

# GLOBALLY UNASSISTED TUVALUANS AFFECTED BY CLIMATE CHANGES: OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS, HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE “NO FUTURE”?

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## Introduction

Nowadays, the Island State of Tuvalu<sup>1</sup> suffers from climate change-derived phenomena. According to the reports issued by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), these phenomena due to anthropogenic actions taken across the globe in the last century. Therefore, they result from a type of economy and modernity that share risks (BECK, 1992). The environmental change occurred in a similar way in the past, which does not presuppose a type of cyclical understanding of the climate, but raises questions about the nature of the current climate changes that we, “modern people”, do not fully understand.

Tuvalu is an island state comprising nine atolls (circular coral formations that vertically rise from the seabed) from North to South, namely: Nanumea, Niutau, Nanumanga, Nui, Vaitupu, Nukufetau, Funafuti (State capital), Nukulaelae and Niulakita (currently unpopulated), which form an island. It is said that there are nine atolls and eight islands because the uninhabited atoll is not counted. In addition to the narrow strip of land that compose the territory of Tuvalu, the State has 360 nautical miles, and its boundaries are established as follows: Kiribati, to the North and Northwest; Tokelau, to the East; Samoa, to the Southeast; Wallis, Futuna and Fiji to the South; and Solomon Islands, to the West.

Thus, when one thinks about the climate issues currently affecting Tuvalu, the question that implicitly permeates the other problematizations is: are the global-warming and climate-change-derived phenomena of anthropogenic, mixed (terrestrial dynamics, human action and extra-planetary factors) nature or is it impossible to measure them according to the universal mathematical models that support climate scientists to make prognosis and policies addressing the mitigation of and the adaptation to climate changes? One possible answer to this question is that there is no absolute certainty, especially in the ideas of modern science - even if it is the motive of this science. However, there are

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controversies surrounding the phenomenon when it is articulated in the near future, but it becomes real when it is problematized based on the affected ones.

Thus, the aim of the current study is to understand how the climate issues currently experienced by the Island State of Tuvalu are internally and externally treated through documents, based on the analytical citizenship categories, on human rights and on sovereignty in relation to the climate changes<sup>ii</sup>.

## The Tuvaluan specificity

Anchored in the case study methodology (STEINER, 2011), the current study addresses Tuvalu, which is one of the smallest and most remote countries located in the Pacific Ocean. Its geographical territory is extremely tiny- approximately 26 km<sup>2</sup> - with low altitude of approximately 4.5 meters above sea level.

The country became independent in 1978. However, it is a parliamentary constitutional monarchy with universal suffrage, i.e., according to the Tuvaluan Constitution, the Queen of England, Elizabeth II, is the head of state and she is represented in the territory by the governor general, who is appointed by the first Minister in consultation with the Parliament.

The country is economically insignificant. Its main sources are remittances sent by expatriates and by Tuvaluans living abroad, trust funds of international aid, Internet domain sale (tv), tourism (which in recent decades is virtually non-existent due to the impact in terms of frequency and intensity of climate phenomena affecting the island), etc.

In terms of climate science and technology, it can be said that Tuvalu, through meteorological centers of weather predictability, both nationally and in partnership with other States, produces reports that are the basis for documents demanding the international community to think the Tuvaluan environmental issues in terms of the possible mitigation and adaptive solutions offered by the countries, especially the developed ones. The climate measurement technologies of the meteorological center located in the country result from bargains in shares and tradings or from the humanitarian aid provided by global and/or regional agencies such as the United Nations (UN) or the Pacific Commonwealth.

The most severe climate issues affecting the country are the salinization of drinking water sources and fertile lands, the increased frequency and intensity of several environmental factors such as La Niña, the seawater elevation, among others. In other words, the Tuvaluan environment fragmentation is linked to the dismantling of the country's economy and politics. In addition to the fragmentation of the cooperative food production model that should internally circulate within the territory, the strong dependence on other countries, along with the loss of territory due to the seawater advancement, undermines the political effectiveness in ensuring citizenship and national sovereignty.

Thus, the Tuvaluan State dismantling due to the climate phenomena impacts not only expresses the erosion of a country, as some International Relation theorists affiliated to realism and neorealism perspectives insist on arguing, explaining that people and social groups disappeared and will continue to disappear throughout history. The fragmentation of the Island State of Tuvalu and of other island countries (developing, poor, or mostly

former colonies) in the contemporary world does not only represent asymmetrical power relations in structural terms. It also represents relations that permeate both the internal logic of each country and the regional and global logics embedded in a colonial heritage in which concerns the management of science and politics, based on a logic of reproduction from the center to the periphery and on the denial of the center to solve the periphery problems.

According to Hilia Vavae at the 2011 Conference on Greenhouse Effect held in Cairns (Australia), Tuvalu has been facing increasingly frequent and intense floodings in the last fifteen years. Most of them occur from January to March and from October to December due to the phenomenon La Niña, which affects the region by abnormally elevating the Pacific seawaters and changing the global climate, especially the rainfalls in several locations in the globe (EPU, 2001).

According to Tuala Katea (a scientist in the country's meteorological center), the island state will probably disappear in the next forty or fifty years, and the irony is that Tuvalu insignificantly contributes to the global warming and, therefore, to the climate changes (VITOLA, 2007). In other words, according to the Tuvalu climate scientists, the future scenarios of the country converge with the scenarios created by the hypercomplex climate modeling computers of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the climate changes are mainly linked to anthropogenic factors, which are mostly promoted by the developed countries.

Tuvalu Paeniu, who was the prime minister at the time of the Kyoto Conference in 1997, said that Tuvalu is one of the smallest and most remote countries in the planet, with palm trees and beaches, the type of place that most people would see as a paradise. However, the tragedy exists and tends to get worse due to the seawater elevation of 88 centimeters predicted for the next century, fact that could turn Tuvalu into the new Atlantis (EPU, 2001). This phenomenon does not only occur in Tuvalu, but also in several island and continental countries worldwide.

Nowadays, twenty-five million people worldwide live in "forced exodus" situation due to environmental disasters<sup>iii</sup> (DEUTSCHE WELLE, 2008). According to the Myers (2001) the estimate for 2050 is 200 million people. Thus, Tuvalu may be considered an illustrative unit in terms of comparison because its contingency is small although similar to other island and continental countries currently suffering from phenomena arising from climate change and from global warming.

The next section of the current study analyzes four official documents (MAY, 2004; SÁ-SILVA, ALMEIDA E GUINDANI, 2009) in order to discuss the Tuvaluan ideology, which, in turn, influences the way of doing politics and seeking climate solutions. It also addresses a contemporary alternative of regional identity in the way of coping with climate change and claiming to the international society to help solving the climate-change-related problems the developing and poor countries face, as well as the political articulation of developed countries regarding the contemporary climate issues.

## Official documents: the Tuvaluan ideology and the international society against the climate change

The climate issues involving the Island State of Tuvalu has epistemological value to the Social Sciences literature and to the Political Theory, since it leads to reflections about key analytical categories, such as national State, citizenship and human rights. Thus, four official documents were analyzed in order to demonstrate this relevance, namely: the Tuvaluan Constitution; the 2009 Declaration on Climate Change issued by the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS); the minute of the 2007 United Nations Security Council Meeting, N. 5663 (SC/9000); and the subsequent Kyoto Protocol resolution (UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK, 1998), which was developed in 1997 and ratified in 1999.

The first document analyzed in the current study was the 1978 Tuvaluan Constitution. However, only the aspects related to the Tuvaluan understanding of citizenship (rights), sovereignty and human rights were herein addressed in order to consider whether there is specificity in the way the country understands politics, which would allow distinguishing it from the actions of the other international community countries towards the climate mitigation and adaptive measures.

In normative terms, Tuvalu is very similar to most countries in the international society. The country declares itself as an excluding political community (MOULIN, 2000) that defines citizens based on a nationality principle by means of a Constitution (rational political accession). Thus, according to a normative legal set that aggregates and disseminates the fundamental values of the Tuvaluan people, the Nation-State is understood as the centralization and/or organization of a sovereign state power internally made by a specific legal order bounded by national borders.

In terms of political extension, the idea of people is similar to that of Nation. It runs through the legal delimitation of border and is characterized by a common origin formed by language, culture and history. The Tuvaluan Nation was formed by Spanish and British values, since Tuvalu is a former colony of Spain and, subsequently, of England. Consequently, the Tuvaluan dialect is little used among the citizens and local religious traditions are prohibited due to the large number of Protestantism followers.

According to the Tuvaluan Constitution, the principle of citizenship outlines that citizens are individuals bearing the principle of nationality, which is understood as the legal bond that specifies the subjects that are part of the state political society and that, through it, ensure the legal status by which a person belongs or not to a particular country acknowledged by international law.

Thus, citizenship is considered a legal status, i.e., the basis for claiming rights (not just a bond that requires responsibilities), which underlies the relationship between the individual and the political community in which this individual has full rights and pledges loyalty to the group (CORTINA, 2001). Therefore, the Tuvaluan citizens are subjects of law, although there are other forms of belonging, such as residence permits, and the figure of the guest worker or refugee.

Citizenship is defined in the Island State of Tuvalu as it is in the Constitutions of the American continent countries, such as Brazil. In the Island State, nationality

underlies the principle of citizenship arising from the positive law and is owned by the subjects of law through the *jus solo* (State land) or *jus sanguini* (blood ties, children of native individuals), except for illegitimate children. Thus, the Tuvaluan nationality is linked to the matrilineal principle.

According to Habermas (2001), the state territory circumscribes the validity scope of the law sanctioned by the State, i.e., nationality is defined in relation to the State territory. With respect to the internal scope of the territorial State, on the one hand, the people of the State emerge as potential subjects of a legislation composed by democratically gathered citizens and, on the other hand, the society is a potential object of their action. The territorial principle results in the separation of international relations in the scope of state sovereignty. The State domain is externally based on other subjects of international law and on the right to the mutual recognition of the State borders' integrity.

Internationally, the Constitution states that the autonomy of each state unit provides peaceful communication between sovereign entities. In legal terms, autonomy corresponds to sovereignty. In other words, it is the place wherein most citizens express their preferences, determine their collective course, and establish the individual action space (HELD, 1991a, p. 197).

According to the Constitution, human dignity, which is one of the pillars of human rights, as well as the individual freedoms, is inherent to every human being, and respecting it is the exclusive duty of each Nation-State, based on the idea of an achieved social minimum (BOBBIO, 2004). The body of rights, both in the present and in the future, results from gifts granted by God, who is considered and exalted as the Almighty.

In normative terms, the Tuvaluan foreign policy guidelines are based on principles such as peace and cooperation, and on the respect for the Charter of Human Rights regarding the equal rights and self-determination of peoples. International relations should be based on self-help, as well as the on the dissemination of courtesy and consensus values by means of personhood, i.e., a different principle of bureaucratic impersonality.

Thus, based on the aforementioned assumption that the Tuvaluan foreign policy is solely guided by self-help, consensus and courtesy between relations in the Pacific, it can be said that the second document called the Declaration on Climate Change, which was issued by AOSIS in 2009, is helpful to understand the Tuvaluan performance in regional terms, as well as the performance of other States forming the AOSIS<sup>iv</sup> and other alliances in the search for climate mitigation and adaptive solutions.

According to the document, Tuvalu and the other countries forming the alliance claim in the international environment, especially to the developed countries, for the establishment of a legally binding agreement regarding the gas emission rates that generate the greenhouse effect, and call for the development of adaptation and mitigation policies in countries facing the phenomena caused by climate change. These requirements are based on the perception of the imminent threat faced by the AOSIS members, which results from the increase and frequency of the phenomena derived from the global climate change and from the fragile sustainable development processes, which are understood as transformation processes (WCED, 1991).

The alliance nations are outraged by the non-compliance with the treaties to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions, as well as by the non-factuality of the mitigating policies agreed in the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and in the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. According to them, the developed countries (DCs) are responsible for speeding up the climate phenomena and for the burdens related to them, especially in small island states located in the Pacific and in other regions worldwide. Therefore, the DCs must offer assistance in terms of technical and economic capacity, and make legal agreements with well-defined deadlines and goals.

The slow pace of the international negotiations and consensus processes related to solving the problems caused by the climate change disappoints the forty-four alliance members and the four observers, who relate the emergence of vulnerabilities in their communities to the lack of action by several members who participated in the international climate negotiations.

AOSIS declares itself as a group of countries formed by small low-altitude islands and by coastal States whose common challenge is addressing the (sustainable) development, the environment of their territories, and the coping (mitigation and adaptation action) with climate vulnerabilities arising from the global climate change, through climate negotiations within the United Nations (UN) negotiating system (AOSIS, 2012).<sup>v</sup>

The claims are governed by rules and principles of International Law and based on the assumption of unequal existence in relation to the development and capacity levels of the States. Thus, the precautionary principle does not ignore the differences related to the amount of pollutant gases emitted by each country.

Therefore, the international society, which is characterized by a common mandatory minimum in which the States are the subjects of law, is the AOSIS-appeal receiver, since it is believed to have influence over the polluting countries. In this case, the international community would lead the DCs to take common but differentiated responsibilities towards the climate problems exclusively derived from actions taken within their own borders, as well as to lead global policies to combat greenhouse gas emissions.

The warning is based on the argument that the worst implications lie on security, since they are related to predictable threats, to human dimensions and, consequently, to the collective security of the States. This discussion was presented in the third document – the minute of the 2007 United Nations Security Meeting, N. 5663 (SC/9000) - after many discussions that interconnected climate change and securitization. The document addressed, for the first time, the possible climate change-related consequences to peace and security, as well as the relationship between energy security and climate security.

The document is extensive and the analysis focused on the Tuvaluan claim to the international society for public policies for the mitigation of and adaptation to climate changes through a decarbonization economy, which would help island countries not to lose their autonomy (sovereignty) and, therefore, would stop the forced exodus of people affected by climate phenomena to the DCs.

China claimed in a meeting that it was not up to the Security Council to discuss climate changes. Similarly, the developed countries (United States, England, among oth-



ers) said that the climate change is a socio-economic issue and that it should be dealt with in the UN General Assembly, due to its large representativeness.

The head of Papua New Guinea, who represented the Forum of Small Pacific Island States such as Tuvalu, argued that the impact caused by climate changes on the small island States was not less threatening and dangerous than the guns and bombs faced by the great nations during the twentieth century wars. He also argued that the Security Council is the main International Forum to manage these issues since it is in charge of protecting Human Rights, as well as the integrity and security of the States.

The end of the document presents the consensus that “everyone is responsible for finding joint solutions to the many problems arising from climate change”. According to the chairperson of the meeting, the British diplomat Margaret Beckett (2007), the climate changes are a matter of collective security in a world increasingly interdependent and fragile. In addition, in the long term, it is necessary to develop a global response to the matter. The diplomat exemplified that the increased number of people infected by diseases, as well as the spread of floods and hunger, may generate an intense unprecedented migration process, which will cause impact on the identity and social cohesion of entire communities. Similarly, there may be severe implications for the internal and external sovereignty of the countries, as well as multi-faceted cross-border disputes.

According to the permanent ambassador of Tuvalu to the United Nations, Afelle F. Pita (2007), the document issued by the Meeting is valuable since it addresses the first attempt by the members of the Council to discuss the climate change consequences to security and peace.

According to Pita (2007), in the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN General Assembly in 2005, the Government of Tuvalu highlighted the link between environmental security and climate change and supported the inclusion of the issue in the permanent agenda of the Security Council because, as it is known, it is of utmost importance for the survival of the State Island of Tuvalu. The global threat, which was based on a possible military conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, shall be now associated with a warming war in which the guns are replaced by smokestacks and exhaust pipes, i.e., a chemical war of immense proportions.

Pita (2007) also states that it is necessary to develop clean energy sources in all countries and communities. As for Tuvalu, it is observed that the country security itself is related to energy production. Thus, since the energy sector is not effective, the costs for local supply are very high. However, this problem would be easily solved if there was reliable sustainable energy based on efficient technologies.

The environmental security inclusion in the permanent agenda of the Security Council directly affects the stable members of the Council, namely: China, Russia, France, United Kingdom and United States. As it can be seen, these are some of the countries responsible for the highest greenhouse gas (GHG) emission rates and they are not signatories of international agreements and treaties related to the climate issue. This attitude can also be seen in the cautious stance adopted by developing countries, which fear the implementation of obligations to reduce the gas emission levels.

All of this relates to the idea of a world divided into sovereign States inserted in an international system whose mobility of individuals is controlled and provided by the state power and by conventions. Thus, only citizens of a State may require international mobility, and this limitation is one of the State sovereignty fundamentals. However, this measure does not mean that no individual can cross the state borders without the State's consent, since there are no States with impermeable borders (REIS, 2004).

Based on the concept of international system, the autonomy of the States prevails in the field of migration and is one of the fundamental characteristics of the traditional international law, since the States internationally relate to each other. There is no relationship between the individuals of a particular nationality and the States of another. The individual is not subject within this paradigm. Therefore, migrations are a social and political phenomenon, since they imply citizenship categories.

Thus, the human rights represent the individual's existence in the international arena as well as the integration process of State-independent universal individual rights, which is obviously based on the tension between the principle of sovereignty and the factuality of human rights (KRISTCH, 2010).

Tuvalu and many island countries faced the partial loss of their territories or the fragmentation of their sovereignty (autonomy) due to climate change phenomena. In addition, they live with the lack of minimum conditions to ensure life in their territories. In the future, these citizens may become individuals who belong to no place and who, in institutional political terms, are called environmental refugees, people who are forced to leave their countries or locations and seek refuge elsewhere due to climate changes (DICIONÁRIO DE DIREITOS HUMANOS, 2006). They may also be designated as stateless. However, this definition is also problematic because, when it is associated with the climate issue, it does not mean that the affected subjects do not have a State of origin. What happens is the bankruptcy or disappearance of the State of origin, thus impairing the categorization of the concept of nationality based on a legislation.

Finally, the last document is the Kyoto Protocol (UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE, 1998), which was developed in 1997 and ratified in 1999. The document derived from a number of scientific/political discussions that pervaded the 1970s and the 1980s in the major conferences or reports on global climate. It is considered an international treaty that specifies commitments to reduce the greenhouse gas emission. Approximately 189 countries have ratified the document (FOLHA DE S. PAULO, 2015). The United States, which was the largest polluter in 1990 with approximately 36.1% global greenhouse gas emissions ((TESTA, NOGUEIRA E COSTA E SILVA, 2010)), withdrew from the treaty in 2001 claiming that it was costly for the US economy to maintain the agreement provisions. They also considered unfair the non-compulsory participation of the developing countries.

The Kyoto Protocol factuality is essentially political/economic (IDEM, 2010), since it exclusively depends on the compliance with the agreement signed by the member countries, including developed countries such as the United States and China, who account for 45% of the global carbon emissions. However, as a rule, the Protocol becomes expressionless and problematic when it is related to state economic policies, but



significant in relation to the disclosure of climate problems and ways of mitigation in the contemporary days.

It is worth highlighting that, despite the obstacles to global agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol, nowadays, it is possible to see progress in the deliberations and construction of global and regional common goals concerning the climate. The mitigation and adaptation actions proposed by the Protocol are essential to vulnerable countries such as Tuvalu, since they represent a way to postpone the state failure in safeguarding the minimum social rights. The reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, which is a key point of the treaty, is the essential condition for the non-disappearance of the nations affected by the climate change.

Therefore, it can be said that the young “independent” country (Tuvalu) has no effective autonomy to manage the climate problems affecting it. The articulated climate change mitigation and adaptation in the country is not carried out based on the climate issues affecting the Tuvaluan state unity, but on the scientific/political/economic pattern of developed countries, which, in turn, makes the actions ineffective.

Tuvalu, as well as other countries affected by the climate change, expresses its claims through documents and speeches performed in conferences, encounters and other climate-related meetings. These countries require the permanent members of the UN Security Council to correlate climate change and security. However, requiring this correlation implies securitizing the migrations caused by climate changes by often criminalizing the forcefully displaced humans.

The international society – and not the international system – receives the appeal of those affected by the climate change. The vindictive argument is built in normative terms (of a universal principle of human life and dignity preservation) and the international society response through documents expresses the market (economy) safeguarding rather than a universal principle of human life preservation. The warming war is a fact under construction, not a fact in itself, and it is evident in the non-ratification and execution of climate treaties such as the Kyoto Protocol and others.

In 2009 - the year of the AOSIS Declaration -, in the eve of the Copenhagen Climate Conference (COP 15), Tuvalu and the several members that form the alliance requested the development of a binding legal agreement among the 17 countries (mainly the developed countries) to deal with the greenhouse gas emissions as well as of climate mitigation and adaptive policies based on the logic of “common but differentiated responsibilities” (LE PRESTRE, 2005). In other words, they requested the DCs to bear the costs of speeding up the climate change.

However, the Tuvaluan claims remain underserved. Regional agreements such as the Pacific Access Category (2010) of labor resettlement for the citizens of Tuvalu, Kiribati and Tonga were created for a fixed period. However, this access is a non-access, since most of the affected ones are unable to prove the items requested by the program.

In political terms, the climate change represents the dismantling of the Tuvaluan State, since it is not able to ensure basic rights to its citizens. Therefore, by harming human dignity, which a basic human right, Tuvalu ends up experiencing the destructuring of its sovereignty.

And it could not be otherwise, because there are impositions from one member to another within the international system logic, such as the attempt by the developed countries to transform the developing or poor countries into climate problem solving locations by creating clean development mechanisms (often self-declared as support), i.e., an economically located decarbonization.

The mitigation measures based on the decarbonization of the world are an example of it. They move values in the order of hundreds of billions of dollars a year, involve public and private funds for scientific and technological researches, tax incentives for “low carbon” technologies, non-Governmental Organization and propagandistic campaigns, parliamentary lobbies, as well as the growing carbon credit market, which moved US\$ 144 billion in 2009 and US\$ 176 billion in 2011 and was estimated to reach US\$ 2 trillion dollars in 2014, thus becoming the world’s largest commodity market, according to the world Bank (2012).

In addition, the Tuvaluan claim expressed in the last three documents takes as scientific basis the scientific perspective of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, whose scientists’ nationalities are only linked to countries that condone with the UN values, i.e., a type of science legitimated by a type of policy.

Another point involving the United Nations policy is the term environmental refugee (or its non-legal definition). Since the term only encompasses the environmental dimension, it becomes inoperative in the sense that it is difficult to prove the climate change origin and exact consequence. Once proven in environmental terms, this evidence does not evoke the political, economic, legal, and socio-cultural dimensions that are often transnationally part of the phenomenon. On the other hand, a definition could raise a significant number of claims.

Thus, it is observed that Tuvalu takes categories and modes of action used by developed countries to deal with the climate change. In other words, instead of proposing discussions about actions aimed at solving the climate issues based on local logics, as well as proposing reflections about the possible ways to foster the citizenship and human rights of individuals and communities affected by the climate, the country is absent from regional occasions or statements that involve criticisms to what the AOSIS members call superfluous attempts of the developed countries or regulatory agencies to solve the climate issues in these countries, and it leads to disagreements among the AOSIS members in the development of demands.

It may lead to discussions of different natures, such as: in Tuvalu, who represents the island state in international and regional climate negotiations? Do these Tuvaluan representatives reside in the State or are they cosmopolitan elites of scientific, political, economic and/or cultural nature (WILK, 2015) who benefit from political agendas, financial remittances, scientific networks, among other things?

## Partial conclusions

Tuvalu can be considered an illustrative unit in which concerns the climate change issue. Despite the specificities of each location (country), it is also possible to

see resonances involving the climate phenomenon. However, the climate change should not be treated as a universal problem with local (state) solution. It is necessary to locally think the climate issues and to develop global climate resolution policies (mitigation and adaptation), because the opposite cloaks the countries that cannot manage the solution to the problem, such as Tuvalu.

This observation is relevant because if the climate change is perceived as an environmental, political, economic and socio-cultural change whose mitigation and adaptive solution depends on discussions about previously hidden topics such as the fragmentation of national States, the economic dependency, the extinction of ways of life, the violation of human rights, the non-autonomy to solve problems, the forced displacement, among others, these topics are brought to light in different knowledge fields and rounds of global political/economic negotiations.

Developing and poor countries are mostly former colonies that cannot manage autonomous logics to solve the climate change. In addition, they are encouraged to secondarily participate in climate governance processes due to the asymmetrical logic that permeates the international system and leads them to take the discourse of the DCs.

In abstract terms, the solution could be problematized based on a universal key that does not exclude climate differences through the universality of the problems, projections and predictions, and basic features of the Climate Conference, but that ensures a dignified life for many people affected in their climate specificities of life.

The Tuvaluan, the Haitian, the Cambodian, the Tibetan, as well as several individuals from different nationalities need to be democratically heard and understood as human in their universality/specificity and not as “subhumans”, according to their citizenship.

In pragmatic terms, the solution can be regionally fostered through alliances, forums, agencies, States, i.e., through different institutions and/or organizations seeking to meet the (universal) local cross-cutting demands by developing clean technologies, sustainable logics and new economy and political standards among countries.

It is also necessary to think about the analytical categories, even in abstract terms, because it is necessary to think about normative/or interventional projects that include the nuances of these new historical logics and that forecast conditions and possibilities of a future to all human beings.

One cannot go along with the idea of unassisted humans in all terms, as in the current case of the Tuvaluan people and of 5% of the world population who do not belong to a strong national State in terms of politics and economics and, therefore, have their citizenship misused due to national sovereignty dissolution processes, which leads to the non-effectiveness of the human rights against the climate change. The human-rights-unassisted people in contemporary times have race, class and peripheral nationality. They are those who Moulin (2011) calls humans without rights or, as in the specific case of the current study, “the globally unassisted Tuvaluans”.

## Notes

- i The term *Island State* is used in official documents of international organizations and the country's website refers to island countries. It is not related to a geographical perspective, but to expressionless States in terms of power.
- ii By climate change, we understand the abnormal climate changes of anthropic and/or natural nature. The term climate itself contains environmental, political, economic and sociocultural dimensions, whereas the term environmental refers only to the environment dimension.
- iii Environmental disasters are non-comparable phenomena in terms of magnitude, duration and incidence (BRAGA, 2012).
- iv The Alliance comprises forty-four members and four observers, who represent 5% of the world population.
- v The alliance is formed by members of different characteristics in terms of location, land area, number of inhabitants, economic and social indicators, political and cultural factors, among others.

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# GLOBALLY UNASSISTED TUVALUANS AFFECTED BY CLIMATE CHANGES: OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS, HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE “NO FUTURE”?

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**Abstract:** In theoretical and empirical terms, the climate change is seen in the current study as a set of themes containing the perspective of “coming to occur in a near future”. However, thinking about the Island State of Tuvalu as a possible illustrative example of the direct occurrence of climate change adds a new analytical perspective to the existing literature, because the inversion from “coming to occur” to “is occurring” may change the resolution focus and give visibility to the affected ones. The aim of the current study is to reflect about the Tuvaluan climate change case based on literature review and documentary research and anchored on Political Theory and Sociology authors who use citizenship, human rights and sovereignty as research themes. It is concluded that Tuvalu illustrates the understanding of climate change and is a probable case of “non-future” for the unassisted ones.

**Keyword:** Tuvalu; Climate Change; Citizenship, Human rights and Sovereignty.

**Resumo:** A mudança climática, em termos teóricos e empíricos, é observada neste trabalho como uma temática que contém em si uma perspectiva de “vir a ocorrer em um futuro próximo”. Contudo, ao inverter a reflexão e pensar o Estado-ilha de Tuvalu como um possível exemplo ilustrativo da ocorrência direta da mudança climática, a reflexão acrescenta à literatura existente uma nova perspectiva analítica, pois a inversão da expressão “vir a ocorrer” para “estar ocorrendo” pode modificar o enfoque de resolução e dar visibilidade aos afetados. Por meio de pesquisa bibliográfica e documental e ancorado em autores da Teoria Sociologia Política que tematizam as categorias de cidadania, direitos humanos e soberania buscou-se refletir sobre o caso tuvaluano frente à mudança climática; concluindo-se que Tuvalu é uma unidade ilustrativa frente à compreensão da mudança climática e um provável caso de “não futuro” aos cidadãos desse país.

**Palavras-chave:** Tuvalu; Mudança Climática; Cidadania, Direitos Humanos e Soberania.

**Resumen:** El cambio climático en términos teóricos y empíricos, es observada en este trabajo como una temática que contiene en sí una perspectiva de algo a “ocurrir en un

futuro próximo.” Al invertir la reflexión y pensar el Estado-isla de Tuvalu como un posible ejemplo ilustrativo para la aparición directa de cambio climático, la reflexión aumenta a la literatura existente una nueva perspectiva analítica, pues la inversión de la expresión “ocurrir “a” estar ocurriendo “, puede modificar el enfoque de resolución y dar visibilidad para los afectados. Por medio de investigación bibliográfica y documental y basada en autores de la Teoría y Sociología Política que tematizar sobre las categorías de ciudadanía, derechos humanos y soberanía se busca reflexionar sobre el caso de Tuvalu frente a el cambio climático. Concluyo que Tuvalu es una unidad ilustrativa para la comprensión del cambio climático y el probable caso de “no futuro” para los desfavorecidos.

**Palabra Clave:** Tuvalu; cambio climático; ciudadanía, derechos humanos y soberanía.

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