**FORCED MIGRATION, CONFLICT, AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE LAKE CHAD REGION:**

**PERSPECTIVES ON INTERNATIONAL DYNAMICS AND THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESPONSE TO ENHANCING MIGRANT RESILIENCE AND COMMUNITY COHESION**

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by

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# ABSTRACT

4.4 million people have been forced to migrate in the Lake Chad Region since 2014 because of violence and climate change (IOM, 2019) causing one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. This capstone is dedicated to analyzing the context of the crisis to determine four crucial aspects that I consider essential for any future development strategies.  Those aspects are: 1) how the gap between internally and internationally displaced migration must be bridged; 2) how there is a correlation between climate change, conflict, and forced migration; 3) the importance of the anthropological response to this phenomenon; and 4) how displaced individuals could be entitled to restitution from the actors responsible for the irreversible effects of climate change yet global habits must change. It was intended for the completion of this capstone to conduct ethnographic fieldwork in Chad but because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic this was not possible.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH


Luis Felipe Romero Hicks Murakami holds a bachelor's degree in Multicultural Relations (cultural anthropology) from the University of the Americas Puebla and is currently working towards a master's degree in international development at Cornell University. Exploring multiculturalism has been a passion that led Luis Felipe to visit more than 50 countries, additional to living and studying in China, France, Mexico, and the U.S.

During his college years Luis Felipe worked as a summer intern in Mexico´s embassies in France, Japan, Panama, and Belgium, where he participated and concentrated in cultural, economic, and political affairs.

Luis Felipe's research experience is in migration. He undertook research with return migrants from the Puebla region in Mexico and spent eighteen months working and conducting qualitative research at an undocumented migrant shelter in Apizaco, Mexico; there he gave humanitarian aid and studied vulnerability, identity, substance abuse and access to justice of undocumented migrants from Central America.

He wishes to continue undertaking investigation endeavors in the field of forced migration and refugee studies around the world.

Dedicated to the victims of forced migration

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DTM = Displacement Tracking Matrix

IDP = Internally Displaced People

IOM = International Organization for Migration

LCBC= Lake Chad Basin Commission

LCR = Lake Chad Region

NGO = Non-Governmental Organization

UN = United Nations

UNHCR = United Nations Hugh Commissioner for Refugees

"We move when it is intolerable to stay where we are. We move because of environmental stresses and physical dangers and the small-mindedness of our neighbors – and to be who we wish to be, to seek what we wish to seek."

 – Mohsin Hamid

## Introduction

4.4 million people have been forced to migrate in the Lake Chad Region (LCR) since 2014 because of violence and climate change (IOM, 2019) causing one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. For the latter part of the past decade non state armed groups like Boko Haram have been committing acts of terrorism and because of climate change Lake Chad has shrunk to a tenth of its original size since 1960 (UN Environmental Program, 2018). Today, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and local governments from the four countries that share Lake Chad (Chad, Nigeria, Niger, and Cameroon) have struggled to mitigate the vulnerability of displaced individuals (UN, 2018).

The purpose of this capstone is to explore the context of the LCR forced displacement crisis with the purpose of identifying possible approaches that I believe should spearhead any durable development strategy in the pursuit of migrant community cohesion and resilience. The four specific aspects of the phenomenon that this document emphasizes are: 1) how the gap between internally and internationally displaced migration must be bridged; 2) how there is a correlation between climate change, conflict, and forced migration; 3) the importance of the anthropological response to this phenomenon; and 4) how displaced individuals could be entitled to restitution from the actors responsible for the irreversible effects of climate change. With regards to the third point, I

propose that the anthropological response using ethnographic methodologies could ensure the participation and empowerment of migrants by giving emphasis to their stories of how forced displacement is experienced to inform effective strategies to mitigate vulnerability. It was planned for me to perform ethnographic field research in Chad for the completion of this capstone, but because of the ongoing COVID-19 global pandemic it was not possible to travel.

This capstone is divided into three sections: Context, Theory, and a Conclusion/Discussion. For the context section, I explore the geopolitical, socioeconomic, climate change, and conflict angles of the case study. The theory section is a literature review that informs the four main points that I present about the LCR displacement crisis. Finally, I state what I believe should be done in the region with regards to delivering on effective development in the form of a conclusion and discussion.

## Context

### Geopolitical context

The LCR is located in Sub-Saharan Africa and is one of the most geopolitically complex places in the world (See Map 1). The Lake is the second largest wetland in the continent and is shared by four countries: Chad, Nigeria, Niger, and Cameroon, as a consequence of the international borders that were drawn by France and Great Britain during the decolonization of Africa in the latter part of the 20th century. The region has been characterized by a common factor amongst the four countries that share it: neglect because politicians are

uninterested in its development for being isolated from their centers (Adelphi, 2018; UN, 2018).
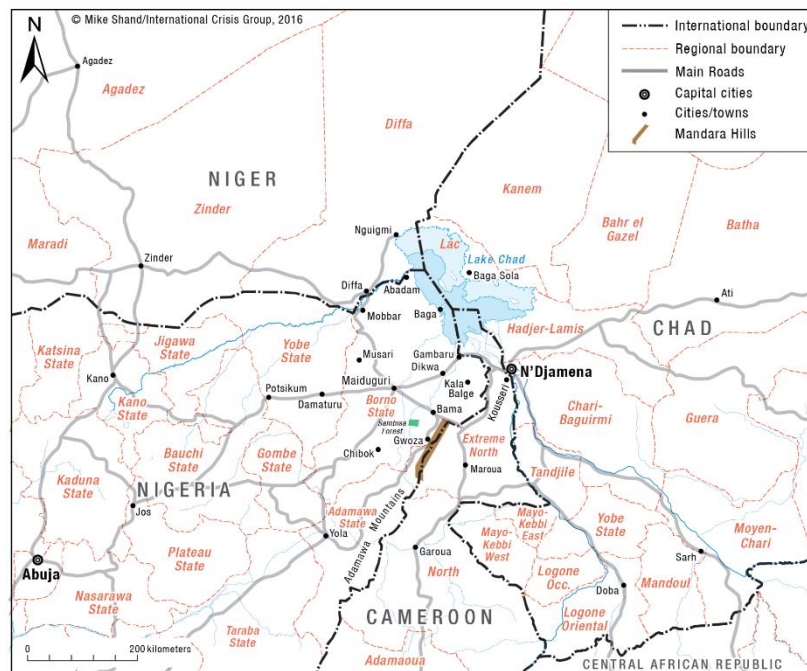


Map 1: International Crisis Group (2017) "Fighting Boko Haram in Chad: Beyond Military Measures". International Crisis Group, Africa Report N.246. Available online: https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/246-fighting-boko-haram-in-chad-beyond-military-measures.pdf.

The four countries that share the Lake make the Lake Chad Basin and share certain common political dynamics besides all being less than 50 years old. Chad, Niger, and Nigeria have experienced periods of military rule. Chadian and Nigerian politics are shaped by oil exploration and transitions from military rule to democracy has been seen in both Niger and Nigeria. Chad and Cameroon have had presidents who have been in power for decades. And in Niger their most recent 2016 elections were rigged, and the opposition jailed (Adelphi, 2018). Military rulings, dependency on oil, dictatorships, unstable governance and governments, and corruption are all factors that come into play

in the region and add to the *de facto* political neglect of the LCR. I call this negative geopolitical conditioning that contributes to the problems discussed later in this capstone a "geopolitical split".

**Socio-economic context**

As previously mentioned, the LCR is experiencing political neglect. Because of it, the region is marked by low socio-economic development indicators such as: low levels of education, high levels of poverty, low levels of national integration, historical government neglect and perceived and actual marginalization. In 1976 approximately 700,000 people lived around the Lake, today, because of droughts and poor livelihood possibilities 2.2 million people live in the region and the number is set to reach 3 million by 2025 (Adelphi, 2018). This population increase adds to the levels of urgency for effective development strategies because of the vulnerability of millions of people.

Because of Boko Haram's violence, which is discussed more in depth later in this capstone, infrastructure has been destroyed by attacks in many locations around the Lake including marketplaces, schools, and places of worship (OHCHR, 2015). The closure of banks and microfinance institutions has undermined savings mechanisms. Cross border trade has been seriously affected due to the closure of borders. As a result, those in the region, whether displaced or not, are dependent on humanitarian aid (Ighobor, 2019 ).

In terms of social groupings, all four countries are very diverse, consisting of many ethnolinguistic groups. However, while the population of Niger and

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Chad are predominantly Muslim, Cameroon has a Christian majority with a Muslim minority, and Nigeria has equal numbers of Christians and Muslims. Additionally, the region has seen youth exclusion and marginalization, particularly in employment, despite an increasingly youthful demographic (UNFPA, 2017).

**Climate change**

More than 30 million people depend on Lake Chad for sustaining their livelihoods and historically It has been an oasis in the middle of the trans-Saharan routes that connected the kingdoms of western Africa to the middle-east and the rest of Asia (Minawi, 2016 pp: 24-25). It is mainly fed by the Chari river, which provides 90 per cent of its water. It was once Africa's largest water reservoir in the Sahel region and it used to cover an area of more or less 26,000 square kilometers which is about the size of the US state of Maryland and bigger than the countries of Israel and Kuwait (Salkida, 2012).

Over the last 60 years, the Lake's size has decreased by 90 per cent because of water overuse, extended drought, and the impacts of climate change. The surface area of the lake has gone from 26,000 square kilometers in 1963 to less than 1,500 square kilometers. The reduction, which has been called an ecological disaster, has led to the destruction of livelihoods for thousands of people (UN Environmental Programme, 2018). (See Map 2 and 3)
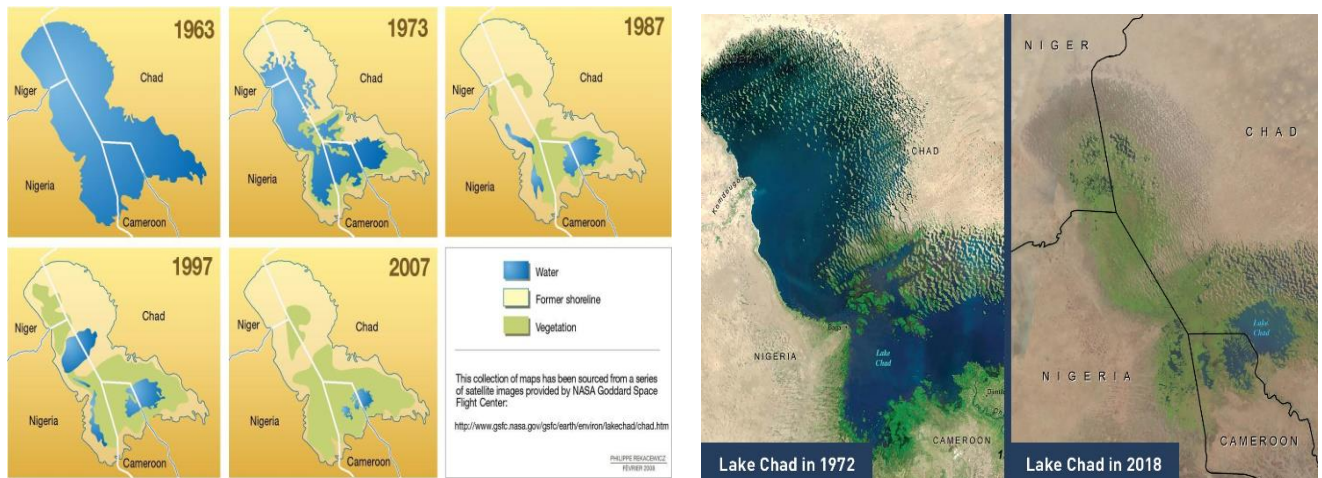
Map 2: NASA Goddard Space Flight Center          Map 3: Usigbe, L. (2019)

To better illustrate how climate change has affected the region Ahmad Salkida – United Nations correspondent and analyst on African development- reported the following in 2012:

> "As you approach the Lake Chad basin (…) the atmosphere of despair is telling. The air is dusty, the wind is fierce and unrelenting, the plants are wilting, and the earth is turning into sand dunes. The sparse vegetation is occasionally broken by withered trees and shrubs. The lives of herders, fisherfolk and farmers are teetering on the edge as the lake dries up before their eyes. Vegetation and water, the traditional staples of livelihood for the Lake Chad community dwellers, are vanishing. Vultures feast on dead cows as drought and desertification take their toll. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has called the situation an "ecological catastrophe," predicting that the lake could disappear this century."

Eight years have passed since Ahmad Salkida reported the "despair" felt and seen in the region. Today, most studies suggest that the irreversible effects of climate change are increasing and expected to worsen (Adelphi, 2018; Freeman, 2017; IOM 2018; Adaawen, 2019) and Chad is considered to be the country most at risk against climate change according to the Climate Fragility

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Index (2016). All this speaks to how devastating the irreversible effects of climate change are felt in the region, and should motivate immediate action.

**Conflict context**

The LCR is currently the stage for one of the worst armed conflicts in the globe. Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lida'awati Wal Jihad (JAS, translated as People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad) or commonly known as Boko Haram, emerged in 2002 in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state in northeast Nigeria. The movement started as a protest against the corruption and inequalities of the state by demanding a return to a "pure" Islamic way of life and gained support of the population that felt let down and neglected by the Nigerian state. Later, the movement became a call to violence against government workers, security personnel, Christians, and Muslims who spoke against them (Walker, 2012).

In 2009 they launched their first ever attack in Maiduguri targeting government buildings and police stations resulting in the death of many of their members and their leader. A year later, and under new leadership, Boko Haram reemerged and carried out suicide bombings and attacks on mosques, churches, and other communities all over northern Nigeria and they started to kidnap people to join their forces. In 2014, in the northern town of Chibok, 276 girls were kidnapped from their school to forcibly join the movement. This sparked an international media campaign to try and rescue the girls resulting in

the liberation of some of them but more than 100 are still missing today (BBC, 2019).

Ever since Boko Haram's kidnappings in 2014 they have been gradually pushed north, to the LCR, by the Nigerian military. Once in the region, their influence and attacks expanded internationally to Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. In all four countries the arrival of Boko Haram has resulted, today, in a complex dynamic with a number of national military, armed opposition and vigilante groups all operating violently in the region. This has consequences for the interplay between the movement of people, food security as well as traditional gender and governance roles (Adelphi, 2018).

Most recently, Boko Haram launched a deadly attack in Chad targeting military bases and communities around the shores of the Lake, all this amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The attacks resulted in the death of 92 soldiers and the displacement of 20, 000 people (IOM, 2020). The Chadian government has responded with the killing of 1000 alleged Boko Haram affiliates with the cost of 52 soldiers (Algazeera, 2020). Violence on top of violence.

**Forced migration context**

Before the conflict and the drying of Lake Chad, there was thriving cross-border trade in agricultural produce, fish, as well as other goods and commodities across the LCR. The region acted as an exchange space offering economic opportunities and resources which people living around the Lake took advantage of. Hence, the region is marked with a long history of migration.

Borders imposed by foreign powers were not perceived as a barrier but rather a point of exchange. Cross-border movements were traditionally for economic and educational purposes, to find grazing land, to find a spouse and to visit or settle with family, or communities of the same ethnic group. Migration patterns changed when climate change started to severely impact livelihood opportunities in the region and violence committed by the diverse state and non-state actors previously mentioned increased (Rabat Process, 2018).

According to the United Nations' International Organization of Migration (IOM, 2019) the conflicts and climate fragility in the LCR has displaced more than 4.4 million people in the Lake Chad Basin since 2014 and is considered the second worst forced displacement crisis in the world according to FAO (2017). In regard to the movement of people in the region the IOM developed a tool called the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) to track the movement of people in the Lake Chad Basin and their reasons to migrate. Their most recent 2019 report puts the number of internally displaced people (IDP), refugees, returnees, and asylum seekers by country at (See Table 1):

Table: Populations identified by the IOM DTM and the Government of Niger by country and status

| Population Type | Cameroon | Chad | Niger | Nigeria | Total | % of total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| IDPs | 244,347 | 122,312 | 104,288 | 2,026,602 | 2,497,549 | 55.9% |
| Returnees | 100,925 | 41,240 | 25,731 | 1,642,696 | 1,810,592 | 40.5% |
| Refugees | 41,763 | 1,761 | 118,868 | / | 162,392 | 3.6% |
| Asylum seekers | / | / | 926[25] | / | 926 | 0% |
| Grand Total | 387,035 | 165,313 | 249,813 | 3,669,298 | 4,471,459 | 100% |
| % of total | 8.7% | 3.7% | 5.5% | 82.1% | 100% | |

Table 1: IOM (2019) Lake Chad Basin Displacement Tracking Matrix. Pp: 14. Available online: https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/dtm/lake_chad_basin_dtm_201903.pdf

And the reasons for forced migration in the Lake Chad Basin according to the IOM are (See Graph 1):

Graph: Displacement reasons in LCB
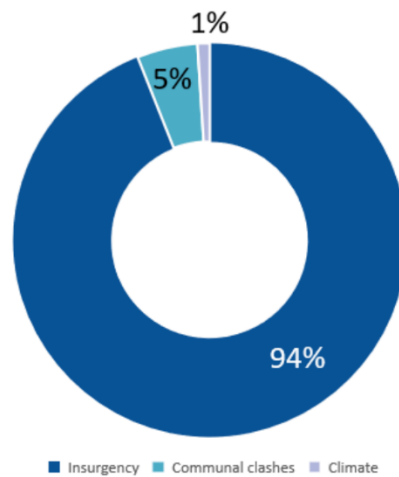


Graph 1: IOM (2019) Lake Chad Basin Displacement Tracking Matrix. Pp: 14. Available online: https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/dtm/lake_chad_basin_dtm_201903.pdf

Even though we see a dramatic disparity between those who move because of climate related reasons and those who move because of conflict, later in the capstone I discuss why the climate and conflict related migration in the LCR are closely interconnected. Meaning that it might be unnecessary to divide between both categories because the reason why conflict is exacerbated and caused is climate change. Making the division could distract strategy makers from tackling the root-causes of the displacement; contrary to what the results of the DTM would make us believe by considering conflict and climate

migration as separate categories and conflict being so dramatically higher than climate.

Additionally, because of the previously mentioned recent Boko Karam attacks in Chad more than 20, 000 people were displaced. This numbers are obviously not reflected in the DTM results and it serves to highlight the urgency to act. Part of the fieldwork planned for this capstone was designed to identify if the reasons to migrate are interconnected between climate and conflict reasons. That would disprove the over categorization of the IOM.

## Theory

This section is dedicated to exploring the academic material available to better understand the LCR forced displacement crisis and find possible solutions to mitigate the vulnerability of those displaced because of climate change and conflict in the LCR.

Any attempt to build a single overarching theory of migration for all types of migration, for all parts of the world, and for all periods of time, is illusory. Such a quest risks 'conceptual reductionism and theoretical imperialism' (Pryor, 1981 pp: 128; Massey et al. 1993). Because of this we know that there is no one migration theory that will explain the Lake Chad region displacement crisis. So, theory will be divided into four sections: Bridging the gap between internal and international migration; migration, conflict, and climate change; resilience and the anthropological response to forced migration; and global dynamics to climate change in the region. This to map a series of possible solutions to the

forced displacement crisis having as a goal the achievement of regional development under Amartya Sen's (1999) parameters. Those being considering "development" from a bottom-up perspective as a series of "freedoms" intended to achieve community cohesion rather than solely focusing on economic development.

**Bridging the gap between International and internal migration**

Because of geopolitical and historical reasons previously mentioned, the LCR is shared by the countries of Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. The fact that there are international borders dividing the region means that any kind of migration that would be interpreted as regional or internal runs the risk of having to be interpreted as international. Because we are dealing with four sovereign nation-states that means that interventions to successfully mitigate the forced displacement crisis will have to be equally attended by all four states. With state neglect from all four countries to the region that means that delivering on effective development must be accompanied with successful diplomacy and a shift to focus resources and efforts to the LCR.

Because of the geopolitical split and complexity of the region an inclusive approach must be undertaken to deliver on successful efforts to mitigate migrant vulnerability. In other words, the gap between internal and international migration in the LCR must be bridged. An example of what international bridges already looks like in the region in terms of resource management is the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC). Created in 1964, it is an intergovernmental

organization that oversees water and other natural resource usage in the LCB. It is comprised of eight member governments— Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Nigeria, Algeria, the Central African Republic, Libya, and Sudan—with their secretariat located in N'Djamena.

Authors Russel King and Ronald Skeldon (2010) say that the relationship between internal and international migration is a neglected topic within migration studies, and undeservedly so (pp: 1640). They argue that there exist enough theoretical and empirical similarities between internal and international migration to suggest a theoretical merger. As they put it: "To consider one form of migration without the other, as has so often happened in the past, is to look at only one part of the story, and results in a partial and unbalanced interpretation" (pp: 1642).

Using King and Skeldon's invitation to consider both internal and international migration theoretically joined and because of the geopolitical complexity of the region I suggest that the same merging approach should happen between the four countries of the Lake Chad region. Because of the interconnectedness of the region considering the "Chadian part" in relation to the "Nigerian part" and with connection to the "Niger side" and "Cameroon part" runs the risk of being an overly convoluted debate, and because of the urgency to act international bureaucracy could very easily turn regional aid approaches into long negotiations between states that show and share disinterest in the region.

Like with resource management, the LCBC or a new intergovernmental institution could promote joined forced displacement mitigation efforts. Because the LCBC is comprised of more states than those submitted to the geopolitical split, for forced displacement matters I would suggest the creation of a new specialized institution that could work directly with the UN through UNHCR and IOM. But, because of the urgency to act, the LCBC is the clearest candidate to become the bridge between internal and international migration in the LCR.

**Conflict, climate change, and migration**

The possible correlation between climate change, conflict, and migration has been a concurring discussion amongst academic circles (Abel et al., 2019; Schwartz, 2018; Freeman, 2017; Reuveny, 2007), with the main consensus being that if changing climate conditions exacerbate conflict and thus cause forced migration is exclusive to certain time periods and contexts (Abel et al. 2019 pp: 239). The Lake Chad crisis is a case where conflict and climate change indisputably engage in a deadly feedback-loop (Usigbe, 2019) because of its context. Researcher Janin Vivekananda and colleges (2019, pp: 29) call this feedback-loop in the Lake Chad region a "climate/conflict trap".

To understand what the author means by the climate/conflict trap they list the root causes of conflict (not only Boko Haram) in the Lake Chad region which are: 1- The impacts of droughts and ongoing climate variability 2- Recurring economic crises, divisive reforms and weak governance 3- Intensifying religious fundamentalism 4- Rising inequality and perceptions of

elite corruption 5- The rise of armed opposition groups, and 6- Growing civilian harm and grievances (pp: 29). By identifying that droughts and ongoing climate variability is the first cause of conflict in the region the author goes on to elaborate that: "the conflict undermines communities' ability to adapt to climate change given restrictions on movement, diminished access to natural resources and the displacement of people. At the same time, climate change, including unpredictable weather, reinforce the root causes that led to the conflict" (Vivekananda, 2019 pp:26)

According to migration expert J. Barnett (2003) climate change should be considered a security risk of national importance. Identifying and understanding the intimate dance that conflict and climate change have in the LCR makes me believe that adapting to climate change should be in the national security agenda of every one of the four countries that share the Lake, in addition to also serve as preventive measures for forced displacement.

**Resilience and the anthropological response to forced migration**

As long conflict and climate induced migration continues, resilience is an important concept for thinking about the experience of displaced individuals. So, what is resilience and how can anthropology as a science help achieve it? The OECD defines resilience as:

> "A resilient state or society is characterized by the ability to cope with increasingly complex, uncertain situations and to "manage and adapt to changing social needs and expectations," including the complex challenges arising from the interaction of climate change with other pressures. Resilience also includes the "ability to absorb and recover

from shocks, whilst positively adapting and transforming their structures and means for living in the face of long-term changes and uncertainty" (2011)

In other words, resilience is the ability to adapt and recover from shock. If we apply the concept of resilience to the LCR forced displacement crisis, the "shock" from which communities and displaced migrants must "adapt and recover from" are: 1- droughts and changing climate patterns (climate change), and 2- the complex violent conflict between non-state armed groups like Boko Haram, state military, and communities. In other words, "adapt and recover from" the "climate/conflict trap". In the next section of this capstone I discuss why it is important to understand that resilience in the LCR context translates to adapting and recovering to and from the "climate/conflict trap". Additionally, using Amartya Sen's views on development as bottom-up my plan was to use anthropological methods to help organizations aiding migrants to design strategies to facilitate resilience.

The anthropological response to forced migration has been, in my opinion, one of the most important in understanding the phenomena of forced migration and thus finding bottom-up solutions. Dawn Chatty writes in the Oxford Handbook of Refugees and Forced Migration Studies (2014) that through the ethnographic method and participant observation Anthropology has primarily contributed by bringing to light the "perspective of the forced migrants, the phenomenological encounter that permits the uprooted, the displaced, and the refugee to break out of the category of "object of study" and to bring to life the individual experience of dispossession" (pp: 83). According to Elizabeth

Colson (2003), Anthropology has been most useful in "giving a voice" to those forced to migrate in order to understand the experience of migrating under forced conditionings and inform policy and further research (pp: 13). Other anthropologists like Marita Eastmond (2007) have used ethnographic methodologies to interpret the "stories" of migrants, advocating that: "Placed in their wider socio-political and cultural contexts, stories can provide insights into how forced migrants seek to make sense of displacement and violence, re-establish identity in ruptured life courses and communities, or bear witness to violence and repression" (pp: 248).

Statistics presented by the IOM and other organizations will only tell one part of the story and anthropological research methods could give a voice to those numbers to understand the social and cultural scenarios at play. If we put effort into understanding the cultural context through the stories of those displaced we will have a better idea of how to promote and facilitate community cohesion so that it is migrants who are the ones designing resilience strategies with the help of international and national organizations. Policy can also benefit from this approach by being better informed and thus with a better chance of being effective, but because of the historical governmental neglect on the region, the most pressing call is to facilitate resilience through community cohesion with or without policy. Anthropology, I believe, can help make that possible.

I was scheduled to travel to Chad during the Summer of 2020. The proposal was to examine the lives of refugees and internally displaced migrants in the capital city, N'Djamena. Using ethnographic research methods such as semi-structured interviews and participant observation, I intended to aid in the identification of the needs of climate and conflict displaced migrants. The outcomes were intended to inform aid programs and project strategies for the local government, UNHCR, IOM and possibly NGOs. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic I was not able to complete the fieldwork. For the semi-structured interviews, the template questions are included as an annex.

**Global dynamics to climate change in the region**

In addition to understanding climate and conflict migrant experiences, needs, and desires, it is also important to look at the problem through a wider, global lens. "Climate change is real and it's not about our future, it's about our present", said Chadian activist, Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, in 2019 at the World Economic Formun. It is well understood that Climate Change is a global issue, yet the countries that contribute (and have contributed) the most to it and those suffering the most from it are not the same. According to the Climate Change Vulnerability Index (2016) Niger is the third and Chad the first "worst performing countries" out of 186, placing the region at "Extreme Risk" (see Map 4). As previously discussed, because of the region's "climate/conflict trap" advocating for finding solutions to adapt to Climate Change is also translated to mitigating the armed conflict and thus coming a step closer to finding solutions to the

forced                                    displacement                                    crisis.



| Legend | Extreme Risk | High Risk | Medium Risk | Low Risk |
| | | | | No data |

**The five worst performing countries**

| Rank | Country | Region | Score | Category |
|------|---------|--------|-------|----------|
| 1 | Chad | Africa | 0.11 | Extreme |
| 2 | Bangladesh | Asia | 0.25 | Extreme |
| 3 | Niger | Africa | 0.27 | Extreme |
| 4 | Haiti | Americas | 0.32 | Extreme |
| 5 | Central African Republic | Africa | 0.34 | Extreme |

**The five best performing countries**

| Rank | Country | Region | Score | Category |
|------|---------|--------|-------|----------|
| 186 | Norway | Europe | 9.96 | Low |
| 185 | Ireland | Europe | 9.94 | Low |
| 184 | Iceland | Europe | 9.93 | Low |
| 183 | Sweden | Europe | 9.93 | Low |
| 182 | Finland | Europe | 9.90 | Low |

Map 4: Climate Change Vulnerability Index 2016. Retrieved Online:
https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Verisk_Maplecroft_Climate_Change_Vulnerability_Index_20

But who is to blame for climate change? Are those being displaced because of the "climate/conflict trap" responsible for the shrinking of the Lake and changing weather patterns? If we consider the language being used by the Climate Change Vulnerability Index (2016) being the "worst performing countries" would seem like blaming their governments and people for not "performing" better. A less misleading phrasing could be "most impacted countries" because the people living in the LCR are amongst the less contributing to climate change. In Chad, Niger, Cameroon and Nigeria the average $CO_2$ emissions per capita varies from 0.1 to 0.7 tonnes per year. That

is more than 160 times lower than the USA, Europe and China. In just 2.3 days the average American emits as much as the average Nigerien in a year (Ritchie and Roser, 2019) (see Map 5).
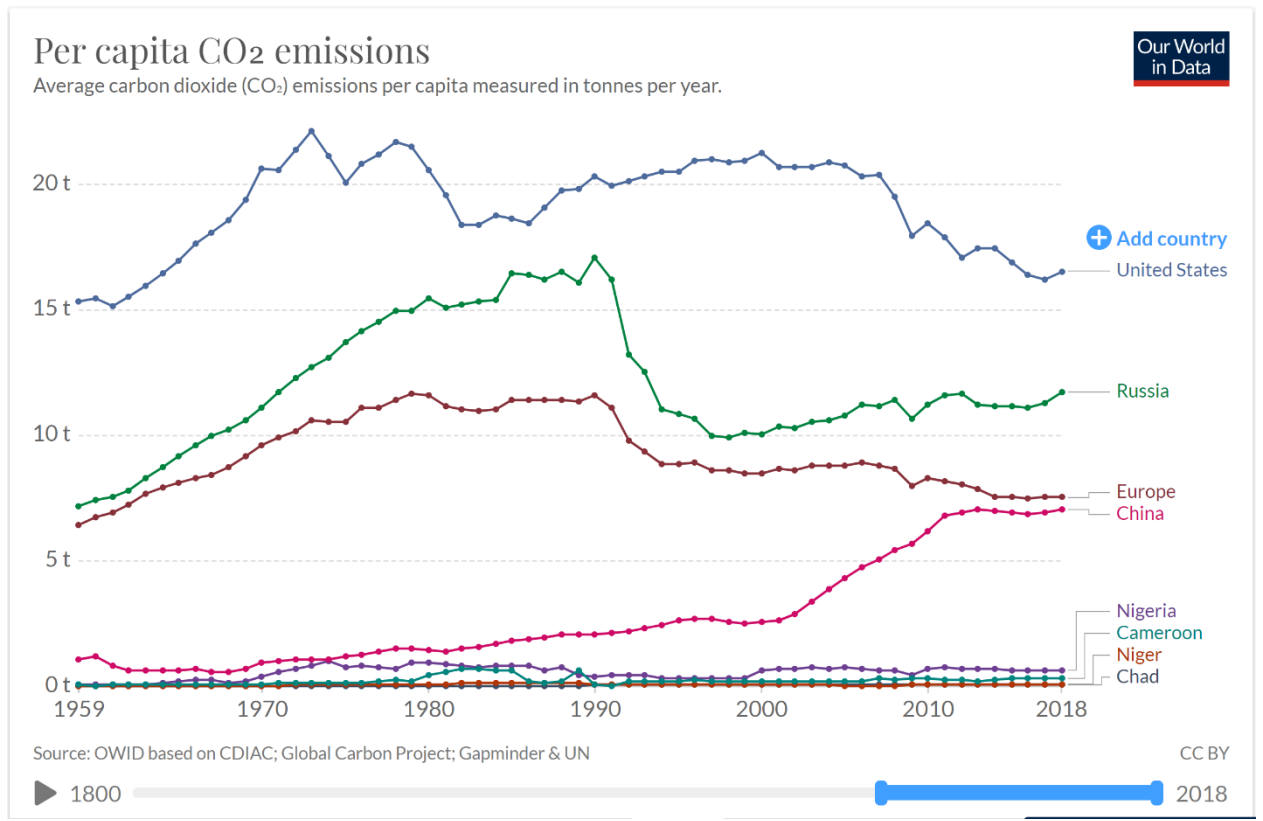
It is difficult to point the finger when considering climate change. Yet, there might be a precedent soon that could give way to a new strategy in how to demand reparations for climate change induced damages. Saul Luciano, a Peruvian farmer and mountain guide, is the first individual in the world to sue a European company based in Germany called RWE for being responsible for the melting of the Pastoruri Glacier and the subsequent glacier-avalanches that threaten to destroy his hometown of Huaraz. With the support of Germanwatch

- an NGO based in Bonn, Germany that seeks to influence public policy regarding the environment, and relations between countries in the industrialized north and developing south - they are advocating that because the company RWE "Credits itself with being the biggest singular $CO_2$ emitter in Europe and, according to recent studies, is responsible for around 0.5 % of anthropogenic emission since the beginning of industrialization" (Germanwatch, 2017), that makes them also responsible for the protection of the people of Huaraz. The case has reached courts in Germany and has gathered international attention (New York Times, 2019; TIME, 2018).

The case has not reached a conclusion and Germanwatch's most recent publication declares that the delegation in charge of gathering evidence in Huaraz is facing difficulties making progress due to the COVID-19 global pandemic (Germanwatch, 2020). Whatever the verdict is, it could be the necessary jurisprudence to make similar "climate suits" (Germanwatch, 2017) by displaced migrants against governments and companies that could be found responsible for the shrinking of Lake Chad.

The LCBC with support from UNHCR and the IOM could become the diplomatic platforms to support legal action for those displaced because of the "climate/conflict trap" against governments and companies that are responsible for climate change and demand international "reparations". To demand "reparations" could shed light on the responsibility that countries that contribute the most to climate change have to those that are suffering the worst effects

today. Chad, Niger, and the entire LCR carries the symbolic conditioning of being at the top of the vulnerability index; that is nothing but pressure for the international community and the international legal system to act swiftly and with agility.

Although, in contrast, demanding "reparations" will only help in patching the problem. "Climate suits" cannot be treated as the prime method for mitigating the LCR displacement crisis. To tackle the devastating effects of climate change in the LCR changes must occur in other parts of the globe. The countries that contribute the most in Co2 emissions need to change their habits. If countries like the USA, China, and Russia do not reform to reduce their Co2 emissions those living in the LCR will continue to pay the highest price for the less involvement.

**So, what must be done?**

The "climate/conflict trap" must be broken with a combination micro and macro actions. As Vivekananda and colleges (2019) put it: "The impacts of climate change have to be tackled as part of peacebuilding efforts if the region is to break free of the conflict/climate trap. In doing this, Lake Chad can once again become an engine for sustainable livelihoods and stability in the region" (pp:16).

From a macro point of view Abel and colleagues (2019) imply that: "policies to improve the adaptive capacity to deal with the effects of climate change in developing economies [like Chad, Nigeria, Niger, and Cameroon] may have additional returns by reducing the likelihood of conflict and thus forced

migration outflows" (Abel et al. 2019 pp: 246) and like Barnett (2003) argues, to fight climate change contributes to national security agendas. In other words, strategies and approaches to fight climate change will tackle conflict from its root-causes and will thus impact forced migration.

From a micro point of view Vivekananda and colleagues (2019) provide another list of 10 "positive interventions that can and should happen now" (pp: 71). The first two, and the most important, are: 1- Building social cohesion, and 2- Support resilient livelihoods. For the latter, like previously mentioned, resilience, in the LCR forced displacement crisis context, means adapting and recovering from climate change and conflict. Thus, to "support resilient livelihoods" would mean to design lifestyles that are appropriate to withstand the changing weather patterns. An example is how some former fishermen in the LCR have become highly productive corn, rice, and cowpea farmers, even growing for export (Institut de Recherche pour le Développement, 2012). And for the former, "building social cohesion" could translates to creating and strengthening new and already existing communities of displaced migrants. Even if I did not have the opportunity to perform anthropological fieldwork on site in Chad to attempt to study  resilience and social cohesion, I believe that ethnographic methods would be especially valuable in the efforts towards achieving these goals because of the value they place on understanding cultural context and "stories". If strategies to facilitate development could have a bottom-up approach I believe that displaced migrants could spearhead their own unique efforts towards resilience.

Additionally, if Saul Luciano's "climate suit" proves that enterprises have a responsibility to protect those facing damages from climate change it would serve as the perfect avenue to demand reparations from being forced to migrate, both internally or internationally, because of the "climate/conflict trap". From what is presented in this capstone I believe that it could serve as enough evidence to at least motivate an investigation. The next steps could be in aiding displaced migrants to achieve international agency to demand reparations. UNHCR, the IOM, and the local governments should all aid in facilitating the platforms necessary to make their cases heard. Yet, it is crucial to consider that the root causes of climate change in the LCR are the continued emissions from the global north.

## Conclusion/Discussion

One thing is abundantly clear, the urgency to act is eminent. After exploring the context of the LCR crisis, it would seem like it checks all the boxes to be the perfect storm when it comes to forced displacement, armed conflict, and climate change. The strategies to enhance migrant community cohesion and resilience in the face of such a challenging circumstance must have both a local, community level, or micro focus as well as a global, international, or macro focus.

The LCR is "geopolitically split" between four nation states, all of which have politically neglected the region. That has marked the region by low socio-economic development indicators, low levels of education, high levels of

poverty, and low levels of national integration. Climate change has changed the landscape in irreversible manners both physically and in terms of how it feels. The Lake is drying up, and, compared to its size a few decades ago, it is almost completely gone today, and the region's climate patterns are dramatically different from what they were. Because the region is so vulnerable to climate change, conflict has had the opportunity to fester, especially since the arrival of Boko Haram to the LCR in 2014. The crisis has led to the forced displacement of 4.4 million people, with 20, 000 more being forced to migrate because of violence that cost the lives of 1144 individuals (counting soldiers and civilians), all while in the middle of the ongoing COVID-19 global pandemic. All of this adds up to one of the worst and most devastating humanitarian crises and forced displacement emergencies in the world.

With the use of theory, I have suggested that the gap between internal and international migration of the LCR must be bridged. This in order to combat the stalling effects of having "geopolitically split" conditions in the region. Additionally, because the region is experiencing a "conflict/climate trap" that means that climate change and conflict are engaged in a feedback-loop so, adapting to climate change in the region also means fighting conflict and thus aiding in mitigating forced migration.

Furthermore, as a micro, bottom-up strategy I have explained how resilience translates to adapting and recovering to and from climate change and conflict, and how I believe that the anthropological method could be a useful

tool in helping to facilitate migrant resilience through community cohesion and informed strategies and policy. This because of ethnography's interest in interpreting the experience of being forced to migrate through the stories of IDPs and refugees. Hopefully in the future I will have the opportunity to visit Chad and conduct that missing part of the capstone project. Before that happens, I hope that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic gets under control in the LCR so that efforts to mitigate migrant vulnerability become more agile.

In terms of macro level strategies there could be international jurisprudence in the near future to motivate "climate suits" to demand reparations from climate change. Although, even if displaced migrants in the LCR could be entitled to international reparations the global dynamics of climate change tell us that to tackle the root causes of the problem $CO_2$ emission habits must change in the global north. Without countries like the USA, Russia, and China making dramatic reform to mitigate their contributions to human induced changing weather patterns, the people of Chad, Niger, Nigeria, and Cameroon will continue to pay the heaviest price.

**ANNEX**

## Questions for semi-structured interviews

## Capstone 2020

**Place:** N'Djamena – Chad

**Estimated duration of interviews:** 30 – 60 min

Each interviewee will be interviewed at least once. Snowball sampling is expected. Names will be redacted or replaced with an alias.

**Key Informants:**

Key informants will be official staff or employees from the UNHCR and IOM field offices in N'Djamena, and local government officials. They will be asked **their name, position in the organization, and time in the organization**.

**Theme #1: Trends and patterns in migration in Chad**

1. What kind of migrants usually arrive in N'Djamena and why?
2. Does your organization or any organization you know of keep track of how many people are migrating to N'Djamena?
   a. If so, what are you learning about trends or patterns in migration?
3. Has the origin of migrants coming into the city changed over time?
4. Have the reasons for migration to the city changed over time?
5. What are the demographics of migrants to the city? Are there more men or women? Young people or old people? People of a particular ethnic group? Have the demographics of migrant populations changed over time?
6. Do you have "climate migrants" coming to the city? Since when? From where?

**Theme #2: Programs for migrants**

7. What kinds of programs or services does your organization offer to migrants in the city?
8. Are there other programs or services offered to migrants by other organizations? Which ones?
9. How are programs and projects your organization offers designed?

10. What are the goals of those programs?

11. How do you assess their effectiveness?
12. How effective have your programs been at doing [what they are designed to do]?


13. What has gotten in the way of program effectiveness?


**Theme #3: Participatory planning**

14. How much does the organization consider what migrants report as their needs?
15. How do you gather that information?
16. How much consensus is there about needs? Do different groups have different needs?

17. Would you say that (IOM's, UNHCR's or the government's) vision for designing and implementing strategies in N'Djamena is from the bottom-up?


**Migrant interviewees:**

Candidates will be asked their **name, age, marital status, and place of birth.**

**Theme #1: Migration histories**

1. Where did you used to live before coming to N'Djamena and what made you leave? Did you move with your family?

2. Why did you choose N'Djamena as the place to go?

3. How was your experience moving to N'Djamena?


4. Do you plan to stay in N'Djamena, or would you prefer to move back?
    a. What would have to change for you to move back?
    b. What would motivate you to stay in N'Djamena if going back is not possible?

**Theme #2: Service provision**

5. Do you receive any services from the government or the United Nations? Are they to your liking? Why yes or no?

6. Do you think that the government or the United Nations are doing enough to help people who are in a similar circumstance as you in N'Djamena?

**Theme #3: Desires and needs**

7. What services would you like to receive? Why?

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