DREAMS FROM KIRIBATI: MAINTAINING IDENTITY
AND SOCIAL RESILIENCE POST-MIGRATION

by

Jerome Cameron

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ABSTRACT

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Climate change is widely regarded as a factor that contributes to migration through sea level rise and consequently Kiribati is expected to become uninhabitable and require mass migration. The question around how to resettle Kiribati's population is without an answer. This thesis sought how the people of Kiribati envision their society will look, function and feel post-migration. This thesis used the strength based methodology Appreciative Inquiry to frame migration in a positive way to help get participants beyond the frightening idea of migrating and rather explore dreams for making migration work for the people of Kiribati.

Fieldwork in Kiribati found participants' dreams cover a wide array of needs such as identity, community connectedness, liveable income, recognised education and the ability to celebrate their culture. These dreams correlate strongly with the components of social resilience which indicates holistic adaptation planning is likely to be the most effective approach. Of all resilience influencing components, the relationship between culture and identity appears the most integral and if the I-Kiribati are able to reproduce their culture in ways that are less dependent on location, the migrating population will likely be more socially resilient when their location of residence changes.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

During the Second World War in November 1943, Kiribati was the scene of the Battle of Tarawa. Situated in all four hemispheres¹, Kiribati was considered to be a strategic position in the Central Pacific. It became the scene of a major battle between Japan and the United States where a total of 6,400 lives were lost. From Kiribati anecdotes, many of the population still hold gratitude to the United States for ensuring their freedom from the Japanese occupation.

The same country which gave them freedom in 1943 is now considered one of the main contributors to climate change which is threatening the existence of Kiribati's territory. Unabated greenhouse gas emissions, rising sea levels and the resulting impacts could render the majority of Kiribati's territory uninhabitable and require mass migration. Many I-Kiribati² believe the impacts of climate change are threatening the freedom of where they can live and could force large-scale international migration as sea levels continue to rise.

Whilst anthropogenic climate change is a global challenge (IPCC, 2013), this thesis focuses on the Republic of Kiribati and the expected migration of their population as a result of climate change. Kiribati is a collection of low-lying atolls in the South Pacific (Appendix 1). Due to their low-lying topography; the atolls are extremely exposed to the effects of sea level rise. The latest IPCC models project a global average of 0.26-0.98m of sea level rise between 2081-2100 relative to 1986-2005 levels and there is a wide range of scientific uncertainty due to the dynamic variables in the climate science (IPCC, 2013). The regional variations are also steeped with uncertainty but it is known that the South Pacific is a region of very high annual sea level variation of more than 0.2m annually in the South Pacific because of the El Niño Southern Oscillation (IPCC, 2007).

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¹ Kiribati has atolls in the Southern and Northern hemispheres. Although Kiribati is all in one time zone, Kiribati is the country responsible for time zone jutting out from the Western to Eastern hemisphere and is therefore considered to exist in all four hemispheres.

² I-Kiribati is the name for the people of Kiribati.

The impacts of sea level rise make sustaining livelihoods more difficult, especially in developing countries like Kiribati with scarce food, water and land (Locke, 2009). Sustaining livelihoods becomes more difficult because as sea levels increase, it can become more difficult to grow food and source freshwater. This is caused by physical processes such as salt water infiltrating crop plantations which renders the crops infertile; or a decreasing availability of freshwater as salt water contaminates fresh water supplies such as wells and natural lenses. It is forecasted the stresses of climate change will eventually result in Kiribati becoming uninhabitable (Campbell, 2014; Locke, 2009). This thesis is motivated by the question of how to appropriately resettle (the majority of) a country's population as this question awaits a convincing answer.

The organisation of this thesis is as follows. Chapter Two presents a review of the climate migration literature to justify how the research questions address literature gaps. One major debate in the literature has centred upon how climate change is causing (human) migration (Black et al., 2011; Campbell, 2014; Piguet, 2008). Another major debate has focused on the utility of altering the UN Refugee Convention to recognise climate refugees (McAdam, 2011a). The focus of the literature on these two debates has left questions in the literature which this thesis aims to partially answer.

Although the relationship between climate change and migration is still debated, there is a degree of consensus that climate change is a factor that influences migration. The literature signals the debate needs to move on from asking 'is climate migration an issue?' to 'what should the response be?' The gap from the latter question has influenced my first question which enquires about responses to climate migration rather than continuing to explore the relationship between climate change and migration.

My second research question has emerged from a gap identified by Adger et al. (2012; 2011) and Hess et al. (2008) who argue adaptation responses need to recognise how culture and identity contribute to resilience. The literature reveals adaptation

planning has largely focused on practical aspects of livelihoods such as employment and education and ignored the role of culture and identity in adaptation. Due to the existence of this gap, the second research question considers the relationship between culture and resilience for the adaptation scenario of the I-Kiribati migrating overseas.

This thesis addresses two main questions:

1. How do the I-Kiribati dream their society will look after climate migration?
2. What role can culture play in assisting the I-Kiribati to maintain social resilience when the location of residence changes?

The literature review also briefly reviews the latest climate science to explain how sea level rise requires adaptation. Vulnerability and social resilience are examined as the conceptual frameworks for this thesis due to their utility for communicating this research in the climate adaptation literature.

Chapter Three discusses my methodology for this research. Given the research questions are exploratory in nature; a qualitative research approach is the most appropriate. To explore these questions I employed the Appreciative Inquiry methodology. Appreciative Inquiry is a methodology and method for studying social systems by exploring their strengths to generate dreams for the future.

Appreciative Inquiry is introduced in detail before I critique its utility using both existing literature and reflections produced following my fieldwork in Kiribati. I declare my positionality as an outsider going to research in Kiribati which has undoubtedly shaped my interpretation of the data. Appreciative Inquiry is a suitable methodology for this thesis because, as a strength based approach, it provides a positive framing for a problem that is often framed negatively. Rather than asking participants to explore problems, Appreciative Inquiry allowed me to get beyond the problem and focus on possible adaptation responses through investigating the dreams they envision for their society post-migration. This chapter also details the

data collection process that included 21 interviews and 6 focus groups in South Tarawa, Kiribati.

Chapter Four focuses on my first research question. One of the main dreams that emerged is the I-Kiribati desire to maintain their strong sense of collective identity post-migration. Many other dreams that related to community, governance and livelihoods are also discussed. Many dreams were closely related to other dreams with no clear way to disaggregate or prioritise them. The close relationships of all dreams indicated adaptation responses require a greater consideration beyond the practical aspects of livelihoods such as employment and education.

Chapter Five answers the second question of what role can culture play in assisting the I-Kiribati to maintain social resilience when the location of residence changes? This chapter explores the relationship between culture, location and identity and how these collectively influence resilience. The cultural dreams of participants are explored as they dream of being able to reproduce their culture in a new country. Through being able to reproduce their culture independently of location, this is likely to strengthen social resilience when migrating.

The final chapter concludes this thesis by briefly revisiting each chapter. The main arguments are summarised to concisely answer the research questions. This chapter also considers possible future research questions that have emerged from this research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

2013 and 2014 have been eventful years for climate science with the release of the fifth iteration of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) assessment reports. This section starts with a very brief recap of the latest science pertaining to projected temperature and sea level increases as well as how this requires adaptation (Black et al., 2011).

I then introduce my conceptual frameworks: vulnerability and social resilience. These provide a lens for analysing adaptation to climate change and the dreams of migrating. Both frameworks can be used and interpreted in multiple ways which makes analysis tricky; however through understanding their critiques they can become useful analytical frameworks. The component systems of vulnerability and resilience support Adger et al.'s (2011) argument that the role of culture is not being considered in adaptation planning and is one reason for investigating the relationship between culture and social resilience when the location of residence changes.

This chapter then reviews the messy, contested and abundant climate migration literature. Whilst the argument about the utility of climate refugees has nearly ceased, the debate about the relationship between climate change and migration continues. Although there is weak empirical evidence confirming a direct link between climate change and migration, it is widely accepted that climate change is an influential factor so whilst the literature is stuck on arguing 'is this an issue?', given the situation in Kiribati, this thesis asks 'what should the response be?' by asking the I-Kiribati their dreams for how they wish their society to look after migrating.

2.2 CLIMATE CHANGE AND SEA LEVEL RISE

Sea level rise will require adaptation due to the expected impacts on social systems. The IPCC Working Group One released their latest report in September 2013 which projects a wide range of future temperatures (Table 2.1) of 0.3-4.8°C by 2100. Based on the IPCC's lowest emissions scenario (RCP2.6³) where emissions peak around 2020 – global average surface temperature will likely increase by 0.3-1.7°C by 2100. Comparatively, based on the IPCC's highest scenario (RCP8.5) where emissions continue to grow unabated – global average surface temperatures are expected to increase by 2.6-4.8°C by 2100 (IPCC, 2013, p. 21). Whilst there are many possible impacts of climate change on ecological and physical systems (IPCC, 2014b), this thesis focuses almost exclusively on the relationship between sea level rise and migration.

TABLE 2.1: PROJECTED CHANGE IN GLOBAL MEAN SURFACE AIR TEMPERATURE FOR THE MID-LATE 21ST CENTURY RELATIVE TO 1986-2005

Source: (IPCC, 2013, p. 21)

		2046–2065		2081–2100	
	Scenario	Mean	Likely range	Mean	Likely range
Global Mean Surface Temperature Change (°C)	RCP2.6	1.0	0.4 to 1.6	1.0	0.3 to 1.7
	RCP4.5	1.4	0.9 to 2.0	1.8	1.1 to 2.6
	RCP6.0	1.3	0.8 to 1.8	2.2	1.4 to 3.1
	RCP8.5	2.0	1.4 to 2.6	3.7	2.6 to 4.8

Corresponding to the expected warming the IPCC projects sea level rise of 0.26-0.98m by 2100. Based on the lowest emission scenario (RCP2.6), global mean sea level rise is projected to increase by 0.26-0.55m by 2100. Comparatively, for the highest scenario the IPCC projects mean global sea level rise of 0.52-0.98m by 2100 (Figure 2.1) (IPCC, 2013, p. 23). It is important to note that sea level rise has a high degree of

³ RCP stands for Representative Concentration Pathway and they provide a foundation for those climate modelling so that results can be compared, communicated more easily and avoid duplications. There are four RCPs: RCP2.6, RCP4.5, RCP6, RCP8.5 which represent the 'radiative forcings' measured in watts per square metre in 2100. For a basic explanation of the RCPs see Wayne (2013a, 2013b) and for a more complex discussion see van Vuuren et al. (2011).

spatial variation, with the western Pacific expected to have some of the fastest sea level rise of any global region (Suzuki & Ishii, 2011; Wyett, 2013). Observed global mean sea level rose by 1.3-1.7mm per year over the 20th century, and since 1993 observations have recorded a rate of 2.8-3.6mm per year demonstrating an increase in the rate of sea level rise (IPCC, 2013; Nurse & McLean, 2014, p. 5).

FIGURE 2.1: GLOBAL MEAN SEA LEVEL RISE

Source: (IPCC, 2013, p. 24)

Since the release of the IPCC's latest round of reports, new research has emerged which suggests that considerably more sea level rise is possible. Three new studies have been released which suggest the West Antarctic Ice Sheet has thinned considerably and that irreversible early stage ice-sheet collapse has begun (Joughin, Smith, & Medley, 2014; McMillan et al., 2014; Rignot, Mouginot, Morlighem, Seroussi, & Scheuchl, 2014). Specifics of consequential sea level rise are subject to deep uncertainty although Rignot et al. (2014, p. 3508) concludes "this sector of West Antarctica is undergoing a marine ice sheet instability that will significantly contribute to sea level rise in decades to centuries to come." Given these recent findings, the IPCC (2013, p. 21) may have underestimated their sea level rise projections because their explanatory footnotes states "only the collapse of the

marine-based sectors of the Antarctic ice sheet, if initiated, could cause global mean sea level to rise substantially above the likely range during the 21st century.”

There is uncertainty in the climate science that cannot be resolved which makes adaptation planning very difficult. Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1 demonstrate the wide range of uncertainty around the climate change projections. This uncertainty generates difficulties for adaptation planning (De Bruin & Ansink, 2011; Ranger et al., 2010). Shackley and Wynne (1995, p. 114) describe uncertainty as we “don’t know the odds [although we] may know the main parameters”. Walker et al. (2003) recognise two main branches of uncertainty – epistemic and variable. Epistemic uncertainty is a result of imperfect knowledge and the range of uncertainty can be reduced with further information gathering. Variable uncertainty is the result from the intrinsic uncertainty of the subject or system being studied. In contrast to epistemic uncertainty, variable uncertainty cannot be reduced through more information gathering (Walker et al., 2003). Uncertainty surrounding sea level rise is largely ‘variable uncertainty’ which makes adaptation decision making difficult as the location and likely nature of some of the impacts may be known, but the timing and precise impacts are deeply uncertain (De Bruin & Ansink, 2011; Hallegatte, 2009; Ranger et al., 2010; Watkiss, 2013).

Sea level rise has multiple impacts on ecological and physical systems which diminish the capacity of ecosystems to support humans and will require adaptation responses. For low-lying island atolls, there will be several major impacts such as “erosion of the shoreline, inundation of low-lying areas and saline intrusion into the freshwater lens” (IPCC, 2014a; Nurse & McLean, 2014; Wong, 2011; Woodroffe, 2008, p. 77). Salt water will also intrude the soil because as sea level rises, the water table rises and salt enters into the soil rendering it unable to grow non-salt resistant crops (Barnett & Adger, 2003). This collection of impacts decreases the carrying capacity of ecosystems to support the population which is a problem for atolls as they already have a low capacity with limited freshwater and soil reserves.

The minimum scenario [RCP2.6] will require adaptation even with the uncertainty. Ranger et al. (2010, p. 12) defines adaptation as “the measures and policies that aim to reduce the adverse impacts of climate change and take advantage of any new opportunities”. In 1990, the IPCC categorised the adaptation responses to sea level rise as protect, accommodate or retreat (Cisneros Linares, 2012; Gilbert & Vellinga, 1990). Protection is the construction of sea walls and other infrastructure to restrict the water level from going inland. Accommodation is alteration of lifestyles to compensate for the new sea level, for example placing houses on stilts. Retreat is the resident population moving away from the increasing sea level (Gilbert & Vellinga, 1990). This thesis focuses on the adaptation response of international migration as a form of retreat.

There is some residual debate on whether retreat is a form of adaptation or the response to failed adaptation but most perceive retreat as a legitimate adaptation response (Kniveton, Schmidt-Verkerk, Smith, & Black, 2010). Originally migration was seen as a failed form of adaptation and the answer was to provide more resources to ensure the population can stay in place. Critics of this argument such as Black et al. (2011, p. 448) state that “migration may be the most effective way to allow people to diversify income and build resilience where environmental change threatens livelihoods”. These critics suggest that migration should be perceived as an opportunity to demonstrate agency and resilience by shifting to a more habitable place. As far as the literature indicates, all organisations dealing with climate migration agree that retreat is a form of adaptation although some governments appear more resistant to viewing migration as adaptation (Asian Development Bank, 2012; IOM, 2013, 2014; Piguet, 2008; Warner, 2009; Zetter, 2008). This debate provides an example of how migration in response to climate change can be perceived in different ways and is a situation where the labels vulnerable and resilience are commonly used to illustrate particular characteristics of the population. There are multiple ways that vulnerability and resilience can be used and these concepts are introduced in the following sub-section.

2.3 VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCE

2.3.1 VULNERABILITY

Vulnerability offers a useful view on analysing susceptibility to risk yet is limited at recognising the agency of social systems and therefore I use it cautiously in my research whilst acknowledging the power imbued within the concept. A vulnerability assessment is one method for discovering the type of adaptation required. Vulnerability is a commonly used concept in a wide variety of disciplines to recognise risk and susceptibility to potential harm (Adger, 2000, 2006). Each discipline tends to have its own definition (Alexander, 2013). The IPCC (2014: 4) as a leading climate organisation defines vulnerability as “the propensity or predisposition to be adversely affected. Vulnerability encompasses a variety of concepts and elements including sensitivity or susceptibility to harm and lack of capacity to cope and adapt”.

There is consensus in the climate change literature regarding the three main components of vulnerability: exposure, sensitivity and adaptive capacity. Exposure is the nature and degree of stresses the system faces. Sensitivity is the susceptibility of the system to the external hazards. Adaptive capacity is the ability to absorb and mitigate the adverse impacts of the harmful conditions (Adger, 2006).

Researchers have been unable to find a method of calculating vulnerability that has achieved widespread use (Adger, 2006). One reason for this is that all three vulnerability components are dynamic and difficult to quantify (O’Brien, Eriksen, Schjolden, & Nygaard, 2004). These methodological difficulties have not been resolved despite decades of research. The inability to determine a standard vulnerability measure presents a problem for policymakers because there is no clear framework for employing vulnerability. Consequently it has been used in a plethora of different ways leading to confusion amongst policymakers (Adger, 2006).

The concept of vulnerability is most commonly used by external actors to illustrate that certain populations are inherently susceptible to negative social and/ or physical processes. This label has routinely been attached to the populations of Kiribati (and other low lying island states). This vulnerable framing of Kiribati has been repeatedly used in both mainstream and academic discourse (Campbell, 2014; Mansfield, 2013; Mortreux & Barnett, 2009). The vulnerability label is often given by those external to the situation of those being labelled vulnerable and therefore can result in ineffective policy responses if not enough consideration is given to the indigenous perspective (Haalboom & Natcher, 2012).

While the framing of those living on low lying islands as 'vulnerable' seems accurate given the physical processes of sea level rise which will decrease the inhabitability of the islands, it is argued the concept ignores the agency and resilience of local communities through framing them as passive victims. Mortreux and Barnett (2009, p. 106) say "discourses of vulnerability downplay the resilience of communities, cast them as powerless, and risk reifying otherwise perceived relationships of inequality between the powerful and weak through paternalistic interventions to 'save' the powerless Other." In the more recent literature, there is an apparent awareness of the power imbued with this concept and consequently it is more common to recognise these populations as resilient given the agency they are demonstrating in maintaining their livelihoods whilst facing challenging environmental conditions (Campbell, 2014; Mansfield, 2013). The power imbued within the vulnerability concept in the climate migration literature has made me consider very carefully how I apply this label in my thesis. I recognise the agency and resilience of the I-Kiribati and have aimed to consider the I-Kiribati's views as deeply as possible to ensure their voices are considered in any adaptation responses that are considered.

O'Brien et al. (2007) notes there are two main interpretations of vulnerability – outcome and contextual. Outcome vulnerability perceives a system as innately vulnerable as a result of the physical processes such as sea level rise. This

interpretation ignores the role of humans within that system and thus any labelling of a population as vulnerable ignores their potential adaptive capacity. Rather it blames the physical processes as the lead cause of adaptation rather than considering the intersection of physical and social systems (Barnett & O'Neill, 2011). O'Brien et al. (2007) describe contextual vulnerability as a vulnerable situation that requires the system to adapt to the external stresses. This interpretation recognises the human agency within the system to absorb and minimise stresses from outside the social system as well as self-determine when the stresses require further adaptation.

The different utilisations of vulnerability are often conflated in all forms of literature with authors irregularly specifying their interpretation (O'Brien et al., 2007).

Conflating outcome vulnerability with contextual vulnerability in social science literature particularly draws criticism for not recognising the agency of social systems in at-risk environments. Therefore with outcome vulnerability, migration would be more likely to be interpreted as a failed form of adaptation whereas contextual vulnerability would be perceived as a form of adaptation.

Mansfield (2013) argues that there are more utilities for vulnerability and that perceiving it as an agency reducing or recognising term is simplistic. Her thesis regarding I-Kiribati women, demonstrates that vulnerability can be used to acknowledge the challenges of a social system and direct responsibility onto a particular actor. She found that when used by I-Kiribati women, this was a way of them recognising the issues they are facing and asserting responsibility to remedy the situation on those that have caused climate change (Mansfield, 2013). Mansfield's work signals the importance of recognising the multiple ways vulnerability can be used and supports O'Brien et al.'s (2007) assertion that it is useful to explicitly acknowledge the interpretation of vulnerability being used.

Kiribati has also been used as a case study to illustrate that vulnerability is a dynamic and performative construct that is reproduced through each interaction. Webber (2013) adds to the vulnerability discussion in Kiribati by arguing that vulnerability is

performative. Groups can be labelled as 'vulnerable' as a result of interactions between actors with unequal power. One example she provides, (and this was also mentioned by my research participants,) is some actors feel an incentive to exaggerate their vulnerability to assist their chances of funding. These actors believe if they are not 'vulnerable enough', funding may not be granted. Furthermore Webber (2013) argues this label is not static but is reproduced through further encounters.

The vulnerability literature has greatly influenced my research and I wish to let the I-Kiribati determine how they use the vulnerability label. Kiribati is regularly framed as a vulnerable country and population due to sea level rise projections and their lack of resources. I want to avoid neo-colonial power constructs such as 'helping the Other' and recognise the agency of the I-Kiribati in their environment as they explore all possible adaptation options (Pers. Comm., 2014). Social resilience has many similarities to vulnerability although it has the potential for deeper consideration of the role of systems influencing the adaptive capacity of a population.

2.3.2 SOCIAL RESILIENCE

Social resilience is a product of many dynamic and interdependent factors which provides a suitable framework for evaluating the main questions of this thesis because it offers the potential to analyse how a society remains strong with external stresses. Resilience has become an enormously popular framework to test the robustness of socio-ecological systems (Alexander, 2013). Within climate change literature, there are two main types: ecological and social resilience. Whilst ecological resilience focuses on ecosystems with a minor or nil human presence, social resilience can be defined as "the ability of groups or communities to cope with external stresses and disturbances as a result of social, political and environmental change" (Adger, 2000, p. 347).

A common difference found in the definitions used by various authors revolves around whether they integrate the transformative resilience elements or focus on the ability of a system to bounce back to its original form (Brown, 2013). When resilience gained traction in the socio-ecological systems literature, its focus was around the ability of an ecosystem to maintain a steady state despite external stresses (Alexander, 2013). This original form of resilience was critiqued for being too static and closed to system adaptation thus the transformative definition emerged. Transformative resilience considers change to be an unavoidable aspect of systems and focuses on how systems can/are able to survive with some changes (Alexander, 2013; Magis, 2010). Nelson et al. (2007) say transformative systems need to shift their overarching goal from stability to flexibility.

The difference between static and transformative resilience can define whether an actor perceives migration as failed adaptation or an adaptation response. If one judges resilience by the ability of a population to remain in one place, this static interpretation of resilience would consider climate migration as a failed adaptation response. Alternatively, transformative resilience would classify migration as a means of adapting in order to maintain resilience of the system. The I-Kiribati will likely migrate in the future as an adaptation response to climate change and therefore I am focusing on transformative resilience as I wish to explore how this migration can be successful rather than condemn it as failed adaptation.

The different systems and components in Table 2.2 signal there are many aspects across a range of systems that contribute to the wellbeing and resilience of systems. Many actors have created frameworks that measure resilience although like vulnerability it remains very difficult to measure (Cutter, Burton, & Emrich, 2010). The resilience frameworks all vary depending what they are trying to measure, e.g. natural disasters (Cutter et al., 2008; Gall, 2013), or community resilience (Magis, 2010; Sherrieb, Norris, & Galea, 2010). Gall (2013) argues that whilst the frameworks

differ in the exact components they measure, their components come from multiple or all of the systems in Table 2.2.

TABLE 2.2: SYSTEMS AND COMPONENTS FOR RESILIENCE FRAMEWORKS

Adapted from (Gall, 2013)

System	Examples of components
Physical system	Critical infrastructure, communication systems
Human system	Skills, education, health
Social system	Community networks, civic engagement, culture
Institutional system	Response systems, governance structure
Technical system	Emergency plans, warning systems
Economic system	Income, productivity, employment
Environmental system	Fresh water, arable land
Ecological system	Pollination, carbon sinks

When comparing these components of resilience with adaptation planning, there has arguably been an overemphasis on the ‘western’ aspects of adaptation planning like the physical, institutional and economic systems whereas the role of social systems in enabling resilience has been neglected (Adger et al., 2012). Adger et al. (2012, p. 112) states how social systems “may in turn be enablers or barriers to adaptation”. Adger et al. (2011) and Hess et al. (2008) recognise a literature gap around the value of culture and connection to place in the adaptation literature which if filled could help provide better informed adaptation options. The importance of place and culture is

very strong within the South Pacific and according to Smith (2013) this consideration is often marginalised when researching with Pacific communities.

Place is a special concept in geography with meanings far deeper than a standard dictionary can provide. Massey's (2004) idea of the relational view of place has shaped how geographers understand the concept of place. Massey (2004) considers place to be dynamic and multi-faceted where humans are influencing the place, and the place is influencing the humans, thus there are physical and social interactions occurring simultaneously. Each place holds great diversity because there are multiple narratives occurring as a result of every individual's unique experiences (Massey, 1991). This physically and temporally fluid perception of place informs this thesis because it suggests how the I-Kiribati can transform a space into a new place imbued with social meaning upon migrating (Massey, 1991).

The relationship and perception of place influences the resilience of individuals and social systems. South Pacific communities traditionally have a very strong relationship to place and derive many aspects of their culture from the land and ocean (Smith, 2013). If someone holds a static view of place and then has to migrate, they are likely to be less resilient because they will feel separated from the place that has historically provided much nourishment and comfort (Massey, 1991; Silk, 1999). Whereas if someone has a more fluid sense of place and believes the social connections can shape a place, then resilience is likely to be higher because they are more flexible with place-based change (Nelson et al., 2007). Berke and Campanella (2006) argue place is a key part of identity and in a disaster this can generate strong community resilience through a coming together to take on the adversity. For my research I feed off these authors and concepts as I explore the relationship between culture, place and social resilience for the I-Kiribati assuming their place of residence changes.

Vulnerability and resilience offer critical insight into the climate migration dreams from Kiribati by providing lenses to understand the agency of the I-Kiribati to

maintain a robust society in the face of stress of the challenges they face. The Pacific Island countries are not innately vulnerable but highly adaptive and resilient societies who have withstood many adverse challenges (Campbell, 2014). The usefulness of these concepts lies in their relevance to evaluating the dreams the I-Kiribati presented in the field. These concepts will come to life in chapters 4 and 5 as their dreams will not be analysed for only the practical elements they offer to a functioning society but also how the dreams can influence the potential vulnerability and resilience of the I-Kiribati in a new residence.

2.4 INTRODUCTION TO CLIMATE MIGRATION

Climate migration is a heavily contested, multi-disciplinary concept that remains with disagreement over the definition and nature of the relationship between climate change and migration (Connell, 2013; McAdam, 2010; Warner, 2010). One reason the field remains so contested is because the relationship between climate change⁴ and migration remains disputed. This debate is focused on the central question – is climate change *directly* causing people to migrate? Initially this debate was centred between two main authors: Myers and Black. Myers argued environmental disasters would contribute towards millions of people being displaced. He was not necessarily implying direct migration but rather land competition, drought and ecosystem destruction would generate environmental pressure which would cause mass movements of environment refugees (Myers & Kent, 1995; Myers, 1997, 2002). Black rejects the assumptions in Myers work and says there is no evidence that environmental change leads to mass refugee flow and that by framing it as a security issue through the use of the term ‘refugee’, this distracts from the ongoing development issues inherent with environmentally induced migration (Black, 1998, 2001).

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⁴ Within the literature, environmental change and climate change are often conflated. This makes comparisons difficult especially with contentious definitions in this field. I will use climate change for consistency given this is the focus of my work but will use environment when used by the author/s to represent their work accurately.

At a theoretical level, the connection between climate change and migration is easy to hypothesise but it is very difficult to provide empirical evidence demonstrating a strong connection. Castle (2002) identifies in his review of Black and Myers' debate that their supporting evidence is from different scales. Myers' evidence is largely based on global-scale forecasts for climate change induced population movement such as migration due to droughts diminishing water security and changing coastlines that drive populations elsewhere. In contrast, Black's evidence is from national and local scale studies. Finding evidence is a challenge for researchers because as Campbell (2014) suggests, climate change is in its early stages which makes it more difficult to demonstrate with certainty.

The complexity of the migratory decision has also made demonstrating a direct connection between climate change and migration problematic (Asian Development Bank, 2012; Campbell, 2014; Connell, 2013; Ehrhart et al., 2008; McAdam, 2011a; Piguet, 2008; Warner, 2010b). Migration is an outcome from a variety of economic, political, social, cultural and environmental conditions (Castles & Miller, 2009). Castles and Miller (2009, p. 25) explain that these factors are dynamic and complex by stating "these conditions are not static, but in a process of constant change, linked to both global factors and to the way these interact with local historical and cultural patterns". Therefore given the variety of factors that contribute to a migratory decision and that these factors are often in flux, it is very difficult to attribute migration to one reason such as climate change. Whilst the complexity of the migration decision generates difficulty in gathering empirical evidence for climate induced migration, Piguet (2008) suggests the discourse has converged in agreeing that environmental factors contribute to migration. Debate remains around how directly climate change causes migration due to the inability to disaggregate the different reasons of migrating.

Ignoring the full reasons for migrating limits a holistic adaptation response that encompasses the various elements of resilience (Table 2.2). Black (2001) argues that

whilst the environment influences migration, it is also strongly connected to the economic and political factors and therefore focusing on the environmental factors in isolation will hinder a full understanding of the migration event. These collective factors of migration give insight into what societies perceive as being crucial to their wellbeing and correlate with the some of the systems of a resiliency mentioned in Table 2.2.

The parallel between the factors of resilience and migration drivers reveal the importance of having a holistic understanding of the motivations for migration in order to be able to plan the migration as effectively as possible. As Adger et al. (2011) identified, there is an underrepresentation of identity and place in adaptation planning. They argue that adaptation planning has focused on a practical aspect of adaptation and neglects the role culture and identity. Neglecting these aspects in adaptation planning can demonstrate what Black (2001) says is an incomplete understanding of the full reasons for migrating and will inhibit the success of the adaptation. This parallel has shaped my two main questions as the first seeks to understand the holistic vision for migration and the second explores the literature gap that Adger et al. (2011) identified.

There remains no agreed upon definition of climate migration. A proposed working definition from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) defines climate migrants as:

persons or groups of persons who, for compelling reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment as a result of climate change that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad (Kniveton et al., 2010, p. 31)

This broad definition captures several of the main debates in the climate migration field such as (McAdam, 2011a):

- Forced versus voluntary migration
- Temporary versus permanent migration
- Intranational versus transnational migration
- Climate versus environmentally induced migration

The total possible combinations of elements and disciplines surrounding climate migration make this a difficult topic to research. There are also multiple disciplines which engage with climate migration from a number of perspectives such as development, governance, human rights, ecological, migration and security studies (McAdam, 2010). To exemplify the confusing nature of the terminology, Connell (2013, p. 467) realised that McAdam's (2010) edited book has at least seventeen different synonyms being used for 'climate migration'. It is uncertain what impact the lack of formal definition is having on generating policy as some authors say it is hindering the development of meaningful policy given the ambiguous definition and number of actors involved (Biermann & Boas, 2010; Laczko & Aghanarm, 2009; Warner, 2010a). Alternatively McAdam (2010) suggests the lack of a formal definition is not necessarily a problem as it allows more flexibility in the responses by institutions whilst they are still working out the best approaches to this problem.

Alongside the debate over the definition is the debate over the estimates over the expected number of future climate migrants. Unsurprisingly estimates vary widely with Myers and Kent's (1995) often cited figure suggesting there could be 200 million environmental refugees by the time climate change is demonstrably clear. Some NGOs believe the number will be much higher with Christian Aid (2007) suggesting that climate change could displace one billion people. Getting less specific but still concerned over the numbers, The Stern (2006: 111) Review mentions "greater resource scarcity, desertification, risks of droughts and floods, and rising sea levels could drive many millions of people to migrate" (Stern, 2007). The IPCC has not

published any projections on climate migration but has mentioned it as a likely result of climate change ever since the first assessment report. The Asian Development Bank (2012, p. 10) criticises the production and reproduction of climate migrant predictions because “in the current state of research, it is impossible to reliably forecast—the number of people who will migrate as a result of slow-onset environmental degradation.” Barnett and O’Neill (2011, p. 9) also criticise the estimations as “heroic extrapolations” which ignore the adaptive capacity, resilience and the uncertainty around the drivers of migration. With my research, I am not adhering to a prediction around numbers but given the physical limitations of Kiribati’s coastline and based on what many authors state, Kiribati will likely become uninhabitable in the future forcing many of the 100,000 population to migrate.

Recognising climate refugees is regularly touted as a solution to climate migration in mainstream discourse; however there is little academic support for this solution. A major debate that has occurred is around the value of altering the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention to recognise climate or environmental refugees (Connell, 2013; Kniveton et al., 2010; McAdam, 2011a). Proponents suggest this solution holds particular utility for the countries of Kiribati, Maldives, Marshall Islands and Tuvalu which are facing the prospect of becoming uninhabitable as a result of sea level rise. Many authors have argued against this solution. Jane McAdam (2010, 2011a, 2011b) has made a large contribution to this debate by arguing that amending the refugee law to include environmental and climate refugees could negatively affect both traditional refugees and those forced to move due to climate change. Connell (2013) notes there is growing consensus in academia that the concept of ‘environmental refugees’ is fraught with problems, asserting that there are very few academics who argue for the refugee solution.

The climate refugee option has been criticised by scholars and leaders advocating for the indigenous perspective to be acknowledged (Black, 2001; Farbotko & Lazrus, 2012; Farbotko, 2010; McNamara & Gibson, 2009). These authors put forward

indigenous voices from Kiribati and Tuvalu. Both countries have been very vocal against becoming refugees. They argue that if they must migrate, they want to migrate as skilled migrants rather than refugees who are commonly perceived as burdens. Farbotko (2012; 2010) argues the processes a refugee must go through to integrate in a new society can restrict the agency of a refugee. This places migrants at a disadvantage when they enter a new country compared to having more free migratory channels for skilled migration.

The climate refugee label is an example of a term that assumes the populations of low lying countries are innately vulnerable. Implicit in the assumption of innate vulnerability is the belief that ‘the Other’ can be helped through the provision of refugee status. This assumption is an expression of O’Brien et al.’s (2007) outcome vulnerability. Potential climate migrants do not want to become refugees and the process of being a refugee is considered disempowering in itself as they are subject to programmes by the host countries refugee agencies (Farbotko & Lazrus, 2012; Farbotko, 2010; Mansfield, 2013; McNamara & Gibson, 2009). In comparison, the ‘migration with dignity’⁵ aspiration is an example of transformative resilience through their desire to move as skilled migrants they acknowledge that if they have to migrate, it is better for them to migrate with more self-determination and as skilled migrants than rely on welfare. With my research, I reject the utility of the term ‘climate refugee’ because it is not desired by the potential climate migrants and I believe the potential migrants should have greater input into possible adaptation responses.

2.5 CLIMATE MIGRATION IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC

Literature that focuses on environmental migration in the South Pacific illustrates the contested relationship between climate change and migration as various studies have found different results. The Carteret Islands from Papua New Guinea provide an

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⁵ Dignity was chosen in relation to the generally well known and widely used quote by Kiribati’s President Anote Tong about his desire that the I-Kiribati “migrate with dignity” (Office of Te Beretitenti, 2013).

example of a small population that has been entirely relocated where sea level rise is largely blamed for their necessary resettlement (Edwards, 2013). Locke (2009) explored internal migration in Kiribati and Tuvalu and concluded that in both countries climate change is causing clear migration to their respective capital cities.

In contrast, Mortreux and Barnett (2009) found that in Tuvalu, climate change is not usually a factor for migration let alone a singular reason to migrate. Shen and Gemenne (2011) researched Tuvaluan migration to New Zealand by interviewing the Tuvaluan community in New Zealand and found that climate change was not a main motivating factor for those who resettled to New Zealand. More generally, Nurse and McLean (2014, p. 13) on behalf of the IPCC state that “to date there is no unequivocal evidence that reveals migration from [small] islands is being driven by anthropogenic climate change”.

Shen and Binns (2010) take the middle ground echoing many international migration scholars by suggesting that the reasons for migration are very complex and that climate change is one factor that can increase the motivation to migrate abroad. Smith (2013) supports the complex migratory decision discourse by adding that there is no ‘single story’ of how people interpret or respond to climate change and reducing it to such is limiting the scope for finding successful adaptation responses.

The different conclusions of these studies can largely be explained by the different research questions and methods of each study. For example, Locke (2009) focused on assessing internal migration patterns whereas others focused on international migration or inter/intranational migration in combination. As discussed in the previous section, the migratory decision is very complex and it would be unusual to find evidence that international migration is being caused by just climate change alone so the research methods used have a large influence in leading to the results.

I want to transcend the issue of ‘is climate change causing migration?’ to instead contribute to the question of ‘how can this issue be addressed?’ Rive (2013) and

Wyett (2013) both say that the relationship between climate change and migration does not need to be explored any further and instead the focus needs to be on solutions. Campbell (2014, p. 2) supports the comments of Rive (2013) and Wyett (2013) as he says “relatively little work has been done on the possible migration processes for PICTs [Pacific Island Countries and Territories] that may be initiated by climate change”. To achieve this, my research assumes that climate change is one migratory factor that can generate motivation to migrate from Kiribati. Furthermore I do not want to pre-empt any particular migration responses which again delivers me at my main question concerning how the I-Kiribati dream their society will look after climate migration.

2.6 CONCLUSION

This literature review has introduced several areas of literature to provide an understanding to key areas of my research topic, justified the relevance of the vulnerability and resilience concepts and demonstrated how the research questions have emerged from literature gaps.

As sea level rises, populations must adapt and low lying populations are often labelled as vulnerable. This vulnerability labelling is criticised for ignoring the agency of these populations and the resilience they show in difficult environments. Furthermore it often comes from externally to the situation facing these physically at risk populations without having a full understanding of their perspectives of the situation they are in. I acknowledge there are multiple ways vulnerability is used and I need to be very precise when writing about the I-Kiribati as I can never fully understand their situation and thus trying to understand and communicate their dreams as deeply as possible is central to writing a thesis that informs the literature.

This thesis uses the concept of transformative resilience where change is seen as a part of adaptation which is likely to be illustrated through migration from Kiribati.

Resilience offers a useful concept to analyse the dreams of the I-Kiribati and how these may influence the robustness of the Kiribati society to the challenges they face.

The relationship between migration and climate change is still disputed however; there is largely a consensus that climate change will be a contributing factor to migration. As several authors articulated, there focus of climate migration needs to shift to solutions rather than questioning the relationship between climate change and migration. This thesis follows this shift and thus is largely responsible for shaping the first question.

The literature review notes a parallel between the multiple factors driving migration and those that underpin resilience. This suggests a holistic understanding of the society is required in order to plan adaptation effectively. Furthermore culture and place identity is regarded as an often marginalised aspect of resilience and adaptation, yet is also considered a key part of life in the South Pacific and Kiribati. The literature gap about the relationship between culture, social resilience and adaptation is a major cornerstone of the second question. Consequently I ask two exploratory questions:

1. How do the I-Kiribati dream their society will look after climate migration?
2. What role can culture play in assisting the I-Kiribati maintain social resilience when the place of residence changes?

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Appreciative Inquiry is the most appropriate methodology for my research context because it is a strength-based approach used to elicit stories and connections from participants' previous experiences to create dreams for their futures. Given the obscurity of Appreciative Inquiry in academia (and general use), it is salient to outline the main theory and critiques before adding further critiques from my experience in Kiribati. The discussion around Appreciative Inquiry is a valuable one which can add to the wider literature around this methodology, given my review of AI literature suggests a very limited use of AI in environmental studies.

This chapter will first explore my positionality as an *I-Matang* (non-Kiribati person⁶) and how this may have shaped my research. Then there is an introduction and discussion of Appreciative Inquiry which contributes to the limited literature on this methodology. I then outline the qualitative methods used for my case study of South Tarawa in Kiribati and how the data was analysed.

3.2 POSITIONALITY

3.2.1 BEING AN *I-MATANG*

In any research, and particularly cross-cultural research, it is critical to consider one's positionality. Positionality is "how research is created through the interactions and relationships between researchers and those being researched" (Browne et al., 2014, p. 586). Positionality is important because there is no such thing as an entirely objective or bias free piece of research. The researcher, naturally, brings aspects of their identity into the research space. These aspects form the positionality of the

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⁶ The official translation of *I-Matang* is "of European ancestry" but it is often conflated and used as a term for all non-Kiribati people including those from Asian countries, as any non-Micronesian person tends to be instantly distinguishable from the general population.

researcher and cannot help but influence the knowledge produced due to the differences between participants and researcher.

Positionality is particularly pertinent for cross-cultural research. I am a Pakeha, cis-gendered, able-bodied, middle-class, university educated male from Aotearoa New Zealand, I have many privileges based on these aspects of my being which influences how participants relate to me as a person and researcher. Cultural differences and language barriers can interact to co-construct new interpretations of data and therefore the space in which research encounters took place must be considered (Twyman, Morrison, & Sporton, 1999). My positionality means I have had little exposure to poverty or sustained deprivation. Therefore it is impossible to fully understand participants' living situations and how this shapes research participants' responses. Therefore my positionality provides me with a lens of privilege when analysing responses from participants and I acknowledge that I see responses from this lens.

Another two examples of differences between citizens of Kiribati and New Zealand are land abundance and the ability to travel. New Zealand has an abundance of land safe from sea level rise whereas Kiribati is almost entirely formed of low-lying atolls and consequently is more exposed to the impacts of sea level rise. The New Zealand passport is one of the most trusted in the world and allows relatively free entry for many countries in comparison to Kiribati who require visas for the majority of travel. These differences are further examples aspects of my identity which made it difficult to fully relate to participants.

My positionality impacts how I relate to participants and how participants relate with me. As an outsider, combined with the I-Kiribati social and cultural norms, this influenced how participants interacted with me. I was obviously an *I-Matang* based on the colour of my skin as well as other identifiers such as my native language, education and the clothes I wore. Despite being different, their social norms demand respect for *I-Matang*, so despite having no existing family or social connections when

I entered Kiribati, I instantly held social esteem as an *I-Matang*. As an example, this meant that I was served food first, and served food regardless of whether I said yes or no; I was expected to totally finish my meal (seconds included) before the I-Kiribati would start eating. This was disturbing because my methodology is about elevating the views of participants. Instead through being perceived as an esteemed guest, it was difficult to negate the impact of my privilege because I often felt I was treated as a source of knowledge rather than a collector of views.

3.2.2 OFFSETTING YOUR POSITIONALITY

Being aware of your positionality is the first step, and the next is to attempt to minimise the impact it may have on your research (Browne et al., 2014). A lot of the offsetting is through reflexivity and self-awareness during research. Cross-cultural research can be an experience fraught with pitfalls if the researcher is careless or over-confident. Even with the best intentions, these pitfalls remain and must be navigated to avoid any possible ‘white saviour’ approach that is disrespectful to the culture that owns the research space. Special treatment arising from being from a developed country is not one that could be mitigated or avoided as no matter how I lived over there, I was always visually and linguistically an *I-Matang*. Therefore full mitigation was not possible, with the focus instead on minimising the impact my positionality would have on my research.

Cross-cultural research can be an anxious experience for participants and researcher as in some cases; both are trying to please the other. I always tried to respect and accommodate participants’ needs and interests as much as was feasible; for example, by meeting in a location of their choosing to ensure the place for the interview or focus group was a space participants felt comfortable. Their *maneaba* (community meeting houses) became a popular setting for interviews and focus groups with participants who did not have an office to host me in (Image 3.1). Their *maneaba* are an example of a safe cultural space, so during these interviews or focus groups we

would sit on the floor on locally woven mats that they would use for any meeting in the *maneaba*. Another strategy I employed was careful framing research participants' agency by presenting my research as working 'with' the I-Kiribati rather than 'on' the I-Kiribati. I also tried to mitigate my university educated privilege by developing accessible questions which would be understood even when language barriers could be present.

Finally, I tried to make the research more accessible by asking participants to share stories and examples from their own lives. The process of story sharing is valuable, as it can generate a greater understanding between participant and researcher as topics discussed can come to life through lived examples (Elliott, 1999). This sharing of their own stories could not be judged as a wrong answer to a question. Thus sharing stories was a strategy to provide participants with some extra confidence early in the interview stages.

IMAGE 3.1: PHOTO OF A MANEABA (COMMUNITY MEETING HOUSE)

Source: (Lewis, 2008)

3.3 METHODOLOGY - APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

The methodology for my research was Appreciative Inquiry (AI). AI was created by organisational change practitioner Dr. David Cooperrider as a strengths-based approach for inspiring change (Bushe, 2013; Elliott, 1999). AI can be defined as “a method for studying and changing social systems (groups, organisations, communities) that advocates collective inquiry into the best of what is in order to imagine what could be, followed by collective design of a desired future state that is compelling and thus, does not require the use of incentives, coercion or persuasion for planned change to occur” (Bushe, 2013, p. 43). As a strength-based approach, AI offers a practice that deviates drastically from the traditional deficit-based research approaches which seek to identify, understand and (sometimes attempt to) solve a problem. AI seeks to appreciate the best of the past and present and enquire how these positive experiences can become more common (Elliott, 1999).

There were other methodologies that were considered throughout the research design phase such as critical feminist theory, participatory action research and *talanoa*. Critical feminist theory was considered due to its emphasis on seeking meaning in everyday stories (Spence, 1995; Wang, 1999). However, the story aspect is not unique to feminist theory and the emphasis on gender through other principal tenets of feminist theory provided a direction for analysis that I considered too narrow.

Participatory Action Research (PAR) provides tools for sensitive cross-cultural research that is highly participatory and aims to leave a positive impact on the community (Kendon, Pain, & Kesby, 2007). Given significant time and resource constraints for this project, PAR was simply too ambitious.

The Pacific research methodology of *talanoa* (Prescott, 2011) is an approach where interviews are considered conversations between two equals, with both the

researcher and participant learning from each other through the interaction and arriving at a greater understanding. *Talanoa* typically does not have a set time frame or end point, but rather is an unstructured interview (Prescott, 2011). This methodology definitely offers utility as a culturally sensitive methodology, although it does not have a specific cultural connection to Kiribati. *Talanoa* was ruled out because I learnt about it too late in my research design process and it has at least one major conflict with AI theory. Whilst AI expects completely non-leading research questions, *talanoa* does not and leading questions are considered okay given this methodology is an exchange of knowledge rather than knowledge extraction. *Talanoa* considers the conversation between researcher and participant as a knowledge exchange where you learn from one another. Given my interview schedule was all planned by the time I learned about *talanoa* and non-leading questions integrated into this schedule, I could not figure out how to integrate the benefits of *talanoa* whilst remaining true to AI theory.

AI stood apart as a methodology that had multiple connections to the research context, its positive framing made it appropriate even when not utilising the action-based component of this methodology. AI is a highly adaptable and flexible research methodology that can be modified for a wide range of research contexts. Furthermore, as an underutilized methodology, employing it in a new context allowed this research to make contributions around the utility of this methodology.

3.3.1 THE APPROPRIATENESS OF APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

AI helped shape this research away from the problems of climate change to the dreams of climate migration to fill the literature gap identified by Rive (2013) and Wyett (2013). These authors argue that research needs to explore possible options of adaptation rather than continuing to debate if this is an issue or not. AI makes this change possible by providing a methodology to explore dreams in a safe, positive and constructive way.

I expected the prospect of having to migrate away from your country due to climate change to be an emotionally charged and frightening idea so I wanted to focus on providing a safe and engaging research space. Strength based approaches are being increasingly used to identify needs rather than relying on deficit based approaches which identify needs based on what is missing and/ or exploring problems (Jimerson, Sharkey, Nyborg, & Furlong, 2004). The deficit approaches have been the mainstream approach for decades and they employ much more negative language and this type of research operates in a more psychologically negative space compared to strength based approaches which are fundamentally more positive (Elliott, 1999; Jimerson et al., 2004).

I could have asked participants to list the problems with migration and examine these in detail, but by interrogating problems or barriers, they can grow even more complex and appear impossible to solve (Jimerson et al., 2004; Rother, 2008). There would also be potential ethical concerns with this approach e.g. participants may be left feeling the problems associated with climate migration were too large, and this could cause emotional harm. Strength based approaches focus on what generates success, which can help reveal the needs and dreams of the population by identifying success causing factors such as resilience (Jimerson et al., 2004). Focusing on the positives can provide a new lens for evaluating the priorities of the population (Bushe, 2011).

AI has strong connections with my conceptual frameworks of resilience and vulnerability which increase the relevance of AI to my research. Elliott (1999, p. vi) says

“AI starts from a fundamentally different position by allowing those who may consider themselves poor and disadvantaged to be aware of their achievements. When they look for their strengths they are often surprised by how resilient, adaptive and innovative they are”.

From my analysis of literature and comparing that to my time in Kiribati, the I-Kiribati are often talked about as 'poor and disadvantaged' despite its people having a rich culture, being generally very happy, and showing remarkable resilience to the challenges they face. Thus AI provides an opportunity to challenge dominant discourses and provide an opportunity for the I-Kiribati to focus on their strengths through the research process.

Another connection between AI and resilience is they both acknowledge large scale change as being a part of the standard lifecycle of successful systems. Transformative resilience theory states that change is a natural phenomenon when the external stresses exceed the tolerable capacity of that system (Alexander, 2013; Magis, 2010). AI encourages transformation of the system so that it can be the best it can be (Elliott, 1999). Given the stresses on Kiribati from climate change and the prospect of climate migration, AI provides the opportunity to review the strengths and stresses to imagine a more resilient system.

3.3.2 PRINCIPLES OF APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

AI has five principles, and all have been integrated into the research design:

- 1) The constructionist principle: Through dialogue, knowledge is constructed. The aim of AI is to inspire "new ideas, stories and images that generate new possibilities" (Bushe, 2013, p. 43). Recognising that knowledge is socially constructed requires the questions asked by the researcher to be non-leading so that particular answers are not pre-empted (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2003). My positionality affects the knowledge that is created and I have already declared my positionality.
- 2) The principle of simultaneity: Enquiry and change happen concurrently. Social systems will respond in the direction implied from the first question, therefore non-leading wording of the questions is critical for determining responses from the participant (Cooperrider et al., 2003).

- 3) The poetic principle: The everyday stories between community members constantly co-author their history and influence the future (Cooperrider et al., 2003). Exploring strengths and dreams in their everyday lives can reveal new insights. These can help envision sustainable change or a greater appreciation of what is currently helping the community to flourish.
- 4) The anticipatory principle: “The most important resource for generating constructive organizational change or improvement is collective imagination and discourse about the future” (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008, p. 9). This principle promotes collaboration and is a key reason for choosing to use focus groups. Furthermore, humans will act in a way that mirrors their expectations of the future (Bushe, 2013). As an example, if the population believes they can maintain their culture when migrating, they will prepare themselves accordingly.
- 5) The positive principle: AI practitioners believe that the greatest change is created through positive energy (Cooperrider et al., 2008). Discussing the problems of migrating due to climate change could be a very negative experience for participants, and ultimately could be a more destructive than constructive process. By focusing on achievements such as the strength they receive from the I-Kiribati culture and how this can be translated to a new place is a positive framing of this problem.

3.4 CRITIQUES OF APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

As an approach with very limited literature available, AI critiques are rare and even more difficult to find from authors who are not professional AI practitioners. This section includes theoretical critiques from the AI literature as well as practical critiques from my fieldwork in South Tarawa. The first two are critiques unique to AI and the second two have been made of AI but are also general qualitative research critiques.

3.4.1 POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE RELATIONSHIP

As a strength based approach that focuses on positive emotions, AI has been subject to criticism for how the negative emotions and experiences are utilised (Bushe, 2007). AI practitioners struggle to create and maintain positive energy with participants whilst also respecting negative experiences (Bushe, 2007, 2011; Cooperrider et al., 2008; Elliott, 1999). Fineman (2006) suggests that if the negative emotions and experiences are not dealt with then AI can become a 'form of repression' and reproduce the opposite of what AI is meant to be as an exercise in liberating ideas. It has been found that negative experiences will generally emerge no matter how positively questions are framed. As Elliott (1999, p. 66) says "feelings are important data" but there is minimal guidance in AI literature on how to i) treat the diversity of feelings that arise and ii) communicate and integrate the emotional data into research findings.

From practical experience, reconciling the emotions of participants was a constant challenge. I had no real idea of what an appropriate range of emotions looks like when trying to keep positive energy but also allow negative emotions to arise. From reflection, I believe that AI literature often conflates positive emotions with the strength based nature of the approach and wrongly perceives negative emotions as diverging from the principles of AI. From fieldwork, negative emotions can represent strengths of character such as reflecting on their resilience when dealing with a natural disaster or working long hours in an unfavourable job to provide an income for a family. Oliver (2005) is correct in asserting the subjectivity of emotions and furthermore, that there are often positive and negative emotions that exist concurrently in experiences. Finally, this research recognises that "feelings are important data" and strives to include the emotions of participants.

3.4.2 THE LIFE OF SYSTEMS

Cooperrider says the spiritual life of systems is crucial to the overarching philosophy of AI (Cooperrider & Avital, 2004; Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). However it has

barely been written about and Bushe (2011) suggests that the life giving properties of systems hasn't been explored due to the largely corporate use of AI where concepts relating to 'spirituality' are not typically discussed. The question of what gives life to systems is an area I wanted to explore with AI and resilience theory as I investigated how culture can help maintain social resilience when the place of residence may change.

The culture of Kiribati is a factor which adds resilience to their social systems and Polak (1973, p. 19) offers a metaphor: "as long as a society's image is positive and flourishing, the flower of the culture is in full bloom. Once the image begins to decay and lose its vitality, however, the culture does not long survive". The transition of their culture to a new place will be critical for maintaining social resilience post-climate migration.

AI theory sees a healthy system as being a dynamic system that can adapt to stresses and change to be the best it can be; generative capacity – or the ability to change is thus a marker of the life of a system (Bushe, 2007, 2011). Within AI theory, generative capacity is a concept that is very similar to the concept of 'adaptive capacity' in resilience and vulnerability theory which is the ability of a system to adapt to external stresses.

3.4.3 ISSUE IDENTIFICATION AND POWER

The knowledge that participants hold on an issue influences their level of participation and the amount and type of data collected (Bushe, 2011). This was something I tried to control for through my research. It is assumed that each participant will be at a different stage of identifying with a particular issue and in my research the issue was climate change and that climate migration may happen in the future. It was very obvious that participants had a range of knowledge and experience about climate change, from those who had learnt a tiny bit in a public seminar to participants who work for climate change based NGOs. There were also

participants who did not believe in sea level rise and that rather “the sea is not rising, the shape of the land is changing” and drew an example of one island in South Tarawa which has changed from long and skinny to narrow and wide (Pers. Comm., 2014). There were also participants who believed they would be dead when climate migration is necessary, whereas others believed they will be migrating in the near future. These different perspectives influenced their level of contributions as those who didn’t identify with an issue were less likely to have thought about it and tended to participate less. Given AI demands a high level of participation, I wanted to ensure that participants could identify with the issue so it was ideal if participants entered having already thought about climate migration. I tried to minimise the influence of this factor by recruiting participants who had some knowledge about climate change (although there was obviously a wide range of levels of knowledge).

Closely associated with the issue of limiting participant’s engagement is Alinsky’s (1971) argument that asking questions which give unlimited power to participants can often yield underwhelming results. Alinsky would often ask individuals a question like “what does the community most need?” and be deeply unsatisfied with the answers and their seeming lack of existing thought into such a question. He argues that by placing people in a position of unlimited power, it is a position they have never had before. Therefore very few people will have thought about such big questions and the answers are often underwhelming. Alinsky was often working with less privileged groups when he made this discovery. He believes being unable to answer these questions demonstrates people were spending more time focusing on present needs than future wants. This situation is comparable to Kiribati, where a lot of time is spent ensuring that there is enough food and water on the table for day to day consumption. His question is very similar to my main question of “imagine there are no limitations, what do you think is the best climate migration solution?” and I found responses at times to be quite underwhelming. I was told several times that this is a question they had not been asked before, nor do think they have the agency to make their dreams a reality. I became aware of Alinsky’s comments after

conducting this research, but I had also anticipated this somewhat and as such had developed some easier 'build-up' questions. A lack of identification with the issues discussed or a perceived absence of power to make their dreams come true may have limited participation.

3.4.4 NON-LEADING QUESTIONS

AI seeks to be highly sensitive of how knowledge is constructed and sees non-leading questions as essential when gathering data (Bushe, 2013). This principle exists to add rigor and remove bias from the data collection, but I challenge the extent to which the researcher can be truly non-leading in any questions. Whilst the questions may be non-leading, this is not the first step of the participants' involvement and those prior interactions are setting the scene for possible conversations. During the participant recruitment stage the researcher will often explain to participants the work they are doing and field research related questions. As you introduce and explain your research, participants are already forming ideas on what to talk about. For example, the participants knew I was interested in hearing their ideal climate migration solution so tried to include this information as early as possible. Despite my best efforts at having non-leading questions and a carefully crafted interview schedule, AI cannot be completely non-leading because of the inherent leading nature during the participant recruitment research introduction stage which is influenced by my positionality and how participants perceive me i.e. as a western researcher interested in climate change.

Upon reflection, one of my main questions was slightly leading. This question was "what provides you with dignity?" or "what makes you proud to be an I-Kiribati?" I thought that this was non-leading as in New Zealand (or another English speaking country); this question would have generated any answer from religion to family or income to qualifications. However, in the context of Kiribati where they are so proud of their culture, the obvious answer was "my culture" and thus the question was slightly leading. This may have also been influenced by mentioning in the

explanation stage prior to an interview that I was interested in the cultural aspect of migration. Whilst I tried to be as non-leading as possible, sufficient information still needs to be given in the recruitment stage so that participants can decide whether they are willing and able to participate, which challenges the strict adherence of AI theory to being non-leading. I found the balance of being non-leading yet being a responsible and honest researcher difficult because as soon as I said the topic of my research, this was already leading participants on.

3.5 METHODS

This research exclusively uses qualitative research methods based on Appreciative Inquiry (AI) theory to answer my research questions using semi-structured interviews and focus groups (Appendix 5). A Qualitative approach was the most appropriate for my study because my research questions are exploratory in nature (Creswell, 2012).

3.5.1 FOUR D'S OF APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

AI uses the Four D method (Figure 4.1) (Bushe, 2013; Cooperrider et al., 2003, 2008), and my interview schedule was based on these Four D's. The first stage, *discover*, aims to get participants to revisit experiences of success relevant to the later questions. Through discovering successes, it is believed this is the strongest platform to dream of future change. Given I wanted participants to envision successful future migration; I could not rely on participants having migrated previously for stories of success. Instead I reshaped the discovery stage around recalling times participants felt a sense of dignity in relation to their culture.

The second stage, *dream*, is about envisioning how these positive experiences can be used to generate future positive change. With a focus group, this dreaming stage will be done collectively, and for an interview, the dreaming stage is done individually. The dreaming stage is where my first main question of enquiring about the dreams

around climate migration was explored. This was the main stage of my research and thus the questions were focused around providing answers to this question.

The third stage, *design*, is about planning how the dream can be implemented. This is easier when dreams are mutually compatible, although individual designs can be accommodated within the process. With this stage, I ensured that there was no expectation that I make this happen for the participants, and the discussions were focused on gathering the information I need rather than developing actual plans.

The fourth stage, *deploy*, was about initiating and making the dream a reality based on the plan made in the design phase. I did not use this stage as it was beyond the scope of this project given resource constraints.

FIGURE 3.1: THE FOUR D'S OF APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

Source: Adapted from (Cooperrider et al., 2008)

3.5.2 THE PLAN FOR SOUTH TARAWA

The proposed methods for this research were to have three focus groups which would each do two sessions of approximately ninety minutes, utilising the Four D's of Appreciative Inquiry. The first session was to be dedicated to a thorough *discovery* stage and touching on the *dream* stage. The second session would revisit the *dream* stage and cover it in more detail as this was the most important part of my research, before concluding with a small *design* stage. A break between sessions would enable participants to identify with the issues more and engage with the *dream* stage questions to provide a better quality of responses.

Focus groups were chosen as the preferred method due to the emphasis on collaboration in AI theory, and the group dialogues AI praxis typically employs. Focus groups allow ideas to be critiqued through robust discussion rather than just generating a collection of ideas arising from one-on-one interviews. Focus groups do have limitations such as 'groupthink' – where individuals in the group will just go along with what one person says and not challenge that point of view (Boateng, 2012; Janis, 1971).

Another potential problem in focus groups is 'facipulation', a portmanteau of facilitation and manipulation. This term signals the power and ability of a facilitator to manipulate the focus group into a certain outcome (Kesby, 2007). I planned to be careful of both these common problems through implementing strategies like ice breakers and general facilitation techniques to generate a safe and inviting research space, implement the non-leading questions of AI and be a self-aware facilitator to avoid facipulation.

3.5.3 WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED?

After arriving in Kiribati and gaining a research permit (Appendix 6), it quickly became apparent that the plan was going to change. The first thing was that I would not be able to get all the government representatives I wanted to talk to together for a

focus group because of conflicting schedules and the amount of staff who were overseas at various times while I was there. Consequently I decided to conduct interviews alongside focus groups⁷. I also conducted my focus groups in just one session rather than over two sessions. This was done to enhance the convenience for participants and to mitigate the risk of participants not coming to the second focus group. Additionally, two of my focus groups were a surprise for me because they occurred spontaneously with no prior warning provided to me. On both occasions a potential interview participant had invited other people to join and one of these instances, I was not even expecting an interview to occur. When dealing with these 'spontaneous focus groups', this reduced the opportunity to ask that this be done over two sessions. The first focus group (which was a spontaneous focus group) also taught me that the focus group could be completed in 1-2 hours, so I decided that this was a reasonable time for one session.

Overall, 21 interviews with 24 participants (three interviews had two people) and 6 focus groups with 48 participants were conducted. Interviews lasted between 35-63 minutes and focus groups lasted between 65 and 118 minutes. Interviews were conducted with a range of people from various government departments, NGOs and regular citizens. I sought people who knew at least a little about climate change and were comfortable speaking English with me as I planned on conducting interviews and focus groups in English. For focus groups, I sought groups who were relevant through being a member of a local environmental organisation or tertiary institute. Those in tertiary education were relevant because in Kiribati, gaining higher education is seen as a way of acquiring skills that can help you migrate to other countries.

All interviews and focus groups were conducted in English except for one focus group where the chairman of the group acted as translator. The latter focus group

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⁷ I learnt four days before leaving Kiribati that there is a Parliamentary Select Committee on Climate Change which is a group of people from a variety of government departments which all discuss climate change as part of their environmental policy integration. This group would have been perfect for a focus group or at least participant observation if I had known about them earlier.

was not planned, as I arrived for a potential interview and was presented with an NGO committee who were very eager to participate. There seemed to be a lot of energy and excitement to start the focus group so I allowed the chairman to translate for me rather than possibly waste that energy by pulling aside the chairman and negotiating conditions for the focus group. I was very happy with how this focus group went and do not think the translation reduced the quality of data.

The expected benefits of focus groups (collaboration, testing ideas and robust discussion) were much more difficult to achieve than expected due to social norms that caused 'group think' in some focus groups. One of these norms was the deeply engrained respect for elders and/ or leaders. This resulted in having one or two dominant speakers in the group who most people expected to do the majority of talking. Another social norm that limited participation in focus groups was the custom to tease people when they make a mistake with their English, and therefore the I-Kiribati are very shy English speakers around other I-Kiribati. I found the focus group participants to be more shy and reserved than the interview participants where the latter did not need to be so concerned about their English. For these reasons, 'group think' occurred in some focus groups and they struggled to generate the desired collaborative and robust discussion.

Furthermore, I do not think 'facipulation' was an issue with my focus groups. I had no agenda to push any climate migration solution, and rather, was aiming to gather information for my broad and non-leading research questions. I did at times have to steer conversations in certain directions as the facilitator to ensure I could answer my research questions.

3.5.4 ETHICS

Ethical consideration is of great importance for any research, and particularly for cross-cultural research. The ethic of beneficence from Manzo and Brightbill (2007) has inspired this research, though, I admit there is are very limited direct benefits my

research can provide for participants given the removal of the action stages of AI. The main benefit was the strength-based principle of AI which provided the opportunity for participants to consider the possibility of migrating with positive framing rather than generate the fears and negatives that are normally associated with climate migration.

Closely related to beneficence is the ethic of non-malevolence (Manzo & Brightbill, 2007). I always aimed to ensure my research caused no harm to participants and communities given the highly charged nature of the topic of climate migration. I have also kept the identity of my participants confidential to ensure their personal safety and enable them to feel comfortable having open discussions with me. With focus groups, I asked that participants did not share the identity of other participants if they were discussing anything from the focus groups with others who were not participants. They were not banned from discussing material from focus groups because AI seeks to encourage and foster community discussions.

This research required and received approval from the Human Ethics Committee from Victoria University of Wellington (see Appendix 2). I provided an information sheet (Appendix 3) and consent form (Appendix 4) to participants through email or in person. I also provided a verbal description of the work in person to ensure they were informed about the research. I gave participants the opportunity to ask any questions they had about being a participant before starting the interviews or focus groups. Some practicalities varied such as whether or not I recorded the interview and whether participants wanted a copy of the transcript based on specific circumstances. Twice I found myself doing interviews without having consent forms and in this case I made sure I had verbal consent and they understood what participating meant.

3.5.5 DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

For most interviews I used an audio recorder which I gained permission to use, and then transcribed the interview at a later date although for several interviews an audio recorder was not appropriate due to a noisy environment so I took notes by hand and immediately wrote these up in full post-interview. For focus groups, I sometimes solely used the audio recorder and on several occasions I also used a video camera (again, permission was granted from all participants for that) to accompany the audio recorder so that I would be able to identify who was speaking in the transcribing stage.

Braun and Clarke (2006) offer a six step guide to thematic analysis in qualitative research. The thematic analysis was an iterative process of firstly preparing the data for analysis. This involved transcribing the data, once transcriptions had been completed, they were emailed to participants who wanted a copy and I received some very minor suggested revisions from two participants. The next four steps are very iterative and follow the process of identifying recurring codes, labelling the themes from these recurring codes, testing the codes to ensure the themes are all consistent with the data set and then refining the themes and codes so they can provide compelling examples to support research questions. The sixth stage is the writing up is supposed to be more efficient and rigorous given the well compartmentalised data and most useful quotes have been identified.

I used qualitative analysis software NVivo to analyse my material. My codes were based around my two research questions with the parent nodes of 'dreams' and 'social resilience'. There were many child nodes below each parent nodes such as the practical aspects of migrating, down to employment based dreams. These transcripts plus notes from my field diary formed the primary data that was used for analysis in the following chapters.

3.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on explaining that Appreciative Inquiry was the most appropriate methodology for this research as a flexible strength-based approach. Through being highly adaptable and focused on positive framing, this reduced ethical problems associated with researching in a cross-cultural space.

I have declared my positionality as a well-educated *I-matang* in Kiribati, and the implications of this for my research. I accepted that my ethnicity and education would influence the interactions I had in Kiribati by always being seen as an outsider, and this brought inherent respect, but also meant that locals may have been reluctant to share information because I am an 'outsider'. I tried to mitigate my positionality as much as possible through having accessible research questions and using sensitive cross-cultural research practices, but nevertheless I was always an outsider.

I also critiqued AI theory from a theoretical and practical perspective. One critique was that AI takes a somewhat simplistic view of interpreting emotions and ignores multiple emotions that can run through stories. These critiques and recognition of the utility in an environmental studies setting is a contribution of this thesis given the shortage of existing critical literature. Despite critiques it was a worthwhile methodology which allowed some rich data to be gathered using interviews and focus groups in Kiribati which I present across the next two chapters.

CHAPTER 4: DREAMS FOR A FUTURE SOCIETY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The main dream from the fieldwork was the overwhelming desire of participants to maintain their sense of identity as I-Kiribati after migrating. This chapter analyses primary data corresponding to my primary research question – how do the I-Kiribati dream their society will look after migration? The term ‘dream’ is used to connect my research with the language of Appreciative Inquiry, where ‘dreaming’ is one of the four main stages of the methodology. I use ‘dream’ in its sense of being a daydream, an aspiration, an ambition etc., rather than the more traditional definition around thoughts and images experienced whilst asleep. The question thus enquires what the I-Kiribati aspire for their society post-migration.

I synthesise the collection of dreams that were expressed by research participants into themes according to different components of the possible migration process. This research was not trying to find one single dream but rather communicate the variety of dreams that the participants expressed. To find dreams, questions were devised to try and get participants to create their own dreams rather than testing any dreams that I, as the researcher, had devised. The open nature of the main question from the interview schedule “given anything is possible, what do you think is the best possible climate migration solution?” required several preparatory questions to develop conscious thought around the wider topic. At times this required altering the structure of the interview schedule and returning to the question as participants built up confidence to answer the main question.

The dreams expressed covered an incredibly diverse range of topics which I have placed into four categories after extensive coding and reviewing of the codes as per the six step guide by Braun and Clarke (2006): identity, social, governance and practical dreams. Each dream and dream category contributes to the complex migratory decision and the opportunity to maintain social resilience. The first

category focuses on dreams connected with identity. The second category is for collective social dreams such as maintaining the strong sense of community. The third category is focused on legal and governance dreams such as governing autonomously. The final category reflects dreams that are more practical for livelihoods such as education, employment and English proficiency. This chapter does not discuss cultural dreams as they are presented in the following chapter.

4.2 IDENTITY DREAMS

The dream that emerged repeatedly in the data is the desire to feel a strong sense of identity no matter where the I-Kiribati live which is a dream that will bolster resilience. When asking for dreams on climate migration, I expected to have President Anote Tong's quote that the I-Kiribati should "migrate with dignity" to be echoed by many participants (Office of Te Beretitenti, 2013, p. 1). However, less than half of the research participants had heard of this quote before. This quote was designed and focused for an international audience so typically only public servants knew of this quote so it has not become widespread domestically (Pers. Comm., 2014).

The word 'dignity' does not translate very well into the Kiribati language making it an insensitive word to include in any statement communicating the main dream for the I-Kiribati people. I asked most interview participants to translate 'dignity' to English and they all said that there is no direct or remotely direct translation. Some participants provided a translation and all who did provided a different Kiribati word (Table 4.1). This evidence suggests the word 'dignity' has a poor understanding and low usage in Kiribati.

For those that knew the 'migrate with dignity' idea, understood the English meaning and how it connects to their identity as I-Kiribati, it represents a very desirable dream –

“Moving with dignity, we want to move to other countries not because we forced to go but because we want to still be able to say that we are in the long term, “I am from Kiribati” and “I have culture” and “I can practice my culture wherever I go”. That’s what I get from the President’s message. We want to move as who we are and still calling us that we are I-Kiribati” (Pers. Comm., 2014).

This participant and others who knew the quote, unpacked the quote in a similar way as the President, by affirming the importance of their identity, culture and way of life as well as their desire to be contributors rather than burdens to the society they move to (Office of Te Beretitenti, 2013). Many accept large changes and challenges will occur through migrating but their bottom line is that “you can still call yourself an I-Kiribati and have that unique identity and culture in you” (Pers. Comm., 2014).

The goal of maintaining the I-Kiribati identity and feeling welcome to express their identity that as one sees fit is a more culturally sensitive goal as it is understood widely in both English and Kiribati. Despite ‘migration with dignity’ representing a valuable dream, the inability to translate ‘dignity’ into the Kiribati language detracts from its applicability as a useful dream for all I-Kiribati. Identity was a word used and understood through the interviews which shows it is a more suitable word than dignity given its ability to be recognised domestically and internationally.

TABLE 4.1 TRANSLATIONS FOR THE WORD 'DIGNITY' INTO KIRIBATI

Source: Personal communications, 2014

Kiribati	English translation
Rikiam	Heritage
Kakawaki	Important
Kakatonga	Pride and respect
Tenanoni I-Kiribati	Being an I-Kiribati
Te Mauri, Te Raoi ao te Tabomoa (the national motto)	Health, peace and prosperity
Anuan te aomata	Human attitude
Katei	Traditional identity
Inaomata	Independence and freedom

Maintaining identity post-migration is a challenging dream, particularly as some participants believe there can be no dignity in migrating. These participants believe they will not be able to retain enough of their culture overseas and it will compromise their identity and sense of dignity⁸ as I-Kiribati. This was expressed by several participants who all identified as being from the Southern Line Islands of Kiribati. According to multiple conversations the people from these islands are known for being more culturally conservative and having a more serious demeanour compared to the rest of the population. The Southern Line Islanders as a more culturally conservative group of Kiribati society were more resistant to migrating and feel greater insecurity about maintaining their identity. Maintaining their I-Kiribati identity is the ultimate dream although this is going to be very challenging for some given their personal identity⁹.

⁸ Given my argument that dignity is an inappropriate term for a dream I will only use the word dignity when my participants have used it explicitly.

⁹ Despite being ethnically homogenous, there are several different nations or groups in Kiribati. Some of the Banaba population wishes to secede from Kiribati and were reluctantly lumped with Kiribati during

The participants felt that choice and self-determination encourage a sense of self-respect which will help them maintain a strong sense of identity. As one participant said when referring to self-determination, “without choice, there is no dignity” (Pers. Comm., 2014). Knowing they have made the choices they think are best for them provides a sense of control and comfort amongst the challenges they expect to face. Many accept they will have to leave their homes in future; however they still expect and see it as a right that they have a large degree of freedom in determining their future beyond Kiribati. While they acknowledge they need a lot of assistance to realise their dreams, they nevertheless see options and self-determination as an aspect of maintaining their sense of identity.

4.3 SOCIAL DREAMS

“We have a very strong ‘togetherness’, our people are family and being family is a very high value, we value our family very much, we value our village very much. These are the things that are important and in our daily life it’s our family. The culture of sharing, we share so much. Even though we may have little from my home. When my neighbour come for something, we really know we need it and they may need it, and even though it’s a little, we can share and same with them. I really like our togetherness” (Pers. Comm., 2014).

A strong sense of community is a central element of Kiribati culture that participants want to retain. The strong sense of community was stated as something participants cherish about their identity as they are very generous people who assist each other to minimise societal deprivation. There were various quotes such as the one above to the effect ‘even though we are poor, we make sure no one goes hungry’. Even with the high unemployment rates and relatively low levels of income there is usually community support for those who are struggling. There is also a stronger social

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independence. The Northern Line Islands and Southern Line Islands are very similar but identify as different groups and have cultural differences.

obligation to extended family members. Support can come from outside families as well by sharing food, clothes or formal requests to community leaders. Despite a very small welfare system, the social organisation of Kiribati means there is very little deprivation and participants dream of maintaining this strong sense of community.

The dream to maintain the strong sense of community overseas is one reason participants have such a strong desire to have access to opportunities for well-paid jobs in their new country. Participants identified the high cost of living beyond Kiribati as a major barrier to maintaining the strong community support they currently practice. They acknowledge the cost of living and need for money will be much greater in Australia and New Zealand which will stretch their ability to support their community. This higher cost of living is feared as a factor that may slowly erode their strong sense of community because they have to spend more money on their personal welfare and thus have less money to contribute to others who need it in the wider community. They dream of well-paying jobs and higher rates of employment to ensure they can look after their family and support other members of their community.

If they have to migrate, the I-Kiribati want to see their spatial distribution of villages replicated in a new place. This would be through copying the existing land distribution and village layouts. Generally participants were very satisfied with life in Kiribati with several participants stating their dream is to “copy and paste” Kiribati to another country so that everything can be as similar as possible including the spatial distribution of villages (Pers. Comm., 2014). Their spatial distribution has developed over many generations and is reproduced through social, cultural and historical relationships. Participants spoke about how their ancestors had fought with other I-Kiribati for their land and that to lose it without having fair compensation (like an identical piece of land elsewhere) would be extremely hurtful and involve grief. Participants also stated that mirroring their social organisation and

land distribution elsewhere will minimise any feelings of inequity as a re-negotiation of spatial distribution will be very complex and likely fraught with conflict.

Furthermore, living in the same communities allows them to maintain the same social relationships they have in Kiribati and receive the benefits from living in established communities. Therefore mirroring the land distribution will help maintain the peaceful nature of Kiribati in a new location by recognising the social, historical and cultural significance of their existing land distribution.

One aspect central to the strong sense of community in Kiribati is the love for their elders and they are highly respected in society. The elders play a central role in reproducing culture in Kiribati. They are respected for their knowledge about the culture and history of Kiribati. They also play many roles in society such as representing the family at meetings, organising gatherings and teaching cultural traditions to the younger generations. One participant was one of the few people on South Tarawa who can teach the traditional knot tying used to construct a *maneaba* (community meeting house). These knots allow the *maneaba* to be constructed in the traditional manner without any modern materials such as nails or bolts. Many participants mentioned that they respect their elders and they wish to take this respect to a new location.

There is a risk the elders may lose some of their status as advice givers should they move to a new vastly different location. The elders of Kiribati also hold a high role in society because they are a source of advice for personal matters such as study options or child-rearing. The elders' experience may become obsolete in a new country as their knowledge and wisdom has been spatially generated from Kiribati, which challenges the ability to continue respecting elders as advice givers. A leader in the education sector stated how it is a struggle to tell older teachers that they are not performing to a high enough standard and that they need to improve. It is socially taboo to criticise those older than you. This participant predicts there will be more cross-generational conflict post-migration because the historical experiences of the

elders will be less relevant for the younger I-Kiribati if they grow up in a different country from their elders. Many participants believe that respecting their elders will be key to successful migration but there are possible challenges as a modern environment could threaten the social standing of the elders.

Participants dream their identity as I-Kiribati will always be welcomed but there is a fear of racism and assimilationist migratory policies in a new country. Several participants mentioned that in other countries and particularly Australia, there is racism towards migrants. The I-Kiribati dream of feeling welcome in a new country because “if you experience racism, you will never find home in this world [be]cause you cannot go back to that country you call home” (Pers. Comm., 2014). This quote explains how social identity is connected to a sense of belonging in a place and can assist their resilience. Assimilationist social policies are considered detrimental to the I-Kiribati identity as they would inhibit the space to express their identity. Their dream of maintaining their identities requires a sense of personal security in the ability to freely practice their culture in another territory and this is challenged by the fear of racism or assimilationist policies and other laws.

4.4 GOVERNANCE DREAMS

Governance and legal matters have large implications on the ability of participants' dreams to become reality in a new country. Many participants fear the loss of land, how this may impact the sovereignty of Kiribati and stated a strong desire to have a new main region of Kiribati in another country. Under international law, sovereignty requires a country to have land that is inhabitable (McAdam, 2010). Even though it will take centuries, eventually the atolls of Kiribati will likely be completely submerged with the country losing the vast majority of their territory. Kiribati will remain a nation state under international law due to the recent purchase of Natoavatu Estate in Fiji and the population on (the more elevated, non-atoll) Banaba Island (Office of Te Beretitenti, 2014). These pieces of land will most likely withstand

serious sea level rise but they form a miniscule contribution to Kiribati's existing ocean territory and currently are home to a very small part of the Kiribati population.

The I-Kiribati want to have a place they can call home and as one participant said "that'd be the ultimate dream – to have a place for Kiribati to resettle and put this big issue of climate change and put it behind their backs" (Pers. Comm., 2014). This is not a certain dream because despite the security of remaining a sovereign state, eventually there will not be enough land for the entire population. Kiribati will lose a significant amount of land and ocean with many participants speaking with anger and sadness on the prospect of climate change making their land uninhabitable. None of the guaranteed territories are capable of sustaining the entire population. Banaba Island only has a caretaker population and is largely uninhabitable after intensive phosphate mining by the British resulted in the Banaban population being resettled to Rabi Island in Fiji. Banaba is not an option for widespread settlement due to the impact of phosphate mining. Natoavatu Estate has approximately 22km² and whilst it is likely there will be some settlement here, the main purpose for this land currently is stated as food security (Office of Te Beretitenti, 2014). Rabi Island is the largest piece of land with approximately 70km² and could take a large proportion of the population if the Rabi people welcome them (Abara Banaba, 2001). However some Banaban Islanders have been seeking succession from the Kiribati government for decades so it should not be assumed this is a legitimate option. Overall 92km² for a population of approximately 100,000 would result in an average population density of nearly 1,100 people per km² which is less dense than South Tarawa but substantially denser than any other part of Kiribati. Furthermore, given that such a large proportion of the population faces migration, the vast majority of I-Kiribati will need to adapt to a new territory.

The dream of territorial sovereignty is important as the I-Kiribati tend to have a very strong attachment to their natural environment that provides spiritual and cultural comfort. The land and ocean are used to provide food, shelter, livelihoods, source

materials for cultural purposes and a medium to connect with ancestors. There is a deep connection to the land and ocean that transcends the basics of having food and shelter by providing cultural and spiritual comfort. Many said the loss of territory will negatively affect their sense of identity. With such a large proportion of the population expected to migrate, the preference for a new autonomous territory is important to enable the control of governance in empowering the realisation of their other dreams.

For participants who did not have explicit ideas for how Kiribati should be governed post-migration, they implicitly suggested integrating into cities around Australia and New Zealand. I sensed a degree of resignation among some of these participants that even when they were trying to dream without limitations, they believe they will lose territory without gaining autonomy over new land. However, most participants were clear in wanting the ability to practice their culture to enable them to hold onto their sense of identity as an I-Kiribati. This illustrates their dreams of avoiding any assimilationist migration policies.

Several participants believe a decentralised governance system where there is a semi-autonomous Kiribati territory within another country would be the best mode of governance. Specifics varied on how this decentralised system would operate but the gist of the concept is the migrants would be permanent residents (if not citizens) of the new country, live in a recognised community amongst fellow I-Kiribati and there would be a Kiribati council to govern their people. This council would be semi-autonomous and administer bylaws recognised by the central territorial authority. It was said this could be a suitable political compromise because another country does not have to totally give up territory to the I-Kiribati and the I-Kiribati do not lose their autonomy over their society.

Australia, Fiji and New Zealand were cited as the three most preferable countries for resettlement. Only two other places got more than one mention as a possible (not preferred) migration location - Europe and South Africa. Australia, Fiji or New

Zealand were acceptable to nearly all participants with no clear favourite as all three have positives and negatives. Australia can offer a similar climate to Kiribati in the northern states, has plenty of “spare land” but it has many dangerous animals and a culture of racism which are large drawbacks given they want to maintain their sense of identity. Fiji has the most similar climate and way of life to Kiribati but does not have the same socio-economic opportunities as Australia or New Zealand. Fiji is also facing a lot of pressure from climate change as a developing country without the same resources to adapt that Australia and New Zealand have. New Zealand is seen as a very peaceful place with no scary wildlife but the climate and way of life is very unfamiliar to the I-Kiribati. The different dreams of a preferred location is an example of where it is important to recognise the diversity of participants’ dreams and not distil responses into the ‘best’ or ‘most-popular’ but rather recognise the multiple dreams that co-exist.

There were several dominant narratives in the conversations around governance and preferred resettlement location. Many participants connected the idea of the resettlement location with becoming a barrier or enabler to maintaining their identity. Having a range of options provides them with a greater sense of self-determination and helps make participants feel like they have more control over their identity. Some of these participants, despite wanting choice, also want all of the Kiribati population to go to one place so Kiribati can be recreated in a new location which would be a delicate negotiation given the various dreams that co-exist. Several participants said they will be very grateful for any country which welcomes them and will realistically go wherever it is possible as they do not expect an abundance of options. It is very likely the decision on where to resettle will be influenced by the location of I-Kiribati already in other countries. Alternatively the I-Kiribati in other countries could also move closer to the location of the new I-Kiribati population. At the individual level the question of where to migrate is heavily influenced by family as there are existing I-Kiribati communities in many of the main centres throughout Australia, Fiji and New Zealand. It was often quoted that participants want to move

towards family members who are already overseas to rekindle family connections and feed off the strength that family provides. Finally, topography is also a factor as many participants asserted their love of living by the ocean so prefer a place with easy ocean access. Overall, there is no clear favourite for a preferred migration location with Australia, Fiji, and New Zealand all joint favourites with respective pros and cons.

Participants generally do not wish to become refugees due to climate change and desire more equal legal status to the host population. Those who are aware of the Kiribati President's message around 'migrating with dignity', expressed their strong dislike for the possibility of becoming refugees and their desire for legal status that does not differentiate them from the rest of the host population. There were participants who were unfamiliar with the President's message and some of these participants echoed the dominant media discourse with quotes like "we will become refugees" (Pers. Comm., 2014). I sensed these participants are less knowledgeable about the different types of migration. Some participants dream of being regular citizens through legal rights in the new country.

Several participants dream greater numbers were able to migrate under the existing migration schemes. Kiribati is a party to several existing migration schemes: the Pacific Access Category (PAC) and Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) to New Zealand and the Seasonal Workers Program (SWP) to Australia. During interviews, the PAC was criticised for not allowing enough people into New Zealand. There are a reported 3-4000 people in Kiribati annually applying for the 75 places on offer through the PAC scheme. This high demand for the PAC suggests that there are dreams that this quota increase. Tuvalu has an identical allotment of 75 places annually and these participants respect that Tuvalu is in a very similar situation in regards to climate change. However, participants expressed frustration that Tuvalu has the same quota despite having a population that is one-tenth that of Kiribati's. These participants do not expect to have a directly proportionate 750 places but

believe it could be more equitable given the large population differences. The idea was also raised to have a PAC agreement with other countries as one participant asked –

“Why don’t Australia have a PAC? US? British? South Africa? We used to be a British territory. Bigger countries I know they still have space. I sailed the world for 20 years, I know they have space. So they must be sympathetic to our people and give us some land and places through the PAC” (Pers. Comm., 2014).

4.5 LIVELIHOOD BASED DREAMS

This section covers a variety of dreams expressed on practical elements connected with livelihoods such as education and employment which add further layers to participants’ dreams and illustrate the multiple components that influence resilience (Gall, 2013). Education was identified as a main motivation for migration from Kiribati, as well as being a large factor in causing migration from the outer islands to the capital South Tarawa (which supports earlier studies) (Jacobs, 2013). Two separate interview participants were actively looking to migrate to New Zealand to improve their education or the education of their children. Many participants also completed their studies overseas and/or stated that overseas education systems are superior.

It was of popular opinion among research participants that the quality of education in Kiribati needs to improve. The people of Kiribati acknowledge that whilst a school education is not essential for life in Kiribati, if they want to succeed in a Western country, they need to have at least a high school qualification. A strong education system in Kiribati can be considered a robust adaptation response (Hallegatte, 2009), because wherever the I-Kiribati live, their education will be beneficial to their livelihoods.

Some participants challenged whether the education needs major improvement or whether the focus should be ensuring qualifications granted in Kiribati are recognised overseas. Many participants remarked how thrilled they are with the collaboration between the Kiribati Institute of Technology (KIT) and AusAID to ensure that qualifications provided by KIT are recognised in Australia. Several staff from KIT stated this arrangement aims to improve the opportunities of KIT students if they migrate in the future given the long term projections of climate change. The highest qualifications students can obtain in Kiribati are lower than what can be achieved in Australia. In order to be a qualified practicing electrician or builder based on the KIT and Australian standards, students need to complete an apprenticeship. However this is very difficult to do in Kiribati given the lack of certified tradespeople. Recognising this barrier to becoming fully qualified in Kiribati, there are discussions between the Australia and Kiribati governments about offering short term migration opportunities for the KIT students to complete apprenticeships in Australia. This is a dream that several participants desire and I believe if more I-Kiribati knew about this possibility then it would be a more widely-held dream.

Participants dream of having more jobs available in Kiribati to increase their incomes and provide them with relevant work experience in case they migrate.

Unemployment in Kiribati's formal economy is extremely high with the 2010 census reporting an 80% unemployment rate (Kiribati Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2012). Participants commented on the extreme levels of competition for jobs with one participant from the hospital saying you can get over 100 qualified applicants for one available position (Pers. Comm., 2014). Another participant mentioned that you will have approximately 4000 school and university leavers per year but only 400 jobs will open up from natural attrition (Pers. Comm., 2014). The lack of jobs is frustrating for those living in Kiribati because they have limited incomes and struggle to get relevant work experience. This is recognised as something that needs to change if they migrate overseas. Whilst they live in Kiribati,

being unemployed is not a big problem due to the strong communities explained earlier. However if they migrate, the cost of living is expected to be much higher and diminish the ability for a person's income to support others so the requirement for a job increases.

The Kiribati Australia Nursing Initiative (KANI) is a programme that many participants gave high praise and wish to see similar opportunities to create new employment opportunities. The programme took thirty Kiribati nurses per year for three years and trained them in Australia to become fully qualified nurses with the intention of the nurses staying as permanent residents. The programme has been recently discontinued and is supposedly being replaced by a nursing home workers scheme which will help fill a labour shortage in the Australian nursing homes with I-Kiribati workers (Pers. Comm., 2014). There is some discontent that KANI is being replaced with a scheme that provides a lower level qualification but the opportunities are received with gratitude regardless (Pers. Comm., 2014). KANI and the proposed new scheme are welcome opportunities for the I-Kiribati as they gain qualifications and earn residency in Australia which is desirable for many I-Kiribati.

The I-Kiribati will either need to have the qualifications or entrepreneurial skills to gain employment in the country of resettlement; otherwise they may not be able to get jobs and will need to rely on welfare or community support to make ends meet. A couple of participants lamented the lack of entrepreneurial qualities the general Kiribati population exhibits. Whilst there is a shortage of jobs in the formal economy, these participants said there are many potential economic opportunities in Kiribati if the young people aim for self-employment. They said that young people are used to taking directions from their elders rather than forging their own paths. These participants mentioned that learning entrepreneurial skills would help the I-Kiribati be more creative in looking for employment opportunities. Another potential benefit of entrepreneurial skills would be a flexible skillset that can bring benefit in Kiribati as well as the likely drastically different place they resettle.

Another very popular dream from participants is to have increased English language proficiency which will substantially increase their ability to learn, work and socialise in another country. English language proficiency is considered very important because the most likely migration locations all use English. In Australia and New Zealand, it is the primary language, and in Fiji, English is the working language given the diversity of nationalities. Given the homogenous ethnic composition of the Kiribati population, there are few occasions when they need to use English so it rarely gets used. The predominant users of English in Kiribati are those employed by the Kiribati government. The limited opportunities to use English are reportedly hindering the learning of English in Kiribati, especially in the outer islands where there are even less opportunities and fewer English speakers. A couple of participants had the dream to have more English speaking volunteers in Kiribati to assist development projects and teach English to locals (Pers. Comm., 2014). This would help I-Kiribati become more comfortable using English in a more practical sense through increased interaction with English speakers and also further development projects.

School students learn English throughout their time at primary and high school although there are social barriers to them achieving higher proficiency. Two focus groups admitted that they will often tease one another when they make even a minor English mistake and thus I-Kiribati avoid speaking English in front of their peers to prevent teasing. This was notable with very different dynamics between my interviews and focus groups. I felt like focus group participants were less confident with their English compared to those I interviewed. There are barriers to achieving greater English language proficiency and these need to be addressed in order achieve this dream.

The lack of preparation and support schemes is a barrier for the I-Kiribati in their current migration patterns and participants dream of a preparation scheme to assist climate migration. If I-Kiribati migrate to Australia or New Zealand, migrants need

to learn differences such as the support services available, their rights and responsibilities as residents in a new country, the importance of punctuality and language differences. One participant who is now an Australian resident and has completed the aforementioned Kiribati Australia Nursing Initiative shared that when she first went to Australia she would often go without food at her host family's house because she did not realise the social norms around eating were different. She followed the Kiribati custom of saying no to food that was offered to her (even when she was hungry) and found her host family would consequently not provide a meal. In Kiribati, according to custom, you would be provided food whether you say you want a meal or not (Pers. Comm., 2014). Another participant who used to supervise Kiribati students at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji stated how several students would not go to tutorials and fail course requirements because they did not know who to seek help from and were too shy to ask for assistance. An overarching theme mentioned by nearly all participants is the desire for long-term holistic preparation before migrating.

Collectively, small pieces of information can make a big difference to ease the anxiety of migration with participants expecting a preparation programme to immensely help with the transition process. Examples of specific aspects of a preparation programme that were dreamed of are: ensuring that those who leave for specific jobs are well-trained and confident in those tasks; being financially literate; aware of the stronger police presence and the laws around drinking; the ability to socialise and get to know those who they would migrate with; learn about the differences in diet and how they can source food that is similar to their traditional diet; where other I-Kiribati are located near their destination; understanding the more secular nature of Australia and New Zealand; knowing which things are likely to be cheaper or more expensive; and sources of assistance. As Wyett (2013) identified, migration has a higher chance of success when it is thoroughly planned with orientation programmes.

4.6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Given the poor translation of dignity into the Kiribati language, rather than focusing on the often cited dream of 'migration with dignity', a better understood dream is their desire to maintain their strong sense of identity as I-Kiribati. This dream holds very wide appeal in Kiribati as their identity was regularly quoted as a critical component to making migration as good as possible.

The dream of maintaining a strong sense of the I-Kiribati identity is supported by the participants' social dreams where they desire retaining their strong community relationships. Participants envision a new society very similar to their current one where they can easily support one another to avoid any societal deprivation, respect their elders, and live in a place where they are free to perform their identity however they wish. The governance dreams varied from having a new autonomous territory for Kiribati, integrating within an existing country or a decentralised Kiribati territory within another state. The autonomous and decentralised dreams reiterate the dream of maintaining identity because with self-determination, the I-Kiribati have more control over ensuring their identity remains strong.

Practical climate migration dreams that emerged had an emphasis on ensuring their qualifications are recognised overseas, employment opportunities in a new country match their qualifications, much stronger English language proficiency and a long-term comprehensive programme to prepare for the possible migration. These four dreams were raised by nearly every participant which demonstrates the strong desire for these dreams as well as how these dreams influence one another such as English proficiency helps employment prospects.

This chapter supports Adger et al.'s (2012, 2011) argument that adaptation planning needs to focus beyond the practical elements of adaptation. The collection of dreams highlights the diversity of factors that contribute to successful migration and adaptation. The range of dreams demonstrates there are multiple drivers of

migration beyond climate change. The existence of the multiple migration drivers supports Black's (2001) argument that only focusing on the climate change driver can result in ineffective adaptation. A large part of identity in Kiribati is culture and the cultural dreams are explored to in the following chapter. The inclusion of the cultural dreams expands the factors which drive successful adaptation and the ability to maintain social resilience.

CHAPTER 5: CULTURE, PLACE AND SOCIAL RESILIENCE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter addresses my second research question – What role can culture play in assisting the I-Kiribati to maintain social resilience when the location of residence changes? This question recognises the interdependent relationships between identity, culture and the connection of a person to their location of residence as factors that contribute to social resilience.

Through this chapter, I argue that culture and place¹⁰ are central components of social resilience and the reproduction of culture in a way that is less dependent on physical location will assist the resilience of the I-Kiribati. This chapter introduces the connection between the concepts of culture, location and social resilience, followed by how migration may negatively affect the social resilience of the I-Kiribati. The cultural dreams are then introduced as well as ways the culture may be reproduced in a new location. While the Kiribati culture faces severe threats from climate change and poorly planned migration, careful consideration about how the Kiribati culture can be reproduced in a new location may aid resilience. This will coincide with the main cultural dreams of the I-Kiribati who wish their culture to remain relevant and welcome wherever they migrate to and to be able to reproduce their culture for all future generations.

5.2 THE NEXUS OF CULTURE, PLACE AND SOCIAL RESILIENCE

Culture is heavily connected to place, identity and social resilience. Culture is a highly contested definition in the social sciences and can refer to “a learned complex of knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, and custom (Marshall, 2009, p. 1), “all that in human society which is socially rather than biologically transmitted” or many other

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¹⁰ This chapter uses the terms location and place regularly and in a specific way although at time there is a blurry difference. Location is referring to a physical location whereas place is recognising the dynamic social and physical meanings within a location according to place theory by Massey (1991; 2004)

variations (Marshall, 2009, p. 1). Regardless of the definition, Adger et al. (2011; 2012) have contributed to the literature by recognising culture can be a barrier or enabler towards adaptation planning and social resilience. Culture is considered to be part of the social systems of resilience (Table 2.2), and one of the foundations of this social resilience can be built by a society having a strong cultural identity and freedom to practice this culture (Gall, 2013).

Culture and connection to place contribute to identity and social resilience for the I-Kiribati. The relationship between people and place is an important geographic concept as one cannot exist without the other (Antonsich, 2011), and place identity develops as a construct of the social and physical environment (Manzo & Perkins, 2006; Massey, 2004). Smith (2013) argues that place identity is very strong in the South Pacific and I found this through my fieldwork, as participants repeatedly said how important their land and ocean is to their identity. Their land provides food from plants, a medium of connection to their ancestors, and a place to live. The ocean provides them with fish for their diet, a place to relax, and a way to sail between islands. As one participant explained their relationship with their place:

“It’s also important to recognise why we are so tied to this country of ours. We have a strong link to our land and that’s important and people don’t understand. They come to Kiribati and say what’s so great about this, it’s small and it’s poor. We have a spiritual connection to our land and we have a connection to our ancestors. Our ancestors fought for the family land, that’s how they get their land during the tribal wars so to just leave from where your ancestors have bled or lost their lives, it’s like you’re turning your back on them and that’s why we’d rather get buried here so then our children will still be connected to them” (Pers. Comm., 2014).

This participant illustrates the strong connection between place and identity in Kiribati and it connects with Massey’s (2004) aforementioned relational view of place by illustrating the social as well as physical connection to a place. This quote also

hints at how place identity aids the sense of community because the land acts as a connecting medium between generations. In Kiribati, the connection with place is very strong and contributes to their existing sense of resilience because they gain so much from their environment to assist their livelihoods and wellbeing through cultural and spiritual connections. Given how place contributes to resilience, the idea of migrating to a new location is a source of fear for some I-Kiribati and is a threat to maintaining resilience because it will be a challenge to imbue this new location with the same deep meanings as they already have in Kiribati.

5.3 THREAT OF MIGRATION TO CULTURE AND SOCIAL RESILIENCE

Given the close relationship between culture, identity, place and how they nurture resilience, the resettlement to a new location will challenge this relationship and the ability of the Kiribati to remain resilient.

“What I’m worried about is will they be able to keep their culture and their values, especially what I would say are the good parts of our culture, the ones I’m proud of our identity. They might lose it, if they go, if they try to fit into society there and I can see what’s happening with the people in New Zealand, they are in a new and different life, it is totally different from Kiribati and I guess that affects them. They still try. I don’t think it’s the same as if the children grow up there versus growing up here in Kiribati and their language too. I think all of those things will be affected” (Pers. Comm., 2014).

I have categorised the threats of migration to social resilience into three categories: physical, livelihoods and cultural challenges. Physical threats include the impacts of climate change to crops, water supply and the flow on effects of these impacts to infrastructure.

Several livelihood threats were described such as the expected changes from the relaxed way of life in Kiribati to a busy urban lifestyle in a (relatively) large city.

Many participants stated their love of the lifestyle on Kiribati which was typically described as relaxed, cheerful and not focused on money. In cities mentioned like Auckland or Brisbane, participants expect a very different way of life, where their lives will be more orientated around their jobs. Other fears include having tertiary qualifications not recognised overseas or not being able to communicate well enough in English which will generate a feeling of social isolation. Many participants were aware that their lifestyle in Kiribati is very different to developed countries and are worried their lifestyle will change for the worse if they migrate.

Participants perceive that climate migration is a threat to resilience because it will diminish the security and comforts their culture and identity provides them with in Kiribati. When asked how they think their culture will be impacted by migration, participants responded with a range of emotional states such as anger at the possibility of losing their culture and the land they love; fear of the unknown or having to adapt to a foreign place and sadness and resignation that they could lose their culture. These participants expect migration to negatively impact their culture and sense of identity as an I-Kiribati. The source of much of this emotion was fear of loss of place as their land and ocean serves many purposes. For example, the I-Kiribati use flowers to make headdresses for cultural ceremonies, various woods are used to construct a *maneaba* (meeting house) or canoe. It is unlikely any new country they move to will have all of the culturally significant materials, and this would challenge the ability of the I-Kiribati to practice their culture in a new location.

The interdependence of culture and physical location means it is challenging to bring this social resilience to a new location, which prompts the questions about the possibility of reproducing culture in ways less dependent on location. All the above threats are dependent on location and this reliance on the physical environment for social resilience is problematic because as Nelson et al. (2007, p. 399) writes: “[resilient] systems need to be managed for flexibility rather than for maintaining stability”. When focusing on transformative resilience (as this thesis does), stability

and dependence on a set location inhibits resilience. Therefore I argue conscious decoupling between culture and location should be considered so social resilience can become less location-dependent. Decoupling culture and location will assist the maintenance of social resilience because culture is more flexible and this can enhance the ability of the I-Kiribati to reproduce valued social meanings in a new location to make it a meaningful place that can feel like 'home'.

5.4 CULTURAL DREAMS

Participants want their culture to be welcomed in the new country, and to remain relevant and be able to reproduce their culture generation after generation. The long term reproduction of their culture will be a large challenge as they want it to be maintained for the future generations born outside Kiribati who will not be able to connect to the culture and land of Kiribati in the same way as those born and raised there. This challenge will become more difficult as the I-Kiribati eventually aim to continue reproducing their culture despite no one having lived on the atolls. This will be an ongoing challenge and will require strong cultural systems to continually teach each generation the cultural heritage of Kiribati. These dreams will be examined in more detail in this section by considering specific cultural dreams and how these can contribute to social resilience.

When discussing these dreams in focus groups and interviews, I found the shift in participants' emotions remarkable. The expression of emotions from body language and tone of voice often changed from a sorrowful to positive state. This typically occurred simultaneously with the transition from speaking about how climate migration may affect their culture, to thinking about how they could make climate migration work. Initially there was a mixture of sadness, fear, trepidation and anger as the participants were thinking about how migration may impact their culture, but for the vast majority this turned into hope, relief and confidence as they thought about ways they can practice their culture in a new location. This revealed that a lot of participants' initial thinking around climate migration assumed the worst

regarding their culture, whereas this research helped to reveal the many ways in which culture may be reproduced in a new place of residence.

A major conflict present in the variety of the cultural dreams that emerged was the tension between the traditional lifestyle versus the modern life the participants expect post-migration. This can be seen in many dreams thus far and will be detailed more below in the cultural dreams. One example is the conflict around what type of education do they want or need now - one for their society in Kiribati or an education purely in English to prepare them for living abroad. There is also the expected tension between the respect the I-Kiribati hold for their elders, yet these elders will possibly go from leaders to dependents if they find the transition difficult. The traditional parts of the Kiribati culture can add to their resilience through the comfort it provides, however it can also diminish their ability to adapt and function in a modern society that is more concerned with time and money. Similarly being able to function in the new context of an industrialised country shows flexibility and thus resilience, yet it also means the I-Kiribati have changed their lifestyle which may degrade their culture and sense of identity, which can also erode their resilience. While not a straightforward dichotomy, there is a seemingly competitive relationship between adapting to the modern world yet maintaining the traditional heritage and a balance of the two is required for resilience in a new location.

5.4.1 TRADITIONAL SKILLS

Most I-Kiribati in this research dream of retaining sufficient knowledge to practice their traditional cultural skills post-migration.

“I don’t know if that’ll be possible but if anything is possible, I would like to have the whole community of Kiribati staying all in one place on their own. And to have a system where they keep their culture and traditions alive with records and with books and with programmes to keep teaching the young people” (Pers. Comm., 2014).

There was consensus that participants are proud of their traditional skills and it would be devastating to lose knowledge of these skills through the long term process of migrating and living in a different society. Participants brought up a variety of traditional skills that form part of their identity and the question of what will happen to these skills demonstrated the traditional versus modern tension. Some of the skills repeatedly identified as important to their culture included: dancing, singing, navigation, weaving, fishing, cutting toddy¹¹ and traditional healing techniques. Many of these skills were practiced regularly if not daily. They do not earn money for most of these skills, but others were a central part of the informal economy and formed a cornerstone for many livelihoods.

The dreams around how to maintain traditional skills post-migration drew a wide range of responses, although many echoed sentiments like –

“We want to preserve our own skills like fishing and making handicrafts and cutting toddy. We need to preserve these as we are very proud of them and it was our ancestors so we should maintain them. Fishing, candles, dancing”
(Pers. Comm., 2014).

The ideal situation was one where their skills maintained relevance in the new country so that they could be regularly practiced to remain an everyday part of the culture. However, this situation was deemed highly unlikely as they expected that many of their skills such as weaving, traditional fishing and canoe building would become less relevant in a new country where the level of technology renders these skills obsolete.

There were a host of dreams around how to retain their traditional skills given the likely irrelevance of most of their skills in a new country. Some traditional cultural skills were seen as more expendable than others, and it was argued the skills that

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¹¹ ‘Cutting toddy’ is a job performed by young, athletic I-Kiribati males. It involves climbing coconut trees and cutting a specific type of tree so that the sap drips out into a container. The sap is allowed to ferment on the tree or then boiled down and depending on how the sap is processed; it can be used for a variety of purposes such as a vitamin laden drink or a sweet syrup for food.

would be most relevant in a new country should be prioritised for retaining. This is a highly subjective and sensitive issue based on the traditional skills each family knows and I imagine would be a source of controversy if decisions were made on which skills to not retain. Other participants believe that they must keep all their skills and that they should turn them into commodities in the new country so they can use their culture to earn an income. This idea was greeted with optimism, as it encourages people to continue practicing their local skills in their day to day life. However, this idea was also criticised for being too optimistic and this would not be possible as only the toddy drink and some traditional healing practices were mentioned as possible entrepreneurial options.

A couple of participants did not care for taking their country's traditional skills to a new country. These participants were content with the idea of fully integrating into a western country and all the perceived benefits it offered. There did not appear to be any correlation between various demographics and the views of these participants. These dreams represented a divergence from other participants' views and were in the very small minority. This divergence signals the potential conflict between the traditional and modern ways of life the I-Kiribati may face in a new country as decisions and trade-offs are considered between new technologies versus their current largely traditional lifestyle.

Many participants dreamt they would be able to use their traditional skills if relevant in the new place, and they wanted to ensure that these skills could be passed from generation to generation. The I-Kiribati have relied heavily on their physical environment to pass on culture, but living in a different location will make this a more difficult challenge because some resources will be unavailable. Therefore they could focus on utilising the strengths of their social system to carry on their culture and explore ways their culture can be reproduced that is less dependent on a specific location.

5.4.2 RECORDING CULTURE

Recording the culture heritage of Kiribati was mentioned by multiple participants as critical to being able to reproduce their culture irrespective of where the population lived. Several options were mentioned, such as having a museum with cultural artefacts. This option was critiqued for being too location specific as it is likely the I-Kiribati will be spread over multiple countries once they migrate.

Another suggestion was to record songs, dances and skill tutorials onto the internet in an online database of history, photos and videos as a way to communicate the culture beyond the limitations that a physical museum would have. This dream was expressed as –

“Have government set up a website and record documents from last generations etc. Ideally any I-Kiribati could access this from anywhere and see what our ancestors did in the past and see their photos such as suits made from straw from coconut fibre. An online museum. This is very essential for our culture so we can show our children, teach them and they can see the proof” (Pers. Comm., 2014).

However, it was acknowledged that the reproduction of culture through this medium could be difficult, as the online archive requires a transition from a verbal and physical mode of transferring knowledge to a written and online mode. These archives would however, possibly provide job opportunities and could be a way of connecting elders and their cultural knowledge with the younger generations who are more familiar with modern computer technology. Participants thought this would be a gigantic undertaking, but one where the online nature of the cultural reproduction could become slightly less dependent on place and contribute to more flexible social resilience for the I-Kiribati.

A complementary suggestion was to have a radio/ television/ internet channel which broadcasts Kiribati news and Kiribati based content. This option is very difficult and

prohibitive in Kiribati given the high infrastructural costs; however it was thought in other locations where the infrastructure already exists, a web-based Kiribati channel could broadcast content to I-Kiribati wherever they were living. It was suggested it could feature content specifically on cultural heritage, with singing and dance tutorials for example. This dream was one where the traditional dreams had potential to be modernised rather than having to choose one or the other.

Participants identified that recording traditional skills could be a problem because these skills are typically passed down through your family and are rarely taught outside of your family. For example, one family may be very highly regarded fishermen so they would teach their children to become fishermen, and it is unlikely they would teach anyone else their family's specific fishing skills and spots because it is part of their livelihood and social prestige. Some skills will be more difficult to record than others such as navigation or medicines. These skills may be able to be recorded but will not be able to be practiced without being in the same place or having the same materials that these skills rely on. Therefore skills could be lost when families migrate unless they practice them in the new country or share their knowledge through an archive centre.

Another problem with reproducing the Kiribati culture in a new location will be the possible resistance of the elders. The elders of each community are the traditional guardians of the culture and are central actors in the reproduction of culture, as they hand it down to the younger generations. Some participants feared that elders will not contribute to their dreams of reproducing culture in another country because many elders may refuse to leave Kiribati given they wish to die on the land of their ancestors.

One participant mentioned three UNESCO conventions which have the potential to assist the safeguarding and protection of Kiribati's cultural heritage – the 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and the 2005

Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression. These conventions offer significant potential to help institutionally safeguard the culture of Kiribati thus using legal means to further resilience. Given the possibility that sea level rise may submerge many atolls, this makes the 2001 Convention particularly relevant as physical and cultural artefacts will sit below the rising water level and will become protected cultural artefacts. The other conventions will also assist Kiribati by having another tool to recognise culture as an important part of the migration process and provide frameworks to ensure the cultural heritage is preserved.

5.4.3 MAINTAINING THE KIRIBATI LANGUAGE

The Kiribati language is a verbal medium of communicating their culture and plays a large role in reproducing their identity, as well as maintaining social resilience. Without their language, their ways of thinking and communicating can change because many words and concepts cannot be directly translated. One participant explained the connection of the Kiribati language and culture:

“language is the most important thing we should be carrying, as for our ancestors, their culture got passed down through stories and it happens that if we forget our language then we may lose our stories and culture that’s been passed down” (Pers. Comm., 2014).

This quote demonstrates how language plays a critical role in assisting resilience because to speak the Kiribati language is a performative aspect of culture that immediately affirms your identity as an I-Kiribati.

There is a great deal of uncertainty about how their language will be used in a new location and this uncertainty largely depends on the spatial distribution and governance model in a new country. If Kiribati moves to a new piece of land and has autonomy then it is likely their language will be prominent in the new location. However, if I-Kiribati integrate with the host population in any of the preferred

destinations (New Zealand, Fiji or Australia), it is likely that English will become the dominant language. Several participants expressed fear that the language would be used less and less by each successive generation. This has been documented as a problem for migrants, as parents try to get their children to use their native language when they move to a new country (Lanza, 2007). The question over language use represents the tension between the traditional and modern, with the increased expectation that English is mandatory to live in the developed world, while also wanting to continue using the Kiribati language given it is a crucial aspect of their culture.

Many participants mentioned the importance of continuing to speak Kiribati in a new location, and wanting to feel they would be welcome to do so. One small but creative dream that emerged was to rename some street names in their host country with Kiribati words so that every day they will at least see and use some of the Kiribati language. This dream would provide a symbolic and visual presence which could aid their larger dream of an easy transition where they can use both Kiribati and English on a regular basis in a new location. This was a very popular dream and significant to strengthening the reproduction of culture, because as one participant said “we know language always goes with culture” (Pers. Comm., 2014).

5.4.4 CULTURAL CEREMONIES

Many I-Kiribati in this study expressed that they wish to ensure they have vibrant and strong traditional ceremonies wherever they migrate. The Kiribati traditional cultural ceremonies hold a lot of meaning for the I-Kiribati. These events provide an occasion to practice and demonstrate their cultural heritage. For example, traditional dancing involves wearing their outfits made from local plants as well as singing songs that have been handed down for generations from their ancestors these songs and dances are often unique to their village.

Cultural ceremonies connect the Kiribati community and facilitate the practicing and learning of culture among different generations of I-Kiribati. It was felt that migrating to a new country and living in a different society would limit opportunities to practice I-Kiribati cultural ceremonies. It was mentioned that new countries may not have the locations to host the community; traditional materials may be unavailable; and demands of a different lifestyle may mean that community members are unable to attend. In addition, it was also voiced that depending on who has migrated, it may not be possible to use a village specific song or dance. Celebrations performed on Kiribati Independence Day were examples of opportunities to reproduce and celebrate their culture in a new country.

The substitution of location-specific materials suggests some cultural aspects can be replaced with other aspects, and that the coming together of the community is an important role of social resilience for the I-Kiribati. When asked how culture can be maintained outside of Kiribati, one participant gave the succinct answer “we have to get together” and then another participant elaborated the ‘getting together’ concept by saying:

“This is the environment that we know how to survive in and the words I really want to put out is that we are not rich in our country but have food everyday. We have food that is more than enough to make us happy and healthy. So migration to another country, it will affect us because we are the people, if I come back to togetherness, we always want to be together and share things, we always want to share things and celebrate together but if the time comes that we have to move out from our country from the sea level rise. I don’t want my country to be scattered around the world. I don’t want us or our nation to be scattered around the world because we don’t want to lose our language, our culture and our dignity – who we are as a nation” (Pers. Comm., 2014).

Several participants were worried about not having the same materials available that would normally be used for celebrations but believed they could adapt. While cultural materials play an important role in reproducing culture several participants think substitutes can be found as long as the I-Kiribati continue to gather together and practice their culture.

5.4.5 MANEABA

Many participants expressed the importance of having a *maneaba*, or meeting house, in a new country which would facilitate the transition from their current home to a new 'home' rather than a new 'location'. Ideally the *maneaba* will be constructed from traditional materials and in a traditional method. Participants recognised this would be a challenge and were more flexible about using other materials as is already the case in South Tarawa. Traditionally built *maneaba* are the preference as these *maneaba* have more cultural significance because they also allow the I-Kiribati to demonstrate some of their traditional knots and construction skills.

The *maneaba* is the traditional meeting house of the I-Kiribati and is the hub of the community with people gathering at all times of the day for a variety of purposes (Image 3.1). Some *maneabas* are used for serving food and playing bingo (which is a common fundraiser), with all *maneabas* used for meetings of community leaders and as a social gathering place given the small size of a traditional Kiribati house.

Typically each person has a set place in the *maneaba* where they will sit for meetings; this signifies their position in the village hierarchy. The *maneaba* may also be used by anyone as a place to spend time during the middle of the day (notably they are designed to be cooler than normal buildings), eat a meal, and to sleep for those families who may not have land or a house (Whincup, 2010).

The *maneaba* is a visual and material embodiment of the culture, social organisation and resilience of Kiribati by being the hub of the community. The construction materials may have changed slightly with modern materials such as cement and

corrugated iron being used. The social hierarchy has relaxed as well with younger males and women allowed to speak at many *maneaba*. Despite these changes, the role of the *maneaba* in the community has not changed. Some participants commented that they are flexible and open to the materials of the *maneaba* varying and having a more egalitarian speaking structure as long as they are able to have a physical *maneaba* as the hub of their community. Therefore, the I-Kiribati dream of having *maneaba* in their new society as a representation of their culture, and they believe that this would enhance their resilience.

5.4.6 EDUCATION

Several participants also mentioned that having pre-schools just for Kiribati children would be excellent at enabling culture and social resilience to be reproduced easily. They could learn in both English and Kiribati, gain cultural knowledge, and participate in regular cultural performances. One participant said they could be like the Kōhanga Reo – the ‘learning nests’ for the Māori of Aotearoa New Zealand. Kōhanga Reos are full immersion education centres conducted solely in Te Reo Māori (the Māori language) which focus on Māori development and cultural preservation. Initially these were only provided at pre-school level, but students can now receive full Te Reo Māori immersion education through all levels of education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Having schools that are solely for I-Kiribati raises questions of where the role of the school ends and the role of community begins, which illustrates the tensions between the traditional and modern aspects of society. While an immersion education may be effective at pre-school level (an institution they do not have in Kiribati), there was no clear indication given as to whether this should be continued through all education levels. With the fears of racism as mentioned in the previous chapter and the desire to feel welcome, it was feared this schooling may isolate the Kiribati children and community thus potentially harming their social relations with the rest of society.

This could therefore increase cultural reproduction while limiting wider social interaction, thus potentially decreasing overall social resilience.

5.5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The role of culture has been marginalised in the South Pacific (Smith, 2013), and also in adaptation planning literature (Adger et al., 2012, 2011). I've presented findings that speak to the possibility of decoupling culture from physical location to help the I-Kiribati think about and possibly develop strategies for transferring their current culture to a new location. The hope is that these ideas can advance the social resilience for future migration from Kiribati and their dream from the Fourth chapter of maintaining their identity.

The outcomes of migration also represent tensions between the typically traditional lifestyle of Kiribati and the modern lifestyle of a developed country. This is a difficult (and subtle) tension to balance. This tension is particularly evident because many cultural aspects derive from physical and social elements of living in Kiribati. Whilst the I-Kiribati culture is heavily reliant on place, if they migrate, their culture will be challenged because they will not have the same physical location to provide the materials used for cultural purposes. Given flexibility is a goal of resilient societies, thought should go into the possibility of decoupling of location and culture so that culture can continue to be reproduced in a way that is less dependent on physical location thus enabling social and cultural meanings to quickly be made in a new space.

Retaining cultural knowledge is the dream of most I-Kiribati participants in this study, so that they can reproduce their culture for all future generations. This requires changes in how culture is currently reproduced given how closely related the culture and physical location is at present. Altering the ways that culture is reproduced represents an opportunity for Kiribati to maintain social resilience in a new place through placing greater emphasis on the metaphorical pillar of culture

which can compensate for the diminishing support offered by place as Kiribati leave their islands. There were many dreams envisioning how this might happen, such as having pre-schools for I-Kiribati children in new countries, having *maneabas* within new communities, having an online database of cultural knowledge, and using UNESCO conventions to assist the preservation of cultural heritage.

Whilst decoupling the relationship between culture and location will be challenging, there is evidence it is possible. I-Kiribati communities already in Australia have been finding substitutes for cultural materials and have said the critical component to maintaining culture is gathering together (Pers. Comm., 2014). The value that the I-Kiribati place on spending time together as a community suggests that there is value in trying to reproduce culture in methods that are less dependent on location to further their social resilience.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This thesis exists to contribute to the conversation around providing an appropriate resettlement strategy for the Kiribati people who will very likely need to migrate from sea level rise in the future. This research is the first of its kind to directly ask the Kiribati people their dreams when imagining a post-migration society.

This thesis asked two main questions:

1. How do the I-Kiribati dream their society will look after climate migration?
2. What role can culture play in assisting the I-Kiribati to maintain social resilience when the location of residence changes?

Gaps identified in the literature have informed the research questions of this thesis. There are gaps around general migration responses for low lying countries as well as considering how culture and identity may enable successful adaptation. Climate migration literature has been overly focused on working out the relationship between climate change and migration rather than considering the adaptation responses (Rive, 2013; Wyett, 2013). Also, the adaptation responses considered generally ignore how culture and identity can positively influence social resilience (Adger et al., 2012, 2011; Hess et al., 2008).

Chapter Two also introduced vulnerability and social resilience as the conceptual frameworks for this thesis. Vulnerability is a commonly used concept in climate migration discourse to highlight the exposure of the I-Kiribati (and other low-lying countries) to sea level rise. The practice of labelling populations as vulnerable has been criticised for its ability to ignore the agency of the exposed population by casting them as the powerless Other that needs saving (Mortreux & Barnett, 2009). Vulnerability can be used in other ways. It is a label the I-Kiribati have applied to themselves to demonstrate they are facing a problem they have not created and use it to shift responsibility to the international community (Mansfield, 2013). The concept can be used in many ways although it always involves implicit assumptions about

power and responsibility so it is good practice to explicitly acknowledge how it is being used (Adger, 2006).

Social resilience offers a framework for recognising the many factors that contribute strength and flexibility to enable a social system to withstand external stresses such as climate change (Adger, 2000; Brown, 2013). Transformative resilience recognises and values a social system with a high degree of agency and flexibility where change is seen as a normal response to external stress (Nelson et al., 2007). There are a host of factors that contribute towards a social system being resilient such as economic, social, spirituality, culture and health (Brown, 2013; Gall, 2013). Every society is different in the factors that make them resilient but a resilient society will likely be strong across a combination of factors rather than just very strong in one or two (Gall, 2013). As it is a combination of factors that make a society resilient, a holistic view for resilient adaptation should be studied which this thesis does by asking for all dreams around climate migration rather than just focusing on one or two categories. Like vulnerability, there are many interpretations of social resilience and it is good practice to explicitly declare how one is using this concept.

Appreciative Inquiry was a suitable methodology for this research because as a strength based approach, it provides positive framing for a problem that is usually framed in a negative light. Rather than asking participants to explore this problem, Appreciative Inquiry allowed me to look beyond the problem and focus on solutions through investigating the dreams they have for their post-migration society. This shift from problems to dreams has helped fill the literature gap identified by Rive (2013) and Wyett (2013) about the need to focus on climate adaptation options for those on low-lying islands rather than continuing to explore the relationship between climate change and migration. Chapter Three also documented the theory, logistics and analysis of the 21 interviews and 6 focus groups that formed the primary data collection for this thesis.

Chapter Four focused on answering the first research question and discovered one of the main dreams from participants is the ability to maintain their strong sense of identity as I-Kiribati after migrating. This dream demonstrates that adaptation is about more than practical aspects of livelihoods such as education and employment and factors such as identity and culture are also critical components to successful adaptation. There is a strong relationship between the drivers of migration, dreams for the new country and factors of resilience. This relationship supports Black's (2001) argument that only considering the climate driver will lead to ineffective adaptation. I argue incorporating the different drivers, dreams and factors of resilience into adaptation plans will increase the chances of successful migration for the I-Kiribati.

Another major finding is the dream to maintain the strong sense of community that is commonly cited as something participants love about being I-Kiribati. The strong sense of community is heralded as being responsible for minimising social deprivation despite having a very small economy. Governance dreams for the new society varied, but there is the desire to have a high level of autonomy with the belief that just because they are losing their territory does not mean they should also have to lose autonomy.

There were very strong themes around dreams related to education, employment, language and preparation with many participants all raising the same livelihood based dreams. There were dreams to ensure their qualifications are recognised overseas, employment opportunities in a new country match their qualifications, much stronger English language proficiency and a long-term comprehensive programme to prepare for the possible migration. These practical dreams (and all dreams) are related and collectively can help the I-Kiribati achieve their other dreams such as English proficiency helps employment prospects.

Chapter Five revealed two main cultural dreams which if implemented will add to the social resilience of the I-Kiribati:

1. The I-Kiribati want their culture to remain relevant and welcome in the new country.
2. They want to be able to reproduce their culture generation after generation.

The first dream is indicative of the desire from participants to only migrate to somewhere without assimilationist policies for migrants. They also want to feel welcomed and wanted in the new country rather than feel like a burden or an unwanted visitor. As well as feeling personally welcome, they want their culture to be welcome given their culture is such an integral part of their personal identities. Participants were honest that aspects of their culture may not be relevant in a new location but they desire to have methods to reproduce their culture in a new location.

The second dream emphasised the passion for the I-Kiribati culture and their desire to ensure they have the strategies in place to ensure the reproduction and continuation of their culture. Despite their culture being very strongly connected to their location, participants stated there will be opportunities to find substitutes for the cultural materials sourced from the land and sea. Some I-Kiribati communities are already doing this abroad by using locally available materials in cultural performances. Socialising together was identified as the single most important aspect of reproducing their culture as it will encourage the Kiribati language to be spoken and performance of their cultural customs. Participants expressed that socialising can be encouraged with designated *maneaba* or traditional meeting houses to use as places for socialising and cultural performances.

Reproducing their culture overseas will be an ongoing challenge because the I-Kiribati culture is very dependent on their location of residence which inhibits the flexibility of their resilience given the likely migration. After migrating, there will be generations of I-Kiribati who grow up without having ever been to Kiribati. This will make learning the culture very difficult and will challenge their resilience given how much culture currently contributes to their social resilience. I argue that methods to reproduce culture that are less dependent on location offer ways for culture to

continue supporting resilience of the I-Kiribati. This can be done through some of the strategies identified by participants such as substituting cultural materials, having an online archive centre or an online web channel dedicated to maintaining cultural reproduction.

This research has confirmed existing ideas and made new contributions to the climate migration literature. One contribution this research makes is a critique of the utility of Appreciative Inquiry within an environmental studies context. Appreciative Inquiry is a methodology that has barely been used in environmental studies research but I argue it offers a lot of utility and flexibility in working with social systems to get beyond the problems of climate change and focus on solutions. Problem based approaches tend to focus too much on the issue at hand and not enough time imagining the possible solutions (Rother, 2008). However, strength based approaches also have their limitations. While the strength based nature of the methodology injected energy into the interviews and focus groups, there are some practical difficulties around focusing so intently on eliciting positive responses such as the questions can become more leading. I also argue Appreciative Inquiry conflates positive emotions with positive stories and vice versa for negative instances. This can lead to devaluing the strength an individual may show in a difficult situation or neglect the multiple emotions and narratives operating within one story. Nevertheless this methodology provided a way to get beyond the question of 'will migration happen?' to 'how can migration work?' by encouraging positive framing. The ability of Appreciative Inquiry to shift to the latter question has helped this piece of work fill the literature gap that Rive (2013) and Wyett (2013) identified as well as add to the critical literature for this methodology.

This research supports the work of Adger et al. (2012, 2011) and Hess et al (2008) who both argue the beneficial effects of a strong sense of identity and culture have not been recognised enough in the adaptation literature and this research partially closes this gap. Participants argued that being able to maintain a strong sense of identity

and culture will enable them to remain socially resilient. Planning strategies to keep the identity and culture strong will further increase the chances of successful migration because as Wyett (2013) argued, migration has a much higher likelihood of success if it is thoroughly planned. Therefore the research findings support the arguments of Adger et al. and Hess et al. and Wyett.

This thesis also supports the work of Black (2001) who says that focusing solely on the environmental aspect of migration limits a holistic understanding of the migratory drivers. While climate change is going to be a factor in causing migration, other migration drivers influence the dreams for resettlement and to ignore the other migration drivers can lead to simplistic and unsuccessful adaptation. This was demonstrated with the dreams of the participants. The dreams identified in this research indicate adaptation is about more than just escaping sea level rise and moving to a safer location. Participants would still like a relationship with the ocean given their society's extensive history of fishing and seafaring. The strong cultural and identity dreams of participants also indicate that desirable adaptation is about more than just correcting the most obvious migration driver. Therefore Black's (2001) arguments have held true for this research and emphasise the need to have a holistic understanding of the migration drivers to enable resettlement to have the best chance of success.

Future research questions from this thesis could look deeper into the feasibility of making these dreams become reality and include comparisons with other migrants who have successfully brought their culture into a new location, for example, Chinatown in many large cities. A feasibility study and taking some of these ideas to a wider part of the population and through government officials would provide more insight into the value of the many dreams in this research. The question of governance of the post-migration society is steeped in much uncertainty and further research into possible governance models when the I-Kiribati will be spread out in

many locations and multiple semi-independent populations could be helpful for Kiribati give their current centralised and small government.

In conclusion, culture has a positive and negative relationship with social resilience for the I-Kiribati. Culture is a source of great personal strength by affirming their identity as I-Kiribati and contributes to their social resilience. However, their culture is heavily dependent on the location they live in which means that upon migrating, the comfort derived from their culture will be challenged and reduce if they are unable to reproduce their culture and social meanings in a new location. If the I-Kiribati are able to reproduce their culture in ways that are less dependent on location, the migrating population will likely be more socially resilient when their location of residence changes. As one participant said when referring to living overseas – “We are the same species as NZ and Australians. We cannot adapt to be like fish and live underwater, but we can adapt to live in another country”.

CHAPTER 7: REFERENCE LIST

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APPENDIX 1: MULTI-SCALE MAP OF THE REPUBLIC OF KIRIBATI

Source: (Ketchoyian, 2011)

Note: South Tarawa extends from Betio in the south-west to Bonriki on the west

APPENDIX 2: ETHICS APPROVAL

Phone 0-4-463 5676
Fax 0-4-463 5209
Email Allison.kirkman@vuw.ac.nz

MEMORANDUM

TO	Jerome Cameron
COPY TO	Bethany Haalboom
FROM	Dr Allison Kirkman, Convener, Human Ethics Committee
DATE	28 April 2014
PAGES	1
SUBJECT	Ethics Approval: 20700 We are not vulnerable, we are resilient: appreciative inquiry into transnational climate migration in Kiribati

Thank you for your application for ethical approval, which has now been considered by the Standing Committee of the Human Ethics Committee.

Your application has been approved from the above date and this approval continues until 30 July 2015. If your data collection is not completed by this date you should apply to the Human Ethics Committee for an extension to this approval.

Best wishes with the research.

Allison Kirkman
Human Ethics Committee

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Allison Kirkman'.

APPENDIX 3: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

PROJECT TITLE: We are not vulnerable, we are resilient: appreciative inquiry into transnational climate migration in Kiribati

RESEARCHER: Jerome Cameron, School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences, Victoria University of Wellington

I am a Masters of Environmental Studies student at Victoria University of Wellington. As part of this degree I am undertaking a research project leading to a thesis. The project I am undertaking is examining the dreams and expectations of those from Kiribati around possible climate migration. This research project has received approval from the Victoria University Human Ethics Committee.

I am inviting residents of South Tarawa who feel that they may need to move in the not too distant future due to sea level rise to participate in a series of two focus groups. These focus groups will have approximately ten community members and will discuss the dreams and expectations of possible climate induced migrants. Each focus group will be about one and a half hours long with one week in between the first and second focus group.

Should any participants feel the need to withdraw from the project, they may do so without question at any time before the first focus group session. Just let me know at the time.

Responses will form the basis of my research project and will be put into a written report on an anonymous basis. It will not be possible for participants to be identified personally and it is expected that participants do not disclose the names of participants when talking about the focus group discussions with non-participants. Upon transcribing the focus groups, I will send you a summary of the focus groups you participated in. All participants will have the opportunity to raise objections to the summary and when there are no objections a final summary will be sent to participants.

No other person besides me and my supervisor Bethany Haalboom will see the focus group and interview transcripts. The thesis will be submitted for marking to the School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences and deposited in the University Library. It is intended that one or more articles will be submitted for publication in scholarly journals. All transcripts will be destroyed two years after the end of the project.

If you have any further questions or would like to receive further information about the project, please contact me at (+64 27 3313017 or jerome.cameron@vuw.ac.nz) or my supervisor Bethany Haalboom, at the School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences, Victoria University of Wellington (+64 4 463 6353 or bethany.haalboom@vuw.ac.nz).

Yours sincerely,
Jerome Cameron

APPENDIX 4: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Project title: We are not vulnerable, we are resilient: appreciative inquiry into transnational climate migration in Kiribati

Please be aware that:

- Any information you provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and the supervisor.
- The results will not use your name and no opinions will be attributed to you in any way that will identify you.
- The recording of focus groups will be wiped at the end of the project.
- The data provided will not be used for any other purpose or released to others without my written consent.
- All participants are expected to follow the focus group guidelines which you have been provided a copy of.

Please read, tick the boxes and sign to confirm that you consent to participate in the research project:

- ☐ I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I may withdraw myself (or any information I have provided) from this project before the first focus group session without having to give reasons.
- ☐ I would like to receive a summary of the focus group discussions when it is completed and have been explained the process of finalising the summary of focus group discussions.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.

Signed:

Name of participant:

Address:

Phone (if applicable):

Email (if applicable):

Date:

APPENDIX 5: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

- Discovery phase
  - o Exploring stories around dignity and/ or pride
  - o How do you think migration may affect this?
  - o Explore expectations around migrating
- Dream phase
  - o Imagine that anything is possible – what are your dreams for the Kiribati society after migrating?
  - o What's really important in here? What's feasible?
  - o Any other options or dreams you have?
  - o How do you think you could keep a strong sense of culture post-migration?
- Design
  - o What skills and personal characteristics help make migration successful?
  - o What can be done locally to help prepare for migration?
  - o What can be done internationally to assist preparation for migration?
  - o Any other dreams you'd like to mention?

APPENDIX 6: KIRIBATI RESEARCH PERMIT

REPUBLIC OF KIRIBATI

MEMORANDUM

From: Secretary for Internal Affairs
File Ref: UM11/2
Date: 5th May, 2014

To: Mr Cameron Jerome
cc: Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Immigration

Subject: Approval letter on Research Study filming on Climate Change & Migration Kiribati.

This is to inform you that your application form on the abovementioned has granted approval from the Secretary of Ministry of Internal Affairs.

The research filming could be one of the important sources that can be used for future plans of Climate change and migration in Kiribati.

Please comply with requirements as stated in the Research agreement form. A filming research fees of AUD\$350 must be paid at the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) account upon arrival and before proceeding on filming work. Copy of the receipt is required soon after payment is made. The film document copy is also required upon completion of the work and to be sending back to the MIA soon after the document complete.

The approval letter can be use as a pass to the immigration officials when applying for the Visa to Kiribati or during check ins at the point of entry or whenever is requested while in the Country.

Congratulations again and hope to work with you while staying in Kiribati.

If you need further assistance from our side we will be ready to offer and assists as required. For official contact phone no (686)28283, or 60271 attention: Pelea Takaria Tehumu Senior Cultural Officer, Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Pelea Takaria Tehumu
For Secretary (MIA)