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Migration as Adaptation in ‘Disappearing states’: Examining Socio-Political Adaptation Strategies in the Sinking Islands of the Pacific

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Résumé

Alors que le changement climatique et la mondialisation s'accélèrent, les communautés des pays en développement particulièrement vulnérables aux perturbations environnementales se tournent vers la migration climatique comme mesure d'adaptation. Le but de cette étude est de comprendre les raisons pour lesquelles les mesures d'adaptation sous forme de mobilité humaine diffèrent dans des cas similaires de dégradation environnementale. A l'aide d'une étude inductive et qualitative basée sur un modèle MDSD, les îles Carterets en Papouasie Nouvelle-Guinée et de la République de Kiribati dans le Pacifique sont examinées pour en extraire les facteurs explicatifs de la variation de leurs mesures socio-politiques d'adaptation. La recherche se penche sur le rôle joué par trois acteurs : les organisations internationales dont le tissu juridique et politique est jugé inadapté aux nouveaux défis des migrations climatiques ; les états pour leur influence sur la construction des stratégies d'adaptation ; et les acteurs de la société civile, dont le rôle se révèle particulièrement important dans les cas de faiblesses institutionnelles et étatique pour pallier aux déficiences gouvernementales. Les différentes stratégies d'adaptation des habitants des îles Carteret et Kiribati s'inscrivent dans un cadre politique et social particulier qui renforce l'importance d'une étude contextualisée des migrations climatiques. Ce mémoire propose un cadre analytique nouveau, qui permettra d'échafauder des politiques adaptées aux cas spécifiques de migration, par l'analyse de trois facteurs explicatifs pour comprendre les mouvements : (i) la capacité de l'Etat, (ii) le rôle de la société civile, et (iii) la conception de la migration. Ces trois facteurs permettront une analyse standardisée mais contextuelle des migrations, avec pour objectif d'en comprendre les particularités. Cette recherche comble une lacune académique dans l'étude des migrations climatiques et de ses acteurs politiques et sociaux. Par son approche constructiviste et inductive, elle a mené à la création d'un outil analytique permettant de surpasser les généralisations des débats académiques et les déficiences politiques internationales et domestiques pour comprendre les variations des stratégies de migration et mieux répondre aux besoins des communautés impactées par les dégradations lentes de l'environnement. Cette étude de cas met en lumière l'importance d'étudier les migrations environnementales dans leur contexte social, politique, culturel, et économique, qui permettra de faciliter ces mouvements de populations et de faire respecter leurs droits fondamentaux.

Mots clés : migrations climatiques, îles Carterets, Kiribati, stratégie d'adaptation, changement climatique, relocalisation, déplacement, migrants climatiques, société civile, capacité étatique

Abstract

As climate change and globalization accelerate, at-risk communities in developing countries particularly vulnerable to environmental degradation are turning to migration as an adaptation strategy. This study aims to understand why these adaptation strategies in the form of climate-induced mobility vary in cases of similar climatic disruption. Based on a qualitative and inductive model of MDS, the Carteret islands of Papua New Guinea and the Republic of Kiribati are comparatively studied to extract explanatory factors relating to the variation of their socio-political reactions to sea-level rise. The research examines the role endorsed by three actors: international organizations whose juridical and political apparatus is deemed inefficient to deal with the new transnational challenges posed by climate migrations; the states for their influence on the construction of migration as an adaptation strategy; and civil society actors, whose role has been increasingly important to surpass institutional weaknesses and governance deficiencies in the context of climate change. The divergent adaptation strategies of the Carteret and Kiribati islanders are inscribed in distinct political and social systems, reinforcing the importance of a contextualised study of climate migrations. This research proposes a new analytical framework through the use of three explanatory factors to understand movement: (i) state capacity, (ii) civil society agency, and (iii) conceptions of migration. These three factors could permit a standardized but contextual analysis of migration, the objective being to understand the particularities of each case to establish appropriate policies. This study thus fills an academic gap in the understanding of political and social actors in climate mobility. By approaching climate migrations from a constructivist and inductive view, it has created an analytical tool that will surpass generalisations found in academic literature as well as international and domestic political deficiencies to understand the variations in adaptation strategies of communities facing slow-onset environmental degradation. This case study highlights the importance of examining climate migrations in their social, political, cultural and economic contexts, to facilitate the mobility of these populations and uphold their most fundamental human rights.

Key words: climate migrations, Carteret islands, Kiribati, adaptation strategies, climate change, resettlement, relocation, displacement, civil society, state capacity

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List of acronyms

ABG: Autonomous Bougainville
Government

CIRP: Carterets Integrated Relocation
Program

COHRE: Centre on Housing Rights and
Evictions

COP: Conference of the Parties, under the
UNFCCC

CS: Civil society

CSO: civil Society Organization

ECOSOC: Economic and Social Council of
the United Nations

EEZ: Exclusive economic zone

ENSO: El Nino Southern Oscillation

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization (of
the United Nations)

GCF: Green Climate Fund

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

GEF: Global Environment Facility

GNP: Gross national product

GOK: Government of Kiribati

GPID: Guiding Principles on Internal
Displacement

HLP: Housing, land and property rights

ICCPR: International Covenant on Civil and
Political Rights

ICESCR: International Covenant on
Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

IDP: Internally displaced person

IMF: International Monetary Fund

IO: International organization

IOM: International organization for
migration

KAPIII: Kiribati Adaptation Program phase
III

KiriCAN: Kiribati Climate Action Network

LDC: least developed country

MDS: Most-Different Case Study Design

NGO: Non-governmental organization

NZ: New Zealand

PAC: Pacific Access Category

PGK: Papua New Guinean Kina

PIC: Pacific island country

PNG: Papua New Guinea

SIDS: Small Island Developing States

SLR: sea level rise

TP: Tulele Peisa

UN: United Nations

UNDP: United Nations Development
Program

UNFCCC: United Nations Framework
Convention on Climate Change

UNHCR: United Nation High Commissioner
for Refugees

Introduction

A. Purpose and objectives

This research aims to understand why political and social adaptation strategies to climate change differ in the cases of the Carteret islands and the Republic of Kiribati¹. This interrogation emerged from the observation that both are threatened in their survival by comparable effects of climate change and sea-level rise, notably in the continuity of their human, cultural and economic existences. Despite similar climatic disruptions and the ensuing socio-economic distress, Carteret islanders and the I-Kiribati have embarked upon diverging journeys of adaptation: the former are determined to relocate their community, while the latter have favored individual labor migration and *in situ* adaptation measures. It has also been noted that the international community has been inefficient in addressing the needs and concerns of populations' movements induced by slow-onset environmental change. In looking at domestic actors for answers, it has been found that political strategies for adaptation needs and climate displacement vary contextually, and that the states' inability to respond has framed the role of civil society actors as central agents engaged in their own protection. The case studies differ substantially in the involvement of the state and of various actors and in their relationship to mobility, providing important keys to understanding the differences in the adaptation strategies they have come to adopt. The research thus argues that adaptation strategies in the context of climate mobility are best explained by three interrelated factors: (i) state capacity, (ii) the agency of civil society, and (iii) conceptions of migration. This analytical framework is illustrated by the comparison of the Carteret islanders and the I-Kiribati through the study of their political and social situations, historical ties with migration, and international support. The purpose of this thesis is thus to provide a constructivist account of the realities of climate mobility in the hope of addressing governance gaps at the international and domestic levels, through a proposed framework of context-specific analysis supported by statements of crucial actors in the Pacific.

¹ Pronounced 'Ki-ri-bass'; kirri'bæs

Many authors have underlined the inability of current international and domestic institutions to adequately address the problems of climate migration (Burton and Hodgkinson, 2009a) (Brown, 2007). At the international level, this is due to the absence of an overarching agency in charge of questions of the adaptation and potential relocation of affected communities, and the insufficient juridical apparatus designed for their protection. McAdam (2011) writes of the lack of political will surrounding the creation of a new instrument capable of addressing the protection needs of displaced communities, which certainly explains the meagre interest of the international community. At the domestic level, this impassivity can be attributed to the weakness of institutions in the countries most impacted by climate displacement. McLeman goes so far as to talk of “incompetent leaders and institutions” (2014:197) in certain states, that will doom their residents to climate change-induced internal displacement. In this light, many authors have recounted the governmental deficiencies that have exacerbated the insecurity of islanders (Schade, 2013) (Tulele Peisa Inc, 2009) (Caritas, 2015). Ten years ago in Kiribati, a public survey attested that 42% of islanders didn’t believe the government was actively promoting adaptation efforts (Kaiteie and Hogan, 2008). Although their policies have changed today, certain domestic institutional shortcomings are still hindering their coping capabilities. The situation is best summarized by David Lipset: “[i]f a legal ‘vacuum’ exists at the international level, and no domestic or national remedy of the sort (...) can be found, and NGOs have not taken up their cause (...) then where may climate vulnerable people look to find adaptation strategies and remedies for the equity and justice issues contained within them?” (2013:146). Although international NGOs have, in part, filled the governance gap left by weak institutions, lack of sustained funding, inconsistent physical implication and prioritization of other humanitarian and migration crises have left communities facing the prospect of permanent relocation particularly vulnerable. Politically, inefficient policies in international and domestic governance have prevented communities from adequately responding to climate change, best exemplified by the challenging community resettlement of the Carterets, and the debatable benefits of individual labor migration in Kiribati. These two types of mobility have been adopted by communities as means of adapting to climate change and lack of international support, and constitute the basis for analysis of climate-induced movement.

The objective of this memoir is first, to understand the realities of climate mobility, especially in planned relocation and individual labor migration in response to climate change. By understanding communities and relevant actors, it is believed policy guidance would be more efficient. Second, in response to the debate on predicting climate movements and using civil society as an analytical pillar, it aims to bring to light the singularities of displacement, and provide a useful basis for contextual analysis that would enable a better political understanding and anticipation of migration flows. Understanding different adaptation strategies in Pacific islands is significant because it can help actors tailor international and domestic responses to climate change for affected communities, thus curtailing a potential migratory crisis in the future.

B. Background

Small island states are particularly vulnerable to climate change and its related impacts, due to their geographical, geological, and politico-economic conditions. These singular vulnerabilities place islander populations at risk and might eventually cause their displacement. The IPCC's 2014 report underlines the dangerous human health, food, and poverty insecurities emanating from environmental degradation, as 70% of coastlines are expected to be impacted by sea-level rise (SLR) (IPCC, 2014), potentially threatening 625 million inhabitants of low elevation coastal zones² (Valdés et al., 2015). As the oceans are becoming more acidic, warmer, and less oxygenated, their ecosystems are being increasingly disrupted, eroding their regulatory capacity and enhancing their impacts on coastal areas through destructive phenomena (IOM and OCP, 2016). Furthermore, according to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005), SLR will be accentuated by environmental modifications due to agricultural practices, overexploitation of fish, the invasion of alien species, disease spreading, and booming pollution. The Pacific region is expected to experience a rise in average temperatures (Campbell and Warrick, 2014), and suffer from an increase in intensity and frequency of floods, wave surges, and geological disasters (Julca and Paddison, 2010). The UK Ministry of Defence has estimated that between 270 and 310 million people are at risk of coastal flooding in Oceania, and by 2045, various low-lying islands would face “near total submersion” and community displacements (2014:33). Although SLR is a major cause for concern to these nations, they also face more immediate problems of climatic variability

² Low elevation coastal zones are those situated under 10 meters above sea level.

and extreme weather events. Intense rainfall and droughts, enhanced by El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) patterns, and king storms and surges, are placing the human rights of islanders at risk (Barnett and Adger, 2003). Becker and her colleagues (2012) have determined that ENSO events are felt most significantly by Pacific islanders, with more pronounced sea-level rise fluctuations in the region impacting rainfall variability which will certainly lead to water shortages (Friends of the Earth, 2007). Campbell, one of the most prolific authors on the region, has pointed out that “[t]he Pacific islands have been singled out as being among those places that may be rendered uninhabitable by the effects of climate change” (2012:57), as they impact Pacific communities’ land, livelihood, and declining habitat securities (Campbell, 2014).

The political response to these environmental problems has been ambivalent. In Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Kiribati, mitigation efforts are noticeable in their adherence to major international treaties and multiple domestic action plans. In terms of adaptation however, PNG has shown greater inabilities to deliver services to its people, particularly in the geographically-isolated Carteret islands. In contrast, the Government of Kiribati (GOK) shows greater implication in providing its citizens with financial and material support for adaptation, advocating for a holistic response to short- and long-term environmental degradations. Migration is envisaged in both cases, because as Nicholas Stern warns, “[h]uman life would probably become difficult or impossible in many regions that are currently heavily populated, thus necessitating large population movements, possibly or probably on a huge scale” (Stern, 2008:6). Many authors have outlined the potential displacement of Pacific islanders due to climate change, attributable to the loss of ecosystem services and land, increased disasters, and overpopulation, that will inevitably force human movement (Oliver-Smith, 2014). More than that, it is precisely the interaction between environmental changes and socio-economic systems that make migration and displacement ineluctable in the Pacific, as their political and social vulnerability hinder their adaptive capacities. In effect, migration is contextual (Perch-Nielsen et al., 2008) (Campbell and Warrick, 2014) and scientific predictions of the region’s climate, as well as historical and political analyses of the islands, make migration and displacement a very likely adaptation strategy in the near future. In this light, the GOK has taken a proactive stance to prepare its citizens for eventual departure since

2003³, by advocating for labor mobility as an adaptation strategy. Civil society in the Carterets have become leading forces against climate change by preparing for community resettlement, whereas actors in Kiribati have adopted a more individualistic approach to adaptation, through *in situ* measures and circular migration. In any case, migration could become a valuable adaptation strategy as “[f]orced displacement is the ultimate human consequence of sea level rise” (Global Humanitarian Forum, 2009:51). How that strategy is conceived however, is largely dependent on the social and political situations of Kiribati and the Carteret islands. They provide a useful comparison for understanding the factors that shape the adoption of strategies in the context of climate change mobility.

C. The findings and contributions of the study

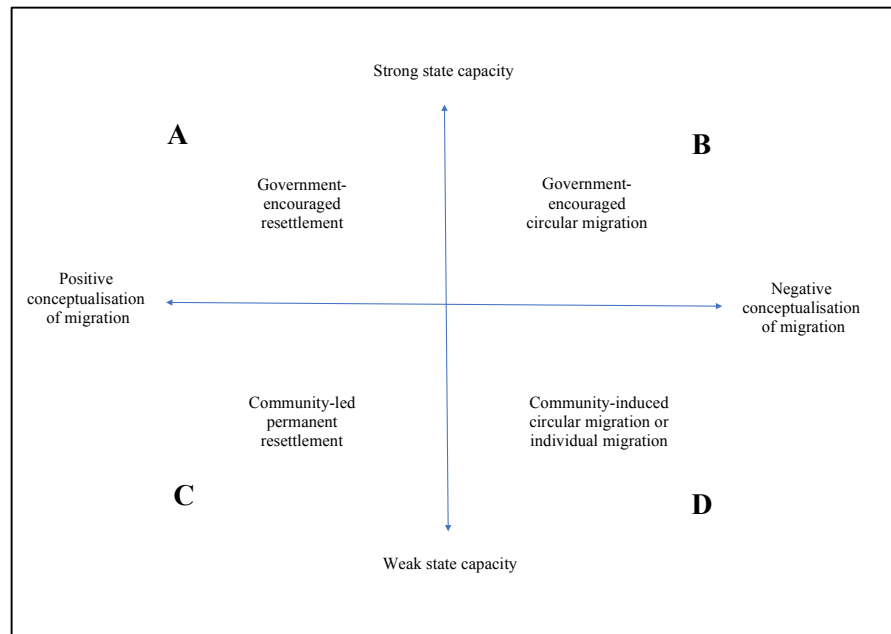
This thesis aims to explain the variation in social and political adaptation strategies in the cases of Kiribati and the Carteret islands. It is primarily qualitative in nature and builds on an inductive approach based on grounded theory, supported by semi-structured interviews of major actors in the Pacific. The two case studies have been chosen for this research based on the existence and availability of data, and because they are both considered iconic examples of the human face of climate change. The Carteret islands represent one of the first attempts at community-led relocation due to sea-level rise, and the Republic of Kiribati is a prime example of a nation in distress, utilizing labor migration as an adaptation strategy.

To the question “why do social and political adaptation strategies to sea-level rise differ”, this research has provided an answer. Findings suggest that state capacity influences the agency of communities in responding to SLR by either requiring civil society to surpass governance deficiencies through community-led efforts, or to follow policies aimed at facilitating adaptation at local and domestic levels. Both are anchored in political and social conceptualizations of migration. State capacity and civil society agency are thus interrelated and influenced by social and political conceptions of migration as an adaptation strategy. These concepts frame the way actors

³ 2003 marks the start of Aote Tong’s first mandate as President of Kiribati, during which he increasingly advocated Migration with Dignity and adaptation to climate change.

respond to SLR: when mass-migration is perceived negatively⁴ and the government is proactive (as is the case in Kiribati, scenario B), the state becomes a leading force; when mass-migration is viewed as a positive adaptation strategy (as is the case for the Carterets, scenario C) in the context of weak state capacity, civil society becomes the dominant actor.

Figure 1. Theorized linkages between state capacity, conceptualizations of migration, and resulting adaptation strategies



As is illustrated in Figure 1, the varying socio-political reactions to SLR are conditioned by state capacity, resulting civil society agency, and their conceptions of climate migration as an adaptation strategy. Planned community resettlement and individual labor migration are the two types of migration strategies examined here. It is theorized that both can be considered forms of adaptation to climate change⁵, and their formulation is highly dependent on the cultural, political,

⁴ The terms ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ are used here to describe the way migration is perceived, in the sense that a positive perception entails a favourable view, voluntary or engaged movement, whereas a negative perception means an antagonistic relationship to migration, approached in a wary manner. These terms don’t carry judgment of the validity of a ‘positive’ or ‘negative’ form of migration by the author, but reflect only the perceived attitude of affected communities towards migration in relation to their acceptance of the movement.

⁵ The concept of migration as an adaptation strategy will be developed further in this thesis. It is contended that migrating enables both home communities and migrants to cope with climate change by diversifying their income through remittances and alleviating pressure on home resources, amongst others. However, it also has certain downfalls, such as impoverishment and social disarticulation if the movement is not carefully planned.

and social context of the affected populations, their relation to their state and their cognitive understanding of mobility.

This study contributes to the academic understanding of climate migrations on two fronts. First, it exposes the relevant social actors in the problem, the state and civil society, by pointing out their relevance and centrality, and the inability of the international community to handle the issue. In doing so, it hopes to sway the debate away from an aspirational international response, to the analysis of likely domestic and civil reactions. It thus aims to counter the realist focus on international players, in favor of a more constructivist approach to the various actors at play in climate change-induced mobility. Empirically, the questions raised here are important as they enable a more concise understanding of the singularities of Pacific cultures and the concrete impacts of climate change on their preservation. It adds to the knowledge of various migration strategies, notably of controversial community-led displacements. By producing insights on the concreteness of community resettlement and labor migration, this research contributes to a better understanding of the realities of climate migration as a whole. It thus fills a gap in the study of the specificities of various types of migration, their purpose, and the perceptions of relevant actors. Secondly, this research provides a baseline to address gaps in institutional responses by asserting that the use of three explanatory factors could ease the understanding of potential migration flows and deter a ‘sudden’ migratory crisis. Interpreting the singularities of climate displacements based on socio-political characteristics of communities and states, instead of creating generalized policies will permit regional and domestic responses tailored to specific situations. This research aims to counter generalist explanations of climate migrations, by contending that the linearity of migration streams may be better understood through three political factors: conceptions, state capacity, and civil society agency. Using these, I propose an efficient frame for understanding reactions to climate change by determining the adopted type of mobility that will, in turn, guide international and domestic policy preparedness for distinct flows of climate migrants.

This research starts with a literature review aimed at discerning the two main academic camps on climate migrants, and introduces what is regarded as shortcomings of the international community, in its responsibility to intervene and the weaknesses of current frameworks for protection at the international level. The second chapter outlines the methodology used for this

research and the conceptual framing of climate movements and terminologies, and attempts to establish a typology of mobility for clearer analysis. The third chapter explores the role of the state by presenting the Carteret islands and Kiribati case studies, and examines the questions of sovereignty and responsibility in state action. The final chapter further analyzes these two cases around three factors: state capacity, its influence in framing civil society agency, and resulting conceptions of migration as an adaptation strategy. They illustrate the claim that adopted strategies in the ‘sinking islands’ of the Pacific are best explained by these factors, providing a context-specific analytical framework of climate change adaptation.

Chapter I – Unpacking climate migrations

A. Maximalists vs. Minimalists: key debates on climate migrations

The academic field is divided on many aspects of climate migrations. Two camps have emerged since the recognition of this issue in the 1970s: the maximalists and the minimalists. Although the debate is dominated by the later, both have contributed to the understanding of climate change-induced mobility on three aspects: projections of movements, direction and causes, and definitional problems. These three aspects are crucial to the case studies of the Carteret islands and Kiribati, because they have framed political and institutional responses to potential migrations. Different forms of mobility reflect different adaptation strategies; whether they be permanent and internal for the Carteret islanders or international and circular in Kiribati, they necessitate different political responses. Projections of flows matter because they guide policies in terms of opening borders and quotas on work and humanitarian visas, as illustrated by the Kiribati mobility schemes. Finally, definitions and labels frame international actions and the unclear status of islanders has hindered their efficient political protection. These debates are crucial background to this thesis because they expose the futility of academic generalizations when examining cases of singular and multi-dimensional events of climate migrations and lay the foundations for the analytical framework proposed in this research.

a. Projections, directions and causes

The maximalist camp on climate migrations offers the most troubling and alarmist perspective. They have provided the literature with pessimist projections of displacements induced by climate change, available in Table 1. These numbers have been picked up by multiple authors, including Nicholas Stern (2008) in his renowned review in which he embraces the idea of climate induced population movements. Fernando et al. (2010) estimated that water scarcity would affect one third of the world's population, arguing that tipping points will be exceeded by 2050 and, combined with increased natural hazards, will cause migration to escalate. The Council of the European Union and the European Commission (2008) have also reinforced the causal relationship between climate change and mobility, with a somewhat vague projection of millions of migrants

by 2020. Indeed, although authors have not been able to estimate a clear number of climate migrants, all maximalists agree on the seriousness of the issue, as “[m]igration in response to environmental degradation is fast becoming the most pervasive form of forced migration to occur in the 21st century” (Aminzadeh, 2007:256). The gravity of what is considered the biggest refugee crisis to come (Biermann and Boas, 2010) is tainted with alarmism by some authors, such as Conisbee and Sims (2003) who write of the ‘extinction’ and ‘obliteration’ of Pacific nations. Although very dramatic, this feeling is corroborated by the Republic of Kiribati, affirming that “sea-level rise will threaten the very existence of Kiribati as a nation” (2015:15). Indeed, rising seas, shrinking natural resources, environmental hazards, and food and water insecurities are pushing populations out of their homes (Swing, 2015). They relate to migration in a neo-Malthusian fashion, considering natural resources and degradation as primary push factors, further accentuated by the level of vulnerability of populations, and to which climate change exerts both push and pull forces. Climate change and degradation is placed at the heart of the migration crisis, as the executive director of UNEP Mustafa Tolba once stressed, “[t]ime is running out. We are set on a collision course between a surging population and disappearing productive lands” (Tolba, 1989:726). And as seas rise, agriculture becomes more difficult in atoll nations, and food and water become scarce, it is indeed plausible that islanders will need to leave their ancestral lands. For Barnett and Adger (2003), atoll nations will reach a migratory threshold that will erode cultural and social organizations and push the social system into complete abandonment.

Table 1. Predictions of climate change induced population movements found in the maximalist literature

Author	Prediction	Timeframe
Brown (2007)	25 million displaced	mid-1990s
Myers (1997)	50 million refugees	By 2010
Myers (1997)	200 million displaced	By 2010
Myers (1993)	2 billion affected in coastal areas	By 2050
Byravan et Rajan (2010)	25 million – 1 billion refugees	By 2050
Friends of the Earth (2007)	1 million refugees in SIDS	By 2050
Swing (2015)	15 million displaced	Per year
Watson (2000)	Tens of millions displaced in SIDS	By 2100
Conisbee and Sims (2003)	150 million displaced	By 2050
Aminzadeh (2007)	50 million and 100 million refugees	By 2010 and by 2050

Although minimalists don’t necessarily dismiss the probability of an increase in human mobility due to environmental factors, their main point of departure from the maximalist discourse

is the consideration for migration as a multifactorial process, in which climate change may just represent one cause of departure (Suhrke, 1994). In effect, they contest the projections presented above. As Burton and Hogkinson (2009a) accurately recount, minimalists such as Richard Black, prominent academic on the question, argues that there's often a failure to account for alternative explanations in migration and that linking migration and degradation is "unhelpful and unsound intellectually, and unnecessary in practical terms" (Black, 2001:1). Black, Bennett and their colleagues (2011) go so far as to suggest that climate displacements aren't inherently negative, and that the main causes of migration are "political instability, poor governance, conflict and social pressures" (2011:448). While it can be argued that the environment is a decisive factor in areas most affected by climate change, it is most widely accepted that it represents a catalyst for underlying socio-economic factors (Adger and Adams, 2013; Christian Aid, 2007; Levy and Patz, 2015). Most authors contend that the main drivers of migration are thus a combination of economic and social tensions, embedded in governance systems and deeply influenced by social inequalities as migration becomes a means for income diversification to enhance livelihoods and coping capacities, influenced by the political, economic, and environmental vulnerabilities of populations (Adger et al., 2015; Campbell and Warrick, 2014; Government Office for Science, 2011; Geddes et al., 2012). The direct nature of this linkage is so questioned, Baldwin and Gemenne have gone so far as to deem it a political construct, "in the way it exists as a speculative, virtual phenomenon" (2013:267). Baldwin has further expressed large skepticism, proclaiming it a "very powerful fiction that serves to stabilize or fix the ideology of humanism" (2017:1). Although this characterization may be a little cavalier, his main premise is that the multifactorial nature invalidates the label 'climate' migration, and it thus can't exist as such.

These arguments converge with the idea of 'push' and 'pull' factors⁶ in mobility, the environment being considered as the former (Perch-Nielsen et al., 2008), along with notions of overpopulation, scarcity of resources, unemployment, and other socio-economic-political drivers. Minimalists consider that climate change effects and migration flows are too unpredictable to validate the estimates produced by maximalists (Tacoli, 2009), and that these alarmist numbers could result in unsuitable policy decisions. This viewpoint is shared by many, critical of the "doom and gloom" discourses (Bettini, 2013) that are based on biased projections inconsiderate of political

⁶ Pull factors rest in the destination, and constitute the drivers that entice the migrant to move to a new location. In effect, the environment is considered as exerting an influential force on all other relevant factors that might drive migration (Swing, 2015; McAdam and Ferris, 2015; Ferragina and Quagliarotti, 2014; Brown, 2007)

and social responses to environmental degradation. For Barnett and O'Neill (2012), projections totaling the number of people exposed to natural hazard completely neglect adaptation measures that might permit populations to stay put, assuming that all inhabitants of an at-risk region will become climate refugees (Kniveton et al., 2008), without accounting for the degree of adaptation or sensitivity to climate change (Barnett and Chamberlain, 2010). Although Myers has admitted in a personal exchange with Brown (2007) that these estimates might be an extrapolation, they have still widely circulated in NGO and academic circles. Bettini (2017) argues that these estimates are mobilized to put a human face on an ecological crisis while being inaccurately deterministic in the understanding of climate mobility. These methodological problems rest on the difficulty to establish a causal link between environmental change and mobility (Johnson and Krishnamurthy, 2010), while accounting for external factors that will influence a population's decision to migrate. This marks the premise for the analytical framework proposed here. Indeed, as Gonin and Lassailly-Jacob assert, "faced with ecological problems, some migrate, but this movement can also be seen as a response to a context of crisis, and not as a crisis in itself" (2002:14)⁷. Overall, international institutions, such as the European Parliament (2011) have adopted a minimalist approach to the relationship between the environment and migration, although it can be argued that this position might be used to justify political inaction in regards to environmental protection and the fight against climate change.

Furthermore, climate migrations and displacements are expected to be overwhelmingly internal (Adger and Adams, 2013; McAdam, 2011; Hugo, 2012; Bettini, 2017; Cambrézy and Lassailly-Jacob, 2010, Hugo, 1996), despite maximalist claims of a broader range of distances (Campbell, 2014; Campbell 2012; Leckie, 2014). This is due to a combination of the fact that the most vulnerable populations are those lacking in financial, economic and technological resources (Renaud et al. 2007) and the logistical costs associated with movement. Nonetheless, in some cases, such as small island states, internal migration will be increasingly difficult. As McNamara explains for example, "Kiribati has no sustainable long-term internal migration option, as there is simply no higher ground to move to, with most islands being less than three meters above sea level" (2015:62). This puts the minimalist dismissal of international mobility into perspective. As has

⁷ Translated from french : « Face aux problèmes écologiques, certains migrent, mais ce mouvement peut aussi être vécu comme une réponse à un contexte de crise et non pas comme une crise en elle-même » (p.14)

been previously mentioned, migration is contextual, and although its multifactorial nature has been asserted by most of the literature, the direction and scope of movement is to be considered within the range of possibilities for certain populations. Pacific islanders have historically been subject to all sorts of relocations (Campbell et al. 2005), and they are no strangers to long-distance mobility. These particular conditions need thus be given due consideration, and the direction of movement is likely to be dependent on a variety of factors, including social and financial resources, and geographical opportunities.

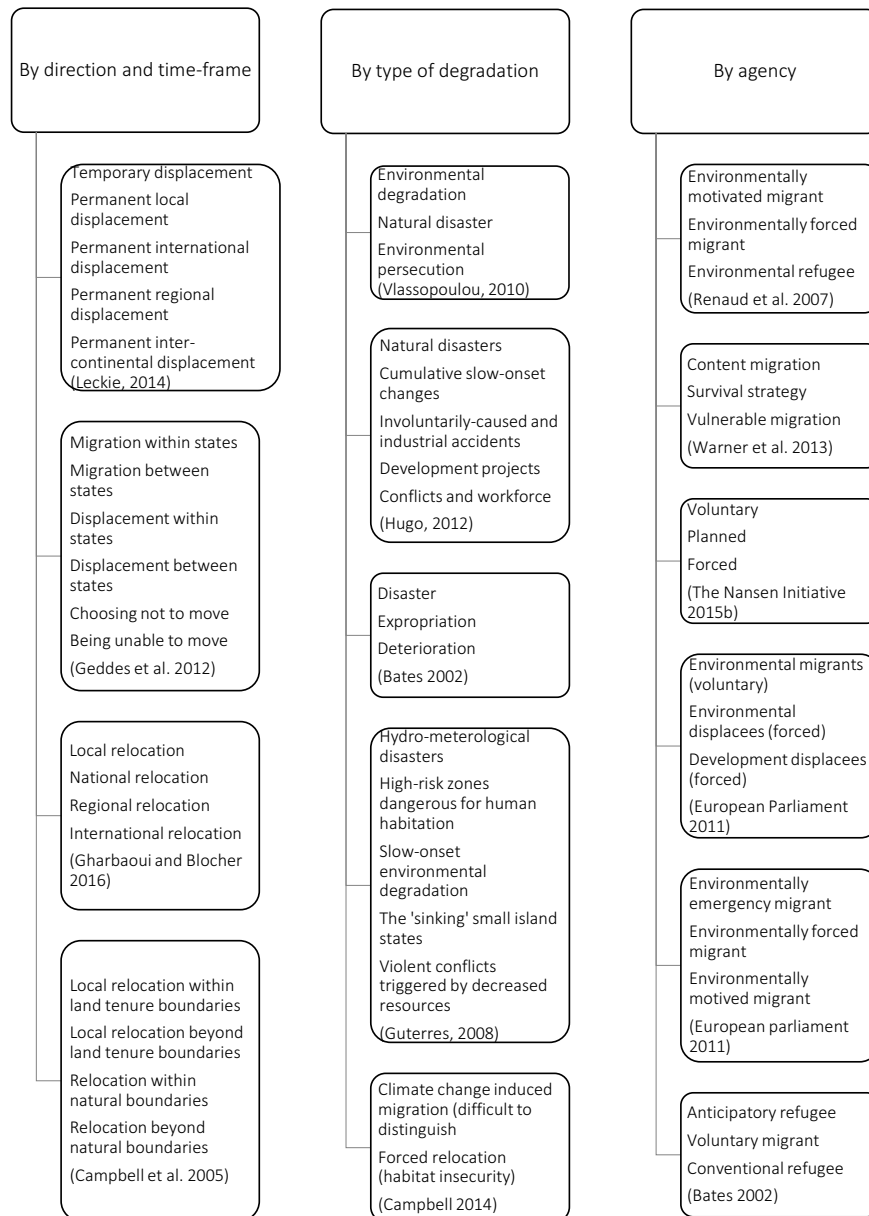
b. Typologies and definitional problems

The term ‘environmental refugee’ was first formulated in the 1970s by Lester Brown of the World Watch Institute. The appropriate label to ascribe to the phenomenon of climate change-induced mobility has been vastly debated, further dividing academic, policy and civil society circles. For brevity, the vast array of definitions found in the literature have been classified in Annex 2, and typologies in Figure 2. This friction between authors represents the cornerstone of the difficulty of formulating protection agendas and policies to frame these movements and the resulting precariousness of the I-Kiribati and Carteret islanders. At the heart of the two previous debates rests this definitional discord: two competing visions of climate change-induced mobility, anchored in clashing perceptions of those movements in terms of who, where, why, and if they are occurring.

Nonetheless, these varied conceptions may be complementary. As is illustrated in Annex 2 and Figure 2, they revolve around ideas of temporality, distance, and agency. The question of permanence in movement recurs, such as the ones of Myers (1993 and 1997), UNESCO (2016), Burton and Hodgkinson (2009b), and Locke (2009), amongst others. It is central to the notion of movement, as it influences the type of policy and protection afforded to these peoples and implies the reconstruction of livelihoods on different scales. The second notion of interest is the distance covered. Maximalists have tended to include a larger scope of distance potentially travelled, and international organizations such as the IOM (2014) and UNHCR (2017) have acknowledged the possibilities of crossing borders in the cases of climate migrations. As it is more likely that migrations will occur over shorter distances, especially in the Pacific where people are engaging

in rural-urban and regional migrations, it seems appropriate that classifying affected people should involve some notion of distance. It also has the potential to ascribe an existing label onto migrating populations, and to assign responsibility for their protection according to the distance travelled.

Figure 2. Classification of existing typologies by direction, type of degradation and agency



The third notion is probably the most meaningful in this definitional debate: agency. This ties together the ideas of temporality and distance, around what authors have called ‘voluntary’ and ‘forced’ movement, and is foundational to the differences in strategy and ensuing political reactions

between the Carterets and Kiribati. Most minimalists have established a distinction between various forms of movement with migration being the *voluntary* departure of populations, comprising economic pull notions combined with environmental push factors. This notion has best been conceptualized as a continuum of agency. Bates (2002) argues that ‘involuntary’ movement would be at the far right, and ‘voluntary’ at the far left. Hugo (1996), McAdam and Ferris (2015), Black, Adger et al., (2011) and Burton and Hodgkinson (2009b) have all embraced this dichotomy where the choice and will of the individual would place him on the scale or spectrum of mobility. Although this division sounds appealing, it is argued here that the notion of choice is inappropriate. These classifications rest on the belief that ‘voluntary’ movement is possible and in opposition to ‘forced’ or ‘involuntary’ mobility. This disregards the external imposition of environmental, economical, and social shocks that are triggering migrations. Ultimately, people impacted by these multifactorial drivers, push and pull alike, might be compelled to move, whether internally, regionally or internationally. But it is dishonest to consider it ‘voluntary’ even if it is preemptive, as exerted forces are necessarily forcing, to some extent, an individual to move. For example, when Johnson and Krishnamurthy (2010) distinguish between ‘distress migration’, one responsive to environmental events, and ‘economic migration’, led by strategic planning, they create a dichotomy, although economic challenges are heavily influenced by environmental shocks. This is the case of Kiribati, where citizens are engaging in seemingly voluntary labor migration, but are in fact compelled by external forces to do so for their survival. Their differentiation thus seems ineffective as one impacts the other, and the notion of agency is blurred by the interrelated drivers of climate change and economic distress. Surely, migration is the product of social factors such as poverty, inequalities, and exposure to hazards (Greiner and Sakdapolrak, 2016), and it is thus difficult to envision a form of climate mobility that is entirely voluntary. McNamara (2007) rightly decries the economization of discourses in the conceptualization of the problem, which is ostracizing the humanitarian plight of these populations. It can be further argued that this focus on economic distress is merely just targeting the most obvious consequences of climate change, while omitting the actual psychological, traditional, and societal damages. For Baldwin (2017), the figure of the climate migrant/refugee serves to resuscitate humanism, symptomatic of its own crisis, as climate change and its human effects are calling into question our capacity to cope with “our internal crisis of values – that our lives, worlds, political concepts, and desires are shaped by fossil

fuels, the very thing that is our undoing – we displace this anxiety onto the other of climate change – the climate migrant – who we then seek to manage and control” (2017:5).

Both typologies and definitions bring forth the controversial term ‘refugee’. Central to the debate between minimalists and maximalists, the former perceive this term as grossly generic (Cournil and Gemenne, 2010) because it omits entire pans of the population that will move internally, or remain trapped (Kniveton et al., 2008). Their rejection of the term ‘climate refugee’ is based on their critique of the maximalist approach that conceives the relationship between the environment and movement as mono-causal (Piguet, 2008). But the biggest critique of this term is its reference to political refugees (Véron and Golaz, 2015; Legoux, 2010; Masters, 2000) protected under the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the status of refugees. Hartmann (2010) goes so far as to argue their association would undermine the rights of traditional refugees, by adding to the bureaucratic restrictions of admission, and ultimately, because of its negative connotation, restrain state efforts at curbing GHG emissions. As this language is used to convey an emotional and catastrophic a sense of helplessness of the victims of climate change (McNamara and Gibson, 2009), it falsely presumes that these peoples are protected under the Convention, so long as they become ‘refugees’. Indeed, Antonio Guterres, current Secretary-General of the UN and former High Commissioner for Refugees, has expressed the inaccuracy of the term, as “it would be incorrect to give the words a legal meaning that has not been endorsed by the legal community” (Guterres, 2008:8). Erica Bower, a climate change and disaster displacement specialist at the UNHCR explains that at the international level, mobility is best framed under three forms of population movements, being migration (voluntary), displacement (forced), and planned relocation (a long-term process), disavowing the validity of the term ‘refugee’ (interview, 2018).

According to the UNHCR’s 1979 handbook of criteria for determining the status of a refugee, a person “does not become a refugee because of recognition, but is recognized because he is a refugee” (UNCHR, 1979:7). This entails fulfilling the requirements found in the very precise Convention definition, that reads as follows:

Owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, memberships of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country

of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (UNHCR, 2007:14)

According to the UNHCR Handbook, a migrant is thus excluded from this definition. It considers his movement voluntary as he “may be moved by the desire for change or adventure, or by family or other reasons of a personal nature” (UNHCR, 1979:12). By reinforcing the notion of choice in migration, they are fortifying the dichotomist view of voluntary migration vs. involuntary displacement. By not accounting for all other reasons a person might be forced to leave, they are creating a big definitional gap that has only led to policy shortcomings for their protection. Indeed, these issues have grand governance implications, notably in the assistance to I-Kiribati and Carteret islanders, and properly and accurately defining the phenomenon is essential despite the difficulties associated with it. Gibb and Ford (2012) don’t believe that this lack of consensus around labels should preclude action, and instead may allow for a greater flexibility in policy responses. However, without a legal agreement on what the persons affected by climate change-induced mobility are, there can be no true commitment by the international community to act because action necessitates some form of consensus over *who* to protect. As labels guide international responsibility, it is no wonder the GOK has bypassed international deadlocks by promulgating labor migration and economic adaptation. By contrast, the Carteret islands’ divergence from economic mobility has hampered international aid, illustrating the exclusivity of the framework in which global action operates.

For now, and because of the controversy associated with the term ‘refugee’, many authors prefer referring to the movements as migration. These varied terminologies testify of the difficulty of describing a phenomenon which draws its origins from a multiplicity of contextual drivers on which the academic field is divided. An artificial division it would seem, according to Bettini (2017) who believes these discourses emanate of “dominant biopolitical neoliberal discourses and move towards the same horizon”, serving to produce “governable populations out of the vulnerable” (Bettini, 2017:36). Nevertheless, the general lack of consensus around these questions has impeded international action on climate migrations.

B. The shortcomings of the international community

a. Taking the first step: international cooperation under tense climate

Many speak of historical responsibility when it comes to environmental migrations, as climate change is thought to have been principally caused by the human activity of industrialized nations, and “duties to environmental refugees would be duties of corrective or rectificatory justice” (Bell, 2004:139; Skillington, 2016) to redress environmental grievances (Gibb and Ford, 2012; Byravan and Rajan, 2010; Byravan and Rajan, 2006). The Republic of Kiribati has implied the responsibility of the North in a document submitted to the UNFCCC, by reminding that it is, as a least-developed SID, “in no way responsible for the unfolding climate change catastrophe” (2015:7). Authors have urged the international community to take responsibility for the issue (Docherty and Giannini, 2009), while others have described their liability in causing a new migration crisis as an ‘uncomfortable truth’ (Conisbee and Sims, 2003:4). Small island states have not hesitated to call out international leaders on their inaction. As early as 1989, during the Small states conference on sea-level rise, the Maldivian minister of transport Abbas Ibrahim deplored SIDS for being “innocent victims of the actions of industrialized countries” (Ibrahim, 1989:1)⁸. These sentiments, as valid as they are, are stifled by an immense lack of political will. At the UN level, no agency is mandated for the protection of those displaced by climate change, despite the issue being “extremely urgent, and it’s clear that climate change is a reality that needs to be grappled with on the time scale of today, and tomorrow, and the next day, and into the future” (Bower, interview 2018). Nonetheless, the UNHCR’s engagement remains non-operational, providing only normative and policy perspectives on relocation. Aote Tong, the previous president of Kiribati, has also expressed his discouragement to the UN General Assembly, as “[f]or many years, we have tirelessly appealed to this organization to do something about climate change, and to provide solutions for those seriously affected by its detrimental effects, especially those

⁸ This notion of injustice is complimented by Leimgruber’s (2004) reminder of the technocentric vision of the industrial revolution that has since dominated the Western conceptions of the exploitation of their environment. He adds that principles of market liberalism dominate Man’s relationship to nature, and although developed nations must take their responsibility in the current crisis, their relentless efforts to prevent climate migrants from being legally accounted for testifies of the North’s rejection of their responsibility in the issue. For him, resolving this crisis would require a transformation of Western attitudes, as “we are reaping the fruits of worldwide colonization, of the export of the European way of thinking, of reckless exploitation of the Earth for the benefit of the few” (Leimgruber, 2004:264).

whose very existence are being threatened” (Tong, 2008:1). These very powerful words resonate today within civil society and climate justice movements, but have failed to translate into any meaningful policy at the international level.

Three narratives have been used by the literature to engage the international community: the human rights narratives, the international responsibility in climate change narrative, and the security narrative (Mayer, 2016). For reasons of sovereignty, difficulty in tracing responsibility from a state to an individual, and focus on the current refugee crisis, these have not been very helpful to date. For Bettini (2017), the international community’s ignorance of the current Mediterranean ‘hecatombs’ is a preview of the lack of political attention the climate migration problem will receive. This lack of appetite for the issue stems mostly from major polluters (Campbell, 2014), as indicated by their failure to meet commitments during international environmental conferences, and the weakness of those commitments in many agreements. The Cancun Adaptation Framework was the first COP document to include a mention of migration resulting from climate change, under the famous Paragraph 14f which encourages measures of cooperation on climate displacement, migration and planned relocation at all levels of governance (UNFCCC, 2011). Despite this recognition eight years ago, actions have been sparse. This is arguably due to the inadequate organizational structures of international institutions, deemed by Weiss and Wilkinson (2014) as disconnected from the growing number of issues, and their lack of a centralized authority which eases resistance to institutional changes (Nay and Petiteville, 2011). More than that, it is the inter-governmental nature of the UN agencies which hinder their ability to protect climate migrants. As Susanne Melde of the IOM has explained in an interview (2018), “we’re an inter-governmental organization so we can’t do whatever we want, it all depends on the governments, our work is based on Member States’ priorities”. In this issue, the international community has expressed very little interest, as Scott Leckie bluntly remarks, “when it comes to a bunch of poor islanders, who make no contribution to the world economy, that’s how they would see it, then why should they spend billions of dollars?” (interview, 2018). This candid observation supports the emergence of new actors on the international scene. Melde adds that there is a large need for action and support for countries affected by environmental and climate change, and while international negotiations and funds have been developing, “the question is, will it be followed through” (interview, 2018).

According to rational choice institutionalism, actors behave to maximize the attainment of their fixed sets of preferences, and it assumes that the creation of institutions is done to secure the preferences of actors who control them in a deliberate and calculated fashion (Hall and Taylor, 1996). Although subject to debate and criticism, it seems to accurately reflect the utilitarian and realist viewpoint of states regarding climate migrations. There seems to be a deterrence to act first, as illustrated by the Australian ‘climate refugee’ bill. In 2007, Green-party Senator Kerry Nettle proposed an amendment act to create a new visa category under existing immigration laws, that would grant ‘climate refugee visas’ (Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 2007b). To facilitate this amendment, it was proposed that full power be given to the Minister to determine if a situation would be considered an environmental disaster, and to set a quota limit on the number of issued visas (Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 2007a; 2007b). Despite these modest elements, members of Parliament argued that they were unwilling to act without an international effort regardless of the country’s responsibility in climate change (Perkiss et al., 2010). This position wasn’t helped by the National and Liberal party coalition that even denied the impact of climate change on Pacific islands, proving skeptical of the science to kill the amendment. This stance has been defended since the Howard years, the Prime Minister from 1996 to 2007, as he refused assistance to Pacific islanders when they began suffering from the impacts of climate change (Collett, 2009). Through his maleficent political construction of refugees and his constant denial of climate change, he set Australia on a course of retreat in the protection of climate migrants.

These positions echo the growing sentiments in the West against foreigners, refugees, and an increasing climate skepticism. Scruggs and Benegal (2012) have noted a rise in recent years in the number of Americans believing that the seriousness of climate change is exaggerated by the media, a denial burgeoning amongst right-wing Europeans as well (McCright et al., 2016). Combined with a growing resentment for refugees and migrants among the population, Western politicians have progressively embraced nationalist and xenophobic rhetoric (Simonelli, 2016), to deter migration flows and at the same time, annihilate the chances of climate migrants gaining political support amongst an unwelcoming population. But as Byravan and Rajan accurately note, “[a]t the dawn of the 21st century, we have already ‘committed’ ourselves to a certain degree of irreversible climate change. The least we can do is to attend our obligations by planning ahead to

meet the needs of those who will be worst affected” (2006:251). Unfortunately, the current lack of international interest shows otherwise.

b. Current frameworks of protection and proposed transformations

i. Amending the Big Two: the shortcomings of the cornerstones of international protection

In the debate on climate migrations, the cornerstones of international protection are often considered to be the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (GPID). The former is mostly considered by those who label the affected populations as ‘climate refugees’, in the event of cross-border displacement. The latter is thought to account for internal migrants, considered most numerous. Two concerns arise: (i) the failure of the 1951 Convention to encompass the environment as a cause of asylum has created a big juridical gap for this category of displacement, and (ii) the non-binding character of the GPID is hindering its ability to protect internally-displaced climate persons.

Refugees of the world are governed by the 1951 Convention and its 1967 amendment Protocol. Their definition of refugees excludes the environment as a cause of cross-border displacement (UNHCR, 2007), because it was written after the Second World War and pertains exclusively to more ‘traditional’ classes of refugees. It is unsuitable for the 21st century environmental crisis, and for Mayer (2016), this is no coincidence. He argues that the Convention was negotiated with a conscious reluctance to broaden its protective capacities, as a result of national interests and sovereignty leaving “the international governance of migration piecemeal and largely unsatisfactory” (Mayer, 2016:195). Indeed, according to the UNHCR’s handbook, the determination of refugee status of an individual is up to the state in which he is applying for asylum (UNHCR, 1979). This has led, for example, to the rejection of two requests for refugee status by I-Kiribati citizens, in Australia and New Zealand. In the former, the applicant argued that life in the country had become increasingly difficult and that climate change could be perceived as a form of persecution, a necessary condition under the 1951 definition (Australia, RRT Case, 2009). He contended that the I-Kiribati could be seen as a particular social group, another criteria for

eligibility, and that the situation would cause him harm in the form of deteriorated living conditions and food and water insecurity. Despite these claims, the Australian Tribunal contested his eligibility to refugee status, arguing that the persecution was not founded on the defining criteria of the Convention; that it had to involve a discriminatory element; that despite Australia's responsibility in climate change, the evidence of harm was insufficient; and emissions and climate change were not a voluntary discriminatory persecution (Australia, RRT case, 2009). In New Zealand, four courts discredited Ioane Teitiota's application for refugee status. They argued that the concept of persecution had to necessarily involve human agency, not including climate change, and it could not be said that the Kiribati government had knowingly failed to protect its population (Buchanan, 2015). The Court of Appeal even framed the applicant's claim for asylum as "fundamentally misconceived" as "it attempts to stand the Convention on its head" (Buchanan, 2015:3). These two cases testify of the juridical barriers upheld against those most impacted by environmental degradation, as well as the reluctance of industrialized countries to acknowledge this new type of refugee. As Burson (2010a) explains, they can't meet the requirements of the Convention because of the impossibility to prove the conscious discriminatory nature of climate change by emitting countries. Erica Bower of the UNHCR adds that an islander could only claim refugee status in the context of persecution based on his beliefs, or if his is being marginalized or excluded from disaster relief (interview, 2018). And although the European Parliament (2011) has suggested that a refugee claim could be made if the home government has failed to protect a certain group of people against the effects of climate change, the New Zealand court case shows that this argument will unlikely be received. Moreover, the anchor of international law in sovereignty and the domination of Western ideology have created an individualistic and universal vision of the refugee (Chemillier-Gendreau, 2006), incompatible with the contextual and community-wide character of climate displacement.

While some authors have suggested amending the Refugee Convention, most deny this possibility based on the lack of political will required, and the inefficiency of such an act. Lallemand argued that the simplest way to protect climate migrants would be to extend the 1951 definition to encompass an environmental component with a simple mention of ecological danger. This argument is vastly contested. Masters (2000) argues that expanding the definition of a refugee would devalue it entirely, and achieving consensus on the definition would be arduous. Moreover, because of the distinct characteristics of climate migrations, incorporating it into existing law

would not be satisfactory (Lange, 2010). Overall, an extension of the Convention would entail renegotiating and possibly lowering the protection standards for all refugees, and necessitate an expansion of legal duties that would probably be challenged by asylum-giving countries (Burson, 2010b). This point is supported by Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who believes the label ‘environmental refugee’ would undermine current protection by the UNHCR and create confusion (Guterres, 2008). Erica Bower adds that an amendment is not a “realistic, political palatable solution. Opening up the Geneva Convention in today’s climate, when there is so much animosity and xenophobia, would ultimately lead to a less good convention” (interview, 2018). This viewpoint is shared by Susanne Melde of the IOM and Sarah Koeltzow of the Platform on Disaster Displacement, who deem an amendment very unlikely due to a lack of political appetite at the global level (interviews, 2018).

The second protection mechanism applicable to climate migrants is the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. It could indeed have the necessary scope of protection; internally displaced persons (IDP) being defined as:

persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized border (United Nations, 2004c:1)

This definition can appeal to the climate migration issue in two ways. First, unlike the 1951 Refugee Convention, it holds a community-wide approach to the affected peoples, which seems very appropriate in the context of climate-induced displacement. Second, the mention of natural disasters extends the scope of the Guiding Principles to those affected by climate change, rendering it the most appropriate tool to date for their protection. In 2009, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on IDPs in which they recognize that “natural disasters are a cause of internal displacement” whether they are hazards or slow-onset events (United Nations General Assembly, 2010), further broadening its scope. Nonetheless, the Principles stress the fact that states have an obligation to prevent displacement, especially of those with a distinct dependency and attachment to their land (United Nations, 2004c:4,5), a point of particular relevance to the Pacific islands. As

much hope as this document brings, its non-binding and statist character hampers its applicability in the context of climate migrations.

Indeed, the Principles fail to recognize an international responsibility to the displaced, and only serves as a guidance document for states to provide assistance and protection (DeWitte, 2010), seriously hindering its ambition. The internally displaced are considered “the world’s forgotten people” (Christian Aid, 2007:7), due to a lack of binding actions taken by the UN and the international community on their behalf. And although the GPID could provide a normative framework for new protection standards (Cournil and Gemenne, 2010), it still doesn’t compel states to respect them. More than that, there is no mandated central authority to structure the Guiding Principles, home countries being the principle agents responsible for the affected populations (Biermann and Boas, 2010; United Nations, 2004c:13). And although international actors argue that the GPID are based on humanitarian and human rights law and are thus globally recognized (Brookings Institution, 2014) – having been incorporated into twenty countries’ national legislations-, the first legally binding framework to be adopted was the Kampala Convention, more than ten years after the GPID, and only pertains to IDPs in Africa.

Climate migrations could also be governed by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 1966, both part of the International Bill of Human Rights. They seem highly relevant to the protection of affected populations, starting with Article 1, which ensures the right to self-determination of all people and that no one shall be deprived of their means of subsistence (United Nations General Assembly, 1966). Article 11 also guarantees the right to adequate living conditions, food and housing, of importance in the context of environmental degradation in SIDS. The ICCPR further stresses the obligation of signatory parties to enforce the Covenant and respect human rights and fundamental freedoms of all peoples, even if they’re not within their territories, therefore extending the scope of their responsibilities to stateless persons, migrant workers, and refugees (United Nations, 2004a). These conditions are pertinent as mobility regarding populations affected by climate change may take many forms and eventually cover all three types of persons. However, the Covenants present flaws that prevent their total application. Principle 12 of the ICCPR contends that states can’t “extradite, deport, expel, or otherwise remove a person from their territory, where there are substantial grounds for believing that there is a real risk of irreparable

harm” (United Nations, 2004a, para 12). Although this would entail that cross-border climate migrants would be protected, Burson (2010b) reminds us that the principle of *non-refoulement* only applies to a certain threshold of harm such as torture or inhuman treatment, meaning that deteriorating ecological conditions would have to become sufficiently dire in the home country to engage this principle, denying its application to a majority of climate migrants that may flee before this threshold is passed. Moreover, Article 1 of the ICESCR guaranteeing the right to self-determination has been subject to various legal interpretations, and despite its binding character on all states, this fuzziness has given it more of a political than legal scope (Pascoe, 2015). More importantly, self-determination yields to territorial integrity and state sovereignty, and thus loses its power in the context of sea-level rise and migration from sinking islands to foreign land. And as international law doesn’t account for the need of peoples to establish their community elsewhere should their territory become uninhabitable (Skillington, 2016), the right to self-determination that would certainly pertain to them is crippled by the overarching state sovereignty principle.

ii. Why creating a new treaty is not the answer

Considering these juridical shortcomings, some authors have suggested creating a new international treaty that would cater exclusively to climate migration needs. For Lange (2010), treaties are the best tool for the governance of climate displacement, distinct from existing refugee and human rights law to encompass the specificities of the issue. Skillington (2016) argues for new treaties that would preserve state sovereignty while guaranteeing community resettlement agreements, and Legoux (2010) stresses the importance of differentiating between refugees and migrants and argues for decentralized protection obligations. It is contended that new international provisions should be made because of the inherent responsibility of pollutant nation to repair the damages to the livelihoods of entire populations, based on the principle of shared responsibility in climate change (Byravan and Rajan, 2010). Chemillier-Gendreau (2006) emphasizes the importance of creating a new definition of a refugee, centered around the destructive impacts of anthropogenic environmental degradation. A definition of the sort is also proposed by Docherty and Giannini (2009), along with a detailed explanation of the nine components crucial to the elaboration of a new convention, based on guarantees of assistance, shared responsibility, and new instruments of administration. Confident that states would embrace this instrument because

migration flows would be managed both for home and host states, the authors stress the importance of their treaty to fill current juridical gaps. In this light, Biermann and Boas (2010) have proposed a new regime to eliminate problems of individuality in recognizing affected peoples, issues of temporary asylum and priority given to emergency situations⁹. It would be associated with the UNFCCC and be under the authority of state members of COPs, an idea supported by the European Parliament (2011). While the basis for this governance regime is satisfactory, this last point is arguably problematic. It would entail that this protection framework, as well as the associated Fund the authors vouch for, would be subject to the internal politics of the COP process under the UNFCCC. As the weakness of commitments of most agreements since the Kyoto Protocol demonstrates, political consensus and action is difficult to gather and it would seem improbable that this would not be the case for this regime. Moreover, Cournil and Gemenne (2010) note, as they challenge Biermann and Boas' proposal, that the probability of such a proposition ever reaching the top of the environmental policy agenda is a fantasy.

Burton and Hodgkinson (2009a) have also been very active in promoting a new protection agenda in the form of a Convention based on a contextual determination of at-risk populations and the capacities of the concerned states to provide protection. Their proposed framework would incorporate notions of common but differentiated responsibilities in climate change and the individual capabilities of states. They reject the idea of an overarching agency mandated for the convention, and instead argue for the creation of an intergovernmental panel to coordinate research, cooperation and solutions (Burton and Hodgkinson, 2009b). The most detailed and thought-out proposition for a new treaty comes from Hodgkinson et al (2010), who account for temporary, permanent, internal, trans-border, and pre-emptive displacement. Again, they reject the UNFCCC and existing institutional dispositions, deemed inadequate and confusing. They also dismiss the need for distinguishing between push and pull factors, and embrace the idea that all movement due to climate change is coerced, thus invalidating the distinction between economic migration and forced displacement. They promote assistance and funding based on historical responsibilities for GHG emissions, and special provisions for SIDS through the principles of self-determination, proximity, and cultural safe-guarding in bilateral agreements between island countries and host nations (Hodgkinson et al., 2010). These provisions are crucial, as they remind international actors

⁹ It is based on five principles: planned relocation, resettlement, collective rights for populations, international assistance for domestic policies, and international burden sharing.

that climate displacement is highly contextual, and will occur in different forms and scopes. This means that a convention should encompass the entirety of possibilities of climate migrations to ensure protection for all affected populations. Unfortunately, this is a very unlikely scenario.

Indeed, the creation of a new treaty is highly disputed in the academic field. McAdam (2011) argues that most movements will be internal and other mechanisms might be more fitting. She also contends that the relationship between migration and climate change is not straightforward, the latter acting as a catalyst of underlying socio-economic pressures, meaning that a treaty would entail unnecessary effort in proving causation between environmental change and harm. Finally, the author reminds us of the political obstacles facing a new convention in terms of political will, reach of consensus on definitions and concepts, and incentives for ratification. Because of these barriers, authors have discredited the idea of a new treaty altogether, instead advocating for the development of soft law mechanisms such as the Kyoto Protocol and the GPID (Yamamoto and Esteban, 2017). It can be argued however that these devices, while important to create international norms and guidelines, lack the enforcement power to coerce states into respecting their engagements, which have already proven insufficient in the global fight against climate change and for human rights. Nonetheless, these approaches are supported by actors such as the Government Office for Science (2011) because they permit a more contextual approach to climate migrations and because the nature of slow-onset events would be difficult to translate into a meaningful treaty (Fornale and Kagan, 2017). While they are more politically feasible at the moment, they also illustrate a disappointing lack of ambition. The academic construction of a new convention aimed at protecting the human rights of persons displaced by climate change is admirable and some authors have produced encouraging propositions, but the reality is that such treaties would probably face immense opposition from polluting countries, and a political agenda currently dominated by diplomatic and refugee crises.

iii. Secondary mechanisms, regionalized protection and bilateral labor schemes as potential strategies

Hence, many soft law arrangements have been advocated to fill the governance gap surrounding climate migrations. The UNFCCC and COP agreements have been recognized as

having the potential to incorporate affected populations, as seen in the Cancun Adaptation Framework paragraph 14f (UNFCCC, 2011). The creation of the Warsaw Mechanism on Loss and Damage in 2013 under the Cancun Framework also offered an opportunity to reinforce capacity-building in affected states by fortifying the Green Climate Fund's (GCF) role in climate adaptation and underlining the need for a multilateral and comprehensive approach to climate change (UNFCCC, 2014). Created to address problems of loss and damage in slow and rapid-onset events, political tensions escalated to the point where members of the G-77 bloc walked out of the discussions (Simonelli, 2016). And although the Cancun framework is recognized as a milestone in the protection of climate migrants, its non-binding character has stalled its efficacy. In that regard, DeWitte (2010) reiterates the absolute necessity for the Framework to be enforced, as small island cultures in the Pacific are becoming increasingly threatened. Similarly, the Paris Accords (UNFCCC, 2015) marked a breakthrough in climate negotiations after the failure of previous COPs, but failed to crystallize the reality of migration induced by environmental change¹⁰. And although authors such as Gibb and Ford (2012) and Guterres (2008) believe that the UNFCCC has the capacity to incorporate migrations as an adaptation issue, it is, again, unlikely that political consensus would be sufficient to truly benefit populations. Although the authors contend that climate migration has sufficient political momentum to attract the attention of policy-makers, they also denote an 'adaptation fallacy', by which decision-makers will neglect migration issues by focusing on adaptation measures that would allegedly get rid of forced mobility (Gibb and Ford, 2012:3). In this light, climate finance under the UNFCCC has been proposed as a mechanism that would help prevent displacements. For Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand (2017), current climate finance schemes have ignored the needs of local communities, questioning the effectiveness of the GCF and international funding. Remittances have been considered effective climate finance (Bendandi and Pauw, 2016), but their sometimes inefficient use casts doubt on their efficacy as an adaptation solution in the long-term. The Almeria Statement on desertification and migration of 1994 presented at the time more ambitious demands, arguing for a review of the legal and regulatory regime of "the ever-growing number of environmental migrants and displaced persons" (Westing, 1994:180). They urged researchers to translate migration analyses into policies that would enable a holistic approach to problems associated with the effects of climate change on both

¹⁰ The Accords hold only one mention of migration, by asserting that Parties should respect their obligations regarding the human rights of indigenous communities and migrants. No details are provided as to the nature of those migrations, and the issue is absent from the remainder of the document (UNFCCC, 2015).

the environment and human populations. Since then however, few statements have had so much ambition. The Suva Declaration by the Pacific Island Development Forum Secretariat provided an opportunity to encourage international leaders to commit to more purposeful terms, declaring Pacific stakeholders as being “deeply disappointed that current international pledges for action (...) remain grossly inadequate” (PIDF, 2015:1). Unfortunately, it reinforces existing frameworks such as the GCF and the Paris Agreement, simply urging them to deepen their commitment. The Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction presents equally unsatisfying demands within the current governance structure, targeting better disaster risk governance and preparedness, while highlighting the role of technology and engineering science (Wahlström, 2015). Although these are notable arguments, they remain anchored in inadequate policy frameworks that have proven insufficient to deal with climate migrations.

Current governance shortcomings have been more concretely addressed by the Pinheiro Principles, created by Geneva-based NGO COHRE in consultation with ECOSOC and other organizations. They aim to foster international standards on Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights of refugees and displaced persons based on notions of restitution, reparation of injustices and human rights abuses (COHRE, 2005). These principles apply to those who have been “arbitrarily or unlawfully deprived of their former homes, lands, properties or places of habitual residence” (COHRE, 2005:9), thus encompassing those displaced by natural events. It confers onto states responsibilities and obligations pertaining to the right to adequate housing, protection from displacement and non-discrimination, amongst others. It encourages with enthusiasm the participation of countries and the international community in supporting the application of the principles, and advocates the establishment of legislative measures and cooperation between international actors. While these are pillars of soft law mechanisms, they fail to call for compensation in the event of the disappearance of a state due to sea-level rise, and remain a non-binding guidance document. Moreover, the UN’s handbook on the implementation of the Pinheiro Principles states that compensation can only be given when three conditions are met: (i) if HLP restoration is impossible, (ii) if the affected individuals prefer compensation, and (iii) if an independent and impartial tribunal has authorized it (United Nations Inter-Agency, 2007). These rigid conditions seem rather impractical and not applicable to most cases of climate migrations, especially those pre-emptive in nature. For geographically and culturally isolated communities in difficult political contexts, like the Carteret islands, envisioning a process of individual

compensation for planned relocation through an impartial tribunal seems difficult. The Western concepts of indemnity and housing restitution also seem inappropriate for tribal communities asked to monetize their emotional attachment to their ancestral lands.

Despite these shortcomings, secondary soft-law mechanisms are still considered advantageous for climate migrants. The most impactful intergovernmental mechanism on the issue seems to be the Nansen Initiative, a bottom-up platform created in 2012 and dedicated to developing consensus amongst member states on the question of cross-border disaster displacement¹¹. Initially, the Initiative has provided guidance on governance at various levels and encouraged states to develop normative frameworks on matters of protection of affected communities (Nansen Initiative, 2013a). Through consultations with Pacific islands, it has gathered meaningful insight from relevant actors on the challenges of relocation and disaster displacement (Nansen Initiative, 2013b), an admirable task for an initiative led primarily by states. Sarah Koeltzow, the policy officer of the coordination unit of the Platform, explains that because it is a state-led process, “in the Coordination Unit, we don’t have, so to speak, an opinion of our own” (interview, 2018). However, Koeltzow also indicates that this is not an issue in the context of the Platform. She argues that “there is a clear recognition (...) that voice must be given to the affected, these are the people who know their needs. Luckily, we’re beyond that stage where something is conceived in someone’s ivory tower and then rolled out unsuccessfully” (interview, 2018). As their position rejects the creation of a new convention, but rather advocates the promotion of their Agenda (Nansen Initiative, 2015), they are anchored in advancing secondary mechanisms. However, as a soft-law tool, the document is “nothing that’s binding per se, it outlines a toolbox of options that these governments have to start to create protection for their population” (Erica Bower, interview, 2018). This set of good practices doesn’t include enforcement mechanisms nor does it commit states to actions.

Regionalized protection schemes represent another path taken regarding cross-border climate change-induced displacement. Bilateral cooperation has been used by nations to counter the inefficacy of the international regime (Sarah Koeltzow, interview 2018), most of which take

¹¹ Through consultations with representatives of civil society, international organizations, academia and states, the initiative has led to the endorsement of the Protection Agenda on disaster displacement by 109 governments in 2015. The Nansen Initiative was then replaced by the Platform on Disaster Displacement, a follow-up designed to implement the adopted Agenda, and further the international consensus on the issue of climate displacement.

the form of labor migration schemes. In the Pacific context, this has been organized through Australian and Neo-Zealander partnerships with nations in the region, mostly through short-term work visas often directed at agricultural sectors in the host states. These opportunities can enable islanders to escape environmental degradation and facilitates citizenship in other countries (McLeman, 2014), while supporting home communities through the sending of remittances. Because most admissions to another country in cases of natural disasters are ad hoc and uncoordinated (Türk, 2015), multilateral arrangements would harmonize standards of treatments and enable more individuals to migrate overseas. Bedford and Bedford remind that “[w]here it is not possible for Pacific peoples to live in their own countries, then clearly alternative homes in the region will need to be found” (2010:92) and labor migration might be the most feasible alternative. However, negative outcomes can be denoted, notably that the exclusive use of labor migration could restrain developed countries from taking their responsibilities in regards to climate change and humanitarian assistance to affected communities (Fornale and Kagan, 2017). On the question of temporary protection such as humanitarian visas afforded to people affected by natural disasters, Erica Bower adds that, already, “nothing is consistent, it’s one plan over here, one plan over there, and temporary protection, it’s not a long-term solution” (interview, 2018). Moreover, individual out-migration could contribute to a brain-drain, and the quality of jobs found in home countries would unlikely be equivalent to the level of qualification held by islander migrants, a point that will be further developed in the Kiribati case study of this research. It is also worth noting that the UN Convention on the Rights of Migrants and their Families has not been widely ratified due to a political reluctance for international law to interfere with domestic immigration policies and to deter future migrations (UNESCO, 2005). In this light, states retain the exclusive rights to the specificities of immigration, notably on how many, who, and for how long migrants can come¹² (Geddes et al., 2012). To ensure the rights of migrant workers are protected, Caritas has advocated the establishment of a Pacific Framework for Climate Mobility based on the respect of human rights and encourages governments to respect their engagements (Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand, 2017).

¹² As will be further analyzed, New Zealand and Australia have set quotas for islander immigration and sometimes rigid criteria for eligibility to their work visas. The Pacific Access Category for NZ for example selects 75 I-Kiribati per year, aged 18-45 years-old, fluent in English, and who have been offered a job in NZ. (See NZ immigration website: <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/apply-for-a-visa/about-visa/pacific-access-category-resident-visa>)

Despite many shortcomings, regionalized protection schemes, more adapted to highly contextual climate mobility, have been presented as the most politically feasible mechanism in the face of an international reluctance to produce a binding global convention for the protection of climate migrants.

Chapter II - Methodology

A. Research problem and question: framing the role of the state and civil society in climate migrations

The literature review of this dissertation has emphasized that climate migrations are contextual, and can take many forms as an adaptation strategy. This is confirmed by the Carteret and Kiribati cases. What is of interest here is understanding the reasons behind the variations in social and political reactions to sea-level rise and environmental degradation. The aim is to discern which factors condition the role of international organizations (IOs), civil society organizations (CSOs) and the state in the resettlement and protection of communities, and understanding to what extent these roles inform each other and influence the perception of migration as adaptation and the development of policies. These interrogations fall under the broader research problem of explaining social and political strategies against sea-level rise through the understanding of the intellectual debate on migration and displacement, and the shortcomings of international and domestic support for affected communities. The hope is to establish a paradigm for analysis of climate mobility that would permit a contextual understanding of future movements.

For this research, the outcome to be explained is made up of the varying socio-political adaptation strategies observed across the Carteret and Kiribati cases. Based on careful inductive analysis, the research puts forth three explanatory factors as conditioning these outcomes: (i) variation in state capacity to address the problem of sea-level rise and its related impacts, (ii) civil society actors' agency in their own protection, and (iii) the social and political conceptualizations of migration as an adaptation strategy.

This research thus interprets the variations in adaptation strategy to sea-level rise as being produced by the three factors and their interactions. The main argument is that state capacity conditions the agency of communities in responding to sea-level rise, and that both are derived from political and social conceptualizations of migration. These concepts influence the way actors emerge in response to sea-level rise: when mass-migration is perceived negatively and the state is proactive in its response (the case of Kiribati), the state becomes a leading force. Whereas when mass-migration is conceived as positive adaptation in the context of weak state leadership (the case

of the Carterets), civil society transpires. As McAdam (2011) reminds us, international relations and international law aspire to universalize and create generalizable norms. The goal here is to understand the conditions that make migratory adaptation possible under the broad concepts of state capacity, CSO agency, and conception of migration, to better exemplify the singularities of climate migration and the need to understand them in their historical, social, political and cultural contexts to develop specific norms and policies. These three scopes in turn generate a frame for future analysis that could render projections and policy-guidance more applicable to the various forms of climate migration.

B. Methodology

a. The method

The research is based on an inductive qualitative approach. The strategy behind the selection of cases follows a most-different case study design (MDSD), centered around the Carteret islands' relocation and the Kiribati labor mobility strategy. The research aims to assess the influence of systemic factors, in relation to each other and on different levels of analysis (Przeworski and Teune, 1970). Indeed, to understand the 'within-system' variations and the inter-systemic differences used for explaining the differential outcomes across cases, analysis is undertaken at different levels of governance, notably the international, regional, domestic, and local. The choice to broadly follow a MDSD approach stems from preliminary research on the case studies and the conclusion that despite a similar issue of sea-level rise, the outcome strategy is different. What thus became of interest was the divergence in the systemic factors surrounding the varying migration and adaptation responses. Case studies must be representative for them to be of utility in research (Seawright and Gerring, 2008), so the Carterets and Kiribati were chosen for their status as iconic examples of climate displacement. The Carterets were the first organized mass-resettlement of communities affected by climate change (Leckie, 2014), and often recognized as the first 'climate refugees' of the world. Kiribati is amongst the most vulnerable nations in the world and is emblematic for its government's fight against climate change on the international

scene¹³, augmenting its relevance to a MDS approach. The cases were also chosen based on the available literature on historical, social, cultural, and adaptation information. Although there are many gaps in the literature on these case studies regarding aspects of economic development, community perceptions, and governmental relationships with civil society, basic information was available and made them logical candidates to the study.

Data collection stems from two sources: primary and secondary literature, and semi-structured interviews. Gaps were identified in the literature on climate migrations, notably in the empirical understanding of the relationship between CSOs and the state, their respective roles, and how those roles are framing adaptation strategies to SLR. A significant part of data collection stemmed from primary sources, such as international organization reports, bills and court reports, NGO documentations, UN resolutions, conventions and treaties, and governmental documents, providing a steady basis for analysis. The second part of data collection was the interviews. They were conducted with important actors in the relocation of the Carteret islands, adaptation in Kiribati, and international agencies. In total, eight interviews were conducted over Skype, and one interview was administered via email. The respondents were from various horizons: three of them from international organizations, four from international NGOs, one from a civil society group in Kiribati, and one member of a governmental program in Kiribati. The initial hope was to get a more balanced number of respondents, in terms of amount and background, but few responses were given to my inquiries, and the process suffered technological difficulties that will be detailed below. The interviews lasted between 30 minutes and one hour and were audio recorded at the knowledge of the participants. As they were semi-structured, the discussions aimed to put the interviewees at ease and discuss the issues in a more flexible manner.

The research is based on grounded theory and the use of concepts coding. Selective pattern coding was the preferred mode of analysis, whereby broad notions were identified within the literature and the interviews and put into relation with the help of the QDA Miner software. By exploring the relationships between the categories of coding, this method has enabled the elaboration of a theory on the variations of socio-political adaptation strategies to sea-level rise.

¹³ Despite Tuvalu often being noted as the first probably disappearing nation (Conisbee and Sims, 2003), its extremely small population made it an inappropriate comparative case. Having a larger population, Kiribati is a prime example of a Pacific island nation faced with environmental degradation.

b. The difficulties associated with the research

Due to the geographical isolation of the two case studies, interviews were difficult to conduct with participants on the ground. At first, the goal of this research was to get the direct experience of communities, local civil society groups, and governments. This proved a very challenging task due to technical difficulties associated with internet connections and setting up Skype appointments. Papua New Guinea has an extreme telephonic communications rate which made it financially impossible to conduct interviews over the telephone. On the Carterets and Kiribati, the internet is not a widespread service, eliminating the possibility of direct discussions with islanders¹⁴. The Carterets' main representatives, the Tulele Peisa NGO, have experienced some communication difficulties associated with their remoteness and limited resources, such as with their internet website and email communication. Close associates of the organization have also reported a general sense of fatigue with international researchers, that has certainly hindered my chances of getting into contact with the head of the NGO, Ursula Rakova. Understandably, they have been the subject of many research projects and media reports without their situation much advancing internationally and domestically from all this attention. This sentiment has also been noted in Kiribati by Scott Leckie (interview, 2018), where people are "bored" with talking about climate change. The high level of interest in these case studies and the relatively small impact of this research, combined with high communication costs and little internet access, also probably deterred these very busy actors from responding to inquiries. Hence, the number of participants was greatly reduced and pertained more indirectly to relevant communities. The new strategy was to get the stories from international associates of Tulele Peisa and representatives from communities in Kiribati. This mainly meant communicating with international NGOs and partners capable of sharing the experience and perceptions of actors on the ground.

Overall, there were difficulties in conducting this research from Canada, which have somewhat hindered its analytical force. Indeed, interviews of community leaders and islanders would have been very compelling to further understand their perceptions on the issue of climate migration, and this topic certainly warrants on-field long-term research.

¹⁴ According to the National Statistics Office (2016), only 15,000 out of 110,000 I-Kiribati have regular internet use and access.

C. Defining the terms

a. Concept framing and adopted theoretical standpoint

This research project borders on three political science domains: environmental policy and theory, migration studies, and civil society and social movements.

Environmental politics theory lays the foundations for the theoretical standpoint of this project, drawing on an ecologist frame of analysis. It underlines the responsibility of industrialized nations in climate change and stresses the importance of a balanced relationship between Man and Earth. It suggests that governance regimes serve to advance certain interests of social actors, and that the environmental crisis will eventually lead to the need for alternative modes of human organization to transcend growth-obsessed industrialized Western societies (Pelletier, 2010). Theoretically, this involves examining climate migrations from a deep ecology perspective, a movement which promotes “a fundamental ethical shift [...] that would dethrone human interests as a centerpiece of political life and extend ethical concern deep into the natural world” (Dobson, 2007:31), a political response that entails bringing balance to Man and his environment in the context of neoliberalism and globalization. Indeed, climate migrations are envisioned as the indirect consequence of an over-industrialized world, disproportionately affecting the poorest populations of less developed countries, resulting from a deeply economic relationship with nature. The use of a political ecology standpoint allows for an analysis of the environmental crisis through social relations and the interactions of unequal actors pursuing varying interests (Greiner and Sakdapolrak, 2016). This theoretical perspective is applicable to climate migrations, as a set of deeply unfair circumstances associated with the exploitation of nature and peoples. Indeed, the decision to migrate is a product of social processes and contexts that affect people’s perceptions of risks, and their capacities, based on poverty and marginality, to respond to that perception (Barnett and Chamberlain, 2010). Political ecology incorporates notions of inequality in relationships between Man and Earth, and between individuals themselves. The adopted approach aims to understand the impacts of these inequalities on migration, whether at the community level or at the regional level. It is argued that the difficulties encountered by islanders are a direct product of the unequal relationship between developing countries and the industrialized world, that has erected

barriers to the safe immigration of at-risk communities, unfair labor mobility schemes, and a reluctance to address the needs of climate migrants at the international level. Green political theory thus encompasses four pillars: ecological responsibility, non-violence, grassroots democracy, and social justice (Eckersley, 2013), of which civil society is a major actor. This research is anchored in these notions, notably in pointing out the responsibility of developed nations in the issue and the centrality of CSOs in climate migrations, considered fundamental players in international and domestic politics especially in relation to environmental questions.

The conceptualization of civil society is fundamental to understand the arguments of this research. Global civil society and new social movements have been the subject of extensive literature, and the definition provided by Mezzalama in his report on the involvement of CSOs in the United Nations system will be used here. It describes civil society as:

the result of different components of populations and communities, and refers to the spheres in which citizens and social initiatives organize themselves around objectives, constituencies, and thematic interests. They act collectively through their organizations known as Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), which include movements, entities, institutions autonomous from the state which in principle, are non-profit-making, act locally, nationally and internationally, in defense and promotion of social, economic and cultural interests and for mutual benefit (Mezzalama, 2002:3)

This definition is most satisfactory, as it encompasses any actor that is not part of an institutional or governmental entity in a truly independent sphere and who acts for the common benefit of his group without private interests. Mezzalama separates NGOs from the rest of civil society, a distinction also made by Scholte (2011) who notes that civil society is a political space where citizens aim to affect the rules that govern their political existence and the inequalities in power, which may exclude NGOs that work within the hegemonic system of governance. This distinction will not be made here because international NGOs are of great benefit to local movements, and in the case of climate migration, work hand in hand to surpass governmental deficiencies. Hence, because of their centrality and to facilitate research and analysis, NGOs are considered part of civil society. Their study is also anchored in the belief that CSOs are a “legitimate form of politics through which to bring improved accountability to the institutions of global governance [...] capable of challenging and transforming the status quo” (Amoore and

Langley, 2005:144). This is central in the context of climate migrations as civil society actors may be indispensable to their own protection. Finally, the notion of collective action is embraced in this research, as being “the result of purposes, resources, and limits, as a purposive orientation constructed by means of social relationships within a system of opportunities and constraints” (Melucci, 1995:43). It meaningfully reinforces the centrality of civil agents in navigating through governance systems based on restricting their mobility and the difficulties associated with their own protection, and is particularly significant in the context of Pacific islanders whose societal systems are based on kinships, clans and families. Let’s also remark that the conceptual foundations of state capacity rests on Joel Migdal’s analysis of state-society relations. He posits that “the emergence of a strong, capable state can occur only with a tremendous concentration of social control” (Migdal, 1998:262). These notions come together to reinforce the political ecology frame used here, that considers the state, civil society, and the environment as fundamentally unbalanced in their power dynamics. The use of Migdal’s notion of state capacity enables a deepened analysis of state-CSO relations to comprehend their impact on civil society agency and conceptions of migration.

This research is thus anchored in an interpretivist epistemology, as it frames the understanding of the differences between peoples and the subjective meaning of social action. These actions are guided by social actors’ conceptions of their acts and the acts of others, the goal being to interpret them within their social worlds. Ontologically constructivist, it makes sense of social phenomena as the product of social interactions, and where culture is conceived as a central determinant of the production of knowledge. These positions enable us to introduce the notion of positive and negative conceptualizations of migration to understand the distinct strategies used by affected communities. Their attitudes towards movement, whether it be receptive or antagonistic, frame the role undertaken by civil society and the state, as well as the policy needs and their application. Addressing these attitudes in a dichotomist manner is a methodological choice to simplify analysis. The two case studies will serve to interpret these positions by identifying the consequences of a positive or negative approach to migration on the elaboration of policies and the relative importance of each actor in adapting to climate change.

b. Defining climate migrations: the creation of a new typology

Two main environmental disruptions are often cited: sudden natural catastrophes, and slow-onset gradual deterioration. The latter will be examined here. Much of the literature has devoted attention to migrations caused by natural disasters, and while very interesting, it often precludes the study of permanent resettlement of communities, reconstruction of livelihoods outside the home, questions of land acquisition, integration or even citizenship¹⁵.

To understand climate migrations in their contexts, social, cultural, political, and environmental situations need to be studied. This research tries to account for these notions in its analysis. In doing so, it is argued that a typology may be useful for classifying forms of climate-induced mobility, for current and future research purposes. Any form of classification should be done with consideration for adaptation measures, community perceptions, and sociodemographic factors, because all populations facing slow-onset degradation can't be considered equal in their responses. It is inspired by existing academic typologies, but aims to deepen the understanding of contextualized mobility. It wants to surpass rigid categorizations that only account for notions of temporality, distance or voluntariness, to comprehend *how* and *why* people migrate. Typologies presented in the literature review of this research are unsatisfactory because of their reductive classification of mobility drivers. For example, specifying the type of degradation is a futile component as the time-frame in which the response is needed is more important, and speaking exclusively in terms of distance and reach is equally reductive as it doesn't explain the variation in responses and mobility.

¹⁵ The gradual deterioration of the environment suggests that communities can no longer sustain themselves on their land and that relocation may be essential, depending on the adaptive capacities of households. This entails that the state and international organizations may be responsible for aiding these communities to ensure both a safe departure from their place of origin and their durable development in the destination. This issue is complex at both ends of the journey, and the role of all actors would need to be analyzed.

Table 2. Proposed typology as a tool of analysis for climate migrations

Time scale	Non-urgent	Somewhat urgent	Urgent	
Level of vulnerability	Minor	Medium	Major	
Adaptation possibilities	Limited <i>in situ</i>	Possible longer-lasting <i>in situ</i>	Impossible	
Coping capabilities	Low	Medium	High	
Conception of migration	Positive	Negative		
State Capacity	Weak	Strong		
Reach of responses	Local	Internal	Cross-border regional	International

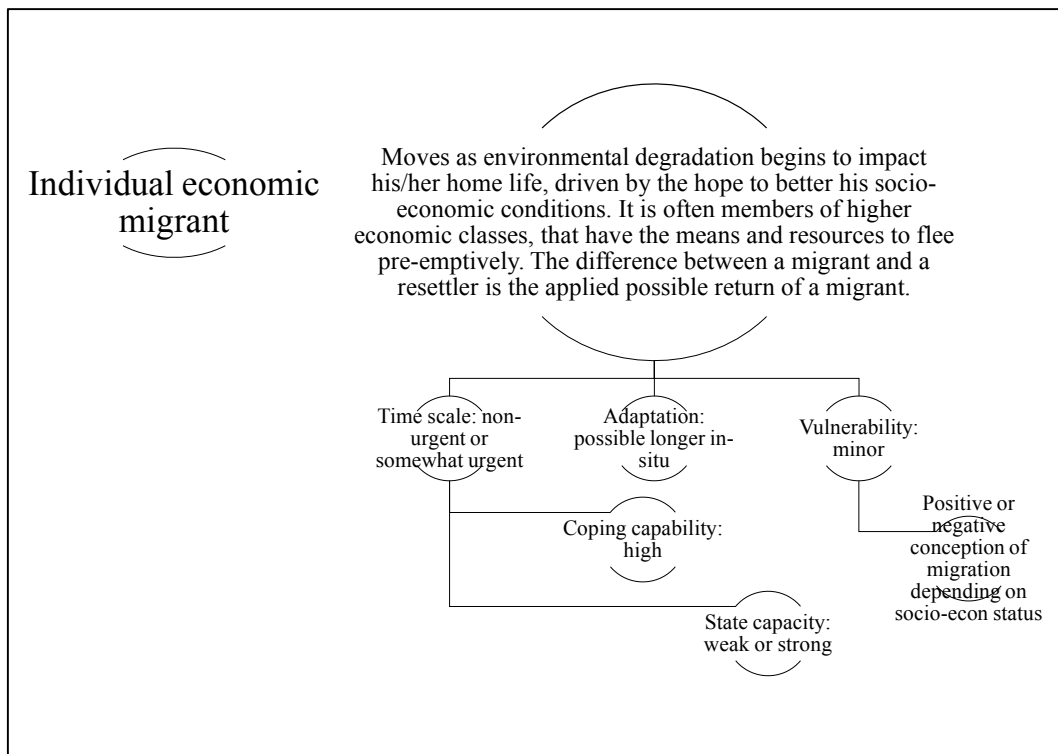
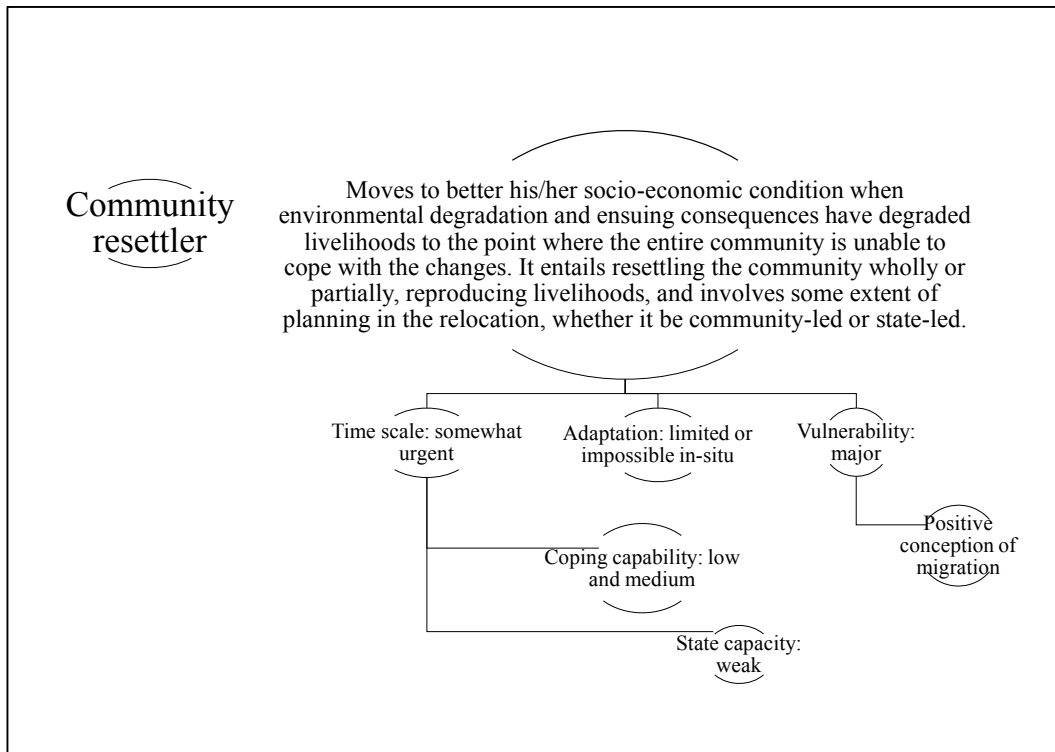
Hence, the proposed typology is composed of seven variables believed to best capture the forces which impact population movement and presented in Table 2 and 3. They should be considered along with the three main explanatory factors used in this research and which have been proposed as a framework for future analysis and policy guidance. Indeed, these seven variables can guide the study of state capacity, civil society agency, and conceptions of migrations by accompanying data collection and research and framing a better contextual understanding of the type of mobility.

This typology determines different categories of migration based on contextual situations in which the affected populations find themselves. This would enable the study of climate migrations and their classification in relation to the socio-economic and political factors that drive or deter migration, by incorporating the adaptation options of affected populations to understand movement. It also rejects the notion of voluntariness, as the line between voluntary and forced displacement is blurred in the context of climate mobility by the external forces that always exert some kind of pressure to move. The typology thus leads to three types of persons presented in Figure 3. For all three, the four reaches of responses can be applied for further contextualization of their migration. To exemplify this typology, it has been applied to the cases of Kiribati and the Carteret islands in Figure 4. It reinforces the conceptual framework this research attempts to build for further analysis of climate migrations, through the factors of conceptions of migration, state capacity, and CS agency.

Table 3. Measure and analytical aim of the seven proposed typological variables

Variable	Measure and analysis
Time scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Non-urgent</u>: little impact on livelihoods, - <u>Somewhat urgent</u>: when livelihoods have begun being hindered by environmental degradation - <u>Urgent</u>: where livelihoods are unsustainable and standards of living intolerable. <p>Because this typology applies to cases of slow-onset events, the time scale is not to be interpreted as the time it takes for environmental degradation to occur, but rather the moment in time when mobility becomes an appropriate response to degradation, considering thresholds of living conditions.</p>
Level of vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Minor</u>: when only a small portion of the population is impacted - <u>Medium</u>: bigger pans of the population are impacted - <u>Major</u>: the majority of the population suffers from degradation. This variable conditions the scope of mobility, as well as the need for humanitarian assistance. <p>Indeed, because climate change affects the poorest, if the level of vulnerability is minor, it can be assumed public measures for capacity-building amongst those peoples will be sufficient to prevent migration.</p>
Adaptation possibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Limited <i>in situ</i></u>: small-scale strategies such as mangroves planting, individual sea-walls etc. - <u>Possible longer-lasting <i>in situ</i> adaptation</u>: more resilient measures, such as government funded sea-walls, extension of land..., - <u>Impossible</u>: no long-term adaptation measures are envisioned and deterioration is too far gone
Coping capabilities	<p><u>Low</u>, <u>medium</u>, and <u>high</u>. This variable is determined by the affected population's general resilience, based on poverty levels, resources, unemployment levels, traditional know-how, technology, health standards, social networks, and public subsidies. Each item should be scaled and lead to a general score that would place the population in one of the three categories.</p>
Conception of migration	<p><u>Positive</u>: a positive conception of migration entails that movement is received in a positive light, and is undertaken proactively with a certain optimism.</p> <p><u>Negative</u>: a negative conception of migration views movement in a pessimistic manner, translating a certain reluctance and wariness to moving. It would generally curtail anticipatory group movement.</p>
State capacity	<p><u>Weak</u> or <u>strong</u>, based on indexes of capacity, GDP, financial resources, economic openness, public infrastructure, corruption index, transparency index, institutionalization of norms, strength of institutions, civil society-state relations, and effective social control.</p>
Reach of responses	<p><u>Local</u>, <u>internal</u>, <u>cross-border regional</u>, or <u>international</u>. It is based on the option most envisioned by and for the population.</p>

Figure 3. Application of the typological analysis for the status determination of three types of persons engaged in climate mobility



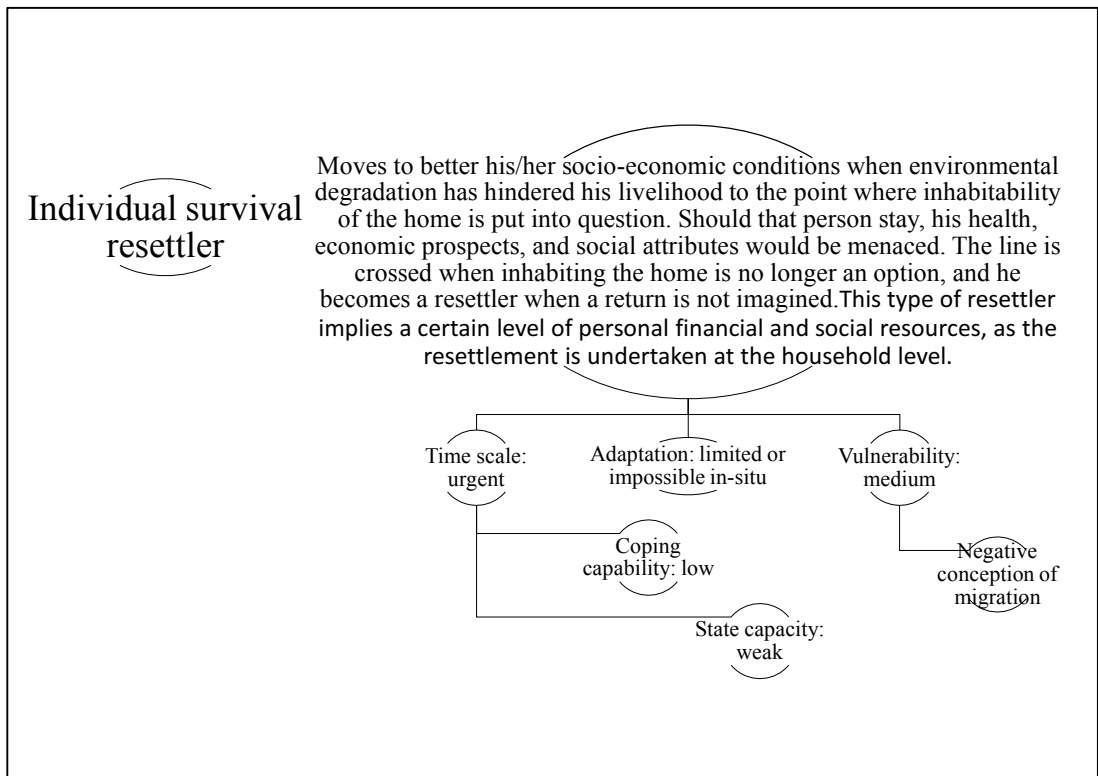
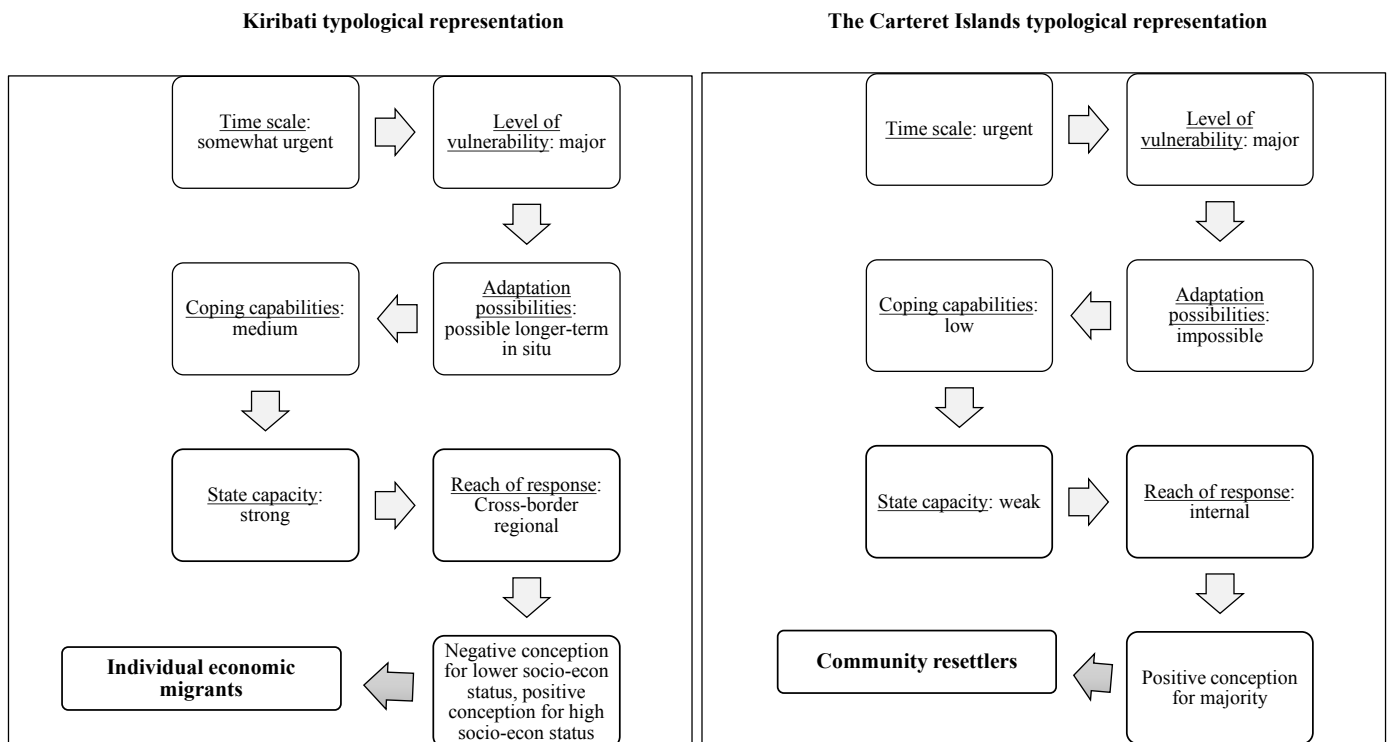


Figure 4. Analytical representation of Kiribati and the Carterets based on the proposed typology



Chapter III – What role for the state?

A. Each state is different: understanding the particularities of Papua New Guinea and Kiribati

This chapter aims to present the case studies and frame the important role of the states of Papua New Guinea and Kiribati in influencing perceptions and responses to climate change. For brevity and clarity, the basic characteristics of each state is classified in comparative table 4.

a. Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Region of Bougainville: the complexity of the Carteret situation

The Carteret islands in Papua New Guinea are situated about 86 kilometers north-east of Bougainville island in Papua New Guinea. It is composed of six atolls¹⁶ no more than two meters above sea level, for a total area of less than 300 km², and holds between 1,322 (National Statistics Office, 2014) and 2,532 islanders (Rakova, 2014). For more than 30 years now, “[l]ife on the Carterets has been far from the western imagination of delightful coconut palm-fringed south sea islands” (Vidal, 2005). The degradation on the islands, reported as early as the 1960s, is largely due to natural events and tectonic activity, with sea-level rise, cyclones and droughts reported by communities as being most experienced (Sithole, 2015). Papua New Guinea in general is subject to major environmental disruptions, such as coastal erosion, coral bleaching, loss of wetlands, and changes in marine resources, due to human activity and natural hazards (Dohan et al., 2011).

¹⁶ A massive wave in 1995 split an atoll in half, so it can be considered that the Carterets are now seven islands, although they are still officially composed of Iangain, Iesila, Yosala, Huene, Han and Piul atolls.

Table 4. Comparative table of the Carteret Islands and Kiribati characteristics

	Carteret Islands	Kiribati
Population	1,322 (2011 census) ¹ – 3,300 people ²	110,136 (2015 census) ³
Number of islands/atolls	7 islands organised around a lagoon	32 islands in 3 island groups, east-west extension of 5000km ⁴
Maximum elevation	1,5 meters above sea level ⁵	2 meters above sea level (except for Banaba island with 81 meters ⁶)
Total land area	295 km ²	719 km ² of land spread over 3.5 million km ² ⁷
Population density	1,224 people/km ² , Highest density in Papua New Guinea ⁸	127 people/km ² (from 13 people/km ² on Kiritimati island, to 2 558 people/km ² on South Tarawa) ⁹
Rural community (in %)	Unknown for Carteret Islands – 87% for PNG ¹⁰	53,7% ¹¹
Type of government	Subject to the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, of Papua New Guinea – independent government and parliament	Republic
Corruption index (Transparency International)	Papua New Guinea: 135 (out of 180 countries) ¹²	Not ranked
Human Development Index – out of 188 countries	154 ¹³	137 ¹⁴
Literacy	Unknown for Carteret islands 64.2% for PNG ¹⁵	Unknown
Levels of poverty	Unknown for Carteret Islands 37% of population below the poverty line in PNG ¹⁶	24,2% of the population, and 18,3% of households ¹⁷
Mortality and morbidity	Unknown for Carteret Islands – low life expectancy indicated by few aged people 6.6 deaths/1,000 population for PNG (world rank 141) ¹⁸	7 deaths/1000 population (world rank 130) Life expectancy of 66 years ¹⁹
Access to safe drinking water (in % of population)	>10% ²⁰	>50% ²¹
GDP	Unknown for Carteret Islands US\$30.84 billion for PNG ²²	US\$186 million ²³
Economic sectors	Staple farming of taro and coconut, subsistence fishing ²⁴ Exportation of farmed seaweed to Asian markets and capture of sea cucumbers ²⁵	Fishing and mining licenses Remittances (15% of GDP) Agricultural production of copra, breadfruit and fish Subsistence farming of coconut, babai swamp taro, breadfruit, banana and fishing ²⁶ Foreign financial aid (25% of GDP) ²⁷

¹ National Statistics Office, 2014

² Tulele Peisa Inc., 2009

³ National Statistics Office, 2016

⁴ Weber, 2016

⁵ Boege, 2011

⁶ The Banaba island has been devastated by intense phosphate mining by the British between 1900 and 1979. Its population was forced to relocate (initially orchestrated by the British, then by the Japanese during its occupation in 1942, and finally by the Australians after the liberation of the island) to Rabi island in Fiji. Much of the land has been removed or degraded, notably by toxic waste left behind by the British (Campbell, 2012)

⁷ Leckie, 2014

⁸ Rakova, 2014

⁹ Locke, 2009

¹⁰ IOM, 2014

¹¹ Bedford and Bedford, 2010

¹² Transparency International, 2017

¹³ Human Development Report, UNDP, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/PNG>

¹⁴ Human Development Report, UNDP, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/KIR>

¹⁵ CIA World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/geos/pp.html>

¹⁶ See footnote 13

¹⁷ Republic of Kiribati, 2015

¹⁸ See footnote 13

¹⁹ CIA World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kr.html>, Locke 2009

²⁰ Julca and Paddison, 2010

²¹ Julca and Paddison, 2010

²² See footnote 13

²³ See footnote 16

²⁴ Rakova 2014, Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand 2015, Sithole 2015,

²⁵ UNDP 2016

²⁶ Republic of Kiribati, 2015

²⁷ Barnett and Chamberlain 2010, Julca and Paddison 2010, Lange 2010, Elliott and Fagan 2010, Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand 2017

Type of degradation	Environmental hazards (notably tropical cyclones) Geological processes (tectonic instability) Sea level rise Drought Water scarcity Coastal erosion and loss of sandbanks Storm surges ²⁸	King tides and storm surges Changing rainfall patterns Drought Coastal erosion and loss of sandbanks Inundation Environmental hazards (notably cyclones) Sea level rise ²⁹
Outcomes of SLR	Spread of diseases, notably malaria and cholera Coral bleaching, inducing ciguatera poisoning Inundation and salinization of land and fresh water lenses (contamination of drinking water) Food shortages Fish losses Loss of mangroves Land loss: 60-70 meters, 50% total surface loss since 1994 58% of land subject to erosion in PNG Fish losses and change in marine species ³⁰	Destruction of trees (notably coconut and pandanus) Food shortages and hampered food production Increasing reliance on imported foods and foreign aid Increase in obesity (46%) and health problems Coral bleaching, inducing ciguatera poisoning Fish losses and change in marine species Rural-urban migration and overcrowding in Tarawa Inundation and salinization of land and fresh water lenses (contamination of drinking water) Loss of mangroves ³¹
Adaptation strategies and policies	Carterets Integrated Relocation Project Construction of sea walls (with coral stones and giant clamshells) 'Atolls Integrated Development Policy' (2007) by the ABG 'Atolls Resettlement Program' by the ABG 'Vision 2050' by PNG Government for poverty-reduction 'Climate Compatible Development Strategy' by PNG Government Agricultural diversification and mangrove planting ³² Disaster Risk reduction and disaster management national framework for action (2005-2015), National climate compatible development management policy (2014-2016), National disaster mitigation policy, and the Strategic program for climate resilience (2012)	Construction of sea walls Development of Locally Managed Marine Areas for customary access to communities Land acquisition in Fiji for agricultural development National Adaptation Programmes of Action for the UNFCCC Mangrove plantation Governmental Integrated Land and Population Development Programme Kiribati Adaptation Programme 'Migration with dignity' ³³ National Disaster Management Plan (2010), National Framework on Climate change and climate change adaptation (2012), Kiribati joint implementation plan for climate change and disaster risk management (2014-2023), and Kiribati National labor migration policy (2015)
Migration envisioned	Progressive (and stagnant) relocation of communities to Bougainville by the government Church donations of land in Tinputz, Tearouki and Mabiri, and community relocation by Tulele Peisa ³⁴	Individual Labour migration to New Zealand and Australia ³⁵
State-led (yes/no)	Initial State-led relocation in 1984, second resettlement phase in 2007, ABG-led objective to resettle islanders by 2020, inconclusive and stagnant ³⁶	Yes – 'Migration with dignity' strategy
Community-led (yes/no)	Yes - community	Yes - individual
Type of migration (IDP...)	Internal	Rural-urban and regional cross-border
Type of adaptive approach	Anticipatory adaptation ³⁷	Strategy of resilience ³⁸

²⁸ Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand 2015, Barnett 2011, Sithole 2015, IOM 2015, McLeman 2014, Friends of the Earth 2007

²⁹ Barnett 2011, McLeman 2014, Friends of the Earth 2007, Uan and Anderson 2014

³⁰ Rakova, 2014, Elliott and Fagan 2010, Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand 2015, Friends of the Earth 2007, Barnett 2011, Poncelet et al. 2010, Sithole 2015

³¹ CIA World Factbook (see footnote 16), Friends of the Earth 2007, Barnett 2011, Poncelet et al. 2010, Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand 2015, Bedford and Bedford 2010,

³² Rakova 2014, IOM 2015, Sithole 2015

³³ Uan and Anderson 2014, Yamamoto and Esteban 2017, Campbell and Warrick 2014, Stein 2014, Boege 2011, Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand 2015, Connell and Lutkehaus 2017

³⁴ Boege 2011, Rakova 2014, Bronen 2014

³⁵ Baldwin 2017, Campbell and Warrick 2014, McNamara 2015, Yamamoto and Esteban 2017

³⁶ Connell and Lutkehaus, 2017

³⁷ Barnett 2001

³⁸ Barnett 2001

In the Carterets, subsistence fishing is a crucial tool for survival, especially in the aftermath of destructive natural events, but the acidification of the ocean are depleting fish stocks and increasing food insecurity for islanders. Combined with droughts and limited arable land, islanders are frequently placed in a state of near-starvation (Rakova, 2014). More than 50% of land has been eroded by rising seas, despite efforts to reconstruct sea walls and mangroves (Tulele Peisa Inc., 2009). Food insecurity stems from the consequences of climate change, as well as the lack of crop diversification, arable land, and eco-agricultural practices (Sithole, 2015). As Ursula Rakova, a civil society leader in the Carterets worries, “[w]e are concerned that one fine day, a King Tide¹⁷ will simply sweep over the islands and most or all people will be washed away without any trace” (Rakova, 2014:269). For Tracy Mann, of Climate Wise Women, the Carterets are hanging on by a fingernail, relying on community members that have already resettled on Bougainville to send them food (interview, 2018). Adding to their difficulties, one of the fishing businesses of the Carterets, *bechdema*, has been banned by National Fisheries Authority, and the swamps growing taro, a widely consumed crop, have been permeated by salt water and floods (Sithole, 2015).

The Carterets are the most densely populated islands in PNG (Connell and Lutkehaus, 2017) and its inhabitants are considered some of the most disadvantaged peoples in the country due to their ecological and economic conditions (Rakova, 2014). Despite the risks associated with relocation – loss of livelihoods and human capital (Schade, 2013)-, some of the islanders have been requesting official resettlement for more than forty years. The first scheme was organized in 1979 by the North Solomon Provincial Government, and in 1984, ten Carteret families relocated to Kuveria on Bougainville. However, by 1987, two families had returned home, and the remaining households’ livelihood conditions deteriorated as they lacked coconut palm trees, fishing rights, and land (Connell and Lutkehaus, 2017; Campbell, 2012). Ultimately, the civil war broke out in 1989 in Bougainville, and islanders were forced to return home. A second resettlement took place in 1997, when the Autonomous Bougainville Government (ABG) moved twelve families to Buka to improve food security on the atolls (UNDP, 2016). In 2007, the Government proposed the relocation of half of the island by 2020, but a lack of involvement and interest hampered the project

¹⁷ King Tides is the colloquial term used in the Pacific to describe very high tides. In Kiribati for example, they regularly destroy seawalls, damage food crops for the villagers, and have even created lagoons (Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand, 2015).

(Connell and Lutkehaus, 2017). In total, it is estimated that 300 families will need relocation from the Carterets (Leckie, 2014), bearing in mind that the last population census noted 355 households on the islands (National Statistics Office, 2014).

Figure 5. Geographical representation of the Carteret islands in PNG



Satellite image source: Google Maps

Politically, the Carteret islands are part of the Autonomous region of Bougainville. According to the PNG Constitution, the central government holds functions related to banking, foreign relations, foreign aid and migration, amongst others, while the ABG is charged with agriculture, community development, fisheries, land and natural resources, water resources etc. (Independent State of Papua New Guinea, 1975). It is clearly stated that the national government is free to delegate any function onto the ABG, meaning that in the case of the Carterets, the responsibility seems to predominantly rest with the Autonomous Region. The problem is the

inadequate involvement of the state in the issue, notably in terms of financial support (Pascoe, 2015) and weak institutional capacity (Sithole, 2015). As an example that will be further developed in Chapter IV of this research, the central government allocated 2 million Kina (approx. US\$ 615,000) in 2007 for the Carterets relocation program, through the ABG. This money never reached the atolls, and “disappeared somewhere in the jungle of the PNG state bureaucracy” (Boege, 2011:16). Poor state capacity is a clear handicap for the country and its inhabitants, with a corruption ranking of 135 out of 180 countries (Transparency International, 2017) despite slow curbing progress as illustrated in Figure 6, and extensive climate change impacts that have the power to tip fragile states into failed states (Brown and McLeman, 2009). A representative of the ABG, Kapeatu Puaria, has admitted that the regional government has little capacity for socio-economic planning and had invested little time and resources into assisting the Carteret relocation (Displacement Solutions, 2008). The civil war has undeniably hindered the administrative and institutional capacities of the ABG, and combined with the fact that, constitutionally, only the PNG national government has the capacity to secure land¹⁸, the resettlement of islanders is tainted by weak governance. Scott Leckie, of Displacement Solutions, explains that the political predicament in PNG is unresolved, and “the situation in Bougainville is not clear, it’s not entirely stable, the economic infrastructure was destroyed during the war and they’re still having trouble reestablishing it” (interview, 2018).

Their infrastructural power, defined by Geddes et al. (2012) as the capacity of a state to enforce policies and provide core functions, seems feeble despite a national effort to develop environmental policies. PNG has produced several national adaptation plans (as listed in table 4), including a Strategic Program for Climate Resilience which intends to provide financial assistance to vulnerable communities facing relocation (Fornale and Kagan, 2017). Despite this recognition of resettlement as a strategy for facilitated mobility, the state still perceives climate migration as an outcome of failed adaptation (Kelpsaitte and Mach, 2015), and omits relocation and displacement in its Disaster risk reduction framework and its Climate compatible development strategy, indicating a hesitant approach to resettlement as an adaptation measure. More importantly, the PNG government continues to support deep-sea mining of the ocean floor, having greenlighted the first

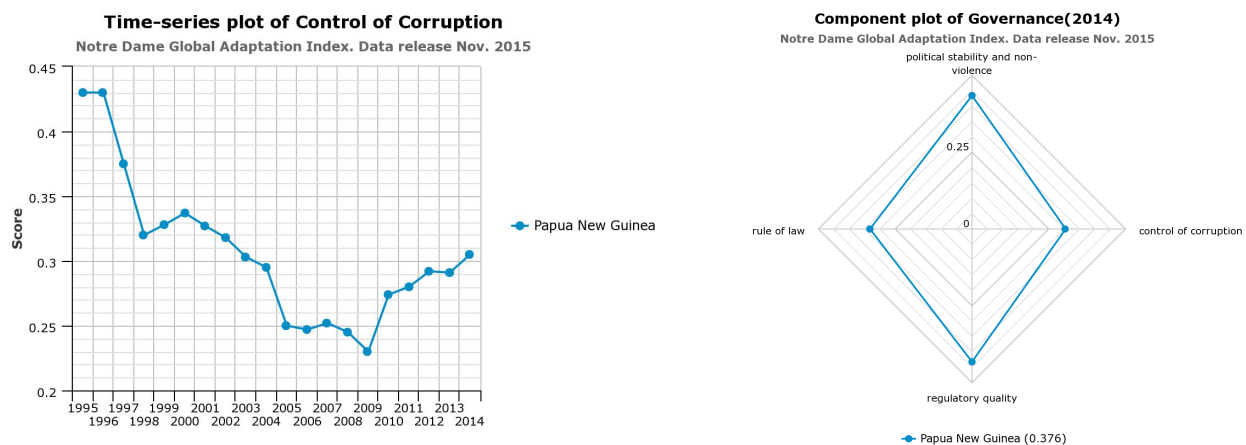
¹⁸ As will be further developed, the issue of land is crucial in the resettlement of the Carterets because 97% of land in PNG is customarily-owned, meaning it cannot be bought or sold. The fact that only the central government – showing little interest in the resettlement - has the authority to acquire land for citizens is a handicap to the islanders’ relocation.

commercial seabed mine for the extraction of gold, silver and copper to open in 2018 (Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand, 2015). The link between deep-sea mining and the devastation of marine ecosystems has been clearly established by environmental impact reports, but the government has been accused of withholding documents, notably environmental management plans and studies on socio-health-economic impacts, and neglecting independent environmental assessments of the mining contract with Nautilus Minerals Inc, a Canadian based company owned by Russian and Omani firms (Davidson and Doherty, 2017). Troubling accusations of the catastrophic consequences of the experimental mine¹⁹ are putting into question the ability of the central government to withhold its environmental and social engagements and its will to protect at-risk communities. For Bronen (2014), if disaster risk reduction strategies are not able to protect communities, their relocation will be inevitable.

The government's paradoxical approach – recognizing relocations as a reality for atolls, but failing to properly integrate them into national strategies- attests of the inadequate institutional governance of the issue in PNG, the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, and the Carterets. It could explain the lack of involvement of the national government, although it is most likely due to the hazy separation of powers between the two authorities after the civil war, which has created confusion on the responsibilities held by the Governments. Papua New Guinea has a very decentralized system with three levels of governance and is one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse country in the world (IOM, 2014). To these political challenges is added the complex societal structure of PNG, based on tribes and ethnic links, which create conflict even among civil servants, hampering work in the central government (Melde, interview 2018). Based on Migdal's (1998) theory, PNG could be considered a weak state in relation to the lack of effective social control it exercises through its inability to mobilize resources and institutional capacity.

¹⁹ Washed-up whales were reported after sonar explorations, as well as dead tunas (that even dogs wouldn't eat) washed up on beaches in PNG due to mining explorations, according to the report of Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand (2015)

Figure 6. Evolution of the control of corruption in Papua New Guinea 1995-2014 and its Governance Index for 2014



Source : Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative, online plot generator.

Note: Control of corruption is an indicator of the Governance readiness of the country. It represents political stability and institutional capabilities. For the overall Governance Index, the higher the score, the better the institutional capacity (scale from 0 to 1).

b. The Republic of Kiribati: environmental vulnerabilities and historical ties with migration

The Republic of Kiribati is composed of 32 low-lying atolls, organized in three island chains: the Gilbert in the west, composed of 16 atolls, the Phoenix in the middle, composed of 8 atolls situated 1,500 km from the Gilbert group, and the Line in the east, holds 8 atolls and stretches out for 2,350 km (Weber, 2016). The Gilbert and Line groups are 5,000 km apart, making the Republic of Kiribati extremely spread out, and surrounded by atoll islands of other nations²⁰. Due to distinct geographical and structural conditions, - the highest point being 2 meters above sea level²¹, and the average island width being 1,000 meters (Boege, 2011) - climate change and natural hazards have gravely impeded life in Kiribati. The country is composed entirely of low-lying islands or atolls²², which are essentially the remnants of extinct oceanic volcanoes in which rest coral reefs and underground fresh water lenses. Coral is critically sensitive to oceanic changes,

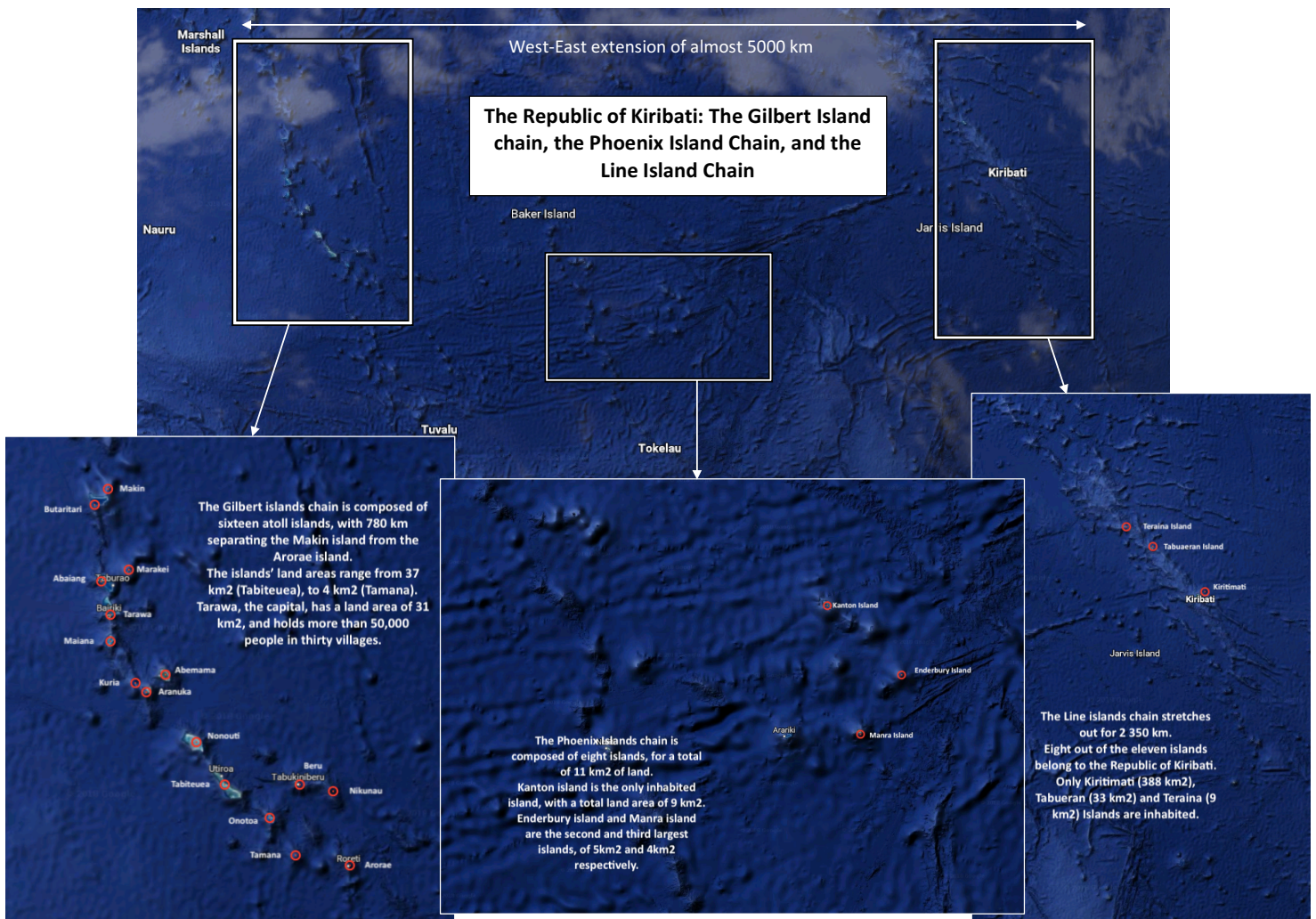
²⁰ For example, three of the eleven atolls of the Line group are part of US territory, and the Phoenix group is bordered by Howland and Baker islands in the North, United States territories, and Tokelau et Tuvalu in the South.

²¹ With the exception of the island of Banaba with a high point around 80 meters, but which has been ravaged by British colonial phosphate mining.

²² Kiribati, the Maldives, the Marshall Islands, Tokelau and Tuvalu are the five countries in the world composed entirely of low-lying atolls, making them particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

such as acidification and human disturbances, causing both the spread of disease and the death of this natural barrier (McLeman, 2014). Subsurface freshwater reserves are also at risk of creating dangerous water stress for populations, due to their shallowness and susceptibility to salinization from SLR and depletion from droughts (Barnett, 2001). For Wendy Flannery of Friends of the Earth Brisbane, the whole nation is under threat (interview, 2018). Severe weather conditions, coastal erosion and sea-level rise have had major effects: in 2015, Cyclone Pam affected 2,000 I-Kiribati and destroyed roads that “collapsed into the sea” (Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand, 2015:13).

Figure 7. Explicative map of the Kiribati islands

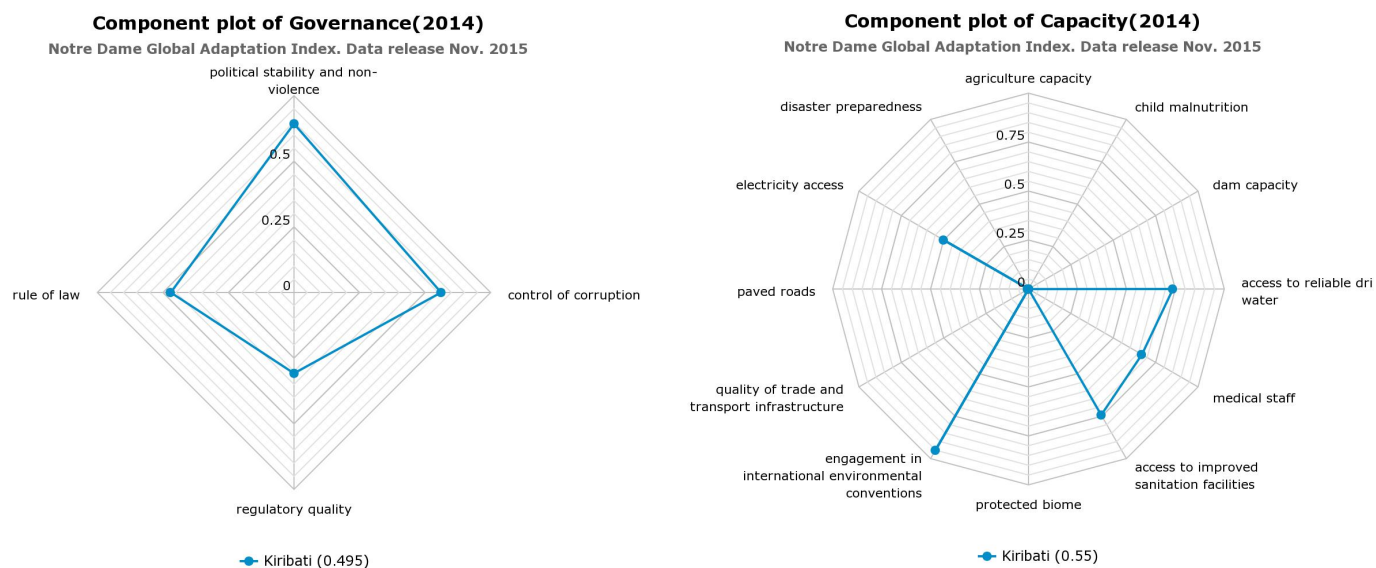


Satellite image source: Google Maps

Five major impacts on islanders' security have been identified: sea-level rise and coastal erosion impacting land security and livelihoods sustainability; increased droughts and rainfall variability hindering water security and increasing water-borne diseases; coral reef deaths hindering coastal protection and marine resources; temperature increases reducing agricultural production; and growth in vector-borne diseases affecting the health of islanders (Campbell and Warrick, 2014). These ecological effects are likely to heighten socio-economic vulnerabilities (Julca and Paddison, 2010), combined with high growth rates and lack of economic diversification, that are augmenting rural-urban migration from the outer islands to the central atolls. South Tarawa is experiencing an urban growth rate of 5,2% per year (Locke, 2009), now holding 47% of the total population of Kiribati on less than 16km² of land. Sanitary conditions have worsened, and the islanders now have the shortest life spans of the Pacific, a life expectancy of 58,9 years for males and 63 years for females (Locke, 2009). According to the 2015 census, Kiribati holds a population of 110,136 individuals for 17,772 households (National Statistics Office, 2016), almost evenly divided between rural and urban areas. The government aims to stabilize the population at 125,000 citizens by 2025 through relocation and family planning, to relieve pressure on land and resources (Locke, 2009).

While a large majority is fluent in English, only 15,000 I-Kiribati have access to the internet, greatly limiting their search for overseas employment. Their subsistence is very dependent on their land and climate, with rainwater as their main source of drinkable water; coconut, breadfruit, pandanus, bananas and swamp taro being their primary food sources; and 9,000 households using fishing as a means of subsistence (National Statistics Office, 2016). These characteristics make environmental degradation and climate change an immense threat to their lives. According to their Intended contribution submitted to the UNFCCC, environmental disturbance is a major obstacle to their development and the government predicts that most of the nation's arable land will be submerged within a century (Republic of Kiribati, 2015). In fact, two uninhabited islands have already disappeared underwater since 1999. The ability of a population to cope with climate change is largely dependent on the state's efforts at funding adaptation, infrastructure and projects (Tompkins et al., 2005). The government has thus developed adaptation policies focused on freshwater resources, risk reduction, monitoring, marine resources, coastal zones and agriculture (Dohan et al., 2011).

Figure 8. Component plots of Governance and Capacity indexes in Kiribati (2014)



Source: Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative, online plot generator

Note: The Governance Index represents the stability of society and of institutions. The higher the score, the better the country's institutional capacity (on a scale from 0 to 1). The Capacity Index represents the ability of society and various sectors to deal with climate hazards.

Kiribati's climate governance is structured around four national plans for climate change adaptation and disaster risk management, and the National labor migration policy. Despite notable efforts to address environmental degradation and coping capacities, they are hindered by the lack of oversight by a government body, and of specific funding for ministries in charge of implementing the plans independently (Fornale and Kagan, 2017). Nonetheless, its environmental strategy is far more notable than that of PNG, owing to the GOK's greater political and institutional stability and adaptive capacity, testifying of a stronger political base for action as represented in Figure 8. They have not succumbed to the pressure of deep-sea mining, advocating instead a precautionary principle as they allow companies to research the ocean floor without engaging in mining activities²³ (Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand, 2017). Kiribati has a great geographical advantage by possessing the second largest Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the world, of which

²³ Most PICs have permitted the exploitation of their sea floor, the infamous Nautilus Minerals Inc. currently holding permits in Tonga, Solomon Islands, Fiji, and exploration licenses in Vanuatu and Aotearoa New Zealand (Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand, 2017).

the sale of fishing and exploration permits could help fund adaptation projects, but paradoxically, might worsen the environmental condition of oceanic resources. Indeed, the World Bank (2000) has indicated that the costs of environmental damage and climate change in Kiribati would be enormous, with notable impacts on public infrastructures: by 2050, 59% of structures and 77% of roads in Buariki on Tarawa island could be submerged and by 2100, 66-100% of all roads on Bikenibeu, also on the capital island, would be destroyed²⁴. The potential inundation costs for the government would be colossal, representing by 2050 between US\$6,6-12,4 millions per year, with sea walls around the capital island of Tarawa requiring investments of US\$1,8 million (World Bank, 2000). It will also face annual economic damages of US\$8-16 million by 2050 (World Bank, 2000b), representing 16 to 25% of its GDP. The Bank further projects massive infrastructural damage to the islands, as well as financial and capital asset losses of US\$210-430 million in the country. Adaptation measures and destruction costs are immense for a nation with a GDP of US\$168 million, as their economic development is hindered by their monocultural cash crops and reliance on cash economy revolving primarily around subsistence production and an increased dependence on imported foods (Barnett, 2011).

Fishing licenses in the EEZ have come to represent a substantial financial revenue for the nation. Unfortunately, it is also accelerating the impacts of climate change, depleting fish stocks and hampering oceanic resources. Indeed, revenue from fishing licenses increased by 571% between 2009 and 2015, reaching US\$148 million in the last year (Republic of Kiribati, 2016). At the same time, Kiribati became the “most productive tuna fishing zone in the Central and Western Pacific” (Republic of Kiribati, 2016:4), and the total volumes of caught fish exploded from 174,770 metric tons in 2006 to 641,119 metric tons in 2015. And yet, the decline in fisheries due to warmer ocean waters have been extensively noted, leading to an unsustainable production of yellowfin tuna to compensate for the depletion of bigeye populations (World Bank, 2000). As Kiribati continues to increase its income from fishing licenses to purse seine vessels, which represents 96% of the fishing activity in their EEZ²⁵ and engage in destructive practices that often result in the by-catch

²⁴ Let's note that these two settlements are located in South Tarawa which holds half of the Kiribati population, making their infrastructural destruction all the more disastrous for its inhabitants.

²⁵ This figure is found in the Republic of Kiribati (2016) report on fishing license revenues. It recounts some efforts made at marine protection, notably through the establishment of the Phoenix Islands Protected Area, and the prosecution of Taiwanese illegal purse seine fishing vessels. The government has expressed the wish to combat purse seine illegal fishing in its waters, while acknowledging that 96% of fishing is made using this method. This is a paradoxical measure considering the amount of environmental destruction still undergone through this type of ‘legal’ fishing activity. Whether legal or illegal, purse seine vessels are still highly destructive for marine ecosystems.

of endangered species and the depletion of fish stocks, the state of the ocean progressively declines, hindering the livelihoods of communities. Despite a noteworthy stance on deep-sea mining, the authorized exploitation of their marine resources will surely undermine their adaptation efforts against climate change²⁶.

During the previous administration, migration was advertised as a positive adaptation strategy for increasing resilience, a point earnestly emphasized in the country's labor migration policy, which argues that the "permanent relocation of some of its citizens is part of the Government's long-term climate change adaptation strategy" (ILO, 2015:17). As a result of uneven development, islanders flee towards urban centers for employment and better living conditions, further accentuating existing livelihood problems, bigger strains on resources, and deteriorated living environments (DeWitte, 2010). The GOK has engaged in internal relocations to relieve pressure on urban centers, notably in Betio, an atoll of 1,75km² with a population density of 8,000 people per km², higher than that of Hong-Kong. The country has very unbalanced population distributions, with for example 5,500 persons per km² in South Tarawa and 50 persons per km² in North Tarawa (World Bank, 2000). The strategy proposed by the government is to relocate 14,000 islanders on South Tarawa in the hope of stabilizing population distributions, to obtain 50,000 people in the capital, 45,000 in the Gilbert chain, and 30,000 relocated to Kiritimati, its largest atoll, situated in the Line chain (Locke, 2009). Unfortunately, the I-Kiribati have a poignant relationship with migration. In the late 1840s, 10,500 Gilbertese were used for slave labor and sent to Australia, Fiji, and Guatemala amongst others, and in 1870s, some islanders voluntarily migrated to Fiji to combat food insecurity at home (Uan and Anderson, 2014). By 1892, the British had colonized Kiribati and soon discovered massive phosphate deposits on the highest island of the country, Banaba. Exploitation began and its inhabitants were rapidly relocated to Rabi in Fiji, constituting the first case of international relocation. When Banaba was seized by the Japanese during WWII, another wave of forced displacement occurred, and eventually, the British took back the island and continued their aggressive mining, until its resources were exhausted and the land destroyed in 1979. The Banabans were devoid of their sovereignty (Campbell, 2012) and the hardship of forced relocation that occurred everywhere in the Pacific in colonial times has tainted

²⁶ Let's also note that the government has sponsored exploration licenses for polymetallic nodules over 75,000 km² of sea floor until 2030, and one of the fifteen licenses to exploit the deep-sea minerals found in the Clarion-Clipperton Fracture Zone (Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand, 2015).

the I-Kiribati's vision of migration. Today, movement to other Pacific islands is not an option due to similar conditions and a lack of carrying capacity for new islanders (Wyett, 2013). But staying on the islands is also put into question by the previous President Aote Tong, who claims "our islands, our homes, may no longer be habitable – or even exist – within this century" (Tong, 2015:76). And without an increase in out-migration, the reduction of population pressures on the atolls will be difficult (Bedford and Bedford, 2010). The new administration has changed courses and now, perhaps adhering to the will of the people, discouraged resettlement as an adaptation strategy. The state's influence on the future of the I-Kiribati is undeniable, especially if "[w]ith threats to agriculture, biodiversity, the economy, health, and culture on Kiribati, its citizens must eventually consider relocation" (Lange, 2010:619). Whether it be permanent or temporary will depend on the state's capacity to influence adaptation strategies.

c. Potential causes of variation in social and political response

The adaptation strategy undertaken by the Carteret islanders is to resettle the community on Bougainville. Shortcomings in explanatory variations presented in this research could be attributed to an evident lack of data on the Carteret islands collected by the governments. Basic socio-demographic and reliable economic information is missing on the islanders. This is exemplified by the lack of accuracy in the last government-led population census in 2011 counting 1,300 islanders, and the head of Tulele Peisa noting three years later a population doubled in size. Figures don't match, most likely due to the inaccessibility and geographical isolation of the Carterets and the lack of interest of the governments. This makes it hard to account for sociodemographic variables that could create variation in the analysis, notably in terms of conceptualization of vulnerabilities influenced by individual socioeconomic status. However, regarding the perceptions of islanders, their fair representation by NGO Tulele Peisa offers some reliability on certain data, comforting the findings of this research. It is also unlikely, because of the small number of islanders and the fact that the resettlement is organized by civil society itself, that sociodemographic variables would come into play. Nonetheless, this shortcoming warrants further on field research.

This potential source of variation is also found in the case of Kiribati. The lack of data on social responses at island and individual levels due to the absence of regular governmental surveys

could hide alternative explanations to their adaptation strategies. The latest survey on public attitudes on climate change was carried out in 2008, and although this research presents the general I-Kiribati perceptions on migration and adaptation, there's still a massive gap of information regarding attitudes of Line and Phoenix islanders due to the recurrent focus of research on South Tarawa and the Gilbert chain. Because of their geographical isolation from the capital, outer atolls are less frequently the subject of surveys and data collection and there could be important disparities within the country. A cause of variation in analysis might stem from the unequal perceptions of the I-Kiribati across the 3 island chains, and without accurate and up-to-date data, it would be difficult to verify its causal impact on analysis. It can be argued that a national unified perception of migration and policies can't be assumed on a territory composed of 32 atolls spread out over 5,000 km. However, the Phoenix and Line groups are much less inhabited, and although their perceptions might differ from the more urban populations, the conclusions of this analysis are a generalization of perceptions based on the majority living in the Gilbert islands. Nonetheless, this shortcoming in data collection also warrants further research, as understanding variations between atoll groups would add to the analysis of I-Kiribati conceptions of migration.

B. What happens when a country drowns? Statehood, responsibility and sovereignty in disappearing islands

According to the Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States, a state must be composed of “(a) a permanent population; (b) a defined territory; (c) government; and (d) capacity to enter into relations with other states” (Pan American Union, 1933:3). These specific criteria for the juridical existence of a state render climate change a veritable threat to Pacific islands. Indeed, as environmental degradation and natural hazards intensify, individual migrations are likely to accelerate, and the inhabitants with the most resources will flee to neighboring countries. Moreover, the territorial integrity of the island state is threatened by coastal erosion and rising seas, as atolls sink and entire pans of land are regularly submerged. Should natural events escalate to the point where inhabitability is no longer possible and populations flee, the statehood of entire nations would be menaced²⁷. As Skillington accurately resumes,

²⁷ It is worth mentioning that the moment when a nation will become permanently uninhabitable will be difficult to pinpoint, and would probably be based on the number of remaining inhabitants.

When rising sea levels eventually force the evacuation of whole small island state communities, there is a danger such peoples will not only lose jurisdictional control, but the moral and political authority to continue to establish justice amongst their members, as well as access to marine, land, and other resources necessary for the preservation of their community in proximity (2016:4).

This is an unprecedented case in international law. Entire populations could face statelessness, a condition which has never traditionally been attributed to the physical disappearance of a state (McLeman, 2014). According to the 1954 UN Convention relating to the status of stateless persons, the definition of statelessness pertains to a person who no state considers as its citizen (UNHCR, 2014a), with no mention of the physical cessation of existence of the country²⁸. It is important to differentiate between *de facto* statelessness, those lacking an effective nationality to protect them, and *de jure* statelessness, those who do not have a nationality. The persons affected by climate change are considered *de facto* because the capabilities of their state are compromised and thus can't be protected by international conventions (Yamamoto and Esteban, 2017). It is unclear if a country could provide basic rights and nationality to its citizens if its existence has been jeopardized, even if it continues to exist in legal forms (Guterres, 2008). It is worth noting that the Montevideo Convention specifically posits that the “fundamental rights of states are not susceptible to being affected in any manner whatsoever” (Pan American Union, 1933:4), a point which seems highly possible in cases of natural events. However, as McAdam (2012) argues, even if an island nation loses its ability to uphold the criteria set forth in the Montevideo Convention, it is improbable that it will cease to exist in juridical terms because of the presumption of continuity anchored in the creation of the United Nations. Authors have presented certain solutions to the dilemma of statelessness, such as the government in exile mechanism. It proposes that a government may function outside its territory, but supposes the continued presence of the population within its borders (McAdam, 2012) and is usually a short-term tool of governance. Another major obstacle to this mechanism is the discontinuity of its relations with other states, breaching criterion (d) of the Montevideo Convention, and the possible interference of the state in which the government in exile will be, in the exercise of its functions and powers. This strategy was also proposed by Burson (2010b), who argued that a country could cede a piece

²⁸ Only can a territory stop existing if it is absorbed by another nation, in which case the new country is responsible for providing citizenship to its inhabitants (UNHCR, 2014b).

of territory for the affected state to continue its exercise of power. It seems unlikely however, that land sufficient for an entire Pacific nation would ever be granted by an existing country. It is equally unlikely that a Pacific state would relinquish its sovereignty²⁹ and be absorbed voluntarily by another territory (Cournil and Gemenne, 2010), as the merger of two states would entail the disappearance of the affected nation.

The maintenance of sovereignty over a sinking territory is thus unclear. The Montego Bay Convention on the Law of the Sea contends in Article 62.2 that a state may allow another state to access its Exclusive economic zone if it is incapable of doing so (United Nations, 1982), which could permit a government in exile to generate revenue. This could be applicable to Kiribati for example, whose immense EEZ could be utilized despite the possible uninhabitability of the atolls. However, the Convention also considers islands on which human habitation or economic life is unsustainable as rocks and strips them of their EEZ, nullifying this strategy. The stakes are high for Pacific island nations, as their sovereignty and ability to retain their juridical and economic existence is heavily threatened by climate change and framed by international conventions. If their islands become uninhabitable, their EEZ rights would be waived and it would compromise their survival and functions should they engage in exile. This justifies the focus on *in situ* measures in the Pacific as a means to uphold their own sovereignty. Climate change threatens the statehood of island nations, and “[f]or all states to do less than everything possible to prevent the loss of a sovereign entity is to undermine this most essential and powerful norm in international law and politics” (Barnett and Adger, 2003:333). At this point, it is unclear to authors and international organizations alike whether a state would retain its sovereignty and its recognized existence if its territory disappears (European Parliament, 2011; Lallemand, 2009). This forms a major juridical and academic gap in international relations, that remains unresolved despite its possible future incidence.

States are considered, under international law and normative frameworks, the primary bearer of responsibility to ensure the safety and human rights of persons affected by climate change and relocation (UNHCR, Brookings, and Georgetown University, 2015; United Nations, 2004c).

²⁹ Sovereignty is defined as “the principle that a state has supreme authority over all matters that fall within its territorial domain” (Commission on Global Governance, 1995:50).

Unfortunately, this sense of responsibility has not been embraced by all, as noted in the case of the Carteret islands. This is due to the overarching principle of sovereignty, the cornerstone of international relations and law, which frames the responsibilities of states as the primary actors of human rights protection and confers onto them the absolute freedom to respond to climate change without interference and through unspecific or unbinding international conventions. The effectiveness of human rights regimes in the context of climate migrations is blurred by this puzzling incompatibility between obligation and sovereignty. As Mayer (2016) notes, imposing any obligation would disturb the sovereignty of states. When organizations such as the World Bank and UNHCR call upon states to organize resettlements, based on human rights and compensation to address issues of land, housing, livelihoods and cultural preservation (Ferris, 2012), the responsibility of the government to its citizens is carefully laid out. In practice however, most government-led relocations have included major human rights violations and have often ended in worsened conditions for the communities (Oliver-Smith, 2014). Because state sovereignty is an immovable principle, complying governments to protect their citizens in the event of climate-induced displacement remains difficult in certain instances, such as the case of the Carterets. It is also worth noting that states may not consider migration as a form of adaptation (McAdam and Ferris, 2015) and prefer to uphold their responsibility to their citizens in the form of *in situ* measures, as is the case in Kiribati. These conceptions of migration may also hinder the right of communities to self-determine their adaptation strategies as they constrain states' responses and frame the way governments perceive their own responsibility: to support mitigation and adaptation within the territory despite an uncertain future, or to aid communities to resettle elsewhere, thus losing part of their population and endangering their statehood?

Chapter IV – Case studies: civil society, the state, and conceptions of migration

A. Governmental deficiencies and Tulele Peisa: crown jewel of community-led migration?

The Carteret islanders have been requesting official relocation for more than forty years. Led by NGO Tulele Peisa (TP) and executive director Ursula Rakova, they have taken charge of the resettlement with little help from the government or the international community.

a. State weakness and resulting obstacles for the Carteret relocation

i. The fundamental question of land and funding

The Carteret islands relocation has been stalled by three major obstacles: state incapacity, the issue of funding, and the complex Pacific rapport with land. Both the ABG and the PNG Government have been very passive in the relocation process, and for the islanders this has translated into a minimal trust in their political leaders that they perceive as an “alien external force” (Boege, 2011:18). This is notably due to the limited meaning that states and borders hold for Pacific islanders, to whom concepts of tribes, clans, or kin groups are more familiar. The relationship between civil society and the state in the Carteret islands is based on a lack of governmental services delivery and on ineffective state symbols in the mind of the islanders. Migdal (1998) notes that social control is dependent on the regulation of resources and services, as well as the spread of values, symbols or imagery to give meaning to the relation between the state and civil society. In the Carterets – added to the lack of governmental services, their insufficient environmental protection policies and the uneven distribution of resources-, the central state lacks symbolic significance to the people of the Carterets, while the ABG’s delivery of services and untamed civil war political ramifications have largely tainted its ability to exercise effective social control. The effectiveness of the relationship between state leaders and society is largely dependent on the use of institutions and the extent to which they can be mobilized (Migdal, 1998). In this

case, institutional capacity has been weak and has further strained the efficacy of state control and assistance in the relocation of the islanders.

This lack of governmental implication, notably from the ABG, is deemed a major cause of delay in the resettlement process (Tulele Peisa Inc, 2017). This friction is indicative of the “politicized nature of climate policy and finance” that reveals “the existing and growing potential for indifference and, worse yet, malfeasance at the administrative level” (Burkett, 2015:81). The absence of funding stems from the weak financial capacity of the ABG which has hindered its ability to deliver government services and fund its institutions (Government of Papua New Guinea and Autonomous Region of Bougainville, 2016). The National government has approved a special conditional grant to assist the ABG in development and infrastructural projects, but still retains a distance with the Autonomous region, claiming to “[e]mpower Bougainvilleans to solve their own problems, manage their own affairs” (2016:4). Indeed, this has been noted by Susanne Melde of the IOM, who recalls the central government’s justification for its lack of involvement as “the Carteret islands are under the Autonomous Region and we shouldn’t really be doing things there³⁰” (interview, 2018). The upcoming referendum has also hampered their engagement in domestic affairs, Melde adds “I don’t think that they don’t feel responsible, but it seems to me that they felt like they shouldn’t really implement any actions there because the region is autonomous” (interview, 2018). Certainly, the ABG’s limited financial resources and weak institutions, remnants of the civil war and tainted by an uncertain political future in the eve of the independence referendum³¹, has greatly obstructed funding assistance to the Carterets’ resettlement. Erica Bower adds that this is also due to governments’ competing priorities and lack of conceptual infrastructure to establish funding mechanisms. Planned relocation necessitates anticipatory funding structures and policies that are currently not in place within the states (interview, 2018). In 2007, at the start of Tulele Peisa, the PNG central government allocated PGK 2 million to the resettlement program (US\$ 615,000), but it never reached the islands. Confusion about this funding persist today, as “[s]ome people from state institutions say that the money is still there, ‘parked’ somewhere and ready to be used later, others say it cannot be found” (Boege, 2011:16). In March 2008, Carteret

³⁰ This exchange occurred as Susanne Melde was conducting the MECLEP project for the IOM, which considered using the Carteret islands as a case study. Upon discussions with the national government, it became apparent that they had no interest in interfering in the region’s affairs due to the region’s autonomous status, and the project instead turned to the Manam island in PNG (interview, 2018).

³¹ The independence referendum has been set by the Governments for June 2019, after some political stalling on the part of the central government (Radio New Zealand, 2018).

and Tinputz chiefs reached out to the ABG to pressure them into releasing the funds (Tulele Peisa Inc., 2009), but that effort has proven fruitless. Migdal notes that “building strong state agencies, ones able to set the rules in their societies, is not simply an abstract norm for state leaders; there are clear imperatives coming from within the society and outside to build as strong an apparatus as possible” (1998:207). In this conceptual light, the ABG and the PNG central governments seem ill-equipped in terms of institutional capacity, symbolic mobilization, and resource management, to build an effective civil society relationship to assist the Carteret islanders in their relocation. This lack of concentration of social control, heightened by the multiple levels of local governance supplanting the state and the fragmentation of society, have hindered the emergence of a strong state as Migdal (1998) theorized.

It is estimated that the relocation of the islands will require US\$ 5,3 million, including a US\$ 1,700 per family given to the host community in Tinputz for compensation (Fornale and Kagan, 2017). Funding, and most importantly the continuity of funding, has proven the main challenge for the resettlement project, with no help from the Governments. So far, two houses, budgeted at US\$ 7,500 each are still awaiting construction (Tulele Peisa Inc., 2017), and with two families waiting to relocate, Friends of the Earth Australia has had to raise the funds to complete construction in 2018. As TP’s Ursula Rakova puts it, “[c]ommunities can lead change in any capacity they choose, provided that the governments in their country supports those initiatives by financing them” (Rakova, 2014:288). In an attempt to regain some support from the ABG, Tulele Peisa has been mending fences with their Atolls District Office and their new executive manager Kenneth Kumul³², resulting in two meetings in 2017 (Tulele Peisa Inc., 2017). For Scott Leckie, the situation in the Carterets is dire, “the sad brutal truth of this situation: it is hard, it is expensive, and it is daunting. An ideal wonderful utopian scenario that we can all envisage, in practical terms, looks very unlikely” (interview, 2018). Rakova is exhausted and frustrated with the lack of practical funding she’s not receiving, “they’re still getting piecemeal dollars from here and there, having a fight for a couple of thousands...” (Craddock, interview 2018). This is also partly due to the

³² Despite this progress, the public servant might be tainted by an air of corruption characteristic of PNG politics. Kumul is said to possess one third of a seaweed company (along with two other public officials) to which the ABG has made recurring payments without legitimate reason (PNGexposed, 2017). While this information is difficult to fact-check, it could signify another obstacle for Tulele Peisa to obtaining rightful funding should corruption once more obstruct the state’s administrative capabilities.

geographical position of the Carterets, which makes tracking the results for donors very difficult. Her international partners describe the situation as extremely difficult and frustrating for the islanders and Tulele Peisa, the main reason being the lack of state finance in support of the relocation, which has rendered life “quite challenging there” (Mann, interview 2018).

The third major barrier to resettlement is finding land. The fundamental problem is that 97% of the land in PNG is customarily owned, which means it can't be sold or bought (Rakova, 2014). For Tulele Peisa, this entailed that land could only be acquired through agreements made with the state, landowners, or the Church. The first option was arduous, and the second proved unsuccessful. Tulele Peisa failed to access twenty coveted run-down cocoa plantations on Bougainville³³, a disappointment accompanied by five failed negotiation attempts with landowners (Connell and Lutkehaus, 2017). One ABG representative, Kapeatu Puaria, notes that the central government is crucial to bolster financial and political support to the islands (Displacement Solutions, 2008), because according to the PNG Constitution, only the central government can acquire land. Indeed, it is stated that “possession may not be compulsorily taken of any property, and no interest in or right over property may be compulsorily acquired (...) unless – (a) the property is required for – (...) (ii) a reason that is reasonably justified in a democratic society that has a proper regard for the rights and dignity of mankind” (Independent State of Papua New Guinea, 1975:31-32). This passage in the Constitution could be applicable to the Carteret case, but in reality, this has not translated into actual land purchases. In 2012, the ABG had attempted to secure 600 ha of land in a former copra plantation in Karoola in Buka, but negotiations with landowners fell short and as a result, further tarnished the relationship between the Administration and the islanders (Edwards, 2013). The PNG government has ratified the ICCPR³⁴, and it should thus ensure the right to self-determination of communities, but this right doesn't allow them to claim land where others have resided (Pascoe, 2015). As landowners can only sell their land to the government, and as the ABG is devoid of powers in that area and the central administration has signaled a detachment from Bougainville affairs, Tulele Peisa has had to turn to the third actor capable of bestowing land, the Church. The Catholic Diocese of Bougainville had acquired sites in Tinputz,

³³ TP attempted to purchase a run-down coconut plantation owned by an American, but the astronomical price rendered the operation impossible (Flannery, interview 2018).

³⁴ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that guarantees the rights to life, self-determination, and civil and political rights, as described in Chapter I.

Tearouki, Mabiri and Tsimba in 1964 on a 99-year lease, and has offered the Carteret islanders 295 hectares of land (UNDP, 2016). This partnership started in 2007 when the Church allocated 81ha of land in Tinputz and work began on the relocation site³⁵. Despite this progress, the Carterets are on a clock. After the civil war, the appeal for the Autonomous region flourished and activities (notably mining) resurfaced. As Tracy Mann explains, “there’s an interest in the land, and the gift of the Diocese is starting to shrink because land parcels are becoming so valuable that they’re getting sold off. One of the big issues that Ursula has to contend with is, can she build some houses quickly? To get that land, to claim that land, get the houses built and get the communities moving” (interview, 2018). For the Carterets, time is ticking both on the islands and on the relocation sites. The operation is rendered all the more difficult as tensions between the government and locals are being fueled by the projected reopening of a mine and the arrival of American and Australian investors, “the added pressure of this left-over civil war, and bands of guys who roam around with machine guns, all of this create a lot of tension and make it difficult for communities to thrive in any case” (Mann, interview, 2018).

Land has cultural, spiritual, and psychological dimensions in the Pacific, it is the foundation of societies. It is the extension of people, and people are the extension of land, it is the basis of Pacific identity and the root of communities (Campbell, 2012). Finding it is a fundamental obstacle in most planned resettlements, because it needs to be sufficient in size, resources, and be appropriate to recreate livelihoods. In the case of the Carterets, the main problems were the complex relations with the states and with the host communities. For hosts to accept newcomers onto their land, in the context of PNG where tribes and clans are the most diverse in the world, was difficult. Poor state capacity and limited institutional capacity can worsen the social and environmental effects of climate change, leading to increased conflict potential (Boege, 2011). In the Pacific particularly, where the vast majority of land is customarily-owned, it is “the traditional embodiment of islanders’ wellbeing, relocation is thus feared to be potential catalyst for land conflicts and social conflicts” (Gharbaoui and Blocher, 2016:157). One of the main preoccupations of Tulele Peisa was ensuring that these associations didn’t occur, as it had caused the repatriation

³⁵ Currently, Tulele Peisa is in the process of developing a Memoranda of Understanding to establish a legal framework for relocation, along with the Catholic Diocese of Bougainville, the Council of Elders of home and host communities, and the Chiefs of the Carterets (UNDP, 2016). It contends that Tulele Peisa will possess the four relocation sites until the land deed has been signed and that land will then be given to the families for ownership. According to TP’s latest activity report, the deed has been drafted in Port Moresby and is now awaiting payment of legal fees (Tulele Peisa Inc, 2017).

of the first resettled Carteret families accused of stealing and starting feuds with host communities (Rakova, 2014). Because nefarious host relations are a threat to resettlement (Leckie, interview 2018), relationships were built through cultural exchanges, speaking tours, as well as construction of infrastructure benefitting both resettlers and hosts in relocation sites. TP undertook a range of initiatives essential to nurture these relations, notably by including local carpenters in building the houses, purchasing materials from local communities, and including the hosts into the construction of the resettlement site (Flannery, interview 2018). These relationships have been essential in ensuring the positive resettlement of the islanders, notably because the ten houses built so far are ‘literally across the road’ from the host community in Tinputz that provides facilities such as the church, schools, and community infrastructures (Craddock, interview 2018).

It should also be noted that the choice of the resettlement site is crucial. Size should be appropriate, and as TP has only acquired less than 300 ha out of the coveted 1500 ha (Oliver-Smith, 2014), the full relocation of the islanders will not be possible right now. Living conditions and reproduction of livelihood is essential, and in the case of the Carterets, this entails finding coastal sites to preserve their fishing traditions, as well as learning new agricultural practices for non-atoll soil. For Scott Leckie, these obstacles will be difficult to surpass. He explains that

it’s pretty much a hopeless situation and that’s it. They are Papua new Guinean citizens, so they are allowed to live anywhere on Papua New Guinea. One-by-one, they slowly begin to migrate away, is the most likely scenario. A scenario of planned relocation by all three thousand Carteret islanders to one location in Bougainville, which is what we were trying to propose with this land deal. That would have been nice, it would have preserved their culture, would have kept the community together, it was to an old cocoa plantation, so they would have had jobs and an income source, they would have had security because they would have been all together, and the list goes on, it would have been a perfect scenario, but that failed. Short of doing that, the most likely thing is, whoever happens to have the most money and the most energy, will get on a boat and go to Bougainville first, and then maybe somewhere else in Papua New Guinea (interview, 2018).

ii. International quietude and symbolic interest

With limited state assistance, Tulele Peisa and Ursuka Rakova have attempted to attract the attention of the international community to fund the resettlement project. Although it has sparked much media and academic interest, this has not translated into funding opportunities for the NGO.

At the international level, the Green Climate Fund (GCF) created at COP16 in Cancun had potential for assistance but its design failed to account for migrations. Indeed, the US\$ 677,000 grant to PNG accorded by the GCF is designed for capacity-building and mitigation of climate change, including monitoring, evaluating and implementing projects for increased readiness of the country (Green Climate Fund, 2017b). The aim of this grant is to augment state capacity regarding mitigation and adaptation projects implementation, notably by mobilizing stakeholders and the private sector. With no mention of migration or displacement, it seems the GCF doesn't consider climate mobility as an adaptation strategy in need of international funding, despite its primary function of financing adaptation and mitigation measures (UNFCCC, 2013). Moreover, it would be arduous for Tulele Peisa to gain accreditation for funding from the GCF as it entails a long process involving many standards and administrative capacities that the NGO may not have. Tracy Mann explains that Rakova "hasn't been successful at establishing a reliable team who can do administrative work, who can write a grant, who can report to donors, who can follow through with all of that. She's been trying to do everything herself, and in that, losing opportunities" (interview, 2018). With much sympathy, Mann denotes this Achilles' heel as a major obstacle in the long-term support of financial donors.

The GCF would also contradict the essence of Tulele Peisa as a community-led effort, as the GCF has been designed to "pursue a country-driven approach" (UNFCCC, 2014:11). The Green Climate Fund was created for greenhouse gas emissions reduction and adaptation at a time when climate migrations were not fully understood as positive strategies, and is thus designed to funnel funds towards states as the principal governance actors. The problem with international financing seems to be this statist focus as an obligatory passage for funding. Guterres (2008) for example has argued for greater financial assistance from the UNFCCC, but has singled out states as primary recipients. Gibb and Ford (2012) argue that the UNFCCC should be the primary instance for absorbing and funding climate migrations, and indirectly reinforce this statist institutional framework for humanitarian assistance. Let's also note that despite the willingness of the GCF to evenly finance adaptation and mitigation efforts, only 16% of the funds go towards adaptation (Bendandi and Paux, 2016). This climate regime has also developed into a focus more on gases than people (Simonelli, 2016), hindering the chances for TP to gain international funding for resettlement as an eco-humanitarian emergency. It seems unlikely that international climate finance mechanisms will turn to new governance actors, as "while most resilience-based efforts occur at

the local level, there is an absence of commitment and accompanying infrastructure at the international level to channel adaptation finance to local communities” (Burkett, 2015:80). This top-down model of funding ignores the direct needs of affected peoples by filtering through governmental structures. Mechanisms to conduct funding all the way down at the community-level are greatly needed in governance to prevent resources from being snatched by bureaucrats (Elliott and Fagan, 2010). Hence, Tulele Peisa has only received “symbolic” financial assistance from the international community (Boege, 2011:31), despite the many efforts of Ursula Rakova at raising awareness. Tracy Mann has spent a year speaking with the IOM about funding the Carteret islands relocation. They rejected the investment proposal, deeming the population size too small and Ursula’s efforts too limited, as she had only managed to relocate eight families at that time. The funding was redirected towards greater communities in PNG (Mann, interview 2018). This could be explained by the international perception that planned relocation is not a migratory adaptation option but rather a measure of last resort. However, planned relocation as orchestrated by Tulele Peisa in the context of full community participation and voluntary resettlement should be considered as a positive adaptation measure. The Platform on Disaster Displacement’s vision of migration as “providing dignity and giving people a choice, to a certain degree” (Koeltzow, interview 2018), although it does not consider planned relocation as migration, could coincide with the Carteret relocation for its voluntary character. Rakova has been travelling to international forums and on speaking tours to bring attention to the dignified community-driven approach she is leading, in the hope that

her very persuasive story and narrative would spur the international community to take action, both at the local level specifically providing resources for Tulele Peisa, but also as an overarching message that the developed world had to take seriously the responsibility of many people who are going to end up as migrants as a result of climate change (Mann, interview 2018).

So far, domestic and international policy actors have demonstrated limited interest or capabilities in assisting the Carteret relocation.

b. Civil society agency: taking charge of their future

i. The rise of Tulele Peisa out of the state’s ashes

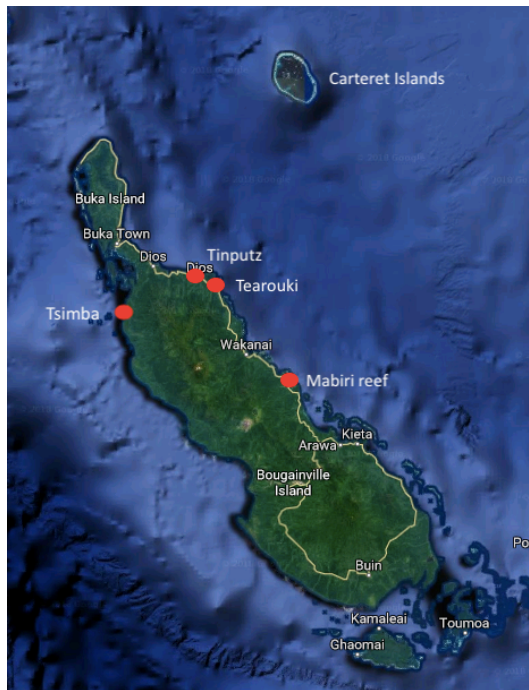
After many unanswered cries to the government to kick off the resettlement process, the Carteret islanders grew weary of its inaction. In 2007, the Council of Elders, the local authority in PNG, set up Tulele Peisa, which translates to ‘Sailing the waves on our own’. Today, the NGO is governed by a seven-member board of directors, Ursula Rakova the Executive director, and functions with five other full-time staff members (UNDP, 2016). After many empty promises from the PNG Government and the ABG, this organization emerged to foster self-reliance and independence, based on community initiatives and action (Tulele Peisa Inc., 2009). It initially set up the Carterets Integrated Relocation Program (CIRP) with the goal of assisting 3,300 Carteret islanders and 10,000 people in three host communities over ten years, with a request of almost PGK 6 million in government funding (Tulele Peisa Inc, 2009). The CIRP proposed a twenty-step process for the successful resettlement of the islanders, entailing a recreation of their livelihoods and ensuring their self-sufficiency³⁶. Ursula Rakova notes that “[d]espite the lack of financial support from the two [governments of Bougainville and PNG], commitment and sacrifice was the norm displayed the few dedicated team who managed to keep going” (Rakova, 2014:287). Indeed, the journey has been plagued by very little state support for the plight of the islanders. Rakova (2014) accuses ABG public servants of falsifying information about Tulele Peisa for PNG officials in order to block funding streams, by falsely painting them as being uncooperative and running a parallel program to the ABG. The ABG has claimed it will not fund the relocation process through an NGO and instead advocates its own program, one that has clearly not proven efficient. Paradoxically, the provincial state has endorsed the CIRP program, but remains passive to act on the issue (Boege, 2011). Scott Leckie explains that “you have a bunch of Melanesian politicians who don’t really care all that much about the islanders, with a culture of corruption, a limited land base, and you see that it’s a lot of obstacles in the way of viable resettlement” (interview, 2018). Tracy Mann adds that “there seems to be a complete disregard for public services for the people”, accusing the PNG governments of failing to provide basic services (interview, 2018). Rakova has called out selfishness and nepotism of ABG civil servants, reflecting the difficulties of political

³⁶ The program begins with the challenging question of finding land, by proposing the use of run-down ruined cocoa plantations in Bougainville, and negotiations with the Catholic Church for land in Tearouki, Mabiri and Tsimba. The next steps accentuate the need for involving the host communities, through cooperation with local Chiefs, inter-marriages and cultural gift exchanges, as well as the selection process and the preparation process of families that will first resettle. Finally, the last steps focus on the settlement itself, the construction of houses, the involvement of local craftsmen, and the set-up of income generating mechanisms (Rakova, 2014).

progress in PNG. According to Tracy Mann, a close associate of the head of Tulele Peisa, Rakova is in a constant adversary role with the governments. She suspects this might also be due to her position as a woman, recalling one Papua New Guinean gentleman explaining to her the danger befalling women in leadership positions in the country, accused of practicing witchcraft and sometimes murdered. “That hasn’t happened to Ursula, thank god, but it has happened to other women who were in leadership positions in community groups” (Mann, interview 2018). She adds that Rakova is at great personal risk in the leadership she exhibits, which has hindered progress of the relocation program.

Tulele Peisa and the islanders have chosen to engage in community resettlement to Bougainville, principally the areas of Tinputz, Tearouki, Tsimba and Mabiri, currently representing a total of 295 ha³⁷. The first five families arrived in Tinputz in 2009 to prepare the land, but so far, progress has been hindered by local disputes and funding difficulties (Connell and Lutkehaus, 2017), and three of them have returned to the Carterets. By 2014, Moroav village hosted a total of 83 individuals (Rakova, 2014), and today, around one hundred islanders have relocated (Mann, interview 2018).

Figure 9. Map of the Carteret relocation options on Bougainville island



³⁷ Despite this donation, Tulele Peisa is still short on land, having estimated the need for an approximate 5ha per family and a total of 1,500 ha of land for the whole community (Boege, 2011).

Satellite image source: Google Maps

According to TP's last activities report, eight houses have been built out of the projected ten, and fourteen out of twenty family blocks have been rehabilitated with cocoa and coconuts (Tulele Peisa Inc., 2017). Planned relocation is a difficult process that requires careful planning, especially when it is community-led because there are no standardized mechanisms to determine the vulnerability of the people and the appropriate time to leave (Bronen, 2014). It also presents great risk to social cohesion and livelihoods, particularly if resources are insufficient to reconstitute services and infrastructures necessary to the continuation of life (McAdam and Ferris, 2015). Most importantly, consent and population control is determinant, a point which Tulele Peisa has well incorporated. Johnson and Krishnamurthy (2010) highlight that planned resettlement can deteriorate living conditions if all stakeholders aren't sufficiently informed and capable of influencing the process. In the case of the Carterets, "every step of the way, chiefs, elders, men, women, and youth from the Carterets have been involved in the negotiations with the host communities and landowners, a conscious effort by Tulele Peisa to make this a community-driven process rather than a government-driven one" (UNDP, 2016:8). This alone highlights the considerable importance of civil society in the context of climate migrations³⁸.

Figure 10. Finished houses on the relocation site in Tinputz



³⁸ As most cases of planned resettlements have failed due to poor planning and exclusion of affected actors, community participation has been widely promoted across the board for better outcomes (Elliott and Fagan, 2010; Martin and Bergmann, 2017; Ferris, 2012). Campbell et al. (2005) add that cooperation and leadership play a key role in the outcome of community relocation, and stresses the need for all citizens to understand the process of resettlement. It is said that resettlement can never succeed if the people are forced to move without any control over the process and destination (Barnett and O'Neill, 2012).



Source: Tracy Mann, April 2016

Figure 11. Tulele Peisa Office on the relocation site in Tinputz



Source: Tracy Mann, April 2016

The resettlement process is being carried out as described in the CIRP twenty-step plan, to prevent the eight risks associated with planned relocation - landlessness, unemployment, social marginalization, reduced access to resources, food insecurity, increased morbidity, community disarticulation, and loss of identity (Campbell and Warrick, 2014). Indeed, Tulele Peisa has made the recreation of livelihoods and opportunities a main preoccupation. This has translated into the creation of a mini forest for food production³⁹, seaweed farming, and more impressively, the establishment of the Bougainville Cocoa Net Ltd in 2009, a cocoa export company to generate funding for the project⁴⁰ (Rakova, 2014). Resettlement has also included agricultural and income generation programs, education and health facilities, and community training programs for both islanders and hosts (Boege, 2011). When islanders are resettled, they are taught new skills, such as gardening and harvesting methods new to these atoll dwellers accustomed to specific ecosystems (Flannery, interview 2018).

The relocation has been gradual, with each departure accompanied by farewell ceremonies from the Carterets and welcome celebrations into the host communities, notably through the exchange of shell money to promote cultural cohesion. This element is crucial to an effective relocation as a complex social process, cultural and social roots must be used as a resource rather than an obstacle (Oliver-Smith and de Sherbinin, 2014). To maintain this link between resettlers and islanders, Tulele Peisa has also envisioned a sea transport service that would ease their contact, as well as the establishment of a Conservation and Marine Management Area around the Carterets to preserve their ancestral land and fishing rights (Boege, 2011). Unfortunately, despite these notable efforts, “they’re nowhere near self-sustained financially. Not only can’t they build the houses, but they can’t properly take care of themselves at this moment” (Mann, interview 2018). It is clear that the absence of the state has hampered the abilities of civil society.

³⁹ The Mini Food Forest serves to incubate adaptable species to provide food and regenerate ecosystems. So far, 34,123 tropical trees have been planted, with a goal of one million trees in Tinutz (UNDP, 2016).

⁴⁰ With the hope of producing sufficient revenue to finance the whole resettlement, Rakova has been in contact with the Wellington Chocolate Factory in New Zealand (Craddock, interview 2018) and looking for new markets to expand their sales (Flannery, interview 2018).

ii. The resulting dependence of Tulele Peisa on international NGOs

As a result of limited international and domestic assistance, Tulele Peisa has greatly relied on international NGOs for financial and technical support. These relationships have principally emerged from a lack of state and international support that have rendered their existence indispensable to the Carteret resettlement. It is widely acknowledged that they have had a great role in humanitarian and environmental relief, notably in “mitigating the trauma” of resettlement and displacement (Elliott and Fagan, 2010:76). This needed focus on civil society actors has also been remarked by Barnett (2001) who argues that authority should stem from all levels of governance and NGOs in a coordinated manner. In the Pacific, local leaders, notably traditional authorities such as Chiefs, tribal leaders, or elders, have surpassed the state in governing communities (Boege, 2011), but in the context of climate migration, resettlement is near impossible without external funding from transnational NGOs. This is due to the extremely uneven distribution of international funding among non-state organizations: between 2010 and 2014, international NGOs received 86% of global humanitarian assistance, while local organisms only secured 1% of financing worldwide (Red Cross, 2015). The Red Cross⁴¹ (2015) further justifies this monopoly by explaining that local organizations are disconnected from the world stage and have very limited access to major donors. In the Carterets, Tulele Peisa has greatly depended on international NGOs for support, a relationship which has grown as their cause became recognized globally⁴². These relationships have enabled the islanders to start building the houses and infrastructures on the relocation sites, and for Ursula Rakova and her team to pursue advocacy actions worldwide⁴³. These valuable relations have been essential for the Carteret relocation (Flannery, interview 2018). They have been key in surpassing governmental deficiencies and providing the islanders and resettlers with basic amenities, such as housing, livelihoods, disaster recovery, wash facilities, “the whole package” (Craddock, interview 2018). Amanda Craddock’s ‘gut reaction’ is that NGOs have been the principal aids to Tulele Peisa, and recounts the much needed involvement of Caritas NZ

⁴¹ Major NGOs like the Red Cross have thus assumed a crucial role on the international stage, notably in engaging local voices and delivering mitigation, adaptation, and basic needs to communities (Chapagain, 2015), even working in tandem with the IOM on setting up emergency shelter in mass displacements (Geddes et al., 2012).

⁴² In the two years following the creation of TP, many partnerships were formed and the NGO managed to collect K231,000 from six international organizations in the form of small grants (Tulele Peisa Inc., 2009).

⁴³ For example, Friends of the Earth Brisbane have been aiding TP by organizing speaking tours in Australia to get the message out and organizing fund-raisers (Flannery, interview 2018).

in financial capacity building and project management. They began supporting livelihoods of agroforestry, coconuts, cocoas, supplying building materials, “whatever the need is” (interview, 2018).

Table 5. Tulele Peisa partnerships with international NGOs and their activities

Organization	Activities
Lonely Planet Foundation, through the Australian Conservation Foundation	Funding: PGK 21,500 (approx. USD 6,500)
Australian Conservation Foundation	Funding: PGK 40,000 (approx. USD 12,257) Advocacy and networking Solar lighting for Tulele Peisa, from 2007 to 2012
GreenGrants US and Global Greengrants Fund	Funding: PGK 21,987 (approx. USD 6,700) Capacity-building support and provision of training workshops in 2009
Commonwealth Foundation UK	Funding: PGK 42,000 (approx. USD 12,870) Support for the development of the Carterets Integrated Relocation Program, in 2007
Women Development Movement	Funding: PGK 2,500 (approx. USD 760)
Rainforest Information Centre	Funding: PGK 5,000 (approx. USD 1,500)
International Women’s Development Agency	Funding: PGK 26,335 (approx. USD 8,000)
New Zealand AID	Funding of Tulele Peisa Headquarters in 2007
Oxfam New Zealand and Oxfam Australia	Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) project for the relocated families, in 2013
Red Cross	Water tanks for the relocated families, in 2009
Caritas New Zealand, and Caritas Australia	Help provided to cocoa farmers through the Bougainville Youth Initiative Program, and to build a Cacao Fermentry Health and sanitation programs for the relocated families Capacity-building and project management, support of livelihoods of agroforestry, coconuts and cocoa Provision of water tanks to relocation sites
Friends of the Earth Australia	Advocacy, lobbying, fundraising, and administrative support, international community and awareness raising
Christensen Fund	Two-year project for cultural and biodiversity conservation of the Carteret islanders
Catholic Diocese of Bougainville	Provision of land on Bougainville island
City Pharmacy and Group of Companies	Hardware materials for housing and infrastructure for the resettlement
Lutheran Mission Centre in Hamburg	Funding for the construction of the first homes of the resettlement, from 2009 to 2012
Climate Wise Women	Advocacy, support, and fundraising for Ursula Rakova and Tulele Peisa
Displacement Solutions	Advocacy, political lobbying for Tulele Peisa, first attempt at a land purchase for the relocation, policy formulation

Sources: Tulele Peisa Inc (2009), UNDP (2016), and interviews conducted for this research

Nevertheless, maintaining relationships with international partners has proven difficult for TP. Wendy Flannery notes that the NGO lacks staff capacity and very limited communication capabilities, as “they never know when they’re going to be able to get on the internet or not” (interview, 2018). This obstacle is also denoted by Tracy Mann who explains that despite Rakova’s personal connections with international players, “why that hasn’t translated into bigger support, I

can only speculate, is a combination of Ursula's own inability to really pay enough attention to those relationships that they often require to get the big funding, but also the remoteness of it, the fact that it is a small group of people" (interview, 2018). Indeed, the Carterets are quite isolated, a four-hour boat ride from Bougainville that comes around every two or three months. For international NGOs, "it's a total out of sight out of mind situation" (Leckie, interview 2018), and the inability to maintain a physical presence in the long-term has hampered the collaboration of TP with certain organizations.

c. Community conceptions of planned resettlement

The Carteret islanders have taken charge of their future with great aplomb, and their perception of themselves has shaped their conception of migration as an adaptation strategy. The term 'climate refugee' has been vastly contested by islanders for multiple reasons. First, it threatens their Pacific identity (Campbell and Warrick, 2014) in a country with little tradition of mobility. PNG has very negligible emigration or immigration due to the significant cultural ties with land and kinship, their lack of resources for migration, and their customary ownership of land. Secondly, the term 'refugee' confers an image of helplessness refuted by the Carteret islanders, who instead perceive themselves as possessing necessary adaptive and resilience capabilities (IOM, 2014). They have instead favored 'climate migrants', 'displacement' or 'relocation' to describe their situation, because "people don't want to be regarded as victims to be rescued" (Flannery, interview 2018), one reason being that they have no control over the environmental degradation caused by the industrialized world. The language used to describe the islanders is meaningful and surpasses the academic debate on terminology as it bears such importance on their perception of their situation and identity. For islanders, it is a question of dignity. The term 'refugee' has a negative connotation of

People who can't help themselves, who are in need, who are perhaps less worthy or outsiders of society. Because of this devastation of having to leave behind their home and their culture, to take the step forward into the relocation, to make it mean something, to make it mean a better future for their children and their grand-children, to make it mean that they'll be able to thrive and not just survive. What you call those people and what level of dignity you accord them is really important (Mann, interview, 2018).

The islanders feel abandoned and angry about the situation and the lack of assistance they're receiving, recounts Tracy Mann, who adds that "they're ready to explode!" (interview, 2018).

Of course, not all Carteret islanders wish to leave. This is especially true among the elder population (Tulele Peisa Inc., 2009), and the fact that very few families have volunteered to go to Bougainville shows a certain reticence in leaving their ancestral lands. Connell (2016) attests that not more than one third of households have, at one time, wished to leave. When Tulele Peisa was created at the end of 2006, only 3 families were willing to resettle. Two years later, 38 families volunteered and by 2013, two hundred people wished to partake in the relocation (Leckie, 2014), testifying of an increasing acceptance for the need to resettle elsewhere. In this sense, migration is perceived as a positive adaptation strategy based on the agency and resilience of civil society. Islanders are aware of the environmental stresses on the islands, and the community, especially the youth, is increasingly proactive in the resettlement. Of course, it is still extremely difficult to leave their land, as described by Connell in an interview with islanders who deplore that "[l]osing our island is losing our lives, losing out identity, losing out custom and whatever we have" (Connell and Lutkehaus, 2017:88), adding that individuals are caught between the insecurities of staying in their own homes and that of accessing land elsewhere. The general population doesn't want to leave their country, which has hampered progress in the resettlement because of "all the people who have said straight out 'we'll stay here and die!'", as people are so attached to their place and their culture, and to everything that gives meaning in their life" (Flannery, interview 2018). For Tracy Mann, most of the people would like to move, despite some strong opposition by the elders that would prefer to die on the islands (interview, 2018). Nonetheless, migration is accepted by the volunteers who aim to reconstruct their cultural traditions on Bougainville and preserve the Carteret identity. This is particularly important to Ursula Rakova, as Tracy Mann notes, "she certainly is devoted to creating a legacy for Carteret islanders, something that will be left of their culture and who they are as a people, after those islands are under water. I *know* that's important to her, I know that's what drives her work" (interview, 2018). These first families have had a major role in framing the settlement as a positive strategy, as they were "totally instrumental in setting up the livelihoods, and were absolutely key in their own future" (Craddock, interview 2018). Tulele Peisa hopes to relocate half of the population, especially those with income earning potential (Displacement Solutions, 2008), while retaining a part of the community on the Carterets to enhance cultural

preservation and alleviate resource pressures. Ensuring the support of the community has necessitated that TP guide the islanders. Scott Leckie recounts Ursula Rakova explaining,

“look, you get everything now from nature, we trade shell money made out of shells, we don’t even have money! All of that will change when you move to Bougainville, you have to work for somebody and get the stuff called money, and you have to exchange the money for food” (interview, 2018).

The total-subsistence culture moving into a capitalist system is a disturbing move that the NGO has had to prepare the islanders for, an essential step towards their perception of migration as a positive strategy. For Amanda Craddock, the islanders with whom she’s recently spoken are increasingly accepting of the move. “They still had needs, but it was definitely positive now. Of course, they’re the ones who have volunteered to come, and they were the first ones to volunteer out of 3,000 people” (interview, 2018). Those who have resettled have increased their quality of life and expressed gratitude for circumstances that they deem better than if they had stayed on the islands (Mann, interview 2018).

In conclusion, this case study testifies of the centrality of state capacity in framing the agency of civil society and the outcome of resettlement. The weakness of state institutions and the rocky relationship between the ABG and Tulele Peisa, as well as the disconnect between the symbol of the state and the reality of islanders has greatly impacted the financial and technical abilities of communities to carry out their own relocation. Their plight has also framed their conception of migration as a positive adaptation strategy to environmental degradation and the inefficacy of the state to protect them. These factors help anticipate the flows of Carteret islanders and their particular policy needs at domestic and international levels.

B. ‘Migration with dignity’: islander and governmental collaboration in Kiribati

Contrary to the Carteret islands case, the Republic of Kiribati has been proactive in addressing SLR and potential relocation for the I-Kiribati. However, the approach of the

government has changed between administrations, and the local populations have engaged in individual migrations to better cope with the effects of climate change.

a. State capacity and the concept of ‘Migration with dignity’: the back-and-forth approach of the state

i. The previous government’s advocacy of resettlement

The administration led by Anote Tong, the President of Kiribati from 2003 to 2016, approached resettlement as a very real possibility for the I-Kiribati. He deemed the country could become uninhabitable within sixty years, and argued for long-term planning of the relocation of the entire population, because “the sooner we act, the less stressful and the less painful it would be for all concerned” (Tong, 2008:3). The idea behind what he termed ‘Migration with dignity’ was to recreate part the community elsewhere in the event of the disappearance of the territory, that could facilitate the move of the rest of the I-Kiribati. The scheme is set up in two parts. First, the creation of opportunities for expatriate communities in host countries in preparation for future migrations, and second, the up-skilling of the population in terms of qualifications and education to provide better opportunities for them to integrate international work markets (McNamara, 2015; Counil and Gemenne, 2010). Through the creation of expatriate communities, the President hoped to preserve I-Kiribati culture and traditions and benefit from remittances sent back home (McAdam, 2011). This migration strategy is materialized by the nation’s labor migration policy, which states that the permanent relocation of some of its citizens is considered a long-term sustainable response to climate change (ILO, 2015). With an emphasis on the permanence of resettlement, the government had developed measures to boost foreign employment, such as pursuing international markets, education opportunities, revitalizing the seafaring industry, and improving inter-state cooperation on cross-border labor migration⁴⁴ (ILO, 2015). These proactive measures are inscribed in the prospect of stalling higher adaptation costs in the future that would

⁴⁴ For example, the government developed the Kiribati Australia Nursing Initiative (KANI), a three-year educational program funded by the Australian Government aimed at training young aspiring nurses and enabling them to stay in the country afterwards. Unfortunately, the program lasted only three years and was discontinued, due to high failure rates and the steep cost of US\$ 200,000 per student (Fornale and Kagan, 2017). Still, 46 young I-Kiribati out of the 78 graduates received a work visa in Australia, which constitutes a success in itself.

include mass-relocation, and instead, argue for the combined actions of *in situ* adaptation and climate labor migration. World Bank estimates show that population densities in Kiribati will increase fivefold by 2100 under current growth rates and environmental degradation, and that the annual emigration of 2,600 people would only maintain densities at their present level (Wyett, 2013:175). This validates the strategy of Tong’s administration to increase permanent movement to relieve pressure on resources and urban centers. Although costly in the short and medium terms, Migration with dignity is a ‘no-regrets’ strategy which aims to improve the skills and livelihoods of the I-Kiribati through a positive approach to migration, and ultimately increase the resilience and coping capacities of communities (Yamamoto and Esteban:2017). Despite these advantages, this strategy also presents a fundamental flaw: the exclusion of marginalized parts of society, those most dependent on their land and furthest from urban centers depriving them of educational opportunities. Taking into consideration the thousands of kilometers between the Gilbert and Line island groups and the average annual GDP per capita of US\$ 1,587⁴⁵ of islanders, it can be argued that this strategy fails to provide equitable protection for all I-Kiribati (McNamara, 2015). Of course, the first part of the policy doesn’t consider migration for the entire population, just those willing to up-skill and create communities elsewhere. Nonetheless, this excludes those households far from these opportunities or those that don’t have the social or kinship systems that allow them to send off a family member overseas to benefit from remittances.

Despite these shortcomings, the Migration with dignity policy aims to preemptively engage with climate change, as explained by Teima Onorio, ex-Vice President of Kiribati, “if the catastrophe is inevitable, we need to prepare ourselves and our people for eventual migration” (Nansen Initiative, 2013b:9). But as Scott Leckie notes,

Migration with dignity is not the same as mass departure of the country. It’s a very eloquent policy in fact, it’s not just migration, it’s migration with dignity and respect and all of the other things that should be associated with a positive, forward-looking, problem-solving approach to migration, not leaving out of desperation (interview, 2018).

With this in mind, the government of Aote Tong purchased a piece of land in Fiji, which “clearly indicated that there are at least some minds thinking departure is better than remaining”

⁴⁵ Based on World Bank data, found at online at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=KI&view=chart>

(Leckie, interview 2018). Officially, the land was bought for agricultural purposes to support adaptation funding in Kiribati, but Leckie suspects this assertion was made to prevent people from suddenly leaving. In any case, the parcel is inadequate to support I-Kiribati settlements, as one third is mountainous and not suitable for human habitation or agriculture. Another problem is the existent community of Fijians on the land, that would obstruct relocation (Leckie, interview 2018). Wendy Flannery, upon visiting the acquired territory, recounts an I-Kiribati woman exclaiming “can you imagine our people moving there?” and thinking “it’s like moving from Earth to Mars!” (interview, 2018). Whatever the official or informal discourse on the land, mass-relocation to Fiji would be highly improbable.

In parallel, the government had also implemented the Kiribati Adaptation Project in three phases to mitigate the impacts of climate change. It targets ten priority areas: awareness, water resources, coastal erosion and inundation, agriculture, family planning, fisheries, health, overcrowding, waste management, and miscellaneous options (Teiwaki, 2005). The Government of Kiribati was tasked with funding and implementing the project with the collaboration of various ministries and the Office of the Beretitenti⁴⁶ responsible for disaster management, as well as an acute involvement of civil society. The project included consultation of Island Council representatives, traditional elders, women, and youth, and incorporated grievance redress mechanisms based on traditional forms of conflict resolution⁴⁷ (Teiwaki, 2005). These ‘no-regrets’ bottom-up strategies have been endorsed by the World Bank (2000) because they reinforce collaboration between the state and communities, and pinpoint environmental issues that require necessary attention. It has also improved the government’s coping capacity and helped shed a positive light on migration as an adaptation strategy.

ii. The new government: pushing for *in situ* measures

Despite this very strongly advocated Migration with dignity policy, the new government presided by Taneti Mamau since 2016 has taken a political U-turn. The strategy is no longer a

⁴⁶ I-Kiribati appellation for the Office of the President

⁴⁷ The traditional form of conflict resolution in Kiribati is the *Maneaba* system, in which the elders, the *unimane* are tasked with resolving grievances for communities over village discussions, and with the influence of traditional authorities and councils (Teiwaki, 2005).

priority for the government that now favors *in situ* adaptation measures and individual labor migration. Indeed, up-skilling and integration of international job markets is still very much encouraged, but cross-border relocation is propagated as not being the only available option (Timeon, interview 2018). They have strayed from the first part of the Migration with dignity policy that aimed to create an expatriate community elsewhere, but continue promoting employment opportunities to enable the I-Kiribati to partake in individual migration. This mindset is best resumed by Manikaoti Timeon, program manager for the Kiribati Adaptation Program who explains “we will continue to live on these islands for as long as technically possible. In the event that migration cannot be avoided then the people have no choice but to move” (interview, 2018). Penelope Alofa, national coordinator of the Kiribati Climate Action Network (KiriCAN), supports this political change of heart, asserting that “to migrate is a choice. We’re staying in Kiribati, we’ll do everything we can to stay in Kiribati” (interview, 2018).

This new political stance supports the concept of ‘maladaptation’ in planned relocation. This is defined as “an action taken ostensibly to avoid or reduce vulnerability to climate change impacts adversely on, or increases the vulnerability of, other systems, sectors or social groups” (Barnett and O’Neill, 2012:9). These actions include augmenting the vulnerability of a group or engendering unnecessary dependence on others actors. In the case of the Migration with dignity policy, it could be argued that expatriate communities were made vulnerable by resettling in a country with different norms, cultures, and employment; and the sending of remittances to their home communities could lead to dependence on expatriate actors and increase their burden. For Hugo (2012), networks are a crucial tool for climate migrations, but even with a history of mobility, populations are not likely to move before *in situ* measures have been undertaken. This is the case in Kiribati, where the previous government tried to guide movement down a linear path of established migration corridors, to ease an eventual mass-scale movement into a ‘no-regrets’ approach. But anticipatory strategies like these are prone to creating vulnerabilities and a centralization of power that could restrain flexibility and policy development (Barnett, 2001). In response, the new administration has focused on adaptation within the islands, to curtail the effects of climate change that could arguably result in social and political disturbance and geopolitical instability (Westing, 1994). The GOK is now supporting the construction of seawalls on South Tarawa to protect coastal infrastructure, the community plantation of mangroves in outer islands, community harvest of rainwater to provide drinking water, construction of groundwater infiltration

galleries in villages, and the establishment of a community-based legal framework for sustainable management of mangrove and water systems (Timeon, interview 2018). These measures are taken to combat food and water insecurity resulting from high rural-urban migration, droughts, contamination of groundwater reserves, and lack of consideration for the impact of certain development projects on local food and water security. In South Tarawa where the seawalls are being constructed, high population densities are placing immense pressure on resources and inhabitants are now starting to migrate back to outer islanders for environmental reasons, such as inundations, shortage of land, and salinity of water (Timeon, interview 2018). The state is thus trying to push back the threshold of non-linear migration⁴⁸. This threshold, once reached, will increase the vulnerability of migrants through unplanned movements. By promoting individual labor migration and financing extensive adaptation measures on the islands, the GOK is trying to ensure this threshold is kept at bay. Due to the tight-knit nature of the I-Kiribati society, “everyone knows the potentials and the lack of potential when it comes to grappling with the question of climate displacement” (Leckie, interview 2018). Indeed, the stakes are far higher for the I-Kiribati than for the Carteret islanders according to Leckie, because

there’s a pendulum, it’s now at equilibrium, in the middle, balanced precariously between departure, and the choice of leaving and going off to another country through the process of relocation, and fighting and staying (interview, 2018)

For now, state efforts and resulting civil society attitudes are keeping this pendulum centered.

iii. Understanding international support for government-led in situ adaptation

Similarly to the PNG government, but in a much more proactive manner, the Kiribati government has increased its resilience and coping capabilities through adaptation measures with the help of the international community. It has sought funding and assistance from regional and global actors, notably the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through the Least Developed

⁴⁸ The threshold of non-linear migration means “the point at which the impacts of climate change are so severe (...) that the resilience of socio-ecological systems is breached, or that existing in situ adaptation options either fail or are perceived as inadequate, so that people make use of migration as an adaptation option in a manner that will fundamentally alter the form migration is taking” (Bardsley and Hugo, 2010:243).

Countries Fund. This US\$ 4,500,500 five-year project aims to enhance the adaptive capacity of communities vulnerable to food insecurity due to climate change (Kiribati Environment and Conservation Division, 2017). The UNDP has also contributed US\$140,000 to the project to develop institutional capacity to combat food insecurity and implement community adaptation measures. The GOK is also benefitting from assistance from the GCF, in the form of a US\$ 586,000 grant to improve domestic resilience to climate change (Green Climate Fund, 2017a). Despite administrative shortcomings due to minimal staff and limited resources, the GOK has readied a National Expert Group to discuss projects and priorities and consulted with stakeholders. These projects will also be assisted by the governments of Australia and New Zealand which have provided technical and financial assistance to the Republic of Kiribati under the GCF. Indeed, the Australian Government has been an important donor to the island nation, having contributed AU\$ 27.7 million in official development assistance in 2017-2018 with the objectives of implementing economic reforms and increasing education and health opportunities for the I-Kiribati (Australian Government, 2018). Australia is now the largest aid donor to the country and is collaborating with the World Bank on improving living conditions and food and water security on the atolls. The European Commission has also assisted Kiribati through the European Development Fund for a total of 2.2 million euros to promote good governance and climate change adaptation (European Commission, 2017). The Commission has highlighted the country's weak human, financial, and technical capacity, and aims to enable the GOK to increase both its governance capabilities and the resilience of its citizens. As Lewis (1990) highlights, adaptation to climate change require a holistic government approach, cooperation between all levels of administration, and involvement from international actors, to avoid what Masters (2000) calls a 'culture of reaction' to environmental hazards⁴⁹. The GOK has notably developed the Kiribati Adaptation Program (KAP) in three phases funded by the World Bank, the GEF, AusAID, New Zealand Government, UNDP and the Japan Policy and Human Resources Development Fund. The country is unable to meet adaptation costs and has widely relied on these external donors, as explained by the Republic of Kiribati (2015). Official development assistance represents its second revenue source after the sale of fishing licenses, and the government has grown increasingly dependent on multilateral grants to enhance

⁴⁹ The author promotes a "culture of action" that would prevent climate displacements and act pre-emptively through international organizations to build the resilience and coping capacities of governments and populations, instead of forces being mobilized only after a humanitarian emergency (Masters, 2000). This culture of action is advocated here in the form of proactive migration to relieve population and resource pressures.

its adaptive capacities. In its latest phase, KAP III had a budget of US\$ 10.8 million (Dohan et al., 2011) dedicated to *in situ* adaptation in close collaboration with affected communities, to “build a sense of ownership of activities and projects, and to ensure that development benefits are sustained in the long term” (Timeon, interview 2018). A project officer worked with villages on each island to reach group consensus over projects proposals submitted for funding under KAPIII (Teiwaki, 2005). These projects are enabling the state to bypass its financial and technical inabilities, notably due to the institutional challenges within the administrations in terms of lack of cooperation, information and limited training of public servants (Republic of Kiribati, 2015). Building governance capacity at all levels is also crucial to deter climate change-induced political destabilization (Brown and McLeman, 2009). The government has played a major role in promoting adaptation measures and behavior among communities, in turn facilitated by active international donors and multilateral cooperation. Let’s note however that this global assistance is most probably this important because it aims to deter migration. As we have seen, resettlements are reprehended by the international community fearful of increased migration flows and more favorable of adaptation and mitigation within developing countries. In the Pacific, Australia has been the biggest donor of climate finance (OECD and World Bank, 2016), while also expressing deep reluctance to welcome immigrants. SIDS are highly dependent on international funding for climate resilience, but concessional loans⁵⁰ are decreasing for these developing countries (OECD and World Bank, 2016), indicating a tightening of climate finance all around. Most notably, as Scott Leckie notes,

if everyone starts leaving, or even if 10 or 20% of the population starts leaving, all investments to the country will stop. Day 1. Even though there’s only a little amount of investment right now, no one in their right mind would keep putting money in there if they thought the best and the brightest minds of the country were leaving (interview, 2018).

Despite these climate finance efforts for the I-Kiribati people, Penelope Alofa decries the international community’s lack of concrete involvement and their exclusively statist approach.

⁵⁰ Concessional loans are those more generous than market loans in terms of interest rates and grace periods (OECD definition available at: <https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=5901>)

The thing is leaders from different governments. The COP is about developed countries, developing countries, or least developed countries. It's their meeting. All of us in NGOs, we go there to shout, and do everything we can to help with advocacy, but really, the change makers are the people who come to those meetings from developed countries. The question is, are they listening to us? They are the ones who need to change. Are they listening to us? You know that they don't. They're not listening. (Alofa, interview 2018).

The focus on states and climate finance has hindered the development of local actors, as is also demonstrated in the Carteret case study. Community leaders are barely represented in governance spheres, because

it all boils down to making money. The COP is about finance, it has moved away from the reality of the COP which is about the survival of the whole planet. I tell them, 'you are able to get to the Moon, you're talking about going to Mars, maybe you have the solution for climate change?' (Alofa, interview 2018).

Despite increasing support for the Government of Kiribati, civil society leaders in Kiribati feel helpless in their interactions with the international community and the concrete assistance they're receiving.

b. Civil society agency and the downfalls of external labor migration as an adaptation strategy

The GOK has greatly relied on civil society organizations to implement adaptation measures and gain support against permanent migration. In a combined effort, the government has been funding seawalls while KiriCAN has focused on mangrove planting and conservation (Alofa, interview 2018). Alofa explains that cooperation with the state has been operational, with the CSO reporting to the government on their activities, collaborating on water availability assessments, filling adaptation gaps, and obtaining specific assistance with certain projects such as water tanks, health projects, or even mangrove growing. She adds "I think the government recognizes what we are doing, and the people know who we are" (interview, 2018). Indeed, KiriCAN has been very active among village communities, in promoting health and resilience-building programs. They regularly speak with villagers about climate change and human rights, communicating on their rights in the event of natural hazards, and emphasizing their need to remain healthy to face the consequences of climate change (Alofa, interview 2018). They've also used examples of the I-

Kiribati and Tuvaluan court cases in New Zealand and Australia to “make them aware that things are happening outside of Kiribati”. However, Alofa adds that speaking with islanders about climate change and the responsibility of industrialized countries has been tough.

One time, I actually talked like that [like I’m speaking with you], I actually told them about my struggles as an advocator for climate change when I travel. And all of them just sat there and cried. Because it’s not easy, and it’s what I do not want them to feel (Alofa, interview 2018).

Civil society has thus been solicited as an agent of *in situ* adaptation and individual migration to follow the state’s policy trajectory against mass-relocation.

Despite straying from the Migration with dignity policy, the current administration continues to promote up-skilling and individual labor mobility in international job markets. As the most problematic form of movement is international because of the difficulties associated with relocating abroad (Campbell et al., 2005), Kiribati has promoted labor routes to Australia and New Zealand as a way for I-Kiribati to engage in short-term migration. The GOK has accentuated the benefits of external labor migration as opposed to mass-relocation, and islanders have followed with this type of adaptation despite its shortcomings, effectively developing an individualistic approach to migration and personal agency encouraged by the state.

The Australian Government promotes the Seasonal Worker Program, aimed at filling labor shortages in rural and remote areas, the Pacific Labor Scheme, for low or semi-skilled Pacific workers sent to rural Australia for up to three years, as well as the newly created Pacific Microstates-Northern Australian Worker pilot program, for 250 citizens offered work in the Northern region (Australian Government, 2018). In New Zealand, to where three times more Pacific islanders migrate (Government of New Zealand, 2012), two main labor migration schemes are available to I-Kiribati. The Pacific Access Category (PAC) enables 75 citizens to enter the country on a work visa via a ballot process, and the Recognized Seasonal Employer Scheme enables islanders to work in horticulture and viticulture (Government of New Zealand, 2012; Yamamoto and Esteban, 2017).

Figure 12. Geographical representation of Pacific migration possibilities for I-Kiribati



Satellite image source: Google maps

Labor migration, while enabling parts of the population to reach better economic opportunities and partly escape environmental degradation, has many shortcomings. First, it embodies fierce selection that excludes those who lack resilience, and the “tragedy of the fit from the unfit” molding “the populations at the margins of the post-colonial present into subjectivities docile to the neoliberal rule” (Bettini, 2017:36). Indeed, islanders are subject to specific criteria for selection under certain visa categories, such as the PAC, which excludes both in numbers and capabilities a vast majority of the population. Despite the willingness of the GOK to provide upskilling opportunities for its citizens, these labor schemes have proven to inadequately respond to the level of competence of applicants. Alofa deploras,

I say, is that really migration with dignity? The people go there and I don't think they've ever received a job offer to work in an office, or in a hospital, or to teach, no! All the job offers we receive in this program are to work on farms (interview, 2018).

She recounts the story of her nephew, an electrician that has gone to New Zealand through the PAC program.

He got promoted in the farms, but he's still working in a farm! I asked him "why are you still working there? Why don't you look for something else?" he said "No, I'm contracted here, and after this I'll leave and look for a proper job". To me, that's not fair, that's not right! We pay so much money for them to go across, to get there with their families, and then they're stuck working on farms. (Alofa, interview 2018)

Alofa denounces what she calls "slave labor" and the lack of up-skilling actually involved in these labor mobility schemes. In reality, they can place migrants into difficult economic situations. Bedford and Bedford (2010) remark that islanders going through the PAC have experienced difficulty finding full-time jobs. Indeed, Thompson et al. (2017) have conducted interviews with I-Kiribati in New Zealand, who deplored the lack of recognition of the program by employers and many operational shortcomings. Respondents said to be "embarrassed at their naivety for believing they would be provided with free housing and jobs to kick-start their settlement" (Thompson et al., 2017:83). This notably highlights the costs associated with labor migration. Kiribati's migration policy notes that most migrants draw on their pension funds to pay for their application to the schemes (ILO, 2015). Considering that the average per capita income in Kiribati is US\$ 1,587⁵¹ and that application fees can rise as high as AU\$ 1,150 (US\$855) for the Australian Temporary Skill Shortage Visa⁵², these schemes are excluding those less fortunate and most vulnerable to climate change. Alofa adds that if the migrants don't work, they don't get money nor food, and "if you're sick this week, then how do you pay rent?" (interview, 2018). It is also worth noting that no domestic legislation governs the overseas employment of I-Kiribati (ILO, 2015), and the protection of workers' rights is thus delegated to the host country. Let's remark that

⁵¹ Based on World Bank data, found online at :

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=KI&view=chart>

⁵² The Temporary Skill Shortage Visa has specific eligibility criteria. The applicant must be nominated by an approved business in Australia, and pay AUD 1,150 in application fees. He can stay between one and four years in the country depending on his situation. Found on the Australian Government's department of Home Affairs website, <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/trav/visa-1/482->

neither Australia nor New Zealand have ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families which ensures human rights, adequate living conditions and treatment, and access to social services for all overseas workers (UNESCO, 2005).

This has created unfair labor schemes, notably because of the asymmetric negotiation power between Pacific nations and Australia and New Zealand (Weber, 2016). Because of this lack of protection, opportunities and actual up-skilling, migrants' dependence on diasporas and home communities has grown. Alofa explains

Our people only survive in New Zealand because of our communal culture, we have friends and family and we're always depending on each other in other countries, that's how we survive. If we don't have this communal culture, we'll never be able to survive. We'll be on the streets, eating from the rubbish bins. (interview, 2018).

Finally, let's note the burdensome process of visa applications. For many labor schemes, the applicants must first find an employer overseas before being able to submit an application. This is a very challenging and costly process for a country in which only 15,000 out of 110,000 inhabitants have regular internet access (National Statistics Office, 2016).

Nevertheless, labor migration has the advantage of enhancing capacity-building and resilience of home communities through remittances, providing a long-lasting source of income (Martin and Bergmann, 2017). Worldwide, the flow of remittances grows by 8% annually (Bendandi and Pauw, 2016), and embodies a direct and predictable source of revenue that enables vulnerable environment-dependent households to diversify their income. In Kiribati, remittances represent 15% of the GDP (Barnett and Chamberlain, 2010), but have the power to deepen inequalities between receiving and non-receiving households, further augmenting the vulnerabilities of already exposed families (Julca and Paddison, 2010). The IMF has also noted that the effect of remittances on investment has been small, and the loss of the labor force to overseas employment has the potential to hamper government services due to a diminished tax base and the concentration of vulnerable households in the country (Browne and Mineshima, 2007). Remittances represent a valuable source of private finance but shouldn't replace public policy, and

only constitute a partial solution to adaptation funding (Melde, interview 2018). As the GOK is not receiving enough grants and increasingly relying on remittances for household adaptation to surpass public finance blockages, it needs to maintain a balance in emigration. Scott Leckie notes that labor migration encourages a brain drain by sending out the most qualified and resourceful individuals, arguing that keeping people in the country and preventing a brain drain process is already challenging notwithstanding climate change, and “anything that sort of tips the balance, they know where that’s going to go very quickly” (interview, 2018). By disavowing Migration with dignity but keeping support for temporary labor migration and remittances, the GOK is trying to prevent a brain drain that would endanger state capacity and external funding. For Susanne Melde however, the brain-drain is not necessarily occurring, as islanders are getting their education abroad and most often return home with that knowledge (interview 2018). Nonetheless, considering the costs associated with individual migration, it is the individuals with the most resources that are undertaking movement across the Pacific, in itself representing a loss for the home country and deepening inequalities between households.

Overall, labor migration presents many advantages for Kiribati, notably because it increases the resilience of families through remittances, diversification of incomes, educational opportunities and potential up-skilling. However, its shortcomings are note-worthy in the context of climate change, by contributing to a brain-drain in already vulnerable nations and not providing citizens with a long-term solution to over-population and resource degradation at home. Indeed, most labor migration is temporary due to a reluctance of Australia and New Zealand to open their frontiers. The two destinations are not equal however. Migrants show a grander willingness to settle in New Zealand, enticed by the higher accessibility of citizenship and permanent residence in the country (Government of New Zealand, 2012). Despite an increasing number of issued visas in Australia, only 1,6% were granted to Pacific workers in 2008, most of them to Papua New Guineans and Fijians. In comparison, 25% of I-Kiribati with a work permit were given permanent residence in NZ in the period 1997-2005, testifying of the better opportunities for resettlement in the country (Government of New Zealand, 2012). Australia has shown great reluctance to the permanent establishment of Pacific islanders, which started with the Howard Government promoting a ‘Fortress Australia’ mentality, spewing the idea that “the country was in peril and an unstable Pacific was a possible threat” (Collett, 2009:13). Although Australia has heavily invested in

adaptation measures in SIDS, the options presented to islanders in terms of labor mobility and permanent resettlement are limited to low-skilled job offers from direct employers – an additional obstacle for islanders- and laborious obtainment of permanent residence visas.

It seems labor migration is a double-edged sword for Pacific nations. It can be a positive opportunity to improve livelihoods, but also represents a barrier to long-term capacity-building for both migrants and home communities. Nonetheless, the Government of Kiribati has been actively promoting this form of migration as an adaptation strategy for years, in harmony with the reluctance of I-Kiribati to leave their ancestral lands. And despite some hesitation, their Pacific partners “will never let people on the islands perish, they will certainly have boats ready to save them if need be, in an urgent emergency situation” (Leckie, interview 2018). Perhaps this means hope for future negotiation with Australia and New Zealand on climate mobility schemes directed towards humanitarian assistance and away from economic fixations. For now, the situation remains highly oriented towards an individualistic labor solution to the environmental degradation that is plaguing life on Kiribati.

c. Conceptions of migration: the importance of land and culture in framing attitudes

Migration is best seen as a sociocultural process (Black, Adger et al., 2011) which requires an understanding of its conception by the islanders. In the case of Kiribati, civil society has assumed an individualistic and economic relation to migration through temporary labor mobility schemes across borders. The position of the I-Kiribati is quite clear:

we see the impacts, but we do not see the impacts as something that should stop us from staying on our islands. We do not want to leave. So maybe it's stubbornness, but at the same time we feel that we must stay and do everything we can to stay here in Kiribati (Alofa, interview 2018)

Nevertheless, she admits that relocation might be a possibility, but adds that people aren't thinking about it right now.

Many times, when we talk about people moving, every I-Kiribati wants to move. But it's not like a permanent move. They all want to have Kiribati here, they want to move but still to come back. And that's the difference. Climate change movement is permanent, you're not coming back.

She laughs,

even the people who are fighting to stay in New Zealand, going 'oh we are going to be citizens of New Zealand because our country is at risk and we can't survive over there' as soon as they get their citizenship, they'll come for Christmas and spend the New Year here (Alofa, interview 2018)

As communities are not accepting that they might have to permanently leave, they believe in the idea that their survival will be secured by temporary labor migrations, contrary to the Carterets islanders who hope to reconstruct their atoll lives elsewhere. Scott Leckie notes that leaving one's country of birth is a huge step, especially for those who are not highly educated, don't have marketable skills, and who have never left the Pacific before (interview, 2018). This unwillingness to migrate overseas is attributable to what Alofa calls stubbornness and to a general fear of abandoning a subsistence-based life for the unknown.

In spite of a general reluctance to migrate permanently overseas, 75% of households declared that they would move if sea-level rise became more serious, despite 24% declaring not having the financial means to do so (Oakes et al., 2016). Indeed, choosing to stay may not only reflect an attachment to their land, but also a lack of resources and "affirmative statements of resilience must be balanced against a lack of alternatives, which is an unstated vulnerability" (King et al., 2014:89). The decision to migrate stems from calculating the costs, risks and benefits of leaving, notably because it could have potential impacts on the resilience of those staying behind and those resettling elsewhere. In Kiribati, those most in favor of cross-border migration are the most educated, those who have traveled abroad and do not fear leaving the country, as they possess skills and qualifications that make them resilient overseas, are more exposed to current affairs and have a deeper understanding of climate change and its effects of the atoll-nation (Timeon, interview 2018). Three main attitudes are noted among the I-Kiribati. The first is based on the religious belief that God will decide their fates and migration is perceived as problematic for their identity and culture. The second understands the severity of climate change and holds a pessimist view of their survival in Kiribati, endorsing mass migration. The third attitude shares this sense of urgency about

climate-induced large-scale movement, but fear it could be nefarious for their culture despite believing in the benefits of migration for home communities (Oakes et al., 2016). These attitudes highlight the centrality of land and culture in decision-making for the I-Kiribati. Babera Kirata, Minister of Home affairs at the time, recounted

Our ancestors had lived happily for centuries on our islands, without fear that one day, our beautiful homes may be lost as a result of the deterioration of the environment. We, in this present generation, have inherited those small islands and we are very proud to be the owners of the beautiful homes, which our ancestors had secured for us (Kirata, 1989:1).

As 95% of households were affected by natural hazards between 2005 and 2015 (Oakes et al., 2016) and as standards of living in urban centers continue to deteriorate, it can be expected that cross-border and internal migrations will increase despite governmental *in situ* adaptation measures. In a survey on I-Kiribati perceptions, islanders claimed to be waiting for the government to guide them in adapting to climate change, with 50% of respondents affirming having done nothing to adapt (Kaiteie and Hogan, 2008). At the time, almost half of the interviewees claimed to be unaware of governmental actions. Today, it is unlikely to be the case, with increased state focus on adaptation efforts at the domestic and community level. Conceptions of migration has been shaped by historical and cultural processes, notably by the Kiribati colonial past inducing forced relocations. Indeed, “[p]ositive as well as negative experiences shape expectations and fears. Both have consequences for people’s decision making” (Weber, 2016:160), closely linking the I-Kiribati’s conceptions of migration with their Pacific identity, culture, and past. They are also shaped by the role their government has undertaken in fighting climate change. Through active promotion of labor mobility routes in the region, the state has been able to shape the perception of mobility as an adaptation strategy, especially among those with the most resources and skills. Through workshops, consultations and communications on climate change (Kaiteie and Hogan, 2008), notably by translating climate science into ideas the population can identify with (Republic of Kiribati, 2015), the government has raised awareness on environmental degradation and reinforced individual adaptive behaviors. Overall, the perception of migration as an adaptation strategy is mixed. Those most vulnerable to climate change and with the fewest resources are extremely reluctant to migrate, wanting to preserve their lands and culture, but the idea of labor mobility is gaining popularity among the youngest and most educated pans of the population. The

idea of mass community resettlement is greatly discouraged by both the new administration and the population, and emigration would require “political acceptance, planning, funding, and administration” (Lewis, 1990:247), reaffirming the centrality of the state in shaping migration as a positive adaptation strategy. This statist promotion of individual migration could put the most vulnerable at risk, because contrary to the Carteret relocation which is first resettling families with the fewest resources and ensuring their safety, the Kiribati individualistic notion of departure makes those with the least financial and social capacities unable to partake in this adaptation strategy. It could be deepening inequalities within society, instead of pursuing collaborative approaches to ensure that migration is an alternative offered to all. This step back from the Migration with dignity policy and the emphasis on labor migration across borders may also put the I-Kiribati culture at risk. Alofa notes that

it may be strong for the next few years, because [migrants] would be working in the community together. But a hundred years from now, and there’s no Kiribati here and the country is gone, sometimes I wonder how this culture will survive. It won’t be able to survive like it is now, it will change because it’s in a new country, with people scattered everywhere, and they’ll be working so hard to survive it will be difficult for them to get together (interview, 2018).

As for the Carteret islanders, land is a fundamental part of the Pacific identity, it isn’t just natural resources, it is an islander’s home (Bell, 2004), as “blood and mud are mixed together to provide identity” and the connection of the people to their land (Nansen Initiative, 2013b:24). The fear associated with climate migration is the potential loss of the I-Kiribati culture. Oliver-Smith (2014) asserts that the displacement of people separates them from their cultural roots and resources they depend on as communities, while Dewitte (2010) reminds that the survival of all cultures is indispensable to the global community. Individual migrations put the Kiribati culture at greater risk of being dispersed among expatriate communities, and overall, leaving their ancestral lands could damage their links to their traditions and identity. These comments are putting planned relocation and individual labor migration in perspective in terms of inequalities in adaptation strategies and cultural preservation that the GOK is trying so hard to achieve by preventing mass resettlement. In the end, their reluctance to accept permanent relocation might actually be their downfall.

In conclusion, the government's and the international community's rejection of mass-resettlement has framed the adoption of external labor migration as the adaptation strategy for the I-Kiribati. Their conceptions of migration as a negative process has comforted their state's preferences and enables us to understand future migration flows towards Australia and New Zealand, based on the islanders' agency in this adaptation strategy.

Conclusions

This research has intended to deepen the understanding of climate migrations through the study of the roles of the state and civil society in framing migration as an adaptation strategy, to explain why social and political reactions differ in communities facing sea-level rise and slow-onset environmental degradation. By filling this gap in the literature, it hopes to accentuate the view that climate migrations are contextual and must be studied within their socio-political conditions. One major flaw of this academic field has been the will to generalize explanations or predictions of movement, as illustrated by intensive debate on projections, directions, causes and terminologies for climate migrations. This research proposes a new paradigm through which to analyze cases of potential climate-induced mobility, to understand its potential flows, responses, and socio-political adaptation strategies. This study has extracted the three factors thought to best explain adaptation strategies and has developed of a new framework to standardize context-specific analysis to examine these variations and produce case-appropriate policy tools. It theorizes the use of three scopes applicable to situations of climate migration to develop distinct policy responses: (i) state capacity, (ii) civil society agency, and (iii) conceptions of migration. Applied to the cases of Kiribati and the Carteret islands, they help understand the variation in adopted adaptation strategies at the domestic and local governance levels. Using a Most different case study design, the cases have been compared on their political background, their relationship with migration, and the involvement of their social actors, thus validating the use of three explanatory factors to account for diverging adaptation strategies in the context of climate change in the Pacific.

This framework could permit the elaboration of more context appropriate international and domestic policies for the protection of communities facing potential relocation due to climate change. More than that, this study draws importance from its ramifications for its subjects, because “understanding the displacement process, the losses that people suffer, the trauma, social and psychological, and in some cases, physical that is experienced, is essential because resettlement must directly address those losses and the needs for healing that people require” (Oliver-Smith, 2014:58). This topic is bound to gain prominence in policy circles as climate change accelerates, and understanding its human complexities is crucial if resettlements are to be carried out properly from a humanitarian perspective.

These observations have led to the argument that civil society is taking on a dominant position in climate migrations. Growing claims for the development of a shared leadership between Western nations and new players (Ikenberry, 2015), and for the inclusion of civil society actors for new multilateral cooperation better suited to address 21st century global concerns have been widely advocated in the literature. Because governance is a “continuous process of evolution” (Rosenau, 1995:18), it elicits claims of a transformation of the international system. The development of new institutions would involve new practices and rules, structuration, routinization, and contexts (March and Olsen, 1998), hopefully based around norms of collective action, and humanitarian and environmental transnational challenges. In this light, social movements and civil actors act as a lever in political systems and enable the outcast to ascend, somewhere between the state and the market where social actions and struggles arise (De Brunelle, 2009). These civil movements are best perceived as action systems stemming from the construction of collective identity (Melucci, 1995), aimed at providing an alternative and fairer society. For Neo-Gramscian Robert Cox, civil society is “both the shaper and shaped, an agent of stabilization and reproduction, and a potential agent of transformation” (Cox, 1999:4), that could lead those disadvantaged by globalization and capitalism to challenge the status quo and transform the order of society. This notion of challenge is pertinent to the issue of climate migrations. As the international community has yet to legally and politically address the needs of cross-border and internal climate resettlers, civil society has endorsed a major role in challenging the state and engaging in its own protection. They have provided a valuable alternative to current juridical structures, inadequate to deal with this 21st century contextual issue and representing a “legal and policy vacuum” (Thompson et al., 2017:86) often devoid of enforcement mechanisms for assisting communities. These shortcomings are a big drawback for potential resettlers caught in the politicization of international migration and the lack of engagement of the international community in the environmental crisis. Civil actors thus render the state accountable and provide an alternative to it (Walker, 1994), holding a fundamental function in the fight against climate change within the neoliberal system. They also present an interesting measure of the negative consequences of globalization, especially in the case of climate induced migrations where the injustice of global climate change is best manifested. As the Cardoso Report underlines, “[t]he rise of civil society is indeed one of the landmark events of our times.

Global governance is no longer the sole domain of Governments. The growing participation and influence on non-state actors is enhancing democracy and reshaping multilateralism” (United Nations, 2004b:3). What Hampson (2010) termed the ‘democratic deficit’, meaning the exclusion of key branches of civil society from participation in governance, is slowly being lessened by the growing recognition of CSOs in consultative processes. Despite many shortcomings to the involvement of civil society in governance, the cases of Kiribati and the Carteret islands have proven the centrality of social actors.

The way states are confronting the issue and their capacity to fund and assist communities in adapting and coping with environmental change has a clear influence on the outcome of resettlement and the responsibility endorsed by civil society actors. Migdal offers insight to what is argued here when he writes “a society fragmented in social control affects the character of the state, which, in turn, reinforces the fragmentation of society” (Migdal, 1998:257). This premise has been demonstrated here in the case of the Carteret islands. Research has shown that the central government of PNG and the ABG have weak capacity for responding to the climate threat on the remote atolls, and to adequately assist Tulele Peisa in its mission to resettle the islanders. Due to corruption, civil war remnants of violence and destabilized politics, and a complex administrative system, the state has failed to react to the urgency of the Carteret situation. Let’s also note the complex societal system that could be characterized as fragmented, where different levels of governance existing beyond the state at the local level have surpassed the government in service delivery, conflict resolution, and legitimacy. The rise of Tulele Peisa as the primary actors of their own adaptation strategy is a symptom of the weakness of the state and the failings of the international community. Lipset correctly notes that “[t]he tides are eroding and exposing the immorality of the state; the immoral state that refuses to accept liability for the environmental consequences of its destructive economy, thus to force climate vulnerable societies to take the burden of adaptation essentially all by themselves” (2013:145). Indeed, the central government and the ABG have engaged in ecologically destructive practices, such as the deep-sea mine off the coast of Papua New Guinea that will surely wreak havoc on their oceanic resources, and have failed to properly translate the needs of islanders facing resettlement in their climate and disaster risk reduction policies. By contrast, the Kiribati government has been actively promoting adaptation measures within the islands to enable their citizens to stay. The current administration has departed

from the notion of ‘Migration with dignity’ that encouraged the development of expatriate communities, and is now actively engaged in *in situ* adaptation. These policies are justified by the unwillingness of the I-Kiribati to leave their homelands, a sentiment noted across the Pacific through “the importance of retaining the Pacific’s social and cultural identity, and the desires of Pacific peoples to continue to live in their own countries” (Pacific Islands Forum, 2008:1). This change in policy is also justified by the absolute need for states to retain sovereignty and statehood, which requires the maintenance of a population and government within a territory. Migration is rarely seen as positive adaptation in policy circles, due to the idea that promoting relocation would mean giving up on adaptations on their homelands. Pacific nations are more than ever promoting *in situ* measures, and actively seeking help from the international community. As Abbas Ibrahim, a Maldives Minister, once asserted,

Countries such as the small island states gathered here have become the innocent victims of the actions of industrialized nations, actions which threaten the very existence of these small, low-lying and fragile countries. (...) We the countries most directly concerned must co-operate in collectively addressing the problem (...) and seek the collaboration and assistance of International Agencies in developing a capability for mitigating potentially adverse impacts of climate change in our own countries (Ibrahim, 1989:1-2).

The proactive engagement of the government of Kiribati has molded a more individualistic role for civil society actors. Through labor migration schemes with Australia and New Zealand, the I-Kiribati are participating in short-term employment mechanisms in the region. Unfortunately, these strategies may not be ideal. They have been designed to fill gaps in the work force in Australia and New Zealand, often leading the I-Kiribati to down-graded jobs beneath their qualifications. It is also worth noting that PICs have been mostly disadvantaged in negotiations with the two host countries, and these short-term mechanisms remain highly reductive in terms of number of issued visas and socio-demographic statuses of persons involved. Despite the advantages of remittances to be used for adaptation measures in the home countries, these schemes offer no real long-term solution, and only enable those with the most resources to leave, excluding a majority of the population that is unable to get in contact with an employer overseas, doesn’t have the finances for the application fees, or the physical conditions to work in agriculture. Thankfully, the government has been engaged in proactive adaptation with local NGO networks such as KiriCAN, who assist the most vulnerable parts of society with building their resilience to climate change. For Wyatt

(2013), Kiribati now has two migration options, act preemptively through planned relocation, or wait and see, and possibly evacuate later. The author highly favors a mass-migration approach to decrease the costs of a future evacuation and to reduce pressure on resources for those remaining on the islands. This option would require land access, and as has been demonstrated in the case of the Carterets, this is a laborious affair in the Pacific where almost all land is customarily owned. Let's also remark that states face a particular dilemma: protecting their citizens from danger, fulfilling their obligations to improve standards of living, and thus supporting individual or community resettlements, could entail losing statehood and territorial sovereignty. But promoting adaptation within the territory at the risk of endangering vulnerable parts of society and pushing back the date to which hasty relocation will be necessary could worsen the economic, health, and social status of populations. This could trample communities' right to self-determination by preventing migration through a lack of financial and technical support, especially in the event of the acceleration of globalization and climate change as the industrialized world still refuses binding environmental regulations.

This research has demonstrated the importance of state capacity and civil society agency in conceptualizing climate migrations, to understand variations in social and political adaptation strategies to sea level rise using the cases of Kiribati and the Carteret islands. Using three explanatory factors, situations of migration – portrayed here as a useful adaptation strategy - can be understood within their contexts and their flows, anticipated policy needs and foreseen issues can be better apprehended. Whether it be planned community resettlement or individual labor migration, climate-induced mobility in response to slow-onset environmental degradation is a beneficial tool for vulnerable communities to increase their resilience and improve their livelihoods. These responses have been heavily influenced by what is termed here as 'positive' or 'negative' conceptualizations of migration, being the attitude of affected communities towards movement, that has shaped their reactions to climate change.

Civil society has played a key role, especially in the Carteret islands, in surpassing governmental deficiencies. Nonetheless, this agency "should not be used as an excuse for the passivity of state institutions in PNG and of those who are responsible for the plight of the islanders at the international level in the first place" (Boege, 2011:17). Of course, this issue warrants further

analysis, notably through on-field research to overcome obstacles of missing data and accessibility of information, and further understand grassroots level conceptualizations of migration. Finally, further analysis of *in situ* measures would be helpful to adaptation policies. In the case of small island states with limited possibilities for internal migration, high population densities and growing pressure on depleting resources, are they sufficient to protect populations from a future evacuation that would threaten the preservation of their culture and livelihoods? In the case of Kiribati, projections note a 140% increase in migration for 2045-2055 (based on 2005-2015 period) in a medium climate change scenario, that will also see a threefold rise in internal movements (Oakes et al., 2016). It is therefore imperative to recognize the plight of islanders that have no choice but to leave their ancestral lands. Ignoring these facts will compromise negotiations at the international and regional levels for protection schemes that will facilitate the resettlement of at-risk communities. As the viewpoint on migration as a negative strategy is slowly changing, it is important to ask to what extent *in situ* measures should be continuously advocated, in a world where no binding engagement has ever been taken regarding the fight against climate change. Environmental migrations, so far, “have been viewed as a peripheral concern, a kind of aberration from the normal order of things – even though it is an outward manifestation of profound deprivation and despair” (Myers, 2002:611). Soon, the ‘human face of climate change’ will have become evidence of the world we live in, one of indifference and injustice in what could be the next big migration crisis of the 21st century.

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Annexes

Annex 1: List of participants

Civil society actors

- ❖ Wendy Flannery
Climate Frontlines convenor, Pacific Islands and Climate Change, Friends of the Earth Brisbane
- ❖ Tracy Mann
Director of Climate Wise Women NGO
- ❖ Scott Leckie
Founder and Director of Displacement Solutions
- ❖ Amanda Craddock
Programs Coordinator for Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand
- ❖ Penelope Alofa
National Coordinator of the Kiribati Climate Action Network (KiriCAN)

International organizations and state actors

- ❖ Erica Bower
Climate change and disaster displacement specialist, Division of International protection at the UNHCR
- ❖ Sarah Koeltzow
Policy Officer, Coordination unit of the Platform on Disaster Displacement / Follow-up to the Nansen Initiative
- ❖ Dr. Susanne Melde
Senior Analyst, Global Migration Data Analysis Centre of the International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- ❖ Manikaoti Timeon
Program manager of the Kiribati Adaptation Program Phase III (KAPIII)

Annex 2: Terminologies and definitions of climate migrations found in the literature

Author	Term	Definition
Aminzadeh (2007)	Environmentally displaced person	“a person who (1) leaves his or her home and seeks refuge elsewhere (2) does so for reasons related to the environment” (p.256)
Byravan and Rajan (2010)	Climate migrants	“all those who are displaced because of the effects of climate change” (p.242)
	Climate exiles	“a special category of climate migrants who will have lost their ability to remain well-functioning members of political societies in their countries, often through no fault of their own” (p.242)
Cambrézy and Lassaily-Jacob (2010)	Réfugié climatique	« toute population contrainte de quitter son espace de vie habituel à la suite d’un événement, qui peut être d’origine naturelle, mais qui serait aggravé, voire déclenché, par l’action humaine » (p.7)
Conisbee and Sims (2003)	Environmental refugee	Persons “forced from their homes and lands by flood, storm, drought and other ‘man-made’ or weather-related disasters” (p.36)
Biermann and Boas (2010)	Climate refugees	“people who have to leave their habitats, immediately or in the near future, because of sudden or gradual alterations in their natural environment related to at least one of three impacts of climate change: sea-level rise, extreme weather events, and drought and water scarcity” (p.67)
Perkiss et al. (2010)	Environmental refugee	“People directly or indirectly affected by environmental pressures as a result of climate change. As a consequence of these pressures, they are no longer able to live in their homeland and therefore find themselves displaced” (p.4)
Docherty and Giannini (2009)	Climate refugee	“an individual who is forced to flee his or her home and to relocate temporarily or permanently across a national boundary, as a result of sudden or gradual environmental disruption that is consistent with climate change and to which humans more likely than not contributed” (p.361)
Myers (1993)	Environmental refugees	“people who can no longer gain a secure livelihood in their erstwhile homelands because of drought, soil erosion, desertification, and other environmental problems. In their desperation, they feel they have no alternative but to seek sanctuary elsewhere, however hazardous the attempt. Not all of them have fled their countries; many are internally displaced. But all have abandoned their homelands on a semi-permanent if not permanent basis, having little hope of a foreseeable return” (p.752)

UNHCR (2007)	Réfugié	Toute personne « craignant avec raison d’être persécutée du fait de sa race, de sa religion, de sa personnalité, de son appartenance à un certain groupe social ou de ses opinions politiques » (p.16)
United Nations (2004c)	Internally displaced persons	« persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights, or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised state border” (p.1)
UNESCO (2016)	Migrant	“any person who lives temporarily or permanently in a country where he or she was not born, and who has acquired some significant social ties to this country”
Bates (2002)	Voluntary migrants	Characterised by “the decision to relocate, usually made at the individual or household level (...) (they have) a variety of motives; the most common involves the desire for economic improvement” (p.467)
	Refugees	Migrants “forced or compelled to relocate by external forces” (p.467)
	Anticipatory refugees	“These people recognise that their local situation will eventually deteriorate and have the ability to relocate before they are forced to do so” (p.467)
Bardsley and Hugo (2010)	Environmental migrants	Those “at the forced end of the continuum (...) but that largely associates migration only with reactive adaptation to climate change”. Migration as “a strategy for adapting in an anticipatory manner to the impacts” and displacement “when environmental deterioration becomes so extreme that people are forced to leave an area as a reactive adaptation”. (p.242)
Black et al. (2011)	Displacement	“movement associated with discrete events that challenge safety, security or livelihoods. Much displacement is, in effect, involuntary or forced, and sometimes sudden if associated with rapid-onset hazards” (p.6)
	Mobility	“a proactive move to improve livelihoods and opportunities, and is typically voluntary and planned” (p.6)
Burton and Hodkinson (2009b)	Persons displaced by climate change	“persons forced to migrate, temporarily or permanently, as a consequence of global warming” (p.2)
Collins (2013)	Migrant	“those who have moved within a country or crossed an international border” (p.112)
	Displacement	“a particular form of migration where movement is forced against the will of the individual” (p.112)
Locke (2009)	Environmental migrant	“those who, for compelling reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are forced to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad” (p.172)

Displacement Solutions (2013)	Climate displacement	“the movement of people within the state due to the effects of climate change, including sudden and slow-onset environmental events and processes, occurring either alone or in combination with other factors” (p.16)
	Climate-displaced persons	“individuals, households or communities who are facing or experiencing climate displacement” (p.16)
UNHCR (2017)	Persons displaced in the context of disasters and climate change	The displacement of people, whether internally or across borders, driven by climate change (p.3)
European Parliament (2011)	Environmental migration	“includes all movement, which are mainly driven by an environmental factor, irrespective of whether these movements cross international borders or remain inside the country, whether they are of a voluntary or forced nature, or a combination of both categories” (p.17)
	Environmental migrants	“people who chose to move voluntarily from their usual place of residence primarily due to environmental concerns or reasons” (p.29)
	Environmental displacees	“people who are forced to leave their usual place of residence, because their lives, livelihoods and welfare have been placed at serious risk as a result of adverse environmental processes and events (natural and/or triggered by people” (p.29)
	Environmentally emergency migrants	“people who have to flee because of the rapidity of an environmental event in order to save their lives” (p.30)
Renaud et al. (2007)	Forced environmental migrant	“a person who ‘has’ to leave his/her place of normal residence because of an environmental stressor” (p.11)
	Environmentally motivated migrant	“a person who ‘may’ decide to move because of an environmental stressor” (p.12)
	Environmental refugee	People who “flee the worst and the displacement can either be temporary or permanent” (p.30)
Ferris (2012)	Forced displacement	“when the physical area they live is declared to be uninhabitable and they are told by their government that they can no longer live there” (p.8)
IOM (2014)	Environmental migrant	Persons “who, predominantly for reasons of sudden or progressive change in the environment that adversely affects their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad” (p.13)
	Environmentally displaced persons	“people who are displaced within their country of habitual residence or who have crossed an international border and for whom environmental degradation, deterioration or destruction is a major cause of their displacement, although not necessarily the sole one” (p.13)
Campbell (2014)	Climate-changed forced person	“those who have lost the land, livelihood and/or food security of their homeland to such an extent that it is no longer habitable” (p.11)

	Climate change-induced person	“those whose homeland has experienced effects of climate change that are partial or not severe (at least not yet) and who thus may have a choice between staying and leaving, or about who goes and who stays, with a subsequent reduction of ‘population pressure’ at the point of origin and the generation of remittances at the destination that can help offset climate-change losses at the origin” (p.11)
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Annex 3: Overview of terminologies used in this research

This annex clarifies the terms and definitions employed in this research, as listed below.

- Migration: although migration is considered by some authors as the economically-motivated form of mobility and the antithesis of displacement, it is considered here in a broad sense, encompassing all forms of mobility in relation to climate change. A migrant is perceived as a person undertaking some movement in relation to environmental degradation, although, contrary to the resettler, it entails a possible return to his home place.

- Relocation: “the permanent (or long-term) movement of a community (or a significant part of it) from one location to another (...). It infers that the community stays together at the destination in a social form that has some similarities to the community of origin” (Campbell et al., 2005:12). The term here implicitly refers to what authors called “planned” relocation.

- Resettlement: “a process to assist relocated persons to replace their housing, assets, livelihoods, land, access to resources and services; to maintain their communities; and to enhance, or at last restore their living standards” (McAdam and Ferris, 2015:141). The term ‘resettler’ designates those who undergo resettlement.

- Resilience: “the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions” (UNHCR, 2017:2)

- In situ adaptation: “adaptation in the place where environmental degradation and climate change effects occur” (IOM, 2014:18)

- Displacement: “a forced removal of a person from his or her home, or country” (IOM, 2014:11). This entails a notion of precipitous departure, unplanned and some degree of unconsent.

- Labor migration: “movement of persons from one state to another, or within their own country of residence, for the purpose of employment” (IOM, 2014:14). Although employment is listed as the principle driver for this type of movement, it is considered, for this research, that labor migration also holds an environmental push factor and some degree of strategic planning for adaptation to climate change.