



Premature Evacuation?

Issues of time, choice, and power

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Overview

1. Vulnerability and Adaptation
2. Forced Migration from the South Pacific?
3. Mobility and Adaptive Capacity
4. Conclusions



1. Vulnerability and Adaptation

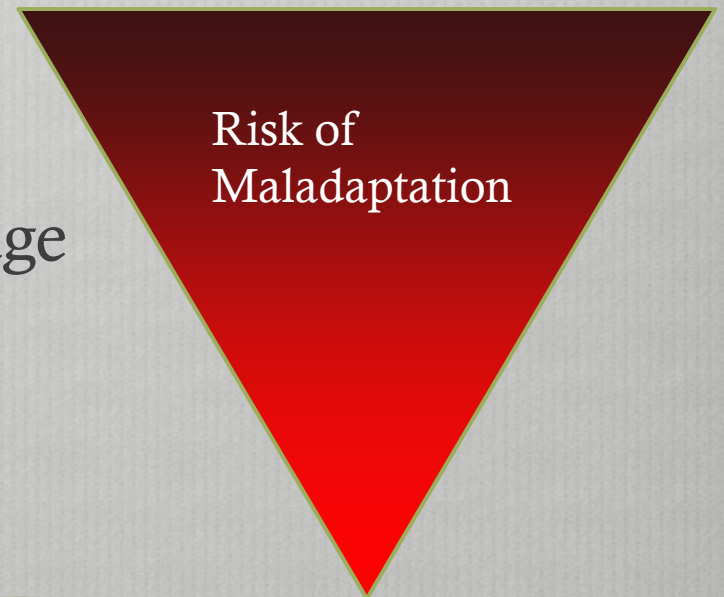
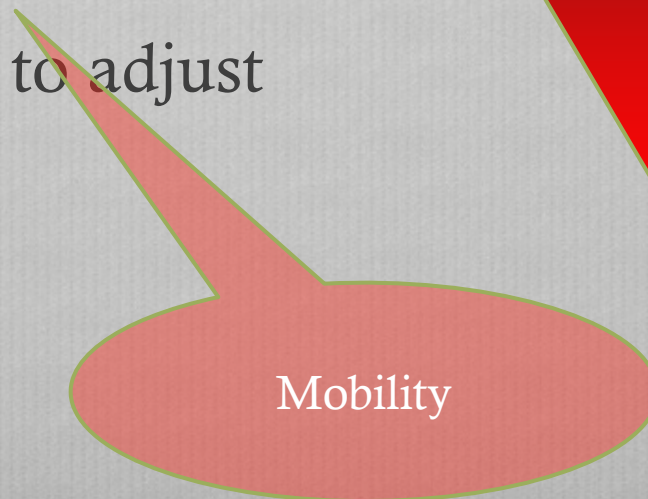
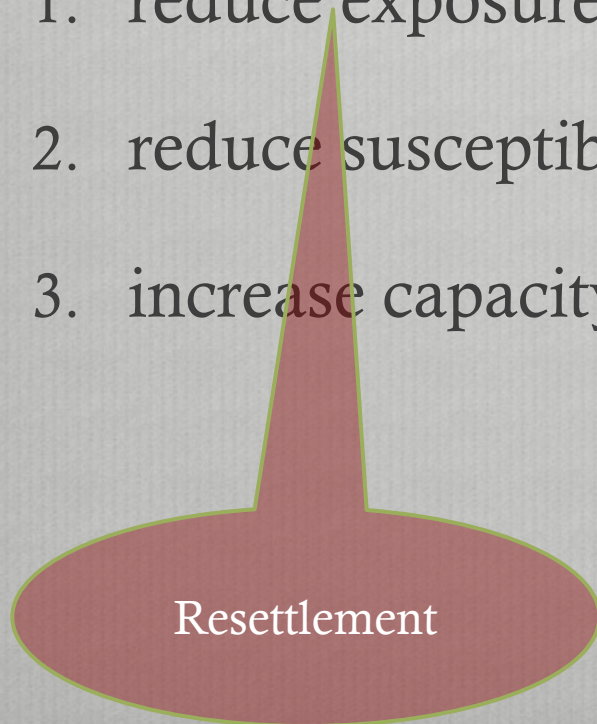
❖ Vulnerability is the potential for loss:

1. exposure to risks
2. susceptibility to damage
3. capacity to adjust

1. Vulnerability and Adaptation

❖ Adaptation means actions that are taken to reduce vulnerability.

1. reduce exposure to risks
2. reduce susceptibility to damage
3. increase capacity to adjust



2. Forced Migration from the South Pacific?

It is often said that climate change will force people to move from the Islands of the South Pacific:

- ❖ "Sinking islands, vanishing worlds" "Climate refugees in a drowning Pacific" "Rising seas ... washed an inhabited island off the face of the earth" "Tuvalu Toodle – oo"
- ❖ "The South Pacific countries will end up having their populations relocated to Australia or New Zealand and the rest of the world expects that and in the end, we're likely to accommodate that so there's a solution there" – Ross Garnaut (2009)

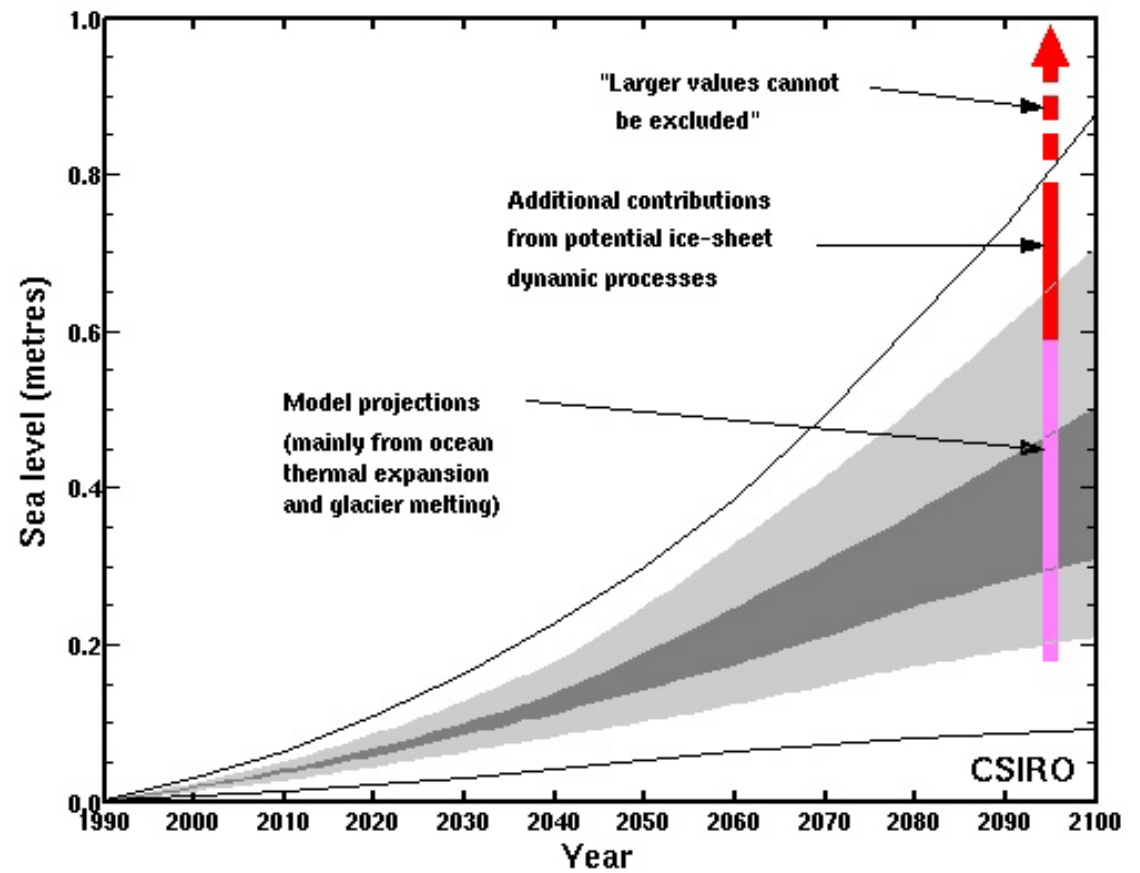
2. Forced Migration?

But we don't know much, in the South Pacific:

- ❖ about how climate change will effect ecological and social systems in islands, by how much, and when,
- ❖ about what adaptation can achieve, and the capacity for adaptation,
- ❖ about how people will view the the risks and opportunities associated with staying / moving

We have big pictures about changing global spaces, but only very fuzzy imaginations about particular places

Evidence is scarce, piecemeal, and inconclusive



3. Forced Migration?

Migration may not be a preferred response, in Funafuti:

- ❖ for most people climate change is not a reason to migrate,
- ❖ would-be migrants do not cite climate change as a reason
- ❖ people wish to remain living in Funafuti for reasons of lifestyle, culture and identity:

“its good here. It is my paradise..”

“God created this place, and what for? .. So we could live here”

“leaving part of your identity behind”.



4. Mobility and Adaptive Capacity

Mobility is a strategy households use, to: access distant labour markets, access education and health services, manage risks to income, and expand choices.

Mobility contributes to capacity to adapt:

Factor	Mobility helps by
Money	Enabling remittances
Information	Establishes knowledge networks
Education	Better access to schooling
Health	Better access to health care
Leadership	Returnees are change agents
Insurance	Portfolio of social resources

4. Mobility and Adaptive Capacity

- ❖ There is most probably an association between vulnerability and households / communities / islands from which mobility is constrained
- ❖ The region's most vulnerable groups could be the focus of policies to enhance mobility
- ❖ Efforts might be made, for example, to help particularly isolated, resource-dependent communities to overcome the barriers to movement, through support with transport costs, housing, language, skills training, and work in destination areas

5. Conclusions

- ❖ The risks climate change poses to people living in the Pacific Islands, will unfold over time
- ❖ Planned resettlement is not necessary yet, and would be risky
- ❖ Mitigation of GHG and adaptation are both necessary to avoid social impacts on islands
- ❖ Shift thinking:
 - ❖ from forced migration and resettlement,
 - ❖ to fostering mobility for adaptation
- ❖ Mobility is a proven, effective, cheap, and equitable way of facilitating adaptation to climate change