

# Mutations and Adaptations of Island Territories Facing Climate Change: Variations, Interactions and Evolutions Between 1945 and 2016, Toward a Hybrid Prospective Habitat in Funafuti

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## Abstract

Today, the consequences of climate crisis - such as the reduction of the land surface area due to increasing sea levels - intensify questions about the future of isolated territories in the Pacific Oceans, and their populations.

Funafuti, the principal atoll of Tuvalu seems symbolic of this, faced with anthropogenic alterations affecting the islands of the South Pacific. Here, changes caused by the submersion of land during the last century have altered the traditional use of space, that is to say, prompted a chronological and gradual progression from a terrestrial to a hybrid habitat.

The methodology adopted in this research consisted in analysing changes in the way morphological, typological and symbolic alterations are measured, according to the various changes, interactions or evolutionary developments in both the geographic and urban strata that, together, constitute the space's territorial identity. This study focuses on the period from 1945 to 2016, when the effect of anthropogenic and natural changes - particularly on the area's spatial identity - became increasingly significant.

Our objective is to promote the theory that, faced with the ocean's increasing prominence at the heart of the atoll, island inhabitants find themselves in a space characterised by its ongoing transformation into a hybrid environment - with hybridity both becoming a pattern and informing adaptive process.

This adaptation comprises a significant rupture in the way the 'limit' between landscape and territory are perceived, a factor that results in the emergence of new, context-specific, socio-spatial structures. Understanding how contemporary habitats evolve in the face of climate change is necessary if we are to update and deepen our understanding of the specific material and cultural developments of countries in contact with the ocean. This transition - from oceanic landscape to inhabited oceanic territory- may represent the beginning of an extensive period of modifications within the Island habitat, which may eventually, over a longer period, result in the emergence of the first, more permanent oceanic habitats.

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