a way that suits their circumstances. This right would be linked to a state's 'responsibility to receive', to enable climate refugees to start a new life. This proposal is framed as a way of providing partial compensation for the injustice and trauma of their loss and damage. Heyward & Ödalen, (2016) have developed a similar proposal, where citizens of SIDS would be offered a "passport for the territorially dispossessed". This passport would give them a right to choose any particular country as their new homeland. Heyward and Odalen argue that it is only through the freedom to choose to relocate to a country of their choice that islanders can be offered full compensation for what can never be properly compensated for. Therefore, "a full free choice is the next best thing" (Heyward & Ödalen, 2016, p. 213). This resonates with the earlier developed proposal put forward by Byravan & Rajan (2010) of granting a special right to free movement.

Another range of scholars, however, have criticised the 'individuality' of these proposals and put forward the idea of collective migration. The core concerns regarding an individual approach is that as Kolers (2012, p. 333-4) puts it:

> "[The individual approach] fails to recognise the nature of the loss that a person suffers when she is not merely an ecological refugee but a citizen of an 'ecological refugee *state'*'. When the state as a whole disappears, the individual's political identity, political community, status in that community, currency, civil-society institutions, and perhaps even her language of political participation and culture disappear as well".

Consequently, he pushes for a collective approach to responding to climate-related displacement. Some of the collective proposals come from the same authors that argued for territorial compensation, which was to be accompanied with the endangered state moving together (Nine, 2010). Others held that territorial compensation was only an ideal proposal, and so they conclude instead that collective migration to someone else's territory is the '*best possible approximation of justice'* (Wündisch, 2019, p. 24). This option resonates better with what islanders have stated so far regarding their preference over community-led relocation.

The above proposals have raised a number of important issues in relation to climate-related migration and displacement and attempted to develop solutions to what would be key moral problems, were the islands to become uninhabitable. They have established that one's territory, sovereignty, right to self-determination, political identity, political community, civil-society institutions, way of life and culture would be lost if SIDS's land were to disappear and therefore these valued human ends ought to be compensated for via the range of measures developed above, on the grounds that they were unjustified. These represent important advances on what is a relatively new field of study and represent a framework of what is normatively plausible and sometimes legally possible. There are however at least two important limitations to these accounts of justice, on which I want to reflect here to establish the purpose and aim of this thesis.

Firstly, the identified moral problems, losses and consequently developed solutions respond to a specific set of concerns. There is a general understanding of what is at risk of being lost if the islands disappear, but there is a lack of empirical studies inquiring into what 'everyday' people consider would be lost. As a result, the current identified concerns are the ones raised by experts or elites. For instance, the government of Maldives has raised the possibility of buying land elsewhere for their community to be able to relocate, which is discussed in some of the proposals above. Another example is when Vaha (2015) speaks of 'state extinction' in response to SIDS using the language of 'existentiality'. It is known however that there is a disparity in the way elites vs. non-elites understand the topic of climate change and climate-related migration and displacement (Arnall and Kothari, 2015). This is not to say that non-elites have no concerns in relation to what can be understood under the theme of justice and fairness, and so a gap emerges: What justice-based proposals or suggestions might emerge based on non-elites concerns and considerations? In line with this question, Arnall, Hilson, & McKinnon (2019) have emphasised the ability of affected peoples to develop and formulate their own justice-based solutions and developed an account of 'claims-making from below'. Similarly, Fladvad et. al (2020) argue the realm of 'the legal' is not reserved to lawyers, judges and government representatives. Instead, they show how rights can emerge from communities in situations of injustice. An example of this is the right to migrate with dignity put forward by former Kiribati president, Anote Tong. In this thesis, I explore the concerns of non-experts in affected populations in the context of climate-related migration and displacement and in doing so contribute towards broadening 'epistemic receptivity' in justice considerations (Klepp and Herbeck, 2016). Secondly, the existing proposals, broadly speaking, take responsibility for the 'legal' status of refugees or stateless persons, but not for the trauma and grief that accompanies it. I deem this to be partly due to the identified 'moral problems' and concerns and the broader lack of attention to non-economic losses, which does not allow to fully and comprehensively understand the experience of climate-related migration and displacement and therefore respond to it from a standpoint of justice in its entirety. Therefore, the following questions can be raised: What else is required of justice? What other proposals and suggestions might come forward if the focus is not on the material or 'legal' loss of affected communities, but on the non-material and symbolic?

In addressing these questions, this project contributes to an emerging body of work that is worth noting here beyond the identified general trends in the justice literature. As a result of an increasing realisation that climate change will result in many losses and damages, a group of scholars have relatively recently started thinking about what more is required of justice in the context of climate change. This has often been framed in terms of reparations or transitional justice. For instance, Page & Heyward (2017) develop an account of compensatory justice and Klinsky & Brankovic's (2018) recent monograph 'The Global Climate Regime and Transitional Justice' applies theories and practices of transitional justice to the context of climate change. One of their chapters in particular is dedicated to setting out a 'Reparations Commission', where affected communities can make claims to request reparations. These proposals embrace an account for the non-material and symbolic dimensions of climate change, but they are not grounded in empirical data of what losses within those realms might be for affected communities. This study contributes to this scholarship by advancing empirical knowledge on the matter and then exploring what a justice response to the particular identified losses might look like.

2.6. Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the literature on climate-related migration and displacement. It started by exploring the maximalist and minimalist reasonings as the different ways in which the climate change and migration nexus has been framed and challenged. This was followed by a discussion of the primary commonalities of both framings. Namely, I observed a methodological and thematic imbalance in favour of quantitative methods and the material and economic dimensions of climate change. On those bases, I argued that current ways of thinking about and researching climate-related migration and displacement lead to future foreclosure. In turn, I suggested future foreclosure risks negatively impacting islanders' capacity to aspire and imagine, the way in which movement and loss are perceived and portrayed in the literature and the side-lining of questions of justice and fairness. The following sections analysed each of these themes independently, highlighted gaps and raised key questions that serve as the theoretical grounds against which this thesis sits.

Firstly, in looking at aspirations, hopes and imaginings, I established two reasons why we might attach value to aspirations: an intrinsic and instrumental value. I highlighted an intrinsic value in the process of aspiring which was important in relation to one's functioning of self-identity. The instrumental value lies in the content of the aspirations, hopes and imaginings themselves and was two-fold. On the one hand, alternative visions served some form of resistance to 'moving or drowning' narratives. On the other hand, they shed light on populations valued human ends, which might be at risk of being lost in the context of climate-related migration and displacement. In wanting to explore islanders' aspirations *per se*, I highlighted this as a data gap in the literature, that besides a few general messages about islanders wanting to continue to inhabit the islands and resisting proposals of migration, there is scarce knowledge on how islanders think about their futures. This set the first objective of this thesis, to understand how islanders think about their futures, both collectively and individually, in the context of climate change and potential displacement.

Secondly, turning to movement and loss, I developed the idea that as a result of future foreclosure, movement and loss risk being taken for granted and being resigned to. Furthermore, I suggest that framing migration as a potential adaptation solution exacerbates this issue by treating movement as a normal facet of island communities. Altogether, these risk stripping away the significance and weight that being displaced might carry for those affected. This section reviewed the integration of a loss and damage framing for climate-related migration and displacement in relatively recent literature and pointed towards the lack of empirically grounded knowledge on non-economic losses. Therefore, a second objective of this thesis is to re-explore movement and loss with an in-depth qualitative, context-specific approach that uses the 'everyday' as the locus of research and focuses on the non-material and symbolic dimensions of climate change.

Lastly, I established that as a result of future foreclosure, and by taking for granted migration and loss, the right of island communities to continue to inhabit their islands, the responsibility of the international community to ensure that right, and the moral wrong of climate-related displacement get side-lined. In this section, therefore, I reviewed the literature on climate-related migration and displacement from SIDS from the standpoint of justice. I drew two observations. Firstly, that justice proposals that have been developed so far respond mainly to the concerns of elites and experts, as opposed to those of everyday ordinary people. Secondly, that these proposals respond to a specific set of losses, such as sovereignty and territory, and in doing so are not able to capture broader responsibilities of justice that might be equally required and justified. From these observations, the third objective of the thesis emerges, to explore potential justice considerations from the perspective of everyday ordinary people and expand the scope of justice by focusing on the non-material and symbolic needs of affected populations. Having established the gaps and themes that this thesis wishes to contribute to, I now turn to develop the case study and methodology to be employed.

Chapter III. Case Study and Methodology

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I introduce the Maldives as a case study and develop an account of the methodology employed. Section 3.2. develops a country profile of the Maldives, its economic, political, social, and cultural background and the different ways climate change has featured in the country's governance. I also introduce Thulusdhoo and Rinbudhoo as the study areas. Section 3.3. discusses the research methodology. I first discuss matters of positionality, outline the research strategy and design, and explain and reflect on the role of research assistants. I follow with an account of the different methods that I employed, their academic rationale and suitability and the way they played out in the field. After discussing the methods, I turn to develop the sampling strategy, the data analysis, the limitations of the study and close by reflecting on formal ethical considerations.

3.2. Case Study: Maldives

Located in the Indian Ocean, the Republic of Maldives is a small island developing state lying southwest of Sri Lanka and India. It comprises an archipelago of 1,192 islands, out of which 200 are inhabited and another 80 are used as tourist resorts. It is the smallest Muslim nation and the smallest country in Asia with an estimated population of around 400,000, unevenly distributed between the Greater Area of Malé, the capital, and the rest of the islands (Hirsch, 2015).

Originally, the Maldives was a Buddhist country until it converted to Islam between the years of 1147-8 AD and 1153 AD and was ruled by a Muslim sultanate until it became a British "protectorate" in 1887. In 1968, under the presidency of Ibrahim Nasir, the islands became an independent republic. Nasir was president until 1978 and was succeeded by Maumoon Gayoom who remained president for over thirty years until 2008. During Gayoom's presidency, the country was relatively stable expect from failed military coups in the 1980s (Joan *et al.*, 2010). It was during these years that tourism flourished and foreign contact increased. However, these economic achievements occurred simultaneously with concerns about the suppression of freedom of speech, political repression, the extent of presidential power, the independence of the judiciary, police brutality and other human rights abuses. There also were been allegations of torture, arbitrary arrest and detention without proper trial during Gayoom's regime (others references in Joan et al., 2010). These events combined led to a democracy movement. In fact, after the 2004's tsunami, European aid was dependent on Gayoom's administration implementing a range of reforms in order to increase transparency and demonstrating stronger electoral democracy (Hirsch, 2015).

As a result of these reforms, the first democratic elections were held in 2008 in what was seen as a significant and exemplary moment in Islamic democracy (Hirsch 2015). Mohamed Nasheed, who was a journalist and had been a political prisoner on various occasions, became the opposition leader and was elected the Maldives' first democratically elected leader. His time in government came to an end in 2012, with Vice President Mohamed Waheed becoming president after an apparent *coup d'état*. In the following elections of 2013, Abdulla Yameen, half-brother of the former authoritarian ruler, became president. In September 2018, elections took place when Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, representing the same party as Nasheed, was elected president. Despite continuous efforts to establish a democratic political system, scholars suggests that the Maldives is "yet to demonstrate a firm commitment to a transparent, open and accountable political system" (Zuhair and Kurian, 2016, p.139). One of the ways this is evidenced is through the lack of fairness and competence in procedural practices in Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA), which were found to be negatively impacted by socio-economic barriers to effective deliberation.

The Maldivian economy has traditionally relied on fisheries which provided employment, exports and food security. However, the role of fisheries has been substituted by that of tourism, which accounts for approximately a third of the country's GDP (World Bank, 2015). The industry has grown rapidly since the 1970s when the first resorts were built on two islands. By 2021, there are over 150 resort islands with still a growing number of planned openings. The formal responsibility for the tourism industry rests with a range of institutions: the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, the Maldives Tourism Promotion Board and the government, which had a 45% share in the Maldives Tourism Development Corporation formed in 2006. The tourism industry has transformed the economy of the Maldives to the extent that incomes are significantly above those in much of the wider region of South Asia, with revenue being invested in education and health services (Joan et al, 2010). Despite these achievements of the tourism sector, there are a number of concerns with this original model. For instance, the tourism industry is based on imported goods and expatriate labour, accounting for only 16% of employment in the country. Linkages between resort islands and inhabited islands are limited, with few services and products being supplied by local enterprises (World Bank, 2015). This represents one of the tensions between the tourism sector and the local population. Another issue regards the prioritisation of the needs of the resorts over those of national citizens. After the tsunami, some raised this concern given that whilst resorts were quickly repaired or rebuilt, some local islands and citizens were left without adequate housing or drinking water for an extended period of time (Joan et al. 2020). A response to these concerns has been to change the tourism model for it to include local islands as tourist destinations. Thus, inhabited islands are growing their own tourism industry with the introduction of guesthouses. Despite concerns about the impact of Western standards on Islamic culture, this had led to an increased integration of culture and a more globalised experience of local islands which are now characterised by a growing number of guest houses, souvenir shops and cafes and restaurants intended to cater for tourists.

These political and economic developments are accompanied by social and cultural transformations. A recent study traces the changes in the social system in the Maldives arguing that whilst currently the Maldives is characterised by quite a high degree of homogeneity, there is significant evidence which points to a much more elaborate social stratification system in earlier times with traces of a caste society (Kulikov, 2018). These are most noticeable in the highest level of contemporary society or elite through the use of everyday language which preserves a complicated system of honorific degrees. This coincides with Mohamed's (1994) argument that the main social classification in the Maldives is the one between the ruling or governing elite and the rest of the community.

There have also been shifts in migration, urbanization, gender, the structure of the home and family, religious conservativism and a youth disconnect that characterizes everyday Maldivian society. Furthermore, economic growth in the Maldives is coinciding with an increase in urbanisation and migration towards Male, to have closer access to education, employment and health. This speaks to another tension in the country between the area of Greater Male and the other atolls. In turn, this represents noticeable income disparities in the country between the better resourced and richer Male and the outer atolls which are less prosperous (Joan *et al.*, 2010). Relatedly, there also is a noticeable disparity in employment based on gender. Many jobs require living away from home and given women are assumed to look after the household, it is men that tend to fill those positions leaving Maldivian women under-represented in the labour force (Joan *et al.*, 2010). This takes place alongside a changing structure of the house, which is going from being open and fluid in terms of roles and spaces to much smaller, rigid and closed places. This has highlighted the divide between the internal and the external, the public and the private, having an effect on gender by contributing to the isolation of women (Fulu, 2014).

There are other ways the role of women in Maldivian society have changed. For example, traditionally Maldivian society was characterised by the independent status of women, particularly when compared to other Islamic contexts. A significant example of this is the fact that women used to rule the islands. The official Maldivian history mentions four female sultans and Maldivians originally had a matrilineal tradition which later changed to patrilineal and patrilocal (Kulikov, 2018). These changes are being influenced and intensified by growing religious conservativism. The traditional form of Islam practiced in the Maldives, characterised by a model of tolerance that incorporated cultural practices, started shifting from about the 1990s, to a more conservative stream (El-Horr and Pande, 2016). Joan et al. (2010) note the role of dress as a manifestation of religious conservatism in the Maldives with an increasing number of women covering themselves fully in the black boda buruga. In these ways, religion plays a fundamental role in the Maldives. One cannot be a Maldivian citizen unless they are Muslim and public worship of other faiths is illegal (Hirsch, 2015). The legal framework is based on Islamic believes. For instance, importation of material deemed contrary to Islam is prohibited and press pluralism exists to the extent that Islamic values are not contravened or diminished (Mohamed, 1994; Joan *et al*, 2010).

These changes in the social, familial, economic and political spheres have left the youth population alienated and searching for new ways of being. Traditional practices and professions are no longer equally available and they are also affected by the limitations of inhabited islands' economy, the lack of empowerment, social support and community engagement. Furthermore, as mentioned above, a large proportion of jobs in the country are filled with foreign labour. This has led to a significant concern about the youth's disconnect and disengagement which is resulting in a heroin "epidemic" affecting an estimated 40% of Maldivians under the age of 25 (El-Horr and Pande, 2016; Doherty in Hirsch, 2015).

As well as these recent transformations characterising Maldivian society and culture, a range of recurrent themes have historically constituted Maldivian identity**.** Spiegel analyses French navigator Francois Pyrard's colonial account (1619) of Maldivian society and Xavier Romero-Frias' (2012) translated anthology of the Maldivian oral tradition, bringing an insight into the Maldivian community´s environmental knowledges and cultural practices. Based on their account, she recognises four characterising themes of Maldivian identity: the force of the ocean, the significance of the coconut tree, the connection to the islands as homeland and the concept of greed. The role of the ocean in Maldives' society is both acknowledged by Pryard and Romero-Frias. Pryard recognised the resourcefulness in islanders' interaction with the marine ecosystem and their fishing abilities, stating that the people of the Maldives are "half fish, so accustomed they are to the sea"(Pyrard, 1691, 101). Both accounts refer to stories that show islanders' awareness of the power of nature and the ocean. In order to keep the sea at safe levels and stop the islands from submerging, daily prayer and collective knowledge are highly valued. Pyrard (Pyrard, 1691, p. 127) comments on the role of prayer in keeping the islands safe:

> "Every day of the week they go at daybreak to the temple, and for this they give a reason according to their belief, that the world is flat, and not round, and that there is a wall of copper all around which prevents the world from being submerged by the waters which encompass it, and that the devil, the enemy of the human race, is at hand all night trying to pierce and undermine this work, and when the day breaks he must nearly have worked a hole. By reason whereof all men…go at break of the day to the mesquites to make their orisons, for without prayers the world would perish".

A story recollected by Romero-Frias shows similar awareness of the vulnerability of the islands against the ocean. This is the story of 'Ukunumana and Līmana', told by Katībuge Ibrahīm Saīdo, Diguvāndo village, Fua Mulaku. In the story, two girls spend all their time picking lice and nits from their hair against the advice of other women in the island instructing them to focus on more important matters. One day, the girls spot a new sandbar that has formed offshore and decide to go there in attempts to avoid the other womens' comments. Whilst they are there, the ocean currents start to change, and the sandbar starts to erode. People from the island try to warn them, but they are too far away to hear and they do not have time to safely return to the island, so the sandbar dissolves under them and the girls drown (Romero-Frias, 2012). As well as showing the power of the ocean, the story also echoes the importance of cultivating an active response grounded in community and collective knowledge, for Ukunumana and Līmana are thought to meet their deaths as they attempt to isolate themselves and ignore the advice of the elders (Spiegel, 2017).

Another important element of Maldivian society and culture is the significance of the coconut tree. "The First Coconuts," as was told by Vaijehēge Alī Dīdī of Dūndigan, Fua Mulaku Island, tells the story that Maldivian society only started to thrive after a *fandita* man (magician) planted coconut trees out of the skulls of deceased settlers. Since then, the coconut tree was used in daily life as food, drink, shelter, shade, medicines, cooking oil, lighting oil, brooms, rope, and wood for boatbuilding, firewood, utensils, toys for children, whistles, and baskets, amongst many others (Spiegel, 2017).

Maldivians' connection to the islands as homeland is also an essential characteristic of their culture. The Maldivian oral tales transmit a deep connection to their islands as homeland and place of origin. The island, section, village or quarter where a person lives is a crucial part of their identity, often included in the individual's name. Furthermore, to demean a person, Maldivians often would say "*taneh doreh neiy miheh*" (a person without location and door), "emphasizing the fact of the person not belonging to a place and house" (Romero-Frias, 2012, xiv). Other stories touch on the concept of greed being an undesirable and punishable attribute. For instance, in "The Fruits of Greed," told by Don Kokko, Hirunduge, Malé, a *handi* (female spirit) gifts a poor couple with gold coins to build a boat so they can fish every day and provide for their family. However, when they return to ask for more coins so they can build a lavish home, the *handi* casts misfortune upon the couple, who become as miserable as they were before (Romero-Frias, 2012, p. 59-62).

These accounts and stories, in giving meaning to the ocean, the coconut tree, the homeland and greed, contributed towards understanding the context of the Maldives in a way that embraces the non-material and symbolic. They speak to islanders' relationship to their environment and their connection to the land and sea in ways that are relevant towards current explorations of the potential impacts of climate change in the Maldives.

The Maldives has been on the international climate stage since the 1990s, with former president Gayoom being the first to highlight the vulnerability of SIDS internationally (McNamara & Gibson, 2009). Nasheed continued to call for international attention, holding an underwater cabinet in 2009. He, however, translated the importance and urgency of climate change to the national realm, where mitigation and adaptation became domestic priorities for the Maldives. Regarding mitigation, on March 15, 2009, Nasheed announced that Maldives aimed at becoming the first world´s first carbon neutral country. The idea consisted of "virtually eliminating fossil fuel use on the Maldivian archipelago by 2020, substituting it with renewable electricity generation and transmission infrastructure with 155 large wind turbines, half a square kilometre of rooftop solar panels, and a biomass plant burning coconut husks" (Clark, 2009). In terms of adaptation, Nasheed´s administration proposed two policies. His first initiative was to establish a "Sovereign Wealth Fund" to purchase land for Maldivians in case of necessary displacement (Kothari, 2014, p. 135). This would be based on diverting a portion of the national´s annual revenue from the tourism industry to buy land in either Sri Lanka, India or Australia (Spiegel, 2017, p. 87-88). His second initiative was to adapt to climate change through internal relocation policies with he "Resilient Island Approach" project, where the government encouraged the population to migrate to less at-risk islands through social services and transport network incentives (Kothari, 2014). After Nasheed, the focus on climate-related policies declined with Yameen's time in government being characterised by neglecting environmental protection and focusing on economic development (Ratter et al., 2019).

3.2.1. Study Area: Thulusdhoo and Rinbudhoo

Within the Maldives, the study focused on two islands: Thulusdhoo and Rinbudhoo. Thulusdhoo is the capital of Kaafu Atoll, located 27km away from the capital, Male. It has a population of 1,900 inhabitants, including the original community and part of the community from Rinbudhoo, who relocated there in 2006. Rinbudhoo is one of the islands that was most severely affected by the 2004 tsunami, causing two deaths. In 2006, the government offered the population the option to relocate to Thulusdhoo and this is when a third of the inhabitants chose to move, with 244 people remaining.

These two islands became the study area for a set of reasons. First, there was an established relationship between the two islands and communities, Thulusdhoo being the host island for the people who chose to relocate after the tsunami. Second, it allowed me to speak to a range of people with different experiences and perspectives of movement. The population in Thulusdhoo had had the experience of being a host community, whilst the population in Rinbudhoo were presented with the choice of whether to move or stay put. Furthermore, the population in Rinbudhoo had been exposed to some of the most severe impacts of the 2004 Tsunami in the Maldives in ways that could resonate to the prospect of sea-level rise. Third, the island of Thulusdhoo had recently been reclaimed (see Figure 3), in ways that I also expected might have an impact on their inhabitants' perspectives on the topics of this research. The two islands are also different in terms of size, proximity to Male and livelihoods, as summarised in Table 1.

Thulusdhoo, being closer to the capital, is a more developed island. Tourism is much more present and visible throughout the island, and the majority of the streets have a guesthouse. The island is busy with tourists. Accordingly, its inhabitants work in the industry, either at the guest houses, or providing related services such as boat rentals and surfing lessons, amongst others. They have also extended the island and almost doubled its size through a reclamation project. It is unclear what the purpose of the new land is, whether it is to accommodate the growing families from the two current communities living in Thulusdhoo, or whether it is to relocate another community.

Rinbudhoo, on the other hand, is a much more isolated island. There are only three guesthouses, two of which are only open during in the tourist season. It is much quieter and there are only the occasional tourists wondering around its roads, who might be visiting from nearby resorts. Islanders engage in their daily jobs which for women might consist of spinning coir rope “roanu veshun”, or weaving palm leaf “fan vinun” and for men of jewellery making. These differences between the islands became evident in the data generation stage and will be further explored in the coming chapters.

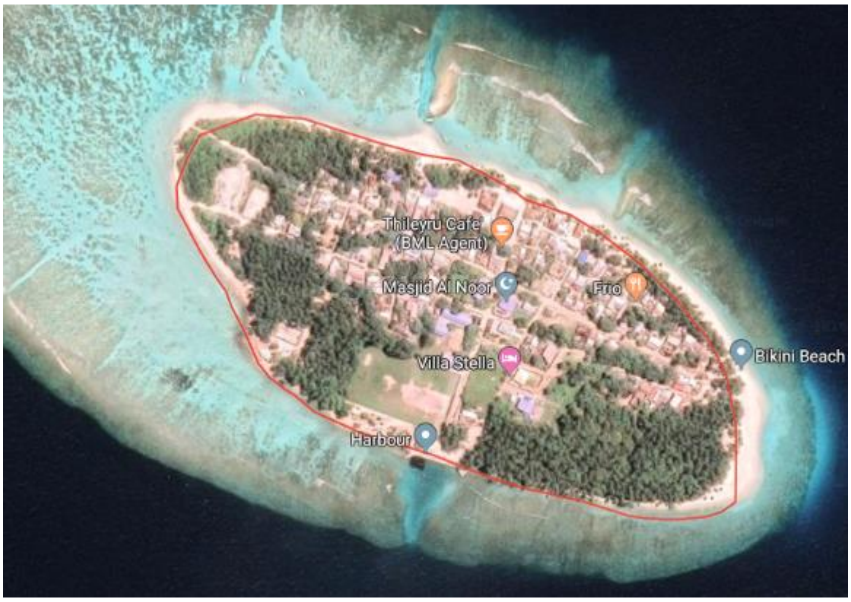

Thileyru Cafe (BML Agent)
Masjid Al Noor
Frio
Villa Stella
Bikini Beach
Harbour

Figure 2: Rinbudhoo

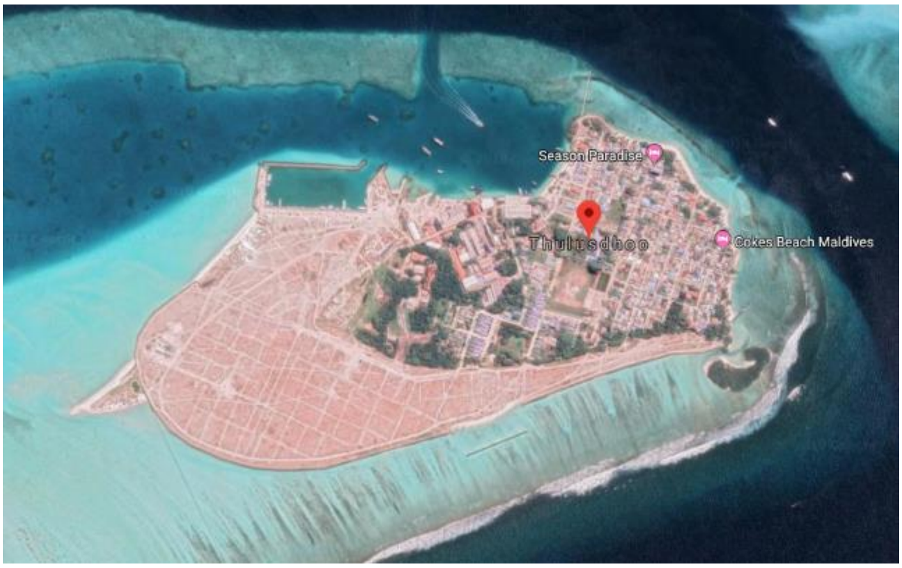

Season Paradise
Thulusdhoo
Cokes Beach Maldives

Figure 3: Thulusdhoo

Table 1: Characteristics of Study Locations

Characteristics of the study location	**Thulusdhoo**	**Rinbudhoo**
Number of inhabitants	1900	277
Distance & Accessibility to Male	27.1km, 30min speedboat journey 8 times a day.	155km, 4h speedboat journey 3 times a week.
Livelihoods	Tourism industry, guest houses and related services such as boat rentals and surfing lessons.	Traditional occupations such as jewellery making, spinning coir rope or weaving palm leaf
Experiences of migration	Host communities for islanders from Rinbudhoo.	1/3 of the population migrated to Thulusdhoo in 2006, two years after the tsunami.
Reclamation Projects	Land reclaimed almost doubling the size of the island, without construction to this date.	Ideas of having a small reclamation project.
Development Characteristics	Abundance of guesthouses, strong presence of tourism.	3 guesthouses, only one open year-round. Very few tourists on the island but many resorts nearby.

3.3. Methodology

This section develops an account of the research methodological considerations. Under Section 3.3.1. I start by sharing my reflections on positionality, outline the research strategy and design. Section 3.3.2 discusses the research timeline and the role of research assistants. Section 3.3.3. focuses on the methods employed in the project, both their academic reasoning and suitability and the way they played out in the field. The following sections look at sampling (Section 3.3.4.), data generation and analysis (Section 3.3.5.), limitations of the study (Section 3.3.6.), and formal ethical considerations (Section 3.3.7.).

3.3.1. Research Positionality and Approach

Research has been and sometimes continues to be a process of 'othering', in which the West has claimed authority based on objectivity and neutrality, in its superior capacity of producing knowledge. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012, p. 83) describes, "they came, they saw, they named, they claimed". Thus, as agents of colonial power "western scientists discovered, extracted, appropriated, commodified, and distributed knowledge about the indigenous other" (Denzin, Lincoln and Smith, 2008, p. 5). This established a relationship between the researcher and the researched, in which the researched were often treated like objects, and as Stanley and Wise (1993) remind us this is morally unjustifiable. These positions raise important concerns in today's research practice in terms of the positionality and role of the researcher, her relationship with the researched people or context, and in terms of appropriation, amongst others. It is therefore important to not ignore the historical background against which this project takes place and remediate in whatever way possible the ethical problems that arise alongside the practice of research and fieldwork.

I am a highly educated, European white woman, an islander, and a migrant. I was born and grew up in Mallorca, a Spanish island in the Balearic Archipelago of the Mediterranean. Although Mallorca is not a state, the boundaries of my identity are somehow defined by the boundaries of the island. At 18, I chose to migrate to the UK to pursue my higher education. Throughout the last few years, I have maintained a relationship with my home island and continued to return when possible. This study acknowledges my positionality as integral to the foundation of my overarching research strategy. It identifies the commonalities between the researcher and the research participants in order to build a meaningful and respectful relationship, where hierarchies are trying to be acknowledged and minimised.

The term positionality describes the "position from which subjects come to know the world" (Sheppard, 2002, p. 318) by playing a central role in the research process. It is therefore important to reflect on my positionality and the influence that this has had on the research process. As Moya states:

> "Who we are and from where we speak is highly relevant for the intellectual projects we are likely to pursue… [they] influence the research questions we deem to be interesting, the projects we judge to be important, the scholars we choose to read and to cite, and the metaphors we use to describe the phenomena we observe" (Moya, 2011, p.79,81).

Issues of positionality are not only important to acknowledge the power relations between the researcher and the researched but also to gain knowledge on the researcher's background. As (England, 1994, p. 251) states: "we do not conduct fieldwork on the unmediated world of the researched, but on the world between ourselves and the researched. At the same time this "betweenness" is shaped by the researcher's biography, which filters the "data" and our perceptions and interpretations of the fieldwork experience". Thus, although it is extremely important to navigate these complexities, it is also important to acknowledge that gaining awareness of these power relations and inequalities does not remove them (England, 1994). The aim lies instead in conducting research according to a set of principles, which grounded in the acknowledgement and awareness of the exposed above, attempt to re-direct, in a decolonising manner, what should be at the core of research and fieldwork practice. Within the practical, time and financial limitations of this particular study, these were as follows.

I adopted's (2019) decolonial research principles: reflexivity, participation, reciprocity and humility, as well as permission and gratitude, discussed by Linda Tuhiwai Smith at the Sociological Review Annual Lecture held at Goldsmith in October 2019. Throughout the research process, I have attempted to be in a continuous conversation with myself, and others, about my positionality and importantly its colonial undertones in relation to the community that I researched in the Maldives. This had an impact in the way I designed my research project and led me to think about the remaining principles. Participation aims to include the research participants at different stages throughout the process, and position them not as sources of data, but as owners of the knowledge generated. As I explain in Section 3.3.3, I used photography and the making of postcards as a method and participants were involved in the analysis stages of the visual data. However, due to the practical limitations referred to above, I failed to take this further and for the participants to be engaged in the writing stages of the research project. In terms of reciprocity, it was important to me that the participants retained something from our interactions. The way I navigated this is by gifting them postcards from my island and having them keep the postcard that they created as part of the research. Hirsch (2018) speaks about humility in terms of how one handles the social relationships with the community and its participants, as well as the inherent power relations. It is hard to explicitly provide examples of how this played out in the field, but my intention was to constantly be not only myself in a professional capacity, but in a personal one. I invited those that became friends for dinner to my house and cooked meals for them from my home and some other times I was invited to their homes. In short, I related to them not exclusively as a researcher but at a personal level. With some of them, I have stayed in contact and continued to build our relationships, hoping to be able to soon return. It is important to clarify that although my interactions with the participants outside of the interviews gave me a wider understanding and contributed to my research project, this was not my approach to gathering data, and to the extent possible, I took my 'researcher's hat' off during those occasions. After attending Tuhiwai Smiths' lecture, it seemed important to also reflect on permission and gratitude. Throughout my time in the Maldives, I asked for permission from my participants to speak to them about certain topics and maintained the conversation around the subject I introduced. An example of this is that although at times it might have made sense to reflect on the role of women and gender in the Maldivian society, this was not what they had consented to speak to me about, and it seemed inappropriate for me to take the conversation in that direction. In terms of gratitude, I take this as an opportunity to express how immensely grateful I feel for how they welcomed me into their islands and homes, their generosity, their warmth and their willingness to speak to me and contribute towards this project.

According to these reflections on positionality I developed the following research strategy. A research strategy is the logic of enquiry adopted to answer the established research questions. This project follows the abductive strategy. Blaikie (2010) differentiates four different research strategies: inductive, deductive, retroductive and abductive. The aim here is not to draw the difference amongst these, but to know what my choice of strategy stands against. The abductive or interpretive strategy involves 'constructing theories that are derived from social actors' language, meanings and accounts in the context of everyday activities' (Blaikie, 2010, p. 89). Unlike the other strategies, it not only incorporates the meanings, interpretations, motives and intentions that people use in their everyday lives but elevates them to a central place in research. Accordingly, this project wants to bring islanders' experiences and narratives to the core of climate-related displacement conversations. This implies an ontology that states that "the social world is the world perceived and experienced by its members" (Blaikie, 2010, p. 89) and that sees thoughts, emotions and hopes as meaningful components of the social world (Mason, 2002). The project therefore adopts an idealist ontology, where reality is considered to be a result of individuals' beliefs and understandings (Ormston *et al.*, 2014). This is complemented with a constructionist epistemology, arguing that social scientific knowledge is a result of the exploration of the meanings and interpretations that those being studied attribute to the social world. It also states that value-free research is impossible and that social reality can only be partially portrayed, as there are different and competing perceptions and interpretations (Ormston *et al.*, 2014).

The initial principle of the abductive strategy is that the basic access to any social world is the accounts that people can give of their own actions or thoughts, and the actions and thoughts of others. Consequently, the first stage of the abductive research strategy is to discover the way in which social actors view and understand the part of the world relevant to the research project. This is followed by the second stage, which consists of abstracting or generating technical concepts from the lay concepts. It is in this process of turning lay descriptions into technical descriptions that the notion of abduction is applied. It is clear from the discussion above that the abductive research strategy adopts a 'bottom-up' as opposed to a 'top-down' approach, aiming to explore and understand social life in terms of the social actors' meanings and motives.

3.3.2. Research Timeline and Research Assistants

My engagement with the location and participants began in October 2018, when I conducted a two-week scoping visit to the Maldives (See Table 2 for a timeline of research activities in the Maldives). The main objectives of the trip were to finalise my choice of islands, to familiarise myself with the country and to advance some of the logistical preparations for my longer stay the following year. During the scoping visit, I visited Male and two other islands, Maafushi and Thulusdhoo. I spent the first and last few days in Male, where I met with my first contact in the field and was able to have some general conversations with people she put me in touch with, or to whom I had reached out via email or social media. I then spent five days in Maafushi and five days in Thulusdhoo, where I introduced myself to the island councils and had informal conversations with islanders. It was as a result of these initial conversations that I began thinking more seriously about the key themes of my thesis and an initial structure. The scoping visit also allowed me to identify Thulusdhoo and Rinbudhoo as the most appropriate islands to conduct my research as indicated above, and to start establishing relationships that proved incredibly useful in my organisation of the trip and time in the islands. I returned to the Maldives in April 2019 for the main period of data generation which lasted two months. I spent a month in Thulusdhoo and a month in Rinbudhoo. Whilst in Thulusdhoo, I also travelled to Male on numerous occasions to conduct key informant interviews, a university workshop, and present my work at the Environment and Development Research, Impact and Public Engagement Workshop.

The initial task on arrival in both islands was to recruit two research assistants to support with the data generation process: one in Thulusdhoo and one in Rinbudhoo. They performed the role of facilitators and translators. They were selected according to three main requirements: language, gender and age. The first requirement was that they spoke English fluently, so that they would be able to act as translators when required. The second requirement was gender, I identify as a woman and, and as will be discussed in Section 3.3.4, I decided to reduce my sample to women. It was important that the third person involved in the research also identified as woman, for this became a commonality amongst the participants and me. The third requirement was age, following a rationale similar to gender. The participants were aged 18-40, in line with having experienced the 2004 Tsunami and the relocation that followed. It was important that the research assistant fit into the same age group, again to keep the sense of shared identity over certain aspects. When we spoke, I made it clear that there would be a one week 'probation' period for both of them. This was a time for me to assess their skills and reliability in performing the task and a chance for them to see if this was something they wanted to continue to do for the duration of a month.

On the island of Thulusdhoo my research assistant was a young woman from another island in the Maldives, who had been living in Thulusdhoo on and off since she was a teenager. Although she was not originally from that island, she was very well integrated into the community. In the island of Rinbudhoo, my research assistant was a young woman originally from that island. I was able to recruit them through my first contact on each island. On the first island, this was a friend who I had made during my scoping visit. She introduced me to a colleague of hers, who then became my research assistant. On the second island, the council president introduced me to a few young women, one of whom was happy to take the role. It seems important to make this distinction, for they represent two different ways by which I gained 'entrance' into the particular field sites, which I perceived to have an impact on my stay in the islands. Gaining 'entrance', Jackson & Kelly (2019, p. 14) explain is "a rather engaged practice of what you see (and how you are seen) and what you do (and are asked or allowed to do) when you arrive after gaining access". As briefly introduced above, my entrance into the community differed in the two islands. On the one hand, I had already been to Thulusdhoo during my scoping visit, established some admittedly superficial relationships and maintained contact until my second stay. It felt to me, and I believe to some people in the island, that I was returning. Furthermore, my main contacts in the island, who were the two people that I was being associated with by other islanders, were two women of a similar age to me, who worked in one of the guesthouses. On the other hand, I had not been to Rinbudhoo before or met anyone from the island; therefore, it was the first time that people from the island had encountered me. Moreover, the first person whom I met was the council president and the islanders associated me with him. Consequently, in Rinbudhoo it took longer, and it was only after two weeks that I noticed the islanders, and within them my participants, having a more relaxed presence and engagement with me.

I intended to pay both of my research assistants for their work. On the first island, my research assistant refused to get paid. She explained she wanted to help me and if I paid her, she did not want to do it anymore. Instead, I noticed she very much enjoyed the Polaroid camera we were using for the research, so I gave her one as a present. I paid my research assistant in Rinbudhoo, after discussing what would be an appropriate wage for the time worked.

Something that was also important for me to consider was my researcher assistants' positionality and to ensure they were comfortable with who we spoke to and about the topics we would cover. It was important for me to remember that whilst I would be leaving once the research was finished, they would remain on the island and continued to engage with the participants in their everyday lives. This only came up towards the end of my research in Rinbudhoo, when I decided to include another ten interviews with both men and women participants, centred on a particular issue. We were struggling to recruit men participants and my research assistant asked if it was possible to speak to more women instead, as it was harder for her to approach and feel comfortable around men. When this occurred, I explained the importance of having gender balance in this situation and together we explored if there were any potential men participants with whom she would be comfortable speaking. We thought of her neighbour, who I also knew independently, and conducted the interview.

It is also worth noting that my experience on the islands might have been different if my research assistants were not part of the community. Although it is not the aim of this section to have a detailed discussion around 'insider vs. outsider' positionalities of research assistants, it is worth acknowledging that their positionality is not neutral either and had an impact on the research. Their established relationships in the islands were incredibly helpful in recruiting participants and gaining their trust. Furthermore, considering the time limitations of my stay, this allowed for a more efficient approach to the generating of data. However, their active role in recruiting participants was not free of biases and would have had an impact on the selection of women we spoke to, although largely unknowable to me. Additionally, their presence in the interviews might have affected the content of what participants shared. In trying to avoid some of these issues, I asked for the participants to come from different parts of the island, and not just the areas where my research assistants lived or spent time.

Another important aspect to consider is translation. The majority of the interviews were conducted in English, with the research assistants occasionally translating specific words. Some, however, were conducted in Dhivehi, and the research assistants translated as the interviewee and I spoke. There were also times when I conducted the interviews on my own. It felt that the ones where I was alone were the ones in which the participants relaxed and shared the most. It felt more personal and balanced, as it was a conversation between two people. I reflected on this in my field diary:

> "The last interview of the day was with someone else living on that side of the island. She welcomed us into her house and into her room, where her little daughter was watching TV. She spoke fluent English and was much more talkative than the majority of them have

> been. I think it is much easier to connect to them when it is only a conversation between the two of us. Otherwise, I think a lot gets lost in the translation, including the connection and the relationship that I am building with the participant." (Field diary, 17/04/19).

Although this might be seen as a limitation on the part of the research assistants, it is also equally important not to forget the many positives of their role in the research discussed above, for which I am deeply grateful.

Table 2: Summary of research activities conducted in the Republic of the Maldives

Period	**Activity**
October 2018	Two-week scoping Visit in Male and two potential islands as study areas: Maafushi and Thulusdhoo. Information conversation with islanders and key informants in Male.
April 2019	Study Area 1: Thulusdhoo – Data generation with islanders in Thulusdhoo and occasional trips to Male for key informant interviews and university workshops.
May 2019	Study Area 2: Rinbudhoo – Data generation with islanders in Rinbudhoo.
June 2019	Return to the University of Reading.

3.3.3. Methods

Academic Reasoning and Suitability for the Project

The main method I employed was a combination of oral histories and oral futures with participatory photography. Oral history is defined as "a practical method for obtaining information about the past by means of conducting an interview" (Thompson and Bornat, 2017, p. 132). Although this project is not uninterested in the past, the central focus lies on the future, for the injustice is still to come. Thus, the inclusion of not only oral histories but also oral futures formed the core parts of the methodology. By this I mean, that through the interview, as well as exploring the past through memories and stories, we explored the future through hopes, aspirations and imaginations. However, besides its focus on the past, oral history as a method also has other key aims such as understanding the oral history interview as "a medium for the revelation of the self" (Thompson and Bornat, 2017, p. 134). It is this aim that my use of oral history targeted. It is also important to clarify that my use of oral history focused on *life stories* as opposed to *life histories.* A *life story* is understood as 'a creative narrative device used by an individual to make sense of their past', by which 'the self is constructed and reconstructed through the active process of telling memory stories' (Thompson and Bornat, 2017, p. 135). It is an account filled with memories, experiences and reflections with no fixed points, as opposed to the "chronologically told narrative of the individual's past" that defines a *life history.*

Although the method employed was oral histories and oral futures, my thinking and design was influenced and inspired by *testimonio*, which sheds light on a series of elements that I considered important to highlight. *Testimonio* emerged from the field of Latin American Studies. This narrative genre was initially used to document the experiences of oppressed groups, paying particular attention to situations of injustice (Huber, 2009; Ramos, 2015). Fitting within a life story qualitative approach, it places individuals and their stories at the centre of the research project. Although there is no universal definition of *testimonio*, scholars have identified several important elements to consider. For instance, Yúdice (1991, p. 17) defines testimonio as an "authentic narrative, told by a witness who is moved to narrative by the urgency of a situation". Brabeck (2001, p. 3 in Huber, 2009) describes it as a "verbal journey… of one's life experiences with attention to injustices one has suffered and the effects these injustices have had on one's life". Finally, Cienfuegos and Monelli (1983, p. 46) describe the process of testimonio as allowing "the individual to transform past experience and personal identity, creating a new present and enhancing the future". In seeking ways of going forward and imagining the future, stories also enlist aspirations and hope.

The way I intended to employ oral histories and oral futures as a method carried with it some of the key characteristic of *testimonio*, allowing to account for matters of justice, or injustice, and to bring the thinking of the future into account, all whilst placing the individual, their stories and hopes at centre stage. However, it is important to differentiate testimonio, oral histories and other similar methods. As Beverly (2004, p.32) stresses:

> "The Spanish word *testimonio* translates literally as "testimony" as in the act of testifying or bearing witness in a legal or religious sense. This connotation is important because it distinguishes testimonio from recorded participant narrative, as in the case of "oral history". In oral history it is the intentionality of the recorder – usually a social scientist – that is dominant, and the resulting case is in some sense "data". In testimonio, by contrast, it is the intentionality of the narrator that is paramount. The situation of narration in testimonio has to involve an urgency to communicate, a problem of repression, poverty, subalternity, imprisonment, struggle for survival, implicated in the act of narration itself. The position of the reader of testimonio is akin to that of a jury member in a courtroom"

In a way, I was not able to know whether my method would come closer to oral histories and oral futures or *testimonio*, for as Beverly (2004) explains, this depends not so much on the intention of the researcher but the intention of the participant.

Methods such as testimonio or oral histories have been used in a variety of fields. Amongst them, the elements of oral histories have proved to be of major relevance and importance in the context of forced migration and refugee studies, where the aim of oral history might have been to record culture in order to help people hold on to it (Thompson and Bornat, 2017). The strengths of the above exposed elements become clearer in the case of refugees. Being able to place individual refugees' stories as a central source of knowledge also contributes to challenge the notion of a unified refugee experience (Malkki, 1995). Instead, it recognises and values the difference within them. As Stone-Mediatore states (2003, p. 150):

> 'Telling their own stories enables them (the narrator) to claim epistemic authority as well as to counter the objectified, dehumanised representations of them circulated by others…Narratives that probe ways to articulate and situate unspoken tensions in everyday life can transform experience, helping those of us who have been reduced to victim to claim agency'.

The role of hope and the future also emerges within the context of forced migration and refugees via the telling of stories. As Eastmond (2007, p. 259) states: "through these stories […] refugees placed themselves meaningfully in the history that led up to the atrocities and flight from Burundi, and envisioned hope for the future".

Furthermore, using oral histories and oral futures as the core methodology also allowed me to address some of the issues that came up in my discussion of positionality. As illustrated, interviewees are not treated like research objects but subjects, whose own subjectivity and life story constitutes a central source of knowledge. As contributors they play a crucial role in the research knowledge making process. However, it is also important to note some of the limitations of these type of methods. Fabiane Ramos reflects on her use of Critical Personal Narrative through *testimonio* in her PhD thesis and on the tension between intention and the actual doing of research, acknowledging that regardless of her intention, her use of *testimonio* resulted in 'plain old interviews' (Ramos, 2015, p. 62), where participants did not take as much of a lead as she had hoped in the direction of the conversation. Even though one of the main aims of using oral histories and oral futures was to shift the power dynamics in the interview process and to allow the participant to lead the conversation, Ramos found that participants waited for her guidance throughout (Ramos, 2015). She reflects that she did not properly consider the actual impact of power differences, personality traits and gender in the interview process (Ramos, 2015). It is important thus to learn from previous research projects that have used similar methodologies and embrace their limitations to balance them in the research design.

The other main component of the methodology was visual methods. Visual methodologies are an approach to qualitative research that involve the use and analysis of images through photography, film, video, painting, drawing, collage, sculpture, artwork, graffiti, advertising and cartoons (Glaw et. al, 2017). Visual methods have been reported to overcome some of the limitations outlined above. For instance, scholars have argued that they aid with the communicative process (Cruickshank and Mason, 2003; Radley and Taylor, 2003; Samuels, 2004; Lassetter, Mandleco and Roper, 2007; Fleury, Keller and Perez, 2009; Harding *et al.*, 2009). Another reported benefit of visual methods is their potential in breaking down power hierarchies and empower participants during the research process (Chaplin, 1994; Pink, 2001; Dockett and Perry, 2005; Einarsdottir, 2005; Didkowsky, Ungar and Liebenberg, 2010; Mizen and Ofosu-Kusi, 2010). This, other scholars state, allows the research to be participant driven and for the participants to retain control over what they share with researcher and to highlight their own issues (Clark-IbáÑez, 2004; Frith and Harcourt, 2007; Garcia *et al.*, 2007; White *et al.*, 2010).

I built on *photovoice* as an established participatory photography method (Wang *et al.*, 1997). Participatory photography refers to the camera being handed to the participant, and by doing so handing a degree of power to them through which their stories can be told through the photographs (Gotschi, Delve and Freyer, 2009). In doing so, photographs represent a “medium by which people’s visions and voices may surface” (Wang et al., 1997, p.382). In particular, photography, as a participatory tool, has been thought to support participants in their articulation of subjectivity, which was central to this research (Walker, Osbahr and Cardey, 2021). As hinted at above, there is general implication that the use of participatory photography and participatory visual methods more generally imply a certain degree of leadership and ownership over the direction of the research by the participants. However, it is important to note that there are different levels of participation (Cornwall, 2008). In this doctoral research, participatory photography was being used to generate “emic” data, yet within the already identified subject matter of the research. Therefore, this impacted the degree upon which the investigation was participant led.

Alongside oral histories, and oral futures, and participatory photography, I also conducted a range of key informant interviews, held two workshops with university students that also drew of visual methods and kept a field diary. The intention behind conducting key informant interviews was to have more technical discussions about the topics of my research project and to have the opportunity to explore the themes of my research from a variety of perspectives, such as NGOs, those working at the Ministry of environment, researchers, and artists. There was a similar motivation behind the university workshops. During the scoping visit, a lecturer at the Maldives National University (MNU) suggested the possibility of hosting two workshops with her students. This gave me an opportunity to get the insight of young people coming from different islands in the Maldives who chose to study environmental management. The field diary allowed self-reflection to be a key of component of the research process.

In the field

As outlined above, my time in the field was evenly split between the two islands of Thulusdhoo and Rinbudhoo, spending one month in teach. In Thulusdhoo, my days were structured around my research assistant's time off work. When she was off, either in the morning or evening, we conducted the interviews. During the time she was at work, I transcribed and wrote in my field diary. In my time off, I walked around the island and went to visit my friends at work, to catch up with them and hear about their days. In Rinbudhoo, I followed a more consistent routine. My time in Rinbudhoo coincided with Ramadhan; it was hot during the days and islanders spent most of their time relaxing inside their houses. I met my research assistant in the evenings and that is when we conducted the interviews. In the morning, I wrote in my field diary and transcribed the interviews from the day before. In my free time, I joined some of the women sitting by the beach outside their homes, or chatted to a council member, who came to the guesthouse I was staying at.

I conducted two interviews with each participant (20 participants in each island). The aim of the first interview was to get to know each other and explore the participant's life story and visions for their future, paying close attention to how these co-exist with climate change and the prospect of climate-related displacement. These interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes, the majority of which took place in the participants' homes, or at a previously agreed place. Typically, this would be at the 'joalies', which are the traditional Maldivian seats outside their houses, near the beach, in cafes or their place of work. Once welcomed, I would briefly introduce myself and offer them a choice of postcard from the island where I come from, Mallorca. I showed the different images, explaining where they are in the island and any particular memories or reflections. This proved to be a good way to start our interaction, and allowed me to highlight my islander identity from the beginning and establish one of the commonalities between them and me that I wanted to ground our relationship in. I asked them to choose and then we started the interview. After the initial introduction, I explained a little bit more about who I am. I told them that I grew up in a small village called Montuiri in the centre of the island and that I lived there until I was 18, when I migrated to the United Kingdom to pursue my studies. I explained this is where I am based now conducting my PhD, which was what had brought me to the Maldives. Following my introduction, I asked them to tell me about themselves, and from there we moved on to have a conversation about their childhood memories on the island, their everyday lives, the futures that they imagined for themselves and their islands, the places and things that they most valued about their lives, and the prospect of climate-related displacement. Often the conversation became one about loss here, without me having introduced this as a theme that I wanted to explore. We spoke about the things that they would miss if they had to migrate and about what would be the loss if the islands were gone. At the end of our interviews, I asked them if there was anything they would like to ask me. Frequently, they asked about what I thought about the Maldives, if I liked it and if everyone was treating me well. After the first interview, I asked them to take two photos with their smart phones: one photo of something that represented loss and one photo of something that represented hope. Before leaving, we arranged a time for me to come back and discuss the photos.

The aim of the second interview was to discuss the photos of loss and hope that the participants had taken. This was a shorter interview, which lasted up to 30 minutes, where we spoke about their choices, the rationale behind them, and the relationship between the two. This contributed to the initial analysis of the pictures, where participants explained the subject of the photo, the location and the message it was trying to communicate. I found this particular method to allow the research to be more participant driven, as I reflected in my field diary:

> “I am very glad about the photos task. I am always looking forward to seeing what they have taken, and it really does feel like a much less hierarchal way of working. After having had a conversation about these issues, they have a few days to process it and then capture their conclusions in two images. I think the photos do represent something that comes out from deeper within them and sometimes things that weren't mentioned in the interview” (Field Diary 13/04/19).

Although participatory photography proved to be a great method to balance some of the weaknesses of face-to-face interviews, it came with its own challenges or unexpected issues. For instance, some of the participants would not take the photos as a result of the interview, but scroll through their phones in order to find something that represented what I asked for. Alternatively, some participant looked up photos on the internet of what it was that they wanted to capture or transmit. Initially, I was concerned about this, and perhaps to a certain degree disappointed for the method I had planned was sometimes unsuccessful. I reminded myself however, that for this particular research, I was interested in the content of the images and not in the process of obtaining them. Moreover, this allowed participants to represent objects or places that were not on the island. For instance, a participant in Thulusdhoo who had relocated there from Rinbudhoo wanted her home island to be the subject of her image. By not restricting the participants in how to 'get' the photographs, she was able to not compromise her message. Furthermore, I was aware that engaging as a participant in this research was time demanding, and so if they preferred to choose an existing picture, or an image from the internet to communicate what they wished, this was not a problem. Another issue was that sometimes, the participants took a photo of something that they had already lost, as opposed to something that they would lose. I reflected on this in my diary:

> "She is now the fourth person that has taken the photos and they have all interpreted the photo of loss to be of something that they have already lost. Most of them have taken pictures of a place where there used to be a beach, of trees that have fallen, or the bridge that is gone. My immediate reaction was to be concerned that they weren't understanding the task and that this didn't fit into my idea of what I was meant to get out of the field, but this is part of the shifting authority. I am unsure as to whether it is a misunderstanding or their own interpretation, but I have decided to let it be. I have made sure to explain what the photo is about, and I don't want to be rude and tell them otherwise." (Field Diary, 14/04/19).

It was part of my role in the field to adapt to the participants understanding and response to what I was exploring. Furthermore, it also showed the amount of loss that was already part of the present, and perhaps in the participants' mind there was no need to think about it in future terms, but to show what had already been lost. This also did not mean I was no longer getting an insight into their future losses, for in this second meeting I also asked to take one last photo of something that they would always want to hold on to, or remember, if the islands were gone in order to make a postcard. They borrowed a Polaroid camera I had with me, and we went to take the photo together. I stuck the photo to a blank postcard and asked them to write why they had captured that particular image. For this part of the research, two participants who had migrated to the island where we were conducting the interviews said that what was most important to them was their home islands and as they were not there, they could not capture it. We agreed to leave the postcard blank, but they still wrote a message. This marked the end of the research with each particular participant, after which I continued to see and interact with them throughout my stay in the island.

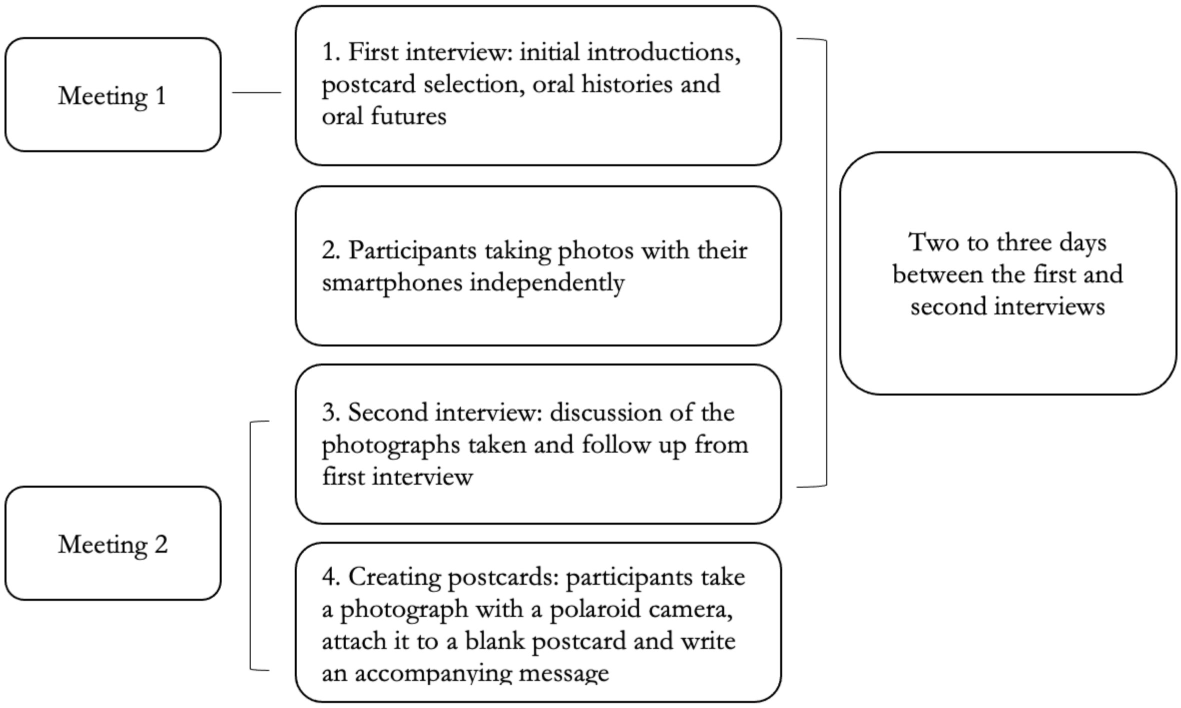

Meeting 1
1. First interview: initial introductions, postcard selection, oral histories and oral futures
2. Participants taking photos with their smartphones independently
Two to three days between the first and second interviews
3. Second interview: discussion of the photographs taken and follow up from first interview
Meeting 2
4. Creating postcards: participants take a photograph with a polaroid camera, attach it to a blank postcard and write an accompanying message

Figure 4: Diagram of the different stages of the methods employed on the islands

The above methods took place in the islands of Thulusdhoo and Rinbudhoo, which are the main field sites. I also conducted interviews with 10 key informants, which lasted around 60 minutes, both in Thulusdhoo and Rinbudhoo and in the capital, Male. The key informant interviews that I conducted in the local islands, Thulusdhoo and Rinbudhoo, were with council members of each island. The key informant interviews conducted in Male included individuals who either for personal or professional reasons had an interest in climate change in the context of the Maldives. Therefore, the participants included people working at the ministry of environment, NGOs, researchers and artists. As briefly discussed above, these interviews allowed me to explore the themes of my research from a variety of perspectives. For instance, I interviewed a counsellor form the Society for Health Education (SHE), who offered support after the tsunami in 2004. This gave me an insight into the different ways in which we should be preparing for potential climate-related migration and displacement, to include looking after the emotional trauma that this might generate and ensure the well-being of those displaced.

I conducted two workshops at MNU, with students from the BA in Environmental Management. The first workshop was with the third-year group which had 12 students, and the second workshop was with the first-year group which had 8 students. Both workshops were two hours long and consisted of a variety of activities. I started by introducing myself and asking the students to introduce themselves, telling me what island they came from. After the introductions, I explained the programme of the workshop and gave a brief explanation of climate-related displacement and how my PhD project aligns with the topic. The first exercise was inspired by a *metaplan* activity. I gave each of them two sets of different coloured post-it notes. On one of the colours, I asked them to write what represents loss, in individual words or short sentences. On the other colour, I asked them to express their hopes, either for themselves as individuals, or for the community and the level that they wished. Once they finished writing them, we put them up on the whiteboard, organised according to the two themes of loss and hope, and we had a general conversation about how they felt writing them and whether it had been easier to write about one or the other. Generally, they agreed that it was easier to think about hopes, which was evident due to the greater number of post-it notes on this theme. The second exercise consisted of drawing the future of the Maldives. They organised themselves in three groups. In the first workshop the groups were formed of 4 students each, and in the second workshop there were 2 groups of 3 students each, and one group with 2 students. I asked them to draw the future of the Maldives as they imagined it. Then each of the groups explained their visions and the others asked them questions. At the end we had a general discussion about what the future of the Maldives might look like and what would be important if the prospect of climate-related displacement became true. To finish, I asked each of the students to write a reflection on the topic. One of the motivations to do this was to ensure that everyone had an opportunity to say something and state their opinion on the matter.

As discussed above, I also kept a field diary throughout my time in the Maldives, reflecting on my everyday life, the interactions and conversations I had with the islanders and the thoughts that came to mind whilst being so close to my research topic. I wrote mostly in the mornings for around an hour about the day before, either from my house, from the beach, or from a cafe on the island. The field diary was also the space where I was able to bring my own thinking on this topic, by reflecting on how the questions I was asking my participants applied to me. It was a space that through this reflection brought me much closer to the participants and the research topic.

Noting my observations of everyday life allowed me to contextualise and better understand the conversations that I had with the participants. The islands where I was were very small, which allowed me to have a fairly complete understanding of the dynamic of the entire land where they live and spend time in. Their lives are not reduced to the islands where they live, and they often travel to the capital or to other islands, but within the island I was able to observe most spaces and get a sense of where people spend their time according to their age or gender. I was also invited into my participants' homes for dinner, or I would go and spend time with them during the day. The main reason why I engaged in this way was to build relationships and out of a genuine interest in them and their lives outside of my research intentions. Consequently, this gave me an insight into in-house family dynamics and the structure of the households. These observations were also very useful when starting to try to understand and analyse the results. This was the case particularly on the second island. I found that the majority of the photos of loss were either of the beach or of the participants' house. I was immediately disappointed there was not a wider range of images that represented loss, but if I thought about it in the context of that particular island, this started to make sense. The spaces where women spent their time in were largely their homes or the beach right outside their homes. There was only one café in the island, where only men spent time in. There were other places such as the sports fields, where based on the interviews they also spent time at, but when I was there it was Ramadhan, so they were not playing at the time. Therefore, the field diary allowed me to gather the knowledge that could contextualise the data and help me understand the experiences of the participants' environments and everyday lives.

3.3.4. Sampling

I conducted a total of 60 interviews throughout my time in the Maldives: 10 key informant interviews across the three islands of Male, Thulusdhoo and Rinbudhoo, 40 three-stage interviews equally divided between Thulusdhoo and Rinbudhoo (each consisting of a first interview, participatory photography and a second interview), and an additional 10 semi-structured interviews in Rinbudhoo.

I employed two main sampling strategies depending on the method and data to be collected: purposive sampling and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling was used for the key informant interviews in Male, Thulusdhoo and Rinbudhoo, as well as the university workshops to identify particular groups of students. The aim lay here in selecting information-rich cases "from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry" (Patton, 2002, p. 230 in Suri, 2011, p. 65). Snowball sampling was used for the majority of the methods and data collected in the islands of Thulusdhoo and Rinbudhoo. After making contact with a participant, they would be asked to identify other community members, thereby building up the whole sample. The specific requirements of the participants varied according to the method and will be discussed in relation to each data collection method.

Snowball sampling was used to identify 20 participants in Thulusdhoo and 20 participants in Rinbudhoo for the three-stage interview process with participatory photography. I prepared interview guides beforehand according to the themes that had emerged from the literature review and the scoping visit and as discussed above had a focus, amongst other things, on the future. This led me to include age restrictions to the requirements. I started interviewing participants of all ages, but noticed that the interviews were much more meaningful and somehow well matched when speaking to younger people. What I mean here is what I referred to earlier as the research taking place in the space in between the participant and the researcher. This space was much richer when gender and age were a commonality. However, it was also important to speak to some of the people that had been affected by the tsunami, for this was a very helpful occasion to refer back to and reflect on in relation to some of the themes that I was keen to explore. The tsunami happened 15 years before my data collection, and so I decided to include women aged between 18-40 years old.

Another requirement that I decided on whilst at the initial stages of my fieldwork was gender, as briefly introduced above. I intended to speak to individuals who identified as both men and women, but ended up engaging with those that identified as women only. It is worth noting here that whilst gender identity per se was not a focus of the research and the strong presence of religion on the islands made these conversation difficult, I remained open to non-binary participants as well as individuals from the LGBTQI+ community.

I chose to focus on women for a few reasons. Firstly, I felt I was being sexually objectified both during the scoping visit and the data collection stages of the research project. Even though men were willing to talk to me, when I tried to arrange a time to meet, on most occasions they would ignore my message until the night time and suggest that we met then. This could be due to their working hours, but came accompanied with other suggestions such as going to a boat off-shore 'to party'. On the first island, when I was with my research assistant, they would ask about whether

I was single and comment on how I looked. On the second island, similar questions were posed to the island president who then communicated them to me. For my own sense of safety, comfort, and well-being, I chose not to put myself in a situation that welcomed those comments and suggestions. As a result, I reflected on the possibility of engaging with women exclusively and other reasons became of major importance. As I explained above, I consider this research to take place in the space between the field site, the participants and myself. Accordingly, a key principle of my methodological approach was to use the commonality between the participants and myself as a way to bond and build rapport. These include my identity as an islander and a migrant and affected my decision for two reasons. First, the sexualisation I experienced in the field prevented me from building the rapport that I intended with the participants, and thus conditions of data collection would have been different in my interviews with men in contrast to women. Second, and similarly to age, I found that if I added womanhood to that space, there was much more to explore, and the conversations became richer. Besides this, I felt more comfortable speaking to women, and I perceived women to feel comfortable around me. Having said this, it is important at this point to clarify a few things. Firstly, I am aware of intersectionality and anti-essentialism debates and it is not my intention to essentialise womanhood (Grillo, 2013). Although it is beyond the scope of this project to discuss this at length, I acknowledge that there are differences in the way Maldivian woman and I experience womanhood, and I do not wish to take these for granted. Secondly, and similarly, I understand that multiple identities and power intersections exist in society, and thus that 'women' do not constitute a homogenous group (Mohanty, 1988).

A focus on 'women' has resulted in being an important contribution of this thesis, addressing inequality in participation in the Maldives and contributing to a body of literature on women's perspectives of island life (Karides, 2017; Doma Lama, 2018). After interviewing a representative from Transparency Maldives, I learnt that the majority of consultations with island communities from the government are limited to speaking to men only. This is expressed in the literature, stating that since the 16th century, before which female sultans occasionally ruled the Maldives, women have increasingly assumed domestic roles (Faizal and Rajagopalan, 2005). The rise of fundamentalism is reported to have affected public participation, particularly by women (UNDP, 2011). This has in turn affected the cultural norms in the Maldives, which consider household activities and childcare duties as women's responsibilities. Of those that work outside of the home, very few women hold jobs that involve decision-making. According to El-Horr and Pande (2016) women make up 0.5% of atoll councillors and 5.1% of island councillors. The lack of women's participation also became apparent in my experience of trying to speak to women. They would often suggest I speak to their husbands, or other male relatives, and when I explained I was interested in speaking to them, they were very much surprised. Furthermore, focusing on women has shed light on the reasons why women choose to migrate, which brings important nuances to the mobility and non-mobility literature in the context of the Maldives. The focus on women therefore allows me to contribute to the scarce literature on the relationship between women, islands and mobility (Karides, 2017; Lama, 2018).

For the additional 10 semi-structured interviews in Rinbudhoo, I used a combination of purposive and snowball sampling. The purpose of these interviews was to have a conversation around the decisions that the participants had made to remain in Rinbudhoo after the tsunami and the option of moving to Thulusdhoo. These were much shorter and focused conversations towards the end of my trip, and therefore the rationale discussed above on my gender choices did not apply to the same extent. I wanted to speak to those who had made the decisions to remain or contributed to that conversation. Therefore, I increased my sample to those who would have been at least 18 at the time of the relocation, in 2006, to also include elders. Within these requirements, my research assistant identified potential participants, who also themselves suggested other people.

For the key informant interviews in both Male and Rinbudhoo and Thulusdhoo, purposive sampling was used to identify participants. Eight participants were identified in Male, based on either a professional or personal interest in the topic of this project. These included academics and researchers, members of the Ministry of Environment, members of the artist community and NGOs including Plastic Non-Gotheh, Society for Health Education and Transparency Maldives. I also interviewed the two island council members in Thulusdhoo and Rinbudhoo (See table Table 3 for a list of key informants).

Table 3: List of Key Informants

Pseudonym	**Occupation/Organisation**
Shareefa	Society for Health Education
Adhara	Transparency Maldives
Anaa	Lecturer at Maldives National University
Sadha	Artist
Cala	Artist
Hafsa	Plastic Noon Gotheh
Mohamed	Ministry of Environment
Hambe	Ministry of Environment

Hassan	Council Member (Rinbudhoo)
Salim	Council Member (Thulusdhoo)

The choice regarding the groups with which I conducted the university workshops were based on their programme of study. Initially, I conducted a workshop with the final-year students of the BSc in Environmental Management, because they were familiar with some of the issues that we would be discussing. Having received positive feedback, the lecturer suggested that I conducted another workshop with the first-year students of the same programme, which I also did.

3.3.5. Data Generation and Analysis

The first stage of the data generation was the interviews, at the beginning of which I asked the participants for their permission to record our conversation. Generally, this was not a problem and the majority of the participants agreed to be recorded. In some cases where the participants did not agree to be recorded, I took notes during the interview. In these cases, I also made sure to type up my notes as soon as possible and expand them, whilst the conversation was fresh in my mind. For the three-stage interviews that were recorded, I similarly transcribed them shortly after and added my reflections on a separate word document. I also always made sure that before I did my second interview with each participant, the first interview had been transcribed and reflected upon. This gave me a chance to follow up on any particular issues, or further explore interesting points. I decided to prioritise the transcription of the three-stage interviews, given these would be followed up. I transcribed the key informant ones on my return to the UK. I also asked permission to record the discussion part of the workshop, which was also transcribed on my return. Whilst in the field, I organised my data in folders according to each participant. Each folder was named after the reference for the participant and included: the voice recording of both the first and second interview with their transcripts, the pictures they had taken on hope and loss, and a scanned version of both sides of the postcards from Mallorca and their respective island. On my return, I organised the rest of my data according to each method, both on my computer and in a printed format in a folder. I also uploaded the word data on to NVivo, with each file corresponding to a participant, as opposed to each file corresponding to each interview. In order to do this, I merged both interviews onto one document and uploaded under the (anonymised) participant's reference as a file. These, in combination with the images and drawings, built the data set to be analysed.

I approached the data analysis using both an abductive and deductive approach to grounded theory (Blaikie, 2010). After conducting the literature review and the pilot study, I refined my research questions and decided on a loose structure of the thesis. I had also identified two of the main concepts that I wanted to explore in the field: hope and loss. These were therefore two key themes that I looked for whilst reading and analysing the data. Within this loose structure, I followed an abductive approach to analysing the data thematically. According to the constructivist epistemology that I adopted for this project, it was important to me that knowledge was generated from the 'bottom-up'; and therefore, it was through carefully reading and engaging with the data that themes within hope and loss emerged.

Nvivo was used as a tool to code the data and facilitate the data analysis using the constant comparative method (Thomas, 2017). This involved going through the data and comparing each element with the other elements. The central activity was coding, which consisted of a three-stage process. The first stage is referred to as open coding and is the stage where I went through the data, examining, comparing it and starting to make categorisations. The second stage is known as axial coding, in which I started to make sense of the open coding by coming up with labels to the codes. Whilst I was reading the data, I created 'nodes' according to which I distributed the data. A 'node' is a collection of sources, in my case, parts of interview transcripts and quotes, about a specific theme. This led me to the third stage which is recognised as selective coding. After having thought about the categories that emerged and the relationships between them, the main themes were drawn (Blaikie, 2010; Thomas, 2017). For the images, the initial analysis began in the field during the second interview with the participants. Together, with each of them, we discussed the photos they had taken, paying close attention to the content of the image and the rationale behind them. These interviews themselves also constitute part of the 'word' data. After this stage, the visual analysis consisted of the following model: firstly, I observed the data as a whole in order to discover patterns that connected or contrasted the different images; secondly, I made an inventory of the photos and postcards (120 images in total, 2 photos and 1 postcard per participant), and looked through them individually to make specific comparisons or note particular elements; thirdly, I returned to the complete group of photos in order to impute meaning and significance (Van Leeuwen and Jewitt, 2001).

As well as thinking reflectively about data processing and data analysis, it is important to make a case for the data reliability and validity of this research. Lewis et al. (2016) give two requirements when thinking about the reliability of qualitative data. Firstly, they state that there should be a likelihood for the research findings to recur in different samples. Secondly, they state the importance of a rigorous analysis of the data. For this project, I used a variety of methods across three different locations. Although there were specific characteristic of these two islands, such as being exposed to relocation from both perspectives, the themes that emerged coincided across the methods and locations, including the university workshops and the key informant interviews in Male. This indicates that the key features of my research findings would be likely to recur if different islands had been studied. To ensure a rigorous analysis of the data, I made notes after the interviews, kept a consistent field diary throughout the data collection stage, dedicated ample amounts of time to self-reflection on my biases and choices, listened carefully to the interviews and thoroughly transcribed them, and closely read the data in order to thematically organise it. Having conducted my initial interpretations, I returned to the data to make sure it was a fair representation. I also validated my findings through triangulation (Silverman, 2014), which involved comparing the results of the different data sources and methods against each other, identifying commonalities and differences between them.

3.3.6. Limitations

Throughout the different stages of the research process, I have reflected on what have been the limitations of the study. A first limitation had to do with language, given I did not speak their local language, Dhivehi. I took one-to-one lessons on the months leading up to the fieldwork and learnt some key words and expressions. However, this was not sufficient to maintain a conversation. A second limitation had to do with time. Within my first few days in the Maldives, I learnt that I would not be able to stay there for the three months that I had planned to, and therefore had to reduce my stay to two months. This was due to recent visa changes and unexpected complications. The main direct impact this had was that I was not able to travel to Male as often as I had planned, as I decided to prioritise the interviews in the local islands, and consequently, I had less chances to speak to key informants. In the local islands, I was still able to meet my aims in terms of target numbers of interviews. However, as I reflected above, it was towards the middle to the end of my stay (particularly in Rinbudhoo) that I felt the people on the island to relax and feel significantly more at ease around me, inviting me for breakfast and dinner at their houses, for example. It is difficult to pronounce whether more time on the islands would have made a difference, but I assume I would have been able to have a slower approach to the data generation, and the conversations might have benefitted from this. A third limitation was the island choices, which in turn had an impact on the individuals that I ended up speaking to. Both Thulusdhoo and Rinbudhoo have particular histories and relationships with migration and displacement, which are not representative of the whole of the Maldives. Although I was not able to stay on other islands, I did speak to women that came from different places across the Maldives who shared the same feelings and concerns, as well as the students at the university workshops who came from different islands and atolls. Another consequence of conducting research on only local islands, is that the majority of the women I spoke to who had migrated for education reasons, had decided to return home. Although there were a few who intended to return to Male, this means my research does not portray a full picture of movement. Those who decided to stay in Male might not share the same concerns, or hold the same relationships to home, when compared with those that decided to return. It is important therefore to acknowledge and be clear about what this research has been able to do and how it could have been improved.

3.3.7. Formal Ethical Considerations

I consider my discussion of positionality to be concerned with research ethics, and so this section will focus on the formal ethical considerations of the research, which were taken equally seriously. Ethics are embedded in all aspects of the research process, from the research design stages to the data generation, analysis, and dissemination. I took the following measures in each of these steps during the research process.

Prior to departure and in conformity with the University research procedure, I obtained ethics clearance from the University of Reading committee before starting the data collection process. During the data collection process, and before starting each interview, I explained the research aims, objectives and procedures to the participants. I provided them with a consent form which contained information on: the voluntary and anonymous nature of taking part in the research, their right to withdraw at any time and their right to full anonymity. It also asked permission to record and established that the participants were free to request that any of their responses be excluded from the research. These were also communicated verbally to ensure the participants' understanding and allow for a chance to ask for clarifications. After having generated the data, and during the analysis and writing stages of the process, the data was stored and managed in accordance with the University of Reading's Data Protection Policy and the UK Data Protection Act. Throughout the thesis, the participants are referred to by pseudonyms and identifiable images have been blurred to guarantee anonymity. It is my intention, once having completed the PhD, to travel back to the two islands to visit my participants, share the findings and completed thesis, and show gratitude for what they made possible.

3.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have developed a country profile for the Maldives as a case study and given details on Thulusdhoo and Rinbudhoo as the two study sites. I have also outlined the methodology I used for exploring climate-related migration and displacement. In response to the methodological limitations in current ways of researching climate-related migration and displacement outlined in Chapter II, I developed an in-depth qualitative approach to explore the non-material and symbolic dimensions of climate change. The following chapters are based on my detailed analysis of the data acquired through this methodology. In the next chapter, I start by presenting my results of islanders' visions of their futures.

Chapter IV. The Future Here

"We could still protect our beautiful islands and have our future here rather than moving to another country"
(Student reflection after one of the workshops at MNU).

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I develop an account of what futures look like *here*. *Here* refers to the Maldives, as opposed to *elsewhere*, which refers to anywhere outside of the Maldives. As stated in Chapter I, the aim of this thesis is to contribute towards de-constructing future foreclosure in order to address the three issues that result from foreclosing the future: limiting islanders' capacity to aspire; the taking for granted of movement and loss; and obscuring important matters of justice, such as questions of rights and responsibilities. This chapter addresses the first of those issues and explores islanders' hopes and aspirations in thinking about climate-related migration and displacement.

Chapter II established that the future of the islands, both in a broad sense covering all SIDS and the Maldives, has been declared and treated as finite by scientists and policy makers (Barnett, 2017; Felli & Castree, 2012). Part of this is because current climate change narratives limit the range of possible climate futures. As a result, islanders' capacity to aspire and to imagine their own futures is being foreclosed and reduced to climate (Arnall and Kothari, 2015). Through developing a set of skills, and thus their adaptive capacity, islanders are expected to develop their resilience to migrate and settle elsewhere (Foresight, 2011). Through this process, islanders are being treated as homogenous, as having the same 'interests, rationality, and aspirations' (Felli & Castree, 2012, p. 2), and the same experiences of the present and futures. As a result, there is scarce empirical knowledge on islanders's own futures narratives. This chapter brings together participants' thinking of the future with some of the key themes in the climate change and migration nexus and reflects on how the former might inform the way the latter is currently being thought about and framed by academic and policy literatures. Furthermore, the chapter challenges the global narrative of climate change by focusing instead on the level at which people experience it and in doing so responds to Nithingale et al's (2020) call to consider alternative framings which are inclusive of people and local places.

The chapter is structured according to three themes. Section 4.2. develops the national vision of the future. Against the projected finite future of the Maldives, participants shared not only their confidence in the future of the islands, but their commitment to working towards one via a range of on-site adaptation measures and development pathways. Section 4.3. discusses the imagined future of the island communities and the participants' desire to de-centralise resources and opportunities within the country. This is thought about in relation to mainstream understandings of resilience. Section 4.4. considers the future at an individual level, sharing the hopes and aspirations of the women I spoke to in the islands. These are analysed in relation to the anticipated futures of affected populations in the context of climate change. Against islanders being treated as homogenous, this theme shows the richness in locally perceived futures and their significance in women islanders' sense of self, value, and identity in their professional and personal lives.

4.2. The Future as a Nation: Confidence in the future of the Maldives

This section relates the theme of islanders' confidence in the future of their country. It contributes to debate on the climate change and migration nexus by presenting a vision of what the islanders I interviewed imagine for their own futures at a national level. It highlights the different ways in which such vision stands against the declaration and treatment of the islands' futures as finite. Section 4.2.1. explores the different ways in which adaptation was conceived to ensure the future of the islands. Whilst some informants were confident of the islands' natural adaptive capacity, others placed their confidence in the potential of human-made adaptation solutions. Section 4.2.2. explores different development pathways that participants imagined for the Maldives which led to 'bad' and 'good' versions of futures on the islands.

4.2.1. On-site potential adaptation measures

All participants conveyed a strong sense of confidence in the future of the islands. Through the interviews, photographs and workshops at the university, participants imagined their futures in the Maldives. The diversity of opinions was perhaps not in whether the country would survive or not, but in the ways in which adaptation should be pursued. Some believed in the sustainability of the 'island' concept and their own natural adaptive capacity, and therefore suggested the aim should be to work in a way that enhances the islands' own adaptive capacity with minimal human interference. Others placed their confidence in the human capacity to design ways to continue to inhabit the islands with projects such as land elevation and reclamation, and it was witnessing the possibility of these kinds of projects in Male and other islands that assured them of the future of the Maldives.

Many were confident in the concept of the 'island', and believed the islands have a natural capacity to adapt to changing conditions, as long as this is respected and not interfered with in excess. I had a long interview with Mohamed, a key informant who had completed his PhD on the adaptive capacity of the Maldivian islands and was now working in the Ministry of Environment in Male. We spoke about many different issues, which will be developed throughout the chapter, but here, I share his reflections on the islands' capacity to self-repair and maintain:

> "The islands have been in existence even with much harsher conditions, because they are allowed to self-repair and self-maintain. […] Adaptive capacity for me means that those biophysical limits should not be interfered, it should be kept as natural as possible and we should try to build with nature, and to live with nature, not against it."

Mariyam, another participant reflected through an image on the natural shifting sands of the islands and explained that these processes can be natural.

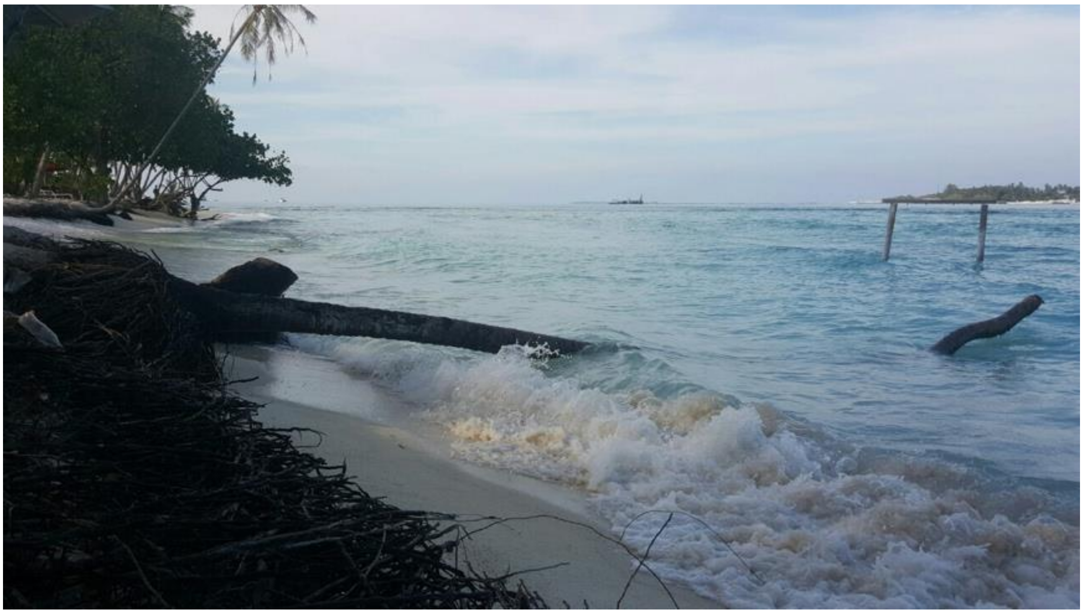


Image 1: Mariyam's picture of loss

The image she took is of one the beaches in the island of Thulusdhoo, where she lives now, after having grown up in Male and studied in Sri Lanka. This beach is now taken over by guesthouses and mainly occupied by tourists. As she describes:

> "It shows erosion and there is plastic, and then yeah. All these things, like erosion and things, they're natural too. We have two monsoons and some islands; the sand moves

> around it for seasons. For one season it will drop all the sands, so it's a natural cycle that happens and the sand keeps moving around the island, it doesn't go anywhere."

Mohamed and Mariyam speak of the islands' inherent dynamic character, where erosion and accretion become regular island building processes. The unconsolidated nature of beaches and the reversal of monsoon from NW to SW creates a dynamic and unstable environment, where land changes in the islands are normal (Kench and Brander, 2006; Shaig, 2008). Kothari and Arnall (2020, p. 307) also explore these journeys of sand:

> "Sand moves with the waves, currents and tides that continuously wash it onto and off the shore, its direction, form and extent dependent on the seasons and prevailing weather conditions. Changes, for example, between the dry season and the monsoons are evident as parts of the coastline become submerged or uncovered."

Having witnessed this for generations, islanders held on to the potential that the islands have to self-repair and self-maintain as desirable ways by which to adapt to climate change. Another way participants thought of the islands' natural adaptive capacity is through mangroves. This was reflected in one of the drawings from the workshop conducted at the MNU, where the students imagined the future of the Maldives.

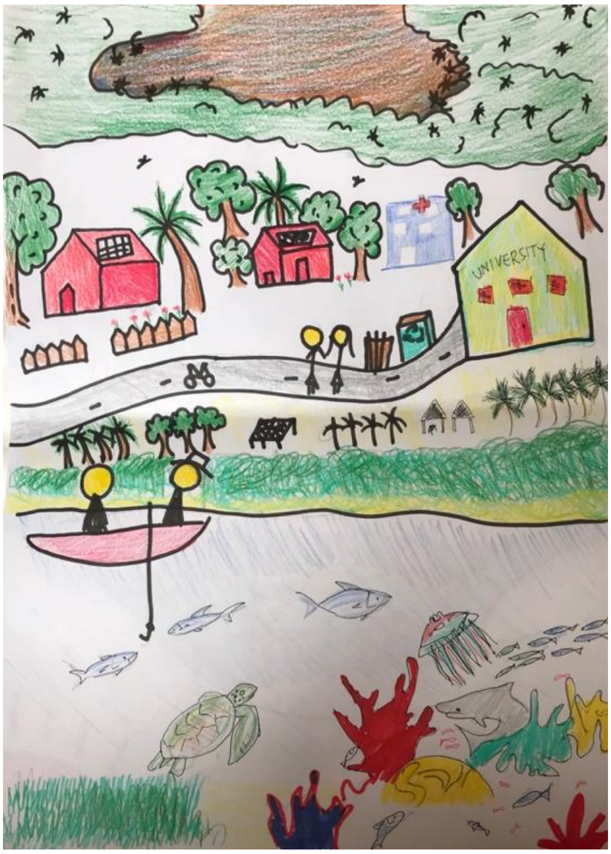


Figure 5: Future Vision (Workshop 1, Group 3)

As the authors of the drawing described: "Also here is the mangrove, mangrove protection and healthy reefs. I don't see any sea walls in the future, because we will be able to protect our mangroves and our reefs will be healthy". In the drawing, mangroves surround the coastline of the island, and this is described as the preferred way to ensure protection against environmental challenges. A key informant working at MNU reflected on the potential and importance of mangrove systems: "mangroves are one of the most resilient ecosystems, they are able to move with the tides, if the tide is extending into the land, the mangrove can extend into the tide and cover it up, so this provides a lot of protection to the island". The focus was placed on supporting the natural islands' ecosystems as a way of adapting to climate change. This coincides with a recently emerging trend of soft protection measures or *building with nature* in broader coastal adaptation strategies, which has also been identified in the Maldives (Klepp & Vafeidis, 2019; Ratter et al., 2019).

However, despite the preference on this type of natural adaptation, some recognised that there are many potential barriers to this process occurring naturally. Throughout the interviews, workshops and reflections, a set of drawbacks to this natural process occurring were identified by the participants, who seemed to be concerned about the direction in which urbanisation and development changes were going. Mohamed, who earlier told me about the islands' natural adaptive capacity, reflected on changes that have already taken place, such as the way in which the islands are now populated. Whilst in the past people lived in the centre of the island, houses have more recently been built all the way to the edge of the island, leaving islanders more at risk of potential sea level rise:

> "The other aspect is the urbanisation, the carrying capacity is very low, so when it reaches a certain capacity, we can't accommodate people, there is no way we can give land to people, so naturally what happens is they start expanding the island, and going to the very edge of the island, and then it becomes very difficult for adaptation because there is no set back, if there is coastal change or inundation, or sea swells, they will be exposed to it more. In the olden days people only lived in a very small, central part of the island, around the island no-one lives, it's protected, but now people have moved to the very edge."

Others focused on the way development projects are now being planned and executed and the potential limitations that this could bring about. Mariyam commented on the motivation behind particular ways of approaching development, being driven not by looking after the country's sustainability but by the interests of the government:

> "My whole problem is with the government, because the way they are developing the nation is not the right way, and not with good intentions either, so whatever they're doing, they're doing it at a personal level that is benefiting them personally. Obviously, they are not thinking about the future of the country or anything"

Others were similarly concerned about the lack of consideration for the future and therefore about the sustainability of the projects that are being undertaken. Mohamed was concerned about this too:

> "The way we are continuing our development and planning, it's not sort of, what should I say, not based on the future scenarios. For example, they are building roads, airports, but

> they are not looking at the future impacts like how much the sea levels will rise, so they are just building things."

One particular concern was the development of reclamation projects. Land reclamation, which involves the process of creating new land from the sea, began in the Maldives in the 1970s (Grydehøj, 2015; Naylor, 2015) and has been used both for public and private purposes. Naylor (2015) develops an accurate account of the way this has impacted islands and what this means for future adaptation to climate change in the Maldives. The concern over reclamation projects raised here was particularly linked to tourism. A key informant from Transparency Maldives, an organisation working towards the elimination of corruption in the daily lives of Maldivian people, reflected on the way resorts and tourism projects are being prioritised over the local islands' environments: "Because we are reclaiming so many lands for tourism and they need to be built overnight, they are removing trees from the communities, hundreds of trees from the islands to make these however many million-dollar projects."

Altogether, the way in which the islands are now urbanised and inhabited, the prioritisation of tourism, the increasing reclamation projects and an apparent lack of taking future scenarios into account, pose a threat to the islands' natural adaptive capacity and led some to believe that instead human-made solutions were the best way to guarantee the future of the Maldives. This coincides with Naylor's (2015) conclusions which state that given the degree of local ecosystem damage, high vulnerability to climate change and Male's continued growth, "soft path" ecosystem-based resilience measures can only be supplementary to increased fortification in the future, including the raising of existing islands and construction of new artificial islands.

Accordingly, some participants placed their confidence, or lack of fear over the disappearance of the islands, in the changes that humans can make to the islands to ensure their survival, such as land reclamation and land elevation. As opposed to land reclamation, land elevation involves the artificial raising of whole islands to appropriate heights to cope with future sea-level rise (Brown *et al.*, 2019). These processes were for some seen under a different light here, as a practice full of potential and possibilities for the islands. Aminath, an interviewee in Thulusdhoo who had conducted her studies in Male, shared her thoughts on how her island felt much safer after the reclamation had taken place on the side of the island where she works. She expressed concern over the other side of the island, where the houses were very close to the shoreline. We were at her workplace during our interview:

(Q) What about the sea?
(A) It's coming… I don't know what you call… the reclamation. After that, now it's OK from this side, but when you go to the other side, you can see the sea is coming, all the sands are going. If they hadn't done this one here, I am sure the sea would be here, just near the building, waves would just... in this building.
(Q) When did they do the reclamation project?
(A) I think 2013. If they hadn't done it, this place wouldn't be here.
(Q) So, do you think it's possible to find solutions doing reclamation projects?
(A) I think if we do reclamation project, if we don't do it there, there will be more sea, sea...

As islanders saw the possibilities of reclamation, they were no longer worried about erosion in other parts of the island, as these were somehow being compensated. Interestingly, part of Mohamed's PhD explored the changes of the islands and estimated that most islands had in fact gained land:

> "I looked at the changes in the islands, especially the coastal, the changes in the coastline, what happened, I looked at 1969 aerial pictures and then 2017, and I compared. So, it was very interesting, most islands have gained land, because of reclamation. But they all have lost land naturally, but because of the reclamation, the net loss was low. It's not because they're not losing land, but because of reclamation."

This is not to claim that reclamation or elevation are indeed a successful solution to climate change, but to highlight how this can in fact be playing a role in islanders' perceptions of the future of the Maldives. Islanders' worries over sea level rising diminished as they saw the possibilities of 'recovering' that sand and making their islands bigger and even higher in relation to sea levels.

Despite the participants reporting a lack of taking the future into account, a key informant who worked for Plastic Noon Gotheh (a way without plastic), a project challenging single-plastic use in the Maldives, explained that indeed one of the previous governments, under the Gayoom government (1978-2008), considered the scientific predictions on sea level rise and built the island of Hulhumale, next to Male, accordingly. Although the purpose of building Hulhumale was not as an adaptation strategy, but had the intention of consolidating the population, they reclaimed it a meter higher than the rest of the islands. As she put it: "Hulhumale when they reclaimed, actually, they reclaimed one meter. They actually took the extra cost and reclaimed one meter above our normal sea level. There were some predictions done at that time which stated there would be a one-meter rise in sea level, so they actually planned for it." This was another way in which some of the young islanders imagined the future of their islands, by elevating the land. Another drawing from the workshops reflects this, relying not on the protection that the mangroves provided but on the islands being elevated, as Figure 6 shows: "We have even elevated the land. One of the ways of coastal adaptation, so to adapt to rising sea level"

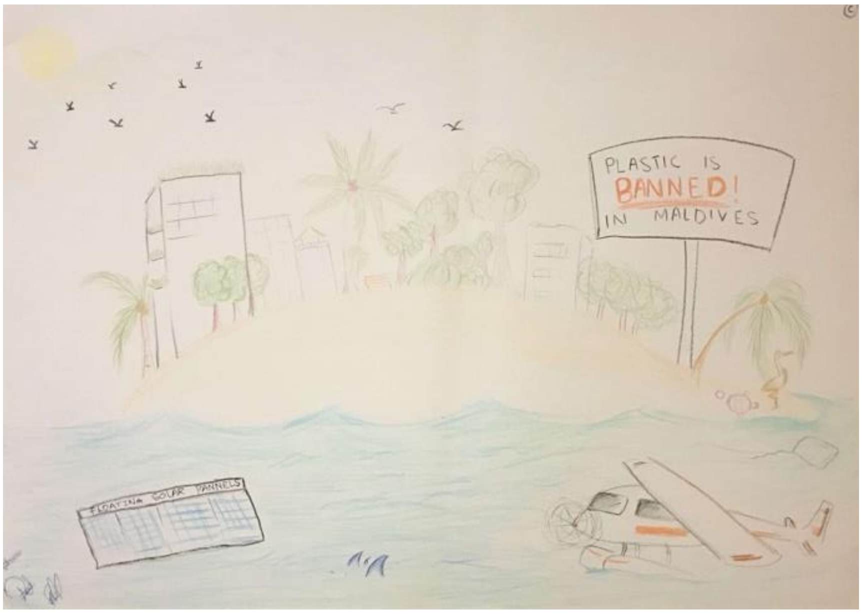


Figure 6: Future Vision (Workshop 2, Group 1)

The image shows a higher island in relation to sea levels which the authors describe as a way of coastal adaptation. Some other islanders and students in the workshop perhaps agreed with reclamation but were not convinced that the way it was being approached at present was optimal. Instead, they suggested alternative ways of achieving reclamation should be found. A lecturer in the department of Environment and Natural Sciences, who taught on climate change, touched on this during our interview: "What we do now is we reclaim as much as we can and we tend to remove areas that shouldn't, so that is not really good, it's really bad coastal engineering. We need to find better ways of doing the reclamation process itself."

Aware of the negative impacts of land reclamation on the environment, a more recent project in the Maldives also plays with the idea of creating inhabitable land, although this time instead of relying on the reclamation of land, it relies on creating floating land. In March 2021, the Maldives Floating City (MFC) project was inaugurated as the first true floating island city, characterised as a "futuristic dreamscape finally poised to become reality"(TTM, 2021). In partnership with Dutch Docklands, the Government of the Maldives, launched the project as a new way of increasing resilience and conceptualised as a "next-generation sea-level-rise-proof urban development" without the negative implications of land reclamation. As described on the project website:

> "Maldives Floating City is the first development of a new era in which Maldivians return to the water with resilient eco-friendly floating projects. The city has a nature-based structure of roads and water canals resembling the beautiful and efficient way in which real brain coral is organised. The idea of having brain coral as the leading concept is that the goal of living with nature and learning to improve and respect natural coral is at the heart of the development, which leads to new knowledge emphasising the responsibility Maldives takes as centre for coral protection in the world."

The Maldives Floating City project thus represents an alternative human-made solution to climate change, that although not relying on the natural adaptive capacity of the islands, attempts to imitate those to a certain extent and avoid the environmental damage of land reclamation.

The participants covered a range of ways in which the islands can pursue on-site adaptation. Through islands' own natural adaptive capacity, processes of land reclamation and elevation or floating inhabitable structures, affected populations shed light on alternative futures for their islands. The measures reflected on by the participants of my study coincide with broader tendencies in coastal adaptation planning, particularly the idea of building with nature and conceptualising land reclamation as a viable adaptation option (Klepp and Vafeidis, 2019). Islanders interviewed stated an overall preference for soft protection measures grounded in a sense of confidence and belief in the island's own adaptive capacity. This contradicts previous findings which suggest that hard measures are preferred for coastal protection in the Maldives (Kench, 2012).

Despite the different ways of understanding how best to adapt to climate change and guarantee a future, the data I gathered during my fieldwork from different groups and perspectives strongly locates the future *in* the Maldives. This stands against mainstream interpretations of the scientific predictions, which normalise loss and movement (Barnett, 2017) and take for granted the future submergence of the islands. As Barnett (2017) reminds us, however, there is still uncertainty, and within this uncertainty, hope and possibility to aim for further mitigation efforts and creative adaptation on-site solutions. To assume the future of the islands as finite does not take into account the possibility of a human response that might impact the outcome of climate change, neither does it seriously consider the significant past of the ancestors of today's island inhabitants. As Barnett puts its (Barnett, 2017, p. 10)

> "Atoll peoples voyaged in canoes across vast distances and settled on narrow sandy islands with no soils and surface water. Some atoll islands have been settled for well over two thousand years, with no 'collapse' in the populations living on these most marginal of terrestrial environments despite climate extremes, colonisation, blackbirding, world war and dramatic changes in economic and political conditions".

Instead of foreclosing the future of the entire island nations and their populations, thus, Baldwin (2014, p.526), suggests that we can think of the future as 'ours to make' and invent it the way we want, as opposed to preparing for a future that the experts tell us to expect. The future islanders I interviewed wished 'to make' was located in the Maldives, and not elsewhere.

4.2.2. Development pathways in the Maldives

It was in this way, through hope and possibility, that islanders seemed to live with uncertainty and commit to a future in the islands. As well as there being differing views on how best to seek adaptation to ensure a future in the Maldives, there were different visions about what such futures would like, which were dependent on the development pathways that the Maldives would follow.

A short boat ride between Male and other nearby islands is filled with the sight of cranes and new islands, or small patches of sand, being built. The continuous growth of resorts and tourism attractions together with the governments' policy to introduce guesthouses and grow local tourism since 2010 characterise the landscape in the Maldives, which amongst other things, is witnessing an extension of the built environment. As Kothari and Arnall (2019, p. 136) state:

> "New infrastructure is particularly evident, including land reclamation projects, harbours, buildings (both residential and guest houses), powerhouses, solar panels, boatyards, industrial zones, ice plants, water tanks (both public and private), groundwater wells, road(s) and thoroughfares, sea defences, and systems for sewage, running water, renewable energy, and energy transmission. In addition, the development of local amenities, including football pitches, playgrounds, and meeting areas, has taken place".

The participants of the two workshops at MNU explored what possible futures these changes could bring about in the Maldives. On the one hand, they imagined what they called a 'bad future'. On the other hand, through their imaginations on how the future could potentially be approached, a series of 'good futures' emerged.

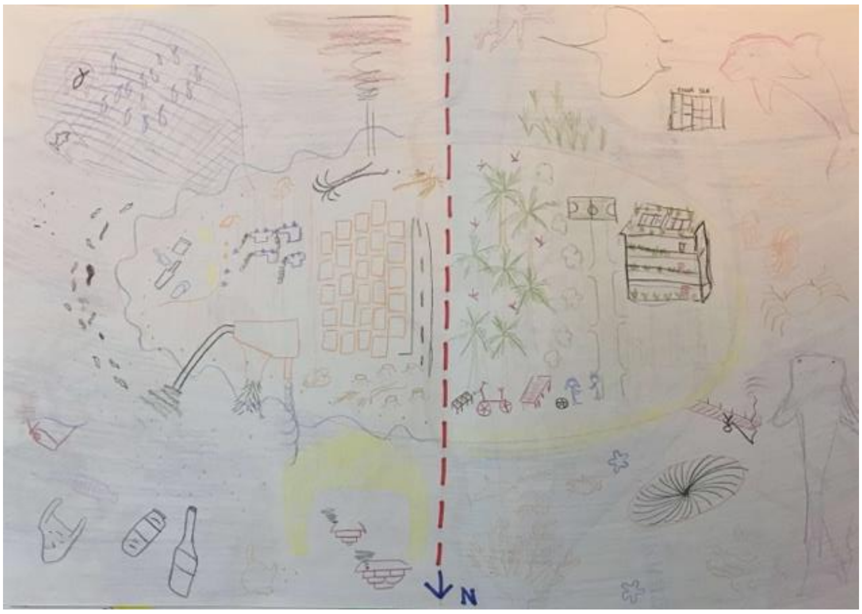


Figure 7: Future Vision, 'Bad Future' on the left and 'Good Future' on the right (Workshop 1, Group 1)

In their group description of the drawing, they stated:

> "For the future, we thought of two ways. It could either go very good or very bad. On the good side, we see people living in a sustainable manner with all greens, these are solar panels in the sea, all living creatures are in harmony. And there is a lot of green, in the roofs, in the pathways. There is renewable energy. Here in the Maldives, an island. Then

> on the other side, we have erosion taking place and lots of waste, there is a landfill close to the beach even, lots of fuels coming from the vehicles and congested space, deforestation, reclamation of land, oil spills, plastic pollution, waste going in the sea and sustainable manner of catching fish even. So that could also be our future. The corals are dead."

Some of the descriptions of the 'bad future' reflect the changes in the environment that have been taking place in the Maldives identified by Kothari and Arnall (2019): sand excavation and erosion, the accumulation of debris and waste and the expansion of the built environment. They also coincide with the line of development projects that have reduced islanders' natural adaptive capacity and increased reliance on human-made solutions, as discussed in the previous section. To avoid this "bad" version of the future, participants of the workshop insisted in the need to change development pathways to ensure a range of "good", green and sustainable futures:

> "And as a nation level we have to take transparent decisions on development projects. And the projects should be sustainable if we want our islands to be safe and protected from big risks we are facing."

> "Our country needs to make more informed decisions on development of our islands and industries and tackle the challenges we face in a more sustainable manner. Understanding that our natural environment is important to conserve and plays an extremely important role in our livelihoods."

The participants, therefore, placed a focus on the sustainability of development choices and on enhancing the natural resources and qualities of the islands. The first step towards this was thought to be gaining awareness. There was a strong sense in the workshops of the importance of awareness among the public. In Figure 9, the participants included a sign saying: "Save the Trees", "to show that people will be educated and care for the environment and they will want this sustainable development". There is a similar sign in Figure 7 saying, "Plastic is banned in the Maldives". Awareness is something that also came up regularly during the interviews and in the individual reflections that the participants wrote at the end of the workshops. They linked awareness to other themes such as education, empathy and the act of caring. These two quotes reflect these matters, the first one from Mariyam, who earlier spoke about erosion and the governments' motivations behind developing the country, and the second one from a student at the workshop:

> "Like I said with education, I think they will care more, because you can't care about something if you don't know about it. If you are aware about it, you can find people who are and actually want to make a difference. So, if we build, not everyone would be like that, but if we can make a whole generation which is like that and then pass it down, I think the younger generations will do it better, then the next generation better, something like that."

> "There is a lot that needs to be done to save our precious islands. From local individual levels to decision-makers and governments. All of us need to work together to make our country a more sustainable one. So that the future generations can call Maldives home just like we do. For this to happen a lot needs to change. Awareness about what is happening and how we can make our activities more sustainable is crucial."

Having gained awareness and assuming a willingness to take action, a variety of themes emerged from these drawings suggesting what a 'good future' would look like for the Maldives. On the one hand, as Figure 9 represents, these describe improvements to their "everyday lives", such as having lanes for walking or jogging (Figure 9), an increase of playgrounds so that every neighbourhood can enjoy some outside space (Figure 9), or an increase of greenery such as trees by the roadsides in Male, or in the islands to increase shaded spaces (Figure 6,7,9 and 10). Public transport was also reflected in one of the drawings, in attempts to minimise the use of private transport (Figure 9).

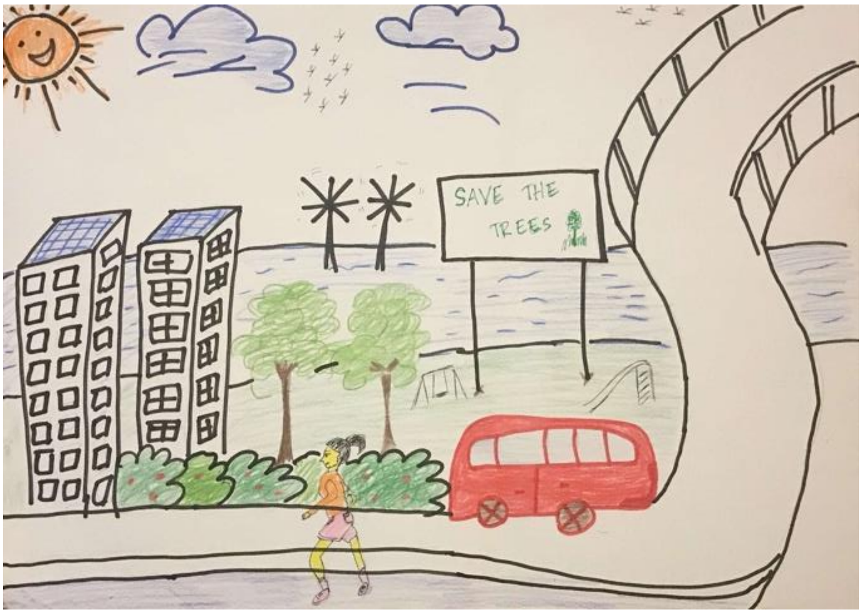


Figure 8: Future Vision (Workshop 2, Group 2)

This group described their drawing as follows:

> “We have an ecocity here with trees, there is sustainable development and for neighbourhoods we have trees, playgrounds, solar panels are installed on the roof of buildings and this is the bridge, these are the windmills in the sea, we have lanes for people who are walking, jogging and cycling, and also people are using public transport. People will not smoke on the road, they will be very healthy, and people will be outside a lot. Every neighbourhood will have a park, very green, so kids can go outside and exercise or play around. Basically, an island life in a city. We put this sign here to show that people will be educated and care for the environment and they will want this sustainable development.”

On the other hand, other aspects of the drawings focused on long-term or more general changes focused around sustainability and development. For instance, these included the local islands having a jetty, as opposed to a harbour (Figure 10), practicing sustainable fishing (Figure 6,8), and relying on renewable energy (Figure 6,7,8,9 and10). These together would lead to healthy and pristine reefs, allowing wildlife to live in harmony with their environment (Figure 10).

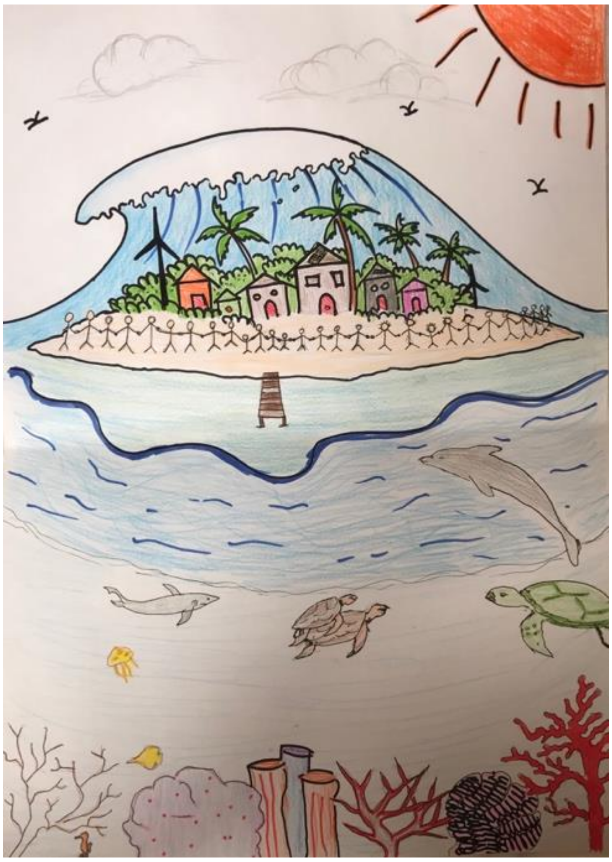


Figure 9: Future Vision (Workshop 1, Group 2)

This drawing was also described:

> "In our future we do not see us moving to another country or anything, we see our island communities developing. So, what we have tried to represent here is a, yes, as an island nation, we are very vulnerable, we are prone to wave action as you can see here, but is everyone is willing to work together, they can actually protect the islands and still have all of the development. You have your renewable energy, you have your pristine reefs, if, the big if being here that you all work together. It's your island, so it's your responsibility."

These visions perhaps point towards a different way of understanding development, through the natural state of the islands and the way of life they have supported for thousands of years. This is thought to be compatible with the development of infrastructure that would improve islanders' livelihoods, such as an increase in education and health facilities. The shift is therefore not necessarily, or exclusively on the content of what 'development' means, but in the *ways* this is pursued. The drawing reflects a focus on renewable energy and sustainable fishing. They speak not only to what is present in a space, but to the way of life it supports. The built environment is balanced by an increase of the presence of nature pictured in the number of trees and greenery.

The islands are now filled with outside spaces that offer shade and the possibility of being and enjoying the entirety of the island. They reflect not an abandonment of infrastructure and economic-based activities, but a balance between those and the natural environment and qualities of the island. This resonates with a new radical form of conservation described as convivial conservation, which choosing to break the dichotomy between nature and culture, "encourages transformative seeds to grow into a realistic and positive foundation for reconciling global conservation and development imperatives" (Büscher & Fletcher, 2019, p. 284). Hassan, a member of the Rinbudhoo council spoke on this issue in one of our conversations around the island. As I reflected in my field diary:

> "He [council member] joined my walk and showed me more of the island, whilst sharing his reflections about development. I told him I had spoken to the people from Rinbudhoo in Thulusdhoo about why they had decided to move, and that they said it was because facilities such as education, employment and health were better and more available there. He told me he disagreed with this, and that here in Rinbudhoo they understood development not to be concrete but about the natural resources of the islands." (Field Diary, 03/05/19).

Based on his understanding of development, Hassan shared the vision he had for Rinbudhoo, which seems to fit with Büscher and Fletcher's convivial conservation (2019):

> "Rinbudhoo is a cultural island, so our focus is on local tourism. The island is very environmentally friendly and has natural and local facilities. We don't have to build so many buildings, we don't have to build an island like a concrete jungle, because we have been living in Maldives for more than two thousand years, so the concept is good. We don't need to change. Through the local tourism project, we will build a special road, special cafes, a cinema and many things. I think if we go for local tourism, indirectly the local population will get a lot of money. If we build forty or fifty rooms in Rinbudhoo, more jobs and also more opportunities to do different business, like jewellery. We have our environment which is very good for the local population, peaceful and clean. The beaches and the house reefs are beautiful"

Pursuing this vision, Hassan explained the different projects that the council had in mind. He explained to me that in a few weeks' time, they were going to ban the use of plastic bags. Concerned about the impact that plastic bags have on the environment, the council had designed tote bags that were given to each household to use when they go to shops. Another project they had in mind was to do with light pollution. Although acknowledging this was not a big problem in the Maldives, the council president recognised the effect it can have on the environment and the wildlife, and so they decided to change the streetlights. This change seemed to be further motivated by challenging individuals' perceptions of development here as well:

> "We started the campaign about light pollution and we are going to change our street lights, because in Maldives, the situation is at night they can see a lot of lights, big lights, that is development, they count like that, so that's why they are putting so many lights, but indirectly it affects the human and also the wildlife. So we are starting the programme to use not so many lights at night and this year we will change the street lights, the electric city bill will be reduced and also the light pollution, I think for that, we are also putting the shield, the lights will be covered"

These visions also coincide with the new government, elected in September 2018, whose intentions are to promote economic growth without compromising the environment. As President Solih (2018) stated in his inaugural address:

> "Almighty Allah has bountifully blessed us with pearly white beaches, beautiful marine life and resources, and agricultural riches. The Maldives is truly a unique wonder of the earth. Our ancestors loved and protected our motherland and entrusted us with the noble task to carry on in their wake. Environmental destruction justified in the name of national development is nothing but an absolute betrayal of our children's birthrights. Keeping that in mind, I intend to spearhead environmental protection programs that adhere to international conventions, to protect selected islands, reefs and seas in every atoll. The development I envisage for the Maldives, is green, resilient and sustainable"

These visions point towards a future located in the Maldives, with comments and reflections that showed this was a conscious decision: "In our future we do not see us moving to another country or anything, we see our island communities developing". Unlike the narratives in some academic literature and policy reports suggest (Myers, 2002; Christian Aid, 2007; Bogardi and Warner, 2009; Knight, 2009), their futures were not filled with catastrophe, an increased threat to the habitability of the islands against climate change and the urgent need to migrate elsewhere. They were filled with hope, passion and a commitment to work together to ensure the next generations could continue to call the Maldives home, as a student reflected after the workshop: "All of us need to work together to make our country a more sustainable one, so that the future generations can call Maldives home just like we do". Against this, narratives of "moving or drowning" which reduce the future to the question of "to stay or to go"; "to live or to die" (Methmann and Oels, 2015) or framings of international migration as a potential adaptive solution (Foresight, 2011) do not satisfy islanders' ideas of their futures or understandings of what it means to adapt and be resilient. There is therefore a continued disjuncture between islanders' conceptualisations of key terms and understandings of what they desire for the future, and what policy and some academics' responses suggest of the same. This section has shed light on the tensions between dominant narratives and counter-narratives at the national level in order to seek justice-based pathways to future-making.

4.3. The Future as a Local Island: De-centralisation and Island Development

Moving from the national vision of the future in the Maldives, this section develops a theme of de-centralisation and development at the local island level. It contributes to the climate change and migration nexus by further reflecting on how adaptation and resilience are understood for islanders of the Maldives and exploring their approaches to movement. Section 4.3.1. analyses the processes of centralisation and de-centralisation that have taken place as a way of providing a background to islanders' perceptions and visions of the development of local islands, which are elaborated in Section 4.3.2. Section 4.3.3. explores the motivations behind this desire to de-centralise and develop island communities.

4.3.1. Ongoing processes of centralisation and de-centralisation

Within the dynamic political context of the Maldives, there seem to have been parallel processes of both centralisation and de-centralisation shifting in priorities for different governments. At times, the government's focus and priority in terms of development projects and funding has been the Greater Male region, including the islands of Male, Hulhumale, Villingili and Thilafushi. For instance, the construction of the artificial island of Hulhumale itself which started in the 1997s, the building of the bridge connecting Male and Hulhumale, which opened in August of 2018, or the 2018 version of the World Bank 'Urban Development and Resilience Project', which states:

> "To address demographic pressures and natural hazard risks, GoM's priority is the integrated and sustainable development of the Greater Male region. A Greater Male

> Development strategy is under preparation, which proposes to articulate the physical and economic expansion and integration of the region's major islands of Male, Hulhumale, Villingili and Thilafushi" (Amankwah-Ayeh, 2018, p. 4).

Alongside these, there have been ongoing efforts at different points to de-centralise administration and resources. For instance, the first democratic government, as developed in Chapter III, passed the Decentralization Act in 2010, to set out 189 island councils, 19 atoll councils and two city councils (Fernando, 2017). The purpose of decentralisation, according to the Decentralisation Act itself was to "allow the island communities to make their own decisions in a democratic and accountable manner"(UNICEF, 2013, p. 11). This signified a shift in the governance of the local islands that went from having an island chief to a council, with a president and other council members. A council member of Rinbudhoo spoke on this issue:

(Q) There were no councils before?
(A) No, there weren't councils. There was an island chief, and the island chief is an old man, and actually the island chief is a selected man. The president selected the chief, and there was no election.
(Q) What year did the council start?
(A) In 2011, February the 26th the council started.
(Q) So, the first democratic elections were in 2008, and then the coup was in 2012, but before that, the government set up the councils.
(A) Yes, we started on the 26th of February in 2011 and on the 7th of February in 2012, the coup. After that, we faced a lot of challenges.
(Q) But the councils remained in place?
(A) Yes. We started convincing the people they have a future, a bright future in Rinbudhoo. Also, we came and met the ministers and we said we need to live in Rinbudhoo, so the government should provide facilities like they provide other islands. We were saying that if the government can't provide facilities, give us, the councils, give us the power to build facilities for them, so slowly we started doing our own projects in Rinbudhoo.

Fernando (2017) reports that the Decentralisation Policy has brought about significant and concrete changes to the Maldives including the development of infrastructure such as fisheries harbours, an increase in island connectivity and a boost of local tourism. Another attempt at de-centralisation is evident in the latest version of the World Bank 'Urban Development and

Resilience Project', published in January 2020, which adds a different area of focus and priority. This update coincides with a new government, elected in September 2018, which focuses again on strengthening decentralisation. In the inaugural address, the new elected president Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, stated:

> "A system to delegate legal authority and decision-making powers to island, atoll and city councils is the fundamental steppingstone to meet our development goals centred on decentralised governance. By the Grace of Almighty Allah, I will redress the current decentralization mechanisms to ensure independent and self-sufficient councils" (Solih, 2018).

Accordingly, the updated urban development of the Maldives now falls into two groups: Greater Male and the outer atolls. This new focus seems to be a result of the governments' intention to strengthen decentralisation as well as severe overcrowding of the Male region and therefore intending to alleviate the aggravating social and environmental vulnerabilities of inhabitants, as stated in the report:

> "A parallel regional development strategy is looking to reduce migration pressures through the provision of needed economic, cultural and social assets in other parts of the country. The Government has identified 21 urban centres in five designated regions, which are planned to service clusters of atolls and offer social, economic and cultural alternatives to Greater Male" (World Bank, 2020, p7).

Table 4: Resettlement, Population Consolidation and Climate Change Policies and Strategies

Policy/Strategy	**Government**	**Date**	**Comments**
Congregational Prayer Conditions Law	Nasir	1968	Populations of 18 islands were resettled as a result of this law, the majority of which were re-inhabited when the law was rectified (Table 5)
National Population Consolidation Strategy and Programme (Focus Island Development Programme)	Gayoom	1998-2007	The concept of population and development consolidation was introduced in 1998, and since then it developed into various plans and stages, including the Focus Island Development Programme (Shaig, 2008).
Safe Island Development Programme	Gayoom	2007	This signified another 'parallel programme' in the overall population and consolidation policy. This started as a result of the tsunami in 2004, which seemed to open a 'policy window' (Shaig, 2008).
'Resilient Island'	Nasheed (MDP)	2008	Under this proposed strategy, populations would be similarly encouraged to relocate to certain 'resilient islands' through social services and transportation network strategies. There was a

			clarificatory emphasis stating that consolidation of population did not mean depopulation of smaller islands (Kothari , 2014).
'Climate Smart Resilient Islands'	Solih (MDP)	2019	The focus of this initiative is to achieve environment-related targets. It is unclear if this is to be pursued on all inhabited islands or a series of selected islands (Solih, 2019).

Population consolidation has been another conflicting and ongoing process for the government of the Maldives (Table 4). Since the late 1960s these efforts have been driven by an attempt to make more efficient the distribution of social services and infrastructures across the country. Whilst sometimes the intention has been to concentrate the population in the Greater Male region, other policies have tried to spread it around the country. The first documented attempt was in 1968, when a law passed by the Majis, the legislative body of the Maldives, stated that all islands with a population of less than 50 male adults did not fulfil the conditions for the Congregational Prayers and as a result had to be de-populated (Table 5) (Maniku, 1990). Although the official rationale for this law was related to religious beliefs, Shaig (2008) argues that the driving force behind it was an early attempt by the government to consolidate and streamline the administration of the country. Since then, governments have proposed a range of projects to consolidate the population such as the 'National Population Consolidation Strategy and Programme', proposed by Gayoom under which he planned to create two regional growth centres and 85 focus islands with high levels of services. The remaining inhabited islands would receive a minimum of services and their populations encouraged to move towards the focus islands and regional centres (Kothari , 2014). Other policies and projects have included Gayoom's 'Safer Island Strategy', Nasheed's 'Resilient Island' and most recently Solih's 'Climate Smart Resilient Islands'.

Table 5: Depopulated Islands in Accordance with Law 6/68 (Javiyani) (Maniku, 1990).

Depopulated Island	**New Island**	**Return to Former Island**
Berinmadhoo (Haa-Alif Atoll), depopulated on 2nd August 1968.	Dhidhoo (15 people); Mulhadhoo (25 people); Thuraakunu (13 people)	Re-inhabited on 10th September 1975, all returned.
Dharaboodhoo (Faaf Atoll)	Magoodhoo, except 8 households.	Re-inhabited, date unknown, all returned except 3 households, who chose to stay.
Faridhoo (Haa-Dhaal Atoll), depopulated on 18th July 1971.	Hanimaadhoo	Re-inhabited on 8th June 1975, all returned.
Funadhoo (Baa Atoll), depopulated on 17th and 18th of August 1968.	Eydhafushi	Unknown
Hodaidhoo (Haa-Dhaal Atoll), depopulated on 13th October 1968.	Hanimaadhoo	Re-inhabited on 28th April 1975, all returned.
Kalhaidhoo (Laamu Atoll), depopulated on 27th March 1969.	Maamendhoo	Re-inhabited on 2nd July 1975, with 224 people.

Kihaadhoo (Baa Atoll), depopulated on 22nd of March and 14th of June 1969.	Hithaadhoo	Re-inhabited on 18th May 1975 with 124 people.
Kodey (Gaaf-Alif Atoll), depopulated on 26th September 1970.	Unknown (145 people)	Re-inhabited on 12th April 1975 with 156 people.
Kuburudhoo (Alif Atoll), depopulated on 6th September 1968.	Rasdhoo (118 people)	Re-inhabited on 13th July with 172 people.
Kuramathi (Alif Atoll), depopulated on 2nd July 1970.	Rasdhoo (124 people)	Unknown
Maaddoo (Baa Atoll), depopulated on 7th November and 17th December 1968.	Eydhafushi	Unknown
Magoodhoo (Meemu Atoll), depopulated on 1st May 1969.	Velidhoo	Re-inhabited on 14th April 1975, with 143 people.
Raiymandhoo (Meemu Atoll), depopulated on 26th January 1969.	Muli (78 people)	Re-inhabited on 28th May 1975, with 94 people.
Tholhendhoo (Noonu Atoll), depopulated 11th July 1969.	Velidhoo (163 people)	Re-inhabited on 11th June 1975, with 70 people.
Udoodhoo (Baa Atoll), depopulated on 25th August and 21st September 1968.	Eydhafushi (87)	Unknown
Ufulandhoo (Raa Atoll), depopulated on 18th October 1968.	Alifushi. After setteling, some of their own accord went to Maduvvaree.	Unknown
Uligamu (Haa-Alif Atoll), depopulated on 1st August 1969.	Dhidhdhoo. On 1st January 1971, they were re-settled on Thuraakunu.	Re-inhabited on1st August 1975.
Vaani (Dhaal Atoll)	Kudahuvadhoo	Re-inhabited when law was repealed, all returned except one household.

These plans however, Kothari (2014) concludes have always been received negatively, with little trust or support. My interview with a member of Rinbudhoo council reflects some of these issues:

> "Kudahuvadhoo, they also want to take Rinbudhoo people there. They have the regional office, so they are trying to bring the Rinbudhoo people Kudahuvadhoo, which is 25 min away by speedboat. The thinking is, in Mohamed regimes', he was giving the development projects only to the big populations, so they wanted to increase the population of the islands. And then, but then later we met the ministers and we told them the people don't want to move to any other island, they want to stay, and Rinbudhoo is a historical island, we have to save our culture and the history."

> "The government was trying to move all island people to Thulusdhoo, then the administration cost will be less, because then there will be no Rinbudhoo, so one island less. That was the plan of the government but actually the law says that if the citizens, if the local people of Rinbudhoo, if the majority people don't want to move, the government can't force them to move to another island."

Out of these two attempts to relocate the population of Rinbudhoo, one family moved to Kudahuvadhoo and 242 people moved to Thulusdhoo, the remaining population of 471 choosing to stay. Of the ones that went to Thulusdhoo, some decided to return within 12 months. Like Rinbudhoo, other islands will have experienced similar attempts with similar responses of some wanting to leave and some wanting to stay. It is impossible to predict how these interlinked efforts to de-centralise and consolidate the population will continue to unfold in the future and in relation to the increasing challenges that climate change will present. The key informants who worked for Plastic Noon Gotheh, thought the new government did not believe in forcing people to move, even in the context of climate change:

> "I mean the incoming government does not think, does not believe in sort of getting people to forcefully migrate to a certain island, even due to climate change, but there would be areas that would be developed more"

The new government's approach to climate change does not specifically reference population consolidation. Instead, under its 'Climate Smart Resilient Islands' initiative, it focuses on achieving environment-related targets in eleven key areas, including: the designation of environmentally protected areas, the installation of new technology, increasing inter-island connectivity, ensuring climate-resilient infrastructure and transitioning to renewable energy, amongst others (Solih, 2019). Amongst these continuous and ongoing efforts to centralise and de-centralise and manage the population of the Maldives, I turn to analyse how the participants of my study perceived the matter.

4.3.2. Brining health facilities, education and leisure spaces to local islands

Regardless of the varied attempts by the government to emphasise de-centralisation, the participants of my study still perceived resources to be centralised, as the following quotes illustrate. The first quote is from an interview with a key informant at the Ministry of Environment and the second one from a student's reflection after the workshop:

> "People migrate internally from island to island for the sake of employment, income generation activities, health, education… specially you would see the island communities migrate, let's say, the central area, not other places, because all the resources are here."

> "A lot of us here in Maldives are experiencing internal migration. Since the government have focused all its resources to the capital of Maldives (Male), moving to Male has become something unavoidable. Maldives has become so centralised that more than half the population had to move to Male. I use 'had to' here for many reasons. Hospitals, schools, job opportunities. These are some of the most common reasons people have to move."

Their perception is therefore that the country is very centralised, and all resources, opportunities and facilities remain in Male or the Greater Male region. Therefore, being if not in Male, close to Male was considered beneficial by some, due to the increase of transport and therefore accessibility to these resources. From this perception therefore, a desire to de-centralise the country and develop island communities was a strong theme that came out of the data. The two university workshops illustrated and reflected on the development of island communities. This development was mainly characterised by an increase in the amount and quality of facilities, particularly in relation to education and health. Figures 6 and 10 above illustrate this.

These visions of what the islands should be like and the facilities that should be available, was also a strong theme in the interviews with the women in the islands. When asked to think about what they hoped for and to picture it in an image, many choose to reflect their desire for their islands to be further developed. Some focused on the development of the health facilities, others on the development of education, and others had a more general vision of what they wished the island could look like. A variety of photos illustrate to these themes.

Image 2: Fathimath's picture of hope

This is a picture of the health centre in Thulusdhoo which Fathimath took. Fathimath worked at the health centre and hoped it would become a hospital one day with better quality facilities: “I want this health centre to become a hospital, with good quality facilities, everything. I hope one day this health centre, the whole society will accept it as a hospital.” In Rinbudhoo, Aisath had similar hopes for the health centre. When I asked her about her image of hope, she described: “The health centre, because we don’t have many facilities here, the scan, X-rays.” As well as the health centre, others placed the focus of the development of their islands on education and took pictures of the school to reflect this.

Image 3: Hawwa’s picture of hope

Hawwa, who at the time we spoke was studying in Male but on holiday in Rinbudhoo, shared her hope of finishing her education studies in Male and returning to Rinbudhoo to become a primary teacher at the school. She chose to photograph the school in Rinbudhoo to illustrate this and her desire to see more facilities: “Hope… the school. There aren’t many facilities. I would like to get more facilities”. Khadeeja, who was already teaching at the school in Rinbudhoo also hoped for the improvement of the school and the availability of facilities, the lack of which was making her job difficult: “I want better education in the island because I work as a teacher. It’s very difficult with not many facilities”. In Thulusdhoo, similar hopes were shared about the improvement and development of education. The still empty, newly reclaimed land, which almost doubled the size of the island, seemed to allow the women I encountered a more tangible space to imagine, to build reams and aspirations for the island. Many of the young women I interviewed placed their hopes for the future in this empty space.

Image 4: Arifa's picture of hope

Arifa, who had migrated to Thulusdhoo seven years ago from her home island Turakunu to be closer to medical and educational facilities, is now settled with her husband and two children. Her parents and sisters also moved at different times, so her entire family is now in Thulusdhoo. Like many others, Arifa chose to take a picture of the newly reclaimed land. Through it, she shared her hope for education opportunities to be increased in the island: “In the future, I want the government to make some colleges, some higher education places, so I don't need to move to Male to give the higher education to the kids, I want to settle here”. Others thought of the newly reclaimed land as opportunities to secure land from the government and be able to start their own independent lives, whilst others dreamt about the general development of the community. Leela, a mother of three daughters who had always lived on the island, had a strong vision for the future of her island: “In this land, I want one of the big mosques, and a big park, and to make this place very developed. A playground for the children, a school with higher grades, and more protection against soil erosion.” As well as images of the health centre, the schools, and the reclaimed land, women chose to take pictures of their daughters and sons, and place in them their hopes for a more developed island. Niuma was permanently based in Male with her husband, but at the time we spoke, she had temporarily relocated to Rinbudhoo, to give her daughter a sense of space and freedom that was not available in Male. She chose a picture of her daughter to represent her hopes for better facilities in the island: “My daughter. I hope for better education and better health facilities in the island.”

Image 5: Niuma's picture of hope

Islanders' visions of the development of the islands coincide with the students' visions in the workshops of the overall country and their imaginations of seeing smaller islands develop further. This development was not centred around an increase of guesthouses. Instead, it was focused around the facilities that islanders' use in their everyday lives, such as the school or the health centre, and an increase in leisure space and protection against environmental changes. They also coincide with the new government's focus on de-centralisation and the empowerment of island communities and their inhabitants, turning them into spaces where they can pursue their hopes, dreams and aspirations.

4.3.3. Motivations behind wanting to de-centralise and develop local island

When enquiring about the reasons behind participants' hopes to de-centralise resources and develop island communities, two main reasons emerged. Firstly, participants seemed to be motivated by reducing the need to move to Male. Either from their previous experiences in the city, or because of their comfortable lives in the islands, the predominant message was to reduce movement and stay in the islands. Secondly, key informants spoke about decentralising and developing local islands as a way to increase resilience against climate change and improving the chances of a future in the Maldives. This section looks at these two themes in turn.

One of the main reasons behind wanting to develop local islands and have better health and education facilities was to avoid the need to move to Male, either temporarily for education or to find jobs. Many of the women I spoke to, who were now mothers, had spent some years of their lives in Male, the majority of them to pursue their studies. Although they explained they had been excited about moving there, they also shared that during their time in Male, they longed to return to the islands. Having now settled in their home islands again, or on another local island after marrying, they were keen to stay there and reduce the need to go to Male for their children's education. There were others that did seek movement and looked to start a new life on a different island. For instance, Khadeeja who at the time we spoke lived and worked in Rinbudhoo but had spent some of her childhood and teenage years in a different island, wished to move: "I don't want to go to Male, but some other island, not Maafushi, some other island where I don't know people. I want to start a new life". Niha, for example, who lived in Rinbudhoo did want to go to Male as this is where her husband was: "I want to go to Male. That's the dream only, living with my husband". The women that sought movement, as opposed to permanency in the islands, tended to have their husbands or family elsewhere, or hadn't married or settled yet, and thus were excited about the possibilities and prospect of what a life in a different Maldivian island could offer. However, the majority of participants were keen to see their islands develop so that they would not need to move.

Thuqa was born in Kuludufushi, where her mother was from, and moved to Thulusdhoo at the age of 18, where her father was from. She is now 32 and has worked at the Thulusdhoo Council as an officer for 12 years. She lives there with her husband and children and wanted to see a university in the empty reclaimed land:

(A) This is the empty land. I want to see, to build a university.
(Q) For you or for your children?
(A) For my children, to study.
(Q) And why do you want a university here?
(A) So I don't have to leave this island.

Others shared her dream. Zaain, who had settled in Thulusdhoo with her husband and children five years ago after being in Male chose to prioritise the same hope. She was happy in Thulusdhoo, which she described as a "very calm and peaceful" place, as opposed to her experience in Male, where she said it had been difficult to live. Like Thuqa, she wanted a university for the same reasons: "I want to make a university, so I don't need to go to Male. And I want grade 11 and 12 here also.". Lastly, Mai who was a teacher at the school in Thulusdhoo, hoped for it to offer higher grades and delay, if not reduce, the necessity that many families encounter of moving to Male for their children's education: "This one is school. So now here we are studying up to grade 10, but if we want to study higher grades, we have to go Male, so one hope is we are staying here and studying one higher grade, that is one hope."

Another key reason identified also by other scholars why people move to Male from local islands is to have better job opportunities (Stojanov et al., 2017). Some of the islanders that I spoke to referred to the development of the island as a way of increasing the availability of jobs there and therefore reducing, again, the need to go to the capital. Shifa, who had relocated to Thulusdhoo from Rinbudhoo in 2006, and worked at the health centre, shared her thoughts on this, explaining how it would also reduce 'everyday mobility' for health appointments and consultations:

> "Because one of my dreams is that this becomes a hospital. Now it is just a health centre, and if it becomes a hospital means we will have a lot of job opportunities, plus specialist consultation we will get, and we won't need to go Male, a little bit of X-ray scanning, and maybe I will become staff nurse also, so this is one of my hopes. The number of nurses will increase so there will be a greater chance for me to be a nurse also, so this is one of my hopes."

A second reason shared by key informants was to increase resilience against climate change and so was thought within the realms of what adaptation could look like for the country. So far, the majority of sea protection measures are built in the Greater Male region, with the majority of atoll islands not having received the same level of investment in coastal protection as Male. For instance, under Gayoom's regime, the Japanese government funded a $60 million seawall around the entire island of Male, after the floods of 1987 (Hamilton, 2008). As introduced above, the island of Hulhumale was built on a two meter high platform, which is higher than the average island in relation to sea level rise and after the Tsunami made the island of Th. Vilufushi inhabitable, it was rebuilt according to Gayoom's 'Safer Island Strategy', and was tripled in land area with its mean elevation being raised from 1 to 1.4m above sea level (Naylor, 2015). Therefore, there were hopes amongst participants that other islands in different regions could offer similar protection and safer options. The key informant who worked Plastic Noon Gotheh for put it like this:

> "I think there should be regions and, in each region, a bigger settlement where all services and protection measures are built in. I think that is something we should do. So, as I said, then you have to think about how to compensate to those who don't live on those islands, but as an adaptation thing, that is something we should do."

Bluepeace, a Maldivian environmentalist group, has suggested something similar. The proposed project consisted of constructing three-meter-high islands throughout the atolls as both centres for development and as more resilient settlements against sea-level rise solutions (Bluepeace Maldives, 2008). This would follow a model of a contingency adapted island where despite the islands being three meters higher, buildings would still be built on stilts in order to reduce the force of floods and strong storm events. Bluepeace Maldives suggest that at least there should be seven adapted contingency islands in seven different regions across the archipelago, although they indicate that indeed all the resort islands in the Maldives could be adapted as water villages or boat houses. It is also important to note that this proposal was explicitly framed as alternative to a planned relocation of the Maldivian population and therefore stating a preference for finding on-site adaptation solutions (Bluepeace Maldives, 2008).

Unlike it has been set out in some of the framings of climate-related migration, where resilience and adaptive capacity have often meant developing skills to become employable and migration to bring remittances back, resilience was understood in terms of the physical. The same key informant from Plastic Noon Gotheh followed:

> "For me, I think very much in the physical. Because the real basis of our existence itself would be sort of, we don't know what would happen, so I really think on the physical and see how we can build settlements, where we can live… 20, 30 years and at that time, they were saying 50 years on, and now we're there. And at the time, in UNDP, we were not talking so much on adaptation. At that time we were talking on mitigation, and I remember they're saying, we need to do this project, because 50 years on, I don't want to be sitting in UNDP and planning evacuation of Maldivian from that. But for me, it's more of a physical settlement where people can live and a liveable environment. Even now, we don't have

> water, we too use technology, so basically for me, it's more of an existential thing, where do we exist? Do we adapt, and how? So physically, it's looking like better planning, better drainage, where there will be flooding, and for me it's, it's always at the back of my mind, where will we live? Where would we go? And that's the kind of thing that I think of when I say resilience."

These reasons relate to two main themes in the climate change and migration nexus. On the one hand, the claim that mobility is a key characteristic of island communities (Bedford and Hugo, 2012; Kelman *et al.*, 2015; Stojanov *et al.*, 2017). My data suggests that although mobility might have been a key characteristic of island communities, there are many attempts to minimise the amount of movement and relocation they encounter during their lifetimes within the country. This adds to the previous conclusion that framing migration as a solution to climate change does not match islanders' perceptions and extent of movement that they are comfortable with. On the other hand, the idea the resilience has been understood by some in terms of islander's adaptive capacity by developing a set of skills that will allow them to settle in a potential new host country (Foresight, 2011; Gemenne and Blocher, 2017). In my research, resilience and adaptation were not understood in terms of mobility and therefore coincide with many scholars' critiques of the way resilience is adopted in the context of climate-related migration (Skoglund and Jensen, 2013; Bettini, 2014; Methmann and Oels, 2015). Instead, resilience and adaptation were understood in terms of the physical and infrastructural, through de-centralisation of resources, the creation of 'safe islands' in different regions and reclamation or the elevation of land. These coincide with earlier conceptions of resilience understood as engineering resilience (resilience as maintenance) and ecological resilience (resilience as adaptation) (Holling, 1973), as opposed to social-ecological (or transformational) resilience, where resilience might mean the abandonment of the settlement and migrating elsewhere (Methmann and Oels, 2015). None of the participants spoke about adaptation in terms of preparing for a future elsewhere where they had to become 'adaptable' or 'employable'. They also did not place the responsibility on themselves to navigate this transition. Instead, and as further explored in Chapter VI, if faced by climate-related migration and displacement, they expected potential host countries to provide them with a living space that matched their lives on the islands.

These ideas contribute to challenging established narratives around climate change and small islands (Kelman, 2018). In presenting counter-narratives to islanders' assumed relationships to 'vulnerability' and 'resilience', this section allows to re-frame key terminology and relationships in the climate change debate in a way that pluralises future-making.

4.4. The Future as an individual: hopes and aspirations

So far, this chapter has looked at future visions of the Maldives at a national and local island level. This section develops the visions of the future at a personal, individual and family level. There is a paucity of research when it comes to thinking about the future at an individual level in the context of climate change. Instead, the climate change and futures thinking nexus has so far mainly focused on the future at a more general, global, national or regional level, to which the previous themes referred (Anderson, 2010; Gidley, 2016). This is not surprising, for climate change poses a global threat and it is entire regions or countries that are and will continue to be impacted on. However, a focus on these larger scale results in the loss of sight of the richness and complexity of individual's lives and futures in and beyond the context of climate change. A lack of focus on the individual or personal level results in individual futures being reduced to climate (Hulme, 2011; Arnall and Kothari, 2015), or treated as homogenous (Felli and Castree, 2012). As established in the literature review, this reduced islanders' 'capacity to aspire' (Appadurai, 2004) and capability to imagine, compromising the sense of self and identity that comes from self-defining future projections, hopes and aspirations (D'Argembeau, Lardi and van der Linden, 2012). There is a call for futures thinking in the context of climate change to take into account the 'steps and strategies' that individuals use to 'imagine and realise' their futures (Arnall & Kothari, 2015, p 201). This section attempts to break this down by telling the stories of hope and aspiration of the women that I met.

A part of the interviews I conducted with the women in both islands involved focusing on the future. As explained in Chapter III, after introducing each other and talking about the participants' pasts and presents, we moved on to speak about the futures that they imagined for themselves at the personal or family level. As well as conversations, participants were asked to take a picture of something that represented their hopes. Future-oriented thoughts are frequent in everyday life. Research suggests that most of these thoughts are related to the near future and directed towards 'everyday problem solving and action planning' (D'Argembeau, Lardi, & van der Linden, 2012, p. 110). This coincides with research conducted in the Maldives on temporality and everyday perceptions of future threats such as climate change (Kelman et al., 2017). As well as these types of future oriented thoughts, there are also others that refer to more significant topics and develop representations of the self in the future. These cover a various thematic content such as traits, occupation and social roles, which significantly contribute to people's sense of self and identity in a similar way than memories and past events do (Mcadams, 2001; D'Argembeau, Renaud and Van Der Linden, 2011; D'Argembeau, Lardi and van der Linden, 2012). It was in these second set of future-oriented thoughts that our conversations focused on and which are of importance to this thesis and the foreclosing of islanders' futures.

This section is organised according to the thematic content of the future representations of my participants' selves, which were thought about in terms of either occupations such as opening a business or becoming a teacher, or in terms of their social roles, such as being mothers. Section 4.4.1 starts with the story of a participant called Nissa and by bringing in other participants' hopes, turns to discuss the future in terms of my participants' professional aspirations. Section 4.4.2. opens by telling the story of Aminath and then develops the participants' imaginations of the future in terms of their and their children' social roles. Following from these stories, this section reflects on the desire for the continuity and enhancement of islanders' way of life.

4.4.1. Women's future selves in terms of occupation

"I am Nissa, I live here"

(Q) What are your hopes or aspirations for the future?
(A) We are planning some investments, some business here. We want to do some business, about tourism. I learnt to make jewellery and things like that, so we are planning to build a shop or something.

Nissa was born in Rinbudhoo, she is now 30 years old and she has spent most of her life here. She remembers the island when she was small, there were many more trees and less erosion than today. She remembers playing in the beach area, which was much bigger than it is now. At 16 she went to Male to pursue her studies; she remembers feeling excited about studying but not about living in Male. The atmosphere is very crowded in Male and so she prefers her life on the island. I asked her about what she missed when in Male, and she explained that she missed everything, the beach, the roads… that the only thing Male offers is higher education. After finishing, she was very excited to come back, but still sad about the fact that here, in the island, they don't get higher education. She has two kids now, and describes an overall happy, peaceful and calm life, although she still worries about the kids' education. In her free time, she likes to go to the different beaches around the island, almost on a daily basis. She takes her two children and every week they go swimming. She imagines her future in the island and is planning to invest and do some business related to tourism. She has been learning to make jewellery, which is what her island is known for, and so she and her husband are planning to build a shop. Perhaps because there are no souvenir shops like the one she imagines having, when asked to take a picture, she finds one that represents her hope and vision.

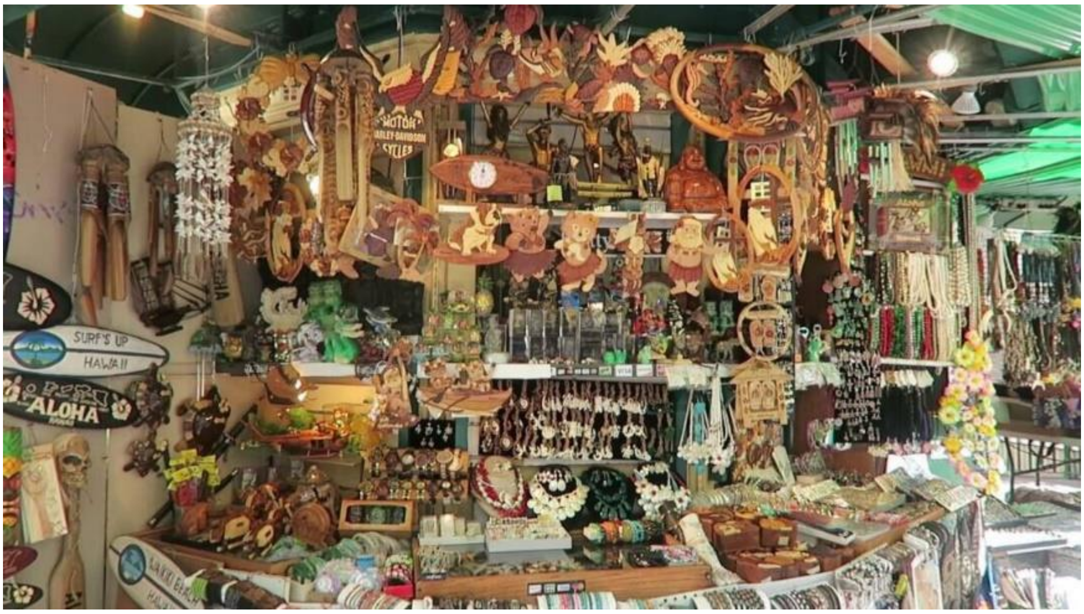


Image 6: Nissa's picture of hope

A few other participants also imagined their future in relation to the growth of the local tourism sector which coincides with the expansion of the built environment introduced above and identified by Kothari and Arnall (2019). Since the introduction of guesthouses in 2010, local islanders have been increasingly involved in the opportunities of the tourism industry, from starting guesthouses to more recently ambitions to open shops. In Rinbudhoo, where Nissa wants to open her own, there were none at the time I was there. It was possible to buy jewellery from one of the few jewellery workshops in the island, but there were no shops where tourists could browse. In Thulusdhoo, there were more than a handful, but two of the participants were also thinking about opening one. Zeena, who at the time we spoke was 24 and had always lived in Thulusdhoo, took a picture of her partner at the shop where he was currently working and explained that they are planning to start their own business on the island.

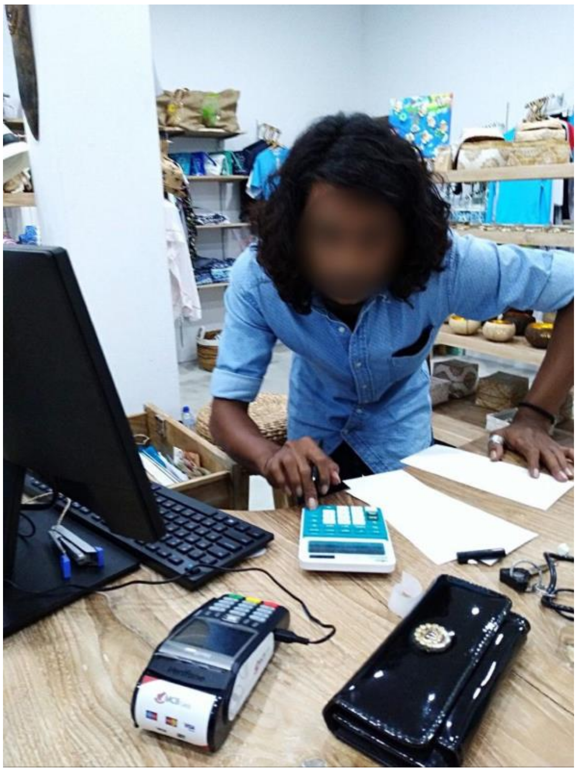
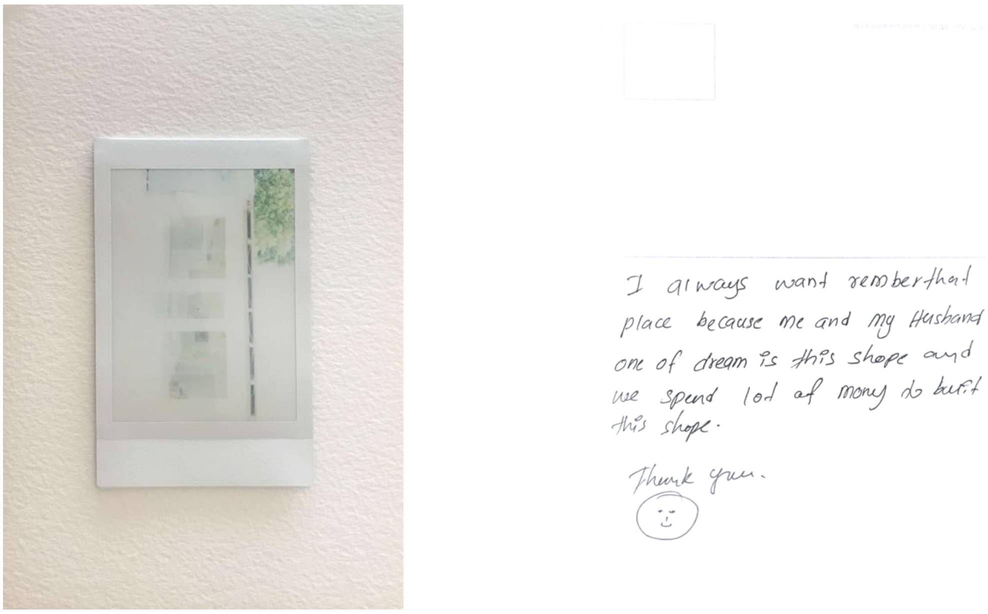


Image 7: Zeena's picture of hope

Thulusdhoo is one of the islands that attracts surfing tourism, and another participant called Mauna, who had moved to Thulusdhoo as a teenager and was now married to someone from the island, was planning on opening, again with her husband, a souvenir and surf shop:

> "I actually, me and my husband try to open a souvenir shop, so we just now have been doing this, I will show you. Half is done, we bring some items also, like a shirt, hat, sun cream… those items, we will try to open before this year, this is my husband and my future, after we try a baby"

After we finished the interview Mauna took me to the shop that they were building and told me more about all the items that they intended to sell for the increasing number of tourists and surfers on the island. Mauna felt very close to this project, as the shop is what she chose to photograph when asked to think about what it was that she would always like to remember if the islands were to disappear.



I always want remberthat
place because me and my Husband
one of dream is this shope and
we spend lod af mony do buit
this shope.

Thank you.

Postcard 1: Mauna

Her message reads: “I always want to remember that place because me and my husband one of dream is this shop and we spend lot of money to build this shop. Thank you”. This tells us something about the significance that islanders’ aspirations, tied to their lives on the islands, place in what is of value to them and their sense of self and identity. Mauna imagined herself in Thulusdhoo building an independent life, creating a family and running this shop with her husband. Other participants placed their personal hopes and aspirations in the future in the context of the development of the islands, as discussed above. This was not necessarily related to tourism, but in relation to the services that would be available to its inhabitants. For instance, Sitha, who was also married and had three daughters in Thulusdhoo, aspired to open both a bakery and tailoring shop:

> “I want to open here one tailor shop and one bakery, that is my dream. Because there is only one tailor shop, and there is no bakery shop here, so that's my future dream, to open one bakery and one tailor shop”

Sitha’s hope fits in with the wider visions of the development of local islands and the new government’s intention to further de-centralise the country and “the empowering of the Maldivian people” (Solih, 2018). Others have professional aspirations that lie in education and they hope to become teachers. Ainy, who lived permanently in Male, but was based temporarily in Thulusdhoo to look after her ill father, wanted to become a Qur’an teacher, and framed her hope in terms of what she would have to sacrifice in a context where international migration was necessary. She chose a picture that represented this hope:

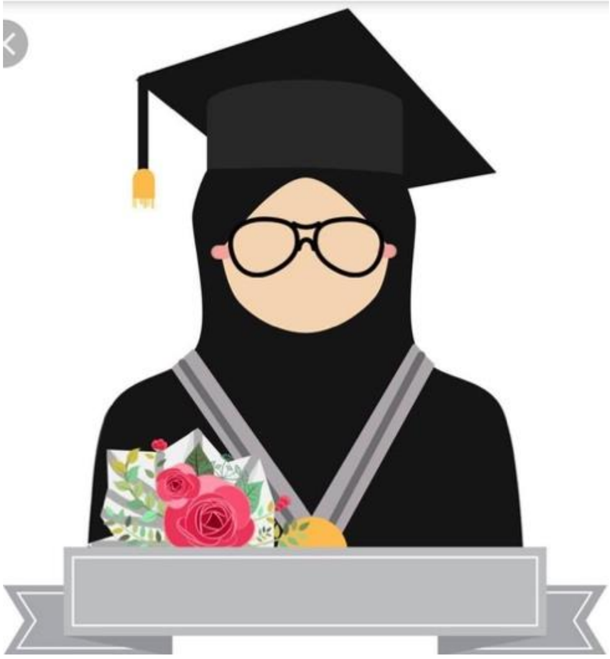


Image 8: Ainy's picture of hope

> "If I have to move to another country, I have to sacrifice my biggest dream of becoming a master certified Qur'an teacher. I already have done a diploma and going to start a degree soon. Not only becoming a master certified Qur'an teacher, I have to sacrifice my daughter Islamic and cultural education, plus we, my husband and me always want to give her a peaceful and happy life together"

Other participants from both Thulusdhoo and Rinbudhoo dreamt of becoming teachers in the schools in their islands: "I want to be a teacher, primary teacher", "I want to be in school in the future also. I want to be a teacher" and chose to picture the school to reflect this:

Image 9: Salma's picture of hope

These hopes and aspirations are closely linked to the visions that were shared at both island and nation levels. They coincide with the growth in infrastructure and guesthouses and with the development of the island. These stories shed light on the importance of participants' future-oriented thoughts in their sense of self and identity. It is also important to note that none of the participants imagined their immediate, or long-term futures to be filled with developing their 'adaptive capacity', as they were imagining and preparing for the future here, not elsewhere. They spoke about increasing their education and training, but this was always tailored to their island context, or the context of the Maldives. Aisath was learning about making jewellery using the natural elements of her island environment and continuing the heritage of her island. Other participants were opening businesses catering to the life in the islands, and others were training to educate the new generation in the same cultural and religious beliefs.

4.4.2. Women's future selves in terms of their personal and family lives

'My name is Aminath. I was born in Kaafu, Thulusdhoo and I am still living on Thulusdhoo'

(Q) How do you imagine your future?
(A) I imagine it here with my son. I imagine him, with me, and he is growing up, living here actually, he is going everywhere. Growing up on the island, going surfing and everything like that, I want him to experience everything about here.

Aminath was born in Thulusdhoo, where all of her family is from and currently live. She has fond memories of her childhood. She remembers her older brother taking her to places and running around the island. They would go to the beach side to hide from their mother and secretly go swimming. When her brother started to surf, he would take her with him, and she would sit by the shore whilst he went into the ocean. After finishing her secondary education, at nineteen, she decided to pursue a diploma in pharmacy at the Maldives National University, in Male. She felt excited about the change, but shortly after arriving in Male, a sense of boredom, lack of safety and nostalgia for her home island surfaced. She compared her time in Male to her experience of living in Thulusdhoo, and how her sense of freedom and safety was restricted by too much traffic and the night time. She spoke about missing the silence, the trees and the beachside and longing for her return. After completing her studies, she joined the school in Thulusdhoo as a teacher and then became a receptionist at the guesthouse where I met her. She married her husband and had a son, and they live in the family home she moved to when she was seven. Before the responsibilities of motherhood, she used to go to watch the sunset alone every day. She imagines her future in her island with her son, where she sees him growing up, going surfing and experiencing 'everything about here', she says. She resents the possibility of having to return to Male for her son's education but states her willingness to do anything for him.

Image 10: Aminath's picture of hope

Unlike those that imagined their futures in relation to perhaps their professional lives, Aminath and many other women I interviewed imagined their futures in terms of their motherhood or in relation to the young and future generations. Many chose to photograph their sons and daughters when asked to think about what it is that they hoped for, for their futures. They would either be about their children having a happy life and being accepted and respected, as these quotes suggest: "Picture of my son. My son is my hope. I want the world to accept my son, and people to be respectful towards my son", "Because I always want the kids to be happy" and "My daughter is my hope. She is everything for me right now". Or placing some sort of responsibility in their children to do well and help their country, as these other quotes illustrate: "I want her to do good things for the country, she needs to prove herself that she is capable to do anything" and "I want him to do well, to help me and all the country, and he gets a good job". Anha, who was from Thulusdhoo and gave tuition to school children, shared her struggle of conceiving a baby and her hope of becoming a mother one day. She borrowed a photo of Aminath's ultrasound to visually represent her hope.

SIEMENS
4C1
*OB NEW
General
TIS: 0.5
TIB: 0.5
MI: 0.8
18fps
2D – 100%
THI
H4.50 MHz
-20dB/DR65
ASC 3
DTCE H
MapD/ST2
26/03/2018
Age 7w 0d

Image 11: Anha's picture of hope

Those that were teachers, instead of mothers, placed similar hopes for the future of the nation on the young generations, but through their students instead of their children. Nashua, who after living in Male for over ten years returned to Rinbudhoo to look after her mother, placed her hope on this.

Image 12: Nashua's picture of hope

(Q) And for hope?

(A) My students.

(Q) In what way are they your hope?

(A) When they grow up, they will work for the nation.

Participants imagined the young generations would continue to be in the Maldives and invested all hope and aspiration in them. Through them, they showed their love, pride and commitment towards the Maldives and its future.

From these stories I learned that islanders' imaginations of the future and representations of their future selves are rich in hopes and aspirations, understood either in terms of occupations or social roles, and advocate for a continuation of a way of life. They are not thought about in relation to climate change, and their understandings of learning and personal development are understood in relation to their heritage and the identity of their islands. They are about reviving the elements of their environment and becoming skilful in their traditional labour, not about learning skills that will make them adaptable and employable elsewhere. These insights further question established narratives about islanders' understandings of what it means to be vulnerable and what it means to be resilient and add nuance, at the individual level, to emerging counter-narratives on the subject matter (Kelman, 2018). Furthermore, these insights de-centre climate from future-making processes at the individual level, adding to the plurality of significant elements in thinking about justice and the future.

4.5. Conclusion

In an attempt to understand the way islanders think about their futures, and in doing so, de-construct future foreclosure, in this chapter I have examined islanders' hopes, aspirations and imaginings about the future. The chapter has been organised according to three themes about the future at three different levels: the national, the island and the individual level, each of these stories challenging core components of the climate change and migration nexus, such as 'moving or drowning' narratives. Through examining these narratives and visions of the future, this chapter has resisted the ways in which the future is being 'pre-determined' (Hulme, 2011) and contributed to its "making in the present" (Kothari and Arnall, 2020). Further, it has responded to critiques of global narratives of climate change which privilege technical science and exclude lay knowledge (Nightinngale et al., 2020) and elaborated on emerging counter-narratives on climate change and small islands (Kelman, 2018). In doing so, it has contributed towards plurality of knowledge in future-making.

I first reviewed a theme of confidence in the future of the islands. Instead of assuming the disappearance of the islands and taking migration for granted, islanders imagined the future in the Maldives through a range of possible on-site adaptation measures. The second theme spoke about de-centralisation and the development of island communities in order to firstly, minimise the need to relocate to Male and secondly, as a way to increase resilience against climate change. The third theme shared the hopes, dreams, and aspirations of the women I spoke to, and the way they imagined and planned for their futures in relation to the heritage and environments of their home islands. Through these themes, this chapter contributes to the climate-related migration literature by challenging some of its core driving components. Unlike skill-based approaches to developing one's resilience and adaptive capacity (Foresight, 2011) and the responsibility falling on the affected populations (Methmann and Oels, 2015), islanders spoke about resilience and adaptation in terms of the state of the physical environment. These coincides with both earlier conceptions of resilience (Holling, 1973) and emerging understandings of land elevation and reclamation as viable adaptation measures (Klepp and Vafeidis, 2019). They imagined potential reclamation projects, the elevation of land, an increase in the islands' own natural resources and self-repair mechanisms, and the development of particular regions with increased protection measures. Lastly, their understandings of learning and personal development were not linked to the *elsewhere* nor thought about in the context of climate change and as a way of developing their 'capacity to adapt' in a potential host country. Instead, they were intimately tied to their pasts, their heritage, the identity of their islands, the natural elements of their environments, their culture and religion, and their visions of how the islands and the country would develop.

This chapter therefore sheds further light on a disjuncture between academic and policy framings of the climate change and migration nexus and the way these themes are understood in the islands., reflecting on their implications towards just climate futures. In doing so, it further strengthens and reinforces the position first shared by Gayoom in 1998 and consistently maintained by SIDS, that they do not wish to drown nor become environmental refugees. That what they wish to do is to "stand up and fight" (Gayoom, 1998) and they expect the international community to take on their responsibility in doing so. It seems, therefore, that if we are concerned with justice or with the experiences of those that might 'have to migrate', we cannot speak about migration as a *solution* to climate change: a future where islanders are involuntarily displaced away from their homelands is not a just future. Therefore, it requires that we re-consider the possibilities of a future *here* and take a braver, more creative approach to on-site adaptation. The chapter makes a contribution here to, in pluralising counter-narratives, and in doing so presenting a better way to relate to uncertainty (Nightingale et al., 2020). The next chapter turns to analyse the non-material and symbolic implications of leaving the islands behind.

Chapter V. Leaving the Islands Behind

"For every gain from migration there is a loss" (Connell, 2008, p.1032)

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I develop an account of movement and loss based on an in-depth qualitative approach that focuses on the non-material and symbolic dimensions of climate-related migration and displacement. Chapter II established that future foreclosure resulted in movement and loss being taken for granted. By assuming the disappearance of the islands, its populations will be left with no option but to move, and so as a result both migration and loss were established to be treated as unfortunate but acceptable phenomena. Chapter IV focused on embracing islanders' hopes and aspirations to re-open the possibility of a future on the islands by sharing islanders' ideas and aspirations for creative on-site adaptation solutions. This chapter moves on to the potential scenario of climate-related international migration and focuses on exploring the non-material and symbolic implications of leaving the islands behind. In doing so, it addresses the second objective of the thesis.

The chapter is structured around movement and loss as two implications of leaving the islands behind. Section 5.2 explores movement. Firstly, I evaluate the way in which islanders' relationship to movement has changed across time and explore whether it is permanency or mobility that best characterises islanders' current relationship to dwelling. Secondly, I analyse the differences between the kind of movement that islanders' encounter throughout their everyday lives and the potential movement that is most commonly associated with climate change and sea level rise. Section 5.3. turns to analyse the prospect of loss. I review the coconut tree, the shoreline, and the home as the three themes that emerged from the data in relation to loss. In my analysis I go beyond establishing these as 'things' that would be lost and explore the different conceptualisation and values that islanders attach to each of those three themes in terms of their material or physical value, their value as everyday practices and the value in terms of the meanings that affected populations attach to them.

5.2. Movement

In Chapter II, I highlighted two established claims in the literature that support the idea of migration being 'normalised' or 'taken for granted'. These are the so-called 'culture of migration' associated with island communities and the idea that climate change is just another driver influencing mobility and non-mobility decisions. In this section, I re-visit these claims from the data gathered during my time in the Maldives. By doing so, I hope to challenge this 'taking for granted' of climate-related migration and displacement.

5.2.1. Permanency as a preferred way of life

Islanders of the Republic of the Maldives have and continue to be highly mobile. An illustration of this is the struggle to identify how many inhabited islands there are in the country, for this has never been constant. Estimates have ranged between 175 and 214 inhabited islands, depending on how both 'island' and 'inhabited' are defined, and the time in which these numbers were presented (Maniku, 1990). Whilst some islands that were never inhabited are now home to islanders, there are reasons to believe that a large proportion of now uninhabited islands have previously been inhabited at one time or another. Maniku (1990) on the basis of historical records, compiled a list of reasons why people might have resettled in different islands throughout Maldivian history up to 1990, when he published his study. One of the reasons was rivalry or a clash between two or more 'fanditha-men' (magicians), sometimes splitting the population into smaller groups and moving to a new island chosen by their own 'fanditha-man'. In these cases, there were normally ceremonies before and after the move and these were often repeated annually. Other types of disagreement and quarrelling among sections of the island community were also a reason for some of the island inhabitants to re-settle elsewhere. These kinds of disagreements could be between chiefs, or powerful families and individuals. Another reason why people moved was due to frequent harassment or encroachment by foreign forces. This was common in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the northern parts of the country, which were more exposed to such acts by South Indians (Maniku, 1990). The law passed in 1968 by the Majlis is another identified reason why people resettled. As illustrated in Table 5 in Chapter IV, islands with a population of less than 50 male adults did not fulfil the conditions for the Congregational Prayers and as a result had to be de-populated and moved to another island. In 1975, however, this law was repealed and many of those de-populated islands were populated again by their former inhabitants. Being affected by an epidemic, a disease or malnutrition on a large scale is another recorded reason why people moved. Islanders would often attribute these events to an island being possessed by an unknown evil force, to which they found no alternative other than to move to a different island. Other reasons were related to natural phenomena, such as severe erosion or natural disasters. Populations often decided to shift to other islands when their island faced heavy erosion, or when the land area diminished after a storm or another natural disaster.

Maniku (1990) lists 87 islands that are recorded as having been inhabited at one time and become uninhabited later, covering the above stated reasons. After 1990, rationales for relocation continued to be partly driven by natural disasters, but also related to economic development, or a mixture of the two (Shaig, 2008). The Indian Ocean Tsunami of 2004 forced the permanent relocation of seven islands and the temporary relocation of two islands. Therefore, although relocation has continued to play a role in Maldivian's adaptability strategies, Shaig (2008) reflects on how relocations recorded by Maniku prior to 1990 were probably assisted by the mobility of property and personal belongings, whilst such flexibility cannot be assumed today partly because of larger investments in housing and personal belongings. One of the key informants I interviewed, Mohamed, reflected on this:

> "In the olden days, the people's homes were very rudimentary, it's not permanently built, so they can move their home even, the walls are built from wooden frames, so they can take it and move it to another place […] If there is a storm coming, they can move the wall of the house to a different position even, they were very ingenious people, so the idea of very mobile, very kind of dynamic lifestyle, because the islands were also very dynamic"

As well as moving internally, islanders from the Maldives have historically been highly mobile internationally. The Maldives was involved, through the Indian Ocean Trade, in some of the earliest documented global cosmopolitan networks. Historical accounts demonstrate the visits of Maldivians to various places, such as the court of the Roman Emperor Julianus in the fourth century CE, or the Emperor of China during the Tang Dynasty in the mid-seventh century (Mohamed, 2005; Fewkes, 2019). Equally, there is evidence of voyagers stopping in the Maldives whilst travelling between ports in the Middle East, South Asia and Africa prior to the twelfth century (Fewkes, 2019). Maldivian language and conceptions of time and space were profoundly connected to these histories of movement. For example, the Dhivehi terms for seasons were formed in connection to the directional monsoons used for trade. When travelling east to Southeast Asia, they would use the southwest monsoon, and when travelling to the Middle East and Africa, they used the northeast monsoon (Mohamed, 2005; Fewkes, 2019).

Altogether, this is perhaps what defines the 'culture of migration' of island communities referred to by Connell and introduced in Chapter II (2008, p.1021), where movement is seen as an extension of island life as opposed to a rupture of it. Connell's findings come from a case study in Niue, a small island in the South Pacific, but the ideas have been applied more broadly to SIDS. In the particular case of the Maldives, scholars (Stojanov *et al.*, 2017) as well as IPCC reports (Mimura *et al.*, 2007), have shown how in- country migration and resettlement schemes have been seen as common trends. For instance, Mimura (2007, p. 708) states: "Within-country migration and resettlement schemes have been common trends over the last several decades in many small islands in the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Both Kiribati and the Maldives have ongoing resettlement schemes". Although scholars and policy reports have attached their argument to this idea of movement being at the core of islanders' identity and way of life, data from this research shows that movement seems to be less at the core of islanders' preferred ways of life. Instead, it is permanency that they aspire to. Mohamed, who as referred to on Chapter had conducted his PhD thesis on the adaptive capacity of small islands, reflected on the way islanders' relationship to movement has changed over time:

> "But then you know, with colonisation this permanent lifestyle became more, because people were exposed to this economic well-off […] With the economic wealth, we started building these permanent structures, specially this concrete structures, then we wanted to become permanent on the islands as well, so we need the services, all kinds of services, and that's how the government has been doing as well, making people more permanent on the islands, so the whole adaptation scenario has now changed because while the islands are having very unique geographies, the people are trying to become very permanent on these structures. Even the coastal dynamics, they want to put stones and everything and make it so permanent that the coastline is also not allowed to naturally, to flow with the natural dynamics. In the olden days, the island is completely normal for the island to erode from one side and to accrete from the other side, but for people now even erosion in one side, they won't want it to happen, so they are trying to build against the nature, and to become very permanent on the islands"

It seems therefore that islanders' relationship to movement has been impacted by a variety of factors over time such as colonialism introducing a less mobile way of life, economic development and government policies, influencing the role that movement plays in islanders' ways of life today and making it permanency that characterises islanders' relationship to dwelling. This is not to say that movement is not a part of islanders' lives, or that it is exceptional. As many scholars researching climate change and migration in the Maldives have established, islanders move for a variety of reasons throughout their lives. My data suggests the same, that movement is present is islanders' everyday lives. However, it also suggests that throughout these movements, being either within the Maldives or internationally, there is a strong continued relationship to the home island that is of importance to islanders, and for many, returning and remaining are the preferred options.

Indeed, for the people that I spoke to during my time in the Maldives, movement was not extraordinary. Particularly movement within the country. My participants had and were planning to move because of education, employment, resources and facilities as well as for marriage and to look after the elderly and the ill. Those that were in the outer islands tended to migrate towards Male, and those from Male, tended to move internationally. In that regard, movement is a normal facet of society in the Maldives. However, this seems to be the result of the way resources, opportunities and facilities are organised according to the government's different population consolidation schemes and strategies to manage the geographical challenges of the Maldives, more than to islanders' preferences and aspirations when it comes to living their lives. It is often that populations and communities need to embark on mobility journeys to access employment, education and health facilities, despite their preferences on where and how to live (Marino, 2012). For instance, and as discussed in Chapter IV, it was common amongst my participants to have migrated to Male to pursue their education. It was the story of many that after finishing the education that their local island offered, they would move to Male to further their formal education. Aminath, who had grown up in Thulusdhoo, temporarily relocated to Male at the age of nineteen to pursue her studies in pharmacy at MNU. She shared her experience: "When I went, I was excited but just after one week, I got bored, so I wanted to come back here. I finished the studies, and I came. […] I missed the silence. Male is so hectic, so many people and less trees. I missed the beachside also". Others might have moved for education, or been educated abroad, and then returned, Male being the only option to develop their professional career. A key informant working at the Ministry of Environment reflected on this:

> "People who are moving, they are seeking employment, education, health, no other reason. Like myself, we are not living here because this is a nice place, no. We love the islands; we don't feel like it's a nice place to be. Congested, packed, everything is there, all the "baddies" are there. But when you end up in a small island, you are at peace, you have

> peace, and everything is there. But we are forced to stay here, because if you go there, you are highly educated, and you won't be doing anything there"

This participant seemed to make a distinction between the islands and Male, as if the latter was not an island. This was common in the way of speaking of Maldivians during my time there. When I arrived at Male for the pilot study, everyone asked if I was going to the islands, and how peaceful and beautiful it would be when I got there. Following from this, it seems that moving to and living in Male does represent a rupture to island life, standing against how Connell (2008) speaks of a 'culture of migration'. The fact that movement is part of their everyday lives does not mean that they attach themselves to this and place it at the core of their identity. Instead, they seem to resent the fact that they have no other option than to move to pursue their professional aspirations. Sadha shared her and her family's experience of relocating to Male, where they still are:

> "Actually, my parents migrated here to give education for my siblings, my elder siblings. It was hard for them, we have our house in our island, we have a lovely place, in a lovely neighbourhood, everything was amazing but we had to leave that tropical beauty and everything and come to this city full of…, it's congested here, difficult to find a place to live here, since we're islanders, we can't find a place to stay, a permanent place, so we had to move from apartment to apartment, we don't have a place where we can say… this isn't our home, we can't feel that. So we have to have everything, like your belongings cannot stay there permanently, so you need to be prepared to move, and because of the rent payments and the bills and everything are so high, we are not able to save for our children, not have family moments or vacations because of all the cash problems, it's very difficult"

International movement was also part of my participants' experiences of mobility, although significantly less so than internal movement. They shared their experiences of travelling abroad either to pursue their education or to go on holiday. In the same way that those from outer islands relocated to Male to pursue their studies, the elites from Male would consider furthering their education abroad. Some participants shared with me their experiences of moving to Sri Lanka temporarily to pursue their primary or secondary education, whilst others embarked on the journey of international movement to pursue their higher education across the globe in countries like Malaysia, Qatar, the United States or the United Kingdom. Anna, who at the time we spoke worked at the Maldives National University, reflects on her experience of completing a master's programme in Australia and being away from home for 18 months:

> "I went for my MA in Australia, and I was there only 18 months and after like 3 months, I started missing the ocean and the smell of the ocean, and that was something that I can't seem, I just had to hear the sound of the ocean, so I was like counting days to get back, even though it was just 18 months".

Another reason why people experience international movement is through leisure travel. Those that had travelled internationally shared with me what their experiences were like. Similarly to Anna's longing to return, Mauna, who had gone to Sri Lanka for her honeymoon explained her desire to be back in Maldives:

> "When I was in Sri Lanka, I feel like I was, how can I explain , when will I be back in Maldives? I didn't feel protection, security or [anything] like that, I feel like in Maldives no animals dangerous ones, but jungle area a snake could bite me, but everything is safe here, if I go this way, nothing will harm me, nothing is there, so I feel when will I be back?"

Shareefa, who was a key informant and was a physiotherapist in the tsunami crisis team, reflected on her relationship to home, her deep connection to the water and the ocean and the time when she realised this:

> "Now as I am ageing, I am understanding, even for a few days when I am out of Male, something happens to me, […] so for so many reasons I didn't know what it was, because I have had so many losses recently that I thought maybe, and then this kind of epiphany, okay, I am missing the sea, because the moment the flight was and then I came to take the ferry and I saw the sea, and it was not clean also, you know in Hulhumale all those bottles, but still it felt home. I think we are wired for this kind of atmosphere; we will miss it".

There will be many other experiences of international movement that my interviews do not reflect. Perhaps there will be those that found home elsewhere or have grounded and connected themselves to other forms of being and other environments. Some of my participants shared their intention to leave the country and were actively seeking opportunities to move abroad. They were not driven by education, employment or improved facilities, but by deeper personal reasons. Being themselves, in terms of their sexuality and religious beliefs, was not safe in their country, and so for their own freedom and well-being, they sought a life elsewhere. For instance, one of the women I spoke to shared:

> "Only me, I am talking for anyone else, I am someone is who is very determined to move out of the country for personal reasons, but that doesn't mean that you know, I obviously care about the country […]. I can't be 100% myself here, as an artist or as an individual but at the end of the day I am from paradise".

My findings coincide in some ways with those of other scholars researching on similar topics, that movement is part of islanders' everyday lives in many ways and that socio-economic factors dominate mobility and non-mobility decisions. From this, other researchers have suggested that mobility is still at the core of island communities and that this prepares them well to think about migration as a potential adaptive solution to climate change. My data suggests, however, that although islanders do engage in these types of movement, they long for permanency instead and it is the latter that characterises their preferred way of life. The way they speak about their experiences of movement does not fit with the way a 'culture of migration' is understood, as movement to Male does seem to represent a rupture to island life, and although mobility might be accepted and thought of as inevitable, it is less clear whether it is regarded as positive. It was clear throughout the interviews I conducted that islanders do not want to move and leave the islands behind. As Kelman et al (2017, p. 295) states: "being islanders comes first". It does not seem just therefore to hold on to their mobility, which better characterised their traditional ways of life, as a reason to support the idea of migration as adaptation. Thus, in the same way that it has seemed important to stress the mobile character of communities when concerned about finding 'effective' adaptation strategies in the context of climate-related migration, it seems important to highlight the longing for permanency when focusing or finding 'just' and 'fair' ways of responding to the same issue.

5.2.2. The distinctiveness of climate-related movement

In the previous section, I established that permanency characterised my participants' preferred ways of life but that nonetheless, movement is still part of many of their pasts, presents and futures. In this section, I aim to distinguish such forms of mobility from climate-related movement in at least two ways: One the one hand, predicted long-term climate-related movement would imply international movement and the erasure of return in ways that islanders' current ways of moving do not. On the other hand, climate change is a morally distinct driver of mobility in terms of matters of responsibility.

Although international movement does take place for islanders of the Maldives, it was very rare for my participants from Thulusdhoo and Rinbudhoo to have travelled, and particularly lived abroad. Instead, it was much more common for them to move between islands. As a result, international movement was thought about in terms of a distinct set of challenges. Furthermore, the move was often not permanent but temporary, serving a particular purpose such as studying or working, that was time-bound. Otherwise, there was at least a dynamic relationship to movement and the home island. Therefore, in a similar way that my participants had experienced out-movement from their islands, they had also decided at one point or another to return. If they had not returned already, this was something that was always present in their minds, depending on the circumstances of their futures. For instance, Shaiza, who had relocated to Thulusdhoo after marrying her husband, said that where she would live in the future depended on her marriage status.

> (Q) Where do you imagine your future?
> (A) If I am married with him, my future is here. If not, I will go back home.

Following climate-related migration, assuming that it is international, the possibility of return would be erased. As De-Shalit (2011, p. 310) states, in the case of populations from SIDS:

> "One's home territory is not only changed or becomes uninhabitable or useless temporarily, but rather it is lost, forever. Thus there is no hope of going back. The distinction is therefore than in less harsh environmental displacement cases, one can still hope to return to one's home, or at least that one's children or grandchildren will be able to return; whereas [for] people from low lying islands which have fallen below sea level, this is not feasible"

In a distinct way to other forms of movement, therefore, the physical home is no longer there, and the possibility of return disappears with it. I reflected on this during my time in the Maldives, thinking about the disappearance or inhabitability of my own island:

> "Every time I feel nostalgic from my home, and my island, I think about the feelings of all of these islanders if their homelands are taken by the waves. It is not only not being here, or living elsewhere, it is the impossibility of return. In my interviews, even when I get them to imagine that they are moving elsewhere, there is always in their minds the possibility of return, that if they are not here, the islands will still remain and that they can still come back every now and then. My purpose here becomes increasingly clear, that is it not, although it never was, to find a solution to climate change, or to decide whether migration is a problem or a solution, but to listen to the pain that losing your homeland carries and to explore the feelings that accompany movement and return" (Field Diary, 16/04/19).

As well as this, if the populations of the entire of the Maldives is forced to move elsewhere, they would also lose their status as "a distinct, self-governing community" and their "membership to a self-determining political community with control over its own affair", amongst other legal and political losses outlined in Chapter II (Heyward, 2014). These present significant differences between the everyday movement that islanders encounter to enhance their livelihoods, and the change that climate-related movement would bring about.

As mentioned above, much research in the context of climate change and migration in the Maldives and the wider context of SIDS has focused on understanding the role of climate change in islanders' decisions of mobility and non-mobility, finding that migration is embedded in island life, that it is a multi-faceted phenomenon and that it is socio-economic factors that dominate migration decisions (Kelman *et al.*, 2015; Stojanov *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, as introduced in Chapter II, another key message from the mobility and non-mobility literature is that migration is a multi-faceted phenomenon and that it is very rare for a single factor to lead people to decide to move. Instead, a variety of factors are taken into account and it is the consideration of them together that will form one's decision to move or not to move. Following from this, climate change alone will not impact islander's mobility decisions and therefore, from a mobility and non-mobility literature point of view, it should be equally placed alongside already existing factors. Although here I do not intend to deny these claims, I wish to draw attention to an important moral difference between climate change and other drivers of migration.

It seems important to differentiate the justice implications of different 'causes' or 'drivers' of migration. In the same way there has been a call in the climate-related migration literature to engage with and learn from the wider mobility and non-mobility literature, it seems relevant now to make a call to engage with the climate justice literature, which carefully engages with questions of responsibility and might be useful in drawing some important moral differences (Shue, 1999; Page, 2008; Caney, 2010). Firstly, there is a difference between voluntary and forced movement, which is important to remember. This distinguishes climate change from other drivers of movement such as education or employment opportunities. Secondly, there is another fundamental difference between being displaced by a natural phenomenon to which no one has contributed and therefore is responsible for and being displaced by a phenomenon to which others have contributed significantly and disproportionately to the affected population. This distinguishes climate change from other environmental changes that are not anthropogenic, such as the 2004 tsunami that affected the Maldives. Some of my participants reflected on the tensions between forced and voluntary movement and the role that the Maldives has played towards climate change in relation to other countries, this being at the core of their understanding of injustice. A student from one of the university workshops wrote in their reflection:

> "In the worst case scenario, us being forced to move out of our beautiful homes because of some of the power hungry counties kept using the earth's resources more for the so called development has always made me angry as well as sad. The Maldives as a small island-based community doesn't give out much emissions since we are small dot in a gigantic world. When all of the man made changes lead to sea level rise and us being forced to move out of our homes is something which I haven't begun to think about because coming from a small island in the Maldives I was raised in the most pure form of the Maldivian culture, heritage social aspects and environmental changes. These migrations can be stopped or can be at least delayed by the whole Maldives working together decreasing emission and livings sustainably. However, the other big countries in the world need to do their part too by uniting with the governments and countries and the people".

A key informant working at the university thought similarly and expressed it in terms of justice and fairness:

> "I think it's really unfair, the developed areas already with a lot of money and resources, they can't think about the impacts of climate change to the SIDS, and they still keep on seemingly doing whatever they can to get more money, more developed areas, and they just can't seem to understand the situation that we could be put into".

Lastly, another key informant reflected on how important it was, for justice, to recognise that the population of the Maldives were not the ones causing their potential displacement, and that if it came to the case that they had to be elsewhere, they had a right to it.

> "I think just would be recognising that we don't want to move to another person's territory, just would be recognising that it is a right to be there, because we, it was not us who did this".

These reflections resonate with the positions of the Maldives, and other SIDS, in addressing climate change. As developed in Chapter II, islanders have consistently expressed their desire to conceive of their futures on the islands. AOSIS has played a key role in negotiating historic global commitments, its main priority continuing to be a focus on mitigation, ensuring global emissions are consistent with the reduction of temperature rise well below 1.5oC. Advocating for their survival earned the reputation of being the 'moral voice' for climate action (AOSIS, 2015).

These demonstrate ways in which climate change differs from other drivers of migration, and although placing it equally amongst other drivers might be helpful in some ways, it hinders our understanding in other important ways if our intention is to respond to climate change in terms of justice and fairness as opposed to efficiency. The mobile history of island communities might, as recognised, place islanders in a good place in terms of having to migrate. It might make them more adaptable, and it might meet efficiency concerns. However, although it could potentially have a positive impact on islanders' experiences of mobility in the context of climate change, it does not have any relevance in assessing international displacement as an injustice. As Zellentin (2015, p. 497) states:

> "This threat is real and morally relevant even if research indicates that their cultural background makes citizens from SIDS well suited to adapt to change (Betzold, 2015). It certainly seems less bad to attack someone who knows self-defence techniques than to hit someone who does not, but usually that does not excuse such attacks".

Furthermore, when it has been clearly stated that they do not want to leave their islands and that being islanders comes first, migration as adaptation does not represent a just response. Although there might be no empirical substantive difference influencing islanders' mobility decisions, as Kelman et al. (2015) suggest, there is an important normative new element that must be recognised, that although there might be no empirical difference in people's decisions to move or not to move, there is both a different moral cause and different consequences to this type of movement.

5.3. Loss

A second implication of leaving the islands behind, and being internationally displaced, is that of loss. In Chapter II, I pointed at relatively new questions being asked about whether migration should fall under loss and damage instead of adaptation. There had been a predominant focus on the gains and positives of migration and significantly less attention had been paid to what losses and damages climate-related migration and displacement would incur for affected populations. The engagement with loss was deemed to broadly be dominated by economic losses and at surface level in a list, categories and typologies format (Tschakert et al. 2017). This section responds to these observations by presenting the findings of an in-depth, qualitative engagement with loss that is context-specific to two islands in the Maldives. In doing so, it attempts to go beyond establishing that islanders reject and fear the possibility of losing a range of things and explores the particular conceptualisations of such things as well as the different valued ends that such understandings allow for and are at risk of being lost. I review the three main themes that emerged out of the data in terms of what islanders feared losing most: the coconut tree, the shoreline and the home. Interestingly, these coincide with three out of the four themes identified as characterising the Maldivian identity in Chapter III. The following sections review the material or economic properties of each of the three themes, their value in terms of everyday practices and the meanings that they hold for their population. However, it emphasises that whilst the first have been well recognised and often thought about in terms of compensation, the latter two dimensions, require further attention, understanding and consideration.

5.3.1. The coconut tree

During my interview with Anaa, a lecturer in environmental management at the University of Maldives, she told me about an old tradition that continues to be practiced in some islands. When a child is born, the family plants a coconut tree which will remain until the child grows into adulthood. Throughout and past their own life, the tree will provide food and resources for the family it belongs to. She explained: "Our great grandfathers, our grandfathers did it, so our fathers had these. These would be family trees from which we could go and get coconuts anytime we wanted". Anaa told me about this tradition because one of her students had recently been displaced from his home island due to the island eroding so severely that the cost of maintaining the land was too high. It seems they had been speaking about this in class and the student chose to share that leaving the family's coconut trees was one of the predominant reasons why he missed his island, alongside all the memories that they held. This brief story encompasses what I attempt to develop in this section with the coconut tree, and later the beach and the home as particular illustrations: that the value of that which will be lost, if islanders are displaced, as well as encompassing its economic or material properties, expands on to the realm of that which is intangible and incalculable.

The coconut tree has many economic and material properties. In fact, until 1970s, the core components of the Maldivian economy were fishing, shipping and coconut cultivation (Stojanov *et al.*, 2017). The tree is used in the Maldives for almost every aspect of everyday life. Islanders have used it as food, drink, cooking and lighting oil, cooking utensils, medicine as well as for other uses such as firewood, toys for children, whistles and baskets, amongst many others (Spiegel, 2017, p. 72-3). Until the mid-twentieth century it was also the dominant building material for boats, and houses, given coral remained too expensive for most Maldivian structures. The wood from coconut trees would form the Maldivian house's skeleton. As Naylor (2015, p. 733) explains, this would consist of "thatched cadjans, mats of woven coconut leaves and sometimes boarded with coconut planks". This approach to the Maldivian house imitated the traditional Maldivian boat, known as the *dhoni*. For the dhoni, coconut wood and coconut fiber rope were also the key building materials. These would be sewed together and fitted with Cadjan sails, so that if a storm hit and the *dhoni* was thrown against a reef, it would not fully break and be able to be tied back together until the nearest port (Mohamed, 2005). When coral became more affordable to build houses, the materials of the coconut tree continued to be relevant, using coconut sap, lime and sand to make mortar to cement the coral together (Edwards, 1989).

These properties and value of the coconut tree are well understood and established in the literature and the overall importance of the coconut tree as a resource was mentioned by my participants as well. Mohamed, the key informant I referred to earlier, speaking of the participants of his own research, shared with me that some justified their immobility to being better off in their home islands partly due to having their coconut palms. As Mohamed put it: "They would say, 'I am not going to leave, we are better off here, we have our community spaces, coconut palms, the resources here', probably it's an attachment to the resource, they don't want to lose the resources". There have been instances in the Maldives where islanders have already been exposed to losing their coconut palms through previous relocation programmes (Azfa *et al.*, 2020). The government however has recognised the importance of the resource and often factored it into compensation schemes. For instance, if the government chooses to clear a certain piece of land, this will tend to result in the removal of resources like coconut palms which would require compensation. Alternatively, if islanders are asked to migrate to a different island, their coconut trees might be left behind and here again the government owes some form of compensation. This has either been in the form of financial compensation or the relocation of forest resources. For instance, the Gan Resettlement Program, in addition to the housing and infrastructure services also included compensation for coconut palms, timber and fruit bearing trees that those relocated owned on their previous island (Lubna, 2015, p. 26). This was deemed to be important not only for its material or economic value but also in offering a continued sense of place (Shaig, 2008). In the resettlement from Gaadho Island, coconut palms were considered to not have been adequately compensated for. Azfa et al. (2020) explain that when islanders realised this, before leaving their home island, they cut them down and brought them to Fonadhoo, the new island, to sell as timber in attempts to maximise the value from their assets as much as possible.

Beyond its material value, the coconut tree plays a fundamental part in islanders' everyday life practices, which have evolved over time. Traditionally, men collected sap which was then used for making the local toddy, known in the Maldives as 'Ruku-raa'. Women, on the other hand, collected coconuts for their husks and oil (Lama, 2018, p. 119). In this regard the coconut plays a key role in islanders' everyday practices and activities, as well as being an important resource. It was common for my interviews with people to be over drinking a coconut that we would buy from one of the islanders selling them by the beach. Most likely we would also be sitting in *dhonis* shaded by coconut trees. The coconut tree in that regard offers socialising space of shade and shelter in an otherwise often sparse landscape. This particular value of the coconut tree came up in relation to the new reclaimed land in Thulusdhoo. Adhara, a key informant from Transparency Maldives, critiqued the project from this perspective raising the point that no one could enjoy the space without adequate vegetation: "Why do they see it as an opportunity, but no-one has even tried to plant a tree there to make it less hot? People can't even go and enjoy there". Other practices were related to cooking, using half of a coconut skin as pan. I learnt this at my research assistant's family home, when she invited me for a barbeque. Alongside spiced fresh fish and a range of meats, we cooked baked eggs inside halved coconuts on the fire. The role of the coconut tree in cuisine goes beyond that of as a resource or utensil. The coconut is a key ingredient in traditional recipes such as the Maldivian breakfast called *maashuni* which consists of coconut and onion with fish and *roshi*, a local flatbread.

Other practices for which the coconut palm was fundamental came through the childhood stories that the women shared with me. For instance, speaking to Mauna, who had migrated to Thulusdhoo firstly following her family and was now married to her husband who came from there, I asked her about what memories she had of her island. She said: "My first memory is eid, we are celebrating eid, and on that day we went playing and climbing coconut palms, I jumped and I broke my arm". The coconut tree therefore featured as a main character in most of the childhood stories that I was told. Aminath shared: "We used to climb up the trees and jump on each and every tree like monkeys. We would miss that". Similarly, Anha paints a freeing picture of her childhood and the trees:

> "Since our home is near the beach, we used to climb up the coconut trees and plunk the coconuts, sit down on the coconut trees that had fallen to the sea, stay there and eat rice, then push each other to the sea and say they had just fallen down".

In that regard, the coconut tree is a visual representation of one's childhood, which women have the chance to revisit through enjoying the continued physicality of the tree. The coconut tree therefore encompasses a range of physical or material properties as well as value attached to practices. All together, these create different meanings that are also of value to islanders. The opening story of this section is an example of this, that the coconut tree that gets planted when a child is born represents a sense of family continuity, belonging and an intergenerational connection to the island, as well as the fruits and the materials it provides and the very practice of planting it. Another example of the meaning attached to the coconut tree is as a symbol of survival. As introduced in Chapter III, "The First Coconuts" tale tells the story of the first inhabitants of the Maldivian islands who could not survive because there were no coconut palms on the islands, resulting in great numbers of people dying. Eventually a *fandita* man (magician) made coconut trees grow out of the skulls of deceased settlers. After this, islanders were able to set coconuts aside from every tree to plant new ones and start to utilise them. This signified a moment of change after which, as the legend says "the future looked bright and pleasant for the islanders of that nation, for there is no better wealth that a Maldivian father can give as legacy to his children than a great number of coconut palms planted by his own efforts" (Romero-Frias, 2012, p. 3). Consequently, the coconut tree becomes a Maldivian symbol of island survival and represents the livelihood of the nation, occupying a position of honour in the Maldivian national emblem (Spiegel, 2017, p. 72-3).

The examples in this section show that, were islanders to be displaced due to climate change and no longer have access to their esteemed coconut trees, much more than a material resource would be lost. The coconut trees enables a range of activities and practices, and is associated with a range of meanings, the majority of which are difficult to compensate financially in an adequate manner. If an islander ceases to be in their home island, they lose long practised traditions and a sense of continuity, familiarity and belonging that the coconut palms ensure. They lose their everyday lives in relation to the coconut trees, their ways of life and their traditional recipes. They lose a sense of their childhood and their collective reference of livelihood and survival. When thinking about climate-related migration and displacement, the loss of these non-material and symbolic dimensions of the coconut tree need to feature in equal importance to the material and calculable.

5.3.2. The shoreline

A second overlapping theme amongst my participants was the loss of the shoreline, understood as encompassing the beach, the sea, the ocean, the corals and the reef. Many of the participants shared their reflections on their relationship to the shoreline throughout their pasts and everyday lives. A section of a speech given at the Small States Conference on Sea Level Rise representing AOSIS in Male, 1989, summarises well the different values of the shoreline that this section expands on. As the speech went:

> "When a fisherman in an outer island of the Maldives ventures out into the sea at dawn, and watches the sun rising out of the deep azure sea and observes spellbound the magic of clear bright morning in the tropics, and when our young boys joyously swim in our crystal clear lagoons, drinking in the invigorating sea breeze to their heart's content, and when our people, both young and old, enjoy strolling on a moonlit beach savouring nature at its very best, it is hardly possible that any of them would ever imagine that the beauty which is their today could be lost to others like them at a date in the not too distant future. Nor would any of our fishermen ever think that the sea which is the bountiful source of his livelihood could, in a matter of decades, become his eternal grave".

In similar ways to the coconut tree, the shoreline holds a range of properties and values. In the speech, the ocean features as a bountiful source of a fisherman's livelihood, in that way representing the material qualities of the ocean. This point resonated with my participants. For instance, Mauna, who I interviewed in Thulusdhoo, chose the reef as her picture of loss. Mauna reflected on the easiness of getting seafood to cook and eat. As she put it:

> "This is my loss, the reef. When I have to leave this island, I mean if I have to migrate to another country, I will lose this beautiful reef. […] Here, if I want to eat seafood, I can get it for free, I have to walk for two minutes and be by the reef. I can take the shell and make it food, so it's very easy here. If I have to migrate to another country, I will miss those things as well"

Image 13: Mauna's picture of loss

Climate-related displacement in this way, would signify an important material loss of the shoreline as a resource. However, the majority of my participants stressed a different kind of loss attached to the shoreline instead. The focus tended to be on the practices that they enjoyed and the different meanings that the beach provided them with. The women I spoke to shared many practices and routines in their everyday lives that took place at the shorelines of their islands. One of these was having weekend picnics with family and friends, which was brought up as a fond memory and one of their favourite ways of spending time. Cala, for instance, thinks of weekend picnics when remembering her childhood:

> "The first 18 years of my life I was living in Male, and whenever I think about my childhood, obviously it is a lot of time spent in the sea. We would go out on picnics every weekend or so. Even now, 27 years later, there are so many families that go on picnics on weekends to the beach".

Shifa shared a similar way of spending time by the beach: "We used to go with food, with plates. We would go and eat together and play there. After that we would swim, and Fridays, we spent most of the time by the beach side". The beach was for many of the women I spoke to a favourite place to spend time in. Rahma, for instance, chose a picture of the beach in Rinbudhoo as a place that she would miss a lot as this was where she spent a lot of her time. This was the case for Fathimath as well, who pictured the beach side in Thulusdhoo where she is used to being during her free time with family.

Image 14: Rahma's picture of loss

Image 15: Fathimah's picture of loss

Like Rahma, Zayne also went to the beach during her free time to relax or have some alone time.

> (Q) What do you do in your everyday life?
>
> (A) I wake up, then making breakfast, then, go to school, after finishing I give tuition for small kids, then in evening time, I stay there (beach), for relaxing.

Haleema, Zayne and Hawwa, chose to reflect this on their postcards. Haleema pictured a beach in Rinbudhoo, where she was from and lived and wrote: "I used beach for everyday life beach gives us happiness and relax". Zayne also pictured the beach to reflect what her favourite place in the island was. She wrote: "Beach is one of my favourite places. I spent most of my free times in the beach. "So, if the islands were gone, the beach is the place I would always miss". Similarly, Hawwa wrote: "This is one of the places that I always want to go and spending time there"

I used / beach for everyday life
beach gives us happiness
and relax

Postcard 2: Haleema

Beach is one of ~~th~~ my favorite
place. I spent most of my free times
in the beach. So if the islands
were gone, the beach is the ~~t~~ place
I would ~~[illegible]~~ ~~[illegible]~~ always miss

Postcard 3: Zayne

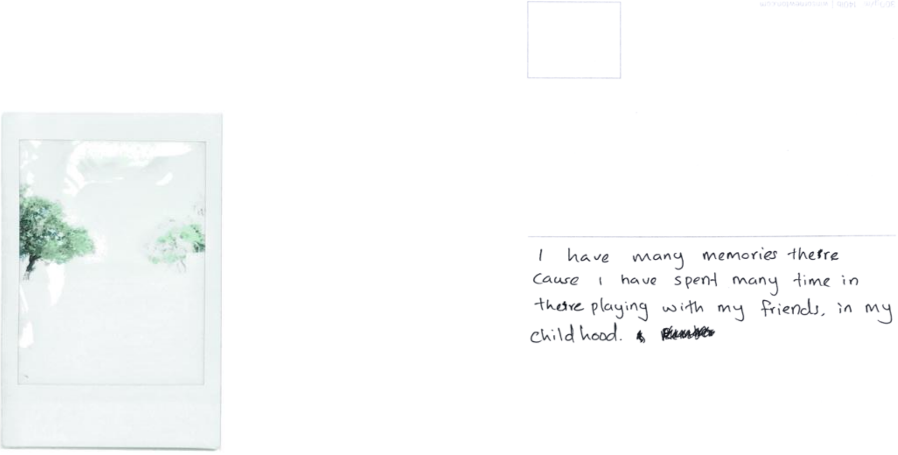
This is one of the places
that I always ~~like~~ want to go
and spending time there.

Postcard 4: Hawwa

Others shared their memories of the beach and particularly the role it played in their childhood, similar to the way the coconut tree did. Mariyam told me of her childhood and her first memories being of her love and enjoyment of the beach and the ocean:

> "I would always run away and my mum would lose, it was a small island, so everyone knows each other. So I was always like that, I would run away, and I would be at the beach, and my mum come get me, I would run away somewhere else, doing something else, playing with kids, and my mum would come get me. Even as a girl, specially as a girl, girls don't do that. They're more reserved, because they're taught to me like that, but me it was the opposite. My first memories are of beach, how much I loved it, and the ocean and my mum"

For her postcard, Khadeeja chose to picture the beach to remember the place that held their childhood memories. She wrote: "I have many memories there because I have spent many times in there playing with friends, in my childhood".



I have many memories there
cause I have spent many time in
there playing with my friends, in my
childhood. [redacted]

Postcard 5: Khadeeja

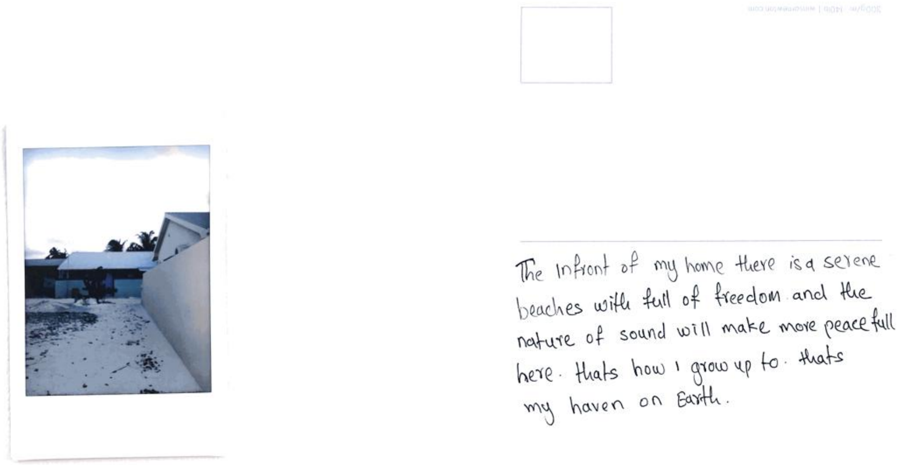
Others also spoke about their times spent at the beach, playing and collecting shells. Aisath, explaining what she remembered from her childhood in the island, shared: "Playing volley, bashi, playing in roads, football. Then we were playing in beach, hide and seek, and going to catch small fish, lots of memories", or Arusha: "Playing at the beach, collecting shells,…". Overall therefore, the shoreline is a fundamental place for islanders' ways of life. Cala put it: "A walk on the beach, hold hands with their children or their girlfriend or boyfriend, it's the ocean. The ocean is like, the ocean is where they hang out in the islands". Similarly, Mariyam reflected on the role of the ocean for islanders: "Even the ones who don't go swimming, we have a really good connection. Maldivians, you see them, sitting on the beach, just doing nothing but just being there". The loss of the ocean in this way goes beyond the loss of the material resources it represents and embraces the loss of a way of life. It is important to bring these considerations when thinking about displacement or relocation projects. Indeed, Mohamed spoke about facilitating spaces by the beach side as an important consideration when planning a relocation process. Speaking about the island of Vilufushi being rebuilt after the tsunami, he highlighted:

> "So if they had designed their dwelling like that, with community gardens, community gathering areas… Like in a normal island where there are some areas where communities gather. On the beach side they always have an area with jollies, or you know, these sitting areas, but it is not provided in these places and people do not want to stay inside the house because this is a very alien lifestyle to islanders".

As well as the material properties of the shoreline and the many practices that it encompassed for islanders, the shoreline was also valued in relation to a range of meanings that islanders attached to it. To the shoreline landscape and seascape, they attributed meanings such as freedom, peacefulness, beauty and joy, which came to form the core of how they defined their lives. An interview I had with Sadha, an artist who had grown up and lived in Male but considered home the islands where her parents were from, told me about the painting she was working on at the moment which attempted to represent this very feeling of peacefulness attached to the beach. As she explained:

> "At this moment I am painting a girl floating on the water, her hair is in the water, her face is submerged half in the water, so basically she is in bliss, she is peaceful, she is calm and everything so it portrays the moment when I was in my island, I was in the beach, in the water, and how calm and how amazing it felt, so people feel that. This is what I feel."

In the islands, some of the women I spoke to, chose to picture the beach either for their 'loss' photographs or in their postcards to illustrate similar meanings and concerns. Bushra spoke of the beach as her second home and where she found peace and enjoyment: "This is where my second home is. It is the beach right in front of my house. It is peaceful and enjoyable". Salma, who had grown up and lived in Rinbudhoo, chose to take a picture of the beach in front of her house to illustrate such freedom and peacefulness. Her message reads: "The infant of my home, there is a serene beach with full of freedom like nature of sounds will make more peaceful here. That's how I grow up, that's my heaven on Earth".



The Infront of my home there is a serene
beaches with full of freedom and the
nature of sound will make more peace full
here. thats how I grow up to. thats
my haven on Earth.

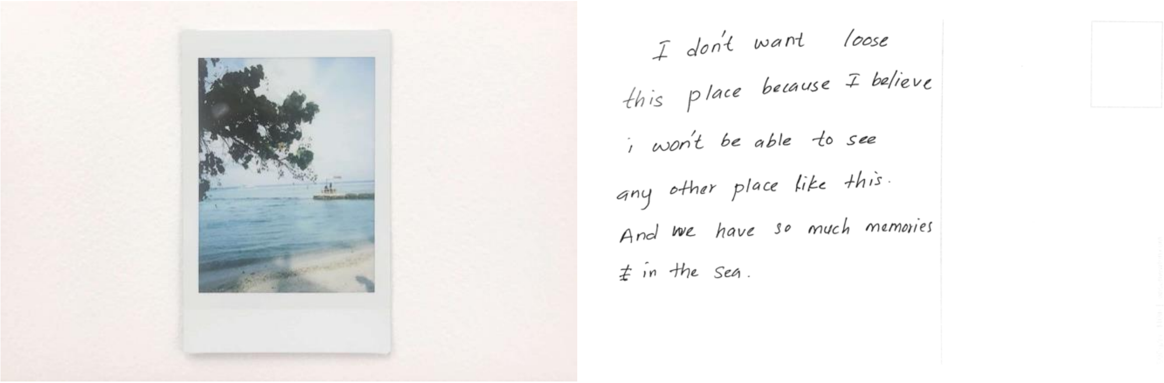
Postcard 6: Salma

Others introduced the beach in their descriptions of their way of life and highlighted its beauty as what made it special for them. Saeeda and Hawwa chose pictures of the beach in Rinbudhoo and explained that part of the reason why this was a special place was because of its beauty: "It is a very beautiful sandy beach, I like it a lot", "those beautiful beaches will go, that is a loss".

Image 16: Saeeda's picture of loss

Image 17: Hawwa's picture of loss

Speaking about Maldivian life, Ainy, said: “Very enjoyable, very nice and Maldivian people are very friendly. We're ready to help each other and we have a beautiful beach”. This beauty was thought by some to be unique to the Maldives and inaccessible elsewhere. Some of the participants were worried about not being able to see this beauty or particular landscapes and seascapes if they were displaced. Aminath took a photo of the beach and wrote: “I don’t want to lose this place because I believe I won’t be able to see any other place like this. And we have so many memories in the sea’.

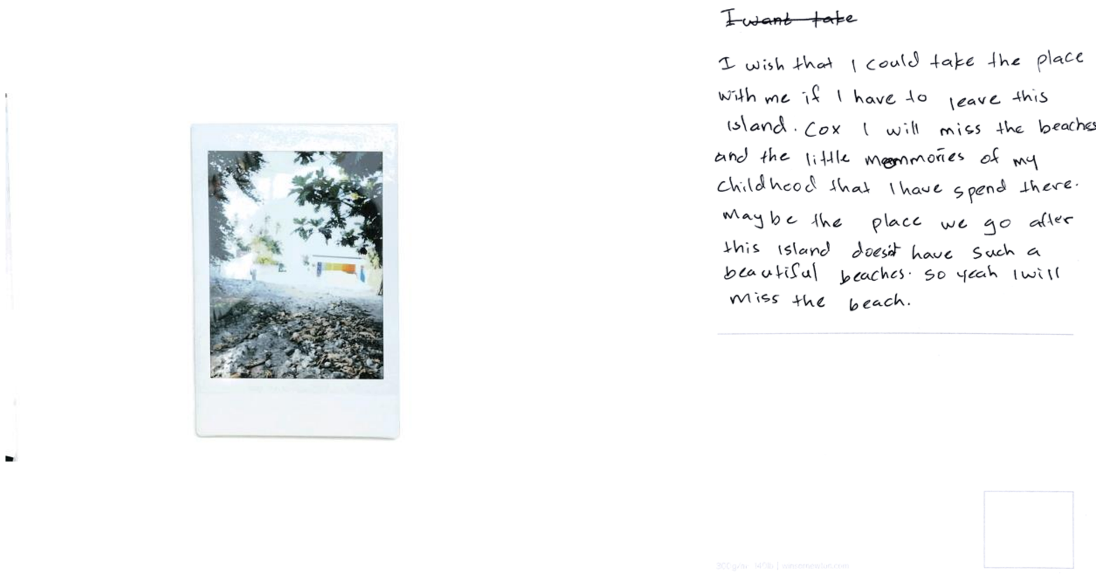


I don't want loose
this place because I believe
i won't be able to see
any other place like this.
And we have so much memories
~~I~~ in the sea.

Postcard 7: Aminath

Aafren, from Rinbudhoo, followed a similar reasoning, writing:

> "I wish that I could take the place with me if I have to leave this island. Cox I will miss the beaches and the little memories of my childhood that I have spent there. Maybe the place we go after this island doesn't have such a beautiful beach. So yeah, I will miss the beach"



~~I want take~~
I wish that I could take the place
with me if I have to leave this
island. Cox I will miss the beaches
and the little memmories of my
childhood that I have spend there.
Maybe the place we go after
this island doesnt have such a
beautiful beaches. so yeah I will
miss the beach.

Postcard 8: Aafren

The beach was also brought up by others as an element that brings their collective identity together and offers a sense of belonging. When speaking about potentially being displaced, Sadha, was worried about this. In her words:

> "We won't feel like we belong there, it won't be our land, right? We won't see the tropical beauty, everything we know about our homeland, like the beach, the ocean, everything… So it would be very hard. It's very sad to think about that. We do have a huge blessing, the ocean, the reefs and we have to leave that and go somewhere we are not very familiar with, so that's very sad"

This quote resonates with the experience shared by Peter (2004, p. 261) speaking in reference to his Western Pacific home island in Chuuk State: "We need to belong to places, the physical plots, taro fields, coconut groves, sandy beaches, portions of reefs, fishing corals, and the island in general". Kothari & Arnall (2020) also make a relevant point in relation to this when discussing beach erosion in the islands. They write about the fact that the loss of the beach confronts islanders' beliefs of their islands as stable homes.

Although being internationally displaced from the islands would be the most dramatic way of losing the beach, it was clear throughout the interviews, and well-established in the literature as well, that in many ways the beach is already being lost. In some ways therefore, islanders were not just imagining a possible state of occurrence. Instead, to some extent, they were reflecting on experiences of the present day and the environmental changes that they had witnessed throughout their life courses. Recent economic, political, environmental and social changes have led to the reduction or disappearance of some beaches to various causes. This was one of the key findings Kothari & Arnall (2019) reported on the environmental changes occurring on a daily basis on small islands in the Maldives: "the erosion of beaches and coastline due to wave action, tidal currents, and human intervention". Previous empirical research on the Maldives points to islanders being aware and concerned about this issue. Interviewees from Kelman et al (2017, p.292) study on local perceptions of environmental change reported: "The island had really shrunk. They have lost many, many trees and there used to be a bigger beach area. But now that is gone." and "The shoreline is coming closer, the erosion is really bad now and the water comes onto the island". This continued to be a relevant topic three years later, following what a participant in Kothari & Arnall (2020, p.311) stated: "There was a large wooded area beyond the school and enough space for two rows of houses to the west of the football field. But now there are only a few coconut palms in between the field and the beach as the whole area has been washed away". Erosion was also a key topic for the participants I interacted with. When speaking about the loss that islanders feared in the potential context of climate-related migration and displacement, some participants chose to speak and picture something they felt had already been lost. This tended to be a picture of an eroded beach.

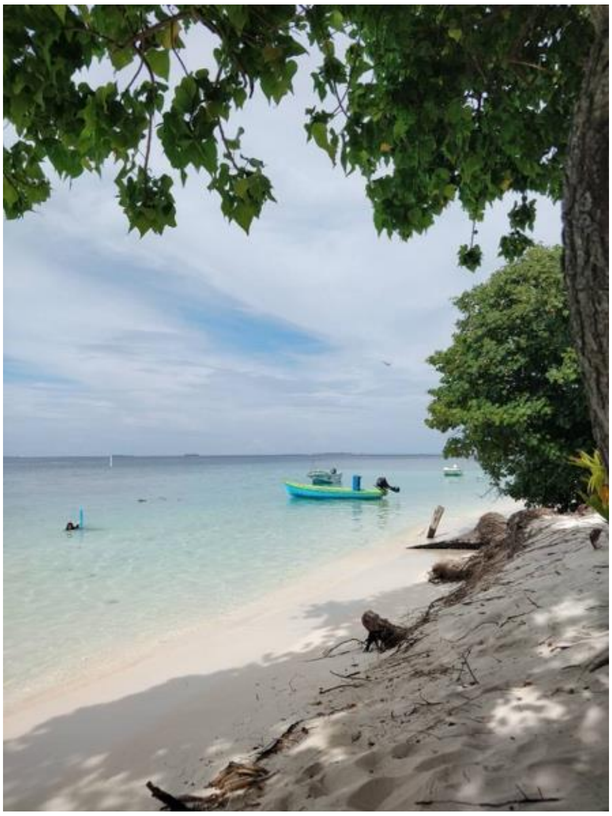


Image 18: Salma's picture of loss

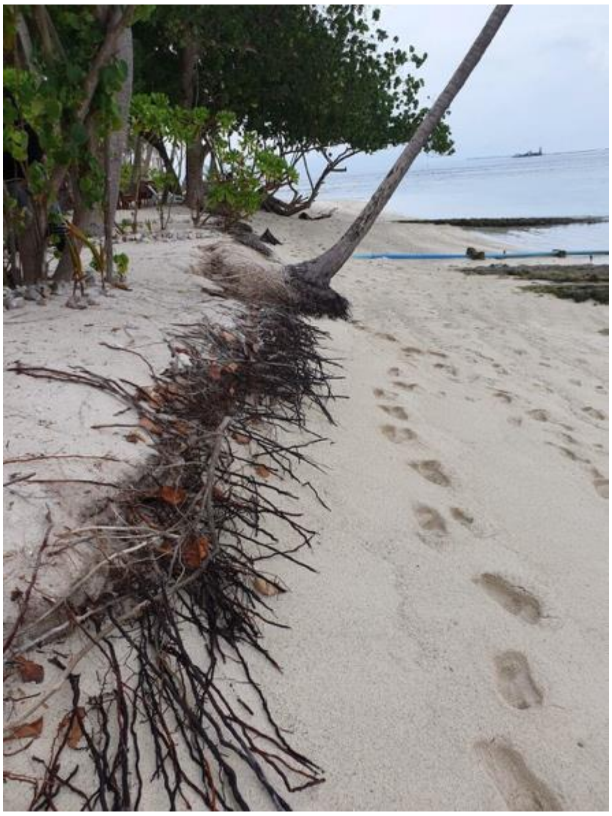


Image 19: Mai's picture of loss

Salma's picture is of a beach in Rinbudhoo. She describes it: "Beach. Erosion, now this island is very small, and few people are living. Some people want to change, but I want to stay here". The second picture was taken by Mai in Thulusdhoo and speaks to the trees that have been lost: 'Soil erosion that is. So many trees, before these many trees are there, but we lost so many trees from there because of soil erosion'. Sitha, speaking of Thulusdhoo, also reflected on this change of the islands:

> "Before we used to have a very nice beach on this side. After they put rocks and now the beach has already gone. Now there is not much nice and not much good for kids playing on the beach. Before it had a very shallow, fun with kids. After that, now it's very deep and not a much nice beach".

Others also spoke about beaches that they remember from their childhood but were no longer part of their island and everyday lives. Aminath from Thulusdhoo, reflected on this:

> (A) Actually, a big part of this island has been gone, actually there, we have so many childhood memories.
> (Q) Where was this part?
> (A) Over there, near samura beach area. It was actually a very long beach.
> (Q) So all those memories...
> (A) Yes, we used to climb up the trees and jump on each and every tree like monkeys. So we miss that.

Similarly to the coconut tree, the value of the shoreline goes beyond its tangible or calculable dimension. The shoreline came to signify a fundamental element of both the physical and social environment of the Maldives. It holds many everyday routines, traditional practices, memories and a range of meanings. Through the beach islanders acquired a sense of peacefulness, freedom, beauty and joy which lie at the core of their way of life. Were islanders to be displaced, this needs to be recognised as a significant and meaningful loss that requires some form of response.

5.3.3. The home

A third overlapping theme that came across in conversations on loss was the home. Like the coconut tree and the shoreline, a range of values were attached to the home. The loss of the home is well-established in the literature, for it is a very explicit loss of displacement. Often assumed alongside the loss of place, there is a clear understanding that displacement leads to the loss of the home and this is not a desired outcome for affected populations (McNamara and Gibson, 2009; Adger *et al.*, 2011; Tschakert *et al.*, 2017). More explicitly than in other cases, there is also a grounded understanding that the value of the home goes beyond its physical or material properties and its loss is not tangible or calculable. As Zellentin (2015) acknowledges, it is not only the physical homeland that will be lost but also the social structures and cultural communities. Therefore, there is a limit to what prices and economic values can capture about what matters about places. As Adger et al., (2011) state: "They may be able to price the replacement cost of damaged houses, but not the loss of "home"".

What is less clear in the literature is exactly what is meant by 'home' and particularly what are affected communities' understandings and interpretations of the concept. Whilst there is certainty that 'the home' as something of major significance risks being lost, there is room to further explore what 'home' looks like to different communities and what it is that falls under such a notion. Mallett (2004) reflects on the abundance and ambiguity of 'home' understandings and interpretations. She raises: "Is home (a) place(s), (a) space(s), feeling(s), practices, and/or an active state of state of being in the world?" (Mallett, 2004, p. 63). The climate-related migration and displacement literature seems to mainly speak of the home as a place or space, although encompassing other elements such as feelings or practices. Although the scale of the home is sometimes specified as the country or the region, often the particular dimension being referred to is unclear or could translate to different scales in different contexts. For instance, in the case of SIDS, the 'homeland' could refer to the country, the atoll or the island. Similarly, the 'home' could refer to any of the above as well as the house, or a particular area of the island. This section explores islanders' different conceptualisations and understandings of the home and the values that islanders attach to it.

In the particular context of the Maldives, the home appeared to be understood mainly at two different levels: as the house and the island. Leela thought of the home as her house and chose to take a picture of it when asked about loss. She explained: "This is my house. Everything, I mean my mother, my father, my sisters, every memory is here".

Image 20: Leela's picture of loss

On the other hand, Shaih was one of the participants that chose a picture of the entire island to represent home. Shaih was one of the citizens from Rinbudhoo who had migrated to Thulusdhoo in 2006. She chose a picture of the entire island of Rinbudhoo, as this was her most accurate and special way of reflecting home. Nashua, still based in Rinbudhoo, also chose a picture of the entirety of the island.

Image 21: Shaih's picture of loss

Image 22: Nashua's picture of loss

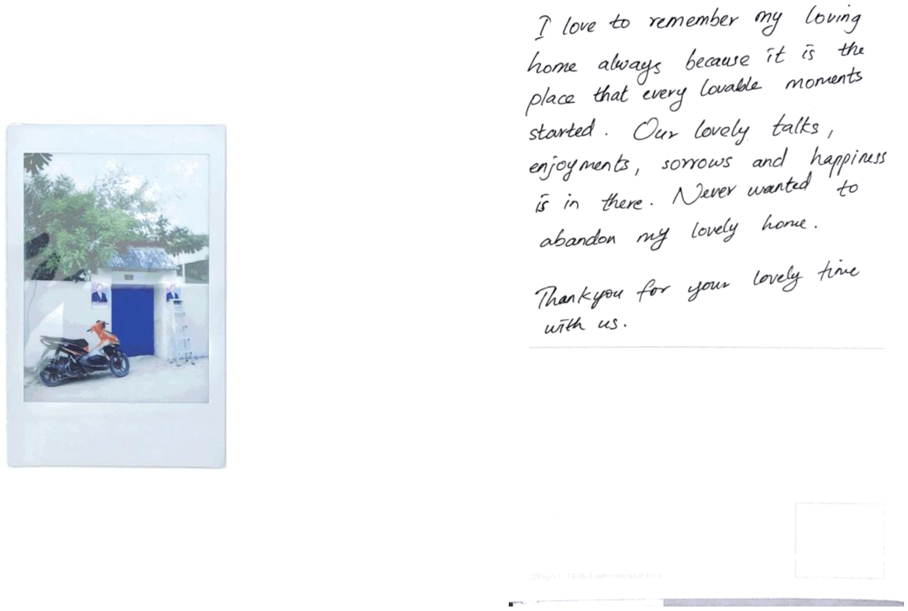
A definition of home that perhaps fits this multi-level understanding is the one that Sadha, an artist who lived in Male, shared with me: "Home to me would be my family, the place I grew up, the things that I always see around me, that I would consider home, the things I love, like a blue sky, the sand". Here, Sadha is combining core components of the landscape and everyday life in the Maldives to build her understanding of home.

An initial value of the home was as a physical space, land or a building to inhabit. This aspect of shelter was not brought up by the women I spoke to on the islands. Instead, it was raised by some of those that had migrated to Male and by Adhara, a key informant from Transparency Maldives who was familiar with the issue of housing in previous relocation programmes in the Maldives, both grounding a fundamental value of the home. Sadha shared with me her family's story, who had migrated to Male to ensure her and her siblings had a good education. She speaks of having a lovely home back in their home island, which they had to leave to come to the city, where they encountered many difficulties in finding a place to live. As she explains:

> "Difficult to find a place to live here, since we're islanders, we can't find a place to stay, a permanent place, so we have had to move from apartment to apartment. We don't have a place where we can say, this is our home, we can't feel that. Like our belongings cannot stay there permanently, so you need to be prepared to move, and because of the rent payments and the bills and everything being so high, we are not able to save for our children, not have family moments or vacations because of all the cash problems, it's very difficult."

Housing was not only an issue for those that migrated to Male. Adhara reflected on the problems that relocating communities had encountered in new host islands, throughout different relocation programmes in the Maldives. In the Maldives, one does not tend to buy land, but be given some land on the island once you marry to build a home and start a new life. This system led to some complications for communities that were relocated, Adhara explains. It seems that for a period of time, prior to the relocation, the government temporarily stopped allocating land for housing, so when the community was relocated, those had not been given land on their original island, did not have the right to claim it as compensation on the new island: "many people were waiting to get land to build their houses, but since they didn't have houses in their original island, they were not eligible to get housing. So from 1999 or so, they were living without a house, they were not given a house". These two examples give an insight into the importance of the home, as a house in its material sense, its precariousness in the context of movement and relocation and the challenges involved in securing one. If the population from Maldives were to be internationally displaced, it also points towards a potentially major change towards islanders' experience of housing, for it is unclear if a host country would take on the Maldivian housing model.

A second value of the home is as a place where practices and everyday routines take place. One of the justifications the women I spoke to used the most for wanting to hold on to their homes was because of all the time they spend there, engaged in their own activities as well as sharing moments with their loved ones. Leela, for instance, took a picture of her house for her postcard. She describes her house as the place where many of her significant moments had taken place.

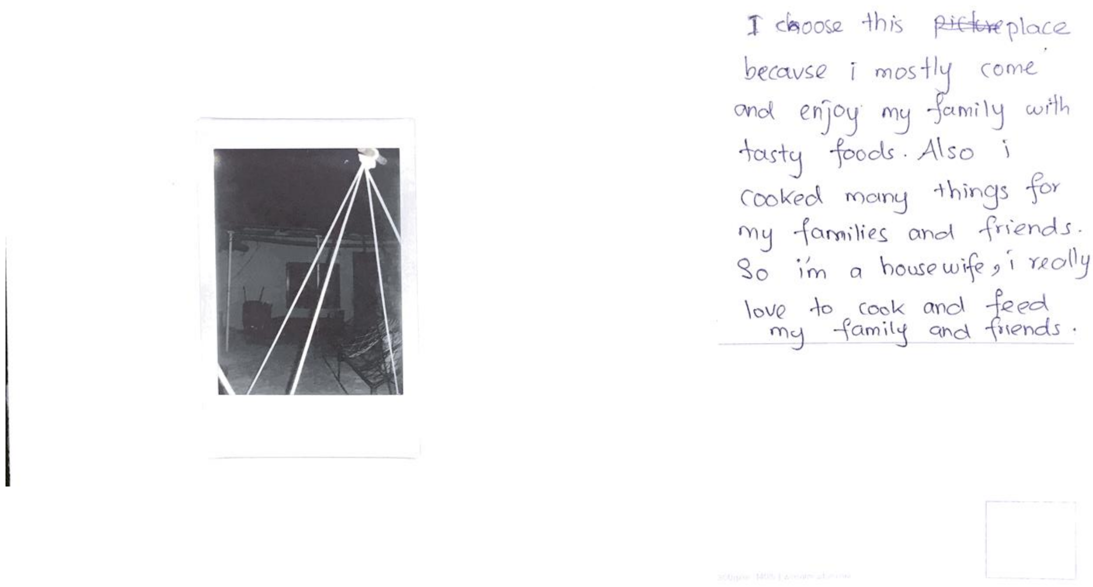


I love to remember my loving
home always because it is the
place that every lovable moments
started. Our lovely talks,
enjoyments, sorrows and happiness
is in there. Never wanted to
abandon my lovely home.

Thankyou for your lovely time
with us.

Postcard 9: Leela

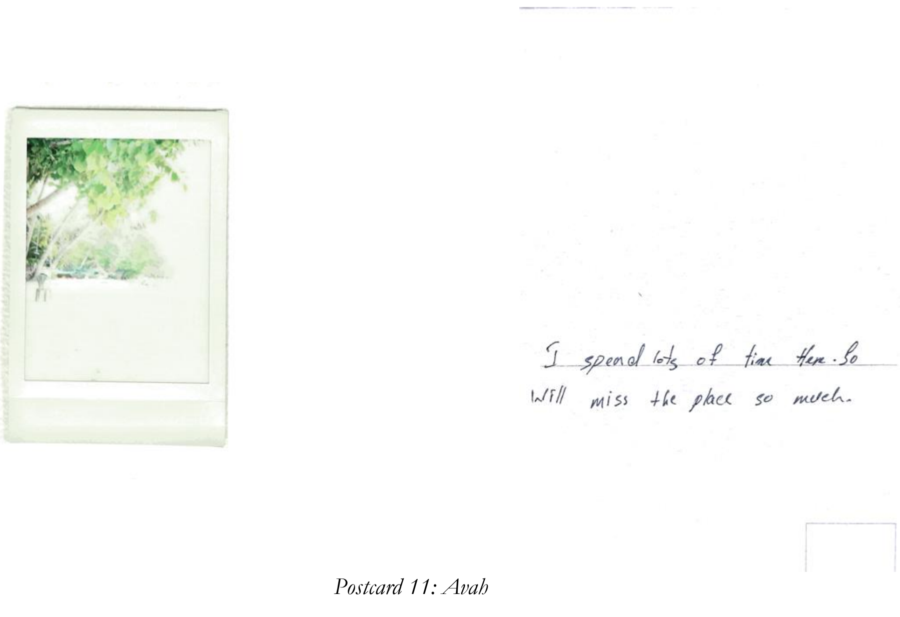
Her message reads: "I love to remember my loving house always because it is the place that every lovable moment started. Our lovely talks, enjoyments, sorrows and happiness is in there. Never wanted to abandon my lovely house. Thank you for your lovely time with us". Zulaikha chose to picture her parents' house for similar reasons, as this was the space where she spent time she deemed valuable with friends and family. She writes: "I choose this place because I mostly come and enjoy my family with tasty foods. Also I cooked many things for my families and friends. So I am a housewife, I really love to cook and feed my family and friends". The home therefore served as a space where family practices of eating and spending time together take place.



I choose this ~~picture~~ place
because i mostly come
and enjoy my family with
tasty foods. Also i
cooked many things for
my families and friends.
So i'm a housewife, i really
love to cook and feed
my family and friends.

Postcard 10: Zulaika

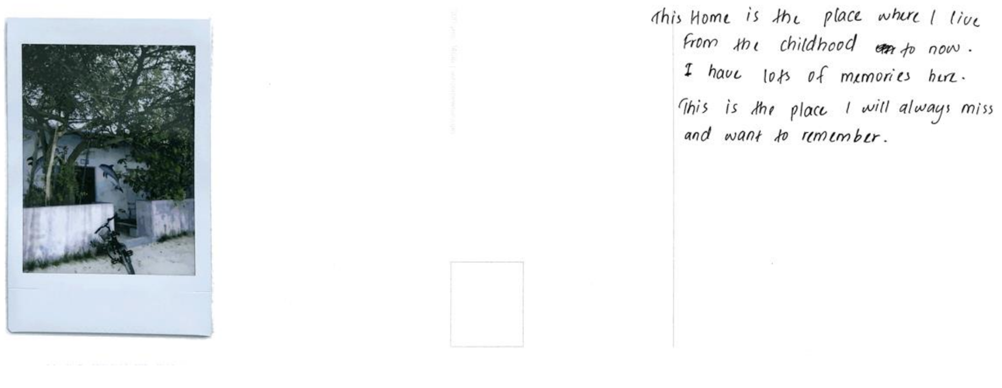
Others chose particular places within the island, other than their houses, for similar reasons. Mauna, for example, shared how her and her husband went for a ride on a particular side of the island and if the island disappeared, she felt she would lose this part of her life: "Like if I move this island, me and my husband, every day, every night we go doing the ride, or walking this area, if we go to another island, we miss this place, we spend time together in this place, like that, so many things". Participants in Rinbudhoo also took pictures of particular places. Avah took a picture of the place in the island where they spent most of their time, when not at work or at home: "I spend lots of times here, so I will miss the place so much". Particular spaces in the island beyond the house were also home to important routines and practices that the women shared with me.



I spend lots of time here. So
Will miss the place so much.

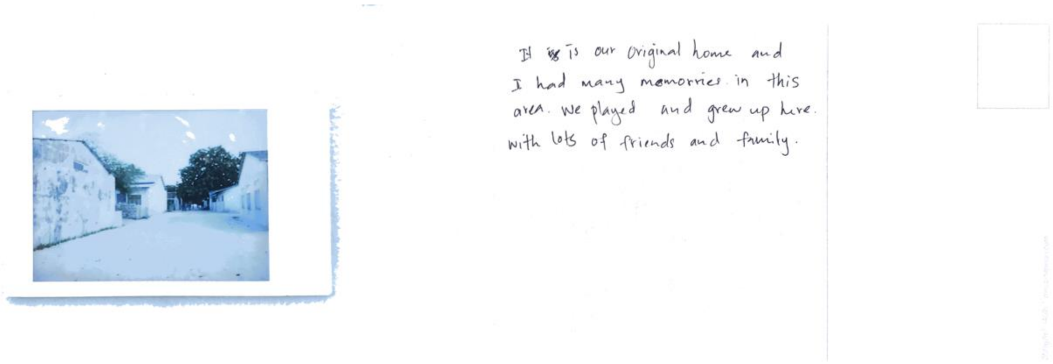
Postcard 11: Avah

Lastly, people also attached a range of meanings to the home. As established in the literature, home, for some of my participants offered a sense of belonging and identity. As a student at one of the workshops reflected: "To leave the island and home that we grew in, and the beautiful reefs and beaches, and the sense of belonging we always had". Without their home, here understood not only as a house but also at the island level, they felt a part of who they were, and particularly their past, would be lost. Memories of 'home' played a particularly predominant role in their sense of identity. This resonates with De Shalit's (2011) development of the relationship between a sense of place and the functioning of self-identity. As presented in Chapter II, he argues that place plays a fundamental role in our identity and since displacement threatens this sense of place, which is incommensurable, there is an obligation to ensure populations are not displaced. Therefore, it seems we can think of memories as another fundamental constituent towards our functioning of self-identity. As Casey (2000, p. 243) states: "Memories become self-definitive. More than any other factor, they determine our personal identity: to be a self at all is to be the self that we can remember". Fairly consistently, islanders shared the reason they feared losing their home was because of the many memories that they somehow preserved there. This was particularly explicit through photographs of loss and postcards, participants choosing to refer to sometimes the house, the island or the entire of the Maldives as home. Rahma, for instance, took a photo of her house for her postcard, which she accompanied with the following message: "This home is the place where I live from the childhood to now. I have lots of memories here. This is the place I will always miss and want to remember'. This points towards a sadness over losing memories and a need for wanting to remember.



This Home is the place where I live
from the childhood to now.
I have lots of memories here.
This is the place I will always miss
and want to remember.

Postcard 12: Rahma



It is our original home and
I had many memorries in this
area. we played and grew up here.
with lots of friends and family.

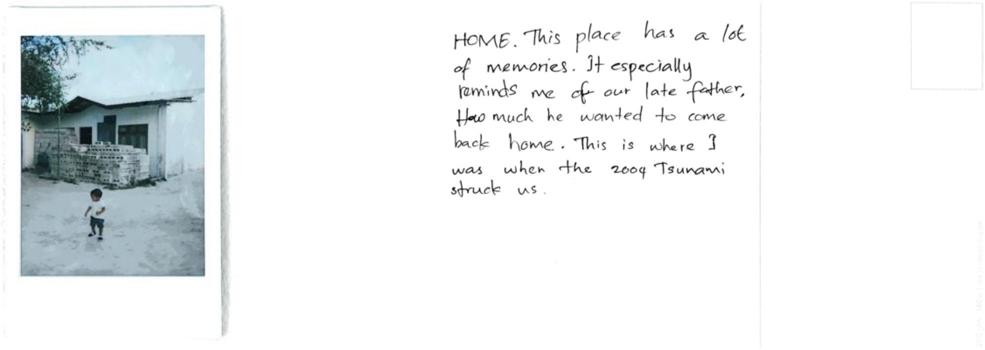
Postcard 13: Nissa

Nissa similarly chose her home and the area around it as where most of her memories were held. “It is our original home and I had many memories in this area. We played and grew up here with lots of friends and family”. Ainy wrote a similar message, contextualising it in the potential situation of finding herself displaced and stating that her home would be one of the places she would miss the most: “This is my home. If I have to move some other country, or the island gone, I gonna miss my home sweet home. All my childhood memories are filled in this house”.

this is my home. If i have
to move Some other country,
or the island gone, I gonna
miss my home sweet home. All
my Childhood memories are filled
in this house.

Postcard 14: Ainy

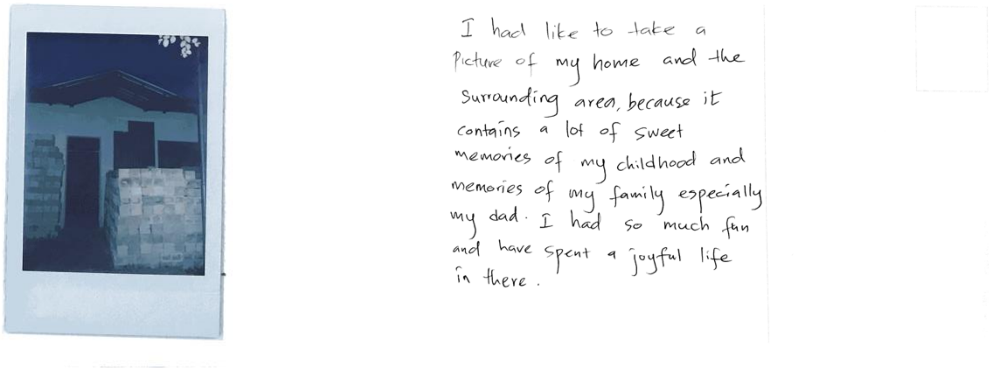
For others, the home also carried specific memories of people that had passed away. Jameela explained how home for her was a memory of her late father and his desire to return home. It was also significant for her as this is where she was when the 2004 Tsunami occurred.



HOME. This place has a lot of memories. It especially reminds me of our late father, How much he wanted to come back home. This is where I was when the 2004 Tsunami struck us.

Postcard 15: Jameela

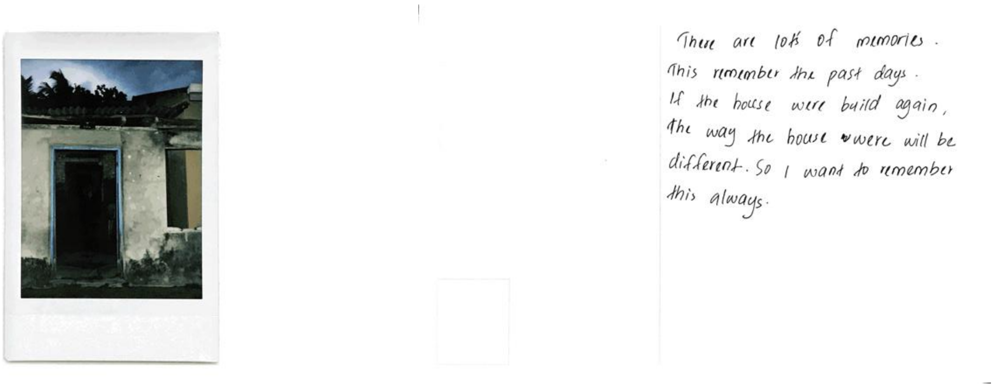
Her message reads: "HOME. This place has a lot of memories. It especially reminds me of our late father. How much he wanted to come back home. This is where I was when the 2004 Tsunami struck us". Ilhama had a similar experience of her home as a memory of her father and feelings of joy. "I had like to take a picture of my home and the surrounding area, because it contains a lot of sweet memories of my childhood and memories of my family especially my dad. I had so much fun and have spent a joyful life in there"



I had like to take a picture of my home and the surrounding area, because it contains a lot of sweet memories of my childhood and memories of my family especially my dad. I had so much fun and have spent a joyful life in there.

Postcard 16: Ilhama

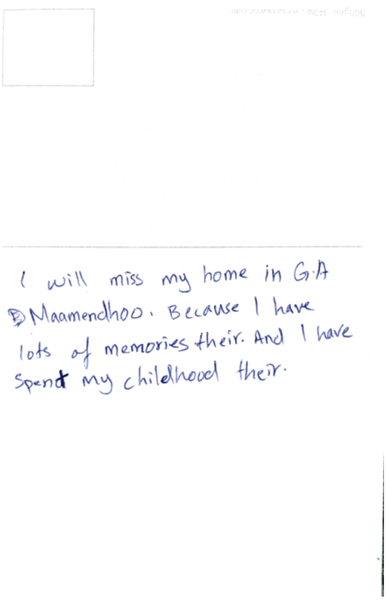
For another participant, it was somehow to preserve the original building of her house and remember it exactly how it was. Nashua shared: “There are lots of memories. This remember the past days. If the house were built again, the way the house were will be different. So I want to remember this always”



There are lot's of memories.
This remember the past days.
If the house were build again,
the way the house were will be
different. So I want to remember
this always.

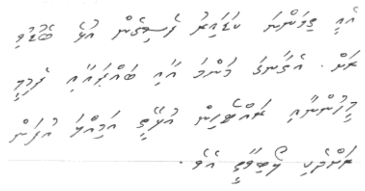
Postcard 17: Nashua

Leena and Shaiza had both moved after marriage to Rinbudhoo and Thulusdhoo respectively and it was their home island that they wished to speak about. Since they were not able to picture their home islands, they chose to leave the postcards blank to reflect this. Leena’s message reads: “I will miss my home in G.A. Maamendhoo. Because I have lots of memories their. And I have spent my childhood their”. Shaiza who had migrated to Thulusdhoo also left her postcard blank, explaining: “When I was growing up my own island because I have to migrate to another country I always want to remember that island because that is where my mum, my dad, childhood friends are there. I really love my island”.



I will miss my home in G.A
~~D~~Maamendhoo. Because I have
lots of memories their. And I have
Spend my childhood their.

Postcard 18: Leen



Postcard 19: Shaiza

Therefore, the home was understood by islanders mainly in two different dimensions, as the house and as the island. They were deemed to be places of importance, where participants shared significant moments with their loved ones. They were also places where much of their stories were stored and in being so a way of remembering their own pasts and their ancestors' lives. There was sometimes a sense of pride attached to the home and of safety and belonging. If climate change results in the displacement of island communities, these represent new ways in which their functioning of self-identity might be threatened. Participants shared their sadness over these losses as well as a strong need to remember as a way of preserving a sense of themselves. Nine (2018) speaks of the home, as house, playing an important role in human functioning, particularly in the cognitive functions that help us makes us who we are, being fundamental in: '(1) the ability to form memories, attitudes, beliefs, and emotional attachments; (2) the ability to evaluate, reflect, and revise values, attitudes, and beliefs; (3) the ability to perform actions consistent with one's environment' (Nine, 2018, p. 242). In the case of islanders, my data shows that it is not only the house that allows for those functions or valued ends but a broader understanding of home which encompasses the coconut tree and the shoreline as well.

5.3.4. Discussion

Through their reflections of the coconut tree, the shoreline and the home, islanders highlighted that which they feared losing the most under the potential scenario of climate-related migration and displacement. One overarching point across the three themes was that islander emphasised the non-economic losses attributed to each the coconut tree, the shoreline and the home. Although they valued and deemed important the physical and material aspects of each of them, it was the practices and meanings as intangible and incalculable dimensions that predominated amongst the responses (Table 6).

Table 6: Different values attached to the coconut tree, the shoreline and the home

	Physical/material	**Practices/everyday activities**	**Meanings**
The coconut tree	food, drink, cooking and lighting oil, cooking utensils, medicine as well as for other uses such as firewood, toys for children, whistles and baskets, construction materials	Traditional practices of sap collection (men) and coconut collection (women), socialising space (shade and shelter)	Belonging, family continuity, connection to space across time, symbol of survival, childhood memories
The shoreline (ocean, reef, beach,…)	Food source, livelihoods	Picnics, space to relax and have alone time, playing, collecting shells	Freedom, peacefulness, beauty, joy, collective identity, sense of belonging
The home ('house', island and nation)	Shelter, particular approach to housing	Socialising space, family coming together, eating together,	Sense of belonging and identity, memories

For the coconut tree, besides its material use in almost every aspect of their everyday lives, there was also a sense of traditional practices and meanings such as a connection to the land that cut across time and as a symbol of island survival. The shoreline, as well as offering resources, allowed islanders to meet for weekend picnics and provided them with a sense of peacefulness, freedom, beauty and joy which constituted the core of their way of life. Lastly, the home signified much more than shelter. It is a space where families came together to share time and eat, and the islanders I interacted with, spoke of it as a place where the most meaningful and intimate moments take place. It also brought them a sense of belonging and identity. It is therefore these everyday practices and meanings that were important human ends to islanders interviewed and justify the importance of its loss in relation to justice. This illustrates yet another disjuncture between the way islanders perceive climate-related migration and displacement and the way it is treated in certain academic and grey literature. As presented in Chapter II, to date the majority of research on loss and damage has focused on the economic and calculable dimensions whilst islanders seem to be more preoccupied with non-economic losses (McNamara and Jackson, 2018). In that regard, this section has contributed to the growing research on the non-economic dimensions of climate-related migration and displacement by establishing a set of practices and meanings that islanders value as important human ends in the particular context of two islands in the Maldives (Tschakert *et al.*, 2017).

A second overarching theme was the shared role of the coconut tree, the shoreline and the home as repositories of memories. Islanders consistently referred to the memories that each of those elements held for them and shared their concern that if they were to be displaced, they would lose their memories of their childhood and of place. There was a sense that if the islands disappeared, or islanders no longer inhabited them, their entire pasts would also be washed away. Of course, the memories themselves would not be lost the moment islanders were relocated. What was to be lost is the anchor of such memories. In his in-depth study on memory and remembering, Casey (2000, p. 201) examines the relationship between memory and place and asks "Why is place so potent as a guardian of memories?" He builds from the idea that the importance of place for memory has not received enough attention, instead philosophical and common-sense concerns being overwhelmed by the temporal dimensions of memory. This might coincide with possible reactions that the loss of place might not obviously lead to the loss of memories, for spatial dimensions have been under examined in traditional models of remembering. However, Casey develops throughout his book this idea of 'memory [being] beyond mind'. He suggests that the human mind is not the unique vehicle of memories. Instead, place plays a major role as a 'guardian', 'container', 'keeper', 'bearer' or 'preservative' of memories. His own writing best illustrates this:

> "Places are potently receptive and preservative of memories, which they hold to keep. As much as body or brain, mind or language, place is a keeper of memories – one of the main ways by which the past comes to be secured in the present, held in things before us and around us" (Casey, 2000, p. 213).

In this regard, memory and place share a close affinity, where they each continue to reinforce each other. Within place, a range of elements assist in places' overall power in containing memory. Particularly relevant here is the role of *things* in doing so. Casey explains that material *things* draw place and memory together in significant ways. He tells of the memories of his childhood experiences at his great-uncle's home, where the house and its interior rooms, the pond next to it and the alley all reappeared in his remembering. He follows:

> "Hence my sense of shock when I revisited Kansas a few years ago and discovered that his house had been razed and the pond eliminated following a major fire on the property. With the disappearance of these things, the main elements of quite a special place in my childhood, and thus the source of a treasured place of set memories, had vanished" (Casey, 2000, p. 205).

This story illustrates my argument, that the loss of place, and in this particular case the loss of the coconut tree, the shoreline and the home pose a threat to islanders' memories. Casey's words echo what the islanders I spoke to feared if they were to be displaced, that the disappearance of their country would provoke the loss of their memories, to date held by the coconut tree, the shoreline and the home. In his analysis, Casey also speaks of being displaced as something 'profoundly disorientating'. He is not, to my knowledge, speaking of climate-related displacement but nonetheless about the experience of being out of place. He brings in the idea of nostalgia here and quotes Johannes Hofer, who first coined the word in his *Medical Dissertation on Nostalgia* (1688): "The patient", said Hofer, "should be taken [home], however weak or feeble, without delay, whether by a traveling carriage with four wheels, or by sedan chair, or by any other means" (Casey, 2000, p. 201). With this quote, Casey again hopes to bear witness to the importance of place, and memory, and its influence over us as human beings. The problem in the particular context of this study is that if islanders are to suffer from nostalgia, Hofer's remedy of being taken home by any means, will not be possible. Further, displacement would constitute an injustice. Thus, it is imperative to ask: were islanders to be displaced, how is the loss of memories to be compensated? Is compensation possible at all? If not, what other responses might be available to attempt to make justice to islanders' displacement? This discussion has shed light on memories as an important loss of climate-related migration and displacement and in that way contributed towards enhancing the understanding of non-economic losses.

5.4. Conclusion

This chapter has re-examined islanders' relationship to movement and loss in an attempt to challenge established assertions about islanders' relationship to mobility and the broader treatment of movement and loss as 'unfortunate but acceptable phenomena' (McNamara & Gibson, 2009, p. 482). The chapter has thus been organised according to these two themes representing the main implications of leaving the islands behind.

The first part of this chapter focused on movement and challenged two established claims in the literature. I first explored islanders' relationship to movement to assess whether the claim that mobility is at the core of island communities' identities resonated with the people I interviewed to in the Maldives. I first explored the ways in which islanders' relationship to movement has developed over time and established that following colonialism, economic development and government policies, mobility ceased to be at the core of islanders' ways of life. Instead, it is permanency that best characterises islanders' current relationship to dwelling. In an attempt to challenge the claim that climate change is just another driver influencing mobility and non-mobility decision-making, I analysed the differences between the kind of movement that islanders engage in in their everyday lives and the potential kind of movement that would take place as a result of climate change. I highlighted two fundamental differences. Whilst movement is a part of islanders' everyday lives, this kind movement takes places within the country and there is always a possibility of return. Furthermore, climate change is a morally distinct driver of mobility in the sense that it is not those who are responsible that have to move and are displaced.

The second part of the chapter focused on loss in an attempt to enhance understandings of what is at risk of being lost in a potential scenario of climate-related displacement. I identified the coconut tree, the shoreline and the home as the main themes that emerged out of the data in terms of what islanders feared losing. I showed how each of those places or elements represent a range of losses that hold value beyond its material or economic properties. I showed how a range of practices and meanings would be lost if islanders are displaced. An overarching value of all those three elements was also their role in keeping or containing memories. Islanders' spoke about their fear of losing their memories if they were to be displaced and reflected on the coconut tree, the shoreline and the home as the places or things where such memories were stored. I drew on ideas of memory being beyond mind and on the natural process of forgetting to illustrate this point.

Through the explorations of movement and loss, this chapter has served as evidence of the significance of both of those phenomena for affected populations and so further establish that climate-related displacement constitutes an injustice and a moral wrong. It has also hoped to contribute to an emerging body of literature on non-economic losses. In particular, I have identified the loss of memories as something to consider in the context of climate-related migration and displacement. The next chapter considers a potential future elsewhere and draws from the key messages established so far and other empirical data to reflect on what justice might look like in the context of populations being displaced.

Chapter VI. The future elsewhere: Justice considerations

6.1. Introduction

So far, I have explored the ways in which islanders think about and imagine a future in the Maldives (Chapter IV) and explored their narratives and perceptions of movement and loss (Chapter V). In this chapter, I turn to analyse the future elsewhere in the potential scenario that the Maldivian islands become uninhabitable, and their populations internationally displaced. Previous chapters have established a few key relevant conclusions in relation to the future elsewhere. Firstly, islanders in my sample think about the future in terms of a continuity of place and show commitment towards a future in the Maldives (Chapter IV). Secondly, it is permanency that characterises their preferred ways of dwelling and they actively seek means by which to minimise movement, both internally and internationally (Chapter IV and V). Thirdly, they think about international migration only as a last resort which would incur a range of incommensurable losses (Chapter V). Drawing from these findings, this chapter starts from the basis that climate-related displacement is a moral wrong and a future elsewhere, an unjust future.

Chapter II established two tendencies in reviewing approaches to justice in the context of climate-related displacement from SIDS. I observed that so far justice-based proposals and suggestions have mainly responded to the concerns of experts and elites. Accordingly, the proposals' main concerns have regarded questions of state extinction, territorial rights, sovereignty and self-determination. A second focus has been on the material and economic dimensions of climate-related migration and displacement, which has led these justice-based proposals to tend to take responsibility for the 'legal' status of climate migrants or stateless persons, but not for the trauma and grief that accompanies displacement. Therefore, two questions emerged. Firstly, what justice-related proposals might come out of the concerns of non-elites? And secondly, what other justice-based proposals might come forward if the focus lies not on the material but the symbolic? This chapter is structured around these two questions. Section 6.2. presents justice considerations based on the empirical data that was collected in the field and explores two main themes: issues of procedural justice and how islanders imagine the reconstruction of island life in a potential future elsewhere. Section 6.3. responds to the second question by drawing on the literature on reparations to explore the tools, processes and mechanisms available to respond to the injustice of climate-related displacement. In particular, I make a normative argument about a potential justice response to the loss of memories identified in Chapter V.

6.2. From the islands: justice considerations for a future elsewhere

As introduced above, this section responds to the tendency identified in the literature for justice-based proposals and suggestions to mainly respond to the concerns of experts and elites. This is partly due to the fact that there is an empirical gap about what 'everyday' concerns of climate-related migration and displacement are and scholars have argued for the agency of affected populations in formulating their own justice-based solutions (Arnall, Hilson and McKinnon, 2019; Fladvad et al, 2020). However, as established in Chapter II, there are differences in the ways elites and non-elites think about and perceive climate change (Arnall and Kothari, 2015). Therefore, room for further justice-related research arises: What justice-related concerns and considerations do non-elites hold? And what justice-related proposals might emerge out of those, instead of the concerns stated by experts and elites? It is important, before I proceed, to clarify who falls under the 'elite' and the 'non-elite' within the Maldives and in terms of the islanders in my sample. I borrow Arnall & Kothari's (2015) differentiation. 'Elites' are understood as those professionals who work at national and international levels, thus including: "academics, government officials and policymakers from NGOs who hold positions of power within organisations, and who therefore influence the national, scientific, political, business and media agendas" (Arnall & Kothari, 2015, p.201-2). 'Non-elites', on the other hand, are understood as 'ordinary' or 'everyday' people with limited influence over policymaking. The majority of my sample falls under the 'non-elite' category, being young women and students in Male. Those that fall under the 'elite' category are a number of key informants, such as those working at the Ministries, NGOs or at the island councils. Having clarified this, this section develops a range of justice-related issues that participants raised in relation to the potential scenario of climate-related migration and displacement and a future elsewhere. Two main themes emerged from the data, the first concerns issues of procedural justice and the second regards the nature of what a future elsewhere might look like. This section also reflects on how these key findings relate and feature in other relocation attempts and programmes in the Maldives, including the experiences of the community from Rinbudhoo that decided to move to Thulusdhoo.

6.2.1. Procedural justice

When speaking about the possibility of one day having to migrate, procedural justice in decision-making processes seemed to be a concern of the participants that I interacted with. As introduced in Chapter I, theoretically, procedural justice has been developed to consist of recognition and participation (Fraser, 2001; Paavola and Adger, 2006; Schlosberg, 2012). Recognition is understood as the acknowledgment of a group or individual as having an independent and legitimate body of thought regarding a subject matter. To fulfil climate justice however, procedural justice needs to go beyond recognition and be turned into participation, implying involvement in decision-making processes.

Okereke (2017) highlights a range of procedural justice issues in IPCC processes such as: gender imbalance (Corbera *et al.*, 2016), geographical imbalance favouring authors in developed countries (Bjurström and Polk, 2011) and marginalisation of indigenous voices (Ford, Vanderbilt and Berrang-Ford, 2012; Ford *et al.*, 2016), amongst others. In the particular context of SIDS and climate-related migration, research has pointed at islanders' desire to be involved in decision-making processes regarding potential relocation (Farbotko and McMichael, 2019; McMichael, Katonivualiku and Powell, 2019). The importance of these processes accounting for procedural justice has also been emphasised by researchers (Ferris, 2015; McAdam and Ferris, 2015; McMichael, Katonivualiku and Powell, 2019; Piggott-McKellar *et al.*, 2019). Without participatory processes, affected populations are left with feelings of voicelessness and a loss of faith in and control over their own futures. In turn, there is a risk of reaching misconstrued assumptions that result in failed governance, such as concluding that costs of rebuilding a community outweighs the benefits (Thomas and Benjamin, 2020). Within the particular context of displacement and relocation, a series of "key learning messages" are presented in the literature. Scholars have argued that transparency and open communication should be central to the process (Piggott-McKellar *et al.*, 2019; Azfa *et al.*, 2020). Within this communication, concepts such as human rights, dignity, equity and sustainability should take the lead over "top-down" decision-making processes that focus on technical, economic and physical considerations (Farbotko and McMichael, 2019; Piggott-McKellar *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, the agency of affected populations must be acknowledged and enabled, allowing for it to vary for different communities. Whilst for some such agency might look like 'voluntary immobility' (Farbotko and McMichael, 2019), for others it might look like what Koslov (2016) calls 'retreat' to refer to moving away from the homeland. This section reviews islanders' thoughts on procedural justice and the particular reasons why they deemed it important.

One of the key ideas that islanders raised when speaking about justice and what would be fair in potential climate-related migration and displacement was the importance of transparency in decision-making processes. They reflected on the lack of knowledge they had about a lot of decisions that were being made around and about them, and that if it came to climate-related migration, it was imperative for the process to be transparent and for them to be informed. As a student shared in a group discussion at one of the university workshops:

> "If it comes to that, if we absolutely need to migrate, I think in terms of justice, what is most important is going to be transparency of the whole decision. Because we are already in a place where a lot of the decisions that involve us, are being taken without our information or our knowledge. So, if it comes to that, if one day someone, some businessman, someone up in the hierarchy says 'OK, we have to move to this country', and they don't even bother asking us, it's not going to fly by us, we're not going to say 'OK, sure, yeah, that's fine', that is not going to happen. So, it needs to be a transparent process where we are involved, throughout and in each step, and according to our feedback, they also need to adapt and adjust whatever plans they are making, it's not going to work otherwise".

What this quote seems to suggest is that islanders would not quietly accept whatever decision was made about their futures, but instead that these would be challenged and resisted. In fact, Kothari (2014) states that broadly, attempts at relocation policies have been resisted by the population in the Maldives. Azfa et al. (2020) recent study provides a particular example of such resistance in initial attempts to forcefully relocate Gaadho residents:

> "Elder participants provided first-hand accounts of two previous attempts to forcefully relocate and resettle Gaadhoo residents. The first was suggested to be in the late 1950s, while the second was during Abdulla Hameed's time as Minister of the Atolls in the early 1980s. These attempts were unsuccessful due to Islanders asserting themselves when confronted by the government's landing parties. This narrative is captured by a male community health worker regarding the first attempt: "Gaadhoo people did not want to move. So, when they found out, the womenfolk ground chilli paste, the men took up batons and went to the beach. Some people drew a line in the sand, and told them that if they crossed it, they would die. That they won't get in without killing them first. (interviewee 3)".

This was also seen during the tsunami in 2004, as a psychotherapist who had been involved in the crisis team, shared with me during our interview:

> "There was another island, I have forgotten the name, they were taken to Laamu atoll and Male and there was 5 or 6 men who refused to evacuate. The military were trying, the home ministry was trying… I know of this because I was contacted by somebody, they were forming a team of people who would go there and talk to them"

The psychotherapist explained that unfortunately she had not been able to go but eventually, although regrettably, the men agreed to leave and were not forcibly evacuated. In her reflection, she highlighted the importance of having made the effort to talk and listen to them:

> "So I am glad to say that there were not forcefully evacuated, the effort was made to talk to them, to listen to them… The other reasons they said [for not wanting to relocate], was very interesting to me. They said however many years we stay in another island, people may accept us, but they will always know us by that name, or that island. So later I met this guy who was part of those who refused to go and I asked him: isn't it a good thing that you will always have your identity as this island person? […] It got him thinking but still he said no, they will always be pointing and saying things"

This resistance is not seen so evidently in the case of the relocation from Rinbudhoo to Thulusdhoo, as islanders were given the choice to relocate or to stay, and so it was only those that wished to that embarked on the journey. It was however resisted in other ways, with the population that decided to stay working hard to build a sustainable and developed island community and by doing so, showing their commitment to the island and their rejection to further inducements to relocate. This demonstrates the self-reliance and commitment to the future of the islands also developed in Chapter IV. Mohamed, who worked for the Ministry of Environment, reflected on this form of resistance: "So the people who stayed there became very resilient. They wanted to show these people, we will build this community". This resonates with what one of the council members in Rinbudhoo shared, on the local people putting in effort to face challenges and sustain the community: "We have experienced the erosion, after 2010. 2010, the local people, they built a small jetty in Rinbudhoo, they raised funds, and they did it themselves". From the council, they showed a similar approach to the future of Rinbudhoo:

> "We started convincing the people that they have a future, a bright future in Rinbudhoo. And also, we met the ministers and we said we need to live in Rinbudhoo, so the

> government should provide the facilities like they provide to other islands. And also, we were saying that if the government can't provide the facilities… give us, the councils, the power to build facilities, so slowly we started doing our own project in Rinbudhoo. Especially awareness programmes, awareness about education, like you know, the country, every person got internet, smartphones, and we were saying that they can study anywhere, they don't have to come to the capital city for education"

As well as transparency, islanders spoke of the importance of participation. Justice here meant the inclusion of all voices in decision-making processes. Students from the university workshops, who came from different islanders around the Maldives, offered the following reflections:

> "*If* there comes a day that the islanders need to migrate due to climate change, there should be justice and voices heard of those islanders as their sense of belonging, identity, livelihood is being taken away and adjusting to psychological changes can have a mental drainage for these people"

> "Overall, I believe that 'climate-related migration' is a term which should involve every single person of the community for each individual has their own thoughts and feelings, be it small or big. An action can only be worth taking if everyone has a say in it. No matter how many policy makers and scientists gather to determine our rights, we have our own responsibility as an input for such decisions. I believe that a decision must be taken from all levels of the community. […] If we do have to migrate, it is crucial to involve the local community in taking decisions and making plans"

These quotes speak about the importance of participation and the inclusion of the local community at its different levels. As Piggott-McKellar et al. (2019) remind us, participation must be diverse within what is referred to as 'local', for there continue to be hierarchies and power dynamics within such communities and so islanders are placing themselves alongside 'policy makers' and 'scientists' in determining their rights and futures. Transparency and participation were for some participants important issues *per se*, for others however, they also mattered as a way of ensuring that the way islanders felt about their homelands and the prospect of climate-related migration and displacement was part of the conversations. As another student at the university workshops reflected:

> “Ultimately what we want is to do whatever we can to make the country more resilient to climate change and its impacts. However, if it ever comes to the aspect of migration, it is important to take our feelings into consideration as well as being transparent and open while making decisions regarding the migration to another country”

The role of affect, or the emotional dimensions of climate migration, also came up in a group discussion at the workshops, with one participant stating:

> “Whoever is making the decision needs to understand our feelings, our sentiments and knowing those sentiments, they should be able to justify why they are taking that decision, without compromising our feelings. They can’t just tell us ‘it’s OK, this has happened to many people before, you will just go with it’, no they can’t say that. They need to understand that we are losing our homeland, our identity… They have to explain if this necessary for our betterment, for our future, it needs to be justified without compromising our sentiments”

In reflecting about their experiences of mobility, islanders referred to a range of feelings and emotions. The women I interviewed spoke about feelings of excitement about the prospect of moving, feelings of sadness about leaving their lives behind and feelings of fear and nervousness about the uncertainty of the new place. For instance, Avah, who had migrated to Rinbudhoo after marrying her husband said: “Excited because getting married, sad because leaving.”. It is important to recognise the range and complexity of emotions that accompany movement, and how these are heavily dependent on the reason and conditions of the move. As I reflected on my field diary:

> “I am exploring the feelings that accompany movement, leaving your homeland, arriving to a new place… I am interviewing woman from many islands that are now in Thulusdhoo, and it is interesting to see how they came here for different reasons and the different feelings attached to the different reasons for leaving their homelands. The ones that came after marrying were mostly excited and happy about the move, and the majority felt welcome here. The movement of the ones that came from Rinbudhoo are accompanied by emotions of sadness and nostalgia”(Field Diary, 15/04/19*)*

From the quotes above, participants also stressed the need to recognise the high esteem they hold for their islands and what it feels for them to be from this place. In attempting to express these feelings, Cala, who lived and had grown up in Male but conducted an MA in the UK, shared:

> "I am part of a community that is only 400.000 thousand people, that's like the population of Leicester. So it really makes me feel, exotic, I feel like we're rare and our culture, our food, our traditional dress, those are things we don't really see right now. People don't consider that stuff cool anymore, even if you think of my grandmother, or my grandmothers' parents, the dressed they wore, the songs they heard, the folk songs, the instruments that we used, those things belong only to 400.000 people. Like OK, say someone in America, in New York, with a tie and a suit, would know how to identify Chinese or Korean language, they see the Chinese, or Arabic but no one knows how thaviyani, or shaviyani looks like. So I am sitting here, looking at the ocean, and there is really like negative things that I could say about living in Maldives, both in political sense, cultural sense, how society… the thinking level as well, so many negatives things I could say, but there is also so many positive things that are making me say, I am proud to be from Maldives"

Decision-making processes therefore need to be grounded in a comprehensive understanding of that what climate-related migration and displacement would imply for affected communities. Chapter V established that this goes well beyond the 'physical' and 'material' dimensions of island life and includes everyday practices and meanings, highlighting the importance of symbolic value. Here, islanders speak of affect as yet another fundamental dimension towards understanding climate-related migration and displacement holistically. In centring the perceptions of the 'non-elites', my findings therefore corroborate the key messages present in the literature in emphasising the need for transparency and participation. In this section, however, I have also shown that the importance of transparency and participation goes beyond the normative principles of procedural justice and was deemed particularly important by the participants of my study in ensuring affective dimensions are taken into account in potential relocation planning.

6.2.2. Reconstructions of island life

As well as reflecting on the importance of fair planning and decision-making processes, islanders spoke about the nature of what a hypothetical future elsewhere might look like. Initially, this was largely a foreign idea to the women I interviewed, about which they had not thought much in detail previously. A range of questions filled their minds: How will we live there? What is the population like? Will my family and I be together or in separate places? Where will I live, if I don't have my own land? Will I be safe in an environment where I hear of wars and cases of rape? Will I survive the possibility of earthquakes and hurricanes? As developed in Chapter II, there are different visions and narratives in the literature about what such a future, where islands have become uninhabitable, might entail for their populations. Some imagine them as climate refugees spread across the globe (Myers, 2002). Others see them 'migrating with dignity' instead and being welcome in specific host countries (Foresight, 2011). Proposals have also been made for entire state populations to relocate together (Nine, 2010; Willcox, 2016). Despite the abundance of imaginaries, there is a paucity of empirical research on this particular subject matter. As established in Chapter II, the focus of empirical research on climate-related migration has tended to be instead on understanding the causal link between climate change and migration. However, some studies have started to tackle questions about how islanders imagine or desire a future elsewhere. Stojanov et al. (2017) study on local perceptions of migration patterns in the Maldives asked participants about preferred migration destinations. They found the pattern of response to be locations nearer and culturally similar to Maldives, such as India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Indonesia, were the preferred migration destinations. This section advances empirical knowledge on this topic by presenting the justice considerations regarding the nature of a future elsewhere that the participants of my study emphasised. Two themes emerged: the desire to move together and the reconstruction of their communities in imitation of island life.

Islanders presented a unified position on wanting to migrate together, if this were to become necessary. Similarly to the findings presented in Chapter IV, they imagined themselves as part of the same community, both at the island and national level, even if outside of the Maldives. As a key informant from Transparency Maldives reflected:

> "If that day comes, the first thing that comes to my mind is going to a place all together. Because moving away from home and having that familiarity, I have seen in this small communities people suffer for generations if they are not being accepted as part of the community"

Participants stated their preference for moving together and this idea brought them comfort and peace, as opposed to feelings of discomfort. For some moving together meant the entire population of the Maldives, for others it meant the people living on their island and for others only their networks of friends and family. Mai, for instance, a teacher in Thulusdhoo, stated: "Living near each other is good. If we see Maldivian in another country, we will be happy, same way if the whole community is there. We feel peace if we all living in one place". Or Fathimath, who shared a similar reflection: "Community together, it would be easy for us, right? If we need help, so we can ask. We know the people, if we move separately, we don't know the people around us so could be very difficult". Or Nashua, who put it simply: "We live together, we help each other". The desire to move together was therefore associated with reducing the levels of difficulty that a future elsewhere could present. As Zaain said: "If we go separate, means that if I need help, to whom to ask help? If community together, I will know everyone in this island, so it's easy to ask for help". In the same way that moving together meant peace and comfort, being apart brought discomfort and concern. As Abia put it: "We want all people same place. Otherwise… very uncomfortable feelings."

These concerns resonate with what some of those that relocated from Rinbudhoo to Thulusdhoo experienced, even though they did migrate as part of a broader community. Some of those that migrated to Thulusdhoo in 2006 found it difficult to settle as they lacked this sense of belonging to the community and a lack of ownership towards the place and its resources. A participant shared: "It was very uncomfortable there, because it was not our own island, homeland is better". Or another participant who said: "I went to Thulusdhoo because my family went, so I wanted to go with them. After one year, my husband wanted to come back. It was hard to live there because we had to buy all the things such as food and everything". Whilst in Rinbudhoo many more resources were available to them, either through the island itself or through the community, in Thulusdhoo they found themselves lacking a network that provided all of these things. Concerns over the potentially fractious relationship with the host community in Thulusdhoo, was indeed one of the reasons why people chose to stay in Rinbudhoo. Those that decided to stay could not conceive of living elsewhere, regardless of their family choices, some being worried about the relationship between the people in Thulusdhoo and how the relationship with them would be. As some participants put it: "I didn't want to go, Thulusdhoo is not good, the relationship between the different communities. I only want to live in Rinbudhoo". Relocating together therefore would allow islanders to maintain their networks and a sense of familiarity, belonging and helpfulness that their current communities provide.

A second and significant justice consideration about the future elsewhere was the importance of designing dwelling and community spaces according to the customs and lifestyles of the islands. This theme came out of reflecting with key informants about previous relocation attempts in the Maldives and the key issues that emerged within them. Mohamed shared the case of Vilufushi, an island he had studied as part of his doctoral research. After the tsunami in 2004, the island was completely rebuilt with the help of the Red Cross and external consultants and engineers. Although islanders were consulted about the new housing, it seems the final result did not adequately resemble their lifestyles on the islands. As Mohamed reflected:

> "The Red Cross, they built the homes, after tsunami, people were consulted, people were shown models of their houses but then… they said that when they went home, all their livelihoods had to be stopped because their homes are built in a way that they can't do home gardening, they can't do fish processing,... in the olden days people did all kind of economic activities like carpentry, or you know, drying fish, or processing fishing in the home itself"

This sense of alienation as a result of no longer being able to inhabit their dwelling spaces as they used to and engage in their everyday practices, coincides with one of the key findings of Azfa et al. (2020) from their study on the forced relocation from Gaadho Island (Maldives), where the community worker and council member suggested that people lost "their sense of everyday engagement in meaningful activity since the move" (Azfa et al., 2020, p. 12). In this case, this was not attributed to the change in housing design or structure, but simply to the fact of being on a new island:

> "A lot of people stay away from doing any activities. That's because they feel depressed. For example, instead of doing the things they used to, they would just stay idle. That's because it's a new environment and they miss the things they used to do. I've only seen the experiences of the people of my island relocating here. Back in our island, many people did thatching, made coir ropes, toddy tapping, but after they relocated, even though there are palm trees and things here, they didn't do any of it. People are slowly getting into it after three years"

Azfa et al. (2020) characterise these experiences as potential loss or grief of what once was. This sense of apathy in the new island was also experienced by my participants who had relocated from

Rinbudhoo to Thulusdhoo and was one of the reasons why some decided to return. Salma explained: “I was bored there [Thulusdhoo]. The next year, 2007, my father also bored, so he also wanted to come back here [Rinbudhoo]”. It was also for some the reason why they chose not to relocate to Thulusdhoo in the first place. Latifha, an elderly woman aged 75 with whom I crossed paths every day in Rinbudhoo, shared boredom as the reason why she chose to stay in Rinbudhoo, as she said: “Boring in the other island, this is the best island”. This idea of boredom was also reflected on when speaking about migrating to Male from the islands. A few participants shared that although they were excited to have a change, they became bored in Male after a few days. Bushra, who went to Male from Rinbudhoo to undertake her studies, shared: “I was excited actually to leave the island for some time, but when I was there [Male], suffocating. Small room, not much to do, boring. I was used to life here [in Rinbudhoo], so much stuff to do, so when I went Male, it was lonely and suffocating”. Aminath, from Thulusdhoo and who had also gone to Male to complete her studies had a similar reflection: “When I went, I was excited, but just after a week I got bored. I wanted to come back here [Thulusdhoo]. I finished the studies and I came.” One of the participants from the university workshops also reflected on her time in Male during her higher education studies. She shared: “I had to live in a small apartment with strangers, the roads were congested with vehicles, there was no beautiful beach to swim around, and everything seemed noisy and felt like nothing”. The women I interviewed had established, busy routines on their home islands and this busyness seemed to be a central part of their identity which relocating disrupted in a way that resulted in boredom and apathy. Some feared that this would also translate to international displacement, if they had to relocate. Zayne, for instance, said: “First we have to find a person who knows our language, then only we can do something. It will be really boring”. These reflections on boredom and apathy, and missing their busy everyday lives in their original islands speaks to the importance of ‘everyday practices’ emphasises in Chapter V. A justice response to climate-related displacement, thus, must take these into account.

Of equal importance to the design of dwelling spaces was the design of the community structure as a whole. The island communities I spent time in during my fieldwork were very small, like many other islands in the Maldives, and my participants were used to being no more than five or ten minutes away from their friends and family. The physical layout and structure of community has been reported in other cases of relocations as something that is important to consider. For instance, Azfa et al (2020) found that the separation of the community had a detrimental impact on culture, community and even family bonds, negatively affecting the transition to the new island. As one of their participants shared:

> "It wasn't good that families were split apart. People lost their neighbours who lived next door for 27 years, things like that. Yes, the bonds were lost, and it's still there. I don't think that this will be fixed, something important was lost." (Azfa et al., 2020, p. 13)

This was not the case for the Rinbudhoo people who relocated to Thulusdhoo, as their houses were built all together in a previously uninhabited location on the island. It was however shared by many as one of the key concerns about having to migrate internationally. Sitha, for instance, shared: "My parents wouldn't be here near each other, living together. If we move to another country, we don't know what will happen to them, maybe living in separate towns." Another participant, Shifa, shared a similar concern: "Actually this island means we can reach any home within 10 minutes, but if we go some other country, there we won't see our parents, now we also still live separate but island is very small so every time I can go and see".

Mohamed also reflected on the importance of this same issue: "I think we have to design it in such a way that communities can live, especially the community should live as one". Additionally, there should be community gathering areas: "They have to design their dwellings like that, community gardens, community gathering areas like in a normal island, where there are some areas where communities gather, on the beach side they always have an area with jollies or you know… these sitting areas". It is widely established in urban studies literature that building and community layouts lead to particular setting's social environment and interactions (Lynch, 1960; Whyte, 1989). Different characteristics of community's physical environment lead to different community relationships and interactions. For instance, community open spaces such as plazas and parks are designed to enhance human connectivity and interaction (Williams, 2014). It will be important thus, if communities find themselves displaced due to climate change, to recognise the significance of the physical environment in ensuring affected communities well-being.

Drawing from these case studies, it is clear that relocation and displacement comes with a substantial set of challenges and will always carry difficulties. The literature sheds light on a range of concerns identified by 'elites' in relation to climate-related displacement and in this section I have highlighted a number of other 'everyday' considerations that became emphasised when interviewing mainly 'non-elites'. It is interesting to note here as well that concerns over the future elsewhere in the case of climate displacement that my participants shared and anticipated coincide to some extent with the experience of relocated communities within the Maldives. Therefore, in this section, I have shown two particular ways of enhancing, as opposed to diminishing, islanders' wellbeing and mitigating some of the difficulties and challenges of being displaced: moving together and designing dwelling and community spaces in a way that imitates island life.

6.3. Embracing the symbolic: thinking in terms of reparations

Chapter II highlighted a second limitation to current justice-based proposals developed in response to climate-related migration and displacement from SIDS: these proposals tend to focus on taking responsibility for the 'legal' status of climate migrants or stateless persons, but not for the trauma and grief that accompanies displacement. This was established to be partly a result of the focus on the calculable, material and economic dimensions of climate-related migration and displacement that have dominated the literature (McNamara and Jackson, 2018). Again, further scope emerges to ask what else might be required of justice: What other justice-based proposals might come forward if the focus lies not on the material but on the symbolic? Drawing from the identified losses established in Chapter V, I turn to the literature on reparations to explore what other tools might be available to respond to the injustice of climate-related migration and displacement in a way that complements current suggestions and proposals. Firstly, I make the case for a reparations approach. Secondly, I analyse existing engagement with reparations in climate-related migration and displacement, which has mainly been devoted to compensation. Lastly, I develop a suggestion on what might be required of justice as a form of satisfaction.

6.3.1. The case for reparations

There are different reasons why a case for a reparations approach might be made in the context of climate change. In this thesis, the case for a reparations approach stems directly from the insufficiency of current climate justice proposals in dealing with the identified losses in Chapter V, and more broadly the insufficient engagement with the symbolic dimension of climate-related migration and displacement. Current proposals, which as Burkett (2009) argues are grounded in traditional legal tools, are important first steps and could succeed in the transfer of resources, but they fail in other important issues such as empathy or knowledge transfer and therefore do not get to the core of the moral wrong or justice challenge that climate-related migration and displacement from SIDS presents. Therefore, there is a need for an approach to climate justice that embraces comprehensively the experiences of islanders, acknowledges them, cares for them and responds to them. It is with this intention, and following Burkett's initiative, that I suggest we turn to thinking in terms of reparations. I am, of course, not the first to do this. Following Burkett (2009), most notably Page & Heyward (2017) and Klinsky & Brankovic (2018) make important advancements to this relatively new field, of applying reparations to the context of climate change. I build on their scholarship to make a case that ties with the overall interest and aim of this thesis.

Reparations are grounded in international and general law principles which state that when individuals are wronged, perpetrators ought to take responsibility for such wrongs, either by returning wronged individuals to the *status quo ante* or, when that is not possible, by compensating them. The case has been made that this can be relevant for both climate change and migration, as well as the combination of the two. Mayer (2017) for example, draws an analogy between climate change responsibility and the customary international law of state responsibility. Under the Draft Articles on the Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts adopted by the International Law Commission (ILC) in its second reading in 2001, a responsible state is under an obligation to make full reparation for injury caused by its fault (Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts, 2001). Legal scholars Verheyen and Poderick have suggested a way to review and reframe the legal landscape. They argue that at the international level there would be a firm basis for the climate vulnerable to bring claims for compensation against specified developed countries, if brought before the appropriate tribunal (Verheyen and Roderick, 2008).

In the case of migration, Mayer (2017) points to noteworthy precedents where migration was recognised as a source of harm which entailed international responsibility for its wrongful infliction. It follows that there is well-established state practice of compensating in these cases. The ethos of reparations, however, goes beyond this initial basis and can have diverse manifestations and potential as a transformative tool (Burkett, 2009). This is achieved when reparations are thought about going beyond the 'backward-looking' nature of reparations (i.e. identifying and compensating for an exact past harm) to include 'forward-looking' elements, recognising the continuing effect of the past harm and seeking ways of improving the lives of wronged individuals into the future. This enables both to honour the past and to have a more flexible approach in finding the right form of 'repair'. As Burkett puts it:

> "Not simply looking at the past, reparative efforts are forward looking as they attempt to honour the past. And rather than fixate on an actual remedy, the realisation of moral repair is as much bound up in the process as it is in the result. In sum, a reparations effort has both 'ends' and 'means' value" (Burkett, 2009, p. 510).

This idea fits well within a transitional justice framing, as opposed to a punitive one, where the goal is to reconcile historical injustice and responsibility with building a sense of unity and solidarity. Klinsky & Brankovic (2018) develop this to be at the core for their justification for applying transitional justice theories and practices, of which reparations is one, to the global climate regime.

Having established the aims and benefits of reparations, what might they consist of? Burkett states that any successful reparation attempt must at least contain three fundamental elements: an apology from the perpetrator, a monetary or other award that gives actual or symbolic weight to that apology, and most importantly, a commitment by the perpetrator not to repeat the offending act, also known as the "guarantee of nonrepetition" (Burkett, 2009, p. 526). It is important to note here that the question of who is responsible for climate change or for addressing its burden, and so who would in this case be considered the perpetrator, has been a key concern of climate justice and for which there is no established answer. Similarly to Burkett, Boxill (1979, p. 259) reflects on how reparation goes beyond a *transfer of resources* and requires the perpetrator to *acknowledge* the injustice of his act. In his words:

> "Part of what is involved in rectifying an injustice in an acknowledgment on the part of the transgressor that what he is doing is required of him because of his prior error. This concession of error seems required by the premise that every person is equal in worth and dignity. Without the acknowledgment of error, the injurer implies that the injured has been treated in a manner that befits him; hence, he cannot feel that the injured party is his equal. In such a case, even if the unjust party repairs the damage he has caused, justice does not yet obtain between himself and the victim"

Accordingly, in the case of climate-related migration and displacement, it is a requirement that the act of migrating or being displaced due to climate change is treated as an injustice and a moral wrong. To speak of migration using the language of opportunity, solution and development is, referencing the quote above, *to imply the injured has been treated in a manner that befits him*. It achieves the opposite of validating and taking responsibility for the grief that islanders might feel due to climate-related migration and displacement.

Reparations might take three different forms: restitution, compensation and satisfaction. Each of these forms might contribute to different elements of a reparation process laid out above, an apology, some form of award and a guarantee of non-repetition. For instance, compensation as a form of reparations might contribute towards a monetary award in efforts to repair. Alternatively, a satisfaction measure might take the form of an apology and include a guarantee of non-repetition.

The ideal behind reparations is 'full restitution', but there are times when this will not be possible, such as in the case of climate-related displacement and other forms such as compensation and satisfaction will be necessary (De Grieff, 2006). Within these, there are two general categories of reparations measures: material and symbolic. Material reparations might assume the form of compensation through payment either in cash or negotiable instruments and symbolic reparations are more aligned with the form of satisfaction, which might include other measures such as rehabilitation and official apologies, amongst others. It is important to introduce the caveat that these are not clear-cut categories and even though material measures tend to fall under compensation and symbolic ones under satisfaction, measures with 'satisfaction' aims might often require material or monetary contributions. In the context of climate change, compensation and material reparations have so far featured most, and it is these two that I critically review in the next section.

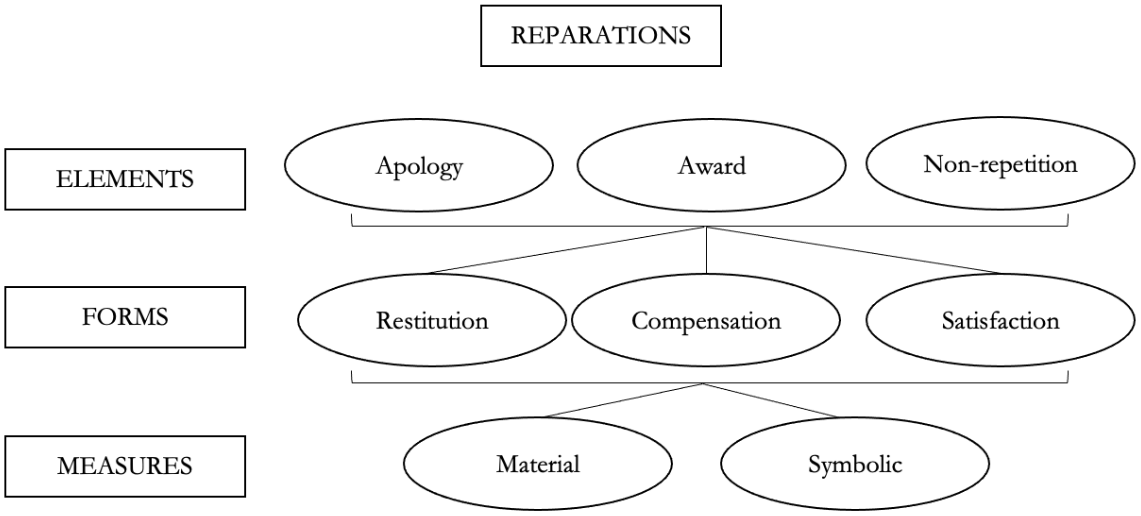


Figure 10: Reparations Concepts

6.3.2. Compensation and its limitations

Of the three forms of reparations recognised by international law, compensation has been the one to receive the most detailed attention in the context of climate change. Unlike in other situations where reparations might be relevant, restitution is not possible in the context of climate-related displacement, where the wrong consists of the inhabitability, if not disappearance, of entire communities' homelands. In place of restitution, therefore, the focus has mainly fallen on compensation.

Compensation first emerged in the context of climate change in relation to the proposal of loss and damage as a third pillar, to sit alongside mitigation and adaptation. In 1991, AOSIS proposed an international insurance pool to compensate SIDS for the impacts of sea-level rise. Since then, loss and damage has been gaining attention and has developed in a variety of ways, drifting away however from compensation being at the core of the matter. Instead, the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) for Loss and Damage Associated with Climate Change Impacts (UNFCCC, 2014a) was assigned three primary functions: (1) 'enhancing knowledge and understanding of comprehensive risk management approaches to loss and damage'; (2) 'strengthening dialogue, coordination, coherence and synergies among relevant stakeholders'; and (3) 'enhancing action and support, including finance, technology and capacity-building'. Some scholars however have brought back compensation as an important and distinctive approach to loss and damage (Page and Heyward, 2017).

Compensation can be thought of in a variety of ways. One immediate way of thinking about it is in material or monetary terms. De Grieff (2006, p. 453) defines compensation as "payments in either cash or negotiable instruments, or of service packages, which may in turn include provisions for education, health, and housing". This has in fact been used in previous displacement programmes in the Maldives. When islanders from Gaadhoo where relocated to Fonadhoo, they received the provision of a house and MVR 60,000 or MVR 100,000 and rent assistance (Azfa *et al.*, 2020). One of this study's key findings was that there were significant shortcomings or limitations with this approach. A first problem was the fact that there were fewer houses than in their original island resulting in larger families having to live in cramped apartments. This might have been due to the fact that during the 'opaque' decision-making process, not all registered their properties. Those who did get a house commented on the poor state in which they found them when they moved in. They did not have a water supply, which Azfa et al (2020) reflect led the population to becoming dependent on bottled water and they lacked privacy, having no curtains or boundary walls, which the new residents had to bear the cost of installing. Another issue was around livelihood assets such as coconut palms that were not adequately compensated for. The lowest price for a coconut tree would be MVR 1500-2000 (70-94GBP) and many did not get any money for the ones they owned on the island. The lack of compensation was attributed to coconut palms not being registered, leading the authors of the study to highlight that those not privy to formal processes were perceived to be worse off as a result of the resettlement. They quote the former council president, who, to put the issue in perspective, stated: "There are people who own 1000 to 2000 palm trees" (Azfa et al., 2020, p. 11). It seems therefore that insufficient compensation was granted. In this example, this was due to assets being poorly accounted for and therefore not compensated. According to the findings of my study however, it came down to no amount of money being able to compensate for the loss that climate-related displacement would imply. As an interview with Transparency Maldives revealed through the following quotes:

> "Again, no money, not even being relocated to the most developed piece of land, we will not be completely, whatever we lost cannot be completely given back to the community. We cannot be compensated for whatever we lost, for example our homes that we lose might be of the highest quality but there are so many other things"
>
> "Developed countries are contributing to climate change and we are losing our homes, our homes are getting damaged, no amount of money again"
>
> "You can't give money and produce this much carbon or other harmful things to the environment and then pay"

De Grieff (2006) reflects that one of the main sources of dissatisfaction with most reparations awards is the fact that beneficiaries frequently consider them insufficient compensation. He argues that to avoid the risk of inviting reparation programmes' designers or beneficiaries to interpret them as an attempt to monetise the life of victims or their experiences of trauma, reparation efforts should be framed as attempting to make a contribution to the victims or survivors' quality of life (De Grieff, 2006). This is not to say money is not important, as a financial mechanism will be needed regardless. It is to say however that the loss implied by climate-related migration would not be easily compensated for with a sum of money or a set of service packages tailored to improve islanders' livelihoods materially.

Page and Heyward (2017) draw from Goodin's account to make a useful distinction between means-based compensation and ends-based compensation, in order to guide a normative structure to respond to particular losses. As established in Chapter I, objects and resources matter because of their relation to various important human ends. Valued human ends might vary significantly from person to person, but no matter a person's particular projects or goals, some general human ends are thought of as uncontroversial. For example, it is reasonable to expect nourishment, shelter, reasonable health or human security and human rights as human ends. Other ends might include artistic endeavour, pursuing a family or a life of religious devotion amongst others. Chapter IV established some human ends valued by the islanders I interviewed. Some of the women shared pursuing a family and a life of religious devotion was part of their aspirations. Anha's hope was to become a mother one day, whilst Ainy wanted to become a master certified Qur'an teacher and educate her daughter in Islamic culture. Similarly to Ainy, Aminath's hope was placed on her children having the experience of growing up on the islands. Alternatively, Nissa wished to further her knowledge and skill in traditional jewellery making methods and techniques integrating elements of the island environment into her pieces. Whether compensation makes a wronged individual 'whole again' depends on whether or not the extent to which they can continue to pursue the same ends as before the disruption.

There are two categories that might disrupt or damage human ends, the loss or damage of 'means' to pursue certain ends, or the loss and damage of the 'ends' themselves. With this in mind, there are at least two methods through which compensation might be pursued: 'means-based compensation' and 'ends-based compensation'. 'Means-replacing compensation' aims to leave a person in the same condition as they were before the unjustified damage by providing the victim with a bundle of alternative goods and opportunities in order for the agent to have the "same objective capacity to promote exactly the same end as does the [original bundle]" (Goodin, 1989, p. 65). An example of this might be granting financial assistance to repair damaged facilities that allowed a person to practice livelihood or leisure activities. To illustrate this, we can return to Nissa's valued end of creating jewellery pieces rooted in and inspired by her island heritage and environment. For example, if her tools or materials were made unavailable, 'means-based compensation' could look like either: returning the tools and materials, repairing them or replacing them. 'Ends-based compensation', on the other hand, takes place when the means is not reparable and thus the end ceases to be possible. This would be the case if the tools and materials could not be returned, repaired or replaced and hence Nissa could no longer practice jewellery making as a livelihood and leisure activity. The aim here is to provide the agent with a bundle of goods and opportunities so that they can gain the same level of subjective well being from having the capability to pursue another equally satisfying end (Goodin, 1989). In Nissa's case, this would mean providing her with an alternative way of achieving what jewellery making provided her, a source of income, a fulfilling practice and a sense of connection and belonging to her island. As Page and Heyward (2017, p. 364) put it: "Rather than enabling her [the agent] to continue her life without hindrance, we might say, ends-based compensation provides assistance to a victim to *change* [emphasis in original] it".

Page and Heyward's (2017) is a useful structure to follow when thinking about compensating loss and damage, however, in the case of SIDS, as acknowledged by the authors themselves, the climatic disruption might be so severe, such that they to become uninhabitable or disappear, that the implied losses and damages are incommensurable and there is no way of making the victims 'whole again'. Although compensation measures will still be required, in monetary or material forms, justice will not have yet been attained, for there is a range of symbolic losses that will have not yet been tended to. I now consider what might be required to repair symbolic loss.

6.3.3. Satisfaction: Cultivating practices of remembrance as symbolic reparations

The section above established that notwithstanding the importance of compensation, climate-related displacement from SIDS was not fully addressed or 'repaired' through compensation efforts alone. Islanders interviewed felt that a monetary calculation and material substitutes for their resources did not fully capture the injustice of displacement nor the immensity of their loss. This justifies the turn to satisfaction, under which symbolic reparations fall. Symbolic reparations respond to victims' demands for truth, recognition, justice and accountability. These might be tangible such as the establishment of museums, monuments or commemorative sites and changing street names and other public places. They can also have a more performative and less permanent character such as public apologies, act of acknowledgment and recognition or annual ceremonies (De Grieff, 2006; Meyer, 2006; Heyward, 2014; Greeley *et al.*, 2020). The focus of satisfaction measures in the context of climate change, or in particular climate-related migration and displacement, falls on those aspects of loss and damage that hold value beyond material and monetary terms (García-Portela, 2020). Therefore, satisfaction measures attempt to address non-economic losses and damages. As satisfaction measures, Garcia-Portela (2020) distinguishes two different categories of symbolic reparations. They can either be focused on victims, what she calls (victim-centred) or on the perpetrators and their relation to the harm suffered by victims (agent-centred). The former (victim-centred), which might include remembrance, are independent of the cause or origin of the harm suffered. In contrast, the distinguishing characteristic of the latter (agent-centred) is that they acknowledge the origin of the harm. Accordingly, they serve different purposes. Agent-centred symbolic reparations aim to acknowledge and take responsibility for the role of the perpetrator in the injustice suffered by the victims which could lead to restoring solidarity and the moral relationship between the two parties. Victim-centred symbolic reparations are less concerned about the relationship between perpetrator and victim and have the purpose instead of preserving the victims' history, culture and sense of identity. In this section, I draw from islanders identified non-economic losses discussed in Chapter V, to outline what might be required of justice in terms of satisfaction measures, or in other words, symbolic reparations.

Chapter V established islanders' fear over the loss of their memories if they were to be displaced. When asked about imagining a future elsewhere, the most common response was about the loss of the past through the loss of their memories. This might not have seemed obvious at first, but as developed throughout earlier chapters, memories fade through the natural process of forgetting, and remembering requires an active effort in which place plays a fundamental role (Casey, 2000). It is in supporting the act of remembering, in the absence of place, that justice comes to play.

There is a well-established relationship between memory and justice. After conflict and wrongdoing, significant importance has been attributed to processes of memorialisation and remembrance as forms of symbolic reparations. For example, South Africa established a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to recover from Apartheid. Other processes of remembrance and memorialization have included the establishment of museums or building of sculptures and monuments. Acts and processes of remembrance and memorialization have been granted different values. In responding to the question of what good will come from remembering, there are at least two established accounts (Blustein, 2008). The first is a consequentialist account. Consequentialism places value in outcomes and justifies action on the intrinsic goodness of such outcomes. Examples of a consequentialist reasoning for the importance of remembering might be along the lines of remembering the past in order to make amends for it, to ensure non-repetition or to promote collective and individual healing. It is because of the outcomes that remembering will bring about that remembrance is important. Alternatively, the expressivist account identifies value not on the outcomes of remembering but on the process of remembering itself. Remembering is seen as an expression of love, honour and admiration. The expression of these emotions and attitudes in the memory of what is lost is reckoned to have intrinsic value. In discussing these two accounts, Blustein (2008) develops the moral foundations of what he calls 'a responsibility to remember'. He argues that we not only have a responsibility to remember what was bad in the past, about which consequentialist accounts are concerned, but also for what was good, which the expressivist account allows for. It is the expressionist account that more closely resonates with what so far islanders I interviewed spoke of. To remember would allow for a continued connection to their homelands.

The focus of the memory and justice literature has tended to be on remembering traumatic memories and the injustice or wrongdoing itself as well as on its collective character. Scholars have pointed at the growing interest in memory in relation to justice to have been greatly influenced by the Holocaust. Blustein (2008) reflects on how this would help understand the tendency to focus on traumatic, as opposed to normal, memory. However, there are exceptions to this. For example, The District Six Public Sculpture Project (conceptualised as a public art practice in post-apartheid Cape Town within the notion of symbolic reparation by the authors) engaged not exclusively with the effect of apartheid but also with 'everyday' memories of people and place. There are also exceptions to the tendency to focus on the collective character. For example, in 'The Moral Demands of Memory', Blustein (2008) looks at both collective and individual memory. However, the development of individual memory focuses mainly on personal matters such as the death of loved ones instead of individual memories that hold value in relation to a broader injustice. Despite these exceptions, these tendencies are not surprising, for the development of symbolic reparations tends to follow from the wrongdoing or the injustice having taken place. This is however not the case for climate-related migration and displacement from the Maldives, for the injustice has not yet taken place and it is unknown when or the extent to which it will. Therefore, the call to remember from the participants of my study responds to different needs or characteristics and a different conceptualisation of the importance of memory. Islanders were concerned about losing their childhood and everyday memories that held the practices and meanings of their ways of life. Although unavoidably these have a collective element, it was their individual and personal memories that they feared losing. As Ilhama speaks of her memories: "I had to take a picture of my home and the surrounding area, because it contains a lot of sweet memories of my childhood and memories of my family especially my dad. I had so much fun and have spent a joyful life in there". Or Ainy, of what she would miss:

> "If we lost Maldives, I am going to miss my beautiful beaches and everywhere. I don't want that to happen. I am going to miss these beaches, where I sit alone and think about life. I think about all the problems. Most of my happiness and sadness I shared here at the beach alone. So I am going to really miss this place. I need a quiet and peaceful place, and I think Maldives is the place for a peaceful life. So Maldives is the best, I can't imagine a life without Maldives, it's very difficult".

The importance of remembrance has been hinted at in the context of climate change and particularly under loss and damage. Barnet et al. (2016) for instance speak of the potential of memorializing as a way of engaging with loss and minimising the harm of grief. As Barnett, Tschakert, Head, & Adger (2016, p. 978) state: "There is a long tradition of memorializing places, practices, and peoples who have been lost, and these take diverse forms including films, graves, museums, paintings, photographs, rituals, sculptures, shrines, stories, and songs. These help to manage grief and sustain the association with what would otherwise have been forgotten". Sakakibara, (2008) shares a particular example of story-telling among the Iñupiat of Point Hope in Alaska. Having already faced the disappearance of their homes due to environmental change and the experience of a new homeland, stories served as a tie between the two spaces and as a way of maintaining connectivity to a disappearing place. As Sakakibara (2008, p. 473) puts it:

> "The Iñupiat memory stays alive with their home, and the drowning home is to be remembered as the storytelling practice keeps the human kinship with the land visible and tangible as a cultural form of communication. The sea may be eroding the Iñupiat land, but storytelling weaves old and new homes into a viable place of cultural survival"

A second value for remembrance emerges in the context of personal and everyday memories, in an attempt to preserve the functioning of self-identity. There is an important connection between our memories and our identities. As Schechtman (2004, p. 89) states: "personal continuation […] depends crucially on *having access* to one's history and recognizing the connections between one's present and one's past". The relationship between memory and identity is reciprocal and evolving, in the sense that memories both illustrate aspects of who we are and shape the way in which we understand our lives and interact with those around us. The loss of memories, in a similar way to how De Shalit (2011) speaks of the loss of place, represents a threat to the functioning of self-identity. Following on from this, I argue that if they are to be displaced, islanders from the Maldives have a *right* to remember. Ensuring such a right would be conceived as a form of symbolic reparations.

So far, the relationship between memory and justice has tended to be conceptualised in terms of duties and obligations, through Bluestein's (2008) assertion regarding the *responsibility* to remember. An agent has been wronged, and the perpetrator of such wrong holds responsibility in responding to such wrong. As discussed above, this coincides with the 'backward-looking' aspect of reparations. I propose here a shift in terms of emphasis by conceptualising the relationship between memory and justice in terms of having a *right* to remember. Speaking in terms of rights, as opposed to responsibilities, responds to my empirical findings in at least three important ways. First, having a *right* to remember is best aligned with the 'forward-looking' elements of a reparations effort. Although grounded in a sense of justice and responsibility, the emphasis is on improving the well-being and lives of affected populations. Second, the proposal of having a *right* to remember coincides with victim-centred symbolic measures, as opposed to agent-centred. Similarly with the 'forward-looking' element of reparations, they prioritise preserving the victims' valued losses, which in this case have been identified as memories (García-Portela, 2020). Third, the focus on having a *right* to remember responds best to the identified set of needs outlined above in relation to remembering. That is, for memories to be of islanders' childhood, everyday lives and happy significant moments, as opposed to traumatic or centred around the event or process of the injustice.

Yet, how ought such remembrance take place and what would it look like? Scholars have argued that although being an innovative juridical tool, memorialisation, as a form of symbolic reparations, has often failed to be effective in its outcomes due to a lack of conceptual elaboration and underutilised potential. For example, they have often failed to be truly victim-centred and participatory, in line with a location and context-specific identity and to give adequate consideration to aesthetic dimensions. Drawing from previous cases of memorialisation and in response to these shortcomings, I develop some guidelines and considerations in order to cultivate practices of remembrance in the case of climate-related migration and displacement from SIDS.

An initial point of attention is finding an identity that is location and context appropriate. Naidu, (2004) in reflecting on the South African TRC, highlights the fact that there has been a tendency to use Western consultants in relation to legacy projects. This, together with the idea that memorialisation has "taken a holocaust identity" (Naidu, 2004, unlabelled page) emphasised the need to train South Africans in processes of public memory to play a role in community and national processes of memorialisation and acts of remembrance. Through this, there would be a better chance for these practices to be aligned with and representative of the appropriate culture. Citing an interview with Troy Philli, they state the challenge was for "South Africa to come up with memorialisation that has an African identity" (Naidu, 2004, unlabelled page). Were islanders from the Maldives to be displaced, this would be an important point to consider not only for the uniqueness of a national identity but for the uniqueness of the injustice that would have taken place. Furthermore, the so far identified memories that islanders wanted to hold on to were not memories of an injustice, for this has not yet taken place. Instead, it was their everyday, happy, and childhood memories that they felt most dearly about. Therefore, the developed identity would have to reflect the nature of the memories themselves as well as being location and context appropriate.

A second consideration in designing and undertaking remembrance efforts is for them to be victim-centred and participatory. The content and form of memorialization acts and processes need to respond to and speak to that which islanders have identified as a loss. The victims must play a central role in the entirety of the process, ranging from determining the nature, objects and form. They ought not to be "passive recipients of preconstructed meanings' but rather 'active participants in creating meaning" (Greely et al. 2020, p. 189). Lleras et al., (2019) reflect on the importance of participation towards the success of memorialisation efforts in their analysis of the effectiveness of *Voces pars transformer a Colombia* (Voices for the Transformation of Colombia), a temporary, 'living museum' ordered by the Law for Victims and Land Restitution (2011) to contribute to the symbolic reparation of the victims of the country's armed conflict. Victims actively participated both in the making of the exhibition and in curatorial processes of meaning making. Through these processes as well as experiencing the museum, victims reported to have 'felt accompanied' and to have gained a sense of public recognition for their life stories. Similar to Naidu (2004), Greeley et al., (2020) argue that there ought to be education programs that train victims on memorialization so they are aware of the scope of such acts and can articulate their needs. However, they should not bear the burden of becoming experts in all aspects of memorialization and symbolic reparations. Instead, as Barsalou & Baxter (2007, p. 2) state: "successful memorialization draws upon specialists from many fields- transitional justice experts, historians, museum designers, public artists, trauma specialists, and human rights activists, among others". Participants in my study stressed the importance of transparency and participation in decision-making processes and so it would be imperative to equally centre the importance of procedural justice in memorialisation efforts.

A third important component is to carefully think about the aesthetics of the acts or processes of memorializing and remembrance. Insofar as acts of memorialisation or remembrance imply the production of an object or gesture, the aesthetic qualities of that object or gesture are an important consideration. To illustrate, the landmark femicide case *González y Otras ('Campo Algodonero') v. Mexico,* as a case study from the Inter-American Human Rights System might serve as an example. The court, in determining symbolic reparations, concluded in the erection of a monument to commemorate the women victims of gender-based murder in Ciudad Juárez, which would come to be named *Flor de Arena.* Greeley et al. (2020) highlight a series of failures of aesthetic form and demonstrate their impact on the success of that symbolic reparation effort. A first issue regards the statue itself which the authors point out easily falls into patriarchal stereotypes, despite a hope that the monument would invite spectators to critically examine the relationships between gender stereotypes and sexual violence. Secondly, the monument, in adopting a traditional form of a figure on a pedestal, positions the viewer as passive agent and reduces possibilities of participation and active engagement from the spectator. A final issue regards the location of the sculpture which suffers from limited visibility due to its placement between a hotel parking lot and a vast empty field between two national highways. Altogether these highlight the importance of careful consideration of aesthetics in cultivating practices of remembrance as forms of symbolic reparations. It seems that realising the potential of aesthetics can imply realising the potential of memorialisation itself, which in Greeley et al. words (2020, p. 190) can be "a powerful opportunity to engage spectators of commemorative practices with victims in a transformative experience, linking the victim and the spectator, the individual and the collective, memory to reparation, justice to social change". Islanders I interviewed often spoke about elements of aesthetic value, such as beauty and associated feelings and meanings to particular landscapes and seascapes. It would thus be also important that through just processes, their conceptualisations of beauty, affect and meaning were represented in the acts, processes or places of remembrance.

These are so far only general guidelines or considerations, and it would require further research, at an appropriate time, to fully understand the particularities of islanders' preferences and demands over the content and form of what they wish to remember. Thinking about these considerations, however, is a starting point towards understanding how to respond to islanders' fear over losing their memories. If displaced due to climate change and unable to ever return, they have a right to remember and to be supported in their remembering through a range of memorializing practices.

This would constitute a form of symbolic reparation and contribute towards a comprehensive response to the injustice of climate-related migration and displacement from SIDS. It is important to note, however, that in being victim-centred, the proposal of having a *right* to remember only constitutes one element of a reparations effort, the element of award. To fulfil a reparations attempt, any process of memorisation developed under the *right* to remember would need to be grounded in the context of an apology and accompanied by a guarantee of non-repetition.

6.4. Conclusion

This chapter has examined how to remediate or respond to the injustice of climate-related displacement by integrating justice-related concerns of non-elites that focused on the non-material and symbolic dimensions of climate change. Section 6.2. examined the justice considerations that islanders shared regarding a future elsewhere. It was important that decision-making processes were transparent and participatory so they could be comprehensively grounded in the prospect of climate-related migration and displacement. It was also important that islanders had the choice to move together, and their future homes imitated the ways of life on the islands through the design of their dwelling and community spaces. Section 6.3. explored reparations as a framework to account for symbolic loss. Compensation efforts alone were conceived to be insufficient and so there was a need for measures of satisfaction, or symbolic reparations, to be integrated in order to account for that which is incommensurable. In particular, I placed a special emphasis on the importance of responding to the loss of memories and argued that islanders have a *right* to remember. I developed that cultivating practices of remembrance as a form of symbolic reparations might be an appropriate justice response to the feared loss of memories. This was considered important as a way of engaging with and managing grief and as a form or preserving the functioning of self-identity. Drawing on previous cases of memorialization efforts in response to an injustice, the following considerations were developed. Firstly, efforts of memorialization and remembrance need not follow previously established identities but find to address the context, location and nature of the injustice. Secondly, processes ought to be victim-centred and participatory. Victims should have access to training and a range of relevant experts throughout the process of designing acts of memorialization in a way that responds to their identified losses. Thirdly, questions of aesthetics need not be side-lined but should be understood as a fundamental component of the success and potential of memorialization and remembrance efforts as a form of symbolic reparation.

In advancing these points, this chapter has shed light on a different range of justice-related issues and proposals that respond to islanders' concerns and focus on the non-material and symbolic dimensions of climate-related migration and displacement. In doing so, it has contributed to the literature on justice and climate-related migration and displacement in an innovative way that attempts to bring together empirical and normative approaches.

Chapter VII. Conclusions

7.1. Introduction

The motivation of this thesis was to explore, from a range of positions, what would constitute just climate futures in the scenario of climate-related migration and displacement from SIDS. This chapter concludes the study by first reviewing the rationale of the thesis and then presenting the findings and contributions in relation to three areas of scholarship: futures thinking, movement and loss, and climate justice. I also reflect on the contributions of my methodological approach. I then turn to discuss areas of future research and end with some concluding reflections.

7.2. Thesis findings and contributions

This thesis identified that, overall, current ways of thinking about and researching the climate change and migration nexus were portraying islanders' futures as foreclosed. Much of the academic literature starts from the assumption that a future on the islands is not at all possible, alongside grey literature rhetoric of 'sinking islands' and thus reducing islanders' futures to 'moving or drowning'. In relation to the notion of future foreclosure, three issues were raised. First, I observed that ceasing to conceive of a future on the islands had an impact on the treatment of islanders' capacity to aspire, hope and imagine. Second, I established that assuming the end of life on the islands meant that movement and loss are taken for granted. Third, by taking up positions that seemed resigned to inevitable migration and loss in turn shifted attention away from islanders' right to remain at home and the international community's responsibility to ensure it.

It followed from these three concerns that it is important to hold the near, medium-term and longer-term future of the islands open. This, however, represented an important tension in relation to the scientific predictions on sea-level rise (IPCC, 2013). Whilst the foreclosure of island futures raises a number of concerns, it is in line with many scientific projections which suggest that the islands' uninhabitability is only a matter of time. In unpacking this tension in Chapter I, I raised the following questions: Ought we to hold the possibility of futures *in situ* open against what scientific projections seems to suggest? Is to hold the future of the islands open wishful thinking? Would this mean placing too much faith in political, social and scientific institutions that have so far failed to respond to the severity and urgency of climate change? Alternatively, is it premature to foreclose the future of the islands amongst high levels of regional scientific uncertainty? Would it mean attributing too much power to scientific projections and not enough belief in human societies being innovative and resilient in their own ways? The thesis set out to explore this tension and place the different possible scenarios in dialogue with each other. The hope was that learning about how islanders imagined a future on the islands might in turn contribute towards developing a fairer version of a possible future both in and outside the Maldives.

Scholars have developed a number of proposals and suggestions in relation to what just climate future might look like for displaced populations, drawing from their areas of disciplinary and geographical expertise (Burkett, 2009; Heyward and Ödalen, 2016; Gonzalez, 2020). The unique contribution of this thesis lies in an inter-disciplinary approach to the same pursuit which has allowed to establish relationships between a range of different components in the field of climate-related migration and displacement. I have examined the affective and philosophical relationships between islanders' hopes and aspirations, stories and perceptions of mobility, predictions of loss, and anticipations of justice. Exploring these elements alongside one another, as opposed to independently, has allowed for a far more comprehensive understanding of climate-related migration and displacement and led to a range of particular findings and contributions in three areas of scholarship: futures thinking, mobility and loss, and climate justice. The next sections review the thesis findings and contributions in relation to each of these respectively.

7.2.1. Futures Thinking

In exploring the ways in which islanders think about and imagine their futures, Chapter IV addressed the first objective of the thesis, to advance the literature on futures thinking in the context of climate change. Embracing islanders' aspirations, hopes and imaginings, the chapter explored the future on three different scales: the national, the local island and the individual level. The national narrative revealed a range of *in situ* adaptation measures and preferred development pathways which signified alternative futures for the Maldives, outside of the 'moving or drowning' dichotomy. The localised island narrative revolved around the idea of de-centralisation and the development of each island. Participants shared that the reasons behind wanting to de-centralise resources and develop their home islands were to minimise the need to relocate to Male, and to increase infrastructural resilience to climate change. The individual narrative showed how islanders think about their futures in relation to their heritage, the identity of their islands, the natural elements of their environments and their culture and religion.

These findings both challenge and advance knowledge on island futures and particularly in the context of the Maldives, a subject which has been relatively understudied given that the majority of climate-related migration and displacement work has been conducted in Pacific Islands. The findings thus bring much needed empirical data on alternative futures for island communities. In emphasising the end of human life on the islands, much scholarship has focused on thinking about a future elsewhere for islanders. By shifting the focus back onto the islands, this research has helped to shed light on different ways of thinking about how to respond to climate change and the threat that it poses to the Maldives. Within these alternative future imaginings, a conceptual contribution regarding adaptation and resilience is also apparent. In Chapter II, I introduced the idea that understandings of adaptation can be context or location specific (Hartzell-Nichols, 2011). The findings of this thesis have contributed towards nuancing the way adaptation and resilience are understood with reference to islanders interviewed. My findings are that islanders' conceptualisations of adaptation and resilience were intimately linked to the habitability of the islands and understood in terms of the islands' natural adaptive capacity, land reclamation and elevation, floating land and the de-centralisation of resources. To abandon the islands necessarily surpassed the limits of adaptation. These findings challenge understandings of adaptation and resilience tied to mobility and coincide with recent conceptualisations of land reclamation as an increasingly recognised adaptation strategy (Klepp and Vafeidis, 2019).

Altogether, these contributions re-define assumptions about where the future can and ought to take place and shed light on a disjuncture between academic and policy framings of the climate change and migration nexus and the way these themes are understood by the inhabitants I encountered in the Maldives. My study thus emphasises the crucial point that literature and policy engaging with the future of SIDS in relation to climate change should be far more attuned to islanders' own future imaginings.

7.2.2. Movement and Loss

This thesis also makes an empirical and theoretical contribution to literature on movement and loss. In addressing the second objective of this thesis, Chapter V explored the implications of leaving the islands behind and was structured in two parts. The first part focused on movement and explored two central messages recognised in the literature against the data generated during my research in the Maldives: the idea that mobility is at the core of island communities' identities and the assertion that climate change is just another driver influencing mobility and non-mobility decision-making. I established that rather than mobility, it is permanency that best characterises the current relationship to dwelling of the islanders I interviewed. This was also seen in Chapter IV, when participants shared that one of the motivations behind wanting to develop their local islands was to reduce the need to relocate to Male. In investigating the claim that climate change is one more driver amongst many influencing decisions around mobility, I analysed the differences between the kind of movement that islanders encounter in their everyday lives and the kind of movement that climate change would lead to if all the islands of the Maldives became uninhabitable. Whilst the current movement islanders engage in tends to be intra-national and retains the possibility of return, climate-related migration according to predictions would imply being internationally displaced and would likely erase the chance of ever returning. Furthermore, climate change stands as a morally distinct driver in mobility and non-mobility decision-making. Climate-related migration and displacement would represent a significant degree of forced movement and affected populations would not be responsible for the phenomenon causing their need to relocate. These findings make a contribution in providing greater nuance in young islanders' relationship to movement both broadly speaking and in the particular context of climate change.

The second part of the chapter turned to loss as the second implication of leaving the islands behind. The basis of this section was that as established in Chapter II, so far, engagement in the literature with loss has mainly concentrated on material and economic losses and when focused on non-economic losses, this has tended to be in a 'list' or 'typology' format (Tschakert et al., 2017). In exploring that which is of value to islanders through the locus of the everyday, the coconut tree, the shoreline and the home emerged as the main themes representing islanders' perception of loss. Each of those elements held a range of values which went beyond the material or physical properties. The coconut tree, the shoreline and the home were also deeply valued in the Maldives as central artefacts in islanders' everyday practices and as artefacts from which islanders derived a range of meanings. Thus, despite the focus in the climate change-related literature on material and economic dimensions of life on the islands, islanders perhaps not surprisingly foreground the value of everyday practices and meanings, and it is those they most fear losing if displaced. In pointing to this lived reality, my findings extend understanding of what islanders value and offer a powerful antidote to the prevailing orthodoxy. The coconut tree, the shoreline and the home also shared an overarching role in preserving memories that islanders feared losing. To no longer see or live alongside the coconut tree, the shoreline and the home posed a threat to islanders' sense of self through the potential loss of memories. To my knowledge, the loss of memories had not previously been identified or placed as a non-economic loss of climate-related impacts. It is a key contribution of this thesis thus to expand the conceptual meaning of non-economic loses by integrating the loss of memories into current understandings.

These new insights on movement and loss enrich current knowledge in the climate change and migration nexus and contribute towards a body of work which challenges the idea of migration as a 'ready-made' and inevitable solution to climate change. It shows, in the context of the Maldives, the threat that climate change poses to islanders' ways of life and valued human ends. By doing so, it provides further empirical evidence on the nature and the extent of the injustice of climate-related migration and displacement.

7.2.3. Climate Justice

The third area of scholarship to which this thesis contributes is justice in the particular context of climate-related migration and displacement. To this end, Chapter VI addressed the third objective of the thesis, to explore the justice considerations for a future elsewhere, assuming in this instance the future inhabitability of the Maldivian islands. Like Chapter V, this chapter was structured in two parts.

The first part responded to the relative scarcity of empirical knowledge on the justice considerations that everyday people hold in relation to climate-related migration and displacement. One finding relates to islanders' demands for procedural justice, which they spoke about in terms of transparency and participation in decision-making processes. This coincides with similar demands in the literature for the voices of affected populations to be integrated in planning stages and decision-making processes (Farbotko and McMichael, 2019; McMichael, Katonivualiku and Powell, 2019). Yet it stresses the importance of procedural justice in capturing the affective dimensions of climate change. Transparency and participation in decision-making processes were deemed important by islanders interviewed beyond being normative principles of procedural justice and in ensuring their sentiments about their islands were at the core of potential relocation planning. A second finding was that islanders wished to move together and that their future homes should reproduce island life, both in the design of dwelling and community spaces. These findings represent a contribution in relation to the emic centrality of justice considerations which in turn contribute towards broader efforts in justice theorising to engage and draw from empirical data (Ackerly *et al.*, 2021). Further, they highlight the relevance of the design of the physical environment towards communities' well-being and thus point towards an important relationship to be explored between justice and urban design in the context of climate-related migration and displacement (Klinsky and Mavrogianni, 2020).

The second part of the chapter examined reparations as a justice framework that incorporates the non-material and symbolic dimensions of island life and climate change, which I highlighted in Chapter II as a second limitation of current approaches to justice. I established that a reparations approach to climate-related migration and displacement allowed to tend to the grief and symbolic loss suffered by affected populations and in doing so, it allowed to go beyond affected populations' legal status as the primary or exclusive concern of justice. Within a reparations approach, I showed that compensation measures were insufficient in fully accounting for the injustice and loss of displacement and so I incorporated satisfaction measures. Under this section, I responded to the loss of memories identified in Chapter V to argue that if they are displaced, islanders have a *right* to remember, and that the international community has a duty to ensure this right. Cultivating practices of remembrance could represent a form of symbolic reparations and address one of the main potential losses shared by the islanders I interviewed. I reviewed previous memorialisation efforts to outline a set of considerations. Namely, the importance of having a context and location tailored identity, to put victims at the centre and to ensure participatory processes in the design and undertaking of activities and to not overlook aesthetics elements but instead think of them as fundamental components in the pursuit of remembrance efforts.

This analysis constitutes a normative contribution to debates on justice in the context of climate-related migration and displacement from SIDS. I advanced the debate on how to respond to symbolic loss and in doing so, contributed to recent scholarship bringing climate change and reparations literature together (Page and Heyward, 2017; Klinsky and Brankovic, 2018). In particular, I contribute to this area of scholarship by establishing the cultivation of practices of remembrance as a potential response to the loss of memories. As summarised above, I grounded this in arguing that islanders have a *right* to remember, as a way of tending to their grief and to preserve their functioning of self-identity. The core of this contribution lies in shifting the emphasis of the relationship between justice and remembrance from *responsibilities* to *rights*. Speaking in terms of rights is best able to capture the 'forward-looking' elements of reparations, the 'victim-centred' identified focus and the preservation of the valued losses of affected populations.

7.2.4. Reflections on methodology

The findings and contributions outlined above are a result of the particular methodology employed in this study. Whilst I have not developed a novel methodology *per se*, the methodological approach in this thesis is innovative and original in the context of climate-related migration and displacement and justice in ways that I consider worthy of note here. Namely, the use of qualitative, participatory, and creative methods and the particularly and relatively unusual focus on young women.

The use of creative methods has resulted in a visual and affect-rich contribution to conceptualising the climate change and migration nexus. The drawing element of the workshops at MNU allowed participants to represent a visual take on island futures. In a field largely dominated by scientific predictions and quantitative analysis, this contributed a new perspective on how to approach futures thinking (Boyd et. al. 2009; Hulme, 2011).

Similarly, the use of participatory photography in exploring themes of hope and loss helped to uncover representations of what is of value to islanders through embracing their own subjectivity (Walker, Osbahr and Cardey, 2021). It aided in representing and making tangible the non-material and symbolic in appropriately creative, non-verbal ways. In particular, the 'imagery' of loss reflects an innovative way of approaching recent and growing explorations of non-economic losses (McNamara and Jackson, 2018). A particular methodological contribution lies in the making of postcards to explore what was of most significance and value to the islanders in my sample. In ways that were different to the use of participatory photography in this research, making postcards was a more focused and intentional activity. Engaged in moments of individual reflection, islanders concluded our various interactions with one final activity. This had a visual and a written component which beyond highlighting a range of important matters, served as a *souvenir* of the interactions, and also relationships, I had established with the participants. It was also a practice of remembrance and in some ways, represents a new object where memories were stored. These methodological approaches have revealed the potential of qualitative, participatory, and creative methods for exploring the topic of climate-related migration and displacement.

A second area of reflection is the focus on women. As I indicated in Chapter III, women do not often participate in government consultation with island communities and have increasingly adopted domestic roles (Faizal and Rajagopalan, 2005). A recent study about coastal protection in the Maldives pointed to similar dynamics regarding the lack of integration of women in planning and decision-making processes (Ratter, Hennig and Zahid, 2019). In particular, and in line with my reflections on positionality, I engaged mostly with young women. This represented an important, and often neglected, perspective on the subject matter of this thesis. For instance, engaging with their experiences and expectations of mobility has led to expanding understandings of women's movement on the islands and nuance the different emotions that accompany movement. Furthermore, speaking to women through their roles in motherhood or care towards young people on the islands foregrounded an intergenerational component in climate-related migration and displacement. In this regard, this thesis advances the literature by placing women's narratives at the core of the climate change and migration nexus and by contributing to a small but growing body of work on women's perspectives on island life (Karides, 2017; Doma Lama, 2018).

7.3. Future Research

This thesis paves way for future research in a number of areas. First, it is the position of this thesis that islanders are owed every effort in ensuring they can continue to call their islands home. Therefore, there is a need for further research committed to exploring how a future on the islands might be possible. This research would need to be grounded in empirical work that engages with affected populations and their future imaginings to continue to define the possibilities and limits of what adaptation and resilience might look like. It could be a potential learning area to compare the future imaginings of island communities across different regions, such as the Indian Ocean and Pacific Islands to explore the different ways of life that are preferred by island communities and how it might be possible to ensure them into the future.

Second, this thesis has advanced knowledge on loss, through the particular perspectives of young women. It would be interesting to advance the investigation of loss from a wider cross-section of social categories, whilst maintaining a similar focus on the non-material and symbolic. It would also be enlightening to engage with island migrants from the Maldives who have settled abroad to understand how they perceive the notion of the disappearance of their islands. What affective and material role does the possibility of return play for them, whether temporary or permanent? How has their relationship to the islands changed since their relocation? What is there to learn from all these experiences in thinking about just climate futures? On a methodological note, in this thesis I have developed methods to uncover the different meanings and values that objects, and places hold for individuals. It would be interesting to continue to explore different methodological approaches to pursue the same aim in the context of climate change.

Third, there is room to continue to explore the potential of a reparations framework to think about justice in the context of climate change and particularly climate-related migration and displacement from SIDS. This thesis identified the loss of memories as a non-economic loss in the context of climate change and argued for affected populations to have a *right* to remember. It would be interesting to explore what *in situ* practices of remembrance as a form of symbolic reparations could look like for different island communities. However, there would be complexities in initiating such research. Although it would be important if islanders are displaced, it might be premature to start engaging with those questions now, for it would contribute to the foreclosing of the islands' futures. Thus, it would take further and careful consideration to settle on an appropriate time to tackle such research.

Lastly, and according to the majority of uptake in the literature, this thesis has conceptualised climate-related migration and displacement from SIDS to imply international movement. It is against this scenario that themes of hope, movement, loss, and justice have been elicited, thought about, analysed, and interpreted. However, in line with the future visions shared by my participants and the emergence of new projects, it might be the case that climate-related migration and displacement occurs within the Maldivian islands. It would be important to explore similar themes of hope, movement, loss, and justice particularly within this other potential context.

7.4. Conclusion

Climate change presents a number of threats to island communities, towards which they have barely contributed. Amongst these, the distinct possibility exists that the way of life as we know it on the islands might cease to be possible. What this thesis has demonstrated is that alternative futures to 'moving or drowning' might be possible in listening and investing in islanders' conceptualisations of the futures of their islands. Current projects in the Maldives support this, such as the Maldives Floating City project. Of equal importance to committing to a future on the islands is holding justice at the core of thinking about and researching climate-related migration and displacement. If we, as the international community, fail to ensure islanders can continue to call their islands home, it will be imperative to frame and recognise climate-related migration and displacement as an injustice.

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