

Conference Report

Dealing with Climate Change on Small Islands: Toward Effective and Sustainable Adaptation?

Date: July, 25-27, 2018

Venue: Schloss Herrenhausen, Hannover, Germany

To move to dangerous places - Squatter Settlements in Suva's coastal zone in the era of climate change

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Climate change has become one of the urgent challenges of the 21st century. A small but important part of the discourses around climate change is about mobility. This paper does not follow the question, if there is such thing as climate change induced mobility or migration. It reflects on possible motivations to migrate and to contradictions that are too obvious, but rarely seen.

Reflections about the relationship between environmental conditions and mobility did not start with climate change and its possible impacts. Already earlier agreement among social scientists existed that pollution and degradation of the (physical) environment can contribute to migration. Such common places, however, often lacked in conceptual depth especially in the questions of how such a relationship actually looked like.

Many argue that mobility in connection to climate change, natural hazards, or similar is to bring people to safety, or to support them in their own efforts to reach safe grounds. The deterioration of environmental quality or natural hazards can put people's well-being, lives and livelihoods at risk to an extent that they move away from dangerous places or as McAdam (2015) puts it from "danger zones".

However, how can we explain when people move right away to "danger zones" like it is happening in many squatter settlements in the Pacific Island region (and surely elsewhere)? Are people not aware that the locations are dangerous, do they not bother, or do they consciously chose such 'danger zones'?

The paper investigates vulnerability of people living in squatter settlements in Suva. It is expected that the intensity of such hazards as well as the frequency of their occurrence will increase as a result of climate change. It is therefore timely to investigate their impacts on vulnerable people and their agency to deal with such hazards. Hardly any research relating to climate change has been done in urban areas in the Pacific despite the fact that through urbanization an increasing share of population of Pacific Island countries are especially vulnerable to impacts of climate change.

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Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are particularly exposed to the adverse effects of global environmental and climate change. Climate change adaptation is therefore urgently needed. While SIDS are particularly suitable for studying adaptation policies and practices and hence receive growing academic and political attention, research is fragmentary and coping measures are inadequately documented, monitored and assessed.

To bring together cutting-edge research on climate change adaptation and to highlight gaps in knowledge and research in these fields a symposium had been organized in Hannover, Germany, from July 25 – 27, 2018. The topic was on Dealing with Climate Change on Small Islands - Toward Effective and Sustainable Adaptation?. The symposium had been organized by Dr Michael Fink and Dr Carola Kloeck from the University of Goettingen and the Volkswagen Foundation, which also provided the funds for the event. The event brought together world leading researchers on climate change adaptation in Pacific, Caribbean and Indian Ocean Islands.

The University of the South Pacific was represented by present members of staff (Dr Joeli Veitayaki, Dr Eberhard Weber), former staff members (Professor Patrick Nunn, Dr Jenny Bryant-Tokelau) as well as a big number of researchers, which had spent time at USP as Visiting Research Fellows (Dr Michael Fink, Dr Carola Kloeck, Professor Elfriede Hermann, Dr Wolfgang Kempf, Professor Silja Klepp, Dr Katharina Beyerl, Dr Carol Farbotko, Dr Virginie Duvat, and Dr Carsten Felgentreff, who brought a group of 15 Geography students to Fiji in September 2018). The importance of the symposium was stressed by the presence of H.E. Mr. Deo Saran, Ambassador of the Republic of Fiji in Brussels, who provided a very thoughtful presentation on Fiji's international role to strengthen climate change adaptation efforts.

The themes of the symposium focused on four different areas that are of particular relevance to islands: coastal management, extreme weather events, livelihood security, as well as migration and (im)mobility. Participants of the event agreed that the outcomes of the meeting were of very high quality and that a follow up in a few years would be essential. For now work on an edited volume with the major papers of the symposium.



Dealing with Climate Change on Small Islands: Toward Effective and Sustainable Adaptation?

3-day symposium funded by the Volkswagen Foundation

25–27 July, Schloss Herrenhausen, Hannover, Germany

PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME

Wednesday 25 July

2:15–2:30pm **welcome**

2:30–3:30pm **opening keynote speech**

“Barriers have two sides: The challenges of transformational adaptation in island contexts”

Patrick D. Nunn, Sustainability Research Centre, University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia

3:30–4:00pm coffee break

4:00–5:30pm **panel 1 : migration & (im)mobility**

“Climate change and the question of migration: Views from the Pacific Atoll State Kiribati”

Elfriede Hermann and Wolfgang Kempf, Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Göttingen, Germany

“Influence of extra-island connectedness on perceptions and narratives of environmental change on Takuu Atoll, PNG”

Anke Möisinger, Department of Social Sciences, Leibniz Center for Tropical Marine Ecology (ZMT), Germany

“Exploring the linkages between climate change and population movements: Lessons from Samoa”

Ximena Flores Palacios, Faculty of Culture and Society, Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand

“Voluntary immobility as adaptation”

Carol Farbotko, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), Australia

5:30–6:30pm **reception**

7:00pm dinner

Thursday 26 July

8:30–9:00am welcome coffee

9:00–10:30am **panel 2: livelihood security**

“Reception of knowledge vs. generation of practice: Ni-Vanuatu engage in adaptation to climate change”

Arno Pascht and Desirée Hetzel, Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Ludwig-Maximilian-University Munich, Germany

“The Lomani Gau initiative on Gau Island, Fiji”

Joeli Veitayaki, School of Marine Studies, University of the South Pacific, Fiji

“Traditional knowledge and climate change adaptation in the Pacific SIDS: Cases from Solomon Islands and Fiji”

Jenny Bryant-Tokalau, School of Maori, Pacific and Indigenous Studies, University of Otago, New Zealand

“Replanting the past for the future”

Joseph T. Mangi, Indigenous, Environment & Development Studies, School of Humanities, University of Goroka, Papua New Guinea

10:30–11:00am coffee break

11:00–12:30am **roundtable debate: linking science to climate change adaptation on the ground**

Horst M. Vogel, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, Saint Lucia

Lyndon F. Robertson, Environmental Health and Sustainable Development Department of the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA)

Tabea Lissner, Climate Analytics, Germany

John Twigg, Overseas Development Institute (ODI), United Kingdom

12:30–2:00pm lunch break

2:00–3:30pm **panel 3: extreme weather events**

“Extreme weather events in SIDS: Challenges to sustainable coping strategies among coastal communities of Fiji and Mauritius”

Stefano Moncada, Institute for European Studies and Islands and Small States Institute, University of Malta, Malta

“Perceptions of tropical cyclones in Mauritius as ‘extreme’ weather events and the importance of a *longue durée* approach for climate change adaptation”

Rory Walshe, Department of Geography, King’s College London, United Kingdom

“Are we sinking yet?: Measuring the effectiveness of climate change adaptation at the community level in SIDS“

Viliamu Iese, Pacific Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development (PaCE-SD), University of the South Pacific, Fiji

“Caribbean SIDS, justice and burden sharing dimensions of adaptation”

Michelle Scobie, Institute of International Relations, The University of the West Indies, Trinidad & Tobago

3:30–4:00pm coffee break

4:00–5:30pm **poster session**

“The cultural value of Conch: Barrier or potential for adaptation? A case study of Conch management on The Bahamas“

Lars Bombauer-Beins, Institute of Geography, University of Hamburg, Germany

“A critical approach to climate change adaptation: discourses, policies and practices in Kiribati”

Silja Klepp, Institute of Geography, University of Kiel, Germany

“Communicating marine and coastal climate change impacts to enable sustainable adaptation: Key findings and lessons learnt from the Pacific and Caribbean Regions”

Ella Howes, Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science, United Kingdom

“Adapting traditional exchange: the legislation of kula exchange in Papua New Guinea (PNG)”

Susanne Kuebling, Department of Anthropology, University of Regina, Canada

“Distributing scarce adaptation finance across SIDS: effectiveness not efficiency”

Christian Baatz, Department of Philosophy, University of Kiel, Germany

“Spiritualising climate change adaptation in Oceania”

Hannab Fair, Department of Geography, University College London, United Kingdom

“A non-secular anthropocene at the Sepik River in Papua New Guinea”

Christiane Falck, Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Göttingen, Germany

“Perceived effects of climate-related environmental changes for Tuvalu, Samoa and Tonga“

Katharina Beyerl, Institute of Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS), Germany

“Climate change perceptions of young Ni-Vanuatu”

Desirée Hetzel, Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Ludwig-Maximilian-University Munich, Germany

7:30pm dinner

Friday 27 July

8:30–9:00am welcome coffee

09:00–10:30am **panel 4 : coastal management**

“Lessons learnt from multi-decadal to centennial island and shoreline change studies for coastal adaptation in small islands: are nature-based solutions relevant?”

Virginie Duvat-Magnan, Institute of the Coast and the Environment, University of La Rochelle, France

“Adaptation appraisal, prioritization and costing techniques in SIDS”

Adelle Thomas, Climate Analytics and University of The Bahamas, Bahamas

“Urban squatter settlements in coastal zones”

Eberhard H. Weber, School of Geography, Earth Science and Environment, University of the South Pacific, Fiji

“Community participation and its potential for adaptive coastal protection”

Arne Hennig, Institute of Geography, University of Hamburg, Germany

10:30–11:00am coffee break

11:00–12:00am **closing keynote speech**

“The Importance of actors, gender and indigenous knowledge at varying scales in SIDS climate change adaptation”

Michelle Mycoo, Department of Geomatics Engineering and Land Management, University of the West Indies, Trinidad & Tobago

12:00–1:00pm **closing and next steps**

summary and reflection of workshop, discussion of next steps and future cooperation

1:00pm lunch