

Re-framing island nations as champions of resilience in the face of climate change and disaster risk

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Wipe Out....



Image and Reality?

- Does this dominant portrayal (as ‘vulnerable victims’) may become so entrenched and in turn constrain resilience?
- How does this fit in current discourse on limits, boundaries and transitions?
- Is it useful to examine this from the lens of scales of resilience?



Methods

- Structural review of relevant case studies
- Presentation of case studies illustrating various types of livelihood strategies used to deal with environmental challenges
- This goal is to highlight various models to build livelihood resilience
- Small Pacific Islands, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Hawaii, Madagascar, Caribbean





RESULTS



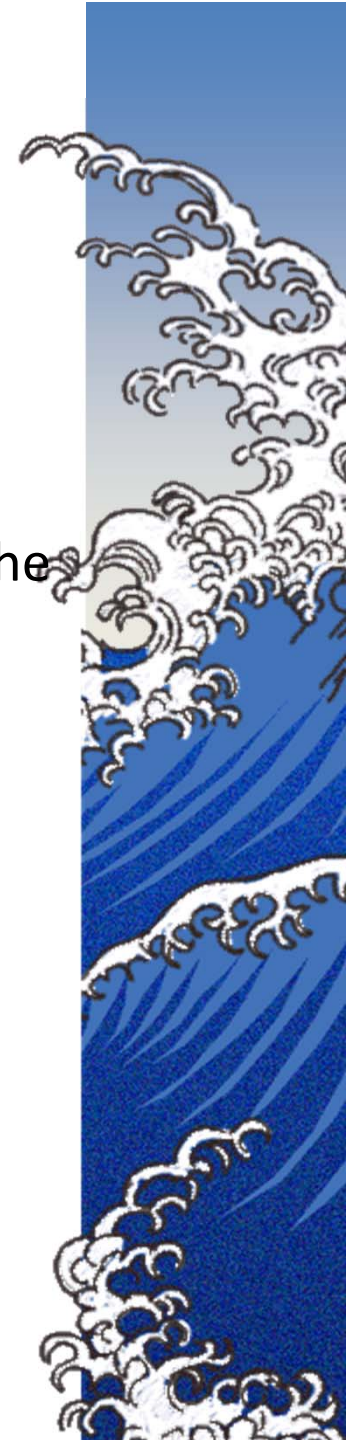


Cyclone preparations Fiji

First of all, you have to close the shutters, and you have to accumulate food and water, clean water. If you have a gas stove, we keep it ready. Need light, torch, radio and enough kerosene. We cut down big trees near our house. With our food, what we do with cassava we make stems short and also yaqona cut down low. Very little damage to our plantation because as soon as hear warning, he (husband) runs to plantation to cut it down. Here in Taveuni, we have wild food too to eat (pers. comm., 2012)

Island Coping Strategies

- Coastal erosion responses:
 - Relocated their houses further inland, built stone seawalls (using cement, dead coral and rocks) and planted grasses and trees, such as vetiver grass along the coastline and foreshore to minimize further coastal erosion and saltwater encroachment
- Cyclone responses:
 - Prior to a cyclone event, matured crops or fruits from trees are also collected and cooked in an underground oven pit (*lovo*) which preserves them for over a week
 - Following event, crops that mature quickly - such as, kumala, corn and certain varieties of cassava - are planted immediately to help with any food shortages while gardens are rebuilt



1. Traditional Knowledge

- Local Indigenous knowledge can and should be utilized to facilitate disaster risk reduction responses and climate change adaptation initiatives at the local level
- Policy needs to be cognizant of, and value, the role of this knowledge, local social networks and associated resources in disaster risk and climate change planning efforts



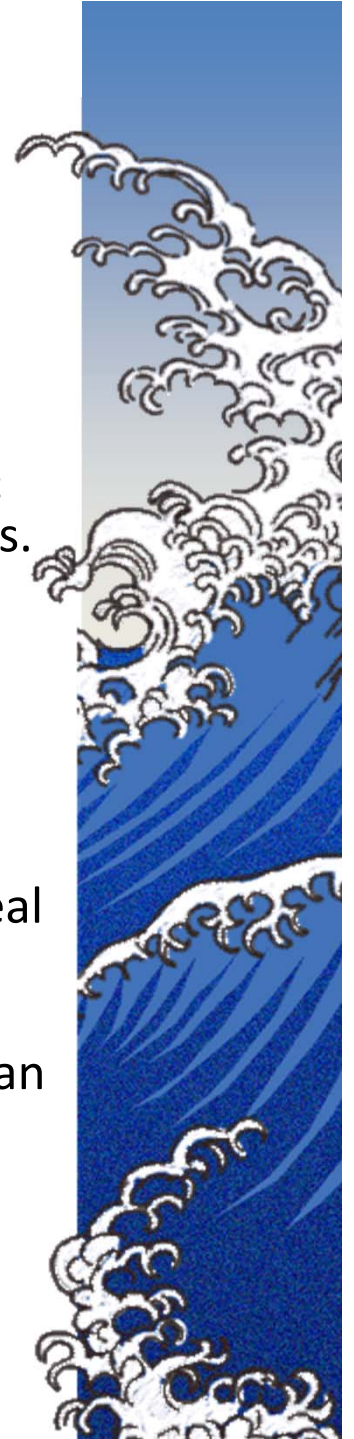
2. Migration, Remittances, Relocation

- Caribbean islanders' maximization of migration as an extraterritorial livelihood strategy
 - complex patterns of short- and long-term international movements of emigration and circulation (temporary, reciprocal movement) maximize livelihood opportunities and contributions to life in the homeland
- one Haitian migrant plantation in the Dominican Republic, migration was reported as the top - if not the sole - coping livelihood strategy to improve survival for residents



Remittances

- Remittances promote the development of human capital and growth of social and cultural capital stocks in local communities
- Among island states with available data, the Dominican Republic and Jamaica received the largest absolute amount of remittances. However, Haiti, Guyana and Samoa received the highest contribution of the remittances as a share of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP)
- These strategies – different mobility patterns and remittances – are important components of how islanders adapt to the limitations of their islands and demonstrate an effective adaptation strategy through opening up choices for people to deal with uncertainties
- Migration is not always a permanent departure from the island, but a strategy to build resilience and in many cases, prepare for an eventual return



Sri Lanka: Post -Resettlement Vulnerability: The daily struggle for work

Fisherman Knitting a Net

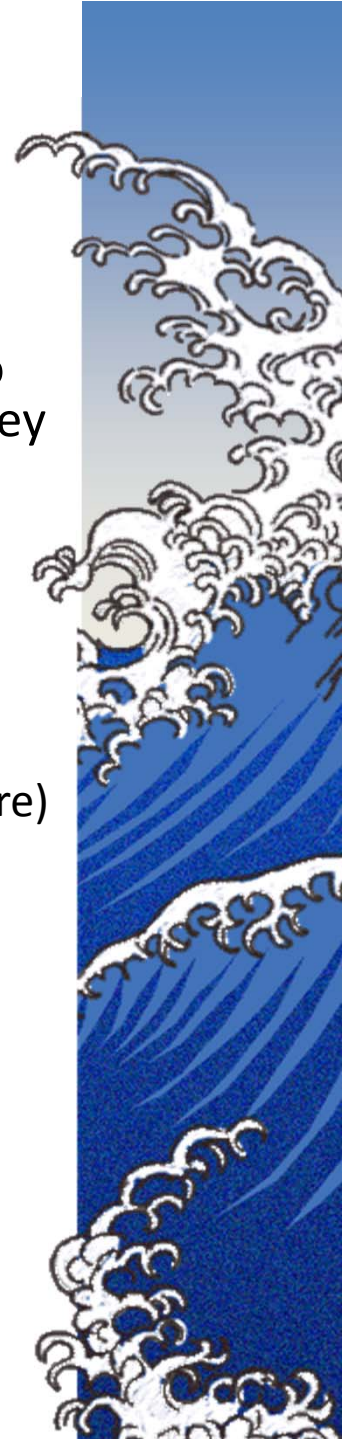


“most of the time, I am late for the auction, so there is not much variety of fish left for me to buy at reasonable prices. Sometimes there are only small fish left for me to buy, which I do not like as I always want to sell a mixture of both small and big fish for my customers” (Ariyasena, 50yrs, fish seller, Katupolwaththa).

“Now travelling to the city early in the morning, and returning at night, is similar to confronting a war on daily basis” (Hemasiri, 57 yrs, Daily paid fisherman, Tea Garden).

Relocation

- Relocation has been used as a vulnerability reduction strategy to floods and landslides on various islands such as Sri Lanka. A survey research revealed that forced relocation of people living in landslide and flood prone areas was employed as a vulnerability reduction strategy by governments of Sri Lanka
- Various factors undermine successful relocation policies:
 - forcing people to live far from their previous settlements
 - forcing people to live in unplanned settlements without individual (water or electricity) or common (road access or a community centre) basic needs
 - lack of provision of good quality housing
 - lack of employment opportunities
 - conflicts between host and relocated communities
 - and lack of access to common property resources
- Such factors can cause some relocated families to move back to their previous places re-exposing them to the hazard



Migration, Remittances, Relocation

- Recognize migration, remittances and relocation as a livelihood strategy to improve resilience, examining how islanders in the Caribbean and Sri Lanka maximize their livelihood resilience through these mobility tactics



3. Women's Resilience

- By helping women and families to determine their desired family size, family planning allows them to plan for emergencies, create safety nets and evacuate and migrate more safely and easily
- Family planning improves maternal health outcomes by reducing closely spaced, high risk births and decreasing domestic workloads.
- Improved climate change adaptability can come from a woman's increased perception of self efficacy and having control over familial, socioeconomic and psychological spheres.



Resilience of Women Islanders

- Building the resilience of women islanders through integrated development, addressing the particular vulnerability of women from the Philippines and Madagascar



4. Food Security

- *Food security systems*: Evidence from Sri Lanka and the Philippines
 - Sri Lanka: planned relocation of coastal communities as a strategy to reduce vulnerability and improve resilience of coastal communities
 - The Philippines: mangrove reforestation, disaster planning, and alternative livelihood options improve food security and build resilience



Farmers in Sri Lanka

- Paddy farmers are aware of rainfall variation, temperature variation, changes to the cropping calendar and sea level rise leading to coastal erosion and salt water intrusion
- Changed their agricultural management practices as a strategy to cope with the impacts of climate change
 - farmers experiment with traditional varieties, short duration crops, biopesticides, paddy husk and bio manure to improve water retention and soil organic material levels



Palawan, the Philippines

- PFPI compared pre-project data from 2001 with post-project data in 2007 to determine the performance of three program:
 - reproductive health, coastal resource management and both in an integrated manner
 - verall results indicated that there were better food security, reproductive health and environmental outcomes at the integrated programme sites.
- Province of Leyte, the municipality of Hindang has created an ordinance, the 'Municipal Multi-Sectoral Population Health Environment (PHE) Council' which will "integrate the PHE approach into the Municipality's annual, short, medium and long-term development plans and programmes and appropriating funds thereof"
- Such councils and additional governance structures have been effective in linking food security and population wellbeing to overall community resilience



Final Thoughts

- Socio-culturally institutionalized and place based practices are strong examples of island communities responding to real-time threats
- Experiences should be recognized and shared globally
- Policy, programmatic and research communities to move away from painting a victimizing, irreparable fate and trajectory of island communities, and instead forge thoughtfully towards an inclusive, intergenerational, justice driven, place based adaptable framework for a sustainable future, for all island, coastal and mainland communities

