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Circular Migration as Climate Change Adaptation: Reconceptualising New Zealand´s and Australia's Seasonal Worker Programs

Migración circular como adaptación al cambio climático: Reconceptualización de los nuevos programas para empleados estacionales en Nueva Zelanda y Australia

A migração circular como uma adaptação às alterações climáticas: re-conceituação dos novos programas para empregados estacionais na Nova Zelândia e Austrália

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Resumen

Este artículo analiza el papel de la migración circular como adaptación al cambio climático. Se concentra en dos diseños de trabajo de temporada, de la región del Pacífico, recientemente conocidos: el Programa Australiano para trabajadores estacionales (SWP) y el Proyecto de Empleador Estacional Reconocido de Nueva Zelanda (RSE). Genera la inquietud al respecto de si los objetivos actuales de estos esquemas de trabajo se pueden reconceptualizar como programas de adaptación que sean útiles no sólo a los intereses económicos y de desarrollo, sino a los retos mayores que impone del cambio climático, y que están interconectados con los dos anteriores. MacDermott y Opeskin consideran que los esquemas de movilidad laboral para el país que envía se enfocan en la "perspectiva de desarrollo", como: (a) oportunidades de empleo, (b) beneficios de remesas regulares, y (c) mejoramiento de habilidades, mientras que los países receptores pueden responder a los desafíos planteados por la escasez de mano de obra en las industrias de temporada donde " la fuerza de trabajo confiable es escasa".

Palabras clave: Migración circular, cambio climático, adaptación, migración humana.

Abstract

This paper looks into an aspect of adaptation, namely the role of the circular migration as climate change adaptation. It focuses on two of the Pacific region's recently well -known seasonal labor schemes, Namely Australia's Seasonal Workers Program (SWP) and New Zealand 's recognized Seasonal Employer Scheme (RSE), and asks if beyond the current goals the schemes May be reconceptualsed as adaptation programs responsive not only towards developmental and economic Concerns but the wider (and interconnected With the first two) climate change challenges. According to MacDermott and Opeskin, labor mobility schemes, for the sending country focus on the "development perspective "such as (a) Employment Opportunities, (b) Regular benefits of Remittances and (c) skills enhancement, while receiving countries country can meet the challenges posed by labor shortages in seasonal industries where "a reliable workforce is lacking".

Key words: Circular migration, climate change, adaptation, human migration.

Resumo

Neste trabalho se discute o papel da migração circular como adaptação perante as alterações climáticas. O conteúdo do mesmo se concentra em dois projetos de trabalho estacional da região do Pacífico, que foram conhecidos recentemente: o Programa Australiano de Trabalhadores Sazonais (SWP) e o Projeto Empregador Sazonal Reconhecido da Nova Zelândia (RSE). O documento suscita preocupação quanto aos objetivos atuais destes programas, no sentido de se eles são suscetíveis de se re-conceituar como

programas de trabalho para adaptação, úteis tanto para os interesses econômicos e de desenvolvimento, quanto para desafios maiores infligidos pelo câmbio climático, desafios estes que tem relação com esta conceituação. Mac Dermott e Opeskin consideram que para a nação que envia os esquemas de mobilidade de trabalho se focalizam nas "perspectivas de desenvolvimento"; por exemplo: (a) oportunidades de colocação, (b) benefícios de remessas regulares, e (c) melhoramento das destrezas. Entretanto, os países receptores podem responder aos desafios afixados pela escassez de mão de obra nas indústrias sazonais onde "a força de trabalho confiável não é suficiente".
Palavras-chave: Migração circular, mudanças climáticas, adaptação, migração humana.

Climate change is among the most serious challenges faced by the world in this century. Nevertheless, international negotiations focus more on mitigation and less on adaptation, in spite the fact that potentially, the "greatest single impact" of environmental change will be on "human migration and displacement" (IPCC, 1990). It was only in 2010 at the Conference of Parties (COP) in Cancun, for instance, when migration was included in climate change negotiations (Mokhnacheva, Lee, & Ionesco, 2013). While migration would not be an only response to environmental changes as affected populations may choose to adapt *in situ* or simply do nothing, yet it is a likely response for those whose homes and means of livelihood are within vulnerable locations. Migration, whether temporary or long-term, has long been recognized as an important coping strategy for persons and communities affected by both sudden and long-term environmental degradations. Where environmental scarcity threatens the long-term capacity to provide food for families and communities, migration has provided the means to minimize vulnerability. Thus, the enhancement of current voluntary migration opportunities and creation of new migration channels would be a reasonable, if proactive, goal vis-à-vis climate change challenges. Forced relocations should be sought only as an option of last resort.

This paper looks into an aspect of adaptation, namely the role of circular migration as climate change adaptation. It focuses on two of the Pacific region's recent seasonal labour schemes, Australia's Seasonal Workers Program (SWP) and New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer Scheme (RSE). Both programs have a dual purpose: while intending to fill labour shortages in the horticultural and viticultural industries of Australia and New Zealand, they also provide employment opportunities for Pacific Island workers by way of circular, i.e. temporary, migration thereby contributing to the economic needs of the workers' respective nations (Woolford, 2009). Traditionally, labour mobility schemes have a primarily economic focus: for sending countries they provide the development package of employment opportunities, regular remittances and skills enhancement; while, for host countries, the schemes answer labour shortages in seasonal industries where "a reliable workforce is lacking" (MacDermott & Opeskin, 2010). This paper explores if, beyond economic goals, both SWP and RSE may

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be reconceptualised as adaptation strategies in response to the threats and challenges from environmental and climate changes.

The structure of this paper has four parts. First, it presents an overview of the Pacific situation in relation to environmental migration. Secondly, it examines both the historical context and key features of the SWP and RSE, and their implications towards Pacific environmental migration. Thirdly it discusses the seasonal worker programs in other countries particularly those in the U.S., Spain and Colombia. It notes how the concept of temporary worker programs in those countries were reconceptualised to include communities affected by natural disasters. The grant by the U.S. (for the first time, beginning January 2013) of H-2 or Temporary Workers visa to Haitian citizens was partly in response to Haiti's 2010 earthquake devastation. The Temporary and Circular Labour Migration Scheme (TCLM) of Colombia and Spain, another innovative program, selects circular migrants from disaster prone high risk zones in Colombia, such as those affected by the Galeras volcanic eruption or the floods that occurred in 2010-11. The last part reflects on the role of migration as an adaptation strategy. It asks whether the ambit of Australia and New Zealand's seasonal labour schemes may be expanded to include environmentally affected populations in the Pacific.

1. The Pacific Situation

Pacific Islanders have for centuries moved across great distances between islands, as their way of coping with environmental threats. Recent events suggest that migration triggered by environmental changes is expected to increase significantly over the coming years (IOM, 2009a). The Pacific region, with its low-elevation island nations dispersed in a vast ocean setting, makes it particularly vulnerable to challenges from the physical environment. The region is predicted to be among those where the adverse effects of environmental changes can be felt the most (Locke, 2009). Thus, the Pacific region presents a unique opportunity to understand the complex relationship between environmental change and migration.

First, the Pacific Rim, with its active volcanoes and geologic faults, has produced some of the world's worst earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and

tsunamis that have resulted in displaced populations. Japan's March 2011 earthquake and tsunami, for example, left 550,000 people homeless, with millions more lacking adequate supplies and services (Yamagata, 2011). Second, several places in the Pacific are regular pathways for typhoons and tropical cyclones. For instance, tropical cyclone Gene devastated Fiji in 2008, damaging infrastructure, agriculture and utilities, and necessitated the provision of FJ$1.7 million worth of food rations by the Fijian government (Relief Web, 2008). In 2005, Hurricane Percy destroyed most of Tokelau's agriculture and led to "severe food shortages" such that New Zealand offered to relocate Tokelauans in this country (Moore & Smith, 1995). Third, the Pacific is extremely vulnerable to long-term environmental processes such as climate change and sea level rise. Examples include instances of coastal flooding due to unusually high tides in the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, and northern Papua New Guinea (OCHA, 2008), and seawater intrusion into farmlands and freshwater aquifers in the Solomon Islands (Webb, 2008).

Low-lying atoll states, such as Tuvalu, are extremely vulnerable to long-term environmental processes like climate change and sea level rise, which would potentially render the atoll nation uninhabitable. While no one is certain when this will occur, long-term preparation would pave the way for a viable solution. Migration, whether temporary or permanent, is being increasingly seen as an effective adaptation measure for long-term impacts of climate change. The voluntary nature of migration allows space for physical and psychological preparation for both the migrant and those who stay behind. As entire communities need not move, other members of the migrant's family, including the sick, the very young and the elderly, may stay behind and benefit from the remittances sent. On the side of migrants, the initial difficulties of adjusting to a new home are usually resolved as voluntary migrants generally choose destinations with an already existing network of friends, family or job opportunities waiting, and there is always the possibility of calling or going back home.

When movement is less than voluntary, however, such as when lands are expropriated, or when environmental degradation in their home islands leaves a community with no choice but to move, entire community systems are disrupted and uprooted, in most cases permanently. These relocations unravel

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spatially and culturally based patterns of social organisation as it uproots all members of the community (Cernea & McDowell, 2000). An example is the Bikinian resettlement on Rongerik Atoll and Kili Islands in the 1940s, which produced deep frustrations continuing to the present. A "sense of loss" and state of discontent is felt in resettlement with several people wanting to return to their home islands with its traditional values and systems.

2. Preferential Migration Schemes for Pacific Peoples

Environmental migration need not always be seen in terms of desperate en masse escape to safer locations. Environmental migration may be an adaptation measure of the first resort or a survival mechanism of last resort. This leads to the useful, but flexible, distinction between environmentally motivated migrants, who move before grave environmental deterioration endangers their lives, and environmentally forced migrants. Some individuals may *choose* to move way before grave environmental deterioration directly threatens their lives (Warner, Afifi, Dun, Stal, & Schmidl, 2008). For these voluntary migrants, the diminishing productivity of their lands, due to environmental deterioration, is only a motivating factor in the relocation process. They can also do this without having to bring along their families. Their move, thus, is similar to that of a labour migrant in search of better livelihood opportunities. Migration thus secures new opportunities not only for migrants but also for the families they leave behind, especially through the remittances they send back. The benefits accruing from these remittances are such that the adaptive capacities of those who stay behind are strengthened (with the construction of better homes, for instance), thereby obviating, or at least mitigating, the need for forced mass relocations.

Although couched in primarily economic terms, the circular or temporary migration schemes of New Zealand and Australia may be regarded –or at least have the potential of being regarded– as initial attempts at establishing proactive environmental migration schemes in the Pacific. Learning from experience of the United States in relation to Haiti, as well as that of Colombia and Spain, both SWP and RSE may be reconceptualised as adaptation strategies for affected Pacific island countries made vulnerable by long-term environmental and climatic processes.

Recognised Seasonal Employer Scheme

In April 2007, the RSE scheme was established, allowing workers from Pacific countries to work in New Zealand's horticulture and viticulture industries for up to seven months in any eleven-month period, under a Limited Purpose Entry Seasonal Work options (Department of Labour, 2009). The RSE was likely patterned from, or at least parallels, Canada's Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP), a long-standing and generally considered "best practice model" (Gabriel & Macdonald, 2011). Established in 1966, SAWP addressed labour shortages across Ontario's farms by permitting Jamaican, and later, Mexican and Caribbean workers to work in Canada (Binford, 2006).

What SAWP was to the Caribbean, RSE became to the Pacific. The RSE scheme allows up to 8,000 (increased from 5,000) Pacific workers to be employed on New Zealand's farms each year (Immigration New Zealand, 2012b). Nationals from 11 Pacific countries are eligible, namely Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Five of these, Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu were priority "kick start" states and were given expedited status in the initial stages of the scheme (International Labor Organization, 2012). The Solomon Islands was formally added in 2010 with the signing of the RSE Inter-Agency Understanding between the governments of New Zealand and the Solomon Islands (Herming, 2011). While the RSE scheme neither allows workers to bring with them their dependents, nor are workers eligible to apply for another visa while they are in New Zealand, it provides workers the opportunity for "circular migration" by allowing them to return in future seasons (Department of Labour, 2009). As such the scheme pursues a twin aim of filling domestic labour shortages as well as providing indirect development aid to Pacific Island countries. Under the program, New Zealand employers first prove the unavailability of any domestic worker under the NZ "First principle" and then apply for an Agreement to Recruit (ATR). Meanwhile, the soon-to-be Pacific workers must obtain "a passport, successful screening for tuberculosis, medical evaluation, police clearance, and a return ticket," half of which the sponsoring employer pays for (Thornton, 2010).

While the RSE establishes a type of circular migration that obliges the workers to return home after the growing season, a worker's experience and professional network in New Zealand, could, for example, make them better

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candidates for permanent migration under skilled migration visa categories or the Pacific Access Category (PAC). The RSE is considered as a model of best practice, which may also serve as a mode of reference for similar schemes in other countries.

Seasonal Worker Program

Australia's seasonal workers schemes resemble New Zealand's. In 2008, Australia announced the Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme (PSWPS), giving Pacific Islanders preferential work slots in its horticulture and viticulture industries (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2010). The PSWPS was a three-year pilot program, with the first workers arriving in February, 2009 (Reed, 2010). During the entire program, up to 2,500 visas were made available to workers from four Pacific countries: Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, and Vanuatu, to assist Australia's horticultural industry, with guaranteed grants of at least six month's employment, changed later to only four months, at an average of 30 hours per week. Visas granted under the PSWPS had a maximum duration of seven months in any given 12-month period (Reed, 2010). On 1 July 2012, right after the termination of PSWPS, the Seasonal Worker Program (SWP) was introduced. It was built on the earlier program, offering access to workers from East Timor, and eight, instead of four, Pacific island nations: Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Vanuatu, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, and Nauru (Department of Education, 2012). The SWP extends beyond the horticultural –fruits and vegetables– and viticultural coverage of PSWPS, and for the first time includes 1) the "broader agriculture industry," particularly cotton and cane operations, 2) the fishing industry, particularly aquaculture, and 3) "accommodation providers" in the tourism industry. A total of 1,550 visas will be available during the "small scale trial" which will run for three years or up to June 30, 2015 (Department of Education, 2012). Much like RSE, the SWP scheme neither allows workers to bring with them their dependents, nor are workers eligible to apply for another visa while they are in Australia.

III. Temporary Migration as Adaptation to Environmental Deterioration U.S. and Haiti

Australia and New Zealand are not the only countries offering seasonal employment opportunities for Pacific countries. The United States has similar programs for seasonal employment of foreign workers under the H-2A (Temporary Agricultural Worker) and H2B (Temporary Non-Agricultural Worker) visa categories (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2011).[1] The total maximum period of stay under both the H-2A and H2-B classifications is 3 years, after which the worker must "depart and remain outside the United States for an uninterrupted period of 3 months before seeking readmission" as an H-2A or H2-B non-immigrant (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2011). Much like in other seasonal workers programs around the world, the Temporary Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Workers programs in the U.S. have an economic focus. U.S. agricultural employers can have access to workers from qualified foreign countries when they cannot find enough local labour to fill-in the seasonal demand. They are required to "demonstrate" that there are "not sufficient U.S. workers who are able, willing, qualified, and available to do the temporary work". They also have to show that the employment of temporary foreign workers will "not adversely affect the wages and working conditions of similarly employed U.S. workers" (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2011).

The economic focus, however, did not prevent the U.S. from using the program to suit the needs of populations affected by environmental disasters. In January 2010, an earthquake devastated much of Haiti, rendering millions homeless and killing over two hundred thousand (Murray & Williamson, 2011). As a response to the devastation, Haiti was included for the first time in the list of H-2A and H-2B visa eligible countries, effective January 2012. U.S. and foreign papers immediately noticed Haiti's eligibility, with the

1 The H-2A and H2-B programs allow United States employers to bring foreign nationals to the United States to fill temporary agricultural (H2-A) and non-agricultural (H2-B) jobs. The following Pacific countries have been designated as eligible for the program: Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. While the Australian and New Zealand schemes are primarily targeted for Pacific workers, the U.S. program includes many countries from Asia, Latin America, Africa and Europe.

latter calling it a "change to US immigration law" and "potentially offer[ing] a new perspective on development strategy" (The Guardian, 2012). Such a policy change augurs well for those who see temporary migration as an adaptation strategy that responds to natural disasters and in strengthens resilience among affected communities.

Spain and Colombia

The Temporary and Circular Labour Migration Scheme (TCLM) between Spain and Colombia, with assistance from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), is another example of reconceptualization of temporary and circular migration to cater to the needs of environmentally affected populations. The TCLM has its genesis in 1991 when the Uni de Pagesus de Catalunya (UP), the largest agricultural union in Spain's eastern Catalonia region, recruited migrant workers from the western Spanish province of Zamora (IOM, 2009b). Workers from the southern Spanish province of Andalucía were likewise recruited. In 1998, UP inquired from the Ministry of Labour in Madrid about the possibility of recruiting temporary workers from other countries, including Colombia. Patterned after the bilateral labour agreement between France and Morocco, UP was granted initial permission in 1979 to recruit 50 workers from Morocco, and another 50 from Colombia (IOM, 2009b). Although only 35 Colombians arrived during the first year, the experience was considered so successful that, in 2000, Spain came up with a new regulation allowing foreign seasonal workers in its agricultural, catering and construction sectors. In 2000, Spain also signed the first seasonal migration agreement with Colombia governed under the principle of "co-development." This is a development strategy attributed to Algerian born French political philosopher Sami Nair, which regards migration as benefiting both the country of origin and the country of destination. Under Spanish law, seasonal labour migration is allowed up to nine months of any twelve consecutive months (Art. 55, Royal Decree 2393, 2004). After ascertaining that no workers in Spain are available to fill the vacancy, seasonal workers may be selected, mainly from countries with which Spain has signed a seasonal migration agreement, Colombia among them. Under the Implementing Regulation of the Organic Law, the Spanish

employer must "provide adequate accommodation for the migrant workers and register them within the Spanish social security system" (de Moor, 2011).

One of the unique features of the TCLM program is its selection of seasonal workers coming from regions in Colombia affected by natural disasters" (Rinke, 2012). This is a somewhat novel conception of a temporary migration which merely began in 1979 as an ordinary labour migration scheme intended to supply the shortage of workers in the agricultural farms of the Spanish region of Catalonia. The eruptions of Galeras volcano in 2005 and 2006 caused the evacuation of thousands of residents in the surrounding areas, most of whom were farmers. The TCLM program was used to "provide a migration opportunity for thousands of affected people" and it "allowed them to temporary migrate to Spain, where they could earn an income in seasonal harvest" (de Moor, 2011). Since then, the program was expanded to other "rural communities, where crops and land are vulnerable to floods and other natural disasters" (UNFPA, 2009).

4. Implications for Pacific Environmental Migration

Migration, whether temporary or long-term, has long been recognized as an important coping strategy for persons and communities affected by both sudden and long-term environmental degradations. In the early stages of environmental deterioration, migration is often short-term and seasonal with a family member sent to another part of the country to look for work or livelihood diversification. Referred to as "eating the dry season," the expression is used in the Sahel region of Sub-Sahara to describe the "temporary migration of young adults during dry periods from their rural communities to urban centres in search of work" (IOM, 2010). The nomadic way of life, where people move seasonally from place to place in search of food, water, and grazing land has existed for millennia. However, the temporary labour migration of foreign workers only became legally recognised after the Second Wold War in the United States and Europe, in response to lack of low skilled workers in reconstruction projects (Barredo, Garcia, & Montijano, 2012). Other countries, including Canada, Australia and New Zealand, established similar programs, which lacked workers in their agricultural sectors. Eventually, a new migrant category of circular labour migrant emerged,

ISSN 1657-6535

due to the tendency of temporary migration to create programs that involve the return of the same individuals year after year. The IOM defines circular migration as the "fluid movement of people between countries, including temporary or long-term movement which may be beneficial to all involved, if occurring voluntarily and linked to the labour needs of countries of origin and destination" (IOM, 2008).

A criticism of both temporary and circular migration is that it treats "migrants as little more than commodities who are justifiably not accepted as full members of their host countries, and workers' rights as fungible" (Avendaño, 2009). Workers are seen as a stopgap solution to the host country's labour shortage, willing to accept low wages until local workers can be found disposed to do the work. The approach is at times regarded as based on values that are "antithetical to social and economic justice" (Avendaño, 2009). Nonetheless, temporary and circular migrations schemes have in many cases provided benefits for workers seeking to avail of a diversified livelihood. This is especially true in situations where natural disasters affect the sending locality, as in the case of Haiti and the Galeras region of Colombia. In the context of the Pacific region which is widely regarded among the areas most vulnerable to the long-term effects of climate change, the reconceptualization of the policy behind the SWP and RSE programs to include populations vulnerable to the impacts of climate change is in Australia and New Zealand's long-term interests. Such will increase resilience in vulnerable Pacific countries, prevent the likelihood of forced migrations, and not least, the move is in keeping with the Australian and New Zealand's humanitarian interests by catering to the wellbeing of its Pacific neighbours with whom both countries share deep social, cultural and historical ties.

Migration as Adaptation

The relationship between the environment (including climate change) and migration has been subject to debate in recent years. In part due to the dearth of reliable data and lack of consensuses on the parameters of whom may be classified an environmental migrant, up to today, the relationship has been characterised as "complex and unpredictable" (Brown, 2008). Nevertheless,

it is likely that sustained environmental changes accelerate existing levels of population movements. As an increasingly harsh environment affects traditional livelihood patterns, people (or at least, a member of the family) move to other locales in search of livelihood prospects. In Nepal, deterioration of land and environmental conditions led to rural to urban migration (Massey, Axinn, & Ghimire, 2007). In the Pacific in the 1950s, due to "lengthy intervals of drought," the government of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony resettled Phoenix Islanders from the Gilberts (now Kiribati) to the Solomon Islands (Knudson, 1977). While environmentally-induced migration, in general, tend to be local, and rural to urban, in some cases international migration occurs depending on the level of migrants' skills and education as well as access to social and economic networks in the country of destination.

While migration may be a response to environmental deterioration, it may also be regarded as a proactive approach to adapt to sustained environmental changes. Adaptation is the "adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities" (IPCC, 2007). This is true whether migration is temporary or permanent. In the case of Colombia, the TCLM program adopted as part of its strategy the selection of populations affected by natural disasters (Rinke, 2012). The workers were granted assistance to go to Spain to work in seasonal farms for up to nine months; upon the expiration of their visa they had to return to Colombia with the possibility of returning to Spain, provided they complied with "all conditions set by the programme" (Rinke, 2012).

This paper posits that both the RSE and SWP provide excellent potential to become an adaptation strategy for environmentally affected Pacific peoples, among them the low-lying atoll Pacific nations of Tuvalu, and Kiribati. Many low-lying islands in the Pacific are projected to become progressively uninhabitable due to the long-term impacts of climate change. While no one knows when the islands may eventually become uninhabitable, in the meantime availing of temporary migration programs will already benefit the workers and their families by way of remittances sent back to their home countries. The remittances will particularly help the

workers children to acquire a better education, which in turn provides them better options in adapting to a changing environment. The remittances may also be used in constructing stronger, cyclone proof homes, or in relocating to safer areas altogether. Both SWP and RSE establish a type of migration where workers have the obligation to return home after the growing season. However, they could potentially open opportunities for permanent migration. The workers' experience and professional networks in Australia and New Zealand could, for example, make them better candidates for permanent migration under skilled migration visa categories in Australia and New Zealand.

Migration and Resilience

The impact of sustained environmental changes on communities depends on how resilient they are in responding to the deprivations presented by the environment. Societal resilience is defined as the "ability of communities to absorb external changes and stresses while maintaining the sustainability of their livelihoods" (Adger, Kelly, Winkels, Huy, & Locke, 2002). While adaptation is strategies adopted to reduce negative impacts of environmental changes, resilience is the capacity to absorb these changes. In other words while adaptation tends to look outwards, resilience refers to inner strengths or qualities of a person or community. Stressors include sudden onset natural disasters as well as slow onset environmental processes, which nonetheless exert pressure on the community's means of livelihood, resources and social structures. For this reason, resilient communities are "active agents that influence their environment, anticipate and resist to future stresses and recreate themselves according to their motivations and capabilities (Scheffran, Marmer, & Sow, 2011).

Among the effects of temporary and circular migration, if rightly conceptualised, is the ability to increase social resilience in the sending community. Clemens of the Center for Global Development, who was one of the biggest proponents for Haiti's inclusion commented "temporary labour migration could be a powerful tool in responding to large-scale disasters" (The Guardian, 2012). For instance, remittances of Haitians workers abroad were "already valued at almost $2bn a year, nearly twice what the U.S.

pledged in aid for post-earthquake reconstruction." The Center for Global Development calculates that if just 2,000 Haitians could work in the U.S. each year under the H-2A and H-2B visa programs they could "add up to $400 million in additional income for Haitian families over 10 years" (The Guardian, 2012). In the case of Colombia, temporary labour migration to Spain allowed the people affected by floods and the volcanic eruption to acquire income in Spain while the disaster-affected areas are still recovering. On the other hand, through the workers' savings and from the trainings they received from the program many were able to establish a family business in Colombia (Rinke, 2012). According to the report of Unio Pagesos, of the 690 workers who took part in the training course, 558 were from Colombia (Magri, 2009). The workers' earnings and the skills they gain are crucial to achieve resilience because the livelihoods of the workers and their families become less vulnerable to direct environmental changes and impacts.

Environmental Migration as Collective Concern

Migration is not new to Pacific islanders. Recent climatic events and processes, however, suggest that environmental migration is expected to increase significantly in the coming years (Laczko & Aghazarm, 2009). There are those who maintain that, far from being a source of humanitarian concern, migration from climate and environmental changes is, in fact, a security threat to the world's states. As environmental threats force people to leave their homes and settle in other lands, instability and conflict will ensue as people fight for limited resources in the host state. Nonetheless, facts attest otherwise evidenced by various long-term environmentally-induced resettlements in the Pacific, which neither generated conflict nor instability in the host state. Foremost was the resettlement of the entire community of Banabans in 1945 from Banaba –called Ocean Island in colonial times- in the Gilberts (now Kiribati) to Rabi Island in Fiji because of decades of rapacious phosphate mining on Banaba (Tabucanon, 2012a). Instead of conflict the Banabans and Fijians co-existed peacefully and maintained healthy cultural exchanges for over 60 years. On the contrary, the reverse is true: not to migrate in times of environmental deterioration forces people to compete with one another over limited resources from an increasingly

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inhospitable land, triggering conflict as a result. Labour migration, temporary or otherwise, allows for livelihood diversification and eases the pressure of populations competing for scarce resources. In circular migration, the need of workers from development states for employment them a decent living wage easily complements the shortage of workers in host states. Brain drain, a constant concern in long-term migrations, is avoided since migrants are expected to return home. Also, as stated earlier in this paper, remittances sent to their family back home will likely be used for uplifting the living standards of the family, including contributions to appropriate education for the children. The situation thus is a win-win scenario not only for sending and destination states but also for the workers and their families.

It thus argued that far from being merely an economic matter, the programs of temporary and circular labour migration have implications for populations affected by environmental and climate changes. For one, the possibility of forced migration is averted, or at least minimized, should the environmentally vulnerable countries be assisted out of their difficulties and poverty. Helping affected communities better adapt to environmental changes is ultimately in Australia and New Zealand's long-term interests. For instance, from 2000 to 2011 sudden-onset natural disasters displaced around "300,000 people in Papua New Guinea [...] almost 90,000 in Fiji and about 80,000 in Vanuatu" (Koser, 2012). There are also those who have relocated due to slow-onset environmental deterioration and saltwater inundation. In 2009 groups of Carteret islanders resettled on Bougainville island in Papua New Guinea on a plan that would ultimately transfer 1,700 residents due to increasing inhabitability of their atoll island (Morton, 2009). Whether a sudden onset event or a lingering process triggered the movement, significant internal displacement has already been reported. While such triggers do not always lead to international migration, it may only be a matter of time when cross border migration may be necessitated because the environmental conditions in the Pacific are expected to worsen.

The World Bank reported an increase in both the number and intensity of natural disasters occurring in the region. It noted that "[t]en of the 15 most extreme events reported over the past half a century occurred in the last 15 years," and accounted for "65 percent of the total economic impact"

on the region's economies (Bettencourt, Croad, & Freemen, 2006). Poverty and scarcity of resources can and do lead to more migration, including forced or irregular migration. Australia and New Zealand, being the region's most developed economies are likely destination for Pacific peoples, who are mostly young and mobile, and many of whom already have family or friends living in Australia and New Zealand. It is thus within the long-term interests of Australia and New Zealand to develop policies addressing the possibility of managed environmental migration in the region. Even if there were "no altruistic concern among rich nations to help the world's poor, their own self-interest should lead them to do so" (Singer, 2002). According to a United Nations panel report: "In the global village, someone else's poverty very soon becomes one's own problem: of lack of markets for one's products, illegal immigration, pollution, contagious disease, insecurity, fanaticism and terrorism" (United Nations, 2001).

A way assist environmentally affected populations in the Pacific is to make them eligible for inclusion in the SWP and RSE programs To provide temporary work permits to communities affected by the environment in underserved sectors entails low costs for Australia and New Zealand. Compare this alternative with, for instance, giving financial aid or granting blanket humanitarian protection across the board among these populations. To identify populations vulnerable to environmental change for the program is a significant step, for Australia and New Zealand, towards the acknowledging of this looming problem of the Pacific region. While acknowledgement may be a small step, it is nonetheless an important one. The experience of Spain and Colombia in specifically identifying environmentally vulnerable populations is a good model for Australia and New Zealand because socio-economic factors were re-conceptualized and expanded to include wider societal issues, among them how to alleviate the concerns of environmentally-affected populations.

The recognition of environmentally affected populations and the notion of granting them legal protection are not new, at least in Australia. Kerry Nettle, Green Party Senator of Australia, introduced in 2007 a bill creating a new visa class for persons fleeing a "disaster that results from both incremental and rapid ecological climate change and disruption" (Nettle,

2007). Disaster includes "sea-level rise, coastal erosion, desertification, collapsing ecosystems, fresh water contamination, more frequent occurrence of extreme weather events such as cyclones, tornadoes, flooding and drought" (Nettle, 2007). The bill contained three proposals: (1) To amend the Migration Act to incorporate a Climate Change Visa Class. (2) To establish an environmental migration intake per year of up to 300 climate change refugees from Tuvalu, 300 from Kiribati, and 300 from elsewhere in the Pacific. (3) To propose the U.N. to adopt a definition and framework on climate change and environmental refugees (Tabucanon, 2012b). The third proposal is similar to that considered by the Australian Labour Party in 2006 in its policy discussion paper on climate-change. This document called for a "coalition" between Pacific-Rim countries that would accept climate-change refugees. It also proposed that the United Nations ensure "appropriate recognition of climate change refugees in existing conventions, or through the establishment of a new convention on climate change refugees" (Sercombe & Alabanese, 2006). Although the Green Party bill was defeated, there is nothing to keep it from being reintroduced in the future in the same or modified form, such as the amendment of the SWP scheme to include Pacific populations affected by natural disasters and environmental changes. In the case of New Zealand, its Pacific Access Category (PAC) immigration scheme specifically grants Pacific peoples permanent residency status in New Zealand to up to "250 citizens of Tonga, 75 citizens of Tuvalu, and 75 citizens of Kiribati" each year (Immigration New Zealand, 2012a).[2] While the PAC does not specifically mention climate change or environmental deterioration among the reasons for the grant of residency status, the program may be considered beneficial to Pacific populations who may need migration as a way to respond to environmental threats brought about by climate change.

Through domestic legislation, some countries in Europe have acknowledged an obligation towards victims of environmental disasters from other countries. Sweden and Finland have legislated protection mechanisms for victims of "environmental disasters." Swedish immigration policy names environmental

2 "The total number of individuals approved under each category includes principal applicants, their partners and dependent children." Immigration New Zealand, Operations Manual, S1.40 Pacific Access Category.

migrants as a separate category of "person in need of protection" (Swedish Aliens Act, Ch 4, s.2.3, 2006). The Finnish *Aliens Act* grants residence permits to those who "cannot return because of an armed conflict or environmental disaster" (Finnish Aliens Act, Ch. 6 s.109.1, 2009). An alien residing in Finland is issued with a "residence permit on the basis of humanitarian protection if… he or she cannot return to his or her country of origin or country of former habitual residence as a result of an environmental catastrophe" (Section 88a). Although the preparatory works to the *Aliens Act* state that the preferred option in environmental disasters is "internal relocation and international humanitarian aid," the Act expressly acknowledges that protection in Finland may become necessary (UNHCR, 2009).

Conclusion

The preferential access of Pacific Island citizens under the RSE and SWP scheme stands in line with Australia's and New Zealand's approach towards climate change. Both Australia and New Zealand acknowledge the vulnerability of Pacific peoples to the impacts of climate change. In its 2009 report entitled "Engaging our Pacific Neighbours on Climate Change" Australia acknowledges the potential of climate change to displace populations in the Pacific, stating "permanent migration could become an option for some Pacific Islanders" (Australian Government, 2009). Nonetheless, while long-term permanent migration is being discussed as an option, the possibility of utilising current programs as adaption strategies for those affected by climate and environmental changes remains unexplored.

It is recommended that both the RSE and the SWP, (a) identify environmentally affected or vulnerable countries in the Pacific, (b) increase the intake of workers from these countries, and (c) for both Australia and New Zealand to provide a quota of workers from countries projected to be most vulnerable to the impacts of climate and environmental changes. Lastly (d), it is recommended that the fees incurred by the workers participating in the programs be subsidised, or at least minimised.

Among the most environmentally vulnerable countries in the Pacific are the atoll nations of Kiribati and Tuvalu which highest points are only a few metres above sea level. Temporary migration will increase resilience

with workers' remittances spent for family upkeep, children's education, construction of better houses, and the possibility to save a portion for capital to help establish a business once the worker returns.

In the case of Spain and Colombia, the employer under the TCLM project pays for the travel arrangements and expenses relative to visas and airfare (Barredo, et al., 2012). Once the workers arrive in Europe, the "project continues to support them by finding a place to stay and providing them with further information about issues such as the Spanish health care system" (Rinke, 2012). In the case of RSE the employer and worker share airfare costs by paying half each of airfare from the workers' home country to New Zealand. For workers from Kiribati or Tuvalu, only half of the return airfare from Fiji is subsidised while the workers pay for the rest (Immigration New Zealand, 2010). In the case of SWP employers may pay for the international return airfare and "later recouping a percentage of this cost from seasonal workers" (Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations 2012). Considering environmentally vulnerable populations may not have adequate means pay for even part of an international air fare, it is recommended that New Zealand and Australia find ways to subsidise workers in this area. Particularly for workers based in Kiribati or Tuvalu, the sharing of return air fare costs should be reckoned from the workers' home country to New Zealand, and not limited to and from Fiji.

There are several advantages in increasing the intake of workers from environmentally threatened communities in both the RSE and SWP schemes. First, seasonal workers from these islands will accumulate savings and remittances while being employed abroad. These remittances can be used as an adaptation strategy to cope with climate change, for instance, by building of cyclone proof houses as well as installing communication and warning devices. The workers' children are likewise enabled to acquire a better education by virtue of the earnings received in the host country. As noted earlier, financial proceeds from labour migration enhance the resilience of the workers and their families to the impacts of climate and environmental changes. Secondly, workers benefiting from the skills training, acquisition and transfer in the host country (learning from the TCLM experience of Colombia and Spain), will bring back with them what they have learned

in order to establish business or alternative means of livelihood in their home countries. Lastly, the worker's experience and social networks gained in Australia or New Zealand, as the case may be, could help them become better candidates for longer-term migration programs, such as the skilled migration visa categories of Australia and New Zealand.

Should reforms of the RSE and SWP be considered to include environmentally affected populations in the Pacific, this would not require any major policy changes as they are in line with existing legislative policies which consider the seasonal worker scheme as a method of fostering well-being and development in the Pacific.

ISSN 1657-6535

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