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So... What's Next? The Role of Aspirations and Capabilities in
Post-Retirement Mobility Planning Among Older First-
Generation Lebanese Migrants in The Netherlands

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1. Abstract

This research aims to understand the post-retirement mobility plans of middle-aged and pre-elderly first-generation Lebanese migrants in the Netherlands, specifically investigating what are the major influences that shape their aspirations and capabilities, and how those influences shape their potential future post-retirement mobility choices, between their current residence and their country of origin. Employing a multi-method qualitative approach that combines in depth individual interviews, and ethnographic observations, the research concluded different types of influencing factors leading to various choices of mobility. Healthcare, Finances, and Adaptation were major capability influencing factors, while Nostalgia, Social connections, and Family constituted the major aspiration influencing considerations. On one hand, individuals that strongly desire to return post-retirement to Lebanon, some had limited capabilities due to financial resources, healthcare accessibility, or family commitments in the Netherlands, while others had capabilities to adapt to these constraints and planned their mobility clearly. On the other hand, other respondents had no aspiration to retire in Lebanon or have mobility between the countries disregarding the availability or lack thereof of capabilities.



2. Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to dedicate this and any achievement I did this year to my grandfather, may God rest his soul. He passed away while I was on my master's program and I wasn't able to see him and say goodbye. However, jedom I hold your memories in my heart wherever I go. Your dedication and effort throughout your life making life better for your kids is and will always be an inspiration for me. My time with you was a blessing beyond measure.

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Table of Contents:

1. Abstract.....	3
2. Acknowledgements.....	4
3. Introduction	9
3.1 Research Questions	10
4. Framework & literature review	11
4.1 Theoretical Framework & Literature Review.....	11
4.2 Conceptual Framework:	16
5. Geographical Contextual Framework.....	18
5.1 The Lebanese Migrants:	19
6. Methodology	22
6.1 Research Design & Data collection.....	22
6.1.1 Recruitment	22
6.1.2 Research Participants.....	22
6.1.2 Interviewing process.....	24
6.1.3 Ethnographic Observations	25
6.2 Data Analysis	25
6.3 Positionality	26
6.4 Limitations	27
7. Results.....	28
7.1 Conflicted Relationships with Lebanon	28



7.2 Retirement Dreams	30
7.3 Family Dynamics	33
7.4 Health Status and Healthcare	35
7.5 Social networks in the Netherlands.....	39
7.6 Field Observation	42
7.6.1 Community under construction	42
7.6.2 United in Lebanon but divided as Lebanese.....	46
8. Discussion	48
8.1 Aspirations.....	48
8.1.1 Proximity to Family & Social Connections.....	48
8.1.2 Nostalgia.....	49
8.2 Capabilities.....	51
8.2.1 The Political situation.....	51
8.2.2 The Healthcare Considerations	51
8.2.2 Adaptability in both cultural contexts	52
8.2.3 Financial Capabilities	53
9. Conclusion & Policy Implications.....	54
9.1 Policy Implications	55
10. References.....	56
11. Appendices	60
11.1 Coding list:.....	60



11.2 Code Tree:	60
11.3 Research Interview Guide:.....	61
11.4 Informed Consent Form.....	67
11.5 Pseudonym Table.....	69

Table of Figures & Tables _____ :

○ Figure 1 Conceptual Framework (Author).....	17
○ Figure 2 Population of Lebanese immigrants, born in Lebanon and are now permanent residents in the Netherlands (CBS, 2023).....	19
○ Figure 3 Distribution of the Lebanese Diaspora (Linus Hagenbach, 2022).....	20
○ Figure 4 Image shared by participant talking about who he voted for in European Elections.....	44
○ Figure 5 One of the many pictures shared on landscapes and nature of Lebanon.	45
○ Figure 6 Picture Memorabilia of an old school drawing book.....	45
○ Figure 7 One of the plethora of pictures shared on Lebanese food.	45
○ Table 1 Mobility Patterns of Migrants After Retiring in France (Guillot et al., 2023)	15
○ Table 2 Characteristics of interview participants	23



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3. Introduction

Aging migrants is now a fast-ongoing process throughout the whole of Europe, especially Western Europe (Ruspini, 2009). Notably in countries like the Netherlands, where White (2006) identified the sharp rise of aging migrants over the age of 60 rose between 1996 and 2003 by 111% for Turks and 112% for Moroccans. As of the first of January of 2022, almost 2.6 million people or what equals 15% of the Dutch population was born in a foreign country (Dutch central bureau of statistics, 2024). This combined with an increase in grey pressure, which is a measurement tool that compares the number of elderly people per working age people, as recently as 2023 the Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics (2024) and the bureau also estimated that grey pressure will increase to reach 50% in the coming few years. Foets et al (2009) establishes that numbers of migrants in their non-working elderly age in the Netherlands are increasing at a fast rate estimated to be 163% compared to the Dutch nationals' rate of 44% between the years of 2009 and 2025. Other estimates revealed that migrants aged 65 years or older are expected to become 18% of the migrant population in the Netherlands by 2050 (Schoenmakers et al, 2017)

This poses significant questions regarding their retirement and retirement planning, given their ties to and potential mobility between multiple countries. Migrant post-retirement migration entails a whole different field of research, Vtanthomme, and Vandenneede (2021) explains how most migration literature mistakenly consider migration as a permanent lateral movement. Additionally, multiple articles like (Constant & Zimmermann, 2011; de Haas et al., 2015; Gundel & Peters, 2008; Jensen & Pedersen, 2007) assert that the mobility of the migrant doesn't end there. On the contrary, they claim that the level of return or movement to other countries later in life is prevalent with migrants in the European and North American contexts. Despite the existence of literature on migrant post-retirement mobility a gap persists. Most research was executed post-retirement, or in other words when the first-generation labor migrants have already retired and chosen their path. Cobb-Clark and Stillman, (2013) express that literature on return decision of migrants as post fact analysis is there, but the literature overlooks studying the incentives of their stay or return. Additionally, Immigrant post-retirement mobility goes unrecorded, or is really



limited. Thus, researchers were left trying to gather necessary information from various consensus or surveys (Dustmann and Weiss, 2008). Immigrant retirement migration / remigration is now a reality and a fact the northern countries as well as the southern ones will have to find means to deal with the fact.

The aim of this research is to investigate post-retirement mobility considerations prior to retirement. Through the analysis of the aspirations and capabilities of middle aged and pre-elderly first-generation labor migrants. The choice to start at an earlier age than most studies that investigate post-retirement Mobility is based on previous literature outcomes. According to Cobb-Clark, & Stillman, (2013) immigrant future analysis of temporary vs permanent choices of migrations and mobility can be analyzed by their intentions and life behaviors; That is because immigrants that intend to have the choice of going back tend to both save, and remit more throughout their life in the host country. Furthermore, current migration and retirement research have proved that retirement patterns are no longer consistent or limited to specific timeframes. For example, Sander & Bell (2013) present evidence on the fact that the recent patterns of the transition to retirement now occur over a broader age group starting from 40 to 70 years old with an age median of 57 for females and 60 for males. Also, the role of aging perceptions plays a big role in migrant coping and future planning according to Cramm & Nieboer (2018).

3.1 Research Questions

This study will investigate questions on Lebanese first generation middle aged and Pre-elderly migrants in the Netherlands, by asking what are their future post-retirement mobility choices and their post-retirement mobility considerations? to understand the post-retirement mobility plans of middle-aged and pre-elderly first-generation Lebanese migrants in the Netherlands. What are the major influences that shape their aspirations and capabilities? and how those influences shape their potential future post-retirement mobility choices between their current residence and their country of origin? By analyzing their mobility trajectories and plans for post-retirement, the research will attempt to explore how these plans are shaped by the interplay of aspirations and capabilities.



4. Framework & literature review

4.1 Theoretical Framework & Literature Review

The aspiration and capabilities framework, developed by De Hass (2011) represents a theoretical approach to apprehend human mobilities. The framework emphasizes the individual aspirations and capabilities and how the two concepts interplay to guide migration or mobility decisions. The aspirations-capabilities framework suggests that migration is not simply a response to push factors (negative conditions in the origin country) or pull factors (positive conditions in the destination country). Instead, it is a complex decision that is influenced by a combination of individual aspirations and the capabilities to fulfill those aspirations.

Amartya Sen (1999) emphasized in his Capabilities approach that opportunities and freedoms otherwise known as capabilities are essential in human development. For Sen development happens by expanding the capabilities of people, and that the expansion does not happen by increasing resources but rather increasing people's opportunities and freedom. Sen's approach also acknowledges that people have aspirations that would necessitate the proper capabilities to achieve.

The differentiation between the aspirations and capabilities framework and other relevant frameworks in this study is necessary. The traditional theory used to analyze the movement of migrants and the reason behind mobility is the Push and Pull framework (Lee, 1966). The push and pull framework is used to analyze migration as an effect of political, economic, environmental and social push and pull factors that lead to mobility decisions. However, to elaborate on the aspirations and capabilities framework and distinguish it from the traditional Push-Pull framework, Mallick (2020) added to De Hass (2011) and Carling (2002) stating that the aspirations and capabilities framework is more complex in the analysis of mobility decisions as it introduces individual agency to the analysis and well as the complex interplay between that agency and the structural constraints that usually accompany mobility decisions. Therefore, Mallick (2020) explains that aspirations and capabilities are dynamic, and they interplay in a dynamic process that



is subject to change over time. This dynamic nature is due to aspirations and capabilities being multi-dimensional, investigating numerous factors like political, social, and economical, as well as giving migration and mobility intrinsic (for its own sake) and instrumental value (as a means to an end). This form of intricate dynamic analysis is why this study utilizes this framework. Understanding the main concepts of this framework is essential to understand how the interplay takes place in the findings. The concepts are mainly represented in three words, Mobility, Aspirations, and Capabilities.

Through applying the capabilities framework of Sen (1999), De Hass (2021) defines human mobility as a person's capability and freedom to have a choice on where he or she wants to live including the ability to choose the option of staying. In addition, capabilities are the resources and opportunities that individuals must attain to fulfill the person's aspirations. Similarly, throughout this research capabilities of the participants that will be investigated include the available financial resources, the person's available skills, access to information and social networks, or even the capability of having a realistic environment that helps the person to achieve his aspirations like lack of persecutions or wars. Previous literature on migration and retirement migration also highlights that fact. For example, Bolzman et al (2006) in his research about post-retirement return mentions the role of their resources or their human capital in guiding their decision to return to their country of origin. Previously Bolzman (1994) explained the migrant resources and human capital consist of socio economic, cultural, social, legal, and health means stating that a duality of these resources between the migrants' host and origin country shape their return decision (Bolzman 1994; Catani 1983; Oriol 1984). François-Charles Wolff (2006) gave an example of this relationship between resources and decisions by stating that purchasing power along with higher financial value of his/her money in the origin country might convince the migrant to leave France in that case the host country.

Aspirations as a concept are defined by Carling as "the desire to improve one's life through migration", this motivation or desire can be initiated because of various factors, such as a desire for a better life quality or better economic opportunities and chances. It can even simply act as an



escape from conflict or persecution. Aspirations within the participants of this research would be centered around their preferred choices of post-retirement life in terms of location. Aspirations also include the reasoning of the participants to consider those locations as their goals. Carling places aspirations as an essential and crucial factor immigration decisions. It is the force acting behind individual motivation that is utilized to leave one's homeland and seek opportunities elsewhere whether internationally or inside one's own country. François-Charles Wolff (2006) also highlighted that family members and their presence or the lack of their presence was also a major determinant in migrant return decisions, they mentioned that almost 66% of migrants with kids living in the host country chose not to return to their origin country, and he ended by specifying that the migrant return decision would be a tradeoff between the financial aspect and family considerations. Economic literature stated that people plan to retire in a way that maximizes their benefits (Topa et al, 2017). However, other factors were also used as preconditions like the age, sex, and income level (Beedon & Wu, 2004), Topa et al (2017) added to that a model proposed by Hershey (2004) by adding psychological predispositions and personality factors to the retirement plan preconditions. Böck & Gehring (2013) mention other life factors that influence their mobility decisions, namely their citizen status and their desire to die in a specific place.

While all aforementioned information does not specifically mention aspirations and capabilities all the preconditions mentioned by the previous literature can be placed in one of the two concepts and/or influences or is influenced by one of the two concepts. Hence, previous literature has paved the way to use the theoretical framework of aspirations and capabilities to study post-retirement mobility patterns of migrants. Throughout this research this framework will be implemented to understand the future post-retirement aspirations of the middle-aged Lebanese first generation migrants. as well as the capabilities of having a say on mobility decisions and capabilities in fulfilling these aspirations. While doing so, it hopes to enable the research to formulate a hypothesis on how the aspirations and capabilities shape the post-retirement plans leading to the participants' post-retirement mobilities.



The concept of mobility is becoming more relative in migration studies as it provides a comprehensive way of understanding the complex systems of movements and the complexities of migration. Mobility highlights that migration or movement is not a simple transfer from one place to another, but that migration is a result of embedded decisions that take into consideration broader economic, social and cultural considerations that shape the movement and its trajectories. Within the research framework mobility will be viewed as transnational mobility between the origin, and current residencies of the participants or even third-party countries in case the participants decide on it in their retirement plans. There are multiple forms of mobilities: like Transnational mobilities (Portes, 1997; Levitt & Schiller 2004), Virtual Mobilities explained by Miller (2006), and imaginative mobilities investigated by Creswell (2006). While all those mobilities are essential to understand the full concept of mobility, this research will use Circulatory mobilities identified by Carling (2002) as its main definition. Circulatory mobilities refer to the physical movement of people in between different locations that happens for various purposes. Literature has also shown variance in the mobility decisions made by immigrants from different nationalities in the same context. For example, Bolzman et al (2006) in a study done on sick Spanish and Italian migrants in Switzerland found a big difference in their post-retirement mobility decisions correlating with their nationalities. The study recorded a decision of 55% of Italians to stay in Switzerland while only 28% of Spaniards decided to stay. The decision according to the researchers was primarily “associated” with their relationship with their country of origin (Bolzman et al, 2006).

In another study done by François-Charles Wolff (2006), migrants of the regions of central and south Africa and south Europe chose to be mobile between their host and origin country more often than migrants from north Europe after they retire. Table 1 shown below was done by Michel Guillot, et al. (2023) shows a statistical difference in the mobility patterns of migrants after retiring in France. Differences clearly exist between the mobility patterns of Moroccans and Tunisians for example as only 25% of male pensioners returned to their origin country while other nationalities like their neighboring Algeria had more than 50% return rate despite having more pensioners than both combined.



Table 1 Mobility Patterns of Migrants After Retiring in France (Guillot et al., 2023)

Table 4 Distribution of CNAV male pensioners aged 65+ by country of birth and place of residence on January 1, 2009, and their subsequent worldwide deaths until December 31, 2012, by country of birth and place of residence at the time of death

Country of Birth	Pensioners on January 1, 2009				Deaths 2009–2012		
	Place of Residence on January 1, 2009			% Residing Abroad	Place of Residence at Death		
	France	Abroad	Total		France	Abroad	Total
Southern Europe	24,371	30,716	55,087	55.8	4,271	5,402	9,673
Italy	10,493	8,262	18,755	44.1	2,157	1,614	3,771
Portugal	7,644	11,153	18,797	59.3	884	1,985	2,869
Spain	6,234	11,301	17,535	64.4	1,230	1,803	3,033
Other Countries in Europe (including Russia)	7,095	6,291	13,386	47.0	1,535	1,297	2,832
North Africa	45,770	37,035	82,805	44.7	6,018	6,644	12,662
Algeria	29,602	31,595	61,197	51.6	4,091	5,621	9,712
Morocco	9,459	3,191	12,650	25.2	1,060	654	1,714
Tunisia	6,709	2,249	8,958	25.1	867	369	1,236
Other Countries in Africa	2,556	916	3,472	26.4	294	144	438
Asia (including Turkey)	3,050	1,287	4,337	29.7	396	240	636
Other Foreign Countries (America, Oceania)	816	509	1,325	38.4	117	86	203
All Foreign-born	83,658	76,754	160,412	47.8	12,631	13,813	26,444
Native-born	32,275	320	32,595	1.0	5,828	63	5,891
Total	115,933	77,074	193,007	—	18,459	13,876	32,335

Literature highlights that the community or country of origin influences the capability of adaptation in the host society; this leads to consequently affecting the embeddedness of the migrant in the host society, and therefore the migrants' mobility decisions. This is important because the level of adaptation and followingly embeddedness influences opportunities of these populations and hence capabilities also for making these future mobility decisions. This has been noted in previous economic literature where migrants were not seen as an individual but as communities (Lieberson & Walters 1990, Rodriguez 1999). More recently Hatton & Leigh, (2009) also found that the stronger the immigration tradition is from one ethnicity or country to the next the more possibilities there are for better economic outcomes. They also worked on explaining that this aspect is one influencing factor, but the other is the immigrants themselves. Portes and Rumbaut



(1996) argue that another aspect is the characteristics of most of the immigrants and the skills or education level that they possess consequently Portes and Rumbaut (1996) “the characteristics of a community acquire decisive importance in molding their entry into the labor market and hence their prospects for future mobility”. However, if the migrants are highly skilled, literature shows that they will be able to push aside the ethnic background and have their ethnic relationships matter less, and hence their ethnicity in the host country seems to have less relative importance than other ethnicities (Lofstrom 2001). This makes it more important to understand the context of the migrant community and their interactions to understand their choices of social networking and satisfaction of longing to their roots and maintain social connections that can influence any future mobility decisions.

4.2 Conceptual Framework:

This research employs and frames its hypothesis on the aspirations and capabilities framework using it to draw conclusions to attain further knowledge in its field. The goal is to provide additional information on the post-retirement mobility patterns of immigrants between their origin and host country. In this specific context the research is investigating middle aged to elderly first-generation Lebanese migrants and in doing so trying to investigate the role of their future aspirations and current and future capabilities in planning their post-retirement mobility between the host and the origin country, as well as analyzing their current perspective of the challenges that hinder their post-retirement plans.

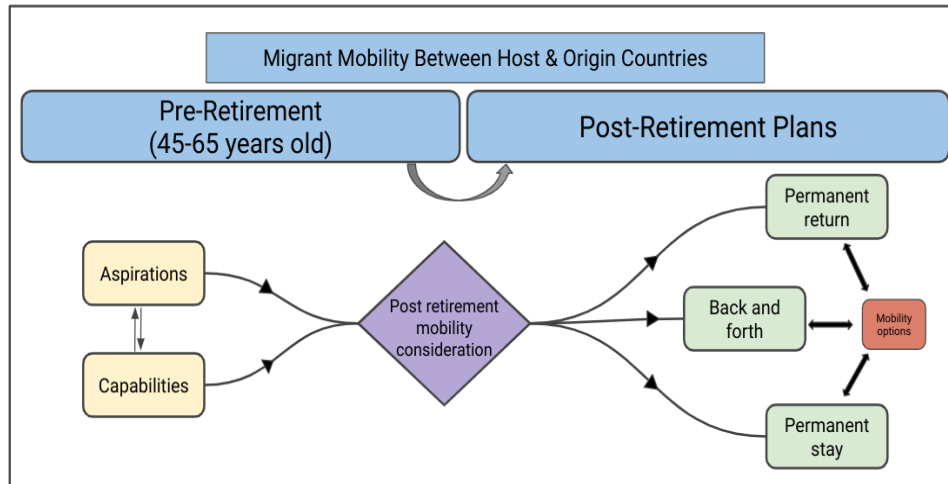


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework (Author)

The above figure establishes what this research views as the three most probable outcomes of the interplay of the migrant's aspirations and capabilities. Like how the interplay of Aspirations and Capabilities in the theoretical framework results in mobility or immobility, this research hypothesizes that there will be either permanent mobility between the two countries Vis a Vie "Back and Forth" option, or permanent immobility by the options of permanent stay or permanent return. Consequently, the participants will be expected to have more freedom in their post-retirement mobility planning especially in where and how they want to live (mobility), if their aspirations match with their current and prospective capabilities. On the other hand, forced mobility or even forced Immobility is expected if the aspirations don't match with the capabilities or vice versa. It is important to note that all three expected forms of mobility can either be a result of forced or free choice of mobility.



5. Geographical Contextual Framework

Hourani (2007) establishes that Lebanese migrants and their descendants are more culturally prone to communicate and have more sustainable relations and social networks with their families in Lebanon than other migrants originating from the region. Hourani also explains how these relations are vital in the prosperity of the Lebanese economy. Another important aspect of Lebanese migration to understand the dynamics of remittances is the level of education, while the past migration waves included non-skilled labor, in the past half century things have been quite different. Recent statistics shows that most Lebanese migrants are high skilled labor, where only 12% had no diploma and more than 46% had high level university education (Kasparian, 2009).

Lebanon is a great example of a migrant exporting country, as ever since the making of the state the migration of its nationals has been its definitive feature Abdelhady (2008) extends on this by explaining that migration of Lebanese nationals was prominent even since the middle of the 19th century. Jumping to today the pattern of Lebanese nationals migrating is still very popular especially since the country's fragile economic and political system. For example, more than 60% of Lebanese people are expressing their wish to migrate and 52% are planning to do so (Central Administration for Statistics, 2022). The age group that will be researched in this study is 45 to 67 so the youngest of these respondents were born in war torn Lebanon and the oldest was in their early and late twenties when the war broke out, also. Also, a great number of older and professional populations left Lebanon recently due to the financial crisis leading to a severe case of brain drain. Thus, it is not surprising to find out that there are also immigrants that are middle aged or pre-elderly that have immigrated recently and that is relevant in the case of the Netherlands,

The number of Lebanese migrants in the Netherlands has been relatively increasing at a fast steady pace in recent years with the most recent statistic showing the amount totaling up to 5,274 persons in 2022 according to (Dutch central bureau of statistics, 2024). While this number might seem small compared to other migrant nationalities in the Netherlands, it still possesses

relativity since it is compared to the population of Lebanon that is around 5,331,203 (CIA.gov, 2024). The number of first-generation migrants from Lebanon however coming from Lebanon is lower with a massive increase in recent years almost tripling in the last 20 years and doubling since the beginning of the Lebanese crisis in 2019 as demonstrated by the graph below (Dutch central bureau of statistics, 2024).

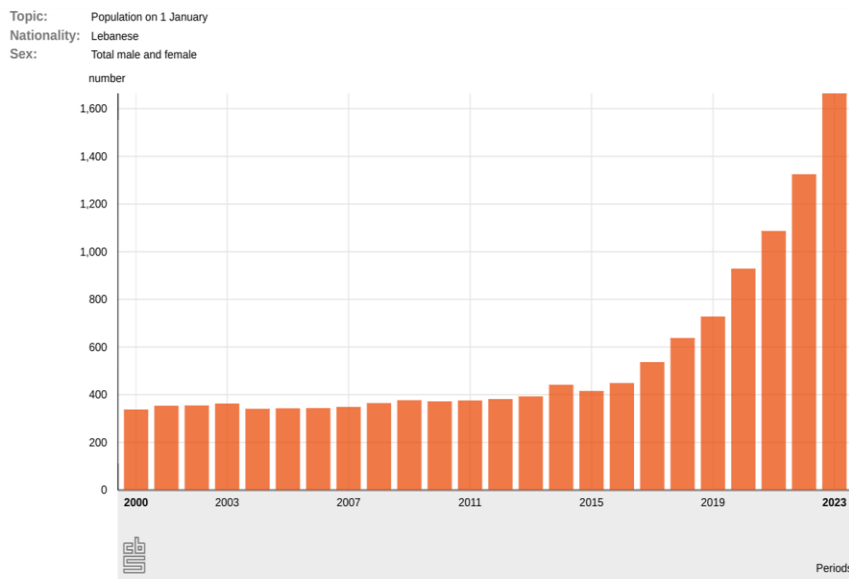


Figure 2 Population of Lebanese immigrants, born in Lebanon and are now permanent residents in the Netherlands (CBS, 2023)

5.1 The Lebanese Migrants:

Lebanese migrants especially the first-generation migrants that are the inherit aim and participants of this study are a special case in migration studies. For instance, Abdelhady (2011) cites the Lebanese Diasporic first-generation studies as "theoretically situated in the framework of transnationalism and ethnic pluralism". To expand on that Marinova (2013) summarizes her reading on Lebanese diasporic communities explaining that despite sharing a global sense of solidarity in being a person from Lebanon living abroad with mutual shared experiences, a state of a lack of cohesion persists and is deeply rooted within the community of Lebanese migrants. She



states that this group stemming from a small piece of land which holds 18 different recognized religions, is further divided along class and cultural lines. Labaki (2006) illustrates an example of such ethnic divisions by highlighting that diaspora that originated during the civil war where a main interest of the sectarian political parties that worked on organizing them in their new countries, like the predominantly Shia communities in West Africa, and Christian Lebanese in North America creating diasporic unions outside like for example: "The Maronite Union" or the "Druze International congress".

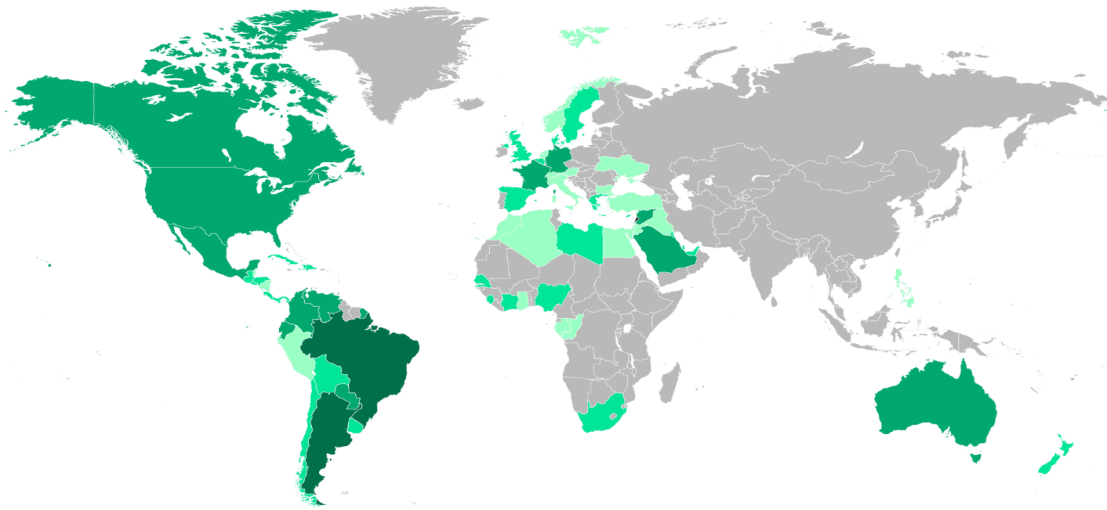


Figure 3 Distribution of the Lebanese Diaspora (Linus Hagenbach, 2022)

These inherit divisions in the diasporic communities changed the way Lebanese define themselves in different countries since each part of them defines their Lebanon in a different meaning. This differentiation also acts in a way to establish themselves and adapt to what helps them embed themselves more or to be more resilient depending on each country. Abdelhady (2011) illustrates this by giving an example from the Lebanese diasporic community in France. Abdelhady explains that " In Paris, ethnic identification is based on the support granted to the Lebanese by the French government". The perception of the general government and public in France is that the Lebanese in France are not a challenge to the French values. Also, the predominant Lebanese Maronite Catholic presence in France works on setting themselves apart from the Arab Identity



that is given by being from anywhere in the middle east and focusing more on their Francophone nature to distance themselves from other marginalized Muslim, Arab, North Africans connotations that are disliked in the conservative French communities.

This is important to note since the Netherlands is still a fresh territory for the Lebanese immigrants. The Lebanese community in the Netherlands doesn't consist of any predominant society or sect, leaving a gap to what the Lebanese immigrants use to identify themselves and for the locals to identify them, as the locals still can't seem to differentiate them from other Arabs or doesn't even know where they are from. Unlike other Lebanese communities abroad like South Africa, Nigeria, West Africa, USA, France, etc... that are all well established and have been influential in homeland politics in Lebanon, and in the country that is hosting them (Kaufman, 2000); even in previous Dutch colonies like former Prime Minister of the Netherlands Antilles (Emily de Jongh-Elhage). Hence, there is a sense of ambivalence around the Lebanese immigrant society.

Since the Netherlands is still a new area of migration most of the migrants that have arrived here are contemporary as described in Figure 2. below. Abdelhady (2004) describes contemporary Lebanese immigrants as professional and highly educated individuals that pursue economic improvement and separate themselves from other immigrants by insisting on their permanent move to the new country and indulgent participation in host society. This is an important notion to consider when literature tries to identify patterns of mobility for this community because the need to provide themselves with the Capability to adapt influences their aspirations of future mobility between the countries. These facts make it imperative to investigate how the Aspirations of the Lebanese diaspora, a nostalgic community with deep connections to the extended family that is almost never hindered from being in a state of constant communication, whether it is monetary through remittances or physical through constant visits (Hourani, 2007), is interconnect with their Capabilities represented with their financials and the social network bonding with the host society and/or their fellow Lebanese immigrants.



6. Methodology

6.1 Research Design & Data collection

The research methodology employed in this thesis is qualitative, employing a multi-method qualitative approach that combines in depth individual interviews, and ethnographic observations to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. This approach is well-suited for exploring the lived experiences, perceptions, and behaviors of individuals and groups, providing insights that may not be readily apparent through quantitative methods (Boccagni & Schrooten, 2018; Hennink et al., 2020)

6.1.1 Recruitment

I was able to gain contact information of close to three hundred Lebanese migrants living currently in the Netherlands, through social media, mainly Facebook groups that then led me to bigger WhatsApp groups. With these connections I disclosed my research topic, then the selection mechanism was figuring out who fits the selected age group and was willing to participate voluntarily in the study without any compensation. Volunteer participants were then asked to give or suggest other participants. This then gained me more access to people to ask for participation.

6.1.2 Research Participants

After the selection mechanism, the study gained access to 9 individuals to go through thorough in-depth interviews. The table below shows the important main demographics for the study.

Regardless of their small number, the participants do hold several differences across the board of characteristics. The ages range between being middle aged and still early to retirement (Participants 2,5,8), and between being middle aged and pre-elderly that are closer to retirement (Participants 1,3,4,6). As well as participants that are pre-elderly and retirement is a close imminent fact of their life and have a short time to get there (Participants 7,9). The participants in the interviews are first generation Lebanese that were born in to almost all governates except



Baalbek-Hermel and Akkar. All the respondents also expressed that they live in three provinces that coincide to be what is called the Randstad area which is expected since it is the economic and livelihood center of the Netherlands. Other major aspects of diversity between the participants are for example the variation between them having kids or not, and whether they have Lebanese spouses or not. These variations are essential because they are major facts and influences on mobility and life decisions. The participants also show a variety of years of residency in the Netherlands, this will be important to analyze how the difference of years spent, and adaptation can influence their mobility decisions. For example, participants with a few years here include 1,2,5,8 while medium time includes participants 3 and 4, and long time spent being 6,7, and 9. Finally, another main characteristic of the participants is the household income level. Participants were asked to rate their Household income level in comparison to life in the Netherlands, 7 interviewees of the 9 framed their high middle or High income which was expected in the literature review beforehand that claims that most contemporary migrants are professionals and of pursue high living standards,

Table 2 Characteristics of Interview participants

Interview Participants	Age	Sex	Income level	Years in the Netherlands	Current Partner's Nationality	Kids	Dutch language
Interview #1	55	M	Upper Middle	5	Lebanese	Yes	No
Interview #2	48	F	Lower Middle	4	N/A	No	No
Interview #3	52	M	Upper	29	Not Lebanese	No	Yes
Interview #4	53	M	Upper	23	Not Lebanese	Yes	Yes
Interview #5	47	F	Middle	4	Not Lebanese	No	No
Interview #6	58	M	Upper	38	Not Lebanese	Yes	Yes
Interview #7	63	M	Upper	40	Lebanese	Yes	Yes
Interview #8	48	F	Upper Middle	4	Lebanese	Yes	No
Interview #9	62	M	Upper Middle	41	Lebanese	Yes	Yes



The background of immigration for the above respondents primarily shared some similarities, apart from interviewer number three and two all the other interviewees left the country of Lebanon and moved to the Netherlands due to either war or financial crisis. Interviewees number 4, 7, & 9 left because of the civil war that happened between 1975 and 1990. Interviewees number 1, 5, 6, and 8 left due to economic or governance related crises and looking for better opportunities for themselves or their families. The only two outliers were interviewee 3 that moved due to a love story and interviewee 2 that arrived in the Netherlands to pursue a master's degree and ended up staying because of a job opportunity.

For the sake of anonymity interviewees were given pseudonyms to conceal their identity while the pseudonym table is available in the appendix.

6.1.2 Interviewing process

In-depth interviews aimed for a collective sample in regard to diversity and representation of the targeted population possible, capturing a wide range of experiences and perspectives. The interviews delved deep into the participants' experiences and individual perspectives on their future preparations, retirement and pensions plans, and personal understanding of their future aspirations and expected capabilities. The interviews will be the base of the analysis and they will be the main source of the data that will be accumulated and analyzed. The interviews were all conducted as a one-on-one private online meeting using the “ZOOM” platform. Interviewees were also asked to be alone to circumvent any bias when speaking about the partners or kids in case they were near. The interviewees were given the choice of the language that best feels the easiest for them between English or spoken Lebanese Arabic. All interviewees chose to do the interviews in Lebanese Arabic, and hence all recordings had to be transcribed and translated manually by the researcher.



6.1.3 Ethnographic Observations

The observation of participants in certain parts of their daily life and interaction with each other and understanding their social context and patterns of behavior. These observations will help to give a more representative analysis of the natural life of the participants and how the life that the first-generation immigrant lives correlates with the existence and the extent of the social networks of the respondents. The observations were held throughout two mechanisms, first through in person attendance with the participants and other first-generation migrants in diaspora gatherings and dinners, and second through the participants' existence in "WhatsApp groups" alongside other non-interviewed first-generation migrants and using the daily communication and interactions as observation tools. These mechanisms will further influence how the study will analyze the data given by the respondents and will increase the credibility of the research. Ethnic observation involves integrating the researcher's perspective with the daily life of the studies population and observing how they interact; this can make patterns and contexts that would be hidden in interviews more apparent and available for the researcher's analysis (Boccagni & Schrooten, 2018).

6.2 Data Analysis

The study aimed to get the most accurate information possible, so the interviews were conducted in Lebanese Arabic language to let the participants use their native language or the language that they feel the most comfortable to share in. Hence, the interviews had to be transcribed and translated manually to ensure an accurate interpretation of the material. The study employed a thematic analysis approach to analyze his data. This method involved manually organizing and identifying repetitive and important patterns and systematically analyzing the meaning of those patterns by the author. The key themes of the recorded data were highlighted then extracted, then compared and categorized, and the correlations explored. This type of thematic analysis paved the way for identifying the underlying and essential concepts that may not have been readily visible from participant individual statements. Ethnographic Thematic analysis, The



process entailed a thorough reading of the field notes, transcripts and other data sources to highlight and identify key themes, and then develop the dividing the themes by codes. Identified codes and categories were then organized and analyzed.

6.3 Positionality

The researcher is a first-generation Lebanese student and potential future migrant in the country of the research yet the lack of entry in the labor market and being in his early 20s disassociates him with the respondents of this study. The researcher also has no immediate relationship with any of the participants. Given that the purpose of the study is a personal choice and preference in planning one's life after retirement, the researcher does not hold any beliefs, stakes, or ideas on which path taken is the best and the most beneficial. The study will approach this research with zero preconceptions and beliefs.

It is important to note that there might be different aspects and views on life between the researcher and the studied group due to the age difference between the researcher and the mid-life and pre-elderly participants. Additionally, it is important to note that there is a difference between the Lebanese constituents in religions, cultures, and the difference between the views on what is Lebanon and how to define the country whether in its borders, origins, or even the actual notion of Lebanon as a nation state. Also, the researcher will consider his positionality as a straight male. He will recognize that his view of Lebanon is that of a straight male and on the opposite side of the table there might be a lot of people that might have left their country of origin as Gender Based Violence (GBV) victims/refugees, or simply have different experiences in the country of origin due to being female or part of the LGBTQ+ community. Throughout the research process, the researcher will maintain a critical awareness of his own subjectivity and its potential impact on the research endeavor. The study will constantly question his own assumptions, challenge any preconceived notions, and carefully consider different perspectives. This reflective practice will enable the study to minimize the influence of any personal biases and ensure that the research findings are grounded in a thorough and objective examination of the data.



6.4 Limitations

This research faced several limitations throughout the entire process starting from the selection process of participants namely a self-selection bias. Since the research asked for voluntary participation, the participants will be inclined to represent those interested in a mobile future and those imagining their possible future mobility. To mitigate that the research clarified that all responses are welcome and encouraged all possible and applicable populations to participate. A second limitation is the Potential for having socially desirable answers; the participants might frame their answers whether positively or negatively to frame them as socially adherent or desirable. Similarly, the research tried to encourage participants to feel as comfortable as possible and worked on letting them know that the study is objective and not looking to get specific answers or answers that prove or support any certain hypothesis. Also, it was highlighted that every kind or type of answer is beneficial for the credibility of this research. A third potential limitation is the limited generalizability of this research due to its nature of being purely qualitative research with a limited number of in-depth interviews, and limited time of research as well as the potential lack of representation of the respondents of the entire first-generation Lebanese migrants in the Netherlands that are nearing or thinking about retirement. Focus on individual experiences is another potential limitation is the focus on the Aspirations and Capabilities frameworks which solely focuses on aspirations, capabilities, and the challenges that hinder those aspirations and challenges, and throughout this process might disregard other potential reasons and life aspects that might affect retirement plans and retirement migration decisions. Finally nostalgic bias, there was an intense focus of memories and nostalgia in good and bad contexts, this is a limitation as memories and nostalgia can be idealized or in other cases demonized depending on the participant's experience and may not represent the full truth of certain situations.



7. Results

Throughout the interviews, certain themes on aspirations and capabilities in their different forms and meanings were apparent. Age in general had an effect with older respondents having a clearer plan set in place. Additionally, marital status between a Lebanese partner or not had a difference for most participants. While slight differences in planning decisions and reasonings were noticed the number of participants was not enough to build a concrete analysis around the differences. What was also clear is the complex and unhindered interplay between these capabilities and aspirations in shaping both retirement mobility decisions for the respondents.

7.1 Conflicted Relationships with Lebanon

Almost all participants apart from respondent number 2 (Julia) showed a clear cultural and emotional connection to Lebanon, this connection with the country translated to the expression of deep longing to different aspects of the previous life that the participants had in their lives pre and post migration when they visited Lebanon. The deep connections and longing to Lebanon translated in their answers as either their constant visits to Lebanon or the hope to visit when the current political situation calms down a bit. Respondent 1 (Makram) said.

“I maintain really strong ties and connections still, I also visit regularly, and we typically spend our summers as a family there and visit each winter for a checkup on our friends and family.”

Similarly respondent number 4 (Younes) mentioned that he also takes his family every summer to Lebanon; he mentioned that his kids love to spend time with their friends over there. Respondents number 5 (Ghena) and 6 (Salah) while reiterating the same with their family he also mentioned that their non-Lebanese partners have created contacts and social networks and now enjoys the annual visit as much as they do; establishing that Salah stated.

“While I do visit my parents, my wife considers it a full-fledged vacation and has even learned the language and she is considered a local now (laughing) and enjoys the annual trip more than I do.” He added on the situation in Lebanon saying, *“I can tell you one thing that despite*



everything Lebanon has done to me and us Lebanese our bond cannot be broken with our country and home, it is the best conditions to live except that we lack organization and good governance that can provide us with a stable life...".

Highlighting his deep emotional connection to the country. This connection pushed respondents to have constant visits throughout their stay in the Netherlands. The participants' connection then had a big influence to push them into having deeper aspirations on living in Lebanon after retirement to make due with their nostalgia and emotional longing after living abroad for numerous years. On the other hand, some respondents still showed longing and connections but were not able to act on it because of the limitation that the political, financial situation in Lebanon, or just general life situation bestowed upon them. Respondent number 7 (Ali) stated that he used to visit Lebanon frequently but stopped recently due to the economic crisis because of his desire to preserve his positive memories of the country. He finds the thought of visiting Lebanon in its current state disheartening, preferring to hold onto his cherished memories of a more peaceful and prosperous time. While respondent number 9 (Ahmad) explained that his restraint is more physical than mental by stating *"...however unfortunately because of the latest events in the country I was not able to visit the last two years, but I want to go back."* Almost all respondents showed an emotional connection and longing to visit Lebanon apart from Julia that stated she only visits Lebanon annually primarily due to family obligations and cultural ties but admits these visits wouldn't be necessary without those factors or *"when my parents are no longer with us"*. This situation of longing and inability to visit translated with the respondents increasing with fear of the unknown and hence had a discouraging influence on the possibility of retiring in Lebanon and made the respondents look for something more stable that they know more.

Despite the obvious connections with the culture and people, most respondents showed the challenge of understanding and comprehending what is happening to their country of origin. The perceptions of Lebanon as a home have taken a hit due to the recent political and economic instability, the perceptions of the homeland where altered interview in number two stated that



Lebanon has *“lost its appeal”* she attains that to losing all her friends that were there because all of them have immigrated. Additionally, Ali who stated that he used to visit annually and frequently said that he has stopped visiting after 2020 because what he saw back then hurt him and he wants to not visit before things are back to normal because he has desire to preserve positive memories of the country, he states that he clings to positive memories of Lebanon pre-crisis and avoids visiting to prevent these cherished memories from being shattered by the harsh reality. *“My country that used to be beautiful and full of life”*. Ahmad expressed a desire to return but stated that he has been unable to do so for the past two years due to recent events. Ghena and her partner also postponed their planned visit due to security concerns last fall. Julia also stated that financial limitations prevent her from annual visits to her parents.

7.2 Retirement Dreams

Most respondents shared similar hopes for a quiet and happy retirement but differed in how they envisioned retirement. Interviewees who desired to spend all their time after retirement in Lebanon can be seen as part of the two groups. The first is the participants who have been residing in the Netherlands for a long time showed interest in retirement with a simple minimalist lifestyle. For example, Younes states that his retirement goal is to return to Lebanon despite acknowledging the country's ongoing challenges. He plans to purchase a restaurant to generate passive income before selling it and living off his pension *“simply waking up and going to the beach in Sour (Tyre) everyday”*. Similarly, Ahmad shares a minimalist life yet in another ecological zone in Lebanon

“...My perfect vision of retirement is having a small house for me and my wife with some land beside it, a little secluded where I can be self-sufficient and live my type of happily ever after”.

Other long-term residents also wanted an easy life after retirement yet didn't choose Lebanon for a full time stay rather a short-term or seasonal stay due to life constraints. Salah for example while stating that Lebanon will be part of his retirement it will not be permanent because



"Lebanon offers a desirable, relaxed lifestyle with a strong sense of community, reminding me of my roots. However, ...my wife being European creates a conflict with our retirement priorities".

It was clear within the respondents that simplicity in life post-retirement meant that there is a need to leave the Netherlands, while not explaining why life in the Netherlands would be complex most noted that life post-retirement in Lebanon mainly or outside the Netherlands in general is simpler and more minimalist which encouraged them to pursue mobility actions that will lead them to the desired simplicity.

The second group that aspired to retire in Lebanon or have a more transnational lifestyle between the two countries with more frequent mobility, was the people that have been living in the Netherlands or outside Lebanon for a shorter term than the previous respondents. These groups of respondents, despite having general views of retirement and having retirement hopes still don't have a clear picture and have a hesitant plan due to the situation in Lebanon. However, what was clear is that social connection and network was important for them; Makram clarified that his one and true goal for retirement is to have it in Lebanon to an extent of saying that *"...I only came to the Netherlands to have the ability to have a respectful retirement in Lebanon... hopefully things go well so I can have the chance to do so"*. He also stated that he wouldn't like to feel stagnant in life so Ideally, he would like to retire in Lebanon but also wants to continue working for as long as he feels physically able. He views 67 as a relatively young age for retirement these days. Even with financial security and the appeal of early retirement, he finds the idea of complete inactivity unfulfilling, especially if he is in the Netherlands at that time. Ghena stated that her dream retirement involves spending time on the beach in Lebanon with her cousins and friends *"If I had any after retirement"*. However, her partner's preferences necessitate a compromise solution, so they are open to a back-and-forth arrangement between the Netherlands and Lebanon to accommodate their desires and their partner's needs. Finally, respondent number 8 (Samar) stated *"...my perfect retirement right now would be saving enough money to live out my retirement in*



Lebanon...". This comes after her accentuating the fact that she still does not have a social network in the Netherlands even after 4 years, "...in the sense of society I still don't think that I am any bit more adapted than the time I came here."

It was clear that the respondents that have been here less and showed in their responses eagerness to go back to having the social life that they were used to before migration that attaining that form of social life is not entirely possible in this new life setting that they are in. Therefore, to regain the sensation of social connectedness that they require they would need to shape their decisions of mobility to best fit a post-retirement future that provides them with their social needs and that is in their origin residence which is Lebanon.

The people who had retirement plans elsewhere other than Lebanon, expressed their plans and convictions and that it is not due to them not wanting to retire in Lebanon but blamed circumstances or lack of the appropriate environment for them to do so. Julia highlighted the fact that she values the concept of retirement available in the Netherlands, contrasting it with the lack of such security in Lebanon, where people are forced to work even at an advanced age, *"The Netherlands offers a secure future, unlike Lebanon where retirement is a non-existent concept."* Ideally, she expressed that she would like to retire in a stable country with a good healthcare system and a balance between a vibrant city and access to nature. *"...Places like The Netherlands, Canada, Portugal or even next to my sister in Malaysia"* are potential contenders for her ideal retirement destination, each offering a unique combination of desired elements. Participant number 3 (Kamil) has been in the Netherlands for a significant time and expressed a desire for a simple life in retirement through ideal retirement involving living by the sea in another Mediterranean country with his partner, enjoying a relaxed lifestyle with their cats. He acknowledged that while he would have preferred Lebanon the unlikelihood of returning to Lebanon is due to *"lost social connections and lack of stability in the country."*

Finally, Ali conveyed that the current situation in Lebanon forces him to reconsider his retirement plans, leading him to explore alternative options in Egypt and Italy. However, even this



fail to excite him because they *"pale in comparison to my ideal memory of my country Lebanon."* Respondents here expressed that with everything going on in the situation in Lebanon whether financially and or politically, it is not worth the effort of taking the mobility decision of living their post-retirement. To explain this decision, all the above respondents gave examples of alternative destinations that they move to other than the Netherlands or Lebanon that will still satisfy their family, weather, social needs that pull them to a happy post-retirement life, and hence were taking measures to pursue that type of mobility in their futures.

7.3 Family Dynamics

Family relationships was a main point of discussion with all participants, they are the main component of social networks in Lebanon for the interviewees, and main life actors as spouse and kids that play a vital role in their lives in the Netherlands. Family had a role to play in all the interviewees' future planning, aspirations, and capabilities. Family relations influenced the participants to either stay in the Netherlands, go back to Lebanon, have a back-and-forth type of mobility, or even stay away from Lebanon. Other responses explained that sometimes family was a consideration but not a major influence, especially kids that will grow up to have their independent lives and abilities to pursue mobility decisions of their own.

Makram lives with his wife and kids in the Netherlands and remains in intensive contact with his family in Lebanon. He states that his wife is eager to go back to their daily life in Lebanon and the only reason they don't go back is finances and that their kids are still dependents. However, he states regarding his kids that when it is time to retire,

"They have a life here and there, and they like both. So, it is their decision when they become adults and I won't stand in their way, and they won't stand in mine." He added to that by saying *"When it comes to going back if my kids want to stay here, I would still like to spend most of my time in Lebanon even if they stay here, but only time can tell because there is instability of what my life would look like and what Lebanon will look like"*.



Younes living in a similar situation with kids with a difference of having a non-Lebanese wife stated that he also visits regularly and while he doesn't have friends per say he has strong ties to his siblings and their kids to a big extent even stating.

"Friends no but family yes, of course they have a massive effect on my decision. We say that "your siblings are your ribs, (a Lebanese/Arabic saying), they don't pressure me for a decision, but they are integral for my life".

He has also made it clear to his family in the Netherlands that he will retire in Lebanon, "Well my family are definitive that they would not join me in Lebanon I will go there alone, they might visit me from time to time and I might visit them but regardless I want, and I hope to live my retirement in Lebanon". Unlike Younes, not having a Lebanese partner affected Ghena and Salah's retirement plans. Ghena stated that her family previously asked and hoped that she would retire full time in Lebanon, and she wanted that too. However, she stated that given an upcoming marriage with a non-Lebanese partner there was less expectation from her and her family on spending time in Lebanon afterwards. Uniformly, Salah mentioned that his non-Lebanese partner effects the notion of permanent return however he maintains the need to spend as much time as possible in Lebanon," given my family situation I would tell you for certain that we will not move permanently to Lebanon, but I will also tell you for certain that we will spend as much time possible in Lebanon". Salah also explained that family in Lebanon also have a pull to go there by stating.

"Family has a big priority for my decisions here as well because when you ask me about Lebanon it is not just the country that I can point to on the map it is the land and the people it is the family.....so yes they are a priority, and they have a lot of effect and all that pulls me back."

The respondents demonstrated that family in the origin country had a strong allure for that and it is a main driver in their decision, and while there was definite care for the respondents care, there was an understanding that the kids that had all their life to live also had the mobility



capabilities to adapt to the parents' decision and unlike maybe family in Lebanon they can visit them where they are and especially if the respondent also demonstrated the ability to visit their kids when needed.

On the other hand, children proved not to be as effective influences as partners and relatives back in Lebanon Ahmad states.

" Look, my kids were born here. They lived here most of their life just like Lebanon is my home the Netherlands is theirs... I do not expect them to be able to go and live in Lebanon with me especially in these circumstances..."

Ali adds to that saying, *"My family here won't oppose me going to Lebanon, and despite them pulling me a little to stay here I wouldn't mind them visiting me in Lebanon"*. Finally, interviewee 6 quoted one of the most famous Lebanese authors Gibran Khalil Gibran when he talked about children saying.

"A very famous Lebanese author says, "the children you birth aren't yours, they are the children of life" so although I would like to see them, but they shouldn't be tied down to me and my decisions, if I tie their lives to mine it would be unfair."

Spouses and or partners had more of a major effect on the participants' retirement decisions, with exceptions of course (Younes). This comes because of the attached and codependent mobility between the respondent and their spouse and the necessity of closeness that is needed in their lives. The respondents with non-Lebanese partners seemed to choose to aim to have the ability to live for a little bit in Lebanon satisfying their aspirations but then also going back to satisfy the partners' post-retirement life decision.

7.4 Health Status and Healthcare

Healthcare was a clear priority for the respondents when talking about retirement healthcare accessibility and quality. It was a main driver in the future migrant aspirations and their



capability limitations, leading healthcare in being a primary determinant in deciding their future mobility decisions. When asked about healthcare there were similarities in understanding the importance of healthcare but differences in the respondent's belief in the healthcare system in Lebanon. Thus, the responses can be split into two camps, the first believes in the importance of healthcare and that it can be accessible to them in Lebanon. The second camp, while also believing in the importance of healthcare, believes that attaining adequate healthcare is not possible in Lebanon on a long-term stay basis.

The first group like for example Younes expressed that healthcare systems in Lebanon are still good and when he decided that his retirement future includes Lebanon, he considered the Lebanese healthcare system and he said that he still considers it to be one of the best in the middle east in terms of personnel, if financial abilities were present.

He stated that *"Well healthcare in Lebanon is great considering it is Lebanon, and yes it depends on what you can afford, but I wouldn't consider that an obstacle for me."* Moreover, he appreciates the system while also remaining critical of the Dutch system saying *"true here healthcare institutions have better high-tech equipment but here if I go to a doctor they will start reading from a book and try to follow certain regulations. In Lebanon, and I have tried both, the diagnostics for any medical condition I found to be better, and more efficient than here. While here the equipment and being up to date provides the medical staff with accuracy, I would take a Lebanese doctor over a Dutch one any day of the week."* However, he then highlighted the importance of having the pension that he wouldn't have had in Lebanon stating, *"But remember that if I didn't have the assurances of my pension and finances i would have chosen to stay here even if I lived in Lebanon my whole life I would have tried to come here or somewhere like here"*.

Ali shared a similar message highlighting the importance of healthcare saying it is his number one priority especially in his age of 63, yet he also expressed that in Lebanon healthcare is not a worry if you had insurance. In his words he said,



"Healthcare is of utmost importance for me, I wouldn't worry about healthcare in Lebanon because I am insured and when you are insured in Lebanon you can get great quality healthcare, so it is not an obstacle to life."

There was a recurring theme in this group of respondents when discussing the role of finances and healthcare, especially that good money can give you good healthcare despite all the problems Lebanon is going through. Samar stated that clearly her decision to go back or not depends on her finances and that if their family's finances were good.

"...you can get the same healthcare and Lebanon like in the Netherlands, if you have enough money...you can sometimes get even better especially if you go to private hospitals and private doctors". She still hedged her bets with finances stating that *"yet if that's the stage in my life I was still contemplating how to manage myself financially then I would spend more time here than in Lebanon just because of access to Healthcare".*

Ahmad, when asked about healthcare availability in Lebanon vs the Netherlands since he wanted to move permanently back laughed and said.

"Healthcare that's a funny topic so from one side at least for me healthcare and Lebanon is way better than the Netherlands if you have the money and that is important to note that it is if you have the money."

He Also seemed to hedge his bets although stating that although he preferred Lebanese medical personnel over the Dutch ones, he stated that in case of further complications in his health then he would come back to the Netherlands.

"Healthcare access and medication access is better here if god forbid, I got a chronic disease in Lebanon even if I have the money sometimes, I will not have access to medical facilities that are as good as here and that's consistent as here but in a sense of doctors I would take a Lebanese doctor over Dutch one any day of the week".



Healthcare for this group of respondents was, as it is to most people, a priority. Despite being more attracted to the medical personnel in Lebanon they also stated that equipment is better in the Netherlands. More importantly is that while healthcare didn't pose as an attraction in one place specifically for them the other it also didn't put itself as a hindrance for people to choose freely, especially when the respondents saw that their financial capabilities allow them to choose the healthcare that they want, so it was directly related to the capability of the respondents to choose their plans.

On the other hand, other respondents had a more pessimistic view on healthcare availability if they decided to live in Lebanon with most of them blaming the recent financial and fiscal crisis for the demise of that sector. Julia stated that she doesn't believe single elderly in Lebanon can be provided with proper care and in her answer also stated that the healthcare system in Lebanon doesn't provide the proper treatments.

"Health is a big problem i can say to you that I don't believe in the health system in Lebanon specially if i am old and i have no kids to take care of me in Lebanon and if you have no one the country won't take of you and have money or not you would be lucky to get proper medication".

Similarly, Ghena stated that for her the healthcare sector in Lebanon doesn't function properly. She also emphasized that it is frightening for her to live there as elderly in the future saying,

"The whole medical system in the country is not working as it should so that is what makes me want to retire anywhere and stay in a place where I want health insurance".

Ghena didn't stop there she also gave an anecdote of her Lebanese friend's experience with the medical system.

"One of my dear friends that lives in Qatar was diagnosed with cancer and when we talked about going back to Lebanon because we still think that the medication Lebanon and the doctors



are better than other places at least in the near our neighborhoods she said that I need to take \$200 worth of medication every week for my chemotherapy and in Lebanon I cannot find it every week".

Salah described a similar worry that he has despite his plan to visit Lebanon and spending time there; however, it is a main reason why he also chose that the Netherlands will be a base for his residency and will only visit Lebanon for a couple of months per year. The interviewees above highlighted that their post-retirement plans included a non-negotiable good quality healthcare that they believe will not be available to them in Lebanon, which puts them in a position to consider that if there is the ability to live in Lebanon it would be temporary, and/or there should always be a base outside in case of medical needs post-retirement.

7.5 Social networks in the Netherlands

Social networks were the main point of analysis on the field and were also investigated heavily in the interviews. The points of inquiry behind social network research were to figure out how these migrants adapt to the Netherlands as a community of first-generation Lebanese migrants, or even as Lebanese migrants in general. Moreover, how does this community interaction affect the mobility decisions taken by individual constituents of this ethnic community? This comes with considering that these migrants as a group don't have the migratory culture in the context of the Netherlands like they do in France or other Lebanese hotspots in the world.

The results of the interviews showed that the participants value their ethnicity and culture and long for their memories of old lifestyles, especially the people that have been here for a longer period as discussed above. However, the interviews have also demonstrated that the interviewees value certain aspects of Dutch culture and value the certain opportunities that life in the Netherlands has granted them and have worked on integrating themselves in it. Migrants that have been here for more than five years showed excellent integration to the language and almost 5 of the 9 participants are/were at one stage in a long-term relationship with a Dutch person. Certain interviewees largely expressed that they are a mix of both cultures when they live here, and they



value it. Younes and Ghena express that they hold emotions that make them feel adapted saying this like *"I feel Dutch"* or things like *"I am more Dutch than the Dutch now"* respectively. Salah, similarly, had an affirmative view on the topic stating *"I am definitely a Dutch citizen, and I am adapted like one and I live like one"*. Other interviewees when also asked about their level of adaptation or assimilation to Dutch society also mentioned that they feel adapted but also mentioned their Lebanese side without the question holding any Lebanese connotations. Julia mentioned that he has very much become Dutch-anized and loves it but also mentioned that *"on the other hand I'm still very Lebanese in many other aspects"*. Ali also held similar convictions confirming that even if he adapted quickly and easily and respects what the Dutch culture holds, he also mentioned that *"there are things that a person cannot get out of his heart, soul, and mind that make you Lebanese"*.

On the other hand, other participants in the interviews claimed that even if they appreciate the Dutch culture, they all had a hard time to adapt or to begin to adapt. However, they claimed that the problem with that is not them, it is however the Dutch society or at least what they have experienced from it. Julia expressed that she still doesn't have a grasp on the Dutch community, because she doesn't meet them in her daily life anywhere outside of work, and even in her work there aren't many Dutch people. Samar stated also that she and despite adapting to the lifestyle in the Netherlands she still has a hard time adapting to the community because the only contact she has with people is through the gym and it isn't that much contact as well. Interviewee number 9 took a more definitive conviction about adaptation starting even after 41 years here he still believe that an immigrant can never become Dutch saying.

"I can tell you one thing for certain: a person born outside the Netherlands can never become Dutch even if you speak the language even if you look alike to a certain extent, it is just so clear for them that you are not Dutch".

These sorts of feelings were also relevant with respondents who believed that they themselves have adapted but stated that the community hasn't adapted to accept their adaptation.



Kamil was vocal about this and even stated that he *"...became tired of trying to prove to the Dutch that I am similar because no matter what you do, they will never look at you as a Dutch person"*.

Societal relations between the immigrants themselves as a Lebanese migrant community in the Netherlands was also investigated as part of the interview process. The interviewees all shared similar views on the Lebanese migrants in the Netherlands as a community, they all stated that even though they share a similar background and almost identical values of life and traditions they have found it rather difficult to engage in meaningful relationships with other Lebanese people on any other basis than for the sake of pure Lebanese gatherings. Makram said that he doesn't have meaningful relationships with Lebanese people here. He also hinted that he wished he had a meaningful friend as *"it would have been really helpful to ease my life here"*. On that topic Younes had a more extensive opinion on the subject also given that he has been living in the Netherlands for longer. He states that despite the Lebanese migrants being known for being strong and united abroad like France and the US, two countries he previously lived in, it is different from the Netherlands. He mentioned that there were barely any other Lebanese people in the early 2000 here and that only recently he can say that the community of Lebanese immigrants started to have a plus. Moreover, he also mentioned that as a Lebanese he never associated with any other middle eastern or Arab communities *"...because they don't share the lifestyle that a Lebanese does the way we view life is different"*. Ahmad who has been in the Netherlands for even a longer time also said something with a similar connotation *"In the Netherlands there are no serious diaspora populations, we are too little, and we live apart in far places, so there is no significant Lebanese social network for me"*. Finally, Samar mentioned that there is not just always similarity; she mentioned that *"because we Lebanese are never just Lebanese"*. Which correlates to the background literature and the field notes.



7.6 Field Observation

On the field, the situation was a translation of what was said in the interviews and expected in the literature. The observation was in two stages in person and online observation. The first, in-person observation on the ground happened over two 4+ hour outings with the participants as well as their families and other Lebanese participants in Amsterdam and Utrecht. The second observation included observing the participants' interaction over online text communication, mainly WhatsApp group chats which included most of the interview participants and other Lebanese contacts throughout the Netherlands. Throughout both observations common themes on the community's social interaction arose, themes that affect and influence current migrant's aspirations and capabilities throughout their lives in the Netherlands leading to affecting their future mobility planning and mobility decisions. Field themes can be concisely placed under two headers, the first explains how the community is still not a fully shaped community; it is a community underworks and is still in the process of construction. The second theme recognized that the community of these immigrants, while united a lot by what they have in common with being Lebanese and childhood experiences they also highlight signs of being divided by what it is or what it means to be Lebanese.

7.6.1 Community under construction

Most of the people at the gatherings were newcomers' people that have arrived in the Netherlands, yet as shown in the previous literature the reality of the Lebanese community in the Netherlands is that much of the people have arrived in the Netherlands recently. Community events were organized via online interaction that included hundreds of members mostly composed of youth, however from analyzing the attendees vs the online communications attendees for these events were mostly people that have been residents for a while, or people who have plans to become residents full-time, in an attempt to build some social connections and have a sense of the "old home" in the "new home". The people that were more excited about participating in these events were compared to their numbers: the people that have been residents for a longer time and are available, as well as people who have been in the Netherlands for 5-7 years' time and have the



building blocks of life ready for them. What was also noticeable was the interaction between the migrants whether on that online chat room or in person in a sense of translation of the cultural characteristics of people that have more experience and wisdom in life to be in the most parts given hierarchical respect. While this doesn't differ from general respect it was mostly expressed in expressions like "Rayess" (Boss), "Mokhtar" (a mayor-like position, or the chosen one), and "Sittna" (Our Lady) among other words. These expressions were mostly used especially when talking to the older people that have been here for a while in a fun manner, yet they still held meaning in the general connotation.

It was obvious that these outings that are being done almost monthly are still a new phenomenon given that people that were here for a medium time were also just meeting for the first time even if they live in the same cities. Moreover, new people were joining every time and being welcomed. A general sense of friendliness was dominant as all people appeared to be looking for someone that shares similar backgrounds in the same country. Everyone was interested in one another and asking for help or assistance on daily problems or life necessities was relevant on online chatting. New people generally ask for help in finding a good General Practitioner, dentist, carpenter, lawyer, or even restaurant recommendations in different cities, and people that have been here for a longer time or have more experiences in that region help by giving suggestions and tips on managing certain situations. There was always a wish for the expansion of the day trips or gatherings to engage more people, especially in further cities, leading to outings being done in a different city each time (Amsterdam-Utrecht-Groningen). Another important observation is how much Dutch normal day conversations take place between the immigrants themselves, especially between people that have been in the Netherlands for a while, with the new people always chiming in and or having opinions on the topics. "What do you think about the PVV (a local right-wing party)". A lot of other similar conversations follow on politics, like sharing who they voted for in

the European elections (figure 5.0), Dutch events like kings-day activities, even how the government is spending their tax money.

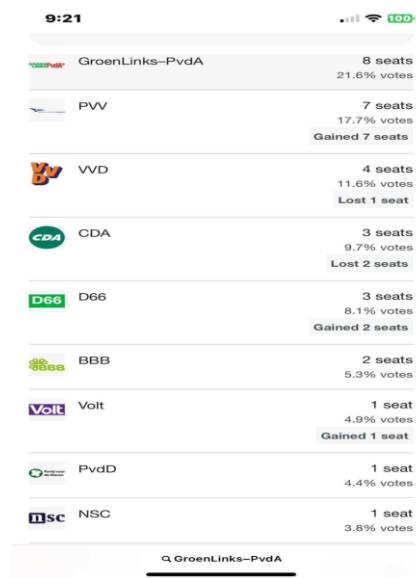


Figure 4 Image shared by participant talking about who he voted for in European Elections

It was so highly frequent on important election days that even sometimes there were divisions and debates between the immigrants themselves on Dutch policies and politics which some saw as normal while others saw repulsive due to former *"Trauma from our politics in Lebanon"*. When asked in the interviews about the social interaction previously people responded with mostly stating that there was either not enough people or cooperation in doing so. They also hinted that it was the case because of having small numbers and living far apart in different cities. Hence, it was also noticed that even people that have been in the Netherlands for a long time are still building their Lebanese community and social networks in the Netherlands. It is important to mention that the lack of such social networks and inability to access traditional societal satisfaction created a big need to visit the origin country, thus it was relevant within the interview participants especially the ones that have not been residents for a long time. Social networking especially with



other Lebanese was asked for by some participants in the interviews as it was seen to ease the adaptation, and embeddedness within the host community. This absence of societal interaction kept the gap in emotional connection between the immigrant and their origin country. Therefore, this made them more prone to choose to return to Lebanon for more nostalgic reasons mainly like food, nature, or simple old memorabilia (figures 6.0, 7.0, 8.0 respectively).



Figure 6 One of the many pictures shared on landscapes and nature of Lebanon.

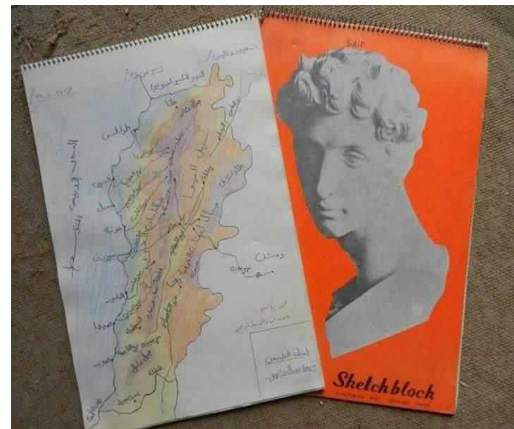


Figure 5 Picture Memorabilia of an old school drawing book



Figure 7 One of the plethora of pictures shared on Lebanese food.



7.6.2 United in Lebanon but divided as Lebanese.

The diasporic sense of nationalism was clear between the participants on the field and on online chat rooms, the constant reminders of life in Lebanon, pride in the food, music, artists, and even support of local entrepreneurs and individuals because they are Lebanese was intense to say the least. Dancing to "Dabke" music or listening to "Fairuz" was essential to express your identity at every outing. Likewise, simply enjoying Lebanese food or anything similar such as Turkish or Syrian with constant comparison with the Lebanese version saying "aenna atyab" or translated roughly to we (Lebanese) do it better was essential alongside the Lebanese flag being present and taken within the Goodbye picture. Constant sharing of news and events that is going on to Lebanon and the Lebanese people on online platforms was also a way to express the deep national identity that they have as diasporic first-generation immigrants. However, despite the intense nationalism in certain aspects especially in food, music, and nature, nationalism vanished when participants started to talk politics and/or the situation of things in Lebanese considerations, as shown by previous literature and Lebanese news daily there is a lack of understanding and having a common view of what Lebanon is. Often leading to arguments or people even leaving the group chats, especially when discussing recent events on the border and what role or duty Lebanon or being Lebanese holds in the recent or all events that happened, is happening, and will happen in the future. This highlights the paradox that being Lebanese abroad is, and experiencing the divisions that led the people to leave the country in the first place whether directly or indirectly.

The above paradox in national identification influenced the interviewees responses. While some expressed their deep love and nostalgia to the life of food and dance and culture making them want to retire in Lebanon and led them to choose to plan as to return to these pillars of life as a Lebanese. On the other hand, others expressed the instability of the situation and deep hatred to the politics and divisions that happened to the country that led to government and consequently healthcare collapse in recent years. This led furthering a sense of repulsion and bad memories of wars and conflicts and impotence of the governments, the main reasons that made them leave in the first place. This also exacerbated the sense of hopelessness as felt and expressed by numerous



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participants leading to the loss of hopes of visiting or living there and essentially planning a life there after retirement.



8. Discussion

This study attempted to emphasize the intricate relationships between aspirations and capabilities and their role in framing choices of mobility between the origin and host country post-retirement. Both aspirations and capabilities are under a constant stream of influence by life circumstances, an individual's experiences, and the broader socio-political and cultural context. On one hand, results highlighted individuals that strongly desire to return to Lebanon, some had limited capabilities due to financial resources, healthcare accessibility, or family commitments in the Netherlands, while others had capabilities to adapt to these constraints. On the other hand, other respondents had no aspiration to retire in Lebanon or have mobility between the countries disregarding the availability or lack thereof of capabilities.

8.1 Aspirations

The results above identified general drivers of the participants' aspirations. These drivers were mainly centered around the intensity of the pull of home and society mainly through proximity to family and society inside Lebanon vs outside, and Memories of Lebanon whether good and bad. These reasons were the drivers of aspirations and the differences in the belief in the role of the intensity or importance of them led to different mobility plans for future mobility between the host and origin country post-retirement.

8.1.1 Proximity to Family & Social Connections

Family and social connectedness was a major point of discussion when talking about what influences post-retirement mobility with the interviewees. François-Charles Wolff (2006) highlighted that family members and their presence or the lack of their presence was also a major determinant in migrant return decisions, in the research, people who plan to spend their post-retirement life contribute to being closer to what is left of family and friends in the country, a lot of people that kept visiting were able to keep their social connections and build upon it. Whether it was parents, cousins, or siblings, the respondents seemed to have the urge to make up for lost time and move closer to their loved ones. However, this was influenced by the state of the



nationality of the interviewee's partner. Where interviewees had a Lebanese partner the pull of family had almost a double effect, and the choice of long-term return if the capabilities were present was most likely. However, when the respondents had a non-Lebanese partner the pull of family was two-sided and the aspirations were split between spending time in Lebanon and the other main member of the family, the spouse themselves. Therefore, the choice of permanent return was more difficult, and the most likely form of mobility chosen was to take a "Vis a Vie" approach between the countries, and in some cases if the family pull in Lebanon was weak the choice of not going to Lebanon at all was also on the table. However, kids despite being seen as central to any mobility pre-retirement, post-retirement had little effect on the mobility decision of the parents. There was a common understanding that the kids had all their own independent life to live, they also had the mobility capabilities to adapt to the parents' decision, and unlike most family or friends in Lebanon they can visit them where they are and especially if the respondent also demonstrated the ability to visit their kids when needed.

There was also a deep longing for societal connections in Lebanon especially within the interviewees that have arrived more recently and have been trying to make a society for themselves in the Netherlands. The lack of such social networks and inability to access traditional societal satisfaction, like the ones they used to have in Lebanon, created a big need to visit the origin country. This absence of societal interaction kept the gap in emotional connection between the immigrant and their origin country. Therefore, this made them more prone to choose to return to Lebanon. On the other hand, interviewees who had lost all social connections in Lebanon either for being outside for a long time and not visiting or for other personal reasons felt no need or attraction to move even for a short time to Lebanon, and preferred mobility between the Netherlands and other countries.

8.1.2 Nostalgia

Topa et al (2017) added to literature stating that psychological predispositions and personality factors to the retirement plan preconditions. Böck & Gehring (2013) also mentioned



various other life factors that influence their mobility decisions, namely their citizen status and their desire to die in a specific place. This research discovered that Memories took a significant chunk of the conversation time whether in the interviews or in the observation on the field. Regardless of good or bad memories, one's nostalgia and melancholy played a shaping role in the future aspirations and thus post-retirement plans. Respondents with good memories of Lebanon, especially the ones that immigrated a long time ago, expressed that they missed the life that they had and that they grew up in. This left an urge and a longing to relive it in the remaining years of their life after work is over. However, and while almost everyone expresses the need to relive it, there was a disagreement between the respondents with good memories as some believed that the bad situation has changed Lebanon to the point of no return and it is impossible to relive those memories, and hence that group chose not to take the purity of the life they had and of their memories. On the other hand, other respondents claimed that good memories are possible to relive, and it was a nostalgic push for their aspirations to plan a simple life and work extensively to plan a retirement plan in Lebanon whether on a beach somewhere or in the middle of their village countryside.

Contrary to the previous point of view, people that have recently immigrated from Lebanon or visited more recently showed higher rates of bad memories and anecdotes on the contemporary ever declining life standards of the country. These memories, unlike the good ones, only had a repulsion effect on the aspirations of the immigrants. This led migrants to remember their previous aspiration that led them to leave their country of origin in the first place, with an increasing sense of hopelessness that the situation has not changed and thus will not change in the future by the time they retire. This reality oriented them to consider retirement mobility away from Lebanon, and post-retirement plans that do not include life in Lebanon after retirement except for the occasional visits in some cases.



8.2 Capabilities

Previously Bolzman (1994) explained the migrant resources and human capital consist of socio economic, cultural, social, legal, and health means stating that a duality of these resources between the migrants' host and origin country shape their return decisions. Similarly in this research, participant Capabilities had a direct effect on the post-retirement plans for the participants. These capabilities, whether current, past, or future predicted, significantly impacted the decisions affecting the participants ability to follow or shape their aspirations and thus post-retirement considerations. Results highlighted common aspects and determinants of capabilities also discussed throughout the field outings and field research. These capabilities were essential in shaping aspirations and enabling or incapacitating participants to take choices that follow their preferred suture plans. Common themes included the political and healthcare situation in Lebanon, current societal adaptation in the Netherlands and possible future readaptation in Lebanon, and the financial capabilities. Financial capabilities were also demonstrated to have an overarching effect on the capabilities and aspirations.

8.2.1 The Political situation

The political situation created a barrier for some participants, constantly hindering their mobility, and its current desperate and persistent state made it become a future barrier and a present one. Given the ongoing troubles people were left with no stability to continue living in Lebanon, when asked about the reasons of immigration people that have been here for a while said war in the 70s, 80s, & 90s and people who arrived recently said government and financial collapse. People insisted that they left aiming for stability in their lives and stability and respect as human lives was the primary goal. However, when people have been living in the Netherlands for a while and still see the lack of stability and respect from the government to the people some see that there is no environment ready to host them back and thus refrain from going back, especially respondents that had partners that are not Lebanese and had little to no stake to live their post-retirement.

8.2.2 *The Healthcare Considerations*



In a different yet related aspect healthcare was highlighted as an issue that influences the participants' mobility considerations. The political and financial situation led to the collapse of the bigger portion of the healthcare system, and thus significantly increased the worries that the immigrants might not be able to attain the required healthcare necessary for their health concerns post-retirement. The fear around healthcare mostly centered around the availability of machinery and medications due to lack of funding rather than medical capabilities. Consequently, fear of quality access to healthcare stood as a barrier for a permanent return choice for some of the respondents and decided that the priority of self and partner health take precedence over moving back full time in Lebanon.

8.2.2 Adaptability in both cultural contexts

While all respondents expressed good if not a great capability in adapting and embedding themselves to the lifestyle necessary to fit in in the Netherlands granting them with the appropriate tools to survive a working life, most participants found difficulties with the societal embedding ability of the Dutch culture and found themselves living similar lives yet distant from the Dutch societal context, despite sharing the work and life market for years and even in some contexts decades. This left respondents with no-one to have social interaction within a life where they don't must go to work, hence leaving no social space for them to plan retirement here, making them consider moving back as an option. On the other hand, adapting to the lifestyle in the Netherlands for years was a point of question when considering moving back to Lebanon and not having access to similar amenities. While this reality created a sense of risk, many argued that the abilities to adapt if they decide to move back will not be as difficult as loneliness would be in the Netherlands.

Field research complemented the interviews when it came to social networking with other Lebanese in the Netherlands. It was clear that the participants also struggled to constitute social connections with fellow Lebanese contacts. This had two main reasons, the lack of numbers in general because the Netherlands is still a fresh destination to immigrants from Lebanon, and the second is the divisions between the Lebanese themselves on what they considered it meant to be



Lebanese abroad and how Lebanon should be presented in the sense of identity abroad. The lack of numbers correlated with the immigrants being spread out and thus unable to gain connections and therefore inability to quench the thirst of societal connection and these in turn led to bigger aspirations of return post-retirement because immigrants thought that there will be no Dutch and no Lebanese social networking in the Netherlands. On the other hand, the division between the immigrants on how to represent themselves translated to minor troubles in communications and sometimes heated online debates. These divisions acted as constant reminders that there is no "light at the end of the tunnel", it also gave the sensation for the participants that Lebanese in Lebanon would be worse in their divisions and infighting. Hence, this led the participants to reconsider Lebanon as a choice of permanent stay post-retirement.

8.2.3 Financial Capabilities

Financial capabilities were not considered an issue to most participants that considered themselves upper middle or upper class within the context of the Netherlands as they considered it not something that affects their aspirations and thus choices of post-retirement plans. However, others considered finances a capability essential to fix the other capability and aspiration shortcomings. Finances played an essential role in equipping people with the ability to overcome issues that might hinder their adaptation of lifestyle by being able to afford independent electricity, water, life necessities that are not necessarily available for everyone. Moreover, the results highlighted that finances were essential to gain access to quality healthcare in Lebanon and thus better off participants showed less worry about healthcare and increased their ability to make choices in a way that best fits their aspirations. On the other side of the coin however, the financial crisis and mismanagement of the government in Lebanon created worries like the lack of trust in the banking system and tax management worries between both countries. This limited the freedom of a permanent move choice and forced some to plan their post-retirement in a way to not live permanently in Lebanon and or have constant mobility between countries, and in other cases not wanting to visit at all.



9. Conclusion & Policy Implications

The research aimed to understand the choices of post-retirement mobility plans among the Lebanese first generation immigrants by analyzing what are the key aspects that shape and influence their aspirations and capabilities for post-retirement lives. Furthermore, understanding aspirations and capabilities translate into understanding immigrant mobility by analyzing their mobility projections and plans for post-retirement, the research will attempt to explore how these plans are shaped by the interplay of aspirations and capabilities. This study examined how aspirations and capabilities influence retirement decisions involving mobility between the origin and host countries. Life circumstances, personal experiences, and socio-political and cultural context shape both aspirations and capabilities. Some respondents strongly wished to return to Lebanon, but financial constraints or family commitments in the Netherlands limited their ability to do so. In contrast, others lacked the ambition to retire in Lebanon or move between countries, regardless of their capabilities.

This research tried to contribute into the field of migration by simply deepening the comprehensions and understanding of the concept of transnational retirement, as well as highlighting the aspect that migration isn't simply a one-way process or even a two way process yet however it is a process of constant mobility that an immigrant or any person engages in even in the final prospective years of their lives. Additionally, it highlights the role of personal and nostalgia or memories, and social networks in mobility decisions. Finally, it also adds to the plethora of literature that highlights that mobility choices and considerations go deeper than push-pull factors and have individualistic characteristics that are subject to influence and change by day-to-day life experiences and factors. These findings emphasize the need to consider individual agency and structural constraints when trying to understand retirement and mobility choices within transnational or migrant communities. Individuals constantly navigate multifaceted limitations, desires, networks, and ever-changing realities when making decisions about their lives after retirement. On one hand, it is important that future research continues to understand outside

influences on migration mobility and migrant embeddedness in host communities. However, it is essential that literature further investigates the importance of individual experiences and choices and conditions that migrants face in their entire journey leading to a just and free choice in mobility. As well as, the differences that affect those experiences and choices between males and females.

9.1 Policy Implications

The complexity of the interplay of influences that shape the aspirations and capabilities that result in future mobility patterns provides important policy considerations and implications for the future. Firstly, the research highlights the importance of the need for support for international communities to help and aid in proper embeddedness in the host society. This shall not stop in housing and or job availability and adaptation but also in finding and sustaining social network embeddedness and intercultural communications that will have long term benefits for the immigrant and the host personnel and communities. This should also be accompanied by equal access to retirement guidance and financial planning support, especially in tax environments so that immigrants get to gain further knowledge on what are their duties as well as rights in building a sustainable retirement. Finally, expressing the importance of fostering community building support mechanisms inside migrant communities especially migrants from areas susceptible to inner conflicts.



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11.3 Research Interview Guide:

Background Information:

- Establishing rapport: Beginning with open-ended questions to foster a comfortable and conversational atmosphere. Asking the participant to share their story, including their background, migration journey, and the duration of their residency in the Netherlands.
 - ***Can you tell me a bit about yourself and your background, including when you migrated to the Netherlands from Lebanon, explaining the trip between the two countries?***
 - ***What was your main reason for migrating to the Netherlands?***
 - ***What is your current profession?***
 - ***Are you a Dutch citizen or not yet? and are you currently in the pension system of the Netherlands?***
- Gathering contextual details: Exploring their current living situation, delving into details like the type of housing they occupy and the specific location within the Netherlands.
 - ***Briefly describe your current living situation (e.g., type of housing, location, who you live with).***
 - ***Do you have a Family, and do they currently live with you, in the same country or abroad?***
 - ***Is your current spouse or partner Lebanese? Has he/she ever visited Lebanon?***
 - ***Can you describe the frequency of your visits or trips back to Lebanon, alone or with your family?***
 - ***(voluntary answer) where would you place yourself and your family on the scale of income in the Netherlands, Low, Low-Middle, Middle, High-Middle, High-income category?***
 - ***Are you the only income source in your household?***



Aspirations for post-retirement mobility:

- Exploring retirement dreams: Transitioning to the core of the interview by inquiring about their hopes and aspirations for life after retirement. Encouraging them to elaborate on their envisioned lifestyle and any specific goals they aim to achieve.
 - ***How do you understand the concept of retirement and how do you envision yours?***
 - ***What are your hopes and aspirations for your life after retirement?***
- Desired post-retirement location: Delving deeper into their preferred location for post-retirement living. Probing gently to understand if they envision remaining in the Netherlands, returning to Lebanon, or exploring other possibilities.
 - ***Where do you ideally see yourself living in retirement (e.g., Netherlands, Lebanon, other)?***
 - ***Do you have any specific plans or goals related to travel or relocation in retirement?***
- Factors influencing aspirations: Encouraging them to share the various factors that hold significant weight in their decision-making process regarding their post-retirement living situation.
 - ***What factors are most important to you when considering your living situation in retirement (e.g., proximity to family, access to healthcare, cultural environment)?***
 - ***How would you consider that spending some time in Lebanon is less demanding financially than staying here for a couple of months? Can this be an influential factor in your mobility decision? Is that appealing?***
 - ***To what level does healthcare and elderly care play a role in your retirement plans and daily life?***
 - ***Do you worry about health care availability and quality in Lebanon when you visit or when you live there?***
- Family and social support: Exploring the role of family and friends in their post-retirement plans.



- ***Do you have any family members who live in Lebanon or other countries?***
- ***Do you still have friends or regular contacts in Lebanon? Do these contacts affect your daily life?***
- ***How do you think your relationships with them might influence your post-retirement mobility plans?***
- Challenges
 - ***How would you consider that your retirement plans intersect with anyone in your family or anyone that might influence your post-retirement decisions?***

Capabilities for post-retirement mobility planning:

- Financial preparedness: Gaining insights into their current financial situation and their strategies for planning for retirement.
 - ***Can you describe your current financial situation and how you are planning for retirement financially?***
 - ***Do you own any property in Lebanon or the Netherlands? If so, how do you think this might influence your mobility options in retirement?***

Awareness of support systems: Assessing their awareness of government programs or resources available in the Netherlands that might directly or indirectly support their post-retirement mobility plans. Examples could include pension plans, healthcare systems, and any additional programs relevant to their situation.

- ***Are you aware of the Dutch pension plan regulations? What level of knowledge do you have about your possible compensation in the pension system?***
- ***If there is an ability to receive your pension in countries outside the EU, would you think that it is financially reasonable to live in a cheaper place where you can get more value for your pension money? To what extent would you consider Lebanon to be that country?***
- ***Are you depending on your personal savings, your family, or your pension plan to fund your retirement?***



- ***Have you had any discussions with family or friends about your post-retirement plans? If so, what was the nature of these discussions?***
- Navigating legal complexities: Exploring their confidence level in navigating the legal and administrative processes involved in potentially relocating back to Lebanon or another country after retirement.
 - ***(If Nationalized) have you regained your Lebanese citizenship? And have you given this citizenship to your kids?***
 - ***(If woman & married to a non-Lebanese man) to what extent does not being able to give Lebanese citizenship to your kids and husband affect your visits and or living arrangements in Lebanon?***
 - ***Do you feel comfortable navigating the logistics of potentially relocating to another country in retirement (e.g., visas, healthcare systems, housing arrangements)?***
 - ***Would you find that going back and forth between the countries is easier to manage than settling in one, or is it the other way around? why?***
- Community connection: Investigating the strength of their connection to the Lebanese community within the Netherlands.
- ***Do you sense that you belong to a community in the Netherlands, may it be Lebanese or otherwise? If so, would you care to elaborate further on what this community means to you?***
 - ***What do you think about the community you left in Lebanon? Does it still exist for you?***
 - ***Would you be able to adapt easily if you go back to life in Lebanon? Why?***
 - ***Would adaptation be easier if you decide to be continuously mobile between the two countries during your post-retirement?***
- Health considerations: Acknowledging that health is a crucial factor in mobility planning, particularly as individuals age. Exploring any existing health concerns, they



might have and how these concerns might influence their mobility options and preferences in the future.

- ***What role does healthcare play in your daily life planning for you and your family?***
- ***What are the health concerns that might impact your ability to relocate or travel post-retirement?***
- ***What is the level of your convictions in the quality of healthcare you receive here? Is it affordable for you?***
- ***What is your ability to access similar healthcare to the one you receive here when you visit or stay in Lebanon for a while or when you think you want to move there permanently?***
- Challenges
 - ***Are there any legal or social challenges that prevent you from being physically present in Lebanon?***
 - ***To what extent would you consider the current economic and political situation have affected your previous answers?***
 - ***How would your answers change majorly if we can imagine the country without these problems, or at least the Lebanon that was there pre-2019?***
 - ***To what extent would your answers have changed if money was limitless?***

Closing:

- Open-ended invitation: Concluding the interview by providing them with an opportunity to share any additional thoughts or perspectives they may have regarding their post-retirement mobility aspirations and capabilities.
 - ***What are the biggest challenges you anticipate facing in planning for your post-retirement mobility?***
 - ***What resources or information would you find helpful in making informed decisions about your post-retirement living situation?***



- Addressing questions: Thanking them for their participation and offering to answer any questions they might have about the research or the interview process.
 - ***Is there anything else you would like to share about your aspirations and capabilities related to post-retirement mobility?***



11.4 Informed Consent Form

Agreement to participate in (MSc. International Development Studies) research project

Title: Investigating The Role of Aspirations & Capabilities
in Post Retirement Mobility Planning in Middle
aged and Pre-Elderly First Generation Lebanese
Migrants in The Netherlands

Thank you for taking the time to consider my (MSc. thesis) research project. I am at your disposal for any questions you might have.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to gather data on [specific research topic; in lay terms intelligible to a wider audience] to [specific research aim or objective].

Procedures

As a participant in this study, you will be asked to [describe specific procedures, such as completing a survey or participating in an interview]. The main use of the information you provide will help me to [what will the data be used for]. The study will take approximately [time frame] to complete.

Risks, discomforts and Benefits

There are [no known] risks or discomforts associated with participating in this study. [In case of risks or discomforts explain]. The benefits of participating in this study include the potential for contributing to the understanding of [specific research topic].

Confidentiality

Your participation in this study will be kept strictly confidential. Your name will not be associated with any data collected, and any data collected will be kept confidential.

Participation and Withdrawal



Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about research privacy, the treatment of research participants or this study project, please contact [researcher's name] at [researcher's contact information]. If you have any complaints regarding the research or the researcher, you may contact the supervisor Dora Sampaio at d.i.martinssampaio@uu.nl.

I can confirm that (please tick box):

- I have read and understand the information sheet and consent form of this research project.
- I have had the opportunity to discuss this study. I am satisfied with the answers I have been given.
- I agree that my participation in this research project is voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw from the study until the moment that the study has been published, and to decline to answer any individual questions in the study without needing to say why.
- I understand I will not be paid for my participation.
- I understand I can ask questions at any point during, before or after the activity about any aspect of the research.
- I understand that I can request any [texts/photos/etc.] with identifiable features to be blurred, made non-identifiable or removed from the research.
- I understand that the data collected for this study will be kept confidentially either in a locked facility or as a password-protected encrypted file on a password-protected computer of the researcher. [If applicable: Audio files or transcripts will be removed after the completion of the research].
- I understand that the information collected for this study will be used only for research purposes only, such as a MSc thesis, articles, book chapters, published and unpublished work and presentations (if relevant).
- I consent to my [interview/focus group discussion] being audio-recorded [if relevant], and understand I have the right to ask for the audio-recorder to be turned off at any time.
- I understand that my name will not be used on any documents, presentations or other output of the research.
- [A pseudonym of my own choosing can be used in this research: _____]

“I agree to participate in this individual research project and acknowledge receipt of a copy of this consent form and the research project information sheet.”



Signature of participant: _____

Date: _____

“I agree to abide by the conditions set out in the information sheet and I ensure to minimise harm done to any participant during this research.”

Signature of researcher: _____

Date: _____

Please fill in the following information. It will only be used in case you want to be sent a copy of interview notes and/or transcripts [so that you have the opportunity to make corrections; if relevant].

Address: _____

Email: _____

11.5 Pseudonym Table

Interview Participants	Pseudonym
Interview #1	Makram
Interview #2	Julia
Interview #3	Kamil



Interview #4	Younes
Interview #5	Ghena
Interview #6	Salah
Interview #7	Ali
Interview #8	Samar
Interview #9	Ahmad