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Pacific Small Island Developing States and Climate Change Migration

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It's early afternoon in the Carterets, a paradise-like atoll off the coast of Bougainville in the South Pacific, and the tide of the light blue ocean waters has yet to reach its peak level. Two men stand about 8 metres from the island shore in waist-deep water. One of the men, a native to the Carterets, points to the sea bed on which they stand, 'right here was where my grandfather's house used to be, and the coastline was out that way another 18 metres' (ABC Australia 2007). The man points to a line on the horizon where light blue waters meet those of a deeper shade of blue, where the land used to end some two decades before.

At present the clutches of climate change are reaching only the most vulnerable populations, low-income countries and those in geographically vulnerable regions (Bardsley and Hugo 2010), such as the low-lying coral atolls of the South Pacific. Small island developing states (SIDS) in the Pacific are functioning on a very limited amount of resources that has been carefully balanced through millennia of ecological and cultural evolutionary processes, so their lack of ability to innovate or diversify their livelihoods (by ecological circumstance) renders them highly vulnerable to any environmental changes (Hartmann 2010, 237; Locke 2009). Climate change makes the small number of livelihoods possible on these islands even smaller, spurring an influx of people from rural islands to the more 'urban' islands with municipal centres, exacerbating the issue of resources (Locke 2009, 171).

1. Introduction

Through examining the three largest contemporary cases of climate change resettlement in the Pacific region through an anthropological lens, those of Kiribati, Tuvalu and the Carterets (Papua New Guinea) (Figure 1), this paper makes a case for what contexts and factors allow for a more successful resettlement and what ones do not, and why. For the purpose of this paper, successful migration is defined by retention of migrants' agency,

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Figure 1. Map of Migration from Kiribati to Fiji and from Tuvalu to New Zealand

Source: https://www.freeworldmaps.net/ocean/pacific/
Annotations added by author

politically, socially and economically, and the continuance of cultural expression. Firstly, the paper establishes *why* climate change migration in the region is particularly pressing and unique: because it involves indigenous people moving to areas in which they may not have access to resources because of the prevalence of customary land laws. Secondly, it examines the three case studies in depth, looking at the cultural, political, economic and environmental aspects of each migration. Lastly, the paper evaluates the merits and demerits of these migrations, in the end arguing that successful migration and relocation in the Pacific involves measures that allow agency or the ability to maintain livelihood, as well as freedom of cultural expression. Factors that allow this are land security, access to resources, sustainability of livelihoods, maintenance of social network or sense of community, integration into host community, and maintenance of social and cultural capital (Edwards 2013; Connell and Lutkehaus 2017a).

2. The relationship between culture and land

Before exploring what makes for successful climate change migration in the Pacific, it must first be established *why* the case of Pasifika[1] migration is especially complicated: why it is different from any other type of migration, developing country or not. Firstly, the overwhelming majority of those being forced to migrate are indigenous people, of which there are approximately 12.23 million in the region (Worldometer 2020), denoting a unique and intertwined relationship between people, culture and the land. Thus, for Pasifika to leave their land means their culture must live in memory. For indigenous people in general, relocation comes with many negative effects including 'a break in ties to a sense of place and identity, self-efficacy, rights to land and culture, and bridging and bonding

1 Pasifika is a term to denote indigenous peoples of the Pacific, encompassing all three colonially named regions of Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia, denoting an interconnected heritage and culture.

capital that is often derived from physical places and losing access to common property resources' (McNamara et al. 2018, 112). Thus, when it comes to relocation, not only is Pasifika identity and sense of belonging at risk, but so too is their ability to sustain a decent quality of life somewhere new, as their existence until that moment has been defined by rootedness to certain environments and access to natural resources. This is not to say that Pasifika cultures and peoples are static or cannot travel (they are in fact both dynamic and voyagers by nature) but to say that indigenous peoples' livelihoods and their ability to retain culture are heavily dependent on access to land and resources. Culture is something that is embodied, i.e. carried with one wherever one goes; however, culture is not readily expressed in new locales where people lack community, access to resources and a familiar environment. Consequently, Pasifika ambassadors insist that all migration must be centred on 'retaining territory, nationality, and cultural identity' (McNamara and Gibson 2009, 482).

Land, composed of unique water features, geological formations, geographic placement and ecological systems, shapes the people who occupy it, and in turn their culture and ways of knowing and existing in the world (Ortner 2005). One Pasifika NGO worker explains why there is such an attachment to the land: 'you know your way at home ... then you are yourself. Your identity is there' (Farbotko et al. 2015, 540). Of course this can be said of anyone's homeland. However, indigenous Pasifika are unique in that their culture is *so* geographically located. The language, practices, traditions and beliefs are all constructed from the immediate environment, and are as a result not easily transferable (Percival 2010). To many, to leave your land is the equivalent of breaking a millennia-long continuous history, embodying the loss of not only place-specific knowledge but the past, present and future. Rev. Tafue Lusama, from Tuvalu, explains, 'Land is equivalent to life in our culture. [If] you lose your land, you are dead. So if your land has been gradually eroded by the sea, you are literally seeing or looking at your life being eaten away. It tells you that you won't be able to give life to your children and your grandchildren' (Dekker 2011). Thus, what Pasifika are looking at in the coming years is not simply the loss of land but the loss of a way of life that cannot be readily replicated or transferred to wherever they migrate to.

"Land, composed of unique water features, geological formations, geographic placement and ecological systems, shapes the people who occupy it."

Moving within the Pacific is especially corrosive when it comes to identity and belonging because a large majority of the land in the Pacific is customarily held, with between 65 and 99 per cent of the land in the region managed through customary tenure systems (Constable 2017, 1033). This way of operating makes it harder for climate change migrants within the region to acquire land on new islands because 'land managed under customary ownership systems cannot be bought and sold, and can only be transferred according to kinship arrangements' (Campbell and Warrick 2014; Constable 2017, 1034). Without access to land, Pasifika migrants have trouble establishing sources of livelihood, continuing the traditional practice of their culture and maintaining their own social networks, which have often doubled as safety nets in times of need. Francis Tebau, an indigenous I-Kiribati representative, explains the dire consequences of losing land: 'if we lost our land, just like my brother from Tokelau

says, we lose everything: our culture, skills that we have, everything' (Steiner 2015, 155). Environmentally rooted cultures, ways of knowing and living, are not recoverable without access to land, and, in particular, a land that is similar to the one that was left behind (Steiner 2015). Ultimately, resettlement within the Pacific is difficult because land is not a commodity in the region; it is not easily bought or sold or given to newcomers, so newcomers are frequently marginalised and impoverished in their new place of habitation (Noy 2016; Connell and Lutkehaus 2017a). Because migrants in the Pacific are not of the culture in their new place of refuge, 'settlers have been perceived as outsiders and rival claimants to valuable coastal resources' (Connell and Lutkehaus 2017a, 79). Unfortunately, although migrants are moving within a small geographic distance, and to places that are seemingly similar in culture, there is still a clear distinction between insiders and outsiders – one that is made even clearer by small population and resource sizes, ultimately making maintenance of migrants' own culture and agency difficult.

3. Different types of migration

While climate change migration is very much a physical movement, it is also an issue of more intangible matters such as culture and identity. Anote Tong, the former President of Kiribati, says, 'some of us might think climate change is just about moving people to a safer place. But it's about equity, identity and human rights' (Hingley 2017, 161). The logistics and metrics of movement are not the only thing at stake here; the very notion of human agency and dignity is in question. In looking at these cases through an anthropological lens it is important to evaluate them via their processes of movement as well as the outcomes of such movement, i.e. how they account for lack of land access, agency and the break between people, culture and land.

Intra-Pacific SIDS migration: Kiribati to Fiji

The Republic of Kiribati, with a population of 110,000, lies right in the middle of the Pacific just south of the equator (Figure 1). Comprising of 33 atolls, depressions of former mountains, now just rings of land only about 2 metres above the sea with lagoons in the middle, Kiribati is at high risk from the rising seas, that shrink the land about 20 cm a year (UN Habitat 2015). When asked about the prospect of leaving their homeland, many I-Kiribati suggest at the core of their concerns is the issue of culture and how leaving will or will not alter it (DW Documentary 2017). Ultimately the question of migration is not whether or not it will happen, but how culture is accounted for and protected in migration.

For the purpose of this case study, planned migration using the purchase of land abroad will be investigated. In 2014, during the visit of Ratu Epeli Nailatikau, President of Fiji, to Kiribati, he announced that Fiji would be willing to host whole communities from Kiribati, saying 'if all else fails you will not be refugees' (Delaibatiki 2014, 2). This welcoming of migration, and purchase of land in Fiji by the I-Kiribati government, speak to the 'Our Sea of Islands' (Hau'ofa 1994) ethos of solidarity within Oceania, as well as the notion of life lived in an archipelago, i.e. distinct yet interconnected existences, much like islands in a chain (Tabucanon 2013).

In Nailatikau's statement that I-Kiribati will not become refugees should they move, he is speaking directly to the main qualm of migrants involving moving: becoming second-class citizens without their culture and access to resources, much like those fleeing conflict. Kiribati has subsequently purchased 5,500 acres (20 square kilometres) of land on Vanua Levu, Fiji's second largest island. That is a rare freehold property in Fiji, as most land is customarily held. In buying land in Fiji, not only does Kiribati have agency in determining its people's migration and providing food security for them back in Kiribati (Hermann and Kempf 2017), but it has the ability to keep communities intact, which will allow greater survival of culture.

However, the plot of land on the Natoavatu Estate is not the panacea for Kiribati's problems, as it has little arable land for agriculture and settlements (Ellsmoor and Rosen 2016). In addition, since local fishing rights are reserved solely for indigenous Fijians,

I-Kiribati would not be able to replicate their principally marine-based diet in Fiji. Ultimately, this relocation option would not be an unsuccessful one, but rather one that requires the evolution of I-Kiribati culture.

This transformation of culture must be manifold because of the differing environment and social dynamics between Kiribati and Fiji. Firstly, the physical environments do not match, as the land in Fiji is hilly, covered in dense vegetation and removed from immediate proximity to the ocean, while land in Kiribati is sandy, without dense swaths of forests, and always near the ocean. While this is seemingly negligible, the fact that the land is not on an atoll limits the expression of I-Kiribati culture as it is currently. Necessitating an evolution of culture, harkening back to the concept of life lived in an archipelago, migration in this case is one where life takes a distinct new form in a new environment, yet is still connected to the iteration of life that preceded it. Secondly, the new land in Fiji is limited, as there are already residents on it: ethnic Solomon Islanders, the descendants of people who were blackbirded (stolen from their homelands and forced into slavery). Therefore, the relocation requires a meshing of populations, and measures need to be put in place to secure I-Kiribati rights as well as assure the maintenance of those of the Solomon Islander descendants. The Kiribati government has guaranteed to work together with the local community to ensure they are not displaced. Lastly, in Kiribati, the employment to population ratio is just 41 per cent. A large proportion of people do not have jobs or high levels of formal education because they lack opportunity and resources on the islands (ILO 2010) and are able to subsist self-sufficiently, a lifestyle that is not as readily available in Fiji. The government must work to provide pre-relocation education and training programmes to help facilitate employment of migrants and maintenance of their agency (Wyett 2014, 180).

In sum, Kiribati's migration to Fiji does present a positive path forward for migrants by the purchase of land upon which they would be able to keep some of their communities relatively intact, allowing the maintenance of social networks and cultural knowledge. However, this path requires the evolution and adaptation of culture to a new environment, as well as governance measures such as educational programmes and vocational training to create economic, social and political agency for migrants in the different forms of society and economy found in Fiji.

Inter-development levels: Tuvalu to New Zealand

Tuvalu, home to just over 11,000 people, sits midway between Australia and Hawaii, right in the heart of Western Polynesia (Figure 1). Comprising of nine islands, the visible remnants of a sinking atoll, Tuvalu is classified as a resource-poor country, whose increasingly salinised soil is destroying staple crops and freshwater supplies.

To leave Tuvalu, like Kiribati, would mean a loss of 'individuals' knowledge of and access to facilities and financial resources; place-specific work knowledge and skills; and ... close ties with one's cultural identity through a given community' (Mortreux and Barnett 2009, 107). Relocation would mean a loss of identity, but also a loss of sovereignty, and therefore agency in determining how one lives (Smith and McNamara 2015).

Despite Tuvaluans voicing their wish to stay and do all that is possible to remain, many have emigrated already as a result of increasingly constrained resources and opportunity. More than 3,500 Tuvaluans already live in New Zealand, a population that grows each year. This presence of Tuvaluans in New Zealand is partly due to its labour deal with New Zealand, which 'provides migration to NZ for 75 Tuvaluans annually who are between 18 and 45, have an existing job offer, meet income requirements and have a tested level of English' (Constable 2017, 1032). However, labour agreements such as these are problematic as they allow only the most educated, well connected and well-off to leave the country and escape the crippling effects of climate change (Constable 2017).

Thus, with migration to more developed countries such as New Zealand being the main option for Tuvaluans, there arises the problem of lifestyle differences. As mentioned above in speaking of Kiribati, islands such as Tuvalu are underdeveloped and under-resourced, so education and opportunity for advancement on the islands are sparse (Locke 2009). This in turn makes it harder for migrants to adjust to life in a more developed setting simply because they do not have the resources and training to succeed in the job market of countries such as New Zealand or Australia (Locke 2009). This education and skills gap creates the notion of winners and losers in migration to more developed countries. Those who are young will be able to adapt, those with education and connections will have more success, and those who are poor and without resources or elderly will fare worse in migration. Although it looks grim, this can be remedied if recipient states such as New Zealand or Australia invest alongside Tuvalu in education programmes for the migrants, to ensure their success upon arrival.

"Those who are young will be able to adapt, those with education and connections will have more success, and those who are poor and without resources or elderly will fare worse in migration."

Aside from educational differentials, the most striking issue with Tuvaluan relocation to a place such as New Zealand is the way of life and the difference in culture itself. In examining how Tuvaluans felt about migration, Mortreux and Barnett (2009) noted that many people spoke of the close-knit community on the island, making life easy and peaceful. One woman said: 'it's good [in Tuvalu]. It is my paradise. I can sleep wherever I want, do whatever I want. I can visit my sister and just talk – and sleep there if I want. You can't do that in [more developed countries]' (108). Another woman from Funafuti, Tuvalu's capital, highlighted this difference: 'here, a man might catch lots of fish one day and sell it, and the next day he can relax, sleep, visit friends, loaf around for the whole day. You can't do that in New Zealand. You have to work every day, work maybe two or three jobs – and hard labour, construction or factory work – just to make a living' (108). These statements speak to the core difference between life on less developed islands and life in more developed ones: agency and subsistence. In more developed nations there is agency, but you must take part in wage labour to survive, whereas in less developed islands there is agency, and one can survive on a culture of subsistence and the community around oneself. Thus, although New Zealand is the destination of choice for most Tuvaluans should they have to move (thanks to family networks and existing work visa agreements with the government), it presents a direct clash with their native way of life. To move from a society where culture, lifestyle and land are deeply intertwined to one where they are distinctly separate presents a big challenge. In order for generations of Tuvaluans to relocate to a wage-based style of life there needs to be heavy programming and training in place to deal with both pre- and post-migration processes. Ultimately, Tuvaluan migration offers a positive, archipelagic evolution of culture *only* if migrants are properly equipped to live in a society based on wage labour that would allow maintenance of both agency and culture.

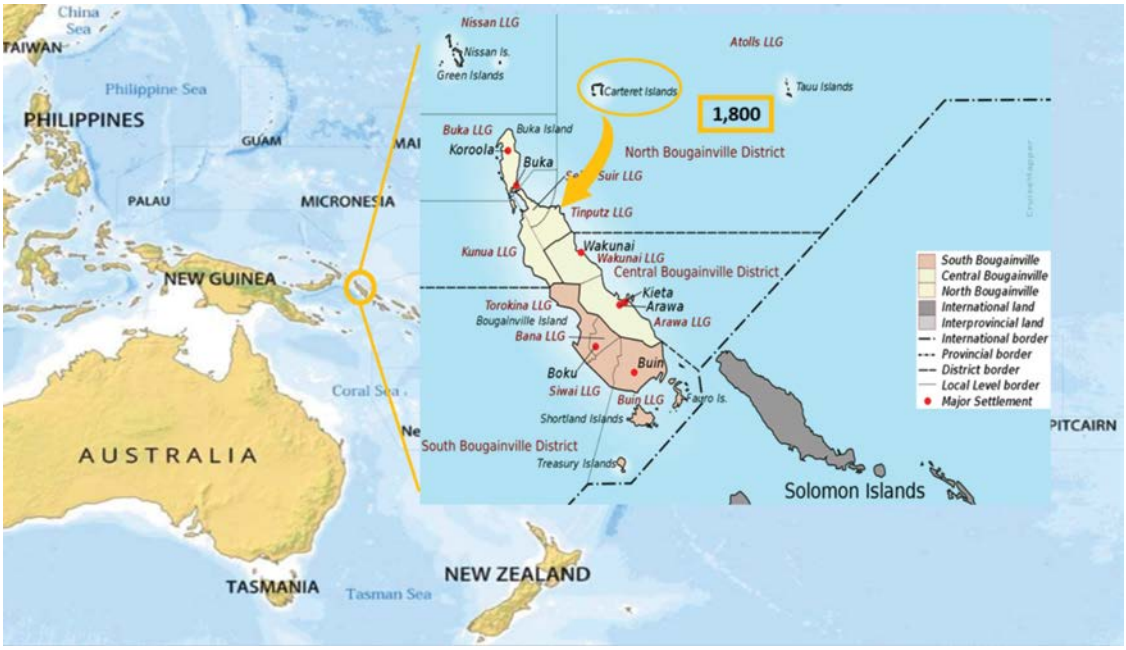
"In more developed nations there is agency, but you must take part in wage labour to survive."

Intra-country: Carterets to Bougainville (Papua New Guinea)

Due west of Tuvalu are the Carteret islands, an atoll chain of six small, low-elevation islands, in the far eastern part of Papua New Guinea (PNG) (Figure 2). Since 1994, about 50 per cent of the liveable land of the islands has been lost to the sea (Edwards 2013, 61). This loss of land has been made even worse by an increase in population, placing larger demands on the natural resources; as the population has grown, reefs that protected the islands from rough seas have been destroyed by dynamite fishing (Edwards 2013). Aside from loss of land and resources, climate change has made the Carterets and other islands in Melanesia more susceptible to droughts, compounding the issue of food security (Moore and Smith 1995).

Currently, the Papuan government is opting to move the islanders to Bougainville, a much larger island 86 km southwest of the Carterets. This relocation is of course easier said than done. Despite Bougainville being within the same nation, it is quite distinct from the Carterets and the nation as a whole, and presently in the midst of a referendum for independence from PNG in which they overwhelmingly voted for independence. While on the surface level it seems that moving within a country should be easy, this case embodies the difficulty of that reality in the Pacific due to endogenous circumstances such as customary land and vast differences in culture and language. Firstly, the Carteret Islanders speak a distinct language from that spoken in Bougainville (Edwards 2013, 60). Secondly, the environment and physical landscape on Bougainville are distinct from those on the Carterets, resulting in people having completely disparate ways of interacting with one another. Lastly, the Carterets have a matrilineal society, which is not the case in Bougainville, so moving is especially a problem for women, as they will see their power diminished (Pascoe 2015, 79). Ursula Rakova, a Carteret Islander and director of Tulele Peisa, the local organisation heading the relocation efforts, notes, 'my grandmother passed land to my mother and then it came to me. Ten years

Figure 2. Map of Migration from the Carteret Islands to Bougainville



Source: https://www.cruisemapper.com/ports/bougainville-island-port-1527
Annotations added by author

along the line I would love to pass on this island to my daughter, but I will not be able to do that' (Pascoe 2015, 79). Climate change migration for Carteret islanders represents a rupture in generational traditions as well as a restructuring of gendered social dynamics, suggesting that even if islanders attempt to retain their culture they will be restrained in its expression in the new location.

The impending relocation to Bougainville is not the first resettlement attempt for Carteret Islanders. In the 1980s and 1990s there were resettlement efforts due to increasing populations and food insecurity (Connell and Lutkehaus 2017a). The migrants in the 1980s to Bougainville returned after just 2 years because of long delays in receiving land rights and agricultural production rights (Connell and Lutkehaus 2017a). In short, without land rights the Carteret settlers were without resources and agency, and thus without ability to express their culture in the new land. In the 1990s, another group of Carteret Islanders moved to Buka Island, another larger island within PNG, because of food insecurity. This round of resettlement was unsuccessful as well because of a 'failure to integrate the new arrivals with the receiving community, and government support for the resettlers was withdrawn after the initial relocation period' (Edwards 2013, 63). These past failures speak to the need for the PNG government not only to provide protracted support to the migrants but also to give settlers land rights in their new location.

"even if islanders attempt to retain their culture they will be restrained in its expression in the new location."

The present relocation to Bougainville is already under way. Tinputz, a village lying at the northeast corner of Bougainville, is the location of choice for resettling the Carteret Islanders. The most obvious difference between the Carterets and their chosen destination of Tinputz is the geography. Most Carteret Islanders sleep outside on the sand and, as a consequence, much of the culture revolves around being outside the isolated domain of the home and connecting with the larger community around you (Edwards 2013, 69). In contrast, the landscape in Tinputz has thick bush covering it and mountainous terrain, so people are not constantly outside. The resettlers have never lived out of sight of the sea, but in Tinputz they will be living inland in insular single-family homes that are elevated from the soil because of mud from the rains (Edwards 2013, 69). In addition, Carteret islanders face extreme difficulty in self-sufficient subsistence, as most land around them in Tinputz is customarily held, leading to a lack of access to gardens (Constable 2017, 1034). Resettlement means a fragmentation of the community despite the fact that the community is resettling in one place; access to and contact with one another have been changed by virtue of the new physical environment. Displacement leads to new social strains not only between settlers and natives over resources, but within the settlers themselves as their agency has been severely limited. Resettlement in this instance makes islanders unable to provide for themselves off the land as they had for over 400 years back in the Carterets (Pascoe 2015).

These external differences are not the only factors that create a drastic change for the Carteret Islanders. On Bougainville, a relatively more developed island than the Carterets, there is little culture of reciprocity (Red Antelope Films 2011). Thus, whereas back in the Carterets people could live off the land and depend on one another within the community for survival, what can one give when one does not have access to land or resources? As there are just 21 salaried positions on their homeland, in a population of about 2,600, Carteret Islanders are accustomed to living off the land (Edwards 2013). Therefore 'most islanders are unfamiliar with any type of business operation,

and there is little prospect of generating informal income locally in the islands' (Edwards 2013, 68). In conclusion, while resettlement saves islanders from the immediate threat of rising sea levels and increasing resource scarcity, it does not maintain a similar style of life or level of agency to what the islanders are accustomed to. This migration requires government efforts to secure migrants' land rights or some form of access to resources in order to allow a favourable development of culture and agency. The government also needs to provide them with business training to take part in the more wage-based economy in Bougainville.

"This migration requires government efforts to secure migrants' land rights or some form of access to resources in order to allow a favourable development of culture and agency."

4. Assessment of migration factors

Having presented the basics of the Kiribati, Tuvalu and Carteret migrations, one must now evaluate their merits and demerits as potential or current relocation schemes. The key factors to be evaluated are those that are linked to both the agency of migrants and the ability of their culture to survive and evolve in a manner that is not purely acculturation or assimilation. These factors for success are land security, access to resources, sustainability of livelihood, use of existing social networks, integration into host community, and maintenance of social and cultural capital through things such as cultural embodiment (Edwards 2013; Connell and Lutkehaus 2017b). By looking at the larger topics of migration planning and time frame, source versus destination population dynamics (cultural and economic), and customary land tenure and access to resources, the aforementioned factors for success will be analysed. While these factors *do promote* security and physical and cultural agency, they do not guarantee 'security of place, nor justify its loss' (Neef et al. 2018, 127). Ultimately, security of place (where one lives) and belonging can be brought about only by locals and migrants working together to ensure positive integration and access to resources and livelihoods while keeping migrants' unique culture alive in tandem with the host culture.

Planned versus unplanned

One of the first things to be considered is how relocation is carried out, i.e. planned and gradual versus unplanned and evacuated. This factor affects how migrants are received and how well they are integrated into the host community (Connell and Lutkehaus 2017a, 92). Kiribati and the Carterets have more developed plans of action, whereas Tuvalu has the steadfast option of relocating to New Zealand but few concrete plans for how to keep communities and cultures together physically and socially. Often, speedy relocation fails to secure livelihoods for migrants in their new residence and is overall more costly (Wyett 2014).

However, when relocation is gradual it meets quite a few issues as well. When relocations are heavily planned and rather gradual, such as that of the Carterets or Kiribati, people undergoing forced-voluntary migration (Erdal and Oeppen 2018) are often met with suspicion 'as "illegal migrants" or "bogus asylum seekers"' (984) due to the way in which refugeeism has been heavily characterised as involuntary, forced, unplanned and spur of the moment. Thus, migrants with planned and gradual time frames do not embody a form of 'acceptable' refugeeism, making host populations more suspicious of their presence. In addition, with

planned migration, problems with slower onsets are largely ignored, i.e. the problems that arise after relocation such as social tension between host and migrant populations, or lack of access to land and resources etc. (Connell and Lutkehaus 2017b), because planning goes only as far as the initial resettlement. This can be dealt with when relocations are participatory, people-focused and plans are for the long term (McNamara 2018) in order to quell social tension and ensure continued agency through access to livelihoods and land. Ultimately, planned migrations are more successful for both the migrants and host populations, as they foster more proactive steps to retain migrants' economic and social agency and help to prepare them for the change in lifestyle and culture upon arrival.

"Ultimately, planned migrations are more successful for both the migrants and host populations."

Source population dynamics versus relocation population dynamics

In the relocation planning itself, one must consider the source population's dynamics in comparison with the destination population's dynamics, as these potential differences govern integration and maintenance of culture. Moving to more developed countries offers nations, such as Tuvalu, security in that the recipient countries have 'well tried systems and resources to facilitate the integration of newcomers and provide opportunities of employment, adequate sanitation, housing and health care, as well as a functioning education system and a social safety net' (Constable 2017, 179). In contrast, Kiribati and the Carterets, moving to similarly less developed parts of the Pacific, do not have the same luxury of moving to places that are accustomed to regularly integrating newcomers into their country. However, moving to less developed countries is not without its merits. It offers a similar culture and lifestyle to what the migrants are used to.

Owing to the way in which people from all three cases are innately tied to the land, there is an instant issue in moving, in that their 'traditional knowledge becomes irrelevant in their new surroundings, creating a feeling of being ill at ease among the community and potentially threatening food security' (Edwards 2013, 70). Having a specific land-based habitus and epistemology makes skills, knowledge and lifestyle difficult to transpose, especially to more industrialised and developed countries such as New Zealand (Moore and Smith 1995, 105). People from Kiribati and the Carterets are moving to destinations in which the populations of their new homes, Fiji and Bougainville respectively, are similar to their own in terms of developmental levels and environment type; therefore, a good deal of their traditional knowledge can still be implemented and passed down. For I-Kiribati, the prospect of moving to Fiji is a positive step. As one I-Kiribati puts it: 'you are moving from one place in the Pacific to another. And you can connect a little bit easier to people and to the place. There is an understanding, you know, between Pacific Islanders' (Hermann and Kempf 2017, 242). However, unlike their homelands, they cannot so readily live off the land in their destinations. This poses a problem, as these populations do not normally engage in or depend on wage labour to survive. Most are employed in the informal sector (107). Thus, even to move within the Pacific requires the adaptation of traditional knowledge. In comparison, moving to New Zealand, a society entirely dependent on wage labour, Tuvaluan migrants are seen as unskilled and unproductive labourers and therefore undesirable (Moore and Smith 1995). This poses an essential issue when moving that needs to be addressed is how societies function – either off the land or off wages – and how to secure access to either, as leaving behind one's homeland undoubtedly means leaving behind

one's livelihood (Noy 2016, 416). To migrate with agency, migrants need to be equipped with the skills and tools to succeed in their new environment, so moving between development levels, from Tuvalu to New Zealand, presents a much steeper challenge as the skills and tools needed to succed differ much more than those needed for the move from Kiribati to Fiji or from the Carterets to Bougainville.

"To migrate with agency, migrants need to be equipped with the skills and tools to succeed in their new environment."

Lastly, when considering source versus destination population dynamics one must consider differences in gender dynamics. In the Carterets, women hold a great deal of the leadership positions – in stark contrast to the rest of the Pacific, including Bougainville (Edwards 2013, 76). Therefore, movement represents a diminution of female power for Carteret migrants. Alongside this, moving as a result of climate change can decrease girls' attendance at school and thus literacy rates, as girls on islands such as Kiribati and Tuvalu must increasingly spend more time to secure water and food, a problem likely to increase for I-Kiribati in Fiji as resources may be farther away (Locke 2009, 176). Ultimately, gendered dynamics are bound to change with migration, so planning committees must consider what can be done to allow a healthy continuity of culture and not overly burden one subset of the population.

Land rights: access and custom

Besides cultural and social dynamics, one of the primary things to be considered is the land that people are relocating to, and whether or not it is customarily held. Access to land and resources governs agency, expression of culture, maintenance of communities and cultural capital. All land within the Pacific has some sort of indigenous claim to it; whether it is acknowledged or not – as in Australia and New Zealand – is another matter (Edwards 2013). Thus, resettlement of whole communities is difficult because of this factor. For I-Kiribati and Tuvaluan migrants, this does not pose a major issue. Kiribati has bought land in Fiji, one of the few properties not customarily held, and also has the support of the Fijian government; therefore, migrants will have access to it and be able to build and work on it eventually. Tuvalu, looking to resettle its people in New Zealand, does not have to worry too much about this, as land and housing are readily available for purchase. However, for the Carteret Islanders relocating to Bougainville, there is indeed an issue, as 96 per cent of land there is customarily held (Edwards 2013, 68).

In the Pacific, there is a common saying across all regions: 'land is life' (Bainton and Banks 2018). In other words, land embodies the tie between people and their identity and existence. Therefore, relocation schemes that do not secure access to land and natural resources are relegating migrants to lead second class lives in which their embodiment of culture is fruitless, as they cannot truly express that culture. The issue of land goes beyond just tenure; it also pertains to access to resources. I-Kiribati, Tuvaluan and Carterets migrants will no longer have access to the same marine and land resources because they will no longer be granted privileges as indigenous people of the land (Connell and Lutkehaus 2017a). Thus places such as Australia, New Zealand or even Fiji (I-Kiribati have yet to be guaranteed fishing rights in Fiji) do not represent a kind of utopia for migrants, as they will not be able to sustain their culture there either, despite being able to purchase or have access to land there. This lack of access to resources and ultimately the ability to sustain oneself off the land is a disinheritance that widens inequality between migrant and native populations for generations to come (Campbell and Warwick 2014).

"It is important that customary land rights be inclusive rather than exclusive and do not resort to the Western method of individual titling."

One way to mitigate the disinheritance caused by moving between customarily held lands is to clearly delineate group resources. Fitzpatrick (2005), a scholar who focuses on the legal recognition of land tenure, suggests that by enforcing group boundaries there can be a clear maintenance of resources as well as a fairer allocation to newer migrants (455). It is important that customary land rights be inclusive rather than exclusive and do not resort to the Western method of individual titling, as that would allow 'wealthier and more powerful groups to acquire rights at the expense of poor, displaced and/or female land occupiers' (453). Thus, any recognition of land tenure needs to have provisions to protect less powerful groups, in this case including climate change migrants from other islands, and clearly allowing access to resources within sustainable constraints. Customary tenure is a matter of delineation between distinct groups and allowing each to have access to what will sustain it, so there needs to be a clear outline of what is due to migrants upon arrival in their new home.

5. Conclusions

The three cases of climate change migration – Kiribati, Tuvalu and the Carterets – all offer a glimpse at how this new era of migration may look for the Pacific and ultimately a great deal of the developing world. They show that successful climate change migration is much more than safely relocating people from point A to point B. It's about culture, it's about livelihoods – it's about agency and access to resources. As people embody their culture, it does have a transferable component, i.e. people act as its carrier and can bring it with them wherever they go. However, embodiment can go only so far if culture cannot be expressed. Through looking at the case studies we see that a positive migration is defined ultimately by the ability to express that embodied culture. The factors that allow this expression of culture and maintenance of identity and agency are: access to land and natural resources, integration into and reception by the host community, and maintenance of social networks and capital. These factors are best achieved through an intensively planned migration scheme, with teams on both ends of the migration working together to address the migrant communities' unique needs. These teams must work to outline the resources available to migrants, both natural and social, in their new destinations and ensure access to them. They must also promote keeping communities intact so that social capital and networks can flourish within the larger new communities; this allows migrant and local cultures to mix and evolve, but wards off complete assimilation and acculturation. By doing so, migrants will have not only more secure livelihoods but the agency to truly pick up where they left off, on the new island of their archipelagic existence.

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