

## Research paper

Is the concept of 'resilience'  
useful within cities facing both  
conflict and disaster risk?

Using Beirut as a case study

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Nadeem Ahmed

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### **About the Author**

Having studied Property Management & Investment at undergraduate level, Nadeem Ahmed read a Masters in International Development & Planning (now named Cities & Global Development), at the University of Sheffield. The course enabled him to study some of the most pressing issues in the world today and those which are especially critical for future generations to come, including: the effects of rapid urbanisation and its effect on people, the economy and the environment.

He subsequently pursued his interest in urban development and human settlement issues further with UN-Habitat as a Programme Management Adviser focusing on post-disaster reconstruction efforts across the Kathmandu Valley in Nepal. His work has involved developing an economic strategy for Bungamati, which has sought to tie the socio-economic development of the area to the post-disaster reconstruction process by encourage partnerships between the community and the private sector.

His research interests include urban development, post-disaster reconstruction and disaster risk reduction, as well as the role of the private sector in humanitarian work. Going forward, Nadeem hopes to learn more about the nature of private sector involvement in development, particularly within disaster risk reduction and post-disaster reconstruction activities in cities.

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*In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful*

*All praise is due to Allah alone, I praise him, seek his aid and seek his forgiveness. I testify that there is no God but Allah, and that Mohammed (peace be upon him) is his slave and messenger.*

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## **Executive Summary**

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It is now widely recognised that disasters are not exogenous extreme events which cause catastrophe but the structural failure of political, economic and social systems. It has been all too easy to demonise hazards as the cause of vulnerability, but hazards only become catastrophic disasters when people in power fail. Thus, international bodies such as UNISDR have sought to create treaties that encourage governments to mobilise against these threats, such as HFA and its upcoming incarnation HFA2. However, responses have been sluggish, with only half of the governments which agreed to implement the recommendations returning progress updates. Progress has been made however with the concept of 'resilience' gaining traction and commentators calling for more 'radical action' to be taken against vulnerability creation, particularly with regards to its more progressive approaches. Using a social constructivist approach to research I will investigate these progressive approaches of 'resilience' which have been applied to contexts of both conflict and disaster. Using Beirut as a case study I discover that it is people, power and politics that indeed pose more of a threat to vulnerability than the hazards the country holds.



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# Is the concept of ‘resilience’ useful within cities facing both conflict and disaster risk? Using Beirut as a case study

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## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Justification for the Topic

Disasters have claimed 1.35 million lives, affected 218 million people and have accounted for an estimated \$2.6 trillion worth of losses, with some commentators suggesting that the figure is double this amount, over the past 20 years (CRED, 2015). What is worse is that it is believed that climate change is going to continue to increase this trend of disasters for the foreseeable future (CRED, 2015). However, from a disaster risk reduction (DRR) perspective the most significant development is rapid urbanisation, particularly within low-to middle-income countries, driven by the urban poor who are made vulnerable through marginalisation within the most hazardous of locations. Now, as a result, not only are more people in harm’s way than ever before but development in high risk areas has increased the likelihood of major catastrophes (CRED, 2015).

Concomitantly, there are a considerable number of people at risk living within fragile and conflict affected states, with an estimated 370 million to 1.5 billion people living in fragility, depending on how you define the term (Muggah, 2014: 348). Highlighting this fact is the devastating impact that can be seen from the Syrian civil war which has displaced 7.6 million people internally and 4 million people externally resulting in a traumatic effect on the whole region (Islamic Relief, 2015a).

Increasing attention is currently being given to the concurrence of conflict and disaster with the acceptance that disaster is exacerbated in fragile and conflict affected states and with the expectation that these two events will coincide more in the future (ODI, 2013). With the wide

acceptance that disasters, as well as conflict, are a product of human processes and vulnerability creation, it is imperative then that cross-disciplinary approaches to address the multi-faceted and interacting nature of conflict and disaster are investigated in order to develop integrated approaches to address the roots causes of both (Johnson & Blackburn, 2014: 30).

'Resilience' presents one potential common approach that has become an increasingly popular concept and is currently applied independently within both fragility and disaster contexts (Muggah, 2014; Johnson & Blackburn, 2014; King & Mutter, 2014). However, Porter & Davoudi (2012) warn that if adopted uncritically through its sheer popularity the concept is destined to become just another 'buzzword' (Porter & Davoudi, 2012). They call for the concept to be scrutinized appropriately in order for it to realise the great potential it must shape the challenges we face (Porter & Davoudi, 2012).

In conclusion the concept of resilience will be applied to the challenging context of Beirut, an example of a fragile city which has suffered massively as a result of the Syrian crisis but also faces multiple other risks including; unplanned urbanisation, major earthquake risk, conflict from internal civil tensions, and external hostile neighbours (Baytiyeh & Naja, 2013; Randall, 2014). Surprisingly these potentially volatile risks have not yet led to full scale disaster, however the country remains hanging in the balance with regards to its future. Therefore, it will be investigated whether 'resilience' provides a 'panacea', as many practitioners assume, or just another inadequate "buzzword" within the discursive repertoire of disaster risk reduction practitioners (Porter & Davoudi, 2012; Alexander, 2013).

## **1.2 Aims and Objectives**

It is the aim of this research to assess the usefulness of contemporary concepts of resilience within the context of cities facing both conflict and disaster risk. In order to achieve this overall aim, the concept of resilience and its limitations will be assessed in its operationalisation within disaster risk reduction. The nature of fragile and conflict affected cities will be investigated and

current attempts to apply the concept of resilience to them will be assessed for compatibility. Using insights gained from the application of resilience within both conflict and disaster it will be investigated as to whether the concept may bridge the gap between these two sectors. Finally, the multiple risks of conflict, disaster, unplanned urbanisation and the Syria crisis will be addressed within Beirut with a view to applying the lessons learnt from the literature review and primary data collected. It is hoped that gaining further insights into the current operationalisation of resilience within both conflict and disaster scenarios and applying them to the complex context of Beirut will produce a stronger argument for the deeper integration of both sectors in their aim to reduce vulnerability.

### **1.3 Summary**

It is now widely recognised that disasters are not exogenous extreme events that cause catastrophe but the structural failure of political, economic and social systems. It has been all too easy to demonise hazards as the cause of vulnerability, but hazards only become catastrophic disasters when people in power fail. Thus, international bodies such as UNISDR have been sought to create treaties that encourage governments to mobilise against these threats, such as HFA and its upcoming incarnation HFA2. However, responses have been sluggish, with only half of the governments which agreed to implement the recommendations returning progress updates. Progress has been made however with the concept of 'resilience' gaining traction and commentators calling for more 'radical action' to be taken against vulnerability creation, particularly with regards to its more progressive approaches. Using a social constructivist approach to research I will investigate these progressive approaches of 'resilience' which have been applied to contexts of both conflict and disaster. Using Beirut as a case study I discover that it is people, power and politics that indeed pose more of a threat to vulnerability than the hazards the country holds.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

## **2.1 Contemporary concepts of resilience within urban planning and development**

### **2.1.1 The field of disaster risk reduction in context**

Disasters pose one of the greatest ongoing challenges to nations. This has been highlighted by the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), which estimates that between 2000 and 2011, natural disasters killed 1.1 million people, impacted 2.7 billion people, and incurred a still-escalating cost of \$1.3 trillion (Al-Nammari & Alzaghal, 2014: 34). Moreover, the majority of these losses occur in the developing world, and thus poorer countries and people are the hardest hit by disasters (INCRISD, 2014: 1; Hagelsteen & Becker, 2012: 4).

Both of these factors have led the international community to make a concerted effort to reduce disaster losses through treaties such as the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) and its most recent incarnation, HFA2 (Gaillard & Mercer, 2012: 94; Hagelsteen & Becker, 2012: 4). However, whilst the 168 national governments, which have signed up to HFA, seem to be making strides towards implementing the recommendations outlined, economic and livelihood losses resulting from disasters continue to rise (Lavell & Maskrey, 2013: 3). The contradiction between these two trends has led to the questioning of not only the effectiveness of the HFA as a means of “building the resilience of nations and communities” to disaster, but of the efficacy of the disaster risk reduction (DRR) paradigm itself (Lavell & Maskrey, 2013). Lavell & Maskrey (2013) state that within the current paradigm:

Disasters are still predominantly seen as exogenous and unforeseen shocks that affect supposedly normally functioning economic systems and societies rather than endogenous indicators of failed or skewed development, of unsustainable economic and social processes and of ill-adapted societies (Lavell & Maskrey, 2013: 5).

As such, the emphasis within DRR remains on reducing disasters and losses, rather than on transforming the underlying root causes of risk (Lavell & Maskrey, 2013: 4). Because the HFA is

interpreted from this flawed standpoint, the resulting governance arrangements and political and economic imperatives for DRR guarantee that disaster-related risk and losses will continue to rise (Lavell & Maskrey, 2013: 5).

In fact, over the years there has been wide-ranging criticism of the implementation of DRR. Particular focus has been on the disparity between what is prescribed at the international level by institutions such as the UNISDR and treaties such as HFA, and what is practised at the national and local levels (Gaillard & Mercer, 2012; Hagelsteen & Becker, 2012; Ingram et al., 2006; Al-Nammari & Alzaghal; Lavell & Maskrey, 2013; INCRISD, 2014; Alexander & Davis, 2012).

Gaillard & Mercer (2012) suggest that this 'glocalisation' of DRR and 'politics of scale' act as a major obstacle to sustainable large-scale reduction of disaster risk (Gaillard & Mercer, 2012: 94). In effect, disaster science, policy and practice, and the local and the global are disconnected by the process of glocalisation (Gaillard & Mercer, 2012: 94). This can be seen in the contrast between the promotion of top-down, homogenising DRR strategies that utilise global scientific knowledge; and the move towards an emphasis on context-specific local knowledge and community-based actions (Gaillard & Mercer, 2012: 94). Gaillard & Mercer (2012) suggest that there is a clear need to 'bridge the gap' and 'reconcile science and tradition'. If this is done, effective and applicable local and scientific knowledge, in combination with technical know-how that has been adapted to local practices, can enhance DRR strategies (Gaillard & Mercer, 2012: 96).

However, it is particularly difficult to replace the outdated 'hazard paradigm', which treats disasters as exogenous threats and formulates technocratic command-and-control measures in order to control them (Gaillard & Mercer, 2012: 97). Although top-down policies have largely failed to prevent disasters, it is evident that within developing countries, and particularly within Middle Eastern and Arab nations which primarily have centralised governance, efforts and

resources continue to be concentrated on emergency management and preparedness (Gaillard & Mercer, 2012: 97; Al-Nammari & Alzaghal, 2014: 35; Lavell & Maskrey, 2013: 4). Little attention is devoted to prospective risk management; that is, to the transformation of the underlying risk drivers of vulnerability and exclusion that lead to unequal access to resources and means of protection (INCRISD, 2014; Lavell & Maskrey, 2013: 4).

In the face of slow progress towards supplanting the hazard-centred, reactionary paramilitary civil defence approach to DRR, Alexander & Davis (2012) express a more radical 'call to arms' (Alexander & Davis, 2012: 2). Although these authors believe that the HFA promotes a sensible agenda for change based on participatory democracy, the management of risk and knowledge, and the promotion of education and preparedness, they state that progress towards these aims has been unacceptably slow (Alexander & Davis, 2012: 2).

In order to understand why they suggest that, it is important to take a realistic view on the interpretation of global processes (Alexander & Davis, 2012: 2). They suggest that the 'elephant in the room', not discussed in the HFA or in the UNISDR global assessment reports, are underlying risk factors such as the denial of basic human rights, unsustainable population increases, corruption, governmental actions that place citizens at risk and acute gender discrimination (Alexander & Davis, 2012: 1). The authors state that it is the prioritisation of economic growth rather than social enrichment that allows 'robber capitalism' to create these conditions, which are ultimately in no one's interest because they breed misery, instability and revolt (Alexander & Davis, 2012: 4).

Looking forward, Alexander & Davis (2012) assert that the above-mentioned underlying risk factors need to be openly addressed by the UNISDR and the UN system. This will allow the social, economic, political, religious and cultural obstacles to DRR to be challenged publicly (Alexander & Davis, 2012: 4). Furthermore, these authors believe that within the post-HFA

programme, DRR and the sustainability agenda must be further integrated.

A similar suggestion is made by Lavell & Maskrey (2013), who believe that a new conceptualisation of risk and its management is necessary, in which disaster is recognised as the predominant indicator of unsustainable development (Alexander & Davis, 2012: 4; Lavell & Maskrey, 2013: 14). In such a conceptualisation, there is a shift away from an emphasis on reducing existing risks to addressing the development-based drivers and processes that lead to the accumulation of risk in the first place (Lavell & Maskrey, 2013: 14).

### **2.1.2 Etymological and conceptual underpinnings of resilience**

Thought to have begun as *resilire* or *resilio* in Latin, the term “resilience” was initially used in the sense of “to leap”. This was until it was used by Cicero in his *Orations* to mean “rebounding”. Enthusiasm for the transferral of the concept from engineering to ecology led Holling (1973) to adopt the systems theory approach to ecological assemblages (Alexander, 2013: 2710). Following Holling’s success, the term resilience was adopted in various other fields such as psychology, economics and geography. The legacy of its adoption in ecology was the emphasis on system stability as a key outcome of resilience (Alexander, 2013: 2710). The persistence of system stability and the influence of the other attributes of resilience, such as rebounding, adapting, overcoming and maintaining integrity, can be seen in the UNISDR’s prominent definition of resilience (Alexander, 2013: 2710):

The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions (UNSIDR, 2009: 24).

Davoudi (2012) considers the terms “preservation” and “restoration” as part of equilibrium-based resilience, rooted in a Newtonian world view which reinforces outmoded command-and-



control style systems (Davoudi, 2012: 301). Within the equilibristic view of resilience, the emphasis is on ‘bounce-back-ability’ or returning to ‘normal’; but what normal entails is not questioned, nor is the potential undesirability thereof (Davoudi, 2012: 302). Davoudi (2012) also suggests that the emphasis on ‘bouncing back to where we were’ shapes the types of responses planned by relevant institutions, and furthermore explains why much of the resilience literature is dominated by post-disaster emergency planning for perceived exogenous and extreme disaster events (Davoudi, 2012: 302). Consequently, the emphasis is on short-term damage reduction and preparedness; which, although necessary, is not a substitute for long-term adaptive capacity-building (Davoudi, 2012: 302).

At the very heart of the matter, Alexander (2013) believes that the problem lies in the fundamental disconnect between the use of “resilience” to describe homeostasis (stable equilibrium) in systems, and with the “resilience ideology” of people and communities that need to be protected – by means of dynamic changes (Alexander, 2013: 2713). Thus, many authors call for caution when shifting resilience thinking from the natural to the social world (Alexander, 2013; Davoudi, 2012; Porter & Davoudi, 2012; Bahadur & Tanner, 2014; Jabareen, 2012).

As a means of navigating the conceptual impasse posed by ecological resilience and its application to dynamic social systems, Davoudi (2012) proposes the concept of ‘evolutionary resilience’ (Davoudi, 2012: 302). Challenging the idea of equilibrium, evolutionary resilience advocates that the nature of systems may change over time, with or without an external disturbance (Davoudi, 2012: 302). Thus, resilience is not conceived of as a return to normality, but rather “as the ability of complex socio-ecological systems to change, adapt, and crucially transform in response to stresses and strains” (Davoudi, 2012: 302).

Davoudi (2012) argues that this paradigm shift challenges the view that the world is orderly, mechanical and reasonably predictable. Her view acknowledges that the world is chaotic,

complex, uncertain and unpredictable (Davoudi, 2012: 302). In fact, ‘transformation’ or regime shifts may not necessarily be the outcome of external disturbances or their linear and proportional causes and effects. Instead, they may be a result of internal stresses with no proportional or linear relationship between cause and effect (Davoudi, 2012: 302). Thus, small-scale change in a system may amplify and cascade into major shifts, and vice versa (Davoudi, 2012: 303).

Acknowledging this uncertainty, Cavallo & Ireland (2014) criticise existing evidence-based tools for disaster preparedness and reduction (Cavallo & Ireland, 2014: 187). They suggest that whilst approaches such as statistical projections and modelling are vital to increase resilience within communities, they are limited in that they neglect the level of uncertainty that future disasters will involve (Cavallo & Ireland, 2014: 187). Because these approaches focus on building resilience to known risks, it is inevitable that they will fail in the face of emerging future risks, unpredicted cascading risks and unknown risks (Cavallo & Ireland, 2014: 187). Moreover, Cavallo & Ireland (2014) find that whilst interdependent risks and cascading failures are discussed in lessons learned, they often fail to be addressed in future DRR plans that are made (Cavallo & Ireland, 2014: 187).

### **2.1.3 The limitations of resilience within urban planning and development**

Given the problem of defining “resilience”, it may be easy to view it as too vague a concept to contribute meaningfully to DRR. However, MacAskill & Guthrie (2014) believe that the term’s continuing use despite the issues outlined above suggests otherwise (MacAskill & Guthrie, 2014: 670). According to Shaw (2012), the term’s appeal to decision makers, policy communities and non-state actors can be explained by its ability to cut across the ‘grey area’ between academic, policy and practice discourses (Shaw, 2012: 308).

However, as Porter & Davoudi (2012) contend, the term “resilience” is in danger of being uncritically accepted into the discursive repertoire of development and planning practitioners,

and risks becoming another buzzword that remains a hollow concept (Davoudi, 2012: 299; Porter & Davoudi, 2012: 329). But, if given adequate attention and critically scrutinised, the concept is regarded as possessing great potential; and is hoped to be able to provide a more radical and transformational agenda that has the ability to challenge power structures and accepted ways of thinking (Shaw, 2012: 310; Davoudi, 2012: 299; Porter & Davoudi, 2012: 329; Bahadur & Tanner, 2014). It is thus imperative that the concept's limitations are elucidated and the critical gaps in the theory are addressed, so that organisations and communities do not regard resilience as a panacea simply because of its popularity (Shaw, 2012; Davoudi, 2012; Bahadur & Tanner, 2014; Alexander, 2013).

There are two broad arguments in terms of the priority for resilience, one political and the other technical. Each regards the challenges to resilience differently (HPG, 2014: 2). The political argument claims that since the shocks and stresses that cause a crisis cannot be prevented, it is essential to ensure that people are able to cope when things do go wrong (HPG, 2014: 2). Following on from this, the key criticism levelled by this perspective is that past and current practice has failed to prioritise vulnerability highly enough (HPG, 2014: 2). As such, resilience is regarded as an encouragement for greater political will and institutional change in the way decisions are made and resources allocated (HPG, 2014: 2).

On the other hand, the technical argument suggests that new ways of thinking and different ways of programming are required, because old techniques have proven technically inadequate and are insufficient to tackle the challenges of the future (HPG, 2014: 2). Thus, from the technical perspective, resilience serves as a conceptual umbrella to foster interdisciplinary solutions to complex future problems and risks, such as those posed by climate change (HPG, 2014: 2).

#### **2.1.3.1 The political argument**

Bahdur and Tanner (2014) align themselves with the political argument outlined above. They

critique resilience with a focus on people, power and politics; believing that in this way resilience can be combined with a more radical agenda that engages with the underlying political structures and trade-offs that determine risk and vulnerability (Bahadur & Tanner, 2014: 200-202). Furthermore, they suggest that with an uncritical acceptance that the outcome of resilience will automatically be good, there will be a failure to address the different winners and losers from resilience-building and the political processes that mediate trade-offs between actors (Bahadur & Tanner, 2014: 202).

Davoudi (2012) echoes this sentiment and suggests that the fundamental problem lies in the translation of “resilience” from ecology to society (Davoudi, 2012: 306). She states that in the ecological literature, resilience is power-blind and a-political; partly because ecologists believe that in nature “there are... no rewards or punishments, just consequences” (Davoudi, 2012: 306). However, in society there are always rewards and punishments: some people gain, and others lose in resilience-building; thus, resilience for some people or places may result in losses for others (Davoudi, 2012: 306; Alexander, 2013: 2714). For the sake of justice and fairness, it is therefore imperative that we “reflect on what precisely it is that is being made resilient, in the face of which specific dynamics, for whom and by what criteria this is good or bad, and whether such resilience is consequently problematic or not” (Bahadur & Tanner, 2014: 202).

In terms of trade-offs, Bahadur & Tanner (2014) warn that building resilience at one scale can have negative impacts at another; for example, by diverting resources away from other systems or exploiting other groups of people (Bahadur & Tanner, 2014: 202). This is highlighted within an Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network (ACCCRN) project that targeted slum communities in Gorakhpur, India (Bahadur & Tanner, 2014: 205). In this case, increased resilience for one section of the community often meant reduced resilience for another. For example, in one instance wealthier households built boundary walls around their homes to prevent flood waters entering. This led to greater risks to more vulnerable adjacent households who could not

afford boundary walls (Bahadur & Tanner, 2014: 205).

Cross-scalar trade-offs from resilience-building were also evident in the ACCCRN interventions, in that substantial progress was made at city level, whilst much less occurred at national level (Bahadur & Tanner, 2014: 206). Thus, concentrating time and resources at one level left ACCCRN less able to effect resilience-building change at a higher level. This became particularly problematic within India's centralised governance system, where resilience at city level was dependent upon decisions taken at state government level. Such situations are a further indication of the importance of contextual politics and power relations (Bahadur & Tanner, 2014: 206).

One shortcoming of the technical argument is the potential under-emphasis of people in its resilience thinking, which may result in a disregard for risk management's inherent political complexity (Bahadur & Tanner, 2014: 203). Bahadur & Tanner (2014) criticise the emphasis on systems as a means to understand social-ecological-technological processes, because this approach fails to populate these systems with people (Bahadur & Tanner, 2014: 203). They suggest that the influence of people is key, because different people and groups seek systems that are resilient in order to realise their particular needs or to maintain their particular institutions (Bahadur & Tanner, 2014: 203).

In this way, the term "resilience" and its narrative are at risk of being hijacked by particular interests to marginalise particular actors in particular settings (Bahadur & Tanner, 2014: 203). Porter & Davoudi (2012) explain this failing of resilience thinking as a result of the fundamental ontological and epistemological divergences between the natural and social sciences (Porter & Davoudi, 2012: 331). Socio-ecological contexts, including crises, are never inevitable; rather, they are produced. This is an ontological assumption that resilience has difficulty disentangling (Porter & Davoudi, 2012: 331).

For example, Davoudi (2012) highlights that when the idea of ‘self-organisation’, inherent in resilience thinking, is translated into a social context, it refers to ‘self-reliance’. This is a favourable outcome in neoliberal discourse, where resilience concepts subtly justify policy directions that encourage the withdrawal of state services as an apparent means of fostering “community resilience” (Davoudi, 2012: 305; Porter & Davoudi, 2012: 332). Moreover, the possibilities of ‘transformation’ and ‘bouncing forward’ also fit into the current climate of neoliberal urban growth, regeneration and renewal agendas that have been dominant for the past 30 years (Porter & Davoudi, 2012: 332).

### **2.1.3.2 The technical argument**

In favour of the technical approach, Manyena (2006) argues that although people should be at the centre of resilience-building, they do not live in a vacuum. Instead, they are part of systems that impact on losses and the locality’s ability to deal with them (Burayidi, 2015: 283). Furthermore, the uncertainty of natural and man-made disasters, which are interconnected and evolve in a network of multiple causes and effects, creates a level of complexity which requires new approaches (Cavallo & Ireland, 2014: 181).

This is particularly evident within the urban context, where critical urban issues are “typically treated as independent issues”, which “frequently results in ineffective policy and disastrous unintended consequences” (Jabreen, 2012: 221). The implication then is that there is a need to conceptualise the multidisciplinary and complex nature of these systems in order to clarify “resilience” in the face of vague and confusing terminology (Jabreen, 2012: 220). Alexander (2013) also identifies this need, suggesting that DRR needs theory in order to make sense of apparently chaotic events (Alexander, 2013: 2713).

MacAskill & Guthrie (2014) suggest that progress towards defining “resilience” is best made by

embracing the concept's diversity. This is reminiscent of Connelly's (2007) 'continuous triangular field' in the field of sustainable development, which accepts that 'sustainability' is a contested concept, and as such encompasses all programs and policies which purport to be sustainable (MacAskill & Guthrie, 2014: 670; Connelly, 2007). MacAskill & Guthrie present a framework for examining interpretations of "resilience" in disaster risk management (DRM) and acknowledge that aiming to reach a consensus on a strict definition is neither practical nor possible. In fact, this impossibility suggests that employing the term in different contexts requires its meaning to be flexible (MacAskill & Guthrie, 2014: 667-668).

Through the development of this framework, they hope to facilitate greater understanding of the concept of resilience and increased cross-disciplinary discussion (MacAskill & Guthrie, 2014: 673). However, HPG (2014) regards the efforts of the technical school to define "resilience" as misplaced. They suggest that the discussion about technical and conceptual insights has come to hide the concept's true goal; that is, making vulnerability the centre of development. Once this is addressed only then is it possible that the technical discussion can improve and inform practice (HPG, 2014: 2).

Whilst HPG (2014) recognises that it is normal for ongoing technical and conceptual developments to inform thinking and practice, with regard to resilience, there seems to be a demand to focus on practice before theory. However, it is not clear whether it would be feasible to engage with the concept of resilience in the way suggested by HPG (2014); that is, by separating the technical argument from the political one (HPG, 2014: 4). For example, practical undertakings such as the UNISDR's Making Cities Resilient Campaign and ACCCRN seem to be operating alongside both the development of frameworks such as HFA and HFA2 and the conceptual theorisation discussed above. Here, practice and theory inform each other and develop in tandem.

#### **2.1.4 The relationship between fragile cities and disaster**

Although trajectories of urbanisation are set to increase the prosperity of some cities, other cities risk sinking into a state of decay and disarray, characterised by their administration's decline in ability or willingness to deliver on the social contract (Muggah, 2014: 345). Members of this new class of “failed” or “fragile” cities are structurally undermined by factors such as social disorganisation, inequality, marginalisation and under-institutionalisation, and are conceptually rooted in previous theorisations of collapsed, failing or failed states (Muggah, 2014: 347).

Depending on how “fragility” is defined, it is estimated that between 370 million and 1.5 billion people currently live in fragile states, with a 50% increase in the world's poor expected to be located within such states over the next five years (Muggah, 2014: 347-348). Goodfellow et al. (2013) describe civic conflict within fragile cities as emerging from:

Sectarian riots to gang violence, terrorism and turf wars between urban landlords... linked both to the city as a distinct space and to contestation over citizenship and entitlements, often reflecting a sense of neglect by the state (Muggah, 2014: 347).

Muggah (2014) is optimistic about the state of future fragility and suggests that the urban decay and disorder within certain cities need not mean that they cannot rebound and ultimately transform for the better (Muggah, 2014: 352). He believes that it is the resilience of cities that offers a means of overcoming fragility (Muggah, 2014: 352). However, the resilience required may be greater than anticipated. There is growing consensus that conflict and “natural” disasters are synergistic and interact in ways that exacerbate each other. This is particularly the case in the context of fragile cities (Lee, 2009: 92-93; King & Mutter, 2014: 1246; Scheffran et al., 2012: 870; Salehyan, 2014).

King & Mutter (2014) explain this relationship, suggesting that while natural disasters have a global distribution, hazards are likely to turn into worse disasters in the poorest and most fragile



states. Indeed, the most vulnerable locations are often the hardest hit (King & Mutter, 2014: 1246). Haiti is a prime example of such a state. The country experienced a relatively strong earthquake in 2010, but, as a result of its fragility, recorded 200,000 deaths. This is vastly more than would be expected for a magnitude 7.0 earthquake, and much more than was recorded in a similar-scale event in California (King & Mutter, 2014: 1246).

Conversely, it has been suggested that climate-related natural disasters may actually decrease the risk of conflict. For example, Slettebek (2012) suggests that natural disasters may bring about a “unifying” effect amongst the disaster-stricken population; e.g. by resulting in more positive perceptions of government during the disaster response, or, less optimistically, by reducing the window of opportunity for insurgents (Slettebek, 2012: 174). The case of the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004 demonstrates both effects. In Aceh, it provided a “unifying” opportunity during which factions formed a peace agreement; whereas in Sri Lanka fighting continued (King & Mutter, 2014: 1248).

It is clear that both conflict and disaster have similar root causes in the forms of social vulnerability and growing environmental pressures such as climate change. This strengthens the argument for the necessity of cross-disciplinary responses (King & Mutter, 2014: 1249). In fact, peace-building as a response to conflict is very similar to DRR as a response to disaster (King & Mutter, 2014: 1243). For example, fostering resilience to disaster is often described as “an ongoing process of individuals, communities, and systems to survive, adapt, cope and grow in spite of exogenous and endogenous stresses and shocks” (Muggah, 2014: 352). This process is akin to the idea of instituting sustainable peace and empowering communities to deal with conflict in non-violent manners through “actions to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid relapse into conflict” (King & Mutter, 2014: 1245).

Little is known about how fragile cities are able to cope with or rebound from shocks and persistent violence. However, Muggah (2014) proposes that resilience within the context of fragile cities is not just the ability to anticipate and respond to risks, but also involves developing the ability of individuals and communities to confront stresses without resorting to violence (Muggah, 2014: 352). Similarly, the ultimate goal of peace-building is to empower communities to deal with conflicts in a non-violent manner (King & Mutter, 2014: 1245).

Examples of resilience measures within low- to middle-income countries include pacification programmes or proximity policing initiatives, and mediation and social capital promotion efforts (Muggah, 2014: 352). However, the most successful resilience-building approaches tend to privilege consultation and dialogue and coordination with multiple layers of government. They take a pro-active approach to urban safety and security and target a combination of macro- and micro-factors shaping urban fragility (Muggah, 2014: 353).

Evidence for resilience promotion in fragile states is still relatively tenuous. This is especially the case in contexts where fragility and climate-related disasters interact. However, it seems that there is a need for cross-disciplinary action which uses interventions from both fields in order to tackle the vulnerabilities that arise (King & Mutter, 2014: 1249). Moreover, since some of the underlying structural causes are the same, it is possible that addressing them will help mitigate both conflict and disasters (King & Mutter, 2014: 1249). King & Mutter (2014) suggest a “DRR for peace-building” or “peace- building for DRR (King & Mutter, 2014: 1249).

### **3. Background of the case study**

#### **3.1 Beirut’s past development**

Beirut is a city that has been shaped by the interplay of regional and global forces over the years. Yassin (2011) identifies ‘glocal’ factors which have transformed the city; such as the changes in global economic systems through trade and capital flows, regional political events and wars, and

the dynamics of the Lebanese political economy (Yassin, 2011: 64).

Yassin (2011) divides Beirut's transformation since the 19<sup>th</sup> century into five phases and suggests that each phase was subject to its own specific glocal factors which produced unique spatial and social orders (Yassin, 2011: 64). During the first phase, Yassin (2011: 66) characterises Beirut as a modest city undergoing Ottoman modernisation with significant Christian immigration which led to them to make up 64% of the population (Yassin, 2011: 67).

The second phase saw a decline of the Ottoman Empire and the arrival of significant waves of refugees. In 1948, 100 000 persons from Palestine who had been displaced as a result of the first Arab-Israeli war entered Lebanon (Yassin, 2011: 68). Towards the end of this phase and the end of colonialism, both class and sectarian divisions and tensions between neighbourhoods were becoming more apparent (Yassin, 2011: 68). An unwritten 'National Pact' reserved the Presidential position for a Maronite increased Arab nationalism and the rift between the elite and the Muslim population continued to grow (Nagel, 2002: 720).

The third phase was marked by rapid urbanisation and neglect of the rural economy. Increasing inequality between rural and urban areas led to massive urban immigration (Yassin, 2011: 69). Unregulated settlements emerged during this period; largely attracting the Lebanese working classes, Syrian and Kurdish labourers, and Palestinian refugees (Yassin, 2011: 69). However, with poverty, high density, and lack of sanitation and municipal services, these areas were widely regarded as the city's "misery belt" (Yassin, 2011: 69).

During the fourth phase, Christian and Muslim tensions erupted into violence, which continued from 1975 to 1990. Yassin (2011) regards the first two years of the civil war as an 'urban phenomenon', with both sides committing grievous atrocities and expelling the 'other' sectarian community (Yassin, 2011: 69). Militia leaders acted like urban designers and produced a new

spatial order by reorganising the urban space and territory according to emerging political, sectarian and military realities (Yassin, 2011: 69-70).

Following the end of Lebanon's civil war in 1990, Beirut's final phase is characterised as one of post-war urban reconstruction, highly influenced by the neoliberal peace model (Nagel, 2002: 721; Yassin, 2011: 71). Solidere, a private real estate company, was tasked with the reconstruction. This focused primarily on a 191-hectare core within Beirut's old centre, which took on a "symbolic dimension" (Nagel, 2002: 722; Yassin, 2011: 72).

As a virtual power vacuum, Beirut was fragmented and subject to constant outside interventions. It essentially represented the "capital of a state that had ceased to exist" (Nagel, 2002: 722). However, the new political elite, under the leadership of Rafic Hariri, attempted to re-establish the city (Nagel, 2002: 722). Unfortunately, Hariri's over-gentrification of Beirut transformed the city centre into an "exclusive entity floating in a non-existent city" that continued to be spatially divided across war-induced lines (Yassin, 2011: 72). Because the state omitted to either acknowledge or commemorate the memory of the war, Beirut has failed to return to any form of normalcy (Yassin, 2011: 72).

### **3.2 Beirut's Current and Future Development**

Beirut has had a tumultuous past, but how the city engages with the challenges of its current phase and plans strategically for its future will either demonstrate an increased resilience to adverse global factors or signal its capitulation to further disaster. Despite Solidere's efforts to reconstruct Beirut without a strategic urban development vision, the city's social and sectarian divisions will persist, breeding further tensions (Yassin, 2011: 72).

Amplifying sectarian divisions, the Syrian revolution has polarised Shiite parties, Sunni Muslims and major Christian parties in Lebanon behind opposing sides of the neighbouring civil war (Mudallali, 2013: 1). With Shiite parties supporting Bashar al-Assad's regime and Sunni Muslims

and major Christian parties supporting the popular uprising, the political crisis is pushing Lebanon to the brink (Mudallali, 2013: 1). Furthermore, the reception of 1.15 million Syrian refugees (Islamic Relief, 2015: 20) displaced by the sectarian violence is proving to be a highly volatile and contentious issue and has placed additional strain on an already-declining economy and already-problematic service provision (Mudallali, 2013: 2).

However, whilst previous disasters have tended to occur along political and sectarian fault lines, it seems that Beirut's greatest threat may be a natural one. According to Baytiyeh and Naja (2013), Lebanon is not only vulnerable to earthquakes, but is long overdue for a major earthquake (Baytiyeh & Naja, 2013: 342-343). In fact, Lebanon is covered with seismic fault systems which over the past two centuries have regularly produced earthquakes of a magnitude of 7.5; causing tremendous destruction in Beirut and surrounding regions (Baytiyeh & Naja, 2013: 343). Unfortunately, previous Lebanese governments have been preoccupied with internal wars and conflicts, and as such have not dedicated any resources, planning or infrastructure development to prevention and mitigation (Baytiyeh & Naja, 2013: 343). As such, it seems that if current socio-political events do not result in conflict first, a potential high-magnitude earthquake will almost certainly result in significant disaster.

#### **4.0 Research Questions**

Having first been exposed to the concept of 'resilience' within the context of climate change adaptation, it became apparent that the concept, with its aim of fostering coping and adaptive capacity and the ability to "bounce back better" from external shocks and stresses, may also be appropriate within the context of conflict (Satterthwaite & Dodman, 2013: 295). Indeed, the concept has been applied in many other fields to address a variety of risks at varying scales, including those of the individual, the community, the city and the nation (Satterthwaite &

Dodman, 2013: 296). It was envisaged that Syria and Palestine, both areas which are characterised by endemic violence, would provide suitable case studies in which lessons learnt from the emerging concept of 'resilience' could be applied. However, it became clear that studying these two countries would not be feasible. At the time of writing, Syria had only recently descended into fragility and conflict, and so it would have been a challenge to gain sufficient and credible information; not only in terms of academic literature, but also from primary sources. Palestine, on the other hand, is the subject of much academic literature; but again, primary sources of data would have been difficult to access.

Taking the position of postgraduate fellow at the NGO Islamic Relief provided me with additional resources, particularly in relation to other countries and cities characterised by endemic violence. As such, Beirut was chosen because it provided an excellent example of a fragile city, having faced much conflict in the past, but by the same token is struggling as a result of the neighbouring Syrian civil war. Following on from the literature review, what follows assesses whether the concept of 'resilience' is useful when applied within the context of Beirut's multiple and interacting risks; which consist of unplanned urbanisation, potential conflict and civil tension, and potential earthquake risk. It is investigated what features of the resilience concept make it useful within this context, and why. Finally, I examine the concept's limitations when it is used to address conflict and disaster, in order to find any gaps that may exist in the current operationalisation of resilience.

## **5.0 Methodology**

Under the assumption that opinion, knowledge and meaning are constructed, not discovered, I believe I am more aligned with the Parmenidean ontology of 'being' (Gray, 2014: 20). Following on from this it is my belief that an interpretivist approach to my thesis question would be most appropriate in order to investigate the "culturally derived and historically situated interpretations" of responses within the field of Disaster Risk Reduction (Gray, 2014: 23).

Historically, within the field, positivist social science has constructed disaster as an exogenous event and as such has favoured linear cause and effect responses that have largely proven inadequate (Lavell & Maskrey, 2013; Porter & Davoudi, 329). There is a wide acceptance now that disasters are actually a product of human processes and vulnerability not an external event beyond our control. There is a call for going beyond the sterile analysis and conservative interventions of the past and considering new ontological and epistemological perspectives that expand the body of knowledge on DRR (Cavallo & Ireland, 2014; Porter & Davoudi, 2012).

I intend to take a social constructivist approach to the research that will seek to highlight the influence of people, power and politics within vulnerability creation to disaster and hope to discover how contemporary concepts of resilience may redress this balance (Bahadur & Tanner, 2014: 201).

Firstly, a scope of literature was undertaken in order to address my initial research regarding the usefulness of contemporary concepts of resilience within cities characterised by endemic violence. Data was sourced from the university library's catalogue, Google Scholar and from the internet using key word search functions such as "disaster", "DRR", "resilience", "Urban", "cities" and "conflict", individually and in combination. There appeared to be a raft of academic and policy literature, however there were significant gaps within the application of the concept to conflict affected regions. The data that was required to fill these gaps included; primary data preferably from conflict professionals and disaster risk reduction specialists as well as from those communities directly affected by violence. Through securing a Postgraduate Fellowship with Islamic Relief, I sought to immerse myself within a large-scale humanitarian organisation in order to access the resources I was lacking. This association gave me access to field offices in countries within which they operated, development and relief professionals within the UK and to their network of Fellows students.

Focussing on a case study, my initial plan was to investigate the research question in the field. This would have provided me with the richest data and most detailed sources of information regarding the prospective location, communities and organisations within which they operate (Bryman, 2008: 52). The most prevalent cases of endemic conflict considered included Palestine and Syria, however due to practical and ethical consideration this was not possible. Beirut was suggested by Islamic Relief as a more practical alternative, with field offices based just outside of the city, but again this was not possible due to ethical and logistical considerations. However, the case did provide an excellent example of a fragile state as it had experienced endemic violence in the past. It was also currently experiencing the effects of unplanned urbanisation and suffering the effects of the neighbouring civil war. As a result, it was decided to proceed with using it as the focus of the research. Furthermore, Islamic Relief provided significant resources that were relevant to the case study including access to country experts, professionals from other organisations within the country and access to Fellows who had conducted previous research in the country.

Using 'snowball' sampling I networked through Islamic Relief identifying those participants that were most relevant to my research question (Bryman, 2008: 184). Whilst I conducted informal interviews with eight participants from Islamic Relief (IR); two participants from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), one participant from the American University of Beirut (AUB), one local community worker from Beirut and a member of Architecture Sans Frontieres (ASF), formal qualitative semi-structured interviews were only conducted with five members of IR, two members of ICRC and the participant from ASF, all of whom had either specific knowledge of the case study, the concept of resilience, climate change disaster, DRR strategy, or conflict (See Appendix A1 for a full list of participants).

Semi-structured interviews presented the opportunity to gain in-depth information, providing



the flexibility to ask follow-up questions in order to gain more insight, thus allowing me to ask the same question in different variations to contrast the responses (Bryman, 2008: 438). This method also allowed me to gauge the reaction of participants to questions, note any irony in their responses and monitor their body language. Five to six main questions with several follow up questions were mapped out before the interview for each participant, all with a primary focus on resilience, but with different contextual questions depending on the participant's specialism. For example, a country specialist would be questioned about the nature of resilience within Lebanon, whereas a climate specialist would be questioned about the nature of resilience within disaster (See Appendix A2 for an example list of questions).

Responses were transcribed manually using a word document in which 'in-vivo' codes and more analytical codes were written within the margins, focusing on; the language, inferences made and references to broader sociological issues (Jackson, 2001: 202). Listening back to audio recordings; verbal and non-verbal cues were also noted such as silences and laughter (Jackson, 2001: 203). Following on from the coding themes were generated by grouping the most frequently mentioned 'in-vivo' and analytical codes within individual transcripts and then across all transcripts (Jackson, 2001). The data was read and re-read multiple times in order to make sure that themes were generated from codes used in context and then formed into a short list of 'meta themes' (Jackson, 2001: 207). Further grouping and re-grouping of these 'meta themes' eventually formed my short list of 'discursive repertoires' amounting to eleven key topics that characterised and represented the participant's opinion on the usefulness of resilience (Jackson, 2001: 207).

This method provided a systematic method of saturating the data rather than merely cross-referencing transcripts and allowing themes to emerge and avoided the danger of jumping to premature conclusions (Jackson, 2001: 202). Whilst the initial review of literature had informed my line of questioning the interview data collected also further influenced my literature review.

It became apparent that there were gaps in the field concerning cross-disciplinary approaches which I then addressed through both my literature review and title which were then altered to accommodate this development.

Being embedded with IR as a fellow provided me with great resources however it is also accepted that it presented some limitations. For example, whilst I strove to obtain participants from outside of the organisation the majority came from within IR. This had the effect of shaping many of my views of development work and disaster and may have potentially biased the results of my analysis towards their opinions. Undertaking the interviews also provided many challenges, for example many interviews with country specialists in Lebanon took place over Skype. As a result, poor internet connections would regularly disrupt the flow of the conversation or disconnect the conversation. It was also difficult to gauge the physical responses of participants over an audio only connection. This was also the case with the three other participants that I interviewed, unfortunately interviews were conducted over the phone or Skype providing a physical barrier to the flow of the interview. However, it is also acknowledged that the three face-to-face interviews that I conducted were also limited. As a novice interviewer I felt it was difficult to not involve myself in the conversation which often times may have resulted in leading questions (See Appendix A2 for an example list of questions).

Whilst making every effort to ensure that coding and 'discursive repertoires' were developed in context it was a particularly difficult task. Eight documents contained at least twenty pages each making cross thematic analysis incredibly time consuming and arduous. The sheer amount of data that needed to be assessed would have likely had an effect on the outcome of the results and their reliability. When transcribing it was also difficult to make sure that all of the non-verbal cues were identified, and many were probably lost in the process. In fact, during the interviewing process itself it was difficult to make notes of non-verbal cues whilst maintaining the flow of the interview and follow up questions.

The data gained through the qualitative process provides rich and detailed insights and opinions but unfortunately it is very specific to the individuals interviewed and the organisation within which I was based. It is acknowledged that these results are not readily generalisable and as such would require further methods in order to draw wider lessons. With more time more participants may have been interviewed providing a greater number opinions and depth to the analysis. Behavioural coding may have also been conducted in order analyse a larger group of participants to draw statistical conclusions from their behaviour (Madrigal & McClain, 2012). Beyond this a mix method may have been used, identifying the factors that affect the areas under investigation then using that information to devise quantitative research that assesses how these factors would affect user preferences (Madrigal & McClain, 2012).

## **6.0 Results and Analysis**

### **6.1 Disaster Risk Emanating from Climate, Conflict & Urbanisation**

#### **6.1.1 Multiple and cumulative risks**

The responses of half of the participants (See Appendix A1 for a full list of participants) conveyed immediacy and emergency about the nature of future disaster. This was particularly the case with Mrs K and Dr A-K, a climate change specialist at IR. The responses of the Mrs K, who stated that the increase in disaster is “palpable”, signalled a sense of unpreparedness and a fear of imminent disaster; whilst Dr A-K’s views asserted that we have to mitigate disaster now by “supporting people to cope with what is happening already”. Both opinions reflect current and future trends which indicate increasing disaster (Al-Nammari & Alzaghal, 2014; Islamic Relief, 2015b; CRED, 2015).

A third of the participants acknowledged that future trends towards urbanisation will exacerbate disaster. Key reference to terms such as “confined”, “concentration” and “huge numbers”

represented participants' perceptions of populations and vital infrastructure within cities and factors that will increase the risk of disaster. As Dr A-K. stated, in these conditions "the chance of people escaping disaster is less". Furthermore, cities are increasingly seen as sites of inequality, where the poor are "socially dislocated" and marginalised within the most hazardous regions (Alexander & Davis, 2012; INCRISD, 2014).

All of the participants highlighted the relationship between climate and conflict, particularly with regards to the scenario where climate causes conflict, as opposed the reverse scenario, which may also be the case (King & Mutter, 2014). Both Dr A-K. and Mrs K pointed to current and future "climate-related wars" which emerge from conflict over resources. The Darfur conflict between "grazers" and "herders" which started in 2003 was cited as a prime example of how diminishing water resources bring competing groups into closer proximity, thus causing conflict over the limited resources. Proximity as a result of diminishing resources is also perceived as increasing a sense of nationalism, which can drive civil tensions.

Dr F stated that Beirut's main risks are from earthquakes, unplanned urbanisation, the refugee crisis, and local and regional conflicts. Whilst participants within IR acknowledged most of these risks, their projects were predominantly focused in rural Lebanese areas and did not acknowledge the risk of a potential earthquake. However, this may have been due to a lack of capacity in urban centres, or to the preoccupation with the refugee crisis evidenced by the focus of Mr A's responses. Furthermore, whilst IR's Integrated Sustainable Development approach (Islamic Relief, 2014a) to projects promotes a multi-disciplinary handling of conflict and climate, the conflict specialist questioned stated that she doesn't "deal with environmental issues but no conflict issues in isolation". This implies the existence of a continued silo approach or a current gap between policy and action.

### **6.1.2 Lebanese host community and Syrian refugee tensions**

In terms of risks to Beirut and Lebanon generally, the Syria crisis and the effect of the massive

influx of Syrian refugees are the overriding issues. Half of the participants, particularly those who specialise in the country Lebanon, pointed towards the “huge additional number of people” within a “very small country” as a cause of tension with the host community. Officially, one in four persons within the country is a refugee (UNHCR, 2014). However, two of the country specialists suggested that the unofficial figure is greater, with in fact two in four persons being refugees. Mrs L stated that “It’s more that people are coming in from Syria into other parts of Lebanon, rather than shopping centres in central Beirut having any kind of impact”. This suggests that action directed towards the refugee crisis should be prioritised.

Mr A and Dr F, who both reside in Lebanon, identified labour competition as one of the main sources of tension between the host and refugee communities. Dr F said that the Syrian crisis has had a significant effect on one of the country’s main sources of income, tourism, and has resulted in competition over the remaining forms of income. Tensions arise because refugees “working illegally” are willing to “accept lower prices”. Mr A stated that attention should be directed towards the youth because “most of the tension comes from them”; especially as “unemployment among the youth is increasing now”. The UNHCR has identified youth as a vulnerable group; particularly within the context of Beirut, where they are at risk of resorting to negative coping strategies (UNHCR 2013, 2014).

All three country specialists also pointed towards competition over services and resources as a key cause of tensions. Amongst these participants, references are made to the “limited”, “overstretched” and “weak” nature of the infrastructure within the country. Mrs L stated that as a result of the significant pressure placed on services, waste has “not been collected”, and this has become a “fiery issue”. Although there has been a huge influx of refugees, “there is no extra contribution from those people generating that extra garbage”. Although she did not “want to draw a conclusion of what else the issue illustrates”, Beirut’s “You Stink!” campaign seems to represent wider discontent with the “corrupt government”, promoting the message “people

want to topple the regime” (Al Jazeera, 2015).

Mrs L and Mr A both highlighted the effect of Syrian refugees on those most vulnerable in Lebanon. Mrs L stated that as a result of humanitarian aid being directed away from existing vulnerable communities, these communities “have been made more vulnerable”. She also described the host community as having feelings of “resentment”, “frustration” and “hostility”. Mr A recounted a situation where these feelings led to violence against an aid distributor, who was hit by the host community.

Whilst Mrs L and Mr A acknowledged that the Lebanese government does not provide refugees with any support and has previously attempted to remain out of the crisis “just to avoid any political intervention” because of sectarian divides, the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) is regarded as a positive step towards addressing tensions between the host community and refugees (UNHCR, 2014; Randall, 2014: 5). Both participants recognised the plan as “fairer”, “inclusive” and more “balanced” in its approach to addressing vulnerability within all of the affected communities. Although Mrs L seemed reserved about its effectiveness, stating that it is “too early to tell whether it is having a massive affect”, she believed that it “may have prevented a worsening” of the situation. Dr F argued that the solution to tensions needed to include “legalising refugee status”. In addition, Dr F suggested that those refugees most in need should be targeted, because “some of them have resources”; and the capacity of “local actors and the local civil society organisations” to deal with refugees should be developed. Although the LCRP does acknowledge the problem, Dr F's recommendations address it in a more structural way, and would allow refugees to work legally, support local services and reduce their own reliance on aid. In this way, all of the tensions discussed would be addressed (Forced Migration Review, 2014).

## 6.2 Towards and Resilience Approach to Disaster Risk Reduction

### 6.2.1 The need to address the structural causes of vulnerability

Dr A-K characterised those who are most vulnerable as “socially excluded”, “marginalised”, and from “particular groups” or “gender”; but noted that this group includes the poor mostly. In fact, he stated that poorer countries are more vulnerable than richer countries, and within the former, disasters “affect poor people more than they affect the rich people”. He gave the examples of Libya, where “refugees and the internally displaced people are the poor people”; and the USA in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, where the “people who suffered were really the poor people living in the slum areas of New Orleans”. These vulnerabilities can also be exacerbated if they are combined; for example, a poor woman from a marginalised ethnic minority is likely to be additionally vulnerable (INCRISD, 2014).

The structural causes of the disparity between richer and poorer individuals’ experiences of disaster were explained by both the Mrs K and Dr A-K. Both participants argued that “the key thing is the assets that they command”; where tangible and intangible assets are included. Examples of tangible or physical assets include a quality shelter, stores of food, or the amount of land possessed. In the Libyan example given above, their possession of more physical assets meant that the rich were able to leave: “rich people loaded their stuff... they had houses in Tunisia and Egypt and they went”. Intangible assets, on the other hand, include “influence” and “voice”. Dr A-K stated that these intangible assets have the effect that the giving influential areas more preference because that's where the “backlash is going to come if anything goes wrong”. In fact, in the 2004 Sri Lankan tsunami, patterns of inequality were shown in the varying levels of destruction of poor and wealthy homes: local fishing communities were destroyed, but hotels and homes in wealthier areas remained intact (Ingram et al, 2006).

Two of the participants made repeated reference to “voice” and “governance” as means of tackling structural vulnerabilities, whilst Dr F referred to “inclusivity”. Dr A-K described “voice” as

giving the most vulnerable “a level playing field” and allowing them to “be at the table” so that they are “equal partners in the decision-making”. As part of an ideal governance system, the ASF participant stated that while you need a “very strong civil Society to be able to demand what is just and right for everybody” through voice, it is also imperative that you have “top-down democratic structure to enable the right kind of services to be in place”. Dr F, on the other hand, emphasised the importance of the inclusion of all members of society; stating that “resilience is a comprehensive concept” which should try “to help marginalised groups” in crisis. However, achieving these characteristics within the fragmented, sectarian and elitist governance system of Lebanon will be a difficult task (Kingston, 2012). In this regard, Dr A-K’s statement that “whoever is in a position of power, you have to wrest it out of him... he doesn't just give it back to you for free” is an apt characterisation of Beirut’s politics (Kingston, 2012).

### **6.2.2 Building capacity for disasters at all levels**

Capacity development has remained an ambiguous concept in DRR and development. Amongst participants, its relationship to resilience also elicited a wide range of responses (Hagelsteen & Becker, 2012). Acknowledging this ambiguity, Mrs K suggested that there are a wide range of definitions for capacity development and even within NGOs the term is still referred to as “capacity building”. Half of the participants emphasised the importance of capacity development at different scales and across various activities. However, Mrs K gave the most comprehensive response, which is probably due to the fact that developing capacity is the primary role of ASF-UK.

Dr A-K referred to “voice” in relation to “capacity”, stating that beyond voice they need capacity; and, conversely, he suggests that you have to build their capacity in order for them to exercise their voice. This suggests that one reinforces the other. Dr A-K suggests that it is also “people in poverty”, who are perceived as the most marginalised group and are referred to as the recipients of capacity development, in order “that they should get their right share of resources”. He also



stated that “knowledge and awareness” must be built. These are both widely regarded as a key part of encouraging ownership of the process, where “ownership” implies that responsibility for the management of projects rests with the beneficiary of the project (Hagelsteen & Becker, 2012).

Mrs K also referred to types of “knowledge” as a key component of capacity development. However, she discussed this across the scales of local architects, international architects and local communities. She stated that capacity development enables professionals to “work with poor communities within whatever context they live”, and also helps communities to “use their local knowledge and awareness to... build resilience”. However, although she acknowledged the importance of “supporting local communities to be able to understand what they've got”, she was also wary of the “romantic notion that local communities know exactly how to manage their fragile ecosystems”. She advocated for a balanced approach, evincing a belief that the gap between local and scientific knowledge needs to be bridged so that communities can live in “harmony with the ecosystem” (Gaillard & Mercer, 2012). Using the recent earthquake in Kathmandu as an example, she demonstrated that although the community has the capacity to “build back”, it will not necessarily be “building back better, because they don't have the techniques or the skills”. This will in turn negatively affect their future resilience (Shaw, 2012).

Dr F and Mr F both discussed capacity development as a driver of sustainable development projects. Mr F stated that within Chad, “50% of the wells are not working after eight years, because of problems of maintenance, technology and affordability”. He believed this is a “classic situation where a failure to mobilise the community and build their capacity for ‘ownership’... results in whatever you have given them diminishing”. “Social mobilisation” is the key tool used to encourage ownership within the community. However, Mr F suggests that without social mobilisation nobody within the community will raise funds or take ownership and as a result “it will soon fall into disuse”.

Alternatively, Dr F referred to enhancing the “technical capacity of the civil society actors” in order to help communities sustain projects into the future. However, this is only one aspect of capacity development, and does not guarantee that the community will continue to maintain the project. For this reason, a more systematic approach needs to be taken that mobilises the community to take ownership (Hagelsteen & Becker, 2012).

### **6.2.3 Perceptions of ‘resilience’ in theory**

A concern with the term “resilience” is that its popularity may lead it to its being adopted uncritically, thus resigning it to the status of just another buzzword (Porter & Davoudi, 2012). Half of the participants, however, demonstrated that they have a thorough theoretical understanding of the concept. Two participants believed that the term just better encapsulated current DRR frameworks; whilst one participant was unable to give a definition or theoretical description but did describe how the concept was being operationalised. The term “buzzword” was used by Dr A.K but in an ironic manner rather than to denote that ‘resilience’ was a hollow concept. Mrs K, on the other hand, referred to it as a “powerful metaphor”; signifying its potential transformational quality. All participants but one identified the community as the site of resilience building. In contrast, Dr F stated that resilience building extends to more than just the community and includes other fields such as infrastructure and laws. Thus, he acknowledged the term’s broad usage.

All participants attempt to go beyond the ‘survival’ discourse of “bouncing back” and responding to disasters as they occur (Shaw, 2012: 309). However, four participants were explicit about the need for resilience to allow communities to thrive within dynamic and changing environments. For example, Dr F stated that within social systems, “we adapt, we change, there is evolution and even revolution”. Acknowledging this, the four participants referred to resilience as something “beyond self-sufficiency”, as a “change tool”, and as “not bouncing back to what we

were but bouncing back better”. Mrs K stated that communities require these types of qualities because disasters have the potential to catastrophically transform where they are. The implication is that communities require adaptive capacity in order to learn from previous incidents and be better prepared for those that follow (Johnson & Blackburn, 2014). Dr A-K used the term “anti-fragility” to denote surpassing “bouncing back” and maintaining the status quo. He stated: “Anti-fragility does not mean that I stop at that particular stage, it means that I address those structures”, referring to structures that cause vulnerability. He explained anti-fragility from a microfinance point of view as setting up a finance system at the community or at the national level, whereby you don't have to give an individual money in order to build his resilience. It is recognised that he will always need finance, whether there is disaster or not.

Four participants characterised the difference between those who are resilient and those who are not in terms of the rich-poor dichotomy. Dr A-K stated that those who are least resilient are the poor, “who have not got the systems, structures, assets, influence, and voice”. Similarly, Mr F stated that reduced resilience stems from the “alienation of communities from power” and lack of “access to services or rights”, particularly within the context of conflict. In response to this inequality in disaster resilience, these four participants saw disaster as an opportunity for “social and political change”, as an “opportunity to make society more resilient”, and as an opportunity for “evolution towards a more just state”.

Mrs K stated that “bouncing back to what you were is not necessarily good for everybody” she suggests that most contexts have massive divisions between the wealthy and poor. In effect, she argued that in order to promote equity and justice, resilience must take on a transformational quality (Bahdur & Tanner, 2014: 208; Shaw, 2012: 309). Dr A-K took this a step further. He called for a more radical agenda, stating that “we should change our whole economic and financial structure in a way that always builds the flexibility of people to respond to different situations”. He suggested that the current capitalist paradigm contains inherent contradictions that have

“fuelled consumerism”, whilst “consumerism has fuelled production”. As such we are diminishing the earth's resources faster than ever before. The implication is that this unsustainable system will inevitably lead to further crisis, particularly due to the effect of production on climate change (Shaw, 2012).

Half of the participants acknowledged that disasters would continually reoccur. Therefore, the primary tasks at the time of writing included “prevention”, “mitigation”, and building “resilience to future disasters”. Dr A-K stated that flexibility and resilience must be built so that “the community can thrive within shocks”. Mrs K believed that there is a “dividend” you get out of investing now for future catastrophes. This echoes Judith Rodin’s work, which promotes investing in resilience-building in the present so that costs are reduced when future disasters occur (Rodin, 2015).

#### **6.2.4 Resilience in practice**

When discussing resilience specifically in communities, responses fell into one of three categories: ideal resilient communities, resilient communities in practice, and resilience on the ground in Lebanon. Each category also seemed to represent the individual participant’s general outlook on the concept of resilience and their current or previous involvement with it. For example, Mrs K was in the process of developing a framework and methodology for resilience within the organisation, and this was reflected in her theoretically-inclined responses. Her strong sense of justice and fairness also came through in her responses to the concept and shaped her view of what a resilient community should be. Because she had a strong focus on post-disaster reconstruction (PDR) within her organisation, her responses also focused on what happens after a disaster event.

On the other hand, Dr A-K and Mr F, as policy advisors and strategists, represented a more pragmatic approach. Their insights stemmed largely from on-the-ground experience and operationalised examples of the concept within primarily climate-related disaster scenarios. The

concrete examples of the operationalised concept provided by these two participants fall under the category of ‘resilience communities in practice’. Mrs S, a conflict specialist, and Mr A, country head of Lebanon, both gave responses that dealt with tensions between the host community and internally displaced persons (IDP). This issue currently represents one of the greatest risks within Lebanon, and is one that Mrs S claimed they see often within their work at IR. In fact, the approach taken from Mrs S’s Darfur example (discussed below) seems to have influenced current resilience projects in Lebanon (Islamic Relief 2015a). This category is what I refer to as ‘resilience on the ground in Lebanon’.

Mrs K remarked that she had “no idea what a resilient community would look like”, because she did not believe that many exist. However, from a theoretical point of view, she suggested that after a disaster, a resilient community should be rebuilt in a way that encourages stakeholder agreement, is not isolated from where it was previously, encourages people to participate in creating jobs and allows people the freedom to “experience their own life”. This represents an inclusive, participatory, equitable and fair way of rebuilding after disaster. In addition, it avoids isolating communities from livelihoods and social networks, which has been found to be detrimental (Ingram et al, 2006).

In terms of physical reconstruction, Mrs K suggested a form of construction that balances hazard prevention with environmental awareness. She also referred to private spaces in which individuals can gain privacy but was quick to suggest not in the western sense; she did not want to convey gated communities. She wished to see kids playing out on the street which seemed to represent a sense of security to the participant, and “structural support” for any potential hazards. This also seems to represent security but from the perspective of the authorities. These elements represent a sustainable redevelopment of communities, balancing development using innovative technology and providing security and privacy for individuals within the community. Unfortunately, PDR often leads to development that is out of place in terms of scale, design and

sustainability. This is usually conducted through top-down, centralised processes; and exacerbates the risk of disaster and vulnerability for inhabitants (Guo, 2012: 49).

Both Dr A-K and Mr F drew examples from climate-related disaster, particularly flooding due to settlements and cities in “coastal locations”, from “typhoons” and from “hurricanes”. Dr A-K used Bangladesh as an example, whereas Mr F referred to Pakistan. In both cases, solutions were similar, and included building capacity within communities, the use of new technology, and experiential learning from other regions of the same country. Mr F cited solutions that included “addressing issues of drainage and irrigation, issues of planting and protection of soil, [and] issues of using better seed and species”. With reference to Bangladesh, Dr A-K also cited an example of experiential learning from another community, where they build their houses on raised platforms known as plinths. This practice informed IR’s work aimed at preventing water clogging in housing within the community.

Physical adaptive strategies such as these, coupled with the use of local social networks and capital, are effective ways of reducing the exposure of those affected by the “double vulnerability” of poverty and climate (Jabeen et al, 2010). In terms of the non-physical attributes of a resilient community, Dr A-K stated that this is “where our faith angle comes in”; referring to the mosque as a key site for social mobilisation. Dr A-K gave examples of practices such as emergency drills, mock exercises for disaster, food stockpiling, using the call to prayer as a warning system, using the mosque as a safe place to congregate during disasters, and using the organisational capacity of the mosque in times when the country’s governance system fails. Being part of an organisation during times of hardship can greatly strengthen both individual and community resilience. It provides a sense of belonging, positivity, and optimism; as well as helping to build crucial skills, techniques, and community structures (Doron, 2005: 184; Nuwayhid et al., 2011).

Mr A and Mrs S both referred to IDP and host community tensions when discussing resilience. Mrs S cited the lessons learnt from a project undertaken during the Darfur conflict, which she termed “the template project” for IR’s Integrated Sustainable Development but was not necessarily adopted in the ISD approach (Islamic Relief, 2014a). The case involved tensions that had arisen over unequal aid distribution between IDPs and the host community. The lessons learnt included ways to deal with the structural issues of the conflict and to build capacity for communities to manage disputes in the long-term, which in turn also enables development. Referring to the project, Mrs S stated that “they didn’t call it resilience, but that’s what it is”. Furthermore, she claimed that “a resilience approach is an integrated sustainable development approach that includes conflict transformation”. The approach asks, “How can we make them more resilient to the potential for conflict in the future?” by addressing the questions “What existing mechanisms are in those communities?” and “What customary methods and involvement are used to manage disputes?”

Similarly, Mr A characterised IDP and host community projects as “resilience-building”. The example that he referred to is a project in Mount Lebanon that provides fresh and clean water to both the host community and refugees. He stated that to “support the Syrian refugees and the Lebanese community as well”, is IR’s understanding of resilience at the moment. It is clear that lessons learnt from the Darfur project are being applied to projects in Lebanon, particularly in relation to fairer aid distribution. However, this does not address the many structural issues present in the tensions between the two communities. Moreover, there are no projects promoting long-term dispute resolution between the communities.

#### **6.2.5 Barriers to cross-disciplinary approaches to disaster**

Although increasing attention is being drawn to the benefits of using the concept of ‘resilience’ within both contexts of conflict and cross-disciplinary approaches to disaster, views amongst participants towards these issues were divided (Muggah, 2014; King & Mutter, 2014; ODI, 2013; International Alert, 2009). What is more surprising is that it was views within one organisation –

the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) – that were divided, with one participant suggesting that resilience was readily applicable to conflict, whilst the other suggested otherwise. Within IR, all five of the participants had positive opinions about the use of resilience within contexts of conflict and disaster. Some opinions expressed used the concept implicitly within their framework, whilst others were explicit about its use and the need for further integration between the two silos of conflict and disaster. Mrs S was the strongest advocate for enhanced integration of the two fields; whilst Dr F and Mr P had differing views.

Addressing the usefulness of resilience when applied to conflict scenarios, Dr F indicated that the concept is not only a “peaceful approach” but can be built into “conflict or an uncertainty context”. Similarly, Mrs S explained that the conflict transformation element, which is a key function of IR’s Integrated Sustainable Development approach in the “template project” rather than it inherently being a key function of the ISD approach itself, seeks to assist local communities in “becoming more resilient to disputes and prospective conflict”. Both Dr F and Mrs S focused on uncertain and prospective crises; suggesting the appropriateness of resilience in these situations with respect to mitigation and adaptive capacity.

Contrastingly, Mr P suggested that “in some categories of emergency, it [resilience] is not so useful, for example in the technological [crisis] and also in conflict”. Mr P’s arguments suggested i) that there is there a lack of enthusiasm within the conflict sector to adapt the concept; and b) that it is more difficult to apply the concept to “internal” rather than “external” crises. “External” is perceived as those disasters “outside the social-economic, or social-political milieu of a society”, whereas “internal” is perceived as “conflict and violence... political, economic, or other kind of differences”. A clear internal-external dichotomy is drawn Mr P, neglecting the commonly-held opinion that all disaster is in fact endogenous (Lavell and Maskrey, 2013; Alexander & Davis, 2012; Bahadur & Tanner, 2014; Gaillard & Mercer, 2012). This approach risks obscuring the real underlying risk factors that increase vulnerability.



Mrs S was particularly passionate about the nature of current cross-disciplinary action taken to address disaster, stating that this issue was her “soapbox”. She frequently referred to the lack of integrated approaches between “peacebuilding” and “development” organisations. She stated that it is only in recent times that you find that specific peacebuilding agencies are doing more collaborative work with humanitarian or development agencies. If cross-disciplinary approaches to disaster are to be successful, it is imperative that departments are fully integrated and act together to develop potential bridging concepts between disciplines such as resilience.

Arguments for more integrated cross-disciplinary approaches to conflict and disaster emphasise the similarities between the two in terms of their consequences, responses and challenges, and underlying root causes (King & Mutter, 2014). ‘Resilience’ is seen as an emerging concept that further bridges the divide between the conflict and DRR sectors by addressing these similar root causes (King & Mutter, 2014; Muggah, 2012; ODI, 2013; International Alert, 2009). Mrs S drew further parallels between the two sectors in terms of the tools used for risk prevention and detection; suggesting that conflict is measurable in ways not too dissimilar to disaster. She stated that whilst conflict is studied as a social science, this does not mean that it is not measurable; and as such remarks that “it’s just not true that you can’t have early warning systems or prevention”. She demonstrated this point using the example of the most recent Kenyan elections, where large-scale machete purchases were taken to be an indicator of upcoming violence.

On the other hand, Mr P identified the differences between the sectors as a barrier to cross-disciplinary action, particularly highlighting the limitations of the use of resilience in conflict as an indicator of this. Firstly, he described the conflict sector as very specific and self-contained, making multi-sectoral approaches difficult. Secondly, the community responses to disaster and conflict were said to be very different: Aceh was cited as an example of the ability of natural

disasters to unify a warring community, whereas conflict was said to have the opposite effect (Slettebak, 2012). Lastly, he contended that conflict and violence are not measurable to any significant degree and denied the existence of any similarity between the risk-measuring tools used in each sector. He stated that has not yet been convinced that violence or conflict are measurable to the same degree as climate.

#### **6.2.6 Politics & elite interests within Lebanon**

The themes of politics and elite interests were mentioned by half of the participants, particularly those who specialise or reside in Lebanon, across a range of different issues. Politics seems to not only shape the social and economic landscape within the country, but also to determine the humanitarian responses undertaken in order to aid those most vulnerable. Governance within the country is characterised by patron-clientelism, sectarianism and the domination of elite agendas, which is also prevalent throughout responses, particularly in regard to Beirut's development and the effects of unplanned urbanisation (Kingston, 2012; Randall, 2014; Fawaz, 2009). Mrs S summarised the participants' general sentiment regarding the need for strong state solutions and political will, stating that there is a limit to how effective humanitarian solutions are within highly politically contentious issues.

Describing the way in which political decisions shape how humanitarian actors can operate in situations of crisis or disaster, Mrs S stated that "political decisions... have the biggest impact on how we're able to respond to them. This limits the effectiveness of the responses. Mr A illustrated this point with examples from Lebanon, particularly in relation to refugee camps. He often used the terms "officially" and "unofficially" when referring to practices in relation to refugee camps, because strict government regulations have created a situation where informal means of survival are necessary (Hanafi et al., 2012). For example, in camps such as Nahr el-Bared and Ain-al-Hilweh, restrictions allow only prescribed entities to provide materials. Mr A stated that only "UNWRA is only allowed" to enter materials into camps for the infrastructure.

He states that he is “talking about officially” because illegally it is possible to enter whatever you require. These restrictions have created the need to resort to illegal means of smuggling materials (Hanafi, 2012).

Using the decentralised communally-organised electoral system to strengthen their power bases and gain access to the national political arena, political elites seem to only make decisions that have political benefit (Kingston, 2012). Mrs L suggested that their involvement in any significant issue within the country is thus determined by “how far the elections are away”, or “what the topical issues” may exist or may “influence public opinion”. Unfortunately, sometimes “they are involved and sometimes not”. Participants characterised this style of governance as “chaotic”, “very political”, and “elitist”. Mrs L also suggested that “it has a very wide range of implications”. Within Beirut specifically, it allows elite client developers to develop high income market-led developments that marginalise communities (Schmid, 2006; Hourani, 2015; Randall, 2014; Marot & Yazigi, 2012). Mrs L stated that “big developers [in Beirut] have a lot more money and therefore a stronger voice and bigger sway with getting what they want”. It is evident then that profit is given preference over Beirut's people which is likely to exacerbate rather than ameliorate existing inequalities, sectarian fragmentation, and vulnerabilities (Hourani, 2015:174).

## **7.0 Resilience as a Solution to both Conflict and Disaster in Beirut?**

Both large- and small-scale disasters seem to be on the rise worldwide. However, DRR responses to disasters often produce poor outcomes for those most vulnerable to them (Gaillard & Mercer, 2012: 94). Gaillard & Mercer (2012) believe this increasing ‘vulnerabilisation’ of the world reflects a ‘battle field of knowledge’, in which disasters are exacerbated by the inability to bridge the gaps between local and scientific knowledge and bottom-up and top-down actions (Gaillard & Mercer, 2012: 94). A point reinforced by participants, but whilst knowledge is key to building capacity within communities to face disaster, many of the vulnerabilities that they face are

exogenous to them and exist within structural forces often of national or global origin (Gaillard & Mercer, 2012: 94). It is imperative then that organisations seek to empower local communities by helping them develop and reinforce existing capacities, to not only mitigate disaster, but demand greater access to resources. Furthermore, participants emphasise that vulnerable communities need the technical support of government because their capacities, even if developed, are limited. Efforts must be made to amplify their voices so that they are heard by those in power and are provided sufficient assistance.

However, considering nations' sluggish response to HFA – evidenced by only 77 of the 168 participating countries returning progress reports in 2009 – it seems that there is a massive shortfall in political will to address vulnerability and support communities (Gaillard & Mercer, 2012: 106). Furthermore, this is only part of the problem. 'Participation', a key tenet of DRR going forward, has become nothing more than a buzzword; relegated to neoliberal policy where it is used in attempts to promote privatisation and decentralisation campaigns (Gaillard & Mercer, 2012: 107). Thus, participation has had the opposite effect of that intended by DRR: it has disempowered local communities and allowed resources to be siphoned off by local elites, whilst also promoting short-termism in outcomes through donor-led, results-based approaches (Gaillard & Mercer, 2012: 107). Amongst participants voice and participation are seen as vital elements in redressing the balance between the rich and the poor. However, within the communally based sectarian and elitist governance of Beirut, wresting power from those who have it presents a massive challenge. Numerous examples of the government's approach to urbanisation and development, throughout Beirut's tumultuous past, demonstrates their complete apathy towards their citizens (Randall, 2014; Hourani, 2015). Those participants who either reside within the country or have involvement with it demonstrate that the government refuses to act even upon the direst of situations; the Syrian refugee crisis being the worst of which.

However, within DRR, “resilience thinking” has been growing in popularity and whilst it has proved a problematic concept, as elaborated in section 2 above, progress has been made with Davoudi's (2012) call for an ‘evolutionary’ resilience, which places power and politics as a focus (Porter & Davoudi, 2012: 331; Wilkinson, 2012: 323). Shaw (2012) believes this more radical and transformative approach has the potential to create opportunities for political voice and resistance to be expressed; and for power structures and accepted ways of thinking to be challenged (Shaw, 2012: 310). When discussed in a theoretical manner these transformational ideas are readily put forward by participants; particularly from those who come from a climate change specialism and have a keen sense of ecological and social justice. However, once the theory is discussed in operational terms these elements of justice, equity and power redistribution start to diminish. They are then replaced by the hard reality and practicalities of living within disaster. Elements of DRR such as grass roots coping strategies and physical adaptations are primarily discussed. Moreover, some participants even regard basic responses such as fair distribution of aid as a resilience-building initiative. It is imperative then that the concept of resilience does not lose the qualities that make it so valuable in the process of operationalising it and that challenging power and politics remains the focus.

Bahadur & Tanner (2014) also call for a ‘transformative’ approach to resilience, which aims to protect the lives and livelihoods of those most vulnerable by promoting equity and rights (Bahadur & Tanner, 2014: 208). Borrowing concepts from the field of ‘deliberative transformation’, transformational resilience challenges entrenched systems maintained and protected by powerful interests through fundamental changes to institutional systems, priorities and norms (Bahadur & Tanner, 2014: 208). Most importantly, it draws attention to the importance of political authority and leadership in reducing vulnerability (Bahadur & Tanner, 2014: 209). These progressive forms of resilience would provide the accountability required within DRR processes, as discussed in section 2 above. Furthermore, they would address power imbalances, which is essential if we wish to develop fair and just ways of reducing vulnerability in

Beirut's contentious political climate and current crisis (Bahadur & Tanner, 2014: 209).

Although the popularity of resilience-building within the context of climate-related disasters and DRR processes has grown, its adoption has been slower within contexts of fragility and conflict in cities. This may be due in part to lack of knowledge about the new social category of 'fragile city' (Muggah, 2014: 345), or about the concept of 'resilience' and how it could be applied in such a complex environment. Within academia and policy there are increasingly more appeals for cross-disciplinary dialogue between those working on conflict and those working on disasters. They highlight the similarities in the consequences, challenges, and structural causes of both (King & Mutter, 2014). However, the reception to the idea varied slightly amongst participants with some showing enthusiasm whilst others suggested that the sectors differed too much in their approach. Arguments in favour primarily emanated from those who work for IR and who are already moving towards an integrated model that includes both DRR and conflict transformation approaches. The argument against from the ICRC professional seemed to suggest that the sectors had very little in common. He drew a clear dichotomy between conflict responses and disaster response, one responding to internal threats and the other external. However, it is now widely recognised that all disasters emerge from social-structural factors and this outdated approach should be avoided as it contributes to vulnerability creation.

If evolutionary resilience is applied, rejecting outmoded top-down scientific methods, and incorporating a "radical agenda" that challenges existing power structures; and if transformative resilience is applied in a way that promotes equity and justice, then the concept has value within both DRR and conflict scenarios (Muggah, 2014: 352; Shaw, 2012: 309-310; Bahadur & Tanner, 2014: 208; Davoudi, 2012). Organisations working within Beirut should seek to incorporate this focus into their programs through constant scrutiny of the concept of resilience within its operationalisation.

Programs operating within Beirut's elite dominated governance system should actively seek to challenge power structures through spreading awareness and capacity building (Bahadur & Tanner, 2014: 209). Power imbalances may also be challenged at a higher level through the creation of committees or advisory groups of professionals and societal leaders who can advocate on behalf of those most vulnerable (Bahadur & Tanner, 2014: 210). In this way new spaces can be created to exercise voice and organise further action (Bahadur & Tanner, 2014: 210). Most importantly 'resilience' must be seen from a pro-poor point of view, seeking to address underlying risk factors of both conflict and disaster and challenge power structure in order to allow the most vulnerable to exercise their voice.

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## 10.0 Appendices

### 10.1 Appendix A1 – List of Participants

<b>Name</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Role</b>
<b>Ailsa Laxton</b>	Mrs L	Regional Desk Co-ordinator for Lebanon
<b>Atallah Fitzgibbon</b>	Mr F	Head of Strategy at IR
<b>Dr. Hosam Faysal</b>	Dr F	Syria Crisis Program Manager (Located in Lebanon)
<b>Dr. Muhtari Aminu-Kano</b>	Dr A-K	Climate Change Specialist & Policy Advisor at IR
<b>Mohammed Ammar</b>	Mr A	Head of Country in Lebanon
<b>Lucy Salek</b>	Ms S	Conflict Specialist at IR
<b>Senior ASF-UK participant</b>	Mrs K	Senior Member of ASF-UK
<b>ICRC resilience expert</b>	Mr P	Resilience expert at ICRC

### 10.2 Appendix A2 – Example Semi-Structured Interview

So first off, I would like to find out a bit about your background I just wanted to know for the purposes of this recording what organisation do you work for?



[Redacted]

**What made you to work with Architecture Sans Frontieres?**

[Redacted]

**And so, you are one of the co-founders of ASF-UK, along with your husband?**

[Redacted]

**And any other members?**

[Redacted]

**(Question lost in recording)?**

[Redacted]

[REDACTED]

**OK so you're trying to give the organisation more independent really?**

[REDACTED]

**So what does the organisation do exactly?**

[REDACTED]

**No I was involved in property development I did a degree in property management & investment, so I was really more concerned about the commercial aspect of property, over the years I started to get involved with NGOs and humanitarian work and that is what kind of changed me more towards wanting to have an impact on the built environment from a more humanitarian point of view.**

[REDACTED]

**Okay, so you train Architects who want to contribute to post disaster reconstruction, to construction in conflict areas without them having the need to go and do a masters?**

[Redacted]

**So ASF are involved locally and regionally as well within the UK?**

[Redacted]

**What is your interest in international work, what is your interest in conflict areas?**

[Redacted text block]

**Is this work classed as post disaster reconstruction or is the work during disaster?**

[Redacted text block]

**So the majority of your work is done after the disaster has occurred?**

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted]

**So your work is capacity building?**

[Redacted]

**So I'm interested in more specifically is all this idea resilience has crept into post disaster reconstruction processes and how people are starting to take this idea on board. so really what I wanted to find out was what is ASF's take on resilience is?**

[Redacted]

[Redacted text block]

So how does that relate to your definition of resilience?

[Redacted text block]

Ok that's interesting...why is that?

[Redacted text block]

What is wrong with the definition of resilience that you mention earlier the engineering definition of resilience? why is Bouncing Back not enough?

[REDACTED]

**So are you saying that generally where these disasters occur where ASF have worked, generally the conditions in the first place are quite poor?**

[REDACTED]

**So you find out where disasters happen the most people are the most vulnerable generally.**

[REDACTED]

[Redacted]

So that's interesting the examples that you mentioned in Italy, in that particular circumstance do not think that that community would want to bounce back the same as opposed to bounce forward and make things better. do you think they would want to bounce back to what they had before, do not believe that what they had before was ideal for them, or do they not believe what they had before was ideal for them?

[Redacted]

If, for example, communities do start taking on board this idea of resilience, which helps them to build back better or bounce back better, who determines what better is?

[Redacted]



[Redacted]

**Do you think it's feasible that governments, particularly where you have worked, will take on board this idea of resilience - of bouncing back better? would they do it the way that you guys believe is best - with community participation? or do you believe they would just probably build Back better in their own way? have you seen that they are including the community? or have you seen that they are doing it themselves and making executive decisions?**

[Redacted]

**Have you ever experienced a situation where buildings have been built back worse?**

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

In your mind what would be an ideal post-disaster reconstruction process, how would a resilient community look in practice, if you was to walk with in a place like Tamil Nadu, for example, or even a more recent example - Kathmandu 5 years down the line and it had been redeveloped what would you look for to signify resilient community. if you can imagine just walking down the street...

[Redacted]

Or even 10 years time?

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

**Do you have any idea what the physical manifestations of that would be in and around the neighbourhood say?**

[Redacted]

**In terms of the earthquake in terms of the disaster?**

[Redacted]

Ok so that is what you would expect to see - children running around the streets, how the physical layout looks, how the transport infrastructure connects them to their jobs and you know all in a kind of seamless manner.

[REDACTED]

It may be a utopia, but it's something to aim for. this is why we are talking about these ideas of resilience right? but what would you expect to see behind the scenes, would you expect in terms of the way the government deal with the people and the way to people deal with each other. what would you expect from a community that is resilient?

[REDACTED]

We've talked a lot about post-disaster reconstruction but I've noticed you only spoken about it in regards to climate change, is that for any particular reason?

[REDACTED]

[Redacted text block]

**Is climate change exacerbating their situation in these vulnerable places?**

[Redacted text block]

**That's interesting because you come from climate change on the one hand straight into conflict, do you believe that those two are interlink?**

[Redacted text block]

[REDACTED]

**Do you believe these ideas resilience apply to places of conflict as well then?**

[REDACTED]

**So do you believe conflict is mostly over sectarian divides?**

[REDACTED]

**Do you believe they are Faith based conflicts?**

[REDACTED]

**Do you think these conflicts cause more of a disaster and climate change? climate change more of a disaster than conflict?**

[REDACTED]

So you think conflict can be more devastating than a natural disaster?

[REDACTED]

Would you say at the moment there is more literature in regards to resilience (in climate change) than in Conflict?

[REDACTED]

The only reason I say that is because during most of the conversation we have been talking about resilience in regards to climate change and post disaster reconstruction processes climate change and how resilience can be used in them...

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**And what about ASF as an organisation? does that represent how they view resilience as well?  
do they say it more in the context of climate change as opposed to conflict?**

[REDACTED]

**Is that something you hope to get involved in going into the future?**

[REDACTED]

**If you was to do that what capacity would you need to build?**

[REDACTED]

**What sort of people exactly would you need?**

[REDACTED]

**So you would need people other than Architects?**

[REDACTED]



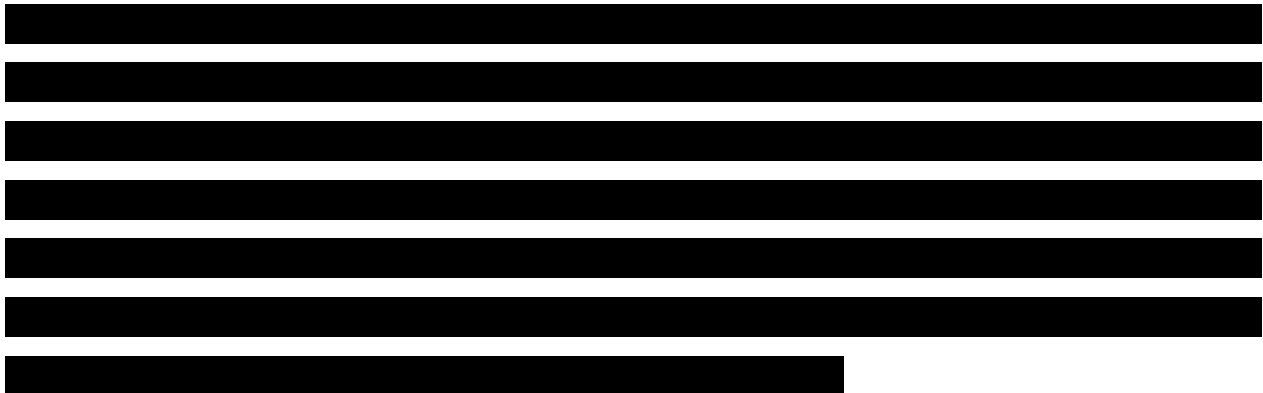
**Town planners?**



**Urban designers?**



**And what skills do they possess that Architects don't?**



**Going forward one of the things that I am most concerned about, not concerned about but interested is where did this idea of resilience come from in the first place and why has it become so popular recently? we have spoken over the last half an hour about how it has been used on the ground and how you guys are building capacity with Architects to go and use this idea of resilience on the ground and what resilient communities would look like, what resilient places would look like... do you believe this is the way forward? do you believe resilience is the answer in post disaster reconstruction? do you believe it holds the answers for future problems?**

[Redacted text block]

**Do you think that word resilience is a good way of encapsulating what we need to do going forward?**

[Redacted text block]

**Is it quite problematic that there are multiple definitions at the moment? what is wrong with multiple definitions?**

[Redacted text block]

[REDACTED]

**So you are happy with definition of resilience as long as it leads to social justice?**

[REDACTED]

**I think so, it seems to be the states that is popularising this concept at the moment...**

[REDACTED]

**I think it's quite interesting that you want resilience to result in social justice and ecological Justice and you want to stay away from the capitalist use of it and elite agendas, but would you not say that America is the home of capitalism?**

[REDACTED]

**Could that not then be means of...**

[REDACTED]

**And Rockefeller themselves, were they not an entrepreneurial organisation originally?**

[REDACTED]

**So there is a financial aspect to it, to their resilience idea?**

[REDACTED]

**I will just ask you one more question before I leave because I think this is really interesting the fact that what you want is a social just, ecologically just version of resilience but the people who are popularising resilience at the moment are those people, who we can generalize and say, live within the home of capitalism and are more interested in financial gain and not only that but in Rockefeller's definition, one of the most prevalent definitions at the moment - the resilience dividend, what they are using is a financial model to push the concept, do you think that is problematic for what you would see as an ideal aim?**

[REDACTED]

**I suppose we had the same problem with sustainable development - it was a contested concept, you know there was everything from ecological modernisation to ecocentric versions of sustainable development and from what I remember is that people just agreed that actually all of these are part of sustainable development and that - OK they have all got their own kind of Edge to them and they all achieve their own kind of aims and it is for us, as individuals, to decide whether we believe they are sustainable or not. do you believe this is the same way that we will need to go with resilience because it seems like your idea of resilience, is again, very ecocentric and socially just, where a s America's version, or Rockefeller's version more specifically, is a bit more financially driven.**

[REDACTED]



**Hopefully, thank you very much for your time.**