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Climate, Security and Peacebuilding: Challenges and Opportunities Across Scales

Workshop Report

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Introduction

On 27 and 28 October 2022, the Toda Peace Institute, Victoria University of Wellington – Te Herenga Waka and IOM hosted a workshop under the title of 'Climate, Security and Peacebuilding: Challenges and Opportunities Across Scale**s'** in Wellington, New Zealand.[1]

In line with previous workshops that the Toda Peace Institute has (co-)organised on issues of climate change, conflict and peace in the Pacific in Auckland in 2018, in Tokyo in 2019, and in Suva/online in 2020, this workshop brought together academics, policymakers and

[1] The workshop was attended by around 50 policymakers, practitioners and academics, from the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and other New Zealand government institutions, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Pacific Island Forums Secretariat and other regional organisations, churches and civil society organisations, from universities in New Zealand, Australia, Fiji and Hawaii, and peacebuilding organisations working with local communities. It was co-organised by the Toda Peace Institute, Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University of Wellington and IOM, supported by MFAT and Toda's partner organisations Conciliation Resources, as well as its partners in Fiji: Transcend Oceania, Pacific Centre for Peacebuilding, Pacific Conference of Churches, and Pacific Theological College.

practitioners from New Zealand, Australia, the USA, Fiji and other Pacific Island Countries, as well as representatives of international organisations and donor agencies, to explore the conflict-prone effects of climate change and discuss options for conflict-sensitive and peace-supportive climate and security policies.

The Wellington workshop addressed challenges and opportunities across scales, from the local to the international, acknowledging that the effects of climate change generate challenges to peace and security across multiple scales and dimensions of societal life, from the everyday security of community members in rural environments to geo-political stability in regional-international contexts. Moreover, these effects and challenges are interconnected – local developments can have national, regional and even international consequences, and decisions taken in far-away capital cities of major powers can have consequences for the everyday lives of people in the local context.

The workshop explored these interconnections with a regional focus on the Pacific, and with a thematic focus on the climate–mobility–conflict/peace nexus.

As Kevin Clements,[2] Director of the Toda Peace Institute, explained at the start of the workshop, it was to provide a safe space for respectful dialogue – dialogue across cultural difference, across scales, and across the realms of state institutions, regional organisations, civil society, academia, and grassroots communities. Such dialogue, which acknowledges and harnesses the diversity of worldviews and approaches, enables mutual understanding as the basis for forging partnerships for inclusive collaboration.

The theme of respectful dialogue was taken up by Aotearoa New Zealand's Minister of Foreign Affairs Nanaia Mahuta who, in her opening remarks, stressed the importance of deep listening for building relationships and partnerships, using the example of her visit to the Cook Islands earlier in the year when she learned first-hand about the effects of climate change for communities and about the existential dilemma confronting the people: they want to stay in their home villages, but they might have to relocate sooner or later due to the climate emergency. This dilemma became a core topic in the workshop discussions – discussions which were guided by the Minister's advice to 'fill the basket of knowledge' by weaving together 'Western' science and research and traditional Pacific knowledges, the knowledge of the grassroots as well as the knowledge of academics and policymakers.

Taking up the threads spun by Minister Mahuta, Winnie Laban, Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Pasifika) of Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University of Wellington, reminded workshop participants that it was the Fiji delegation at COP 23 in Bonn, Germany, in 2017 who introduced the wisdom of talanoa[3]—sharing stories with respect—into the international climate change discourse. Laban furthermore challenged the big external powers which attempt to reduce Pacific Island Countries (PICs) to pawns in their game of geostrategic

[2] Apart from the first session, the workshop was conducted under Chatham House rules. Therefore, names are given only for contributions from that first session, but not for the presentations and discussions that followed.

[3] Talanoa is a Fijian term that derives from the word tala (talking or telling stories) and the word noa (without concealment). Talanoa "refers to a respectful way to conduct dialogue in Fijian (and other identity) communities. It is group-based and processual. Talanoa aims to promote relational development and is key to how negotiations take place."

chess and praised PICs' ongoing struggles to re-focus politics on climate change, based on the insight—formulated in the Pacific Islands Forum Boe Declaration on Regional Security from 2018, and oftentimes repeated since—that climate change is "the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of the peoples of the Pacific."

Grounded in the diversity of worldviews, experiences and perspectives present at the workshop, participants explored how this 'single greatest threat' translates into challenges across scales, and how these challenges can be addressed through collaboration across scales, with a focus on the climate–mobility–conflict/peace nexus, addressing issues such as: the definition of (un)inhabitability, the spectrum of mobility between the poles of forced (displacement) and voluntary (migration), the inextricable land/people connection (the vanua), the conflictual implications of different types of mobility (migration, relocation, displacement – internal, circular, international, immobilities), the legacy of colonial injustices, the combination of climate injustice and mobility injustice, climate migrants as 'wronged parties' (and not as 'refugees' or 'victims'), experiences of a community engagement talanoa approach to community relocation, migration pathways and Pacific diaspora in Aotearoa New Zealand, historical relocations, a Pacific regional framework on climate mobility, the duty of assistance at the international level.

The purpose of this Summary Report is not to summarise all these topics and document the proceedings of the workshop in detail. Rather, based on the presentations and discussions in the various sessions, it aims to identify the key issue areas and focus on selected findings and insights.

Acronyms

EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
GHG	greenhouse gases
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
PCCM-HS	Pacific Climate Change Migration and Human Security Programme
PICs	Pacific Island Countries
PIF	Pacific Island Forum
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

The Right to Stay and the Need for a Plan B

The science is clear: Man-made climate change is happening, it is accelerating, with the most vulnerable people and regions disproportionately affected. This includes the Pacific and PICs, where tropical cyclones are intensifying, rainfalls and flooding are heavier and droughts are more frequent and last longer, ecosystems are damaged (e.g., coral reef degradation), and sea level rise and associated effects (coastal erosion and inundation, salt water intrusion etc.) pose an existential long-term problem. All this puts economic, social and political stability under severe stress, and it has negative impacts on human health and on water and food security, as well as on livelihoods and habitat security. As a consequence, new conflicts can emerge or existing conflicts can be enhanced, and peace and security are threatened.

In the Pacific, the findings of climate science are corroborated by the everyday experience of the people on the ground. They can tap into a treasure trove of deep and comprehensive traditional knowledge about nature, the environment and the climate, accumulated over generations. This enables them to identify the climate change-induced environmental changes that deeply affect their everyday lives. For them, the science data just confirm what they see and know – they observe and experience higher tides, storm surges, coastal erosion, flooding, saltwater intrusion, changing rainfall and wind patterns. In line with the findings of science and local knowledge, the Pacific Island Forum at its meeting in July 2022 declared a 'climate emergency' for the Pacific region.

The immensity of this emergency was made clear by Simon Kofe, Minister for Justice, Communications and Foreign Affairs of Tuvalu, in his keynote address at the workshop. The small island/big ocean nation of Tuvalu is being battered by the effects of climate change, but at the same time its government and people are also at the forefront of innovative thought and action when it comes to addressing the climate emergency, both at home and internationally. Minister Kofe explained the various in situ climate change adaptation projects his government is undertaking, for example, to physically raise the islands. But he also acknowledged the need for a 'Plan B' for the worst case: that Tuvalu might become fully submerged by the sea or become uninhabitable well before total inundation, e.g., due to unbearable food and water insecurity. This would mean that Tuvaluans would have to relocate elsewhere.

The Tuvalu government's Future Now Project addresses the implications of this worst case scenario, raising fundamental—and fundamentally new—legal and political questions such as: can a country maintain its statehood if its territory has been submerged or its population had to resettle elsewhere?, can it keep its maritime zones?, and is it possible to rebuild Tuvalu as a 'digital nation', without a physical territory?

Minister Kofe presented two avenues for addressing these questions: (1) to re-interpret existing international law and state practice in ways that take note of the fundamental climate emergency-induced changes and thus allow retention of statehood and maritime zones, (2) and/or to change the international law framework to accommodate those changes. In any case, for Tuvalu and countries in a similar situation, the "key question is whether there is sufficient political will in the international community to positively

interpret existing, and any emerging, legal principles and concepts to ensure continued statehood, or at least legal personality, and to incorporate them into workable legal norms and action plans" (Costi 2020, 151).

The aim is to make sure that Tuvalu can continue to exist as a state and maintain its sovereignty—and keep its maritime entitlements—even if it loses its physical territory or the entire population and the government have to relocate.[4] Tuvalu would then become a de-territorialised state, with a population and government ex situ, but it would continue to exist as a sovereign nation. For this case, Minister Kofe developed the concept of Tuvalu as a 'digital nation' – Tuvalu 2.0., with a digital government administrative system, with digitized historical documents, records of cultural practices etc.

Even if Tuvalu is a special case, several of the issues raised by Minister Kofe in his keynote address figured prominently in the discussions of the workshop. The question arises, for example, how developed states, in particular the developed states of the 'Pacific family' (Australia and New Zealand are members of the Pacific Island Forum, the regional organisation for the Blue Continent), respond to the plight of the people in Tuvalu and elsewhere in the Pacific. Are they willing to open their borders for people who have to leave their homes due to the effects of climate change, beyond currently existing labour migration schemes (which do not explicitly acknowledge climate-driven migration and which are mainly based on the economic interests of Australia and New Zealand)? At the workshop, representatives of the Australian and New Zealand governments pointed to the lack of reliable data on climate mobility and the need for a regional approach, and they posited that enabling people to stay in their home communities and maintain their communal way of life should be given priority. They also stressed the need for genuine dialogue, with an openness to listening to and learning from the directly affected people, and they acknowledged the need for international/regional collaboration and locally driven bottom-up partnerships.

At the workshop, there was consensus that people have a right to stay in their places of origin and everything has to be done to make this possible. But there was also agreement that climate change-induced mobility, in the form of migration, relocation and displacement, is a reality today and that it will become an even more pressing issue in the future, with conflict-prone consequences.

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[4] The Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States (1933/1934), which is the authoritative source for the definition of statehood in international law, gives the following four criteria for being a state: a permanent population, a defined territory, a government, and the capacity to enter into relations with other states. In the worst case, Tuvalu might lose its territory and/or its permanent population. It can be argued, however, that the Montevideo Convention definition only deals with the recognition of new states, while the prospect of a country losing its permanent population or territory due to climate change is a fundamentally new development which needs a new approach to the issue; the expectation is that the international community of states would in this case see the recognition of a state as irrevocable and would not cease to recognise the statehood of a state which already exists even if that state loses its territory and/or population. In fact, international law as it stands today does not suggest that already existing states would become extinct if they would lose certain indicia of statehood. And at the end of the day, statehood is attributed by states recognising states – hence it is a fundamentally political question (Costi 2020). A similar argument applies to the issue of maritime entitlements. At present, a state's right to maritime zones, in particular its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), depends on the physical existence of a populated land territory (that is why rocks or islands that cannot sustain human habitation do not entitle the right to an EEZ). But again, this rule can also be altered in order to bring international law in line with the new realities emerging with climate change.

Various Types of Climate Mobility

When taking stock of types of climate mobility, this can be done along different sets of criteria (Campbell 2022). One can differentiate between migration, relocation and displacement; between forced, induced and voluntary mobility; between internal and international mobility; and between permanent, temporary or circular mobility.

For example, individual or family migration within a country (mostly from outer islands or rural areas to urban centres) can be induced by certain environmental effects of climate change, e.g., coastal erosion or salt water intrusion, which in turn affect land and water security so that people decide to move, expecting that the situation at home will worsen in the future – and hoping for a better life in the city, which also includes the expectation of better access to services, such as education or health, or employment opportunities in the formal sector of the economy. Such migration is not forced, but it is also not entirely voluntary; it is induced by the effects of climate change (as push factors), but also has other aspects to it (pull factors of life in the city).

A different case is international labour migration to countries like New Zealand or Australia, which is temporary or circular. This can be seen as voluntary. However, deteriorating living conditions at home due to certain effects of climate change might have contributed to the decision to go overseas, and the remittances sent home can be used to improve life there, and this might also include contributing to in situ climate change adaptation measures. Another form of international mobility is permanent migration to another country. This mostly is caused by a combination by various push and pull factors, and climate change might be among those.

Displacement in the aftermath of a devastating tropical cyclone is a completely different case altogether. It is definitely forced, it is mostly internal, and it is temporary – people usually return to their original place of residence once houses and infrastructure etc. have been repaired or rebuilt.

Finally, there is planned relocation of entire communities, or significant parts of communities. Planned relocation is presented as a form of adaptation, in order to avoid forced displacement later, and with the additional benefit of improving the livelihoods of relocated people. Numbers of communities which have relocated, are relocating or are planning to relocate are growing. This type of climate mobility today is internal, mostly short distance, on the community's own lands or to the lands of neighbouring communities or to freehold (state, church…) land. It might be forced if the home area has become uninhabitable or even totally inundated, but more often it is induced, with the community having experienced or experiencing serious negative effects of climate change and expecting aggravating problems in the future. So that when weighing the pros and cons of staying or moving, the decision is taken to relocate. Of course, the means to do so (financial, technical etc.) have to be available. If they are not, the community will have to stay despite the climate change-related dangers, and despite the intention to relocate. This then is forced immobility. Not to forget, however, that immobility can also be voluntary: people do not want to leave their homes even in the face of severe and aggravating negative effects of climate change (see below 'Who Defines (Un)Inhabitability). Experiences with planned

relocation are mixed. There can be gaps between the promise of improved environmental security and of improved livelihoods at relocation sites and the reality relocated people are confronted with: problems with the suitability of the site, with housing and infrastructure, loss of traditional economic activities (e.g., fishing when moving from the coast inland) and most importantly loss of connection to ancestral land (see below 'The Vanua'). To present relocation as adaptation without caveats therefore is problematic.

All these different types of climate mobility are conflict-prone, associated with different types of conflict (Campbell 2022). While it is highly unlikely that there will be wars or large scale international or domestic violent conflicts caused by the climate emergency, there is conflict and violence in the local and everyday context, e.g., conflicts between and within communities over scarce and diminishing natural resources, in particular land (or water or fish).

These conflicts often occur between relocating and recipient/host communities, in particular in the context of real or perceived inequalities, e.g., when relocated people are provided with better houses than the locals, or when the newcomers are denied certain opportunities or rights, e.g., fishing rights. Moreover, agreements between relocated and recipient communities are often verbal and thus open to interpretation, and these interpretations may change over time, e.g., when those who originally made the agreement have died and the successor generation does not feel bound to it. Conflicts between relocating and recipient communities even have led to re-relocation of people who had relocated. The process of relocation itself is also conflict-prone, with conflicts between communities and state institutions (and donors financing relocation) with regard to planning, decision-making, implementation and follow-up.

There are also conflicts in the informal settlements of urban centres between communities which have moved in from different rural areas or different islands, particularly against the background of poverty and competition over access to employment and services. These informal settlements are also the site of relatively high levels of domestic and gender-based violence, which is also high in the aftermath of extreme weather events like cyclones and ensuing displacement. And there is racism and racially motivated violence against—permanent or temporary—migrants from the Pacific in destination countries (Australia, New Zealand, the USA…).

Furthermore, there are various forms of (structural, cultural, epistemological) violence which are not visible, but (can) have a massive impact on the wellbeing and security of people who (have to) migrate or relocate due to the effects of climate change. In fact, these non-visible forms of violence which impact on human, ecological, ontological and relational security seem to be at least as significant and devastating in the Pacific as forms of direct physical violence. Accordingly, they figured prominently in the deliberations of the workshop (see below 'The Vanua').

Climate Mobility – Local, Regional, International

The workshop addressed all the above-mentioned different types of climate mobility, with some types given more attention than others. One focus was on planned relocation of rural communities (Campbell 2022). Planned relocation as a response to the effects of the climate emergency has become a major issue in several PICs. It is very important in Fiji (Benge and Neef 2021), where the government has identified 48 communities as being in urgent need of relocation, while 830 communities are assessed as being so vulnerable as requiring relocation in the future. Furthermore, the Fiji government released Planned Relocation Guidelines in 2018 and is in the process of elaborating Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for relocation.

Several civil society and peacebuilding organisations in Fiji (Transcend Oceania, Pacific Centre for Peacebuilding, Pacific Conference of Churches, and others) have worked with or are currently working with communities which have relocated or are planning to relocate. Transcend Oceania (TO) has supported the communities of Vunidogoloa, Vunisavisavi and Naviavia and, based on its experiences, has elaborated, together with its partner organisation Conciliation Resources, guidelines for a community engagement approach to relocation. TO's approach stresses the importance of the concept of talanoa (see above) for relationship building, participatory research, sense making and analysis, and community-led peacebuilding action. TO posits that the communities have to be put front and centre in relocation, from planning and decision-making through implementation to post-relocation monitoring. Relocation cannot be seen and carried out as just a one-off event; rather, it is a lengthy non-linear complex process. To have a chance of success, it has to be all-inclusive and holistic, taking into consideration different views and experiences along the lines of gender and age, and incorporating not only material, technical, economic, social and political aspects, but also culture and spirituality. In particular, cultural appropriateness and harnessing indigenous traditional local knowledge were found to be crucial for the success of planned community relocation (Transcend Oceania [2022]; see also Conciliation Resources 2021).

Another focus of the workshop was on international migration and the experiences of diaspora communities. Case studies about the situation of migrants from Tuvalu and Kiribati in Aotearoa New Zealand demonstrated the agency of people on the move, with climate mobility presented as journey of the *te wa* or *te vaka moana* (ocean-going canoe) across the waters of the Pacific which do not separate, but connect, people (Yates et al. 2022). Problems are posed by national borders which, as workshop participants were reminded, are an invention of colonial times. These borders restrict migration pathways to certain types (in the case of New Zealand the Pacific Access Category (PAC) and the Recognised Seasonal Employer scheme (RSE)), and render other forms of migration 'irregular' or 'illegal'. This has serious limiting effects on the possibilities of climate change-induced international mobility. Moreover, problems arise in recipient countries where migrants are all too often confronted with prejudices, racism, disadvantage and various forms of low-scale everyday violence. Maintaining dignity and agency under such conditions is a major challenge, not least for the younger generation whose connections to the culture and customs of their homelands are fragile anyway.

It is obvious that against the contemporary reality of nation states and national boundaries, and against the reality of the transboundary regional and international effects of climate change, the regional–international level is of particular importance for addressing the climate–mobility–conflict/peace nexus. The workshop heard about several initiatives at that level, steered by regional organisations such as the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat, the Pacific Climate Change Centre, and the regional branches of UN institutions, e.g., UNDP or IOM. A challenge is to bring together the different approaches which engage with varying policy levels, address distinct, but overlapping themes, and deal with different time horizons, e.g., the '2050 Strategy of the Blue Pacific Continent', the 'Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific' and its associated 'Pacific Resilience Partnership'. In the context of the workshop, the elaboration of a 'Regional Framework on Climate Related Mobility' is of particular interest and particularly promising. Its purpose is to guide Pacific governments in planning for and managing climate mobility. Work on the framework, which is organised by the Pacific Climate Change Migration and Human Security Programme (PCCM-HS), does not only include governments, but also academics and a broad range of civil society actors, not least the churches as the most influential civil society organisations in the Pacific. Although the programme tries to be as inclusive and participatory as possible, it remains a challenge to bring together a broad variety of actors from different scales, with different histories, interests and agendas for joint planning, decision-making and implementation of policies and strategies. There is still an urgent need to increase the understanding of the climate–mobility nexus in the region.

Who Defines (Un)Inhabitability?

A major debate at the workshop revolved around the concept of (un)inhabitability. In extreme circumstances, leaving one's home (island, village…) can become the only option because that home becomes uninhabitable; in such a situation migration becomes forced. The question, however, is: who defines this moment or situation (Farbotko and Campbell 2022)? Whether a location is declared (un)inhabitable and people therefore may stay or have to relocate, is a highly contested political question. The answer does not merely depend on 'objective' scientific data; rather, (un)inhabitability is socially and culturally constructed, comprising not only material, but also non-material (social, cultural, spiritual) aspects. To declare a site 'uninhabitable' can become a self-fulfilling prophecy; it can be used to legitimise giving up on in situ adaptation. It could let donors off the hook with regard to financing such in situ adaptation with the argument that people have to relocate anyway, or donors and funding agencies might use the argument of uninhabitability in order to promote relocation because in situ adaptation would be financially more costly. [5]

This shows that the island–vulnerability and climate–mobility discourses affect and can shape realities on the ground. Once the talk about existential threats, vulnerability, precarity, inevitable uninhabitability and the need to relocate has taken over, it can become

[5] Taken even further, the uninhabitability argument could be used as an excuse by 'developed' nations—that is: the major greenhouse gas (GHG) emitters responsible for the Pacific climate emergency—to give up on mitigation measures, arguing that people from Tuvalu and elsewhere will have to leave their homes anyway, given the already locked-in effects of climate change.

politically so powerful that it creates its own reality, and people indeed (are forced to) move from homes declared 'uninhabitable'. "Relocation programmes, once started, take on powerful momentum" (Farbotko and Campbell 2022, 188). But relocation sites, on the other hand, can be perceived as also being 'uninhabitable' by those forced to relocate – because relocation negatively affects their place-based ontological, or relational, security, their culture and identity, or because their new neighbours in recipient communities harass and attack them. Far from being a 'solution', relocation can bring about more hardship, pain and conflict.

Scientific approaches to (un)inhabitability exclude the non-material, culturally, cosmologically and socially specific aspects of habitability which are grounded in everyday life and customs of island communities and which shape local traditional knowledge, cosmologies, belief systems and relational worldviews. (Un)inhabitability is not just determined by the presence or absence of certain material conditions (Farbotko and Campbell 2022). And this is why local discourses of—voluntary—immobility are gaining traction in the Pacific. People decide to stay put even if material conditions worsen, because intangible factors—the spiritual connections to place, to the ancestors, to the other-than-human elements of community (animals, spirits, trees, rivers, rocks, unborn generations …) —matter more than just those deteriorating material conditions. This relatedness, this eco-relationality (Vaai 2019), lies behind the frequently heard statement by Pacific Islanders that they would rather die on their home islands than move elsewhere. For them, their village home is a site not only of personal, but also of ancestral, intergenerational and spiritual belonging and the prospect of having to abandon the burial sites of their ancestors is the biggest obstacle to relocation.

Instead of outsiders—politicians or scientists—defining and determining (un)inhabitability, the decision about habitability or uninhabitability, about staying or leaving, has to remain with the people who are directly affected. For them as the subjects of an "existential threat discourse associated with sea level rise risk, habitability does not involve only material elements of human security, but rather is relational to specific cultures, cosmologies and relationships to land"; they "must be accorded the right to have their experience and knowledge of habitability—and their perceived thresholds of habitability—central to science, law, policy and planning that seeks to address sea level rise risk" and any other effects of the climate emergency (Farbotko and Campbell 2022, 189).

In situ adaptation, whenever possible grounded in customary local practices, should be the preferred option. It is more empowering and just and poses less threats to the ontological security of people. This does not exclude certain types of mobility, in particular temporal and circular migration, taking into account the long history of mobility of Pacific Islanders. For them, connection to place and mobility are not mutually exclusive, but integral aspects of being in the world. Currently existing migration patterns, both internal (rural–urban, but also urban–rural, e.g., during the COVID crisis) and international (e.g., circular labour migration) are a continuation of ancestral mobilities and draw on customary practices. They are part of everyday life, and they allow for the maintenance of strong attachments to the place of origin, to the home island or village.

The Vanua

Closely linked to the (un)inhabitability topic is the topic of the land/people connection in a Pacific societal and cultural context. This was another focus of the workshop, taking the implications of climate change and climate mobility for human rights and human security as a starting point. It became clear that the specific framing of the climate–mobility–conflict/peace nexus is important because it has significant political consequences. For example, framing of climate migrants as a threat to national security, amplified by sensationalist reporting in the media about 'climate refugees', can lead to oppressive and exclusionary anti-immigration policies, closing national borders against future 'waves' of such 'climate refugees'.[6] Against such securitisation of the discourse, linking climate change, mobility and human—instead of national—security can open up a counter-narrative which focuses attention on the importance of localisation, prevention, protection and empowerment (Westbury 2022). The concept of human security, however, has to be contextualised, it has to be aligned with the lived experience of Pacific Islanders, and it has to be grounded in their needs and worldviews. In other words: the question what human security is from a Pacific perspective has to be unpacked, e.g., perhaps shifting its focus from the individual to the communal.

It can even be argued that human security as a Western concept which deals with human beings as individuals in a compartmentalised and disconnected way, and with human society as separated from nature and the environment, does not go far enough and does not adequately acknowledge the inextricable land/people connection which is the basis of being and knowing in Pacific cultures. An alternative to, or expansion of, human security would be a relational 'whole-of-life' approach (Vaai 2019).

Such a 'whole of life' approach, the idea of an all-embracing network of life, does not have the human being in isolation at its centre, but understands human beings and human society relationally, in relation to other-than-human beings, both in the material and spiritual worlds (Vaai 2019). It is grounded in indigenous Pacific ways of knowing and being in the world. It takes human beings not as isolated 'individuals', but as members of communities, defined through their—not only rational, but also affective and spiritual—relationships (Boege 2020).

And it does not see humans as 'the crown of creation', but as embedded in a network of relations of reciprocal exchange with other life forms. Accordingly, nature is understood not as separated from human society, as a resource that can be exploited and degraded; rather, human beings and human society are seen as inextricably interconnected with the natural world. Cartesian dualism and extractive attitudes towards nature do not fit into this 'whole of life' approach, nor do concepts of land as 'property'.

In the context of such an approach, the rights and security of people and the rights of nature are interconnected – they are inseparable. For in Pacific worldviews, people, land, and the

[6] Interestingly enough, well-meaning humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors seem to be tempted to also use such an alarmist narrative in order to raise awareness about climate vulnerabilities and to demand more support and more funding for adaptation or domestic resettlement.

environment are one: the vanua/banua/fenua/fonua/honua/whenua/'aina//enua/te aba [7] is land/people – land is an extension of the people, and the people are an extension of the land. This land/people identity is reflected not only in Pacific languages, but also in the widespread custom of burying the umbilical cord of a newborn in the soil of the place of birth (or burying one part of it, and devoting the other part to the sea), thus confirming the connection between the person and the land(/sea).

Against the background of this land/people interconnectedness, it becomes clear why it is so difficult and so important to maintain the tie to the land after migration, relocation or displacement. As fundamentally place-based, the ontological (Boege 2022), or relational (Farbotko and Campbell 2022), security of people is under threat when they are forced to move, especially when there is no option of return because their place of origin has become uninhabitable even from their own perspective, or it has disappeared completely.[8] Security for Pacific Islanders is inextricably linked to land as the place of origin and space of relational interconnectedness, imbued with meanings and relations – including spiritual meanings and relations. The spiritual dimension, which is notoriously underestimated by Western 'enlightened' approaches, is of major importance in a Pacific Islands environment. Here, "there is no security without spiritual security" (Vaai 2019, 7).

Ontological, relational security, rooted in the connections to place, also allows for mobility, and mobility does not put emplaced security in danger – provided that mobility is voluntary, on one's own terms, and provided there is a place one can return to, a 'home' to go back to, that is: provided that the vanua, the land/people connection, is intact. The fundamentally new situation which comes with the multiple effects of climate change is that the option of returning home is under threat. One cannot go back home to a sunken island or a coastal area which has become uninhabitable. This poses the ultimate challenge to emplaced security: the prospect of being forced to leave the space one belongs to in an all-encompassing relational way, without the option of going back. Historically, connections to the place of origin, the place of one's ancestors, could be maintained also for those who had gone away, because there were people back home who preserved the place/space for all the members of the community, including those not currently present; however, this might no longer be possible in the future. And this might fundamentally shatter ontological,

[7] These similar sounding words describe the land/people connection in different Pacific languages. Vanua in Fiji or fenua in Tuvalu mean both 'land' and 'people' (Campbell 2019). And in Samoan, the "word for placenta (fanua) that holds the unborn baby in the womb of a mother is the same as the word for land and community" (Vaai 2019, 10).

[8] The concept of ontological security was elaborated in the context of Western Social Psychology and Sociology and later also introduced into International Relations and Peace and Conflict Studies. With its focus on dimensions beyond the material realm of security and on the importance of place/space for security, it offers a valuable explanatory frame for understanding the climate–mobility–conflict/peace nexus and a significant link to Pacific ways of thinking about security (Farbotko 2019; Boege 2022). However, as conceptualised in the context of Western rational academic thought, with its focus on 'the individual'/ the 'self' as a discrete entity in a substantialist and compartmentalised manner, it does not fit with Pacific non-dualistic and non-substantialist ontologies and epistemologies with their communal, spiritual and relational underpinnings. This is why Farbotko and Campbell (2022) propose use of the term relational security in the Pacific societal and cultural context.

relational security, with catastrophic social, cultural and psychological consequences – loss of meaning, loss of relationships, loss of socio-cultural context, loss of purpose in life.

And this is why the assessment of (un)inhabitability from the perspective of the local people and from the perspective of scientific data might differ. Staying in places that are deemed (close to being) uninhabitable from a material point of view, can nevertheless provide for ontological, relational security, while moving to places with better material conditions can result in fundamental insecurity. To tackle such insecurity caused by forced mobility necessitates the maintenance of cultural practices that can reaffirm connection to land even when people are physically far away. Or, to put it the other way round: the question is how to maintain ontological, relational security under conditions of climate mobility.

Simon Kofe's idea of the 'digital nation', of 'Tuvalu 2.0', is an attempt to respond to this question – although one can have doubts whether this answer would actually work: Can you have 'Tuvalu' (with its custom and culture, in its spiritual dimension) when the physical territory of the islands of Tuvalu does not exist anymore or has become uninhabitable? Creating a digital twin of Tuvalu in the metaverse, with the recreation of territory, culture, and sovereignty might be technologically possible (albeit not without problems), but is it possible to maintain the fenua, the land/people connection, with all its deep spiritual meanings? One might be able to keep heritage and culture as a virtual museum, but to maintain in the metaverse the ontological place-based security that comes with the land/people connection is a totally different thing altogether. Hence perhaps it is best to interpret Kofe's initiative as a provocation, to enhance moral pressure on the main GHG emitters to do more in terms of mitigation so as to make it possible to keep Tuvalu in the real world.

The issue of non-economic loss and damage comes into sharp focus in this context: loss and damage for Pacific Islanders goes far beyond physical, material, economic loss. Non-economic cultural, mental, spiritual loss and damage that comes with the destruction of one's home and ensuing forced displacement, relocation and migration is even more important, because it fundamentally challenges the ontological, relational security of the affected people which is closely connected to land as imbued with cultural and spiritual meaning and relations. There can be no actual 'adequate' monetary compensation for this type of loss and damage. Such loss and damage cannot be measured and cannot be compensated in monetary terms in fair and adequate ways. This is not to say that major GHG emitters should not be responsible for compensation (surely compensation for material quantifiable loss and damage in order to alleviate the devastating material physical effects of climate change), but to stress the point that the climate emergency has caused and is causing devastation in dimensions that are hard to understand, or willingly ignored, by the major GHG emitters who at the same time dominate the mainstream climate change discourse with their 'Western' secular approaches.

Climate (Im)Mobility: Problem or Solution (or Both)?

The workshop deliberations made it clear that migration is not necessarily an alternative to in situ adaptation, or a measure of last resort, but can also be an element in an integrated adaptation strategy (Campbell 2022). Labour migration in particular can contribute to adaptation at home via remittances. But it also has 'brain drain' and the loss of particularly able and active community members as its problematic side. To sustain the resilience of communities losing such members to labour migration poses serious challenges.

Moreover, there is a problem with the 'migration as climate adaptation' argument more generally. It presents climate migrants as agents of their own destiny and thus is used to not speak about the responsibilities of the major GHG emitters and about climate justice. In typical neoliberal fashion, responsibility is loaded upon the people who have to move, under the guise of their 'agency', at the same time refusing to give them rights; they are not recognised as a distinct type of migrant who are entitled to specific rights. The result of this neoliberal framing of migration as a form of adaptation is the combination of climate injustice and mobility injustice (Benge and Neef 2021, 2022).

At the same time, presenting people merely as 'victims' of climate change, as is the case with the 'climate refugees' discourse, has its own problems too. It denies people agency and makes them to mere objects of others' policies – be it anti-immigration policies of states or humanitarian aid of international civil society organisations.

A way out of this dichotomy of thinking of people who move due to the effects of the climate emergency as either 'climate victims' or as 'climate adaptive agents', is to think of them as 'wronged parties' or 'rights-holders'. Such an understanding implies the acceptance of responsibility of the major GHG emitters who have wronged those people on the move, and acknowledges the right of the wronged people who are owed redress, e.g., by opening borders to them or by financial assistance for climate migration (Benge and Neef 2022). In practical political terms this could mean, for example, amending New Zealand's PAC and RSE (and similar schemes in Australia) so as to also cater for climate migration, opening additional formal pathways to climate mobility, and not least granting amnesty to 'irregular' migrants. In other words: to make navigation with dignity possible by providing a place to land for the canoe of the climate migrants. This necessitates considerable changes to the current climate change 'legal ecosystem', which does not provide meaningful protection to people displaced by climate change. Currently, they enjoy only limited legal protection and have only limited access to justice and remedies. To change this for the better, concerted efforts are needed to procure a framework that protects the human rights of people affected by the climate emergency. It has to be based on a 'duty to assist' states and people in need, with those countries most responsible for the climate emergency as primary duty bearers.

Such a line of argument is supported by introducing historical depth into the debate. The legacy of colonial injustices must not be forgotten. This legacy was mentioned at the workshop numerous times and in various contexts, e.g., with regard to colonial-era relocations which left the relocated people in uncertain and often miserable conditions, or the drawing of boundaries by colonial masters – boundaries which now prevent people from moving freely across the Blue Continent. In fact, the current climate emergency is

perceived by Pacific Islanders to a considerable degree as the neo-colonial continuation of the injustices of the colonial past.

Acknowledging climate migrants as rights-holders has to encompass both the rights associated with moving, and the right to stay, that is climate mobility and climate immobility. Voluntary immobility in the face of the climate emergency deserves much more attention than is currently the case (so far, the focus has been mainly on involuntary immobility, the so-called trapped populations) (Campbell 2022).

Those who stay and those who move can support each other. The immobile community members who want to stay in their ancestral homes provide the connection to place, also for those who choose to leave, while those who migrate provide different forms of support (e.g., remittances) from abroad for the communities at home.

Finally, one has to keep in mind that the overwhelming majority of people who move due to the effects of the climate emergency, migrate, are relocated or are displaced within the boundaries of their own country. Movement is mainly short distance, on one's own land (e.g., from the coast a bit further inland and up) or to neighbouring rural communities, or it is migration from outer islands and rural areas to urban centres. And if it is international mobility at all, it is mostly intra-regional and to neighbouring countries, following pre-existing historical routes and ties, building on existing networks of family and kin relations.

Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

The discussions at the Wellington workshop were imbued with the spirit of talanoa, the spirit of listening and sharing stories, as suggested by Winnie Laban, and they contributed to 'filling the basket of knowledge', as expected by New Zealand's Foreign Minister Mahuta.

The dialogical character of the workshop, storytelling and listening, made it a very special event. Vertical dialogue between communities and governments, horizontal dialogue between communities in various stages of relocation, in various localities, even between stakeholders from different countries and world regions, comparative learning, weaving together different worldviews, ontologies and epistemologies were seen as indispensable for addressing the challenges and opportunities of the climate–mobility–security/peacebuilding nexus in a multi-faceted, relational and holistic manner. Affected communities have to be put front and centre, be it with regard to decisions about (un)inhabitability and relocation, and be it with regard to finances for adaptation and for loss and damage. The strength and agency of communities, grounded in their physical and spiritual connection to land (and sea and sky), their own mechanisms of (resource) governance and conflict resolution, their traditional knowledge, their ontologies and ethics, are all too often overlooked or marginalised in the mainstream climate change, security and peacebuilding discourse. Instead, it is necessary to reconceptualise who 'the experts' are – not primarily external scientists, development workers and peacebuilders, but the knowledge holders of the affected communities and their local supporters from the churches and other civil society organisations on the ground. External actors can provide the space and resources for horizontal exchange of experiences of those local stakeholders

and for comparative learning. But these external actors, including donors, will have to let go of control, they will have to think of accountability not in terms of bureaucratic structures and procedures, but relationships, and they will have to expand time horizons beyond 'project time' (of two or three years). Short-termism is bound to fail; long time frames beyond project cycles are needed.

The issue of time played a role in workshop deliberations under various aspects. Most fundamentally, we are confronted with the dilemma that time is running out because of the cascading and accelerating negative effects of climate change, but more time is needed to develop and implement policies and strategies. Time is needed, for example, for changes of international law or for preparation of communities who have to relocate and for recipient communities. Or to put it differently: there is a need to balance urgency with an incremental 'touch and go' approach and a Pacific relational talanoa approach which requires time for exchange, deliberation, reflection, adjustment.

Talanoa was seen by workshop participants not only as a qualitative way to collect data in a Pacific cultural environment, but also, and even more importantly, as the appropriate way for exchanging stories and experiences, and thus for building and sustaining partnerships, at various scales, from the local context to the stage of international conferences and negotiations.[9]

Talanoa and dialogue across diversity was also seen as the alternative to the mainstream (top-down) practice of—all too often rushed—'consultation' that puts affected people in the communities into the role of recipients of expertise generated, and decisions made, by others elsewhere. In this context it was said that governments, or state institutions more generally, are of course indispensable for good climate mobility governance. But at times they are also drivers of conflict, in particular if and when they pursue their own pre-determined agenda (of adaptation, of relocation, of disaster risk management etc.) without taking time for inclusive and attentive engagement with communities. Often government representatives when meeting with communities or civil society organisation talk, but do not listen.

This disconnect between communities and state institutions hints at issues at a more basic level, at underlying fundamental differences: first and foremost differences of power. Power relations and inequalities shape policies in the climate–mobility–conflict/peace nexus from the local and the everyday to the global and international. Furthermore, the plethora of stakeholders who operate in that field at various scales bring to the table highly diverse ontologies and epistemologies, and this necessitates openness for cross-cultural dialogue. The Toda Pacific Declaration on Climate Change, Conflict and Peace talks about the need to nurture "cross-cultural dialogue through engaging and sharing Pacific worldviews, knowledge systems and spirituality, and integrating 'Western' and Pacific ways of thinking". As a starting point, external actors like state development agencies would have to

[9] In a similar vein, the Toda Pacific Declaration on Climate Change, Conflict and Peace stresses the importance of "building linkages between all levels of climate change governance, from the local to the international" and "supporting bridging institutions which have the capacity to bring together stakeholders from different governance levels, societal spheres, localities, and with different worldviews".

understand that there actually do exist such different worldviews, different ontologies and epistemologies, that their 'Western' way of knowing the world is not the only, not the universal, one. To acknowledge and work with different ontologies across cultural difference is of the essence.

In summarising the discussions and planning next steps, workshop participants came up with a series of findings and ideas for future collaboration, grounded in the diversity of experiences and perspectives present at the workshop. Creating new additional pathways to climate mobility, the elaboration of a Pacific-specific Regional Climate Ethics Framework and Regional Climate Curriculum, are cases in point. Participants agreed that there is an urgent need to feed Pacific ways of thinking, Pacific ontologies and epistemologies, into the international climate change, peace and security discourse. The Tuvaluan values of communal living (Olaga Fakafenua), shared responsibilities (Kaitasi) and Fale-pili—being a good neighbour —, which Simon Kofe had introduced at the beginning of the workshop, would be well suited as guidelines for global climate change policies.

Flowing from these more general remarks and observations, a few recommendations emerge:

- Policies and practice addressing the climate–mobility–peace/conflict nexus in the Pacific have to foreground the cultural–(spiritual) dimension of the issue, that is, first and foremost: the significance of the land/people connection for the security of affected people. This also means
- To overcome the limits of human-centred approaches and explore options for operationalisation of a relational 'whole of life' approach as an alternative.
- To contextualise human security based on the lived experience of Pacific Islanders, aligned to their ways of being and knowing.
- To organise and conduct dialogue, and co-produce knowledge, across cultural difference.
- To develop an internationally-recognised climate mobility justice framework.
- To find ways to translate Pacific ways of thinking into international law.
- To explore ways for communities to access climate funding directly; to redirect external financial assistance to the grassroots community level; to make sure that funding for loss and damage, for adaptation and for climate mobility reaches the communities, the people on the ground.
- To make sure that both relocating and recipient communities are compensated.
- To prioritise building relationships between relocating and recipient communities.
- To make sure that relocation is carried out in a conflict-sensitive way; conflict analysis and peacebuilding initiatives have to be developed in and targeted at the specific local context, in collaboration with affected communities.
- To also address unplanned relocation to informal urban settlements; this needs much more attention.
- To organise inter-regional exchange, e.g., Pacific–Caribbean; and to include indigenous peoples from major GHG emitting countries, e.g., Torres Strait Islanders and Aboriginals from Australia.

- Finally: When thinking about expanding the network of workshop stakeholders, representatives of the communities on the ground as well as the young Pacific climate activists have to be brought in.[10]

The workshop succeeded in bringing together policymakers, academics and practitioners from civil society for fruitful exchange. It became clear once more, however, how difficult it is to bridge the gaps between policy and academia; between local initiatives and experiences and national and regional strategizing and planning; between pragmatic political thinking, theories and concepts, and Pacific ontologies and philosophies. All these were present at the workshop, and to a certain extent they also engaged with each other. But more needs to be done to really establish common ground and to combine or integrate approaches. Communication and collaboration across scales is a fundamental challenge – and a must. It is necessary to engage governments and policy makers more comprehensively, to include young activists of the climate justice movement in the debates, to link mainstream policies and Pacific ways of thinking, to make the voices of communities heard, and to feed policy thinking as well as research results into community deliberations in ways that align with community values and worldviews. These are important points to keep in mind for future dialogues.

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[10] It was interesting to learn that young people from Pacific diaspora communities in New Zealand have reclaimed their cultural identity through climate activism. Participation in the global movement for climate justice is seen as empowering and a way to reconnect to cultural roots and develop pride as Pacific diaspora youth. An important next step would be to enable these young Pacific climate activists to introduce Pacific ways of knowing and doing into the international climate justice movement and its campaigns (currently they mostly follow the global mainstream discourse and agenda, which is dominated by Western approaches).

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