

# **Fiji's Climate Campaign: Small State Niche Leadership**

*A Bachelor's thesis exploring the leading position Fiji, a small island developing state, pursues with regard to climate change*

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## Introduction

The Republic of Fiji is renowned for its white beaches, clear blue seas, abundant coral reefs, and tropical climate. This utopian image was abruptly disturbed when cyclone Winston hit Fiji back in 2016, destructing numerous homes and devastating the lives of many in a merciless manner. Extreme weather conditions and rising sea-levels due to global warming characterize a new dystopian reality. Other small island developing states (SIDS) face similar hardships, some of which are being confronted with a threat to their physical existence. In order to effectively combat climate change, the small and isolated Pacific Island Countries (PICs) need to spread the word globally. Dressed in a costume depicting a personified Earth shedding a tear, Timoci Naulusala, a 12-year-old Fijian, addressed leaders present at the 23<sup>rd</sup> UN Climate Change Conference (COP23) as follows:

Let me tell you my story to bring you closer to home. I hail from the beautiful province of Tailevu . . . in Viti Levu, the largest island in Fiji. Earlier in 2016, we were hit by one of the strongest cyclones to have ever struck Fiji, the strongest in the Southern Hemisphere. My home, my school, our source of food, water, money was totally destroyed. My life was in chaos (Timoci Naulusala, November 15 2017).<sup>1</sup>

Timoci's heartening, uplifting and inspiring speech traveled across the globe as news outlets and social media networks picked up on his effort. Like other SIDS, Fiji is extremely vulnerable to the effects of global warming as illuminated by Timoci above. Despite the country's small size and remote geographical location in the vast Pacific, it has acquired a position within the international limelight regarding climate change (Corbett, Yi-Chong & Weller, 2018, p. 103). The 23<sup>rd</sup> UN Climate Change Conference (COP23) is one for the books, since Fiji became the first of the SIDS to ever preside over a UN Climate Change Conference. The chairmanship over the COP23 is however not the country's exclusive achievement with respect to climate change. Fiji, for example, co-hosted the UN Ocean Conference with Sweden (2017), it managed to launch a Sovereign Green Bond (2017), it attended the Belt and Road Forum as the single SIDS country (2017), and Fijian Peter Thomson was assigned to hold office as the new and first ever Pacific president of the UN General Assembly (2016).

This prominent position of Fiji contradicts with the notions of weakness and passiveness deriving from traditional theories of IR. This thesis wishes to revisit prevailing notions of material power, exploring creative and innovative ways in which small states maneuver through the international realm, in order to elucidate how a small and remote island state like Fiji manages to be so present internationally. First, the existing scholarship will be reviewed, followed by an explanation of the objectives of this research, the expectations deduced from literature focused on small state coping strategies, whereafter the methodology will be discussed and the collected data will be analyzed.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://cop23.com.fj/timoci-and-shalvi-fijis-youngest-climate-stars/> (accessed April 19, 2018)

## Literature review

### *International Relations (IR) theory and small states*

In its broadest sense, IR explores the relations between states, non-state actors and national leaders within an international system (Grieco, Ikenberry & Mastanduno, 2015, pp. 6-7). According to the dominant neo-realist and neo-liberalist schools of thought, this system can be characterized by its anarchic nature (Heywood, 2014, pp. 61 & 65). Important to note is that neoliberal institutionalism recognizes anarchy, but assumes that this particular condition can be resolved through cooperation and mutual efforts facilitated by international institutions, rejecting the realist belief of inevitable conflict (Heywood, p. 65; Grieco, 1998, p. 486; Jervis, 1999, p. 45). Nevertheless, both schools perceive the international system to be in an anarchic state, which generally implies the absence of a global government or police force ordering the international state of affairs (Milner, 1991, pp. 70-71). As a result, states have to look for ways to survive without an official global umpire in place.

When applying these *grand theories* to the study of small states, neorealism presumes small states to lack individual agency being dependent on their larger and hence more influential counterparts, based on the aforementioned notion of anarchy. States have to take care of themselves, and therefore it is argued that the bigger the state, and the more power it possesses, the more secure it is within the international realm (Browning, 2006, pp. 670-671). Material power, essentially encompassing a country's military capabilities, is prioritized, resulting in an apprehension of small states as minimal power carriers or powerless units (Browning, p. 670; Neumann & Gstöhl, 2006, p. 19). This material power is often labeled 'hard power', entailing a state's possession of solid military and economic means that function as coercive instruments (Wilson, 2008, p. 114; Thorhallsson & Bailes, 2017, pp. 51 & 53; Wagner, 2005, pp. 1-2). Furthermore, as both Browning (p. 671) and Neumann and Gstöhl (p. 18) note, small states are considered to be 'objects' instead of 'subjects' of IR, mirroring the perceived dominance of the larger units, the ones affecting the behavior of the smaller states. This also typifies realist thought, a theoretical approach that used to prevail throughout the IR literature (Hey, 2003, p. 5).

Neoliberalism does not deny the importance of the so-called 'hard power' of big entities (Hough, Malik, Moran & Pilbeam, 2015, p. 21). Neoliberalists do, however, unlike realists, strongly believe in the potential of international institutions to advance small state's interests, and to allow small states to exert influence in IR (Browning, p. 672). Traditionally, the largest entities or 'great powers' were the only units within the international system that were deemed of importance to study, leaving the small states out (Neumann & Gstöhl, 2006, p. 4). Neumann and Gstöhl (pp. 22-23) enumerate different reasons for this disregard of small states, ranging from the language barriers present amongst scholars studying small states to the logic that 'great events must have great causes'. Moreover, since the authoritative realist school considers 'great powers' to shape the international system because of their capabilities, they are highlighted and examined, leading to an omission of small states from IR research (Neumann & Gstöhl, p. 3; Hey, p. 5).

### *IR theory and environmental security*

When delving into the literature that touches upon the domain of international security within IR, the focus is skewed towards classic security issues concerning outside aggression or possible occupation by larger states. An interesting note Hey (2003, p.8) makes concerns the physical security of small states. She argues that there is no need, or at least less of a need, for states to fear their physical security (aggression from other states) in modern times. However, when looking at the current threat of rising sea-levels and more extreme weather conditions due to global warming, one could argue that some small states greatly fear their physical security nowadays, some island states even facing possible demise. Not taking environmental security into account illustrates Hey's narrow definition of security, which mirrors both realist and liberalist thought, as elaborated on below.

The historically dominant realist tradition greatly affected security studies and the conceptualization of the security of small states, putting forward the idea that small states are solely occupied with their survival because of ongoing threats posed by larger states, and that the 'material power capabilities' of states matter most (Wivel, Bailes & Archer, 2014, p. 6; Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2015, p. 4). According to neorealist scholar Walt, international security relates to the military threats states face and their 'competition for power' (Walt, 1991, pp. 212-213; as cited in Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, p. 4). While neoliberalists have attempted to broaden this confined perception of security with their inclusion of the importance of economic ties for enhancing peace and security between states, they still present too narrow of a concept neglecting, amongst other dimensions, the phenomenon of environmental security (Hough et. al, 2000, p. 21). Peoples and Vaughan-Williams (p. 5) also underline this, arguing that liberal thought, for the most part, exclusively focuses on military security as well. Buzan (1991, p. 38), an advocate of a so-called 'broadening' and 'deepening' of the concept of security, argues that its definition should also embody environmental, economic, societal and political security, types of security not or rarely addressed by the two traditional IR theories.

Scholars such as Sutton and Payne (1993, p. 584) as well as Bartmann (2002, p. 367), Ingólfssdóttir (2014, p. 83) and Charles et al. (1997, pp. 16-23) do recognize climate change as a security threat, in particular for small states, and underline the/this broader notion of security in their works. Present-day security threats to small states, and specifically small island developing states, do not necessarily arise from larger states within the international system but from nature and humanity itself. Ingólfssdóttir (2014, p. 80) explains how climate change is currently one of the biggest issues affecting international security. Even though it might sometimes appear to be a regional problem in those areas that are most likely to be affected, it is beyond any doubt a global problem as well (Ingólfssdóttir, p. 85). Mankind contributes to the warming of the globe, long-term effects of migration and food shortages will be felt in any corner of the world, and hence the problem will not be solved without worldwide action (Ingólfssdóttir, pp. 81 & 83).

## **Research question and objectives**

Notions of ‘weakness’, ‘passiveness’, ‘helplessness’ and ‘powerlessness’ originate from the traditional IR theories of neo-realism and neo-liberalism, as discussed above. The smaller units behave to the wishes of the larger powers, and hard power as well as military security are all that matter. According to this train of thought, Fiji, as a small state, is an ‘object’ rather than a ‘subject’ in IR. Fiji’s prominent position and climate leadership, or niche leadership with regard to the issue of climate change, do not match this image. A share of Fiji’s niche leadership in the climate realm has been outlined in the introduction to this thesis. Its chairmanship over major climate-related UN conferences, its delivery of the 2016-2017 president to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), and its issuance of a Sovereign Green Bond have been presented as examples. Adding to this, its COP23 Presidency has allowed Fiji to introduce initiatives such as the ‘Talanoa Dialogue’, which has been adopted by United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Furthermore, Fiji’s climate leadership is also reflected by its launch of a Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDS) as the first Pacific country to do so. These initiatives and presidencies will be further elaborated on as the thesis progresses, but support the claimed exceptionality of the small state of Fiji. It is this prominent position of Fiji within the international climate realm that triggered the writing of this thesis.

The specific question that will be addressed is as follows: How has Fiji, despite its small size and remote geographical location in the Pacific Ocean, succeeded in attaining such a prominent role within the international arena regarding the issue of climate change? The core focus will be on Fiji’s leading position and its strategies to acquire visibility worldwide. The aim is to refine the small state literature, specifically the literature on small state opportunities. Moreover, the fact that non-western states are often neglected in small state research leverages the importance of an analysis of a non-western small state (Gibert & Grzelczyk, 2016, pp. 2-3).

Since the classical IR theories do not offer a solid and comprehensive explanation for Fiji’s accomplishments, it is of necessity to look at other, more detailed, theories focused on small state opportunities before proceeding to the expectations and analysis.

## Small state opportunities

Despite the prevailing focus on the larger entities within the international system, a growing number of scholars within the field have sought to devise frameworks and theories to account for the behavior of small states. Small state academics aspire to explore different strategies that allow small states to act swiftly and smartly within the international realm, and to survive or even to exert power despite their limited resources. A substantial amount of the literature acknowledges that small state opportunities lie with normative or social rather than material power (Ingebritsen, 2002; Browning, 2006; Björkdahl, 2013; Ingólfssdóttir, 2014; Wallis, 2016; Long, 2017; Lakatos, 2017; Kaarbo & Kenealy, 2017). They recognize that small entities can function as so-called ‘norm entrepreneurs’, actively spreading certain norms and values that could impact larger entities and hence their behavior (Ingólfssdóttir, 2014, p. 87). Since small state resources are known to be limited, this is an important source of power for small states to consider (Long, 2017, p. 192). According to Björkdahl (2013, p. 325), the act of norm entrepreneurship can be regarded as an important component of a small state’s ‘diplomatic strategy’, allowing small states to exert influence disproportionate to their physical size.

This train of thought stems from the constructivist *grand theory* of IR, which perceives the international system to be an ‘international community’ where states tend to be affected by a process of socialization, mutually influencing one another, and caring about their reputation within this group (Ingebritsen, 2002, p. 12). It is an outlook that highlights the ‘power of ideas’, and puts great emphasis on identity and norms within the community (Ingólfssdóttir, 2014, p. 88). Norms, within this context, relate to ‘accepted codes of conduct’, ‘desirable behavior’, ‘the right thing to do’, ‘appropriate behavior’, or ‘standards of appropriateness’ (Ingebritsen, 2002, p. 12; Björkdahl, 2013, p. 322 & 324; Browning, 2006, p. 673). Norms set an international tone, they tend to create certain expectations of how states ought to behave within this aforementioned international community. This logic can be applied to small states fighting climate change as well. Norm entrepreneurship is a practice available to small states in order to deal with the threat of rising temperatures, attempting to make morally appropriate behavior, such as collectively reducing emissions, known to the international arena.

It is important to look at the process leading to the effective propagation of a norm, especially since this thesis aims to explain *how* Fiji has acquired a prominent position in pulling the climate cart, *how* it managed to climb to the top of the international podium by chairing the COP23 and UN Ocean Conference and made itself known to the global public. Kronsell (2002, p. 292; as cited in Ingólfssdóttir, 2014, p. 89) maintains that the following elements are crucial when advocating a norm: a small state should work on its reputation, it should possess sufficient knowledge and expertise on the issue, its norm should be in line with the national interest of the state, and progressive domestic policies in the sense of ambitious national climate policies should be pursued that are in line with the issue that is being promoted. In other words, in order to be able to spread a certain norm or standard, a state has to make sure it is recognized internationally as a credible, reliable and trustworthy actor (Ingebritsen, 2002, p.

13; Björkdahl, 2013, p. 333). Lakatos (2017, pp. 61-62) adds that the effective popularization of a norm also depends on the so-called 'administrative competences' of the country, referring to the quality of diplomats, and the extent to which the issue is prioritized, i.e. the extent to which the country manages to select a maximum of two issues to champion intensively internationally. This prioritization of a single issue or two is key, especially for small states, since they lack the capabilities to focus on a large array of issues simultaneously. A term used within the diplomacy realm that touches upon this same idea of prioritization is 'niche diplomacy', which entails that there is one specific 'area of focus' of the small state (Ó Súilleabháin, 2014, p. 6; Lakatos, 2017, p. 59).

Put differently, the four mentioned conditions laid out by Kronsell (2002) can be perceived to aid a small state's ascension to an international podium as well, since prominent leadership positions will be offered to those that seem credible; those that have a certain reputation and are pursuing ambitious and exemplary policies themselves as well. Whilst constructivist scholars agree on the importance of norm diffusion, it is not the only way for small states to influence the global order. Ingólfssdóttir (2014, p. 88) mentions the importance of bilateral relationships with larger and consequently stronger powers in the international realm, for instance, Kaarbo and Kenealy (2017, pp. 36-37) identify international institutions as important platforms for small states to voice their concerns, and Browning (2006, p. 673) discusses how the literature recognizes that small state opportunities may also lie with their specific geopolitical position, or with a certain reputation the state propagates. A more out-of-the-box strategy is put forward by Duyvesteyn (2017), an International Studies scholar who argues that hard power, i.e. military resources, should not be completely ignored when talking about small states and their opportunities in world politics.

Duyvesteyn (2017) proposes that diplomatic influence can be acquired through military means, even in the case of small states. This is not to say that a state should have large military capabilities in order to be able to engage in this type of strategy. The core idea is that small states could purposefully participate in peacekeeping missions of the UN, in a way that is disproportionate to their size, to obtain important positions within international institutions. Duyvesteyn concludes this based on the significant contribution that a smaller state such as the Netherlands makes to the UN peacekeeping forces, and the country's election to the Security Council (Duyvesteyn, 2017, para. 15). Like Duyvesteyn, Pinto (2014, p. 392) also reasons that serving on peacekeeping missions could be a conscious choice of small states to augment their international visibility. These two theories might seem counter-intuitive because of their focus on hard power, something that small states tend not to possess much of. Both scholars are nevertheless included in this section because Fiji, as highlighted by Neumann & Gstöhl (2006, p. 23), makes a significant contribution to UN peace missions annually.

## **Expectations**

Based on the presented theoretical insights on small state opportunities above, Fiji is expected to find creative and innovative ways of maneuvering through the international realm to make itself well-known on a global scale. Since Fiji is facing the hardships of a changing climate, it is expected that in order to withstand this problem, Fiji will prioritize this issue, will devote its resources to this particular issue, and will portray itself as a credible actor on the world stage in general, more specific with regard to the climate change issue.

Moreover, despite the general disregard of military power in small state scholarship, Fiji is expected to use the military power that it possesses to further its national interest including their climate goals. Knowing that Fiji has a relatively large military force for its small size (Bartmann, 2002, p. 371), and is a large contributor to UN peacekeeping missions (Neumann, & Gstöhl, 2006, p. 23), it is expected that this strategy will increase Fiji's visibility, will make the state more trustworthy and credible, and will thus help Fiji in furthering its climate objectives.

An important note with regard to the expected strategies accounting for Fiji's success in attaining positions at global organizations, and taking the lead, is that the observations discussed will not be limited to the expectations presented above. If specific tactics or diplomatic techniques are to be found that do not fit any of the expectations that derived from the literature, they will nevertheless be included in the analysis in order to refine the field of the small states literature.

## **Methodology**

### ***Conceptualization and operationalization***

Small states make up the very foundation of this thesis. Therefore, the concept of ‘small states’ demands an explanation, especially since there is no consensus amongst scholars in the field as to what the exact definition of a small state entails, and what specific indicators should be used in order to identify this group of states (Maass, 2009, p. 70). Some refer to the total number of inhabitants as an indicator of a small state, whilst others tend to look at the state’s geographical size, the amount of influence a state exerts on the international system, or even a state’s perceived size (Hey, 2003, pp. 2-3). Both the Commonwealth and The World Bank identify ‘small states’ utilizing population size as an indicator. They set the maximum at a population of 1.5 million (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2015, p. iv; The World Bank, 2017, p. 1). These renowned organizations make this an authoritative conceptualization of a ‘small state’ that will therefore be adopted in this thesis as well. A small state is thus considered to be small based on its population-size that should not exceed 1.5 million.

### ***Research method***

This thesis offers a qualitative single case study, combining different research techniques to gather data. The content of official press releases, reports and speeches from the Fijian government as well as reports from international organizations such as the World Bank and the European Union have been closely examined. News articles from news outlets such as the Fiji Sun, the Fiji Times and Radio New Zealand have been studied, and the extant scientific literature about Fiji’s behavior and its foreign policy regarding climate change has been explored. An analysis of these sources is supplemented with a form of personal communication with a climate change expert and an active participant in the field of IR. Mr. Krishneil Narayan, a Fijian consultant for Sustainable Development and Climate Change, and Mr. Samuelu Laloni, the Ambassador of Tuvalu’s Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York, have been contacted and interviewed via email.

Both government records as well as reports from international organizations have been analyzed in order to acquire a broader perspective on the subject matter, with the aim of evading possible bias. The same goes for the purposeful combination of national and international news outlets. Within social science research, this is referred to as ‘triangulation’, implying that multiple sources offer multiple valuable perspectives, increasing the soundness or ‘validity’ of the findings (Maxwell, 2009, pp. 236 & 245; Bryman, 2016, p. 386). The content analysis will support the interviews, and vice versa. For the two interviews a so-called ‘self-administered questionnaire’ has been used, though an altered version to fit the qualitative research design. This type of questionnaire is usually employed in quantitative research, and primarily contains closed-ended questions, and thus requires alterations for this study

(Bryman, 2016, p. 221). In essence it is a list of questions that ought to be answered by a respondent him- or herself independently, so without the presence of a researcher (Lavrakas, 2008, p. 803).

For this research, such type of questionnaire, an email with an enclosed list of interview questions, proved to be the most suitable way of retrieving insights, as the remote location of the state under scrutiny, the islands of Fiji, did not allow for an in-person interview. Moreover, the abundance of commitments and extremely tight schedules of the respondents were better facilitated by a questionnaire that could be filled out at their own pace, in their own time and at their own location. The questionnaire has been designed keeping qualitative principles in mind, such as formulating open-ended questions to avoid ‘yes’ and ‘no’ answers, leaving room for the perspective of the respondents by trying to minimize the researcher’s frame, making it applicable to the qualitative analysis (Bryman, 2016, pp. 472 & 497).<sup>2</sup>

With regard to the selection of the respondents, every individual contacted has been carefully chosen. The insights retrieved from Mr. Krishneil Narayan are particularly valuable to this research since he joined Fiji’s delegation to the 2016 UN Climate Conference, the COP22 in Marrakech, and is hence aware of the ins-and-outs of the political game. Furthermore, Mr. Narayan served as the former coordinator of the Pacific Islands Climate Action Network (PICAN) (2015-2018) and as Fiji’s former Youth Ambassador for Climate Change and Sustainable Development (2009-2015). Samuelu Laloni, the current Ambassador of Tuvalu’s Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York and former High Commissioner to New Zealand (2015-2017) and Deputy High Commissioner to Fiji (2006-2009), is an experienced diplomat in the field of IR. Mr. Laloni’s input has been used in order to put this research in a broader perspective by making a comparison between Fiji and Tuvalu.

### *Case selection*

As identified above, this thesis offers a single case study. A case study, though a contested concept, could be defined as an: “Intensive study of a single unit or small number of units with an aim to generalize across a larger set of units.” (Gerring, 2004, p. 341). The Republic of Fiji, a single unit, will be intensively studied, and will be presented as a ‘deviant case’. As Seawright and Gerring (2008, p. 302) indicate, this deviant case study can be explanatory in nature: “It, too, is an exploratory form of research.” This applies to the case of Fiji, a case that deviates from the traditional IR literature, as it is a very active player in the international realm, and in one way or the other it appears to have been successful at circumventing its weakness. The underlying factors that can account for this phenomenon, for Fiji’s its leadership role, despite small size, will be explored.

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<sup>2</sup> The two questionnaires can be found in Appendix A and B.

## **Data analysis**

### **1.1 Fiji's climate prioritization**

As elaborated on in the theoretical framework, the prioritization of one or two issues is essential for small states when trying to gain global visibility (Lakatos, 2017, p. 61). They will be able to allocate their scarce resources accordingly. In Fiji's case, climate change can be considered to be the issue that is singled out to be actively promoted. According to Fiji's UN mission in Geneva, Switzerland, one of the state's 'key areas of interest' concerns climate change (Fiji Mission Geneva, n.d.). Mr. Krishneil Narayan, a Fijian consultant for Sustainable Development and Climate Change, affirms this: "Fiji uses every platform to speak about climate change. The current administration/Government in Fiji has made climate change one of its top priorities." (K. Narayan, personal communication, May 24, 2018).<sup>3</sup>

The following section will discuss the identified strategies Fiji employs to attract the chairmanships of important climate conferences, and to secure its leadership position with respect to climate change. It will elaborate on the country's credibility and reputation, the extent to which it serves as an example to the rest of the world and the Pacific, the importance of bilateral partnerships, and Fiji's available resources.

### **1.2 A credible actor**

Fiji presents itself as a credible climate actor within the international realm. This becomes evident when looking at the state's propagation of 'morally correct behavior' in its rhetoric, the exemplary behavior Fiji is exhibiting, and its peacekeeping efforts.

#### ***Propagating morally appropriate behavior***

When shedding light on the rhetoric used by the Fijian government when addressing climate change, phrases such as 'moral authority', 'moral obligation', and 'moral responsibility' make the scene (Bainimarama, 2015; Bainimarama, 2017a; Bainimarama, 2018). An example of a statement made by Fiji's Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama at the 21<sup>st</sup> UN Climate Conference (COP21) is as follows: "And my message is that the industrialised world has a moral obligation to make that change [to their carbon consuming lifestyles]." (Bainimarama, 2015). This proves Fiji's strong stand, clearly voicing what behavior is desired from the international community. By promoting 'the right thing to do', Fiji establishes its reputation as a climate advocate, which could, amongst other things, benefit their bids for the presidency of climate conferences. Or as Kronsell (2002, p. 292) argues, a state's reputation is one of the factors that will aid a small state in spreading a certain norm.<sup>4</sup> As will be touched upon in the

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<sup>3</sup> The completed questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

<sup>4</sup> More on Kronsell's rationale can be found in the theoretical framework on pages. 7-8

following paragraphs, this particular reputation as a climate champion is reinforced by Fiji's 'one step ahead' behavior concerning its domestic climate policies, which will in effect enhance their credibility.

### *One step ahead*

When analyzing domestic and international news outlets, as well as reports from the World Bank, it becomes evident that the island state is, in spite of its small size, determined to bring change. The Guardian and TIME reported on Fiji's ratification of the Paris Climate Agreement, underlining that it was the first nation to do so, which showcased Fiji's commitment and willpower to change the world for the better (Cuff, 2016; Jenkins, 2016). Moreover, Fiji has set goals with regard to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, aiming to reduce these emissions by 30 percent in 12 years from now (2030), and to fully switch to sources of renewable energy (The World Bank Group, 2016, pp. 8-9; The World Bank, 2017a; Pratibha, 2017). These ambitions are also mirrored by Fiji's National Climate Change Policy (Government of the Republic of Fiji, 2012) and National Development Plan (Ministry of Economy, 2017). The National Development Plan, for example, sets forth the goal of completely nullifying Fiji's GHG emissions by the year 2050, to satisfy the agreements made in Paris (Ministry of Economy, 2017, p. 16).

Not only are Fiji's domestic policies and climate goals ambitious and hence in line with their aforementioned reputation of being a dedicated climate advocate, the country also exhibits exemplary behavior which further boosts their credibility. Fiji has been the first Pacific island country to launch a Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDS) and to issue a Sovereign Green Bond, and can therefore be considered to be 'one step ahead' of its Pacific neighbors (The World Bank, 2017b; Kumar, 2018). The LEDS is a strategy complementary to the already existing efforts made by the Fijian government to reduce the nation's emissions and to increase climate resilience, also referred to as 'mitigation' and 'adaptation' (Kumar, 2018). Mr. Narayan, who attended the 2018 'National Stakeholder Workshop' on the Fijian 'LEDS', provides the following account for Fiji's lead:

All of the Pacific island states . . . rely on outside finance & technical assistance in order to achieve such policies. Similar is the case for LEDS. Fiji has used the attention from its COP23 Presidency to get financial & technical support from [the] Global Green Growth Institute to develop LEDS before other Pacific island countries, and in doing so, is leading the way. Other Pacific island countries could use Fiji's experience as an example to see how they could develop their LEDS. (K. Narayan, personal communication, May 24, 2018)

What becomes clear is that Fiji's presidency of the 23<sup>rd</sup> UN Climate Conference (COP23) has not only allowed it to voice its concerns globally, but has also served as a stepping stone for the nation to, in this case, receive support from the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) to realize the first Pacific LEDS.

Important to note is that Fiji's emissions are insignificant when compared to those of larger industrial countries. As a result, its reductions in GHG emissions will not have a great impact. However, Fiji's progressive policies, including the LEDES, do include a significant reduction in GHG emissions. This could serve as a tactic to enhance its credibility when applying the logic of Kronsell (2002, p. 292; as cited in Ingólfssdóttir, 2014, p. 89). Or as White (2014), former lecturer at the Fiji National University, puts it: "... the aim affirming one's self-worth in terms of sound ecological living (as well as providing moral leadership to the international community), drives on Fijian efforts to reduce their ghg emissions." (White, 2014, question 10).

### *Strategic peacekeeping*

One could also consider peacekeeping to be a strategic move for small states in order to gain international prestige and strengthen their position as credible actors, provided that they contribute to UN missions in such a way that is disproportionate to their size. Since Fiji currently supports worldwide missions by their noteworthy deployment of a total of 655 individuals, it is a strategy to be considered (UN Peacekeeping, 2018). Several speeches by Fiji's PM Frank Bainimarama have therefore been analyzed in order to explore when and in what context Fiji's contribution to UN peacekeeping missions is being addressed and linked to the issue of climate change (e.g. Bainimarama, 2017b; Bainimarama, 2017c).

What can be distilled from their rhetoric is the, although somewhat implicit, idea of reciprocity; the idea that Fiji makes sacrifices for conflicts that do not directly harm their country as such, arguing that the global community should be prepared to help to enhance the security of the Fijians with regard to climate change too. No other supporting documents have been found that prove Fiji's contribution to the UN peacekeeping forces to be a purposeful strategy to gain international recognition for climate change, or to entice larger states to act on climate change. Nevertheless, it can be considered to be part of the Fijian climate narrative, ameliorating credibility, which in turn might help to acquire top positions related to climate change.

### **1.3 Bilateral partnerships and reciprocity**

Next to strategically portraying itself as a credible actor, bilateral partnerships make up another type of strategy Fiji engages in. "One of the strategies that Fiji has employed [to acquire prominent international positions pertaining to the issue of climate change, e.g. COP23 Presidency] is to invest heavily in its international relations and use political bargaining to leverage itself as an important player." (K. Narayan, personal communication, May 24, 2018). It leverages every bilateral meeting with other states to discuss and raise awareness for the issue of climate change (K. Narayan, personal communication, May 24, 2018). This diplomatic strategy is also put to practice when Fiji tries to convince larger units, such as China, India, or Indonesia, to cut their GHG emissions. As Mr. Narayan puts it: "Fiji plays on

the need for these larger countries to have political influence over the Pacific islands region and enforces this during the bilateral meetings with these countries” (K. Narayan, personal communication, May 24, 2018). These remarks emphasize the importance of bilateral partnerships and the region’s geographical location.

The interest of larger countries in the Pacific region, as identified by Mr. Narayan, is also reflected by a statement of the European Commission concerning its partnership with the Pacific: “The growing geostrategic importance of the Pacific . . . has made this region an emerging foreign policy priority for both the EU and many of its strategic partners such as the US, Japan, China, Russia and India.” (European Commission, 2012, p. 2). Scholars such as Stringer (2006, p. 548) recognize the strategic location of the Pacific as well: “. . . despite their small size, Pacific island microstates [Stringer adopts a threshold of 1 million inhabitants] are not pawns because of their possession of sovereignty and their ownership of geopolitically or economically relevant territory . . .” In other words, Fiji’s geographical location creates opportunities for the small state, supplying it with more clout in bilateral negotiations, including negotiations concerning climate change.

In the upcoming section it will be clarified what extensive bilateral ties between a small and a larger nation can look like, explaining the effect it can have on Fiji’s prominent presence in the climate realm.

### ***Reciprocity***

“Fiji’s international affairs motto [*sic*] is “Friends to all” meaning she says to other countries, that if you are nice to us we will be reciprocate by supporting your courses as well.” (K. Narayan, personal communication, May 24, 2018). The Prime Minister alluded the same motto in his address to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), explicitly stating that Fiji is ‘friends to all and enemies to none’ (Bainimarama, 2014). However, in a more recent speech to the UNGA, it seems as if Fiji is departing from this foreign policy principle, as the country wishes to pick its friends ‘in a more discerning manner’, i.e. devoting more attention to their counterparts’ respect for human rights and state sovereignty (Bainimarama, 2016). Though it sounds promising, this new standard appears to be in conflict with the good bilateral relations Fiji and Indonesia enjoy, despite Indonesia’s violation of the human rights of West Papuans, as will be elaborated on below.

Mr. Narayan himself joined the Fiji Government delegation to the 2016 UN Climate Change Conference in Marrakech (COP22), the conference following the 2015 COP21 in Paris, which led to the well-known ‘Paris Agreement’. It was the COP22 in Marrakech, however, where Fiji voiced its ambition to preside over the next conference, the 2017 COP23. A state from the Asia-Pacific region would be appointed the Presidency. As Mr. Narayan emphasized: “No island state had dared before to host the presidency due to logistics and budgetary constraints.”, followed by “No other country at COP22 in Marrakech wanted to be seen as a villain that blocked such an opportunity to be given to a small island

state for the very first time.” (K. Narayan, personal communication, May 24, 2018). In spite of that, another candidate presented itself, namely Indonesia (Lal, 2016). Both states had to compete for the Presidency. Indonesia took a step back, which can be accounted for as follows:

Indonesia provided funding support to rebuild school[s] after Tropical Cyclone Winston devastated Fiji in 2016 and Fiji supports Indonesia’s claims to West Papua despite Indonesia’s human rights violation[s] on the West Papuans and West Papua’s call for independence. So in the end Indonesia withdraw [*sic*] its intention to bid from [*sic*: for the] COP23 Presidency. (K. Narayan, personal communication, May 24, 2018).

The above gives a proper illustration of what a certain reciprocal bilateral relationship between two states can look like, and what implications this might have for a nation’s bid to host an important conference. In this case a conference where that offered Fiji a prestigious platform to raise its concerns, spread its norm, and to launch climate initiatives. All in all it can be concluded that small states play political games, just like the larger ones do.

#### **1.4 Fiji’s neighbors, too small?**

In order to assess what effect scale, so the size of a state, has on the ability of such state to champion the need for climate action, the following section will compare Fiji with one of its smallest Pacific neighbors, based on their numbers of inhabitants: Tuvalu.<sup>5</sup> This comparison between a small (Fiji) and a micro-state (Tuvalu) will allow for a greater understanding of the importance of resources available to these countries and the effect of these resources on their climate combat.

Due to the rapid pace at which sea-levels rise, Tuvalu, a country with almost 11,000 inhabitants, is facing a so-called ‘existential threat’; a threat to its physical existence. In other words, there is a high probability that, in the near future, Tuvalu’s atolls will be swallowed by the Pacific Ocean. As the documentary “Climate Refugees” emphasizes, Tuvalu could become the first nation to completely vanish from the world map because of climate change (Nash, 2010). Fiji’s former UN Ambassador, Mr. Peter Thomson, highlighted the difference between Fiji and Tuvalu in an interview, underlining that even though climate change jeopardizes communities in Fiji, Fiji’s neighbors such as Tuvalu and Kiribati face a threat to their existence as they are lower-lying ‘atoll Republics’ in contrast to the higher volcanic islands of Fiji (South-South News, 2011). As a result, it is crucial for Tuvalu to get its message across and to trigger a global response. Tuvalu is, however, a significantly smaller state, so the forthcoming paragraphs will delve into Tuvalu’s strategy, building on the perspectives gained through

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<sup>5</sup> An additional section to put this research in greater context, and to meet the requirements made by the Leiden University Honours College: HC Science & Society with regard to an extension of the Bachelor’s thesis.

the questions answered by Tuvalu's Permanent Representative of Tuvalu to the United Nations, Mr. Samuelu Laloni. <sup>6</sup>

As discussed, bilateral partnerships are crucial to Fiji's climate combat and its opportunities to take the lead of this combat that the entire Pacific is faced with. Its national policies reflect the state's willingness to tackle climate change and to function as an example to the rest of its Pacific neighbors. In Fiji's National Climate Change Policy it is stated that the nation's policy vision is as follows: "A responsible and *exemplary* Fiji, *leading* the Pacific in combating climate change and achieving resilience, while attaining sustainable development" (Government of the Republic of Fiji, 2012, p.17). When comparing the national climate policies of Fiji and Tuvalu, it stands out that these terms are absent from Tuvalu's Climate Change Policy (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade, Tourism, Environment and Labour, 2012). With regard to this difference, Mr. Laloni, Tuvalu's Ambassador to the UN, commented the following:

A country can put whatever it wants in its national policies as long as it has the manpower and resources to fulfil them. Fiji as the second biggest economy of the 14 pacific small island developing states, compared to others, is better equipped with the finances and human resources to paly [*sic*] a leading role in many of the issues concerning the pacific. (S. Laloni, personal communication, June 11, 2018)

The difference in financial and human resources between the two Pacific island countries, as underlined by Mr. Laloni above, is, *inter alia*, reflected by the asymmetrical budgets of the two countries. When scrutinizing the countries' national budgets, or 'budget estimates', Fiji has a considerably higher budget allocated to its Foreign Affairs department compared to Tuvalu. The budget (2017) allotted to Fiji's Ministry of Foreign Affairs amounts to a total of 43.9 million Fijian dollars (FJD), which equals to approximately 17.8 million euros (EUR) (Ministry of Economy, 2017, p. 55). The budget (2017) assigned to Tuvalu's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Environment, Trade, Tourism and Labour on the other hand, adds up to a total of 3.5 million Tuvaluan dollars (TVD), which makes approximately 2.26 million euros (EUR) (Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, 2016, p. 108). A difference of roughly 15,54 million euros constitutes a substantial financial gab between Fiji and Tuvalu, which has its implications on their international presence and the maintenance of good global relationships.

As put forward by Tuvalu's UN Ambassador Mr. Laloni, Tuvalu only has a few overseas missions, five in total, impeding the nation's ability to take a leading role, such as Fiji does, in combatting climate change (S. Laloni, personal communication, June 11, 2018). In 2000, Fiji counted ten overseas missions, the largest number within the 'Pacific' category (Mohamed, 2002, p. 17). Today, Fiji maintains twenty-one overseas missions (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.), and thus enjoys an even

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<sup>6</sup> The completed questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

broader representation. As posed by Mr. Laloni, such global representation is necessary to “support its leadership in international meetings and important issues such as climate change” (S. Laloni, personal communication, June 11, 2018). On top of its scarce financial resources, Tuvalu also has a shortage of human resources, or personnel, as its environment department employs solely “a handful of people” (S. Laloni, personal communication, June 11, 2018). Therefore, it is almost self-evident that Fiji is taking the lead.

Even though Tuvalu lacks financial and human resources, it nevertheless employs certain strategies in its effort to raise awareness for climate change. When asking what these strategies consisted of, Mr. Samuelu Laloni commented the following:

Tuvalu takes every opportunity to raise the issue of climate change very seriously whether it is the UNFCCC process or meetings in any regional and international fora. We are open to forming appropriate partnerships to raise the issue of climate change wherever possible. This is critical as small island countries and economies would need partnership[s] to be able to share their story and issues more effectively. (Tuvalu’s UN Ambassador S. Laloni, personal communication, June 11, 2018)

It is interesting to note the similarities between the strategies of Fiji and Tuvalu, both seizing every meeting, whether bilateral, regional, or international, as an opportunity to share their message with a larger audience.

In spite of Tuvalu’s efforts, it remains strongly dependent on a larger island neighbor such as Fiji. When asking to what extent Fiji is important to Tuvalu in its fight against climate change, Mr. Samuelu Laloni commenced his reply by stating that Fiji is “Very important” to Tuvalu, followed by:

Fiji is Tuvalu’s closest neighbor and provides Tuvalu with over [sic] 90% of its imports. In fact, Fiji has committed to helping Tuvalu and Kiribati should climate change force people to abandon their lands. Also, as the current Chair of the COP process, it is a very important partner in the fight against climate change. (S. Laloni, personal communication, June 11, 2018)

This shows Tuvalu’s strong dependence on Fiji’s leading efforts to fight climate change and raise international awareness at fora such as the COP23. One has to be careful, however, with nullifying the accomplishments of countries such as Tuvalu, as underlined by Mr. Narayan, who states the following from his Fijian perspective:

It is incorrect to state that other Pacific island states are not prominently present at international forums just on the basis that they are not chairing major meetings. Kiribati, Tuvalu, Nauru, Vanuatu, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, PNG [Papua New Guinea] are all present and showing

leadership at international forums in various forms and levels in accordance with their ability. (K. Narayan, personal communication, May 24, 2018)

Mr. Narayan added: “Tuvalu has been a vocal country on climate change for a number of years – even a the [*sic*] phrase was coined “Save Tuvalu, Save the World”, referring to Tuvalu being the ‘canary in the coal mine’ for climate impacts.” (K. Narayan, personal communication, May 24, 2018).

## **Conclusion and discussion**

The objective of this thesis was to unravel what underlying factors could account for Fiji's prominent position within the climate realm, despite its small size and remote geographical location in the Pacific. Based on the analysis conducted above, this thesis concludes that Fiji, as a small island developing state remotely located in the Pacific ocean, does its outmost best to present itself as a credible and trustworthy actor on the world stage, nourishes its bilateral relationships with middle and larger powers such as Indonesia, and possesses enough resources have a fair worldwide representation that can support its climate leadership. This satisfies the expectation of Fiji's likely prioritization of the issue of climate change, devoting its resources to the particular issue, and portraying itself as a credible actor on the world stage. The importance of bilateral relations, however, and that of Fiji's geostrategic location, were not expected to be as important as the analysis proved. Therefore, the key take away of this research is that small states, especially due to the Pacific's strategic location, can somewhat steer relations with larger states on this basis, which aided Fiji in gaining influential positions at climate fora. "Each move is a well calculated [one]" (K. Narayan, personal communication, May 24, 2018).

This thesis by no means claims to have provided a comprehensive analysis of the small state of Fiji, but it presents a starting point, gaining an insight in the behavior and strategies employed by Fiji in a very concise way, within the boundaries of this research project. Therefore, there are more avenues to be explored in the case of possible future research. Since this thesis primarily focused on the state-level of analysis, a recommendation for future research would be to consider looking the institutional structure of the country under scrutiny, or at possible influential individuals such as the nation's Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama or former President of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Mr. Peter Thomson in Fiji's case. Furthermore, the interviews formed an essential part of this research, providing valuable insights that were not easy, or not at all, to be found in other available sources. Though the two obtained interviews were of great added value, the self-administered questionnaire did not allow for interaction and for the possibility to ask for a clarification on certain responses.

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## **Appendices**

The two completed questionnaires that have been referred to as ‘personal communication’ throughout this thesis are added below. These are the original documents that Mr. K. Narayan (Appendix A) and Mr. S. Laloni (Appendix B) received and have filled out by themselves in Fiji and New York, at their own pace. No changes have been made to the questions and answers, to the format of the document, or to any spelling mistakes made by the respondents. Both Mr. K. Narayan and Mr. S. Laloni have granted permission to include their responses into this thesis, including references to their names.

Hereby I would also like to sincerely thank Mr. Krishneil Narayan and Mr. Samuelu Laloni (including his assistant Mrs. Tara Samuelu) for taking time to fill out the questions and sharing valuable insights.

### **Appendix A: Questionnaire filled out by Mr. Krishneil Narayan, Fiji**

*Consultant for Sustainable Development and Climate Change (Fiji)*

### **Appendix B: Questionnaire filled out by Mr. Samuelu Laloni, New York (Tuvalu Mission UN)**

*Permanent Representative of Tuvalu to the United Nations (UN)*

## Appendix A: Questionnaire filled out by Mr. Krishneil Narayan, Fiji

### Bachelor Thesis: Fiji's Climate Campaign

*Dear Mr. Krishneil Narayan,*

*I would like to thank you in advance for filling out the questions, this will be of enormous help and of great value to my analysis.*

*I would like to ask you the ten questions presented below. You are free to note down any thoughts, opinions, and comments as you like. There is no limit to the length of your answers. The research question of my thesis is as follows: How has Fiji, despite its small size and remote geographical location in the Pacific Ocean, succeeded in attaining such a prominent role within the international arena regarding the issue of climate change?*

**Name respondent:** Mr. Krishneil Narayan

**Date:** ...24 May 2018

- 
1. What strategies does Fiji employ to raise awareness for climate change internationally?

Answer: Fiji uses every platform to speak about climate change. The current administration/Government in Fiji has made climate change one of its top priorities. As climate change in the “in-thing” and attracts a lot of money in terms of overseas aid and development, in particular for small islands and vulnerable states, it is strategic to leverage every international meetings, every bilateral meetings with other countries to talk about climate change.

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2. What factors make it difficult for Fiji to attract international attention and how does Fiji overcome this?

Answer: Fiji is classified as a small island developing state (SIDS) which like other SIDS, is usually considered to have little political power as compared to larger economies. This means Fiji has to fight international to attract attention.

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3. How come Fiji is so present at international forums pertaining to the issue of climate change (e.g. COP23, UN Oceans Conference, invite to the Belt and Road Forum)? Why is in particular Fiji appointed to fulfill such prominent positions internationally, and what tactics and instruments are used to secure these positions?

Answer: One of the strategies that Fiji has employed is to invest heavily in its international relations and use political bargaining to leverage itself as an important player. As a member of the UN Fiji has an equal vote. Fiji's international affairs moto is “Friends to all” meaning she says to other countries, that if you are nice to us we will be reciprocate by supporting your courses as well. Fiji is a hub of the Pacific islands region, and as one of the central countries

from this region it shares considerable support from our other Pacific island countries, as well as other small island countries from around the world. Fiji leverages that support to nominate herself to various prominent position internationally. Each move is a well calculated. First it was leading the various forums, committees, and then becoming the chair of the G77 & China bloc, followed by extensive lobbying to get elected to as the President of the UN General Assembly. Using the Presidency of the UNGA, Fiji moved to champion the cause of Oceans sustainability (which is one of the SDGs) as the ocean plays an integral part of our island life.

I was part of the Fiji Government delegation to COP22 in Marrakech in 2016 when Fiji announced that we would like to bid for the COP23 Presidency. Because climate change is an important issue for the Pacific region, Fiji saw an opportunity to step up, nominate its intention to become the COP23 Presidency as a nominee from the Asia – Pacific region whose turn it was to host the next COP. No island state had dared before to host the presidency due to logistics and budgetary constraints. No other country at COP22 in Marrakech wanted to be seen as a villain that blocked such an opportunity to be given to a small island state for the very first time. Indonesia had also bid for the COP23 Presidency but when Fiji wanted to host the presidency, Indonesia withdrew. Indonesia and Fiji enjoy good bilateral relations. Indonesia provided funding support to rebuild school after Tropical Cyclone Winston devastated Fiji in 2016 and Fiji supports Indonesia's claims to West Papua despite Indonesia's human rights violation on the West Papuans and West Papua's call for independence. So in the end Indonesia withdraw its intention to bid from COP23 Presidency. With the support from AOSIS bloc, the G77 & China bloc which consists of 130+ countries and the Asia –Pacific grouping at UNFCCC, Fiji was approved to become the COP23 President. One thing to remember is that Fiji was the chair of the G77 and China bloc during the COP19 negotiations in 2013 during which time Fiji's leadership style of keeping the unity of this bloc (which has 130+ members) were highly commended so Fiji had proven its leadership worth already.

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4. The Vanuatu Independent News Magazine included the following quote by you as, at the time, the coordinator of PICAN: *"The European Union, China, India and others are already forming alliances to support the continuation of the Paris Agreement. Even without the United States, climate action under the Paris Agreement will continue. Not even Trump can derail action on climate change."* (June 2, 2017). This leads me to the question: How does Fiji try to influence larger states (such as China, India and the U.S.) to get these states to reduce their emissions? What techniques is Fiji using and are Fiji's efforts successful?

Answer: Fiji plays on the need for these larger countries to have political influence over the Pacific islands region and enforces this during the bilateral meetings with these countries.

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5. Fiji's National Climate Change Policy of 2012 states that Fiji's policy vision is as follows: *"A responsible and exemplary Fiji, leading the Pacific in combating climate change and achieving resilience, while attaining sustainable development"*. How is Fiji, despite its small size, able to take on this leading role?

Answer: I think I have already answered in other questions about Fiji's leadership role in the Pacific.

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6. What makes Fiji a credible and trustworthy actor on the world stage?

Answer: Fiji maintains good relations with other members of the UN on the basis of equality, non-interference in the internal affairs of all States and respect for sovereign rights of all peoples and their territorial integrity. [Note: Mr. Narayan reiterated Fiji's foreign policy statement here]

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7. I noticed you attended the 'National Stakeholder Workshop' on the Fiji Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDS) (May 23, 2018). I came across the following statement: "Officiating at the workshop Attorney-General and Minister responsible for Climate Change, Hon. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum highlighted that developing LEDS for Fiji will set an example for the Pacific, as it will be the first LEDS for a Pacific small island developing state." How does Fiji manage to pull this off? Are the other small island developing states looking up to Fiji?

Answer: All of the Pacific island states have financial and technical constraints to formulate such strategies and policies. They rely on outside finance & technical assistance in order to achieve such policies. Similar is the case for LEDS. Fiji has used the attention from its COP23 Presidency to get financial & technical support from Global Green Growth Institute to develop LEDS before other Pacific island countries, and in doing so, is leading the way. Other Pacific island countries could use Fiji's experience as an example to see how they could develop their LEDS.

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8. In an interview with the *Pacific Island News Association* (March 23, 2017) you mentioned the following: "Fiji has a chance to leave a legacy in the global climate talks [COP23] by sharing information and building consensus on ambitious policy measures to tackle the extraction of fossil fuels." What about Fiji's role as a provider of information on adaptation and mitigation, does Fiji have a good amount of knowledge and expertise on climate change that it can offer to, and share with, the rest of the world?

Answer: That statement was referring to Fiji being in a position to leave a lasting legacy through its COP23 Presidency by ensuring strong and ambitious policy measures to move the world away from dependency on fossil fuels.

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9. I read you advocate for youth involvement and participation in climate initiatives. What role do youngsters play for Fiji, and how do they help Fiji to achieve its climate goals?

Answer: Youth have an important role to play in ensuring climate action. We try to find ways for youth to get involved in national climate change decision making by regularly meeting with officials to enforce youth positions. It is difficult for Fijian youth to penetrate that space but we have noted an increasing interest from Fijian youth to get actively involved in coming up with new solutions.

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10. How does Fiji differ from other Pacific island states? How come other Pacific island states such as Kiribati, Tuvalu, Nauru and Vanuatu are not as prominently present at international forums as Fiji?

Answer: Fiji is the central hub of the Pacific region. In terms of climate challenges, all Pacific island states are in the same canoe, including Fiji, tackling similar challenges. It is incorrect to state that other Pacific island states are not prominently present at international forums just on the basis that they are not chairing major meetings. Kiribati, Tuvalu, Nauru, Vanuatu, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, PNG are all present and showing leadership at international forums in various forms and levels in accordance with their ability.

Marshall Islands has been a leader at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) negotiations on shipping emissions for the past year which lead to IMO agreeing in April 2018 to a target to reduce carbon emission by at least 50% compared with 2008 levels by 2050. In 2018, Marshall Islands will take over the chairman ship the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) from the current chair Ethiopia. Kiribati has also been the chair of the CVF in the past. In 2015, Marshall Islands Minister, the late Tony de Brum was instrumental in getting an agreement on the 1.5 degrees Celsius target in the Paris Agreement on climate change.

Nauru has been the chair the Alliance of Small Islands States (AOSIS) bloc at the UNFCCC. Samoa hosted the 2014 UN SIDS Conference, a major UN meeting. Vanuatu was to host this year's Commonwealth Heads of Movement Meeting (CHOGM) in April but it was only moved back to London due to infrastructure damage in Vanuatu from Cyclone Pam. Tuvalu has been a vocal country on climate change for a number of years – even a the phrase was coined "Save Tuvalu, Save the World", referring to Tuvalu being the 'canary in the coal mine' for climate impacts.

Any other comments: ...

*Thank you so much for answering my questions. I wish to incorporate your response into my thesis, and therefore I would like to ask you if you agree to, so if you consent with, me quoting parts of your answers or referring to your name throughout my work? YES / NO.*

**Yes.**

*Thank you again, 'Bedankt!' (Dutch) or I believe as the Fijians say: 'Vinaka vakalevu!'.*

*Tesse Albers*

*Leiden University, The Netherlands*

## Appendix B: Questionnaire filled out by Mr. Samuelu Laloni, New York (Tuvalu Mission UN)

### Bachelor Thesis: Fiji's Climate Campaign Tuvalu focus

Dear Mr. Samuelu Laloni,

I would like to thank you in advance for filling out the questions, this will be of enormous help and of great value to my analysis. Thank you to Mrs. Tara Samuelu as well, for reaching out to you with my questions.

I would like to ask you the five questions presented below. You are free to note down any thoughts, opinions, and comments as you like. There is no limit to the length of your answers. The research question of my thesis is as follows: How has Fiji, despite its small size and remote geographical location in the Pacific Ocean, succeeded in attaining such a prominent role within the international arena regarding the issue of climate change? I am also looking at Fiji's Pacific neighbors, and the similarities and differences between **Tuvalu** and Fiji in their capabilities or capacities to champion the need for climate action.

**Name respondent:** Mr. Samuelu Laloni

**Date:** ...11 June 2018

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1. What makes it difficult for Tuvalu to attract international attention?

Answer: I believe Tuvalu has been very successful in attracting international attention to the issue of climate change given the resources it has and as one of the smallest of the Pacific island countries. At 26 square kilometers of land area and a population of almost 11,000 it is quite different from other Pacific countries as Fiji. If we can improve on our effort to attract international attention, we will need more finances than what we now have.

But international attention is not just about hearing our voices. It is also about understanding and commitment to actually doing something. For climate change, it is implementation of the pledges and commitments in the Paris Agreement. Without enhanced and accelerated implementation, attracting international attentions, as just that, is meaningless for it will not save the most vulnerable to climate change.

We need international attention with political commitment for enhanced and accelerated implementation of the Paris Agreement. So far, there is much international attention but without the necessary political commitment to act.

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2. What strategies does Tuvalu employ to raise awareness for climate change internationally, and are Tuvalu's efforts successful?

Answer: Tuvalu takes every opportunity to raise the issue of climate change very seriously whether it is the UNFCCC process or meetings in any regional and international fora. We

are open to forming appropriate partnerships to raise the issue of climate change wherever possible. This is critical as small island countries and economies would need partnership to be able to share their story and issues more effectively. As a small low-lying island, our extreme vulnerability and the existential threat of climate change is the message that we have always try to share and raise awareness on climate change. Existential threat raises many questions especially human rights issues. Our issues of rights to land, food, territorial seas, etc.... requires a serious attention and discussions on the peace and security implications of climate change. These are issues that pacific island countries have and will always raise in discussions in the UN.

- 
3. Fiji's National Climate Change Policy of 2012 states that Fiji's policy vision is as follows: *"A responsible and exemplary Fiji, leading the Pacific in combating climate change and achieving resilience, while attaining sustainable development"*. Why is Fiji taking on this leading role, and not another Pacific island country such as Tuvalu? Adding to this, what is the Pacific's opinion on Fiji's climate leadership, on Fiji taking the spotlight and hosting important climate events (COP23, UN Ocean Conference, attending Belt and Road Forum etc.)?

Answer: Again, it comes down to capacity to host and chair international meetings. One would also need to have a fair representation around the world to support its leadership in international meetings and important issues such as climate change. Tuvalu only has five diplomatic missions around the world and a small environment department that employees only a handful of people. What we are doing now is raising the issue of climate change etc.. to the best we can given the resources we have and we have been very successful at that.

A country can put whatever it wants in its national policies as long as it has the manpower and resources to fulfil them. Fiji as the second biggest economy of the 14 pacific small island developing states, compared to others, is better equipped with the finances and human resources to paly a leading role in many of the issues concerning the pacific.

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4. How important is Fiji to Tuvalu in Tuvalu's fight against climate change?

Answer: Very important. The pacific island countries for example in the UN is a close and strong advocate group with the larger and bigger economies such as Fiji, playing a very important role. Fiji is Tuvalu's closest neighbor and provides Tuvalu with ovr 90% of its imports. In fact, Fiji has committed to helping Tuvalu and Kiribati should climate change force people to abandon their lands. Also, as the current Chair of the COP process, it is a very important partner in the fight against climate change.

- 
5. In what ways does Fiji serve as an example to Tuvalu and the Pacific as a whole?

Answer: That we, as the pacific, can play important and influential roles in the international meetings and decision making on issues that affect us in the pacific. What we need in the pacific is solidarity on issues of common concerns and we have been very successful at that, in terms of climate change and oceans.

Any other comments: ...

*Thank you so much for answering my questions, and for broadening my perspective on the subject matter. I wish to incorporate your response into my thesis, and therefore I would like to ask you if you agree to, so if you consent with, me quoting your answers or referring to your name throughout my work? YES*

*Thank you again, or "Bedankt"! (Thank you in Dutch).*

*Tesse Albers*

*Leiden University: International Relations and Organisations BA*

*The Netherlands*