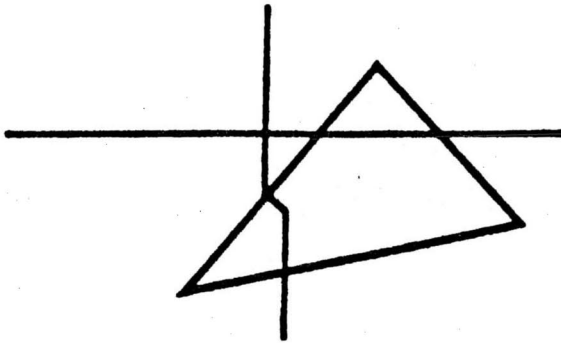


# THE PACIFIC ISLANDS IN THE YEAR 2000



Edited by

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THE PACIFIC ISLANDS  
IMAGES AND IMPACTS

by

Robert C. Kiste

The six papers that follow are concerned with projections as to what the Pacific region will be like a decade and a half from now. In order to provide an historical context, it is my task to examine what Westerners have thought and written about the Pacific. Essentially, this involves an examination of Western perceptions of the Pacific Islands and their people since initial contact between Europeans and Pacific Islanders and the impact that the Pacific has had upon certain aspects of Western thought. Lastly, I attempt to relate what has been perceived and thought in the past to what may occur in the future. My biases are probably quite evident; I write as an American anthropologist who has some knowledge of Pacific history.

Western Images of the Pacific

It is common knowledge that Magellan crossed the Pacific from east to west and by accident came upon Guam in 1521. His own perception of the Chamorros, who liberated all pieces of iron from his ship that they possibly could, is clear: Magellan named the Marianas the Islands of Thieves. During the 17th and 18th centuries, the Spanish and Portuguese were particularly active in the Pacific, but there was little impact in Europe. Indeed, both nations hoped to make great fortunes from the island world, and they were secretive about their voyages.

Excitement about the Pacific had to wait until the voyages of exploration by Bougainville and Cook, and it was they who triggered off a great reaction in Europe and America. Cook was the more important of the two. R. A. Skelton (1969:25) has commented that before Cook's time, the Pacific was almost a closed book to Europeans. New Zealand biologist H. Newton Barber (1970:88) has indicated that the first of Cook's three voyages was significant in at least three ways: 1) the development and demonstration of new precision in navigation; 2) the major island discoveries that were made; and 3) the precedent that was set for taking scientific observers on voyages of exploration. Sir Joseph Banks, the naturalist aboard the H. M. S. Endeavour, went on to become famous in his own right.

To place the voyages of Bougainville and Cook into context, it must be recalled that in the 18th century there was the somewhat popular notion that at an earlier time, humans had existed in a purer, a better, a more innocent, and more happy state. Of course, I am referring to the notion of the "noble savage" that J. Rousseau had done so much to promote. Bougainville had read Rousseau, and when he arrived in Tahiti in mid-1767, he thought he was the first European to land there, and he was certain he had discovered paradise. (Actually, the British explorer Samuel Wallis had beaten Bougainville to Tahiti a few months earlier.) Bougainville reported that the climate of the islands was all that could be desired. He was under the impression that the land provided a bountiful sustenance and the people were not required to work. Bougainville found the Tahitians to be physically a beautiful and handsome race, and the sexual availability of women did nothing to change his opinion.

Bougainville named Tahiti New Cythera after the Greek island where Aphrodite, the goddess of love, had risen from the sea. Later, Sir Joseph Banks was also overwhelmed with Tahiti. As Bernard Smith (1960:26) has written:

Banks was just as enthusiastic; to him as to Bougainville, Tahiti was the Golden Age come again. The sexual freedoms of the people filled him with admiration and delight, but in his English way, he was more circumspect about it than the Frenchman.

Smith also reminds us that there were two contrasting notions about the nature of the "noble savage." On the one hand there was the view of "soft primitivism" which was represented by the Tahitians. Life was portrayed as being easy, and people were pure and guileless. Their lives were filled with pleasure and uninhibited sex. On the other hand, there was "hard primitivism." It was represented by people who lived in harsher climates which made them tough and Spartan. They supposedly did not need or want all of the material goods considered necessary by Europeans, and thus they were better off. In the Pacific, indigenous people of Australia, New Zealand, and Terra del Fuego were thought to represent this type.

It goes without saying that the image of the "soft primitive" made the greatest impact upon Europeans. It was the image that appealed. Perhaps all humans could find their Tahiti, or in a broader sense, what came to be taken for Polynesia as a whole.

A little over a century after Bougainville and Cook, a certain J. G. Wood published a tome with the title The Uncivilized Races of Men in All Countries of the World, and he commented on another group of Polynesians:

Being savages, the Samoans have many of the imperfections which necessarily accompany savage life, but at the same time they approach nearer to the "noble savage" of the poet than most races of men. They are hospitable, affectionate, honest, and courteous, and have been well described as a nation of gentlemen. Toward strangers they display a liberality which contrasts greatly with the cruel and blood thirsty customs of the Papuan tribes (1878:1008).

These idyllic images of Polynesia and Polynesians came to be incorporated in and sustained by popular literature. In his book The Mentor published in the 1920's, Frederick O'Brien, a former editor of the Honolulu Advertiser, offered this view:

I have roamed from Sakhalin to Tonga. Above all, I have loved Polynesia and shall remember it longest. In it are the most lovable and handsomest untutored men and women that grace the earth (quoted in Wolfram 1984:49).

The romantic myth about the islands is what is conjured up by such phrases as the "South Seas," and the "South Pacific." It is the stuff that movies are made of and the range has been great, from Dorothy Lamour in her sarong of the 1930's to the third and latest film version of the Bounty. To those of us in Hawaii, it is obvious that the myth sustains a tourist trade. And myths die hard. After more than a dozen years of the extremely popular TV show Hawaii Five-0, with viewers watching Jack Lord chasing the bad guys around in a very urban Honolulu, tourists still arrive expecting to see the mythical islands and not the high rise buildings which fill the sky line. Perhaps the epitome of the myth appears in the Broadway musical version of James Michner's Tales of the South Pacific and one thinks of the lyrics from the song Some Enchanted Evening.



The nature of J. G. Wood's reference to the Papuan tribes should remind us of another image about the Pacific and its people. Something else enters in. Certainly Europeans responded positively to Polynesians, while the lesser known Micronesians were either ignored or lumped with Polynesians. In both areas, Europeans could relate to paramount chiefs at the apexes of stratified societies. Albeit inaccurately, these were seen as the same or similar to the kings and nobles of the Old World. The oral histories about great voyages and battles stimulated the imagination. The freer sexuality found most places certainly had its attractions, but it was also very important that the Polynesians and their Micronesian cousins were of the "right" color. They are the lighter skinned peoples of the Pacific.

In contrast, the Melanesians represented what Europeans did not prefer or understand. As their very name indicates, the Melanesians are the black-skinned peoples of the region. The fragmented and small polities with their respective "big man" leaders were difficult to deal with and did not make sense to early Europeans. The prevalence of magic, sorcery, and in some instances, cannibalism, were an anathema to the white interlopers. The very geography of the large Melanesian islands made them more difficult places and their less healthy environment made them less attractive. It is not an accident that Douglas Oliver's book of some thirty-five years ago, The Pacific Islands, consistently referred to the Melanesians as "savages." The book, like all other things, was a product of its time.

The point is, Europeans had a strong tendency to idealize Polynesians, and eventually, the latter were even sent to missionize parts of Melanesia. The combination of all these factors gave the Polynesians a sense of superiority.

Understandably, this has caused resentment among Melanesians, and these emotions affect regional politics today. Sentiments related to what is sometimes referred to as the "Melanesia alliance" are real and have some depth. Further, a sense of a common racial heritage and the sharing of Melanesian pidgin in the Solomons, Papua New Guinea, and Vanuatu are all variables which tend to promote a certain cohesiveness among the Melanesian states.

The above mention of the mission effort reminds one that there was another important and powerful perception held by many Europeans about Pacific peoples. It was the opposite of the "noble savage" notion, especially that of the soft variety. The pagan could not be noble. As the islanders were living without knowledge of Christ and the God of the Hebrews, they were living in a state of pathetic sin. From the missionary view, the islanders were enveloped in an age of darkness. They had to be converted and Westernized.

The unconverted could only be ignoble, and the thoughts of Hiram Bingham as expressed in his mid-19th century book A Residence of Twenty One Years in the Sandwich Islands make this perfectly clear. Reflecting on the early days of the mission effort in Hawaii, Bingham reported: "Darkness covered the earth and the gross darkness of the people" (1855:2).

His overall view of Hawaiian culture and society is reflected in the following :

Polygamy (implying plurality of husbands and wives), fornication, adultery, incest, infant murder, desertion of husbands, wives, parents and children; sorcery, covetousness, and oppression extensively prevailed.... The heathen system, therefore, tends to immeasurable evil (Ibid.:21).

No sooner had islanders been identified as noble or ignoble savages, another perception about them emerged. This is the notion of the "fatal impact," the subject and title of a well-known book by Alan Moorehead, and it saw the destruction of Pacific cultures and the depopulation of the indigeonous peoples as inevitable consequences of European contacts. By his third and final voyage, Cook himself was convinced that introduced diseases, the creation of new wants, and the general disruption of island societies were tantamount to their death toll (Howe 1974:138). Mission activity came under fire from proponents of the view. For example, the Russian explorer Otto von Kotzbue was extremely critical of the disruptive activities of individuals like Bingham (Ibid.:138-139). Early anthropologists, working in the Pacific contributed to the general acceptance of the fatal impact view. In his Argonauts of the Western Pacific, Malinowski expressed his opinion that the subject matter of ethnologists was rapidly vanishing (1961 [original 1922]: xvi).

During the 1920's and 1930's, the conviction that Pacific peoples were doomed to extinction remained firm even though there was mounting evidence that populations were recovering. R. W. Robson founded the magazine Pacific Islands Monthly in 1930, and he predicted the Pacific would soon become a "whiteman's lake" with the demise of Pacific islanders. Robson was the first advocate of regional cooperation, but his concept of regionalism was far different from today's. Robson had in mind associations of European planters (Fry 1979:46-47).

Immediately prior to World War II, it was becoming increasingly evident that Pacific populations were not dying out. Felix Keesing called for a

change in view. He noted that island populations were not only recovering, but that they were increasingly youthful ones.

During the nineteenth century and even into the twentieth century virtually every commentator foresaw no future ahead of the South Seas peoples except a more or less speedy decline to extinction. So widely was this mournful picture publicized that most people accept it as holding true today. Actually, however, from before the turn of the century, depopulation has been stayed in an increasing number of Oceanic groups, and the trend has usually been reversed in the direction of marked increase (1941:37).

In a lecture on the University of Hawaii campus in the fall semester, 1984, historian K. R. Howe pointed out that the fatal impact era of thought also involved a particular viewpoint by writers of history. These are issues that Howe has touched on in an earlier article (1974) and his recent book (1984). In his lecture here, Howe suggested that we might conceive of Pacific history as falling into three periods. In the first two periods, Pacific islanders were not only thought to be on the road to extinction, they were also seen as being of little importance in shaping their own histories since European contact. Islanders were viewed as passive, on the receiving end of changes initiated by Europeans, and not initiators of innovations themselves.

Howe suggested that there was first "imperial history" which was concerned with the "official agents" of colonial powers, i.e., explorers, missionaries, colonial administrators, and perhaps military types. Second to appear, there was a history of "European expansion" when it was realized that "unofficial participants" had to be written into the scheme of things past. Such unofficial actors included beachcombers, whalers, traders, etc. From this

perspective there were waves of various categories of outsiders, and hence the title of Howe's recent book, Where the Waves Fall. Howe's history includes the responses and actions of islanders, however, and that places his work, in the third period of Pacific history. This era was launched under the direction of J. W. Davidson of Australian National University (ANU). It recognizes that islanders were not passive in the wake of the arrival of Europeans, and that they were often as not creative and important actors in shaping the course of post-European events. As an anthropologist, I do not find this to be a startling insight. Under Davidson's influence, Pacific history at ANU became interdisciplinary in nature and graduate students began to include ethnographic style fieldwork as part of their doctoral studies.

In a review of Where the Waves Fall, Peter Hempenstall tells us that: "The Davidson age is over....," but he does not tell us what the future holds (1984:44).

#### The Pacific as Scientific Laboratory

I need to jump back to Cook's time. I noted earlier that on his first voyage, a precedent was set, that of taking scientific observers on exploring expeditions. This precedent helped to launch a revolution in biological thought and helped lead the way to the theory of evolution. The aforementioned Sir Joseph Banks, a naturalist, collected specimens of all sorts. He later became president of the Royal Society and was instrumental in establishing the policy that scientists would be regular fixtures on the exploring ships of the British Royal Navy. Banks was followed by a long line of scientific observers, up to and including Charles Darwin on the voyage of the H. M. S.

Beagle, which sailed on England's probes into the Pacific region. Darwin's observations, particularly those in the Galapagos, greatly influenced his thinking. To him, each island appeared as a laboratory experiment. The faunal species of each island differed in minute ways from those of others, and Darwin eventually concluded that successive generations had differentiated themselves from ancestral forms as new adaptations to isolated and local island environments. In another development, Darwin's theory about origins of coral atolls has subsequently been demonstrated as scientific fact.

Later in England and after the publication of On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection in 1859, others defended Darwin. Two of his most prominent supporters were Joseph Hooker, an eminent botanist, and Thomas Huxley, the self-proclaimed "bulldog of Darwinism." Like Darwin, both had spent their formative years on voyages in the Pacific (Jastrow 1984:230).

While scientific inquiry in the Pacific had lasting impact on the biological sciences, the Pacific has also greatly influenced my own academic discipline of anthropology. Modern anthropology has mainly been a product of British and American academia. In England, Thomas Huxley encouraged what was to become the Torres Straits Expedition, conducted between 1898 and 1900. Its three principal members, A. C. Haddon, W. H. R. Rivers, and Seligman went to the field as practitioners of other disciplines but all became ethnologists because of their experience on the expedition (Eggan 1968:128). The three men trained the next group of anthropologists to emerge in England, including the founders of the two varieties of functionalism which came to dominate British anthropology for decades. Bronislaw Malinowski was a student of Seligman and others at the London School of Economics, and as those familiar with

anthropology well know, Malinowski set the standards for modern field research in the Trobriand Islands during World War I. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown was the first ethnological student of Rivers and Haddon at Cambridge, and while he did not work in the Pacific, his initial fieldwork was in an island society, the Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal between 1906 and 1908. Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown trained the next generation of British social anthropologists and had a significant, but lesser, impact on American anthropology.

In the United States, Margaret Mead's first field research was in American Samoa in 1926 and it led to her famous book Coming of Age in Samoa. Mead later worked in several locations in what is now Papua New Guinea. Mead's anthropology was definitely influenced by her work in the Pacific; it is an understatement to indicate that her own influence both within and without the discipline has been nothing short of phenomenal. Her greatest impact was on the American public. Mead popularized anthropology. Cultural relativism and the importance of culture as a determinant of human behavior have been widely accepted because of Mead; she carried the basic messages of American cultural anthropology to the world at large. Mead's portrayal of Samoan sexuality unintentionally also reinforced the romantic and popular view of Polynesia.

The next really significant involvement of American anthropologists in the Pacific came with World War II. During the very early years of the war in the Pacific and under the direction of George Peter Murdock, anthropologists helped prepare informational handbooks for the military occupation of the Pacific. Immediately after the war, Murdock directed the Coordinated Investigation of Micronesian Anthropology (CIMA), the largest anthropological expedition ever launched at the time.

American Micronesia or the U.S. Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands was also the scene of one of the most ambitious experiments ever launched in applied anthropology. The anthropological involvements in the Trust Territory included some of America's best known anthropologists. The names of Homer G. Barnett, Ward H. Goodenough, and David Schneider came immediately to mind as senior Micronesian hands who have made substantial contributions to anthropological theory. A host of others are also well known, and many of those who were first involved in the Trust Territory have trained students who have also worked in Micronesia. Those students have in turn tutored the third generation of Americans to work in the area, and generation four is now emerging. Micronesia is probably the most studied culture area of the world, and the overall impact on American anthropology has yet to be measured.

Thus, the Pacific Islands have had great impact on biological and anthropological thought. In both cases, the islands have been viewed as laboratories. Clearly, islands offered biologists somewhat the equivalent of relatively isolated breeding populations, and like Darwin's birds and reptiles, island societies were and have been viewed by anthropologists as entities in the process of continual modification and adaptation to their insular environments. It is not surprising that some of the best work in cultural ecology has come from the Pacific.

#### The Islands in World Affairs.

With the exception of Spain's possession of the Marianas beginning on Guam in 1668, the partitioning of the Pacific among the colonial powers was accomplished in the 19th century. The Pacific was thus the last area of the



world to fall under the yoke of European colonialism. The French acquired Tahiti in 1842, and the race for colonies was on. The colonial powers hoped for profit, but more often than not, national pride and prestige were equally at stake. In any event, the colonial division of the Pacific was complete by about the turn of the century, and the islands had had some importance in at least European affairs between the 1840's and 1900 when they were the prizes in European colonial expansion.

By the turn of the century, not only was the colonial partition complete, but all island groups had been missionized. Trading firms and plantations had been established, and the colonial era was firmly in place. Little new was occurring, and the Pacific came to be viewed as a relatively unimportant backwater of the world. Certainly in America, there was little interest in the region. The U.S. Navy had its outposts at American Samoa, Guam, and Hawaii and the commercial interests in the last were firmly tied to the American mainland. Knowledge about the area was also limited, and as a result, the aforementioned anthropological research at the outset of the war was launched as an emergency effort.

The Pacific became of world wide importance with the outbreak of the war, but not because of the islands or their people. It was the arena in which Japanese imperialism was to be fought, and Western propaganda portrayed the Japanese as the "yellow peril" to be cast out of the region. When that was indeed accomplished, interest in the islands waned once again.

While the importance of the Pacific in world affairs declined after the war, there was a difference from the pre-war years. Partly out of the idealism of the global conflict, there was a new social and moral

consciousness, and it was no longer respectable to be a colonial power in the old sense. In 1947, the South Pacific Commission was formed by the metropolitan powers in the region, and there was a belief that more should be done in the areas of education, health, and general social welfare. K. R. Howe (1974:145-146), suggests that Westerners, especially Americans as a consequence of their deep involvement in the Pacific war, felt a sense of guilt about what had occurred in the islands since the intervention of outsiders. Howe believes this theme is reflected in two works on Pacific history of the time: J. C. Furnas's Anatomy of Paradise (1946) and Douglas Oliver's The Pacific Islands (1951). Howe also comments that there was "... a feeling of growing responsibility for the region in the post-war era" (Ibid.).

At least in the British Commonwealth, the notion that the region demanded some new and a different kind of attention came with the beginning of decolonization. The process began with Western Samoa's independence in 1962, and at least on official governmental levels, the metropolises have had to pay more attention to the region. The eleven recently independent and/or self-governing states must be treated as such, and four of them are now members of the United Nations. As the two metropolises most reluctant to give up their Pacific colonies, France and the United States have been the last to show a responsiveness to these developments. The U.S. Department of State did not establish an Office for Pacific Affairs until 1978 (previously the Pacific Islands were lumped with Australia and New Zealand), but the belated creation of that separate office does represent recognition of the new political status of the island states.

There are two other major sets of forces that are shaping contemporary views of the Pacific. In one of these, the island Pacific is being overlooked and the context is primarily economic. High level government officials in the United States, Japan, and elsewhere and the editorial pages of the Honolulu newspapers speak of a pan-Pacific community, and it is projected that the next century will be the century of the Pacific. There is a Pan-Pacific Community Association, Inc. headquartered in Washington, D.C., and it publishes a Pacific Community Newsletter. The association is a private organization, but its members include U.S. ambassadors, congressmen, as well as influential leaders in the business world. On the surface, all of this might suggest that the Pacific Islands are on the verge of becoming more important players on the world stage. In reality, nothing could be further from the truth in the eyes of those involved in the discussions. The discussions about a pan-Pacific community are now being conducted by the Pacific rim countries and reflect the fact that trade among the large Pacific rim countries, particularly Japan and the United States, is now larger than trans-Atlantic business. At a Pacific Cooperation Conference in Bangkok three years ago, the actors were Australia, Canada, Chile, Indonesia, Japan, Melanesia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, and the United States. As an after thought, Fiji and Papua New Guinea were invited to attend the conference, but neither attended.

It appears relatively clear that in the deliberations among the rim countries, the Pacific is viewed as an empty expanse of water to be plied by the containerized shipping vessels of the rim's economic giants. The island nations are simply overlooked, or only belatedly remembered, and some island

leaders have expressed a fear that the interests of their countries will not be considered except as they occasionally might be of relevance to the economic concerns of the rim nations.

While there is some current concern over fishing rights in the region, and in the distant future, the mining of the sea beds within the exclusive economic zones of Pacific nations may be a source of interest, the resources and products of most Pacific countries will not generate much immediate attention from the major economic interests in the region. However, the second set of forces operating in the region will not allow it to be perceived as an unimportant backwater as was the case between the turn of the century and World War II. Unfortunately perhaps, the main reasons are the perceptions which linger from the war. In the United States, there are strong feelings that it would be undesirable to allow any part of the Pacific region to fall into hostile hands. The compacts of free association which have been negotiated with the Micronesian states include the strategic denial of any third parties and reflect this defense concern. The desire of Australia and New Zealand to preserve the dominance of English speaking nations in the Pacific has roots which date back to the last century. They appear to be pleased that the United States will maintain a strategic presence in Micronesia, and the three ANZUS partners are united in their wish to prevent the Soviet Union from gaining a toe hold in the Pacific.

Given the combination of the facts that the West has a strategic interest in the region and that nine Pacific nations have achieved independence and two others are self-governing in free association with New Zealand, those eleven countries have considerable leverage with the Western metropolises that will

extend well into the next century. Three Micronesian states may well soon join them as even newer self-governing states in free association with a major Western power.

The Pacific is not the paradise as envisaged by the early explorers. Like most nations of the world, Pacific countries have real problems which must be dealt with, and the following papers make some projections as to what the region may look like in the next one and one-half decades.

My own comments here have been concerned with the changing images of Pacific Islands held by the outside world during different historical periods. That these have always been, at best, partial or confused should be clear, nor is there reason to believe that images of the Pacific in the year 2000 will be less subject to the distorting effect of other cultural lenses. I have not had the time or space to discuss the efforts of Islanders themselves — whether in the field of politics, science or the arts — to present different kinds of images to the nations beyond their vast ocean realm. The success or failure of these efforts will be a matter of the utmost interest as the Pacific enters the 21st century.

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PERSPECTIVES ON THE POLITICAL AND SECURITY  
INFLUENCE OF OUTSIDE POWERS

by

Henry S. Albinski

Harold Wilson is reputed to have remarked that, in politics, two weeks is a long time. Looking forward five, ten and even fifteen years is obviously an elusive enterprise. But it is not an unprofitable enterprise, and its meaningfulness in relation to plausible political and security scenarios of the Pacific island scene, more or less as of the year 2000, is particularly apropos. It is apropos because it deals with a regional setting whose international significance is increasingly recognized, yet which is highly susceptible to outside power influence, and for the time continues to define and shape its own personality.

The present assessment undertakes to anticipate outside power political and security effects by applying categories of analysis that coincide with the island countries' own perceived, dominant concerns. To begin, however, some special attributes of the Pacific island region should be noted, since they impose more than usual difficulties on efforts to make confident projections.

At least three, distinctive features that typify the Pacific island community invite special caution in forecasting the region's middle range future. The first refers to decision-making style within the island countries. The resident countries are small with disproportionately modest and relatively unspecialized bureaucratic establishments. There in other words is not much by way of independently gathered intelligence data,

analytical expertise or breadth of applied experience that can be passed to political decision-makers. Political parties do not themselves enjoy much institutionalized autonomy which otherwise could enable them to influence the judgments of political elites. The senior political elites operate in contexts of substantial personalized authority, and often are second or still first generation national leaders, with wide national visibility and following.

The upshot is highly individualized decision-making in the Pacific islands. Since this condition is not likely to change much in the next ten or fifteen years, the region will remain governed in a manner considerably less routinized, less subject to institutional constraints and therefore less predictable than would obtain in more established and complex political systems. The intangibles surrounding leadership styles and programmatic preferences among the region's remaining non-independent entities, especially those under French control, further obscure efforts at determining foreshadowed political behavior, and thereby regional-outside power relation outcomes.

A second factor complicating confident scenario-building refers to various intraregional characteristics. Hence, the greater South Pacific region, or Oceania, can be construed as a series of subsets as well as a greater region in itself. The Melanesian/Micronesian/Polynesian distinction is more than cultural. The Melanesians for instance represent the most populous group, thereby engendering unease elsewhere as to their possible interest in or capacity to dominate South Pacific affairs. Overall, the Melanesians have emerged as the most politically militant on international questions. Until now most of the South Pacific Forum members have represented a British-New

Zealand-Australian colonial background. Consensus has arguably been easier than it will be toward the end of the century when there will be more independent regional entities, and the newcomers will be of French and American colonial/administrative derivation. In other words, the region will become more, not less, politically diverse, fragmented and complex, and outside powers will find it more difficult to anticipate its behavior and to respond to it.

The subtheme of this phenomenon is that interstate rivalries within the region will likely accentuate, beyond the kind of jostling exemplified by aspects of PNG-Fiji relations. The reasons for increased interstate rivalry could include maneuvering for leadership, widening differences in political orientation or in preindependence heritage (for instance the behavior of a postindependence New Caledonia), the susceptibilities of regional countries to more intense, outside power blandishments, or regional country apprehensions about outside power reprisals against offending policies. The latter point has been intimated regarding Fiji's periodic reluctance to offend France, lest France influence EEC policies that could undermine Fiji's sugar market.

Domestic disturbances in the island countries could of course severely discommode some of the most carefully laid predictions about the region's politics. One of the more obvious circumstances would entail social disorder over the political future of the French territories. The effects would be felt among neighboring states as well as the actual sites of commotion. In case of trouble in New Caledonia, there would be especially profound effects on Vanuatu's approach. And, in the last resort, conflict in established, sovereign nations cannot be entirely discounted; for example plural society

tensions in Fiji or secessionist unrest in PNG. Apart from impact on the political integrity of such affected nations, serious civil disturbances could distract or even incapacitate those nations in respect to their normal role as Pacific island community actors.

A final caution about forecasting conditions in the South Pacific refers to outside rather than to resident states. Even assuming that there is no overt breakdown in the central balance, or regionally, the essential point is that many of the interested outside powers are latecomers to approaching the South Pacific region as a whole. They may have had a historically distant political presence (e.g., Japan); or they may focus mainly on one segment of the region (e.g., the US vis-a-vis Micronesia and the special case of American Samoa); or they may have been present for some time but without being especially mindful of wider, transregional political/security implications of their policies (e.g., France); or they have been rebuffed and to date unable to establish a meaningful foothold (e.g., the Soviet Union); or like the ASEAN nations they have simply been preoccupied with Southeast Asian affairs and have paid little heed to the South Pacific. At bottom, recency, indifference, lack of access or other limiting circumstances have prevented a number of outside powers from crystallizing and practicing policies that are well honed and truly in place. Until such crystallization becomes more evident, outside power behavior will be more volatile, or at least more tentative and experimental, than those searching for confident projections for the region might prefer.

As a group, the Pacific island countries are economically weak, dependent and vulnerable. As populations grow, there is little to compensate through

indigenously generated wealth. Most have no industries to speak of. Most rely on one or two cash crops or catches. Only PNG and New Caledonia contain known natural resources of international market consequence. Pacific country EEZ (exclusive economic zones) seabeds have to date not yielded optimistic forecasts of natural wealth. The more important companies operating in the islands are foreign. The region's trade is only incidentally intramural. It instead flows beyond, predominantly to former or continuing metropolitan powers - the ANZUS countries, Japan and France. The island countries are moreover deeply dependent on outside power technical assistance and a host of civil aid measures. We are reminded that PNG, the region's largest and in respects most economically viable member, has for years had its ongoing budgetary requirements lavishly subsidized by Australia.

These economic circumstances are familiar, but warrant underscoring for purpose of their foreseeable political effects. The guiding assumption is that, within ten or fifteen years, these circumstances will not materially change. The island countries will remain poor and sorely dependent. They will not be able to dispense with a sizeable outside power presence, in aid form or otherwise. The question therefore is who will likely be providing such economic backup, and with what political implications.

Probably the most plausible forecast is that it is the western outside powers that will continue their dominant economic roles. One explanation is simply that of habit; recipient countries will continue what has become familiar and for the most part has not been overbearing. A second reason is that some of the alternatives will probably remain politically unpalatable. The Soviets are not welcome politically, are regarded as strangers, and are

part of a perceived great power rivalry that could flare up if they were allowed greater economic access to the region. Australia's and in degree New Zealand's panicked reaction in 1976 to the prospect of Soviet aid to Tonga and Western Samoa in exchange for certain facilities will surely remain in the consciousness of regional countries. These countries can expect to extract more assistance from the ANZUS powers, but credibly cannot afford to push them to the brink of alienation. The Chinese are more benignly regarded than are the Soviets and have relatively little to offer. But their persistence in matching or checkmating Soviet initiatives is theatre that island countries will not wish to encourage.

Carried thus far, our scenario has the strong inference, that, continuing in their pervasive regional economic role, outside powers will continue to exercise disproportionate political influence. This will likely be the fact, but with some variations on prevailing trends being possible and even likely.

First, the balance between and among donor nations could well shift, carrying corresponding political overtones. The subregionalization of aid programs is already moving away from the conventional practice of Australia being preeminently active in Melanesia, New Zealand in Polynesia and the U.S. in Micronesia. So as not to become overdependent on a single donor, PNG welcomes New Zealand aid, and Western Samoa welcomes Australian aid. Given its far greater resources, Australia already outstrips New Zealand in the amount of money it injects into the Pacific island countries, even if assistance to PNG is discounted. New Zealand's endemic economic troubles could easily contribute to a widening of the gap. After a time, the disparities might reach such an order of magnitude that New Zealand's

political weight in the region could perceptibly recede. If for sake of discussion successive governments in Australia continue to stand closely with the United States on regional security issues while New Zealand becomes a kind of odd man out in ANZUS, or indeed if de facto or de jure ANZUS is reconstituted without New Zealand, from a general western point of view New Zealand's relative economic - and by indirection political - retraction in the region might not be lamented.

There are some other calculations to be made, including those involving the United States. Apart from its substantial economic commitments to the Micronesian territories, the U.S. has only very light aid programs directed at the island countries. These programs are in fact of a volunteer and indirect character. Should various congressional and other advice prevail and the U.S. were to adopt straightforward, bilateral aid programs toward the islands much of the present, regional aid/politics equation would shift. If the U.S. instituted aid programs of any significance in countries previously served mostly by Australia and New Zealand it probably would run the risk of sooner or later offending Canberra and Wellington at least on complaints of turf and precedent. Probably more importantly, as a newcomer donor who also happened to be a great power without satisfactory, pan-regional credentials, the U.S. could become embroiled in controversies with recipient countries in ways that the Australians and New Zealanders do not precipitate.

Whatever any forthcoming U.S. aid role in countries presently dominated by Australian and New Zealand aid programs, a prospective American role in presently French controlled territories could produce a different set of political outcomes. Assuming that New Caledonia and/or French Polynesia will



have moved to independent or virtually independent status roughly by the year 2000, it would not be improbable that American commercial interests would take a keen interest and that official aid would be proffered. This is said with the acknowledgement that former French territories world-wide have for the most part maintained close cultural and economic ties with France. The French themselves might nevertheless prefer to facilitate an American economic presence, perhaps as a form of counterpoint to political influence from New Zealand and Australia, the island community's closest western friends and who will probably continue to be much more publicly critical of French regional policies than will the U.S.

In the last resort, however economic assistance from outside powers is allocated, by the turn of the century the island countries are likely to be more feisty about their dependence on such aid and the quid pro quo of their political good behavior that they might infer as that being the price expected by donors. Or, even if few such inferences are drawn, there will be the simple sense of national pride. Already, from various Pacific island quarters, have come protestations about Australia and New Zealand playing Big Brother, about their undue influence in regional councils, and about the need for non-island states to be more sensitive to that somewhat amorphous notion of The Pacific Way.

Defense assistance and protection for island countries can also be foreseen as having a more troubled passage by end of century than currently obtains. It is well to remember that, even apart from various defense cooperation programs, the Pacific island community is substantially covered by some form, literal or implied, of outside, western power defense protection.

The French territories remain garrisoned by French forces. American Samoa will foreseeably remain in the U.S. hands and falls directly under the American defense mantle. Neighboring Western Samoa has at various times by extension been construed as falling within the ANZUS ambit. New Zealand retains explicit defense responsibility for the Cook Islands, Tokelau and Niue. The U.S. will continue to exercise treaty-linked influence over the use of abandoned defense facilities in Tuvalu and Kiribati into the 1990's. U.S. arrangements for control over the defense of Micronesian territories will continue into the 21st century. Australia has no formal commitment to defend PNG, but traditional connections and informal understandings impose special responsibilities on it.

It is also well to recall that the ANZUS partnership is welcome throughout most of the Pacific island region, and that several island countries have over time indicated interest in becoming associated with the alliance in some form. The ANZUS nations have sensibly demurred, both because of what such additions would do to the integrity and intimacy of ANZUS, and because such steps could aggravate regional great power rivalry.

All the same, outside, western power contributions to regional country defense arrangements face more rather than fewer complications in the years to come. Even if no local emergencies arise and assistance from protecting outside powers is not invoked, sensitivity - indeed hypersensitivity - about outside power military intentions is likely to become more standard fare in the region. A recent example is the exclamation of a former PNG foreign minister that New Zealand's proposed armed forces reconfiguration to enhance rapid deployment was an ominous sign of "gunboat diplomacy" in the South

Pacific. Another example is the apprehension in the Solomons particularly that the U.S. military action in Grenada could quite literally presage American gunboat diplomacy in the South Pacific when the U.S. found itself in some dispute with a tiny and defenseless regional country.

It is not likely that the formal or implied outside power defense commitments to island countries will need to be invoked against the major communist powers. This does not however imply that the region's defense security will be carefree. The prospect of an overt clash between Indonesia and PNG over Irian Jaya border problems lingers. The Indonesians would not appear to have any interest in aggravating their Irian Jaya troubles by chewing off parts of PNG and, inter alia, thereby prospectively having to deal with Australia. Since no skirmishing on the border beyond a low level is likely, Australia will not need to make a hard choice between "defending" PNG, and maintaining its special Indonesian relationship. The trend that Indonesia's continuing scrapping with PNG could accelerate, however, is that Indonesia would continue to forfeit opportunities to become the principal bridge between the ASEAN and Pacific island communities. The Malaysians would then probably continue to develop the principal ASEAN presence, with political influence following economic involvement.

But, whether the motive is to create a fire brigade for regionwide deployment, or somehow to remind potential, outside nation governments such as the Indonesian or the French that the island community will not be intimidated, a multinational regional force such as Julius Chan once recommended has no serious prospect of success. The smaller regional states would only become more apprehensive about bigger power (e.g., PNG)

aspirations. After all, among the island countries, only PNG, Fiji and Tonga have armed forces as such, only the first two have any meaningful capability, and PNG's is by far greater than Fiji's. Second, in part because of the existing or foreseeably continuing network of outside power defense commitments, these same powers will continue to be averse to encouraging regional military fire brigades whose composition and utilization could lead to an obfuscation of the assumed terms of existing protective aprons and defense pledges. An action such as PNG's assistance, with Australian backup, to suppress the rebellion on Espiritu Santo on Vanuatu could, as an ad hoc event, conceivably be repeated. Even in the Santo case, however, Fiji's nose was somewhat bent out of joint over how PNG comported itself. In sum, little embellishment to standing features of defense cooperation and protection is in prospect.

The Pacific island community is devoted to the principle of eliminating or containing great power rivalry within the region. Being small, frail and far removed from the centers of international competition, the resident countries wish to avoid becoming pawns or victims. Their means to accomplish this are not however straight and easy, and very likely will become more difficult as uncomfortable policy dilemmas are imposed.

The issue of limitation of great power rivalry in the region can be approached from both diplomatic and defense vantage points. The first dimension entails choices of diplomatic representation and of membership in international movements or in blocs and alliances. The recent diplomatic pattern in the region is quite straightforward. Western nations and especially Australia and New Zealand are the most visible among outside powers

in terms of residential diplomatic representation. The U.S. on its part is stepping up its own regional representation. The Soviets lack any residential representation, while the Chinese are present in PNG, Fiji and in Western Samoa.

The western and especially ANZ predominance is easily explained. Australia's and New Zealand's geographic proximity, prior and largely benign colonial connections, high level aid programs, innate interest in the region, and the personal ties and moderate politics of regional elites all add up. The Soviets have been rebuffed because in large measure their situation is the reverse of Australia's and New Zealand's regional assets, because their invited presence would itself inspire great power rivalry in the region, and lastly because of ANZUS nation advice that Moscow be kept out. The Chinese have been able to establish some entree because they have not been perceived to be as menacing as the Soviets (and indeed behave as friends of the west), and because, after initial doubts, the outside western powers raised no objection. Vanuatu's case is to date aberrant. As a matter of professed neutrality and evenhandedness, no recognition has been extended either to the U.S. or to the Soviet Union. Vanuatu has also stirred controversy by establishing nonresident relations with Cuba, and has become the only regional nation to join the Non-aligned Movement.

Looking ahead toward the end of the century, the existing general pattern, with Vanuatu as the exception, would appear to have reasonable but not sanguine prospects to survive. A continually elusive variable will be the outlooks and political temper of the succeeding generation of regional elites. More substantively, the regional pattern could well be disturbed, and

there would be "more Vanuatus," or diplomatic proclivities even more extreme than Vanuatu's, if the French territories are beset by commotion and then emerge with a bruised and angry governing elite that holds little sentimental brief for the west. There also is the Chinese factor. Chinese influence, and the regional countries' political receptivity of China, will probably either be as much as it is now - low key and of little direct impact - or tilting toward negative. China's regional role is largely a transposition of its dispute with the Soviets. Hence China supports a western political and security presence in the South Pacific. In so doing it essentially confirms western country regional preferences. But China's anti-Sovietism, which dominates its desire to preempt or counteract the Soviets, is to repeat a form of major power rivalry transferred to the region. That is an unwelcome notion in the region, and its manifestation could spill over and prompt resident countries to review their prevailing, essentially pro-western aligned stance. In this sense, because of the way it is carried out, China's pro-western approach in the region could by indirection be injurious to western interests.

The comment regarding the plainly pro-western orientation of most Pacific island countries leads into the rather more complex issue of outside power defense entitlements. Nuclear considerations apart, the basic question is whether these western privileges are likely to be challenged as being out of keeping with avowed regional interests that stress an escape from major power rivalries. Two related perspectives can be applied to this question. The first addresses the prospect of the introduction of a non-western military presence in or around the island countries. The second addresses prospects facing the retention of existing western defense facilities, or the introduction of new ones.

It is well to bear in mind that the fundamental, western power rationale in the area is strategic denial, specifically vis-a-vis the USSR. The island countries do appreciate this consideration, but as a regional matter rather than as the local manifestation of the global context of great power competition. Their perception is that the success of strategic denial means exclusion of Soviet footholds and thereby exclusion of intraregional competition for political and security advantage. For the time being they do not view the preponderance of western power as in itself provocative toward the Soviets, and thereby as regionally destabilizing. As with diplomatic policies, the survival of these attitudes will depend heavily on the next generation of elites. But certain special events may intervene. Again, an agitated process of decolonization in the French territories could tempt an attitude of a curse-on-both-great-power-camp-houses. While the point is stretched, Vanuatu might continue to flirt with such notions as allowing Soviet naval visits, and an independent New Caledonia might become equally unsporting toward western powers and their interests. In a dozen or fifteen years, the U.S. in particular might regard such prospects - not just realities - with utmost gravity. The reason is that if the strategic balance in the western Pacific were to shift away from the U.S. and its allies, if the Philippine bases became untenable, then the strategic lines of communication leading southward from the eastern edge of Micronesia, into the vicinity of Kiribati, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and New Caledonia, down into the Tasman Sea and round the southern coast of Australia would receive more active attention. It would be an open question whether the United States would press Kiribati and Tuvalu hard to renew the then-expiring treaty clauses designed to keep

unwanted third parties out, and to continue arrangements for possible U.S. return to abandoned defense facilities. It would also be an open question whether in such circumstances the U.S. would exert uncommonly firm pressure to insure that Vanuatu and New Caledonia did not permit Soviet interposition. If only for the sake of argument, such American pressure, even in a cause the remainder of island countries regard as sensible, could offend their sensibilities about big power heavyhandedness, and thereby reduce western political standing generally.

The possible loss or degradation of American naval and air bases in the Philippines would be a powerful political as well as strategic blow to the U.S. For a host of reasons, reconstituting such facilities in Japan or in Western Australia would be unfeasible. Despite depreciation of effectiveness and the costs involved, the only alternative would be relocation on Guam, and very likely the reactivation of facilities on Tinian and Saipan in the Northern Marianas. The U.S. might also find it militarily expedient to increase its presence in the Micronesian entities now heading for independence, and especially to invoke clauses in its arrangements with Palau for contingency use of military reservations.

Guam and the Northern Marianas are American territory. The Micronesian territories will be independent states, freely associated with the U.S. for 50 years, well beyond the year 2000. These considerations are not immaterial, but they could come to lose much of their meaning should a major U.S. strategic shift into Micronesia be undertaken. Right or wrong, peoples on the affected land masses could protest. Their governments, which will be included in regional councils such as the South Pacific Forum, could raise an alarm.



The South Pacific regional countries could well perceive the whole American enterprise as chilling reminder of what great powers do when it suits them, including introducing military might more squarely into the region and conceivably prompting a Soviet riposte. The U.S. and other western powers would however probably swallow island country displeasure and loss of political welcome as the price of salvaging vital military capabilities west of Hawaii.

The nuclear factor overlaps military basing and weapons systems issues. The island community has a collective abhorrence for things nuclear. The Americans tested nuclear weapons in Micronesia for years. The French continue to do so Mururoa, and have indicated they would probably be proceeding for another fifteen years - i.e., until about 2000. China has tested ICBM delivery vehicles in the area, and the U.S. continues to do so. Problems associated with nuclear waste disposal exercise the island countries. As nuclear armed U.S. vessels and occasional Soviet attack submarines ply the South Pacific waters, the resident countries are unnerved by the prospect of nuclear weapons being employed in anger in the region.

The middle-range future suggests three ways in which nuclear related contingencies could affect the region's political and strategic development. One is French testing, which will apparently continue regardless of who governs in Paris, and of how strongly the island countries complain. The island community's disapproval of France is compounded by dissatisfaction with its regional decolonization process. The net effect will likely be more, and more severe, attacks heaped on France on both fronts. In the course of these attacks the island countries could find themselves frustrated by absence of

equal fervor on the part of Australia and New Zealand, which are members of the South Pacific regional structure and among the area's most influential partners. Similarly, the telescoping of French nuclear testing and decolonization policies could incrementally contribute to political radicalism in the region, further upsetting relations with the ANZUS nations.

A second, nuclear-related domain of contention surrounds proposals for a regional nuclear-free zone (NFZ). If adopted, a zone of the type proposed by Australia at the 1984 South Pacific Forum meetings would in and of itself have little bearing on island country-outside power relations. Prospective injunctions against nuclear proliferation, nuclear testing, and nuclear waste disposal suit nearly everyone, including most outside powers. Freedom of the high seas would not be restricted under an NFZ scheme, and each regional nation would decide for itself whether it would allow port visits to outside power naval units without reference to their armament or propulsion. The U.S. and France would not in any event realistically be expected to accede to denuclearizing their own regional territories, namely Guam and French Polynesia, in the face of some hortatory Forum proclamation.

A potential problem would however seem to lie below rather than on the surface of such an NFZ proposal. Since the original, 1975 regional zone scheme was adumbrated, a key lesson has been that a great deal of what transpires depends on the interest, initiative and pleasure of Australia and New Zealand. Until mid-1984 the two ANZAC partners essentially harmonized their positions. The election of Labour to office in New Zealand in July 1984 constituted a major change in New Zealand nuclear matters, both as they pertain to ANZUS alliance affairs and in regard to the outlying South Pacific

community. Two related consequences are possible. With New Zealand and Australia out of synchronization, the island community countries will have less firm guidance than in past, thus rendering the regional decision-making process, and an approach to consensus-building, more complicated. It could also aggravate differences toward the west and nuclear matters specifically already manifest among regional members, as for instance between Vanuatu and Fiji. Moreover, assuming the New Zealand government's position remains fixed, its displeasure with things nuclear could, even in the face of Australian objection, induce wider anti-nuclear sentiment among island countries. This could mean holding out for tougher NFZ terms or, following New Zealand's example, as a matter of national choice refusing to accept visits by nuclear powered or armed vessels. The current user of such privileges in selected island countries is the U.S. The loss of occasional port visit opportunities in the current South Pacific context would be of little practical consequence. But pressures could be exerted on or within the new Micronesian entities to forbid such visits. Should this arise, the implications for U.S.-Micronesian relations would be most unpleasant, especially in light of prospective military prerogatives that the U.S. will be enjoying there. Moreover, speculations about the Micronesian territories aside, a combined New Zealand-South Pacific island nation boycott of American ship visits would make it more awkward for Australian governments, especially Australian Labor party governments, to maintain currently hospitable ship visit policies, and could carry over into the domain of existing American defense installations on Australian territory. Access to Australia is of dramatically greater strategic importance to the U.S. than is access to New Zealand or to the South

Pacific islands. Hence the spillover effect from the context of a regional NFZ, with New Zealand's conduct indicating ANZUS nation discord and tempting island countries to follow in kind, could contribute to a profound change in the regional security equation.

The third, nuclear-related scenario brings us back to American defense connections with the Micronesian territories. The U.S. does not have nor does it contemplate bases as such in the emerging entities. But, even if basing problems in the Philippines do not cause the U.S. to invoke contingency facility use in the Micronesian areas outside Guam and the Northern Marianas, the prospect of heightened local displeasure with a U.S. presence cannot be discounted. Whether any such criticism could impair U.S. access is problematical. But there already are such precedents as a mass sit-in by the Marshall Islanders at the missile testing range at Kwajalein as an assertion of land rights, and coordination between Micronesian and French territory movements seeking not only independence but comprehensive, regional denuclearization.

Decolonization is another, major political theme that preoccupies the Pacific island countries. Both the U.S.-associated Micronesian entities and the French territories remain unevolved into independence, but it is the latter that really offends regional sensibilities. Resentment of France is of course magnified by criticisms of its nuclear testing program. Since France has indicated that the testing program will last another fifteen years, it is not unlikely to consider an act of self-determination in Polynesia before the turn of the century. Indigenous independence sentiment is to be sure weaker there than in New Caledonia. In New Caledonia, the French have promised

self-determination by 1989. But the indigenous independence parties wish to hasten the process and have threatened to boycott interim elections and other territorial events.

The combination of New Caledonian independence party impatience, public goading of France by South Pacific island countries and by Vanuatu particularly, the complex ethnic composition of New Caledonia and France's own economic and political interests there could well become combustible. The French themselves have warned of something on the order of a white "Rhodesian" outcome if French authority were retracted and radical, indigenous movements tried to force their way to power, with bitterness and bloodshed the result. Such a scenario aside, it is well to recall that New Caledonia has already been disrupted by political violence. More commotion is the likely prognosis.

A critical consideration is that if New Caledonia is to undergo a sharply divisive political transition, and then be governed by Kanaka elites who were radicalized in the independence movement, there would be considerably wider implications for the region. Militant champions of New Caledonian independence, such as Vanuatu, could then be found working with new, regional ideological friends rather than remaining a distinct minority within the South Pacific community. If only to escape isolation and labels of political reaction, other, more moderate island countries could in the meantime have been thrust into tough-minded positions. The entire community could in fact undergo a tilt toward a more assertive, radical and possibly anti-western posture, especially if it was felt that outside western powers had let the community down on the New Caledonian issue.

A politically radical New Caledonia could feature such measures as allowing Soviet diplomatic representation and civil aid, and generally being unsympathetic toward western interests. There already have been intimations that the Kanak Socialist Independence Front has been establishing links with Libya. New Caledonia's geostrategic location would add to misgivings in ANZUS capitals as well as in Beijing and in Tokyo. It is also possible that anti-colonial momentum generated over New Caledonia would spill over into Micronesia. While the U.S. would likely have foresaken its United Nations-sponsored, strategic trust political control by the time of New Caledonia's independence, the prospective terms of treaties with the Micronesian entities could easily be turned on as forms of lingering colonialism, inherently unequal and forcibly extracted. Given the strategic stakes involved, the United States would not wish to contemplate a revision of the defense terms of the treaties, whether the pressures to do so were of local or of broader, Pacific island community origin. The potential radicalization of an independent New Caledonia would be disincentive, not incentive, to surrender American rights over the Micronesian entities' external affairs, or access to defense facilities.

These speculations about the South Pacific region's future have focused on political and strategic themes, primarily as identified by member countries themselves, and with particular reference to great power interplay. With all the requisite caution about foreseeing conditions at the turn of the century, it would appear that the political and strategic format in the region will be somewhat different, and more unsettled and troubled than it is today. Outside powers will themselves have substantially contributed to the shape of things

to come. Their capacity for political management in the region will have been attenuated. Vis-a-vis one another, they will not likely be in the kind of virtual state of stasis that has characterized the past years.

## ECONOMIC PROSPECTS FOR THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

by

Te'o Fairbairn

It is often said that the Pacific Basin Region is poised to enter a new economic era which will bring new levels of prosperity to its people. Such a belief is not totally without foundation; after all, the Pacific contains within its boundaries some of the most dynamic and rapidly growing economies in the world, many of whom are world leaders in technology and industrialization. With its vast ocean areas, the region is rich in marine life and its land masses contain substantial quantities of key minerals: copper, gold, nickel and phosphate as well as hardwood timbers. Energy potential is not insignificant while the strategic value of the region is recognised by the Western Alliance which so far as the South Pacific island countries are concerned has implications for their ability to secure financial aid resources for development. Not for nothing has it been said that the 21st century is the era of the Pacific.

For the small island states of the region, however, the promise of an impending 'golden age' needs to be treated with caution. In an uncertain world, many key resources may take years to develop, and some with apparent promise may yet prove to be commercially nonviable. It is likely that meaningful participation by Pacific island countries in the development of their fishery resources will continue to be frustrated by lack of capital and technical expertise. Distant fishing nations will continue to reap the major



benefit until these deficiencies are remedied. And, while rapid growth continues to be enjoyed by the Pacific Rim countries, little impact is likely to be felt by the smaller islands economies of the region.

These generalisations aside, it is clear that Pacific Island countries differ widely in their resource endowment and their capacity to achieve economic growth. The best prospects are held by the larger island countries such as Papua New Guinea and Fiji which are relatively well endowed with natural resources. With these, the potential is there to sustain cumulative growth and to achieve significant economic transformation in the coming decade. Far reaching changes in the social and economic life of these countries can be expected and these will be manifested through such avenues as the attainment of higher levels of social and welfare services; greater diversification of economic activity; stronger involvement of foreign capital; accelerated urbanisation; and a further decline in subsistence activity.

In sharp contrast are the prospects for the very small island economies: economic growth cannot be envisaged because of poverty of resources combined with rapid population growth. Living standards are likely to remain at low levels and the absence of economic opportunities will be reflected in continuing aid dependence, growing unemployment and pressure to emigrate.

This paper addresses the contrasting economic condition of Pacific island countries, their development prospects and the important influence of regional initiatives and foreign aid. It also reviews recent policy and strategy proposals whose implementation could significantly affect future development. To simplify, the analysis focuses on three categories of island countries, principally those under the Forum umbrella, whose size and resource potential

suggest (1) continuing economic growth, (2) limited growth and (3) no growth. This three-fold typology is not meant to be all embracing, e.g., a notable omission is the special case of Nauru; but it is convenient for the purpose of the present discussion.

### Growth Economics

This group includes what can be considered the lucky countries of the region: Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu (and arguably New Caledonia). Together this group accounts for an estimated 3.7 million, or 84 percent of the region's estimated current population of 4.5 million. Each has the potential to achieve cumulative economic growth and structural diversification based on the exploitation of both land, sea-based and tourist resources. Through a disciplined planning approach and backed up by a considerable input of private foreign investment, these countries have already made notable advances in developing their resources and in improving their living conditions.

By comparison with many other island countries, this group controls fishing zones that are relatively well stocked with tuna and have relatively large land areas as a basis for achieving significant agricultural diversification, whether it be subsistence food, cash crops, livestock or forestry. Rich mineral deposits are found in Papua New Guinea and to a lesser extent in Fiji and Solomon Islands. Hydro-carbons have been found in Papua New Guinea but hydro-power, biogas and solar energy possibilities are present throughout. Forestry is a major resource in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands while exotic forest varieties are being developed on a large scale in Fiji.

Considerable success in the exploitation of natural resources including minerals, is reflected in exports. Although gold and copper account for just over half her export earnings (\$480 million out of \$913 million in 1982) Papua New Guinea can boast at least half a dozen other major natural resource export products: coffee, cocoa, copra, copra oil, palm oil, logs and tea. Fiji exports are dominated by sugar, which accounts for about half her total export earnings, but the degree of diversification is also notable here. Important exports include coconut oil, gold, canned fish, ginger and an array of processed and manufactured goods such as cement, paint, cigarettes and light engineering items. For Solomon Islands the range covers fish, wood products, palm oil and copra; and for Vanuatu, copra, cocoa, frozen fish and chilled beef.

Though export earnings have generally been static over the past few years due to poor commodity prices, they have nonetheless expanded markedly over the decade as a whole. From 1975 to 1982, export earnings (in current values) more than doubled for Papua New Guinea and Fiji but multiplied five fold for Solomon Islands and three fold for Vanuatu. These are impressive performances, meaning in effect that there has been a growth in exports in real terms, and in the case of Solomon Islands, a very notable one.

With exports as an engine of growth, the national incomes of these countries also expanded markedly. Fiji's GDP doubled from 1975 to 1982; Papua New Guinea's rose by 30 per cent from 1977 to 1981 and from the limited evidence available, it appears that it more than doubled for the Solomon Islands over the past five year period. This suggests positive values for economic growth in real terms (which for Fiji has averaged 3 per cent annually

in the period 1977-82) and since these rates were above population growth, incomes per head have been rising. This is no mean feat when viewed against the adverse effects of the recent global recession. According to available national income figures, the level of GDP per head (1982) amounted to \$1,637 for Fiji, \$820 for Papua New Guinea and \$670 for Solomon Islands (see Table 1). These are well above income levels recorded for most developing countries in the world.

The major factor underlying these growth performances has been successful export diversification through natural resource development. Minerals have played a large part, especially for Papua New Guinea and Fiji, but the increased processing of natural resources has been significant. This has been an important factor in the expansion of industrial sectors, particularly in the case of Fiji where industrial activities and processing now account for at least 12 per cent of GDP - the highest in the region.

The growth momentum continues apace with the development of new major resource projects. In Papua New Guinea work has reached an advanced stage on the Ok Tedi project in the Western Province to develop huge deposits of gold and copper. The mine is said to contain 34 million tons of gold deposits, yielding 2.9 grams of gold per ton, and 376 million tons of ores bearing 0.7 per cent copper, 0.6 grams of gold and about 0.14 grams of silver per ton. The cost of bringing the mine into operation is estimated at \$1.6 billion (1981 prices) and the first stage of the mine opened in 1984, beginning with gold. When it is fully operational it will dominate the economy of Papua New Guinea in much the same way as Bougainville did in the previous decade.

Other major projects being developed in Papua New Guinea are the Ramu Sugar project which commenced production in 1982 but with its full potential not yet realised; a revival of the tuna industry; timber milling; and survey work on several newly discovered mineral deposits.

In Fiji, the harvesting of vast pinewood forests will make a significant impact on the economy and will open up many industrial opportunities. New sugar acreages are being developed while further major expansion can be expected from ginger, cocoa and citrus fruits. Productive projects currently being implemented in Solomon Islands encompass forestry, tuna fishing, and a commercial venture in palm oil and coconut.

#### Limited Growth

Western Samoa and Tonga are illustrative of this middle level group, where agriculture and related activities provide scope for growth, but their future potential is restricted by a limited land area and opportunities for major industrialisation and tourist development. Additionally, there is little indication so far of the existence of commercially exploitable minerals.

Exports are dominated by 'traditional' products: copra and other coconut products, cocoa, bananas and coffee, with a variety of other items including light manufactures, but these are small in total. Thus, Western Samoa relies heavily on coconut oil, cocoa, taro and timber with coconut cream, beer, soap and fruit juice providing a degree of diversification. Tonga's exports are dominated by coconut products including coconut oil and desiccated coconut, with certain fruit and vegetable items also prominent. Between 1975 and 1981,

Western Samoa recorded a slight upward trend in copra coupled with strong expansion in taro exports, but the overall performance in real terms has been static, a situation also seen in Tonga.

National income per head is among the lowest in the region, varying between \$400 and \$500. Principally because of this, Western Samoa has been classified as a Least Developed Country (LDC) by the United Nations. Some growth in real national income appears to have occurred during the 1970's but the recent experience has been one of decline because of adverse terms of trade, generally declining export production and an ever-rising population.

Subsistence production continues to play a significant part in the economic life of the group; as a proportion of GDP, subsistence production is equal to 32 per cent in Western Samoa, and 26 per cent in Tonga which compares, for example, to only 8 per cent in Fiji. Opinion varies regarding the development potential of subsistence sectors, but at the present time they remain of considerable importance as a source of livelihood for many island countries. As well, they provide a measure of security against the vagaries of the world economy as a 'fall back' in times of economic crisis.

Development prospects mainly depend on the ability to develop presently unused land for agriculture and to improve the productivity of existing agriculture. Other possibilities lie with the development of agricultural processing and tourism.

Countries in this group must contend with powerful constraints to development. Among the most intractable problems are the existence of rigid traditionally based land tenure systems, a low capacity to innovate, paucity of capital funds and skills, continuing vulnerability to international trade

instabilities and rapid population growth. Progress in selected areas will no doubt be made, but on a limited scale and irregularly, while adverse changes in world market conditions could quickly undermine the economic viability of apparently successful projects. For these and related reasons major breakthroughs in the foreseeable future cannot be expected.

### No Growth

These are the 'problem' economies of the region: Kiribati, Tuvalu, Tokelau, Niue and the Cook Islands. Apart from sea-based opportunities, poverty of land-based resources is severe and this combined with tiny domestic markets, geographic isolation and expanding populations, provides the ingredients for economic malaise and decline. A few countries have been able to stave off subsistence poverty through sustained emigration and a heavy reliance on foreign aid.

Copra is the lifeblood of the group but small amounts of handicrafts and fresh fruits and vegetables are exported in some cases. Exports of fruit juice, processed fruit and clothing are significant in the Cook Islands but these are based mainly on two islands — Rarotonga and Mangaia. On the whole, export earnings are not only small but have been static except in the Cook Islands, where, in recent years, exports have climbed noticeably.

Recent estimates of national income per head vary from \$600 to \$700, except for Kiribati and the Cook Islands with \$450 and \$1,200 respectively. These are relatively high and reflect aid dependency rather than domestic productive capacity. All have probably suffered a decline in real income per head in recent years.

An additional handicap suffered by this group (with the notable exception of Rarotonga) is the low productive capacity of subsistence sectors reflecting poor soils and other unfavourable environmental conditions. Poor subsistence sectors explain in part the unusually high dependence on imported food compared with the larger island countries, as well as the modest contribution of the subsistence production to GDP. Thus in the case of Kiribati and Tuvalu, it is estimated that subsistence production accounts for between 16 and 18 per cent of GDP - about half the corresponding share for Western Samoa and Solomon Islands.

With virtually no opportunities for growth, prospects for improved living conditions depend on aid, with emigration relieving population pressure. Possible regional and aid initiatives for small island countries will be discussed below and if implemented could result in major benefits. On the other hand, an absence of outside assistance would lead to an unavoidable drift to subsistence poverty.

#### External Initiatives

It is clear that by concentrating on natural resources as a basis for economic growth I have perhaps painted an unduly bright future for the larger of the Pacific island countries. The analysis has neglected the many obstacles that have to be addressed and overcome if the resource potential is to be realized - a fact that applies both to large and small countries. On the supply side, there are problems of raising development capital and securing the necessary expertise at all levels, but with limited local capacities, the bulk of these inputs must necessarily come from overseas.



Progress can also be obstructed by rigid adherence to customary forms of land tenure and socio-traditional attitudes, which impede the development of commercial agriculture and are inimical to innovation and development.

On the demand side, problems arise over securing markets and favourable prices and the ability to cope with fluctuations in world market conditions. Poor export prices, if accompanied by rapidly rising import costs, can result in a serious decline in the terms of trade which can negate the effect of increased export production on national income.

High costs of transport, both sea and air, and of public administrative services are further major constraints, particularly onerous for the more remote and dispersed countries. Testing social issues that invariably arise with development have to be faced, such as ensuring that the benefits of development are distributed on a reasonably equitable basis between the various social, occupational, ethnic and geographic groups. Also, almost all countries currently face serious balance of payments problems which need to be brought under control, stemming, in part at least, from low export price levels and high import costs, including that for imported fuel.

Such constraints remain an ever-present threat, frustrating efforts of island countries to realise their development aspirations. However, even from the most pessimistic assessment, the economic future of the larger countries still remains highly favourable by comparison with the smaller members of the region. A growing disparity in the economic circumstances of the Pacific islands is evident from the recent experience, but greater polarization can be expected in the future even allowing for the effects of foreign aid. One will find groups of countries thriving in a state of relative affluence amidst

those suffering economic deprivation - dramatic contrast to the traditional times when under subsistence conditions, economic status would have been fairly uniform.

Increasing fragility in the economic circumstances of the small island countries could have significant regional implications. Continuing economic weakness could leave little choice but to seek radical solutions including closer integration with a sympathetic metropolitan power and mass emigration. Such approaches will certainly undermine the coherence of the region making it difficult to pursue regionalism in a meaningful sense. Serious security problems could arise whose impact on the economic life of the region is bound to be detrimental.

In the next 20 years will we see initiatives capable of promoting Pacific island development and assisting in particular the small resource-poor economies? The most interesting possibilities lie with foreign aid and regional initiatives.

### Regional Initiatives

Much headway has been made in establishing a network of regional and sub-regional organizations that promote the economic life of the area and its constituent countries. The work of the South Pacific Forum and its Secretariat arm, SPEC, is well known at both the political and economic levels. SPC has been active over many years in the social and economic fields, while a variety of more specialised bodies have been established including the University of the South Pacific, the Pacific Forum Line (PFL), the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), Trade Commissions and the like.

Largely under the auspices of the above organizations, a multiplicity of regional projects and activities have been designed and implemented, many with strong financial support from the United Nations agencies and other international bodies. Apart from the activities undertaken by the above named organizations, other regional activities include those involving energy, telecommunications, the environment, sea-based mineral exploration and various aspects of technical assistance and research.

A notable initiative has been the negotiation of a trade agreement (the South Pacific Trade and Economic Co-operation Agreement or SPARTECA) between two groups of Forum members; island countries on the one hand and New Zealand and Australia on the other. The principal aim of the Agreement, which came into effect in 1982, is to achieve progressively duty free and unrestricted non-reciprocal access into the two metropolitan markets for a wide variety of island products, as a possible means of boosting island trade. For the island countries it is a significant breakthrough, opening the way for increasing exports, and several countries, particularly Fiji, have gained notably from it. However SPARTECA is not a free trade agreement and it excludes or severely restricts the entry of a certain group of products of interest to island countries. Complicated administrative requirements have also provided a barrier in some cases. Above all, SPARTECA tends to favour, albeit unintentionally, the larger, more industrially advanced countries so that it operates as another mechanism for widening regional inequalities.

Much more needs to be done regionally to increase the benefits to Pacific countries from exploiting tuna resources within their 200 mile Exclusive Economic Zones. Many countries, particularly those where tuna is

concentrated, have high expectations about the development potential of this resource which is presently being exploited by distant fishing fleets with little benefit to island countries. The Forum Fishing Agency, which was established in 1979 with its headquarters in Honiara, carries out useful work in certain areas, such as data collection and dissemination and keeping a registry of fishing vessels; but as Herr (1981) has noted, it contributed little initially towards policy coordination. Further progress in realising the potential of tuna calls for concerted action in the vital areas of surveillance (to prevent poaching); policy coordination; applied research on tuna stocks and migratory patterns; and planning of regional facilities and possibilities for joint venture activity. Indications that the United States is about to enter into a regional treaty to permit regulation of the highly migratory species is a hopeful sign which, if it eventuates, will undoubtedly open the way for a stronger regional effort to tackle some of these urgent problems.

Though outwardly impressive, regional co-operation to date falls far short of what could be achieved. Progress has been most notable in the relatively 'easy' areas where the benefits of regional co-operation are most obvious and can be realised without impinging too heavily on national sovereignty. Certainly, some tough areas have been addressed as for example, airline services and shipping, but an attempt to set up a regional airline failed and there is no certainty that the PFL will survive at least in its present form. Other difficult areas calling for closer economic integration and collaboration have been barely touched: industrial planning, regional trade co-operation, applied agricultural research and closer integration of

development planning and policy. All these and other related areas provide scope for future co-operation with attendant benefits to the region.

Apart from these, there is scope for other initiatives that could promote development, particularly for the small island countries. For example, Pacific countries can strive to achieve a single regional voice in certain key international forums rather than, as often is the case, participating individually or as blocs. Greater unity would enable a truly regional viewpoint to be presented and would be advantageous in securing vital outside resources for development.

Regional organizations need to give particular attention to the special needs of the smaller countries and ensure that this is reflected in their work programmes. Since the larger countries apparently gain the most benefit from the work of regional institutions, possible ways to remedy this bias should be considered. The provision directly of technical experts at no cost to the small islands might be one way of doing this; another is the establishment of an aid mechanism based on contributions (a regional tax?) from the larger, economically more advanced countries. Limited inter-island migration is another possibility. Through such initiatives it may be possible to reduce somewhat the extent of future economic polarization and disparity.

### Foreign Aid

Pacific island countries have been receiving increasing amounts of foreign aid over the recent period, chiefly in the form of bilateral aid for budgetary and development assistance. As Table 2 shows, official development aid to the region, both as grants and concessionary loans, totalled just over \$1 billion

in 1982, or \$208 per head. There are several major recipients in aggregate terms but a notable feature is the relatively high amounts per head received by the very small countries such as Niue, Tokelau and the Cook Islands.

Given their limited financial capabilities, aid has played a large part in allowing island countries to meet some of their development aspirations. Aid has supplemented local budgetary resources rather heavily in some cases and this has been important in raising living standards above what would otherwise be sustainable; but for almost all countries aid has been crucial in supporting national development programmes and without it few such programmes would have been viable.

The rationale for aid giving rests on a complexity of motives that are historic, political, economic and strategic in origin. It is clear, for example, that political and military considerations underly French aid to her Pacific territories and to newly independent Vanuatu, while economic factors, particularly access to raw materials, are at the forefront of Japanese aid. Australia and New Zealand consider themselves an integral part of the South Pacific 'community' and feel a special obligation to foster development among their small neighbours. Underlying this position are strategic conditions related to maintaining political stability among island countries and ensuring that they remain within the Western Alliance sphere of influence. In effect their strategic value is a resource whose economic role can be 'measured', or partly so by foreign aid.

While willing donors are likely to continue to be available, prospects for increased aid are not promising and indeed, the value of aid in real terms could decline markedly. On one side, certain traditional donors are facing

difficult economic conditions and have had to limit their aid. There is also a belief in some quarters that aid levels are already high and have reached saturation point, so that further increases are not justified. On the other side, some island countries take seriously their pledge to achieve greater self-reliance and may not wish to increase aid dependence. (Note too, that Australian 'budgetary' aid to Papua New Guinea of just over \$300 million, is scheduled to be phased out during the next few years.)

With aid looking less promising, Pacific island countries will need to explore new avenues for augmenting the supply of development capital and ensuring its efficient use. They will necessarily have to turn increasingly to domestic sources for mobilising development funds, including new ways of raising tax revenue, increasing surpluses from public enterprises, broadening the institutional base for mobilising savings and careful control of government administrative expenditure. It need hardly be said that among the small countries the scope for achieving major increases from these sources is severely limited.

Possible regional measures that may be taken to assist small island countries have been suggested in the previous section. Certainly, the development of effective regional mechanisms in the fields of fisheries, energy, transportation and sea-based mineral exploration could benefit the small countries in a major way, but overall, there is a need on the part of the international community to come to grips with the development realities of the problem economies and to devise innovatory approaches. A possible first step is for donors to come to terms with the continuing need for aid support and to accept that much of this support is justified on social and welfare grounds rather than on strictly economic ones.

Australia's aid programme was recently subject to an intense review by an officially appointed team (the Jackson Committee). The team report highlighted the predicament of Kiribati and Tuvalu and proposed that Australia should establish a special immigration quota to help deal with the unique problems of these two islands. Such a proposal is under consideration, but it represents the kind of regional initiative that could play a crucial part in meeting the development problems of the small island states. One hopes that Australia will accept this challenge.

#### Other Policy Initiatives

What other possible strategies are there for the category II and III Pacific island countries to stave off the seemingly ineluctable march to subsistence impoverishment? Recent analysis point to a number of possibilities, some of which call for regional action on a somewhat grand scale. Among the more interesting proposals are those suggesting closer economic integration with outside countries and special domestic efforts to achieve major advances, especially in the fields of population control and technological progress.

In a recent article (1982), Higgins has analyzed the various development options facing small Pacific island countries. He points out that attempts to develop in isolation as independent sovereign states or revert to old colonial and neocolonial ties (in part embodied in multinationals) in an effort to become part of a large system are options that would in many ways lead to disaster. Much more promising is an option based on the integration of Pacific island countries as a means of establishing a 'rational network of



interactions and flows among regional economies of the South Pacific' (Higgins 1982, p. x). He argues in favour of political integration which would pave the way for the formation of a regional socio-economic political system which would be empowered to decide on vital matters affecting the economic development of the region; for example co-ordinated development planning. According to Higgins, such a scheme is the only meaningful way for these countries to achieve increased prosperity. The benefits are perceived to lie not only in co-ordinated planning and agreed economic specialization but in the scope for harmonising the relations of Pacific island countries, treated as a single unit, with countries outside the system.

The importance of political co-operation has been emphasized by Fisk (1982) as a strategy for Pacific island development. There are many practical difficulties in the way of securing such co-operation but Fisk feels that it could be achieved through existing regional mechanisms such as the South Pacific Forum. By working together in this way, these countries can gain extra muscle in the international area. This will have significant implications for most Pacific island countries not only in the development of major resources, such as fisheries and sea-based minerals, but also in the area of aid and migration.

The development constraints and options facing the small island states have also been studied by Doumenge (1983). He maintains that these islands lack both the space and the economic volume to set up a durable domestic structure, the only guarantee of genuine economic viability (p. vii). Such viability, which he defines as the productive capacity required to enable the wishes and aspirations of the population to be satisfied, can be achieved by

maintaining 'continuous relations' with foreign partners. More specifically, Pacific island countries can benefit from establishing 'privileged links' with the outside 'power centres' or 'poles' such as are represented by the major Pacific rim countries (California, Japan, Hong Kong, eastern Australia and New Zealand) and in particular, with the great North Atlantic metropolices (London and Paris in Europe, New York and Miami in eastern North America). These poles are multipurpose, with the capacity to create 'vital stimuli' as a base for generating development among island countries.

Much the same conclusions are expressed in a report prepared by a team of experts in 1979, which, under the auspices of ADB, surveyed the agricultural possibilities and overall economic prospects of selected Pacific countries. According to the team's report, a possible solution for the economic plight of the small countries is to become more closely integrated with a large metropolitan country, such as is represented by the present relationship between the Cook Islands and New Zealand. This would ensure a regular outlet for surplus population on the one hand, and ensure a source of foreign aid on the other, but the cost would be to compromise economic and political independence.

For the larger countries, closer economic integration with outside countries can have significant implications for trade policy as noted by Dommen (1980). Here economic viability depends on the capacity to foresee changes in world economic conditions and to adapt to them by moving from one form of specialisation to another rather than undertaking a diversity of activities simultaneously. Favoured activities will be those that have a high income elasticity in world markets; but with few productive options, such a strategy has little relevance for the small countries.

The importance of domestic initiatives in shaping policies to save the economy from subsistence poverty has been highlighted in recent articles by Tisdell and Fairbairn (1984) and Fairbairn and Kakazu (1984). Employing a theoretical approach, Tisdell and Fairbairn show the island economies facing a restricted range of resources and population growth. Economic growth can occur but it is only a temporary phenomenon for, in time, the economy will revert back to subsistence levels as it comes up against population pressure, resources depletion and unfavourable international market conditions. It can even fall below subsistence levels if traditional skills are lost during the 'development' phase.

Against this scenario, Tisdell and Fairbairn explore the possibility of escape through appropriate planning initiatives. A first possibility is population control which government can promote through family planning and related programmes (and migration). The second is increased productivity and strengthening of subsistence sectors through the intensive application of technology to productive sectors. Taken in combination, changes in these two areas can lead to economic growth and an escape from low-level subsistence. But it is apparent that in practice, achieving major improvements in productivity calls for structural changes of a kind that few island countries would be prepared to undertake, and in the case of small islands, the potential is severely circumscribed by the small scale of the productive sectors.

Fairbairn and Kakazu also demonstrate the possibility of economic collapse by small countries and a consequent reversion to subsistence poverty for much the same reasons noted above. To prevent such a collapse, they propose a

development strategy that gives greater emphasis to subsistence sector production, especially foodstuffs, as opposed to commercial production for export. The advantage of the strategy is twofold: first, it will reduce the severity of balance of payments crises that invariably follow an over-commitment to export production; and secondly, it will result in greater self-sufficiency in food production and hence national economic independence. The swing back towards the subsistence economy implies curbing material aspirations of the population and this paves the way for achieving a more sustainable balance between these aspirations and resource capabilities.

Finally, two relevant points for the designing of development strategy can be noted. First, smallness (especially if associated with compactness) means that certain national and community needs can be quickly met often with modest expenditure of capital funds. This can apply in the case of health facilities (presumably only one major hospital will be required), technical training facilities, wharves and airstrips and tar sealed roading. Furthermore, smallness can facilitate the spread of new techniques favourable to production.

Secondly, small island countries have a potential to develop activities which exploit the advantages of insular remoteness and isolation. Wace (1980) has identified many such opportunities ranging from plant research and export of cut flowers to the establishment of testing grounds for noxious materials and military bases. Leaving aside military bases, such 'remoteness specific' activities can provide a useful source of cash income making for greater economic security. These possibilities, though they seem unusual, deserve close consideration.

### Concluding Remarks

With prospects of increasing polarization in the economic conditions of Pacific island countries, particular attention needs to be directed at the plight of the smaller countries faced with limited or no growth scenarios. While continuing growth and improving living conditions can be expected to occur among the larger countries, the economic life of the smaller countries will remain static and probably decline through the sheer lack of development options. Unaided, some may find themselves in the next decade suffering a degree of subsistence poverty hitherto unknown in the region.

Addressing the needs of the small resource poor countries calls for innovatory approaches and this paper has suggested a few such possibilities in relation to aid and regional cooperation. But continuing heavy aid dependence is anathema in some cases while prospects for increased aid are not promising. Perhaps it is time to take a more serious look at some of the recent proposals concerning the establishment of broader-based cooperative systems for the region as suggested, for example, by Higgins. A degree of political integration would provide the foundation for a stronger South Pacific Community and would, for one thing, clear the way for further major regional initiatives in the economic and social fields. Many benefits would ensue, but so far as the smaller island states are concerned, such a system will provide a valuable framework for focusing regional and international attention on their special problems and needs, and above all, will enable the development of meaningful solutions in a region-wide sharing partnership with their more fortunate neighbours. There are problems aplenty in the practical implementation of such a scheme but it may be the most effective means of resolving the dilemma of the small states.

Table 1

POPULATION, PER CAPITA INCOME AND MAIN EXPORT  
PRODUCTS OF SOUTH PACIFIC COUNTRIES

COUNTRY	POPULATION 1982 (000)	PER CAPITA INCOME <sup>1</sup> (\$)	MAIN EXPORT PRODUCTS
American Samoa	33.9	4060	Tuna
Cook Islands	16.9	1110m	Fresh fruit and vegetables clothing, processed fruit and copra
Federated States of Micronesia	82.4	830	Copra, fish
Fiji	658.0	1630m	Sugar, gold, coconut oil, fish
French Polynesia	153.8	4600m	Coconut oil, vanilla
Guam	108.4	4860m	n.a.
Kiribati	59.3	420m	Copra
Marshall Islands	32.8	n.a.	n.a.
Nauru	8.4	n.a.	Phosphate
Niue	3.2	620p	Fruit products, copra
Northern Marianas	18.4	4000	Vegetables

New Caledonia	145.0	7900m	Nickel and products
Palau	12.4	n.a.	n.a.
Papua New Guinea	3126.6	820m	Copper and concentrates, cocoa, coconut products
Solomon Islands	243.0	670m	Fish and fish preparations copra, timber, palm oil
Tokelau	1.5	650	Copra, handicrafts
Tonga	99.5	460f	Coconut oil, dessicated coconut, fruit and vegetables
Tuvalu	7.7	590f	Copra
Vanuatu	125.6	550	Copra, fish, frozen meat
Wallis and Futuna	11.9	1030	Copra
Western Samoa	157.0	605	Copra, cocoa, taro, timber

1. Based on official estimates for either 1979 or 1980 except for Fiji and Western Samoa which are for 1982 and 1983 respectively. National income figures are GDP except for Guam, Vanuatu and Western Samoa which are GNP; with GDP at factor cost denoted by f, at market prices by m and producer prices by p.

Sources: South Pacific Commission, Demographic Unit, Noumea (for population figures); Fairbairn 1984, Chapter 3; ADB 1984.

TABLE 2

## OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE (ODA) FLOWS BY SOURCE AND RECIPIENT 1982 (\$ MILLION)

	AUSTRALIA	FRANCE	NEW ZEALAND	UNITED KINGDOM	UNITED STATES	OTHER BILATERAL	TOTAL BILATERAL	AID	EDF	UNDP	TOTAL MULTI-LATERAL	TOTAL MULTI-LATERAL	TOTAL BILATERAL MULTI-LATERAL	ODA PER HEAD(\$)
Cook Islands	0.6	--	9.0	--	--	0.1	9.7	0.3	--	0.5	0.1	0.9	10.6	627.6
Fiji	15.9	0.3	3.1	3.2	2.0	6.1	30.6	--	2.5	1.4	1.6	5.5	36.1	54.9
French Polynesia	--	176.0	--	--	--	--	176.0	--	0.6	--	--	0.6	176.6	1148.4
Kiribati	2.9	--	0.4	9.5	--	1.9	14.7	--	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.7	15.4	259.6
Nauru	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
New Caledonia	--	161.4	--	--	--	--	161.4	--	0.4	--	--	0.4	161.8	1116.2
Niue	0.2	--	4.1	--	--	--	4.3	--	--	0.2	--	0.2	4.5	1402.2
Pacific Is (USA)	--	--	--	--	160.1	4.5	164.6	--	--	0.2	0.4	0.6	165.2	573.0
Papua New Guinea	268.6	0.3	2.0	0.1	--	10.6	281.6	4.3	18.4	1.7	10.7	35.1	316.7	101.3
Solomon Islands	7.2	--	0.6	11.3	--	3.3	22.4	2.2	2.7	0.6	0.5	6.0	28.4	117.1
Tokelau	--	--	1.8	--	--	--	1.8	--	--	0.1	--	0.1	1.9	1291.8
Tonga	6.1	0.2	2.3	1.1	1.0	1.8	12.5	0.2	2.5	0.8	1.1	4.6	17.1	173.2
Tuvalu	0.9	--	0.4	3.5	--	0.8	5.6	--	0.5	0.2	--	0.7	6.3	82.1
Vanuatu	4.7	9.6	0.9	7.8	--	0.8	23.8	0.2	1.3	0.5	0.7	2.7	26.5	210.9
Wallis & Futuna	--	7.2	--	--	--	--	7.2	--	0.2	--	--	0.2	7.4	625.5
Western Samoa	5.8	--	3.3	--	1.0	5.6	15.7	1.2	2.5	0.8	2.0	6.5	22.2	142.3
Unallocated	4.7	3.4	12.0	0.8	2.0	1.3	24.2	--	--	--	--	--	24.2	--
TOTAL	317.6	358.4	39.9	37.3	166.1	36.8	956.1	8.4	31.8	7.2	17.3	64.8	1020.9	208.5

SOURCE: Compiled from computer printouts provided by OECD, Paris and Table 1 (Population)



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## THE FUTURE OF SOUTH PACIFIC REGIONALISM

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There is a widespread view in the South Pacific that regionalism will be expressed in the future by greater organizational simplicity than is currently the case. Not only is such a development expected, but also strenuous efforts have been made already to attain this objective. In particular, a substantial share of the efforts toward regionalism over the past decade has been devoted to establishing a single regional organization (SRO).<sup>1</sup> Yet despite the activity and rhetoric in the direction of an SRO, I believe South Pacific regionalism in the year 2000 will be characterized by greater institutional diversity and thus by more organizations. Nevertheless, the proponents of an SRO will not be completely disappointed for the policymaking process governing these organizations will become more coherent and integrated and thus advance the most important aims of the SRO proposal, in part because of this diversification.

### South Pacific Regionalism and Sovereignty

Central to this vision of the South Pacific's regional future is the assumption that regionalism is essentially concerned with intergovernmental relations. Its primary justification is the preservation and extension of state sovereignty. Whether there have been, or will be, unintended consequences that have supranational implications for regional integration is immaterial to this position. Both in motivation and in action the countries of the South Pacific, like

most countries of the world, have supported the concept and practice of regionalism principally to secure their own national interests (which, of course, may be interpreted as short-term or long-term or both).

This explicitly state-centric model of regionalism carries with it some implicit assertions about the nature and the role of regionalism. Perhaps the most important of these for this assessment of the future is the rejection of the populist-based idealist, and the economic reductionist, views of regionalism. The former tends to regard regionalism as a mitigating device to moderate the divisive influences of sovereignty. The realists are inclined therefore to emphasize international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) as more effective building blocks to regional unity than intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) since these are putatively closer to "the people." The economic reductionists are not so much troubled by the morality of government as by the roots of its behavior. They perceive the forces of economics to underlie both domestic and international politics.

Although popular sentiments of commonality have been vital to establishing the scope and maintaining the level of regional activity in the South Pacific over the years, I regard this factor as largely instrumental to the actions of government. That is, to the extent that governments support regional INGOs, they do so to make their policies at the IGO level more effective and acceptable—not the reverse. This observation, however, cannot be taken as a denigration of work of INGOs in the region. Nor can it be regarded as a judgment based on the comparative operational efficiencies of nongovernmental organizations and

IGOs. Rather it is an assessment of relative national priorities that helps to justify the focus on regional IGOs in this presentation.

Perhaps more a difficult explanation to put aside is that of the economic reductionists. The view that economic rationales underpin regional cooperation currently strikes a responsive chord in the South Pacific. Much of the demand for an SRO stems from the same principles to which the economic reductionists subscribe. Regional cooperation allows communities of countries to obtain collectively economic benefits that those states could not secure individually. Thus the economic reductionists allege that behind every political act (such as regional intergovernmental cooperation) there is an economic motive. The SRO proponents would not necessarily reduce all IGOs in the South Pacific to such a single cause, but they do tend to perceive the major elements of regionalism in fairly conventional, economic cost/benefit terms.

Superficially the record adds a verifying gloss to the economic reductionist interpretation. All the major IGOs established since World War II have been founded to achieve limited developmental (largely economic) goals.<sup>2</sup> The South Pacific Commission (SPC), the Pacific Islands Producers' Association (PIPA), the South Pacific Bureau for Economic Cooperation (SPEC), the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), and the Coordinating Committee for Offshore Prospecting/South Pacific (CCOP/SOPAC) would fit this mold, although two organizations—SPC and SPEC—have broadened their original responsibilities in the intervening years. In addition, two important bodies—the University of the South Pacific (USP) and Pacific Forum Line (PFL)—have been created both to

contribute to the region's economic development and to achieve economies of scale in the provision of needed services.

Yet against this evidence must be weighed the countervailing data that the islands do not pay for anything like the major financial costs of regional organization. Thus reducing the justification for South Pacific regionalism to economic rationalism does not appear to be wholly tenable. The islands contribute only a minority of the budget to the major IGOs--the highest levels being reached in SPEC and FFA where, at least until recently, the islands were responsible for one-third of the assessed contributions. With extrabudgetary contributions and supplemental funds from nonisland contributors, however, the real levels have been probably nearer to 15 percent.<sup>3</sup> (Since neither Australia nor New Zealand is considered an "island" in this paper, I am treating their contribution as "outside" donations even though they are members of virtually all the major regional IGOs.<sup>4</sup>)

Of course, it could be argued that the economic justification for regionalism need not be limited solely to the associated states' capacity to pay for the collective goods and services acquired through regional cooperation. It may be sufficient that the organizational mechanism permits outside funding to be channeled into those purposes. Such an explanation, however, begs the question of why the outside donors would seek to strengthen regional relations in the South Pacific or why the islands would adopt a regional approach if the outside funding could be made available directly on a bilateral basis.

The reasons for funding may include economic benefits for the donor, but they are scarcely confined to this single purpose. They extend also to security interests, political access, humanitarianism, ideology, and the like. Such noneconomic factors may even lead to a reversal of conventional economic reasoning in specific cases, such as Australia's continuing assistance to the PFL despite the gravest economic doubts regarding this aspect of South Pacific regionalism. The islands too seek more than just economic advantages through their participation in regional cooperation. The creation of the Forum is the primary evidence of their wider concerns. Nevertheless, as I will argue here, even at the solely organizational level there are political justifications for pursuing less than optimally efficient (in economic terms) regional solutions to problems that might be treated bilaterally.

Therefore, without further belaboring this methodological point, I submit that the primary purpose of regionalism in the South Pacific today and in the immediate to intermediate future is to assist the small, isolated, and relatively disadvantaged island states to better enjoy the benefits, and more effectively discharge the duties, of sovereignty. Further, if the notion is rejected that "everything has a price" (such that all state activities can be reduced to a line entry in an accountant's ledger), the idea of sovereignty embraces more than a simplistic concept of economic viability. Given the threats to and the pressures and limitations on the islands' exercise of sovereignty noted by others during this series of seminars, regionalism may prove vital to the success of the islands as nations on the threshold of the

twenty-first century. But to have this impact, regionalism itself must grow with the needs of the region.

With certain qualifications, I believe we will witness further growth in regionalism (including institutions), as well as increasing sophistication in the operation of South Pacific regional cooperation by the year 2000. The global trends of almost exponential growth in the numbers of IGOs since World War II may not be maintained by regional IGOs in the South Pacific, but specialization and regulatory control are likely to ensure some growth. And, as previously suggested, the exigencies of managing this growth will enforce a more rigorous pattern of interorganizational cooperation that will be more complex and sophisticated than the existing pattern.

Rather than develop a complex matrix of possible arrangements based on a column of organizations and a row of interorganizational levels of complexity, I will collapse them into three basic scenarios of regionalism for the future. The three scenarios are presented in order of increasing probability.

#### Scenario 1: Regionalism in Decline

A decline scenario would arise should there be the same or fewer organizations with less complexity or fewer numbers with the same level of complexity by the year 2000. In any of these circumstances there would be some loss in the current levels of intergovernmental cooperation in the South Pacific. Given the present robustness of regionalism, such a decline seems unlikely and yet certain factors could bring about such a development.

One set of circumstances that conceivably could result in a reduced level of regionalism derives from the dynamics of current internal pressures on intergovernmental cooperation in the South Pacific. Such factors include the willingness of governments throughout the region to work together, the perceived viability of alternatives to regionalism, and the apparent success or failure of existing regional arrangements. All of these have arisen as problems at various times in the past, and they could reemerge with greater force in the future.

Perhaps the primary internal impediment to regional action has been the appeal of "subregionalism." This term has been used frequently as a euphemistic expression for ethnic division, particularly between the Melanesian and Polynesian areas of the South Pacific. Although such differences have been contained heretofore, it is possible that the attraction of greater integration into a Melanesian Alliance (including New Caledonia), divergent security perspectives by the Polynesian states, the emergence of a larger Micronesian bloc, or other pressures might inhibit the willingness of the island nations to work together extensively on a region-wide basis. It is also imaginable that the less ethnically based type of subregionalism, as evidenced by the formation of the Nauru Agreement group within the FFA,<sup>5</sup> could become more important if the logic of resource management should somehow concentrate all the advantages in a single subregional configuration. Again, one would expect regional institutions to suffer in such a circumstance since as with ethnic subregionalism, economic interest-based subregionalism would serve as an alternative to, rather than a source of additional strength



for, the regional approach. The example of the Benelux group within European regionalism shows nevertheless that subregionalism need not be a threat to regional cooperation.

A second internal pressure has been the high level of bilateral assistance in the region. Bilateralism has greater appeal than regionalism for fairly explicable reasons. It gives more effective control to the recipient countries in the use of the aid especially for national development planning. Further, for some nations at least, direct government-to-government aid negotiations may be more productive in achieving desired levels of assistance.

A third possible pitfall for regionalism could be a domino effect resulting from the failure of a significant regional institution. Were the PFL or the SPC to collapse (in the case of the latter, recent political unrest in New Caledonia has added a new dimension of stress) or the USP to follow the pattern of Air Pacific, for example, a general loss of esteem for regional cooperation might ensue within the region. The remaining regional bodies then would be subject to more rigorous scrutiny and given less benefit of the doubt in marginal cases. Of course, such consequences would follow only if the collapse were to occur in untoward circumstances. Were the altered regional relationship to arise from a general agreement for a new course of action, the loss of an institution or a change in one's status could herald improved regional ties.

In addition to these internal pressures, certain external developments could undercut South Pacific regionalism by the year 2000. Such developments might include political reabsorption, external

manipulation of regional IGOs, and donor timidity. Although it may seem inconceivable to most observers that presently independent or self-governing states within the South Pacific would be willing to surrender their status for a more dependent one, some cynics doubt that the smaller entities will be able to cope with sovereignty over the long term. Should the most dire forebodings come to pass, a regional system based on sovereign or near-sovereign entities would be subject to serious stress because it would appear to be both less legitimate and less effective. Given that island states are unlikely to volunteer openly for such a fate, it seems probable that the reabsorption threat would be generated from outside the region by the misguided efforts of friendly states to relieve embattled island nations of some of the responsibilities of sovereignty.

The problem of external manipulation of a regional IGO is likely to arise only in the playing off of the SPC against the Forum-related agencies. Even here the problem could arise only if one of the three major non-Forum members of the SPC (i.e., Britain, France, and the United States) made the fundamental error of judgment of assuming that it would be possible to use the SPC as a lever against the Forum states. Some allege that this is occurring with the distant-water fishing nations (DWFNs) issue, but it appears that the current byplay is part of an overall negotiating strategy. Nonetheless, a miscalculation on the fisheries question or some other matter could result in a confrontation between the region's two major regional policy-making systems. Regardless of the victor, the controversy itself would probably reduce the level of regional cooperation.

The inhibiting influence of nonregional donor timidity would arise if the donor states upon which the current regional system is based were to support some organizations and ignore others for fear of giving offense to certain islands. Such decisions, which appear already to have been made, could represent either an indirect effort by some regional states to use the donors to resolve the SRO question or a miscalculation by the donors of the regional states' expectations of them regarding the regional organizations. Either way, such a development could undermine the viability of an IGO dependent on donor assistance through a snowball effect and thus reduce the number of regional organizations.

#### Scenario 2: Static Regionalism

Change has been the hallmark of regionalism for the past 15 years, and thus it appears inconceivable that the next 15 years would find regionalism unaltered. The idea of stasis, however, has to be considered a relative term. In addition to embracing the situation of no significant change in the number or complexity of regional organizations, the scenario of static regionalism includes situations of greater numbers but less complexity and of reduced numbers with only moderately higher sophistication. Were the SRO question less entrenched, this scenario would have to be rated less probable than the prospects for decline. Nevertheless, there are elements that could produce relative stasis over an extended period of time.

Undoubtedly the most plausible internal factor would be a failure to resolve the SRO question, with the result that a consensus at the lowest common denominator continued. In this case, as we have seen in recent

years, a philosophical commitment exists in some quarters to resist further expansion but the absence of agreement on the SRO prevents contraction. Thus the status quo would prevail for some time.

A second contributing factor may well be lost or preempted opportunities. Civil aviation is proving to be a classic case here. It was once stated categorically, perhaps in the early blush of national independence or the great hopes held for island cooperation, that the development of a regional approach to civil aviation would be the acid test for South Pacific regionalism. Yet events have tended to move this issue farther and farther from the regional arena. Given the growth in partnerships between the island airlines and rim country airlines (particularly Australia's Ansett and QANTAS airlines), one could even regard the matter as being firmly in the bilateral camp. Should this pattern become more general, there may be fewer opportunities for the islands to pursue regional cooperation.

Externally two sets of influences could combine to maintain the present status quo. The donors, which pay the larger share of the costs of regionalism, may decline to support any further expansion. Concurrently the external members of the SPC may discourage any reduction in regionalism, at least within the SPC system. The impasse might then make continuance of present arrangements relatively attractive to all parties.

### Scenario 3: Increased Regional Cooperation

If the decline scenario involves an unlikely denial of the advantages of specialization and institutionalized control that are

associated with IGOs and if stasis raises the almost equally unexpected possibility of a plateau in the perceived utility of regionalism, one is obliged to consider the prospect of an increase in regionalism with some seriousness. A greater use of regionalism need not imply merely a growth in the numbers of IGOs. The increase scenario could arise from a more sophisticated use of existing bodies, the establishment of replacement institutions, or even fewer organizations. It could also derive from a transfer of greater authority to more, the same number, or fewer numbers of IGOs. In the final analysis, the net result would be a higher level of coordinated policymaking by the island states.

In any event, I believe the increased use of regionalism in the South Pacific by the year 2000 will occur in all these facets of regional cooperation. There will be more IGOs, a more complex use of those bodies (including higher levels of interorganizational integration), and a greater level of authority for at least some of them.

The conclusion that there will be more rather than fewer organizations stems from three premises. First, the areas of policy over which island countries are expected to exercise sovereign authority are widening. The oceans, the environment, illicit drugs, and similar resources and problems have not only been added to national agendas in recent years but have also been given high priority. Second, the Forum countries have resisted investing their regional organs with omnibus responsibility, preferring rather to maintain relatively limited functional bodies. Related to this is the third premise, that specialized (i.e., functionally coherent) bodies are easier to control

and administer. Such bodies are also easier for external donors to fund. Thus there will be pressures to establish new regional IGOs to aid the island governments in meeting obligations that can be subject to regional solutions but are beyond the governments' national or existing regional resources.

Nevertheless, as the SRO qualms underscore, the creation of additional organizations is not a popular or trusted response to such pressure. One would expect other options to be pursued wherever possible--informal coordination, bilateralism, and global institutions (the United Nations system)--to list some of the more commonly used alternatives. As for regional options, the existing organizations are also likely to be used both more extensively and more intensively. The former is already occurring as evidenced, for example, by the continually broadening program base of SPEC. This development has its risks, however, especially should SPEC programs be so diversified that they become bogged down in execution, to the detriment of an interagency coordinating role. Although embryonic, the more intensive use of existing organizations will also increase.

The area of marine resources provides grounds for speculation on the emergence of regional IGOs responsible for a fairly specialized area. The FFA presently limits its activities largely to the economic management of a single resource. Its primary focus has been to maximize the economic returns for the island coastal states from DWFNs entering the Pacific tuna fishery. However, this restrictive approach can last only as long as the fishery is underexploited. When fully utilized, the

FFA is almost inevitably doomed to accept a wider mandate for scientific management of the stock and thus to assume a new set of appropriate duties related to regulation of effort, gear, entry, and the like. Similarly COOP/SOPAC, which has adopted a predominantly scientific and technical stance toward marine mineral resources, can be expected to amplify this role as the coastal states seek to develop or to admit others to their offshore resources. It would not be surprising to find by the year 2000 that COOP/SOPAC and the FFA had become two arms of a single Pacific Islands marine resources agency that would provide expertise, advice, and coordinative leadership on a wide range of oceanic issues.

The attempt to limit the growth of regional institutions may lead to more extensive and intensive use of existing bodies, but there can be little doubt that it will also encourage greater interinstitutional cooperation. To date, this aspect of regionalism in the South Pacific has been perceived mainly in negative terms. Organizations have tended to interact in the main to prevent duplication of effort. As will be argued in this paper, the more positive benefits of interorganizational cooperation are likely to become more apparent, particularly in the area of shared or joint programs.

As already indicated, stronger regionalism in the year 2000 may occur with the granting of greater authority to regional institutions. By this I mean that we will observe at least the precursory steps toward supranational power in the region. Supranational authority arises when an IGO is invested with the power to make binding regulations on

individuals or groups within its ambit and/or when the IGO has the capacity to levy imposts for its own use without having to refer back to the national authority of its members. To date this type of authority is almost exclusively associated with the European Communities and is nowhere to be found in the South Pacific.

Nevertheless, it is conceivable that some discretionary, regulatory authority will be conferred on some agencies in the not-too-distant future. The power is likely to be highly circumscribed, but even the preliminary steps would be significant. Unlike the European experience, where supranationalism was part of a grand design, the move toward supranationalism in the South Pacific is more likely to appear as a pragmatic response to a discrete regional management need. For example, the FFA might be given the power to set binding catch limits, to regulate gear usage, and perhaps even to restrict entry without referral to member governments. It is even possible that the FFA will have the power to set its own charges to help finance its operations through such devices as a licensing surcharge. And, if this could occur for the FFA, similar developments could be plausibly entertained for other agencies.

#### A Coherent Regional System

Should the third scenario of increased regional cooperation be realized, one still might question whether or not it would in fact assist the islands in protecting and projecting their sovereignty. After all, more IGOs would mean more costs, more nonnationals responsible for areas of national interest, and, granting supranational authority, a direct



reduction of national control. All of these are genuine risks (as others not listed may be), but they are not unmitigated ones.

One cannot make the question of costs disappear merely by rejecting the regional IGO solution. Since the areas of proposed IGO activity will presumably involve matters requiring the individual states to accept responsibility in any case, costs of one sort or another will have to be borne. On one hand, nations may choose to ignore the area and thus bear as a cost the lost opportunities or denied responsibility. On the other, they may address the issues and finance the expense through bilateral aid, internal transfers from existing programs to the new area of concern, or some similar mechanism. Multilateralism therefore only changes the method of dealing with these costs.

Rather than exacerbating the islands' financial liability, regional cooperation may even lend itself to ameliorating these costs. It can provide for economic redistribution to help the less advantaged members of the regional community by giving them access to assistance that they would not otherwise obtain, even though the more advantaged countries may have less need of the assistance themselves. Regionalism also diffuses the impact of most IGOs' dependence on external assistance by diversifying the range of donors and minimizing the political leverage of individual donors. This can help to reduce the political risks of neocolonialism inherent in over-reliance on bilateralism.

The question of personality as a factor in regional decision making cannot be sidestepped, and indeed every senior-level personnel change in a regional IGO raises the issue of geographic (subregional) balance. A

greater diversity of organization would make the political necessity of geographic balance easier to achieve while helping to reduce the anxiety felt over filling the occasional vacant positions in today's system. Supranationality is unlikely to become a genuine problem before the turn of the century. To the extent that it becomes salient, it can be expected to arise in the context of a more coherent and disciplined regional policymaking process in the South Pacific.

The rhetoric of the SRO controversy has been liberally sprinkled with expressions of concern over duplication, overlap, waste, coordinated aid, external influence, and the like. When distilled down to its essence, the desire for an SRO is grounded in a wish to maximize the political authority of the islands at the lowest practicable cost. I have dealt with the rationale of the SRO elsewhere<sup>6</sup> and thus will not review it here. Yet it should be noted that despite the "decolonization" of national institutions, the colonial origin of the SPC remains the major impetus for and obstacle to the putative benefits of an SRO. This problem epitomizes the current state of South Pacific regionalism.

The growth of regionalism has been unstructured and undisciplined, notwithstanding the emergence of the SRO issue in the second half of the 1970s. In this respect the South Pacific is scarcely different from any other section of the world except Western Europe. Even with the growing concern for this topsy-turvy growth, however, there has been a reluctance in many quarters to consider a blueprint for incremental regional development—that is, a plan for gradual progress toward a coherent regional system. There are of course reasons for this hesitancy. For

some, the SRO issue requires an immediate solution and therefore gradualism is unacceptable; for others, it is a rejection of planning for regional integration; and for still others, the question is integration itself.

It is difficult to debate the subjective judgments on the urgency of IGOs in the South Pacific although the record of the SRO controversy shows in practice that more time has been available than critics expected. The recent pronouncements suggest that haste will continue to be made slowly on this matter. Reactions against developing a plan for regionalism appear to stem from a belief that the European experience of regionalism is irrelevant to the South Pacific. Yet this substitutes piety for good sense. Although the pattern of the blueprint may be inappropriate, having a plan or vision is scarcely a Eurocentric notion in itself. And of course there are any number of models of regional integration; a greater degree of policy coordination does not require higher levels of structural integration.<sup>7</sup>

It may well be that the present phase of the SRO question will produce steps toward a plan for a coherent regional policymaking process. The 1980 joint Forum/SPC review offered an elaborate institutional proposal, but it did not accommodate all the differing political positions nor did it provide a detailed blueprint for implementing the proposed SRO. Should the current review (the four ministers' enquiry) choose to recommend a pattern for the future, its proposals are more likely to emphasize general policy coordination than the narrower

organizational features of the 1980 review. Its report then should approximate a plan for regional development if not a precise blueprint.

The characteristics of a more clearly articulated vision of South Pacific regionalism may be indistinct at the margins, but at least three central elements will be crucial. The regional policymaking process, if it is to be coherent and disciplined, will have to be authoritative, cover the entire region (i.e., most if not all the ambit of the SPC), and be flexible enough to be adaptive. The recognized sticking points on the SRO issue heretofore have involved the first two characteristics: the Forum agencies have the authority to make effective policy but only the SPC can apply its (limited) decisions to the whole region. It may transpire, however, that the third trait, flexibility, will provide a passage between the Charybdis of geographic inadequacy and the Scylla of political impotence.

Much of the substantive energies of South Pacific regionalism have been absorbed in recent years in the development of specific regimes. A regime is a discrete, largely self-contained set of rules, practices, and organizations focusing on the control of a particular issue.<sup>8</sup> Some current examples include fisheries, the environment, nuclear material, trade relations, and oceanic minerals expressed in part in manifestations such as FFA, the South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP), the nuclear-free zone proposal (NFZ), the South Pacific Area Regional Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement (SPARTECA), and COOP/SOPAC. Regimes, being specific-purpose arrangements, are not especially flexible in themselves, but they do provide for enormous adaptivity within a

regional system. As the examples reveal, not all regimes require a separate organizational expression. As each regime is discrete, the development of any particular one can include as many interested parties as is appropriate without necessarily making these external participants a permanent fixture of the general regional policymaking process. Further, the independently structured character of regimes allows a series of problems to be addressed simultaneously, at speeds, and with various approaches. Thus such regimes tend to mitigate the linkage aspects of problem resolution when disparate questions are treated through a single multilateral arena.

Taken too literally, this observation could be deemed a defense of the existing multiple IGO arrangements, as well as making a virtue of necessity. Such is not my intention, however. If regime management is to be an effective solution to some regional problems, it would be desirable for the regimes themselves to be supportive of regional aspirations that in turn are coherent. Interestingly, regimes may be contributing as much toward bringing the regional decision-making process together as they are to expressing the results of agreements reached.

Since the rationale for an officially apolitical SPC is the existence of dependencies and since the first principle of the Forum is political authority, neither body can merge with the other at the moment without making an unacceptable compromise. Nevertheless, as evidenced by SPREP, the two general policymaking systems can work together, maximizing their respective strengths rather than their separate weaknesses, to develop and execute a specific regime. It is to be hoped that a similar

pattern will be possible for fisheries and other management issues. As these regimes overlap and interlock, they will help not only to reinforce the validity of the regional approach but also to integrate the policymaking process that gave rise to the regimes.

The ties among the various regional IGOs, which arise from developing and subsequently implementing a regime such as SPREP, require additional interaction among those bodies that ramifies the formal consultations made at the senior secretariat level. Such connections arising from shared responsibilities will continue to mesh the activities and the personnel of the several bodies in common endeavors. Thus even though the present bifurcated approach (Forum and SPC) is likely to continue for a number of years, there will be gradual but perceptible movement toward common organs.

The policymaking processes will then have to deal with an increasingly interconnected system of regional IGOs. More interorganizational direction for the joint programs and projects is already producing improved executive communication among the governing authorities, and this trend can be expected to continue. It is to be hoped, however, that those bodies will not merely react to the flow of events. Much could be done even now to harmonize of regional policymaking.

If the proponents of the SRO accept an incremental path to their goal, it will be possible to actively facilitate interorganizational cooperation. The ground can be prepared by establishing ex officio relationships among the senior administrative levels of the various

regional IGOs (a measure accepted by the Sixteenth South Pacific Conference in 1976), formal personnel exchanges and common terms and conditions of employment (at least within broad guidelines), and compatible retirement schemes. Such changes would encourage interorganizational cooperation and also remove some anxieties whenever a new regional body was created.

Since the value of functionally limited meetings and organizations derives from the expertise of specialization, few advantages can be gained from reducing the efficiency of such meetings and bodies by having them undertake more general duties. With better information about proposed meetings, it may be possible to save for some functional gatherings, but these economies are likely to be minor. More important would be the coordination of the general policy meetings. At an early Forum meeting it was proposed that the Forum meet again shortly before the South Pacific Conference as a sort of privy council to the Conference. The idea lapsed owing to a political accident, but it still has some merit.

Were the Forum and the Conference to meet at common venues and with proximate timing, the connections between the two policymaking processes could be greatly enhanced. The savings on common secretarial services and meeting facilities would probably be small but real nevertheless. More importantly, the arrangement would facilitate sharing of views on respective agendas and matters of mutual interest. Although the Forum would take the lead in all matters of high politics and major policy, the South Pacific Conference would not come to such an arrangement

empty-handed. In addition to enhancing the geographic comprehensiveness of the Conference membership, the Conference draws together the major donors, international actors, and interested parties involved in the region.

The logic of a closer policy relationship between the Forum and the Conference raises several political issues, but by and large they are less important than those posed by the setting of policy for an SRO. For the moment, however, the benefits of a more integrated policymaking process will probably not be as persuasive as the immediate exigency of protecting the Forum and its agencies from a dilution of political authority. Under the present circumstances the SRO alternative would raise this specter as a genuine possibility.<sup>9</sup> Recognition of this risk has been a major influence on the course of the SRO debate in recent years.

Yet for whatever the overt reasons, the regional policymaking process will be more unified and coherent by the year 2000. A merger, even *de facto* rather than *de jure*, may be too much to expect between the Forum and the Conference, but a close working arrangement will be operating. The policies that result will be implemented through specialized agencies, not all of which will be formally linked. Nevertheless common organs will exist to facilitate and execute interorganizational cooperation. Central to this system will be the Forum's secretariat, since it will be the primary agency for coordination; but to undertake this role efficiently SPEC will need to be divested of some of its more technical responsibilities. Some of those



responsibilities will go to functionally appropriate specialized agencies; others are likely to go to a more general body, probably a somewhat restyled SPC having direct linkages to the Forum system.

Concomitantly with these changes, the member states will revise their internal procedures for handling their regional responsibilities. The departments of foreign affairs will ensure that there will be not only greater personnel continuity and internal policy control but also, given the anticipated role of specialized agencies, greater use of interdepartmental committees to coordinate the various line departments operating directly with their respective functional IGOs. More effective methods for monitoring the work of the IGOs will be in use so that member states will be able to avoid unintended duplication of effort. (The deliberate playing off of bilateral and multilateral donors will not disappear, however, although it is likely to require more sophisticated methods in future.)

The donors and other external interests will be affected by such changes. Some states and agencies will upgrade or otherwise improve their participation in the advisory committees of specialized regional IGOs and will take a greater interest in the meetings to draft particular management regimes. Observer status at SPC and SPEC meetings will carry more weight. It is also likely that some external interests may seek entry merely to get a foot in the door before it is too late. Such reactions could assist the islands in furthering their regional control because they would have the opportunity to help shape the form of and the

mechanisms through which the external interests developed their involvement in South Pacific regionalism.

#### Concluding Remarks

Speculation scarcely lends itself to concrete conclusions. Thus I end merely with a few concluding remarks on South Pacific regionalism in the year 2000. Regionalism is important to the Pacific Islands. It can help even the weakest sovereign and near-sovereign states to exercise more effectively the rights and responsibilities of their political status. The dependencies are advantaged by having a say in the affairs of their neighborhood, by developing wider external contacts, and even by experiencing a form of praxis or political apprenticeship that will assist their further constitutional development. The economic benefits to all members of the region should not be gainsaid, but the dimensions of regionalism cannot be constrained to this one factor. Security and political, legal, diplomatic, social, and other advantages are also associated with effective regionalism, and at times any one of these may be even more important than the other rationales combined.

Will South Pacific regionalism become more effective in the future? As I have suggested throughout this paper, I believe the answer will be yes. Bilateralism is too fraught with the dangers of neocolonialism to be the only substantial solution to the islands' development problems. Globalism, as expressed through the United Nations system, would undermine the elements of South Pacific control by incorporating the islands' involvement in multilateral solutions into a larger framework were it used too extensively (unless a new UN organization were

established to serve the SPC region and this became a substitute for local initiative). National self-reliance does not appear to be an option for all nations, and yet major national failures among some in the islands' community would pose risks for all. Thus regionalism has a genuine role to play in the international network of the South Pacific.

Not only does regionalism have a role to play but also this role will become more prominent and clearly defined by the year 2000, I believe. The declining regionalism scenario is certainly not beyond the pale as a possibility, but it would require a greater willingness on the part of both local and external countries to risk regional instability than we have witnessed to date. Given little change in the international climate, it is more conceivable that the present balance of forces will maintain the status quo in South Pacific regionalism; nonetheless it is difficult to believe that such an equilibrium could endure to the end of the century. Hence the judgment that we will see an increase in the use of regionalism.

My depiction of the influences that would shape the growth scenario and of the characteristics that would emerge from it has been derived from present indicators that I regard as significant. Since there are pressures for a quick solution to the SRO question and since it is always possible for states to redefine their operating premises at any time, the incremental, step-by-step unfolding of a more intricate and disciplined regional policy-making process may never occur. It is possible that informal mechanisms will make up the bulk of the expansion if the antipathy to regional IGOs proves more substantive than rhetorical,

contrary to my expectations. Nevertheless, I have no doubts that a student entering the twenty-first century will find South Pacific regionalism a lively and current thesis topic and that the student will not be looking back to the 1970s and '80s as the high point of regional cooperation.

## Endnotes

- 1 The idea for an SRO was apparently first mooted in the report of the 1976 Aid Review Task Force that was initiated by the South Pacific Forum through SPEC. Many of the same concerns were responsible for a review of the SPC, also done in 1976. In 1979 SPEC carried out a further study (based on a two-year delayed consideration of the 1976 report), that in turn gave rise to a Forum proposal for a joint Forum/SPC study. The 19th South Pacific Conference agreed and the Joint Regional Arrangements Committee composed of representatives from three Forum members and three Conference members deliberated and reported in 1980. SPEC prepared a further paper on the SRO in 1982 following up the proposals of the 1980 joint study. Last year (1984) a team of four foreign ministers from the Forum countries again tackled the issue, and it appears certain their work will continue in 1985.
- 2 Despite its prominence in regional affairs, the South Pacific Forum has not been included in the list of IGOs because it is not technically an IGO.
- 3 Uentabo F. Neemia, Who Pays? Who Benefits? from Regional Cooperation (Suva: Institute for Pacific Studies, 1982), provides considerable detail on the islands' contributions to regional IGOs.
- 4 The only exception here is that Australia has not become a member of COOP/SOPAC, although it is a major contributor. New Zealand's position in COOP/SOPAC, however, may be affected as a result of the May 1984 change in this IGO's status.
- 5 This bloc within the FFA was formed by treaty in 1982 to give greater bargaining strength to the western countries with major tuna resources: Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Kiribati, Marshalls, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, and Solomons.
- 6 "Institutional Sources of Stress in Pacific Regionalism" (Honolulu: Pacific Islands Studies Working Papers, University of Hawaii, 1980) and "SRO or SRS: Whither the South Pacific?" (Honolulu: Pacific Islands Development Program, East-West Center, 1984).
- 7 For an interpretation that emphasizes a national rather than an IGO approach to regional integration, see Gunnar P. Nielsson, "The Parallel National Action Process: Scandinavian Experiences," in Paul Taylor and A.J.R. Groom (eds.), International Organisation: A Conceptual Approach (London: Frances Pinter, 1978), pp. 270-316.
- 8 The Spring 1982 issue of International Organization (volume 36, number 2) is devoted entirely to the question of international regimes and provides useful references for both sides of the debate on this topic.

- 9 I have outlined the arguments for this interpretation in my paper "SRO or SRS: Whither the South Pacific?"

## DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS AND IMPLICATIONS

by

Diana Howlett

This paper focusses on the smaller countries of the South Pacific which are either independent or self-governing: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu and Western Samoa. American Samoa and the territories of New Caledonia and French Polynesia are not discussed here, nor is Papua New Guinea, which has a population three times larger than the combined populations of the ten smaller nations. The considerable diversity of the South Pacific islands in respect of their size, environmental characteristics and resources, culture and history, is well known. The land area and population, also very diverse, are shown in Table 1.

Demographic data for the region are not always reliable (although they improve with each census), cannot be readily compared between countries and usually not between censuses (different questions are asked and the census years and intervals differ), and they are not current (in some countries the most recent census was in 1976). This paper uses 1981 estimates prepared by the South Pacific Commission unless otherwise indicated. Some socio-demographic concepts do not translate easily to the Pacific. For example, 'family' is not usually a nuclear family in these countries, and no definition of 'the economically active population' is standard throughout (see below).

Table 1  
PEOPLE AND LAND

Country	Population (mid-1981 estimate)	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Population density (persons/km <sup>2</sup> )	Land per person (hectares)
Cook Islands	17,400	240	73	1.4
Fiji	646,500	18,272	35	2.8
Kiribati	59,500	690	87	1.2
Nauru	8,100	21	386	0.3
Niue	3,200	259	12	8.1
Solomon Is.	235,000	27,556	9	11.7
Tonga	98,400	699	141	0.7
Tuvalu	7,600	26	292	0.3
Vanuatu	119,900	11,880	10	9.9
Western Samoa	156,000	2,935	53	1.9

100

Source: South Pacific Economies 1981: statistical summary, Table 2, South Pacific Commission, Noumea 1984).



Many of the population problems of today, and thus for the future, are not new. Population problems of one kind or another have characterised the South Pacific for at least a hundred years although by the 1940s the widespread anxiety about population decline<sup>1</sup> had changed to a concern about future population pressure in some of these countries (Furnas 1950; Oliver 1951; Stanner 1953).

The population of most South Pacific countries now is probably as high or higher than it has ever been (Caldwell et al 1980:957), except in the Cook Islands and Niue whose people may freely emigrate to New Zealand. The estimated combined population of the ten countries in 1981 was 1.35 million. Although the populations of these countries are absolutely small by global standards they show a wide range between the three smallest which have less than 10,000 people each and the largest (Fiji) which is approaching two-thirds of a million people.

#### Population distribution and density

In all the multi-island countries (that is, all except Nauru and Niue) the population is very unevenly distributed, with increasing concentrations in core islands and towns while the populations of remoter islands remain static or in decline. In Kiribati, for example, the population in 'urban' Tarawa grew at four percent annually during the 1970s but the annual rate of growth on all rural islands was around 0.1 percent (Tira 1982:3). Throughout the South Pacific the coastal zones of every island are now the most densely settled regions and, although land may be cultivated in the interior of the larger islands, few villages and no towns are found away from the coastal fringe.

Population densities also vary widely, both within and between countries. For example, average population densities in Tuvalu are thirty times greater, and in Kiribati almost twenty times greater, than in Solomon Islands. The information on population densities (Table 1) is fairly simplistic. Statistics based on total land area give no indication of the quality of the land and inevitably include unproductive areas, nor do they take into account the extent to which Islanders use marine resources. In a number of countries people are unable to use fully the national land resources because of land tenure conditions but Polynesians especially, like many Micronesian and Caribbean people, exploit socio-economic fields which extend well beyond the nation-state (Marshall 1983:6). Where information on the area of arable land<sup>2</sup> is available it indicates a much altered picture of population density. Thus in the Cook Islands the average population density is 75 per km<sup>2</sup> but on arable land the density is 487 per km<sup>2</sup>, in Western Samoa the population density increases from 53 to 104 per km<sup>2</sup>; and in Fiji from 35 to 54 per km<sup>2</sup>. An alternative way of considering the relation between people and land is to calculate the land available per person. This is shown in the final column of Table 1, based on total land area. Only in Niue and the Melanesian countries (Solomon Islands and Vanuatu) do people have access to a reasonable area of land, although again the area per person would be considerably reduced if arable land only were considered. Elsewhere the land per person is very limited indeed. These figures are all the more alarming because over 70 percent of the people in most of these countries live in rural areas; the exceptions are Fiji and Kiribati where the proportions are still high at around 63 percent, and Kiribati's drought-prone atolls are of low productivity.

### Demographic Characteristics

Present fertility, mortality and migration characteristics vary widely in the South Pacific but most of the countries can be clustered into one of three types (Table 2). Two countries do not fit readily into this classification. Tuvalu achieved low fertility rates following a concerted family planning campaign during the 1970s but mortality rates are relatively high; and Nauru is a country with high fertility and moderate mortality. Permanent emigration from both countries is minor. Both 'Type 1' countries are Melanesian and both 'Type 3' countries are Polynesian, but 'Type 2' includes people of several culture groups: Polynesia, Micronesia, Fijian and Indo-Fijian. These three clusters should not be interpreted as reflecting either environmental or cultural determinism, however, as a mix of historical, social, political and economic factors account for the similarities and differences.

### Fertility and Mortality.

Throughout the region in recent decades the spread of education, medical and public health services has brought about a general decline in infant mortality and enabled more people to live longer. As Lipton describes it, the generations have lengthened (1968:343). Life expectancy at birth is highest in Fiji, Western Samoa, the Cook Islands and Niue (62-65 years) and lowest in Kiribati, Nauru, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu (52-54 years). In most countries the life expectancy at birth of women is several years higher than for men (Lucas and Chilcott 1984:11). Completed fertility rates reflect historically high fertility levels in a number of countries (Lucas and Ware 1982:45) but

Table 2

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS(1)

TYPE 1: high fertility; high but declining mortality; minor international migration

Solomon Islands

Vanuatu

TYPE 2: moderate fertility; low to moderate mortality; low to moderate international migration

Fiji

Kiribati

Tonga

Western Samoa

TYPE 3: low fertility; low mortality; high international migration

Cook Islands

Niue

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(1) Crude birth rates above 40 per 1000 population are high; between 30-39 per 1000 are moderate; and below 30 per 1000 are in the low range. Crude death rates of 15 or more per 1000 population are high; between 10-14 per 1000 are moderate; and below 10 per 1000 are low.

Source: South Pacific Economies 1981: statistical summary, Table 18, South Pacific Commission, Noumea, 1984.

fertility patterns are now subject to factors which in some countries are leading to higher levels and in others to suppressed levels. In the Melanesian countries traditional practices of fertility control have been widely abandoned resulting in larger families and in increased stress on women, who contribute very significantly to rural production. Elsewhere factors such as higher levels of education, wage employment, and urban residence of women seem to have contributed to some reduction in fertility. Temporary work emigration has produced age and sex imbalances which appear to have lowered fertility levels in countries such as Kiribati and Tuvalu (Walsh 1982:6). Migration of men may also mean that people marry at a later age, leading to lower fertility levels. Family planning campaigns often bring about a significant initial lowering of fertility but are costly for small countries to sustain and their impact has been variable.

Although mortality rates have generally declined in the region in recent decades it is not possible to be confident that they will continue to do so in all countries. Many current health problems stem from environmental conditions and poor hygiene and sanitation facilities, which are responsible for serious bacterial, viral and parasitic diseases in the region. The resurgence of malaria in Melanesia is particularly worrying. So far, mortality seems to have declined faster in towns than in rural communities, but this trend may be arrested as chronic degenerative diseases, a relatively recent phenomenon in the South Pacific, affect the morbidity and mortality of growing numbers of urban dwellers.

## Migration.

In terms of the future of these island countries it may be most important to evaluate their prospects according to whether or not they have the option of international migration. The Pacific Islanders are descended from some of the world's most adventurous migrants and over the several thousand years during which the region has been occupied most Islanders have remained very mobile. Even during colonial times it was possible for people of one culture group to migrate to or be re-settled in another culture group within the sphere of influence of particular colonial powers, as were Melanesians in Samoa, Gilbertese in Solomon Islands, and people from Vaitupu (Tuvalu) and Banaba (Kiribati) in Fiji. For most, this option is no longer available: the movements of people are restricted to within their national boundaries. Thus whatever other advantages the Islanders may have gained through the achievement of nationhood, political independence has largely closed off one of the principal means by which island people everywhere adjusted the balance between population size and the local resource base. In many small Caribbean islands, for example, 'migration traditions are so pervasive and of such long standing that they are a way of life' (Richardson 1983:xi).

Internal migration, including seasonal and circular migration, is a widespread phenomenon except in the small, single-island countries of Nauru and Niue. Elsewhere the main flows are from rural to urban areas, but the migrants do not always come from the remoter, least-developed islands. It was recognised some years ago that

Migration tends to result from knowledge that opportunities have increased, or are better,

elsewhere rather from declining real living standards on the home islands. Felt wants rather than outright necessity stimulate migration and, as...the contrast in opportunities between small and large islands becomes more obvious...the incentive to migrate increases (Ward 1967:89-90).

Ward's observation applies to international migration as much as to internal movement. Few Melanesians have emigrated to other countries but most of the other South Pacific countries have 'internationalising' populations (Marcus 1981:62). Close to 200,000 South Pacific Islanders, mainly Polynesians and Indo-Fijians, are now expatriate residents in New Zealand, the United States, Canada, Australia and other South Pacific countries (see Connell 1984:54, map). In the case of Kiribati and Tuvalu, two of the most hard-pressed countries in terms of the population/resource relationship, only temporary emigration has been available so far through contract employment in Nauru's phosphate industry and as seamen on overseas ships, but neither source of employment is very secure. Nauruans, by contrast, are frequent commuters, especially to Australia, for goods and services unavailable in their own country.

#### Age Composition and Dependency Ratios.

The age composition of a population is a critical determinant of future population growth. Apart from Tuvalu, between 40 and 50 percent of the population in all these countries is under the age of 15 years (Table 3) thus populations will grow rapidly where emigration is not possible. Under these conditions, populations are unlikely to stabilise or decline for some years even if fertility rates are lowered. Dependency ratios (Table 3) indicate the proportion of young and aged dependents in a population relative to the

Table 3

AGE COMPOSITION AND DEPENDENCY RATIOS

Country	0-14 yrs Percent	15-59 yrs Percent	60 yrs Percent	Dependency Ratio <sup>1</sup>
Cook Islands	49.8	44.2	6.0	126
Fiji	41.2	54.8	4.0	82
Kiribati	41.0	53.0	6.0	89
Nauru <sup>2</sup>	44.2	52.9	2.9	89
Niue	47.4	44.0	8.6	127
Solomon Islands	48.5	47.7	3.8	110
Tonga	44.5	50.4	5.1	98
Tuvalu	31.9	55.8	12.4	79
Vanuatu <sup>3</sup>	46.0	51.0	3.0 <sup>4</sup>	94
Western Samoa	48.1	47.3	4.6	112

1 Sum of numbers below 15 and over 60, divided by the number between ages 15-59 x 100, except Vanuatu  $\frac{(<15>65)}{(15-64)}$

2 Nauruans only

3 Provisional, 1979

4 Percentage over 65 years

Source: national censuses



number of economically active. The economically active age group is difficult to determine precisely, as it varies from country to country, between the monetary and subsistence sectors of the economy, and, within the monetary sector, between the public and private sectors. In Table 2 the economically active age group is set at 15-59 years but in some countries younger children contribute to production. In Samoa, for example,

The number of very young children who are already considered bread winners by their families is astonishing. They are also the families' workhorses. They prepare the food out in the cooking houses and they are the last to eat at dinner time (Apia Observer, 8 October 1981).

Overall, the productive members of the population in the South Pacific normally support at least twice as many dependents as do their counterparts in industrialised countries but the economically active in rural areas generally have a considerably higher burden of dependents than urban adults due to the out-migration of members of the workforce. As health services enable more children to survive and people to live longer, and as education services draw more children into the schools, the number of dependents steadily grows.

The demographic picture then is something of a mosaic. The Melanesian countries are at an early state of the demographic transition with estimated population growth rates during the last five years of 3.3 percent annually in Solomon Islands and 4.2 percent in Vanuatu (South Pacific Commission 1984:5). At the other extreme are the Cook Islands, Niue and Western Samoa with either little growth or population decline due to the net emigration of people in the reproductive age groups. Between these extremes are Fiji, Tonga, Kiribati,

Nauru and Tuvalu in which the annual rate of population growth in recent years has been around two percent. In all but the Cook Islands and Niue, however, the impetus for continued numerical growth in the population is high because of past fertility levels which have been responsible for the youthful age structures of the present populations. Even the Cook Islands seem to have reversed the trend of population decline from -1.0 percent annually over the last ten years to a growth rate of 1.1 percent annually over the last five years (South Pacific Commission 1984:Table 2).

### Population Projections

The recent censuses of most of these countries provide population projections to the year 2000 (Table 4), based on several sets of assumptions about levels of fertility, mortality, and migration. Each set of assumptions produces a projected increase in the combined populations of these countries, ranging from a combined total of 1.53 million (low growth) to 1.83 million assuming moderate growth and 2.23 million assuming high growth. Some countries will, however, grow faster than others depending on the stage of the demographic transition reached and emigration opportunities. Social scientists are often called on, or tempted, to estimate population ceilings in situations where land and other resources are limited and in which populations are expanding or emigrating. Such efforts have usually proved futile, as demonstrated by the case of Mauritius which now has more than double the population ceiling of 400,000 predicted early in this century (Brookfield 1984:19). It is extremely difficult to anticipate the social, technological

Table 4

POPULATION PROJECTIONS TO THE YEAR 2000<sup>1</sup>

Country	Low	Percentage <sup>2</sup> change	Medium	Percentage change	High	Percentage change
Cook Islands	20,000	(10)	22,531	(24)	28,541	(57)
Fiji	793,202	(28)	874,354	(41)	1,029,424	(66)
Kiribati	93,296	(63)	101,854	(78)	106,979	(87)
Niue <sup>3</sup>	2,790	(-22)	3,370	(-6)	3,940	(10)
Solomon Islands	331,646	(68)	423,851	(115)	542,304	(175)
Tonga	123,000	(37)	128,000	(42)	130,000	(44)
Tuvalu	11,500	(56)	12,050	(64)	12,500	(70)
Western Samoa	160,000	(5)	265,688	(75)	381,031	(51)

1 Nauru, Vanuatu: no data available.

2 From last census year.

3. Niue to 1986 only.

Source: national censuses.

and political changes which will alter future relationships between people and resources. What follows then, is not so much prediction as an examination of some possible consequences of the present demographic patterns.

### Issues for the future

The implications of present demographic patterns in the South Pacific may be considered in a number of ways. The structural problems of smallness must be taken into account. Population issues have social, economic and environmental consequences (although it is not always easy to distinguish clearly between them). The nature of problems differs at national and regional scales. Other considerations are whether or not an apparent trend is reversible in the short or longer term, and the extent to which the island nations themselves can deal with emerging problems without seeking external assistance. Finally, an analysis of trends should also take account, however imperfectly, of the perspective from the Pacific. We judge these to be poor countries by the welfare and income standards of western industrialised nations but the South Pacific's nearest neighbours are such nations and many Islanders, especially in Polynesia and Fiji, aspire to the living standards which emigrant relatives and friends enjoy in them.

### Structural Problems

The demographic aspects of smallness are well-documented (see, for example, Smith 1967; Selwyn 1975; Caldwell et al. 1980; ESCAP 1982; Walsh 1982). The process of economic development in small countries, and the interactions between development processes and population dynamics, are not

often the same as in larger countries. Small countries provide few opportunities for economic diversification or economies of scale, and scope rarely exists for effective competition and the operation of market forces. Monopolies arise as economic niches are occupied, often by foreign companies, because the domestic markets are too small to support competitors. Thus income inequality increases as a community or national population quickly separates into richer and poorer groups. Governments are usually the largest employers in small nations: in the South Pacific, 50 or 60 percent of the paid workforce may be government servants. In micro-states greater conflict arises between the goals of individuals and those of their governments in matters such as internal and international migration, family planning programs, and the use of remittances. Skilled people are a scarce resource, expensive to train and often lost to larger countries. Those who serve their governments work in considerable professional isolation and often under abnormal degrees of stress: many are multiple office-holders, are transferred frequently between departments and are required to travel abroad often on official business. Much time must be devoted to dealing with visiting missions, advisers and experts. The loss of human productivity through the premature death of skilled people and those in positions of seniority is now a significant problem in the Pacific (Taylor 1983). The island nations of the Pacific are all tropical and most are archipelagic, structural conditions which pose environmental problems for health and economic activity, especially in the production of food for urbanising populations.

## The National Implications of Demographic Conditions

Populations with young age compositions and high dependency ratios will require the increasing provision of social welfare services, especially in health, education and social security. Until recently little need has been apparent in the South Pacific for the public provision of social security for aged dependents but as life expectancy extends and younger people continue to migrate, and if the trend toward nuclear families becomes firmer, the demand will strengthen. Bedford states that although the proportion of people aged over 60 years in the region is unlikely to be more than 7 percent by the end of the century, numerical increases in elderly people 'will be the most spectacular of any age group' (1982:88). In multi-island nations the capital and recurrent costs of social service provision to small and scattered populations are very high. It seems likely that it will be more difficult to maintain the present health levels of the Islanders as populations increase. The control and reduction of health problems impose heavy recurrent costs for which island governments rarely receive external assistance. High fertility rates in a population also add to the strain on limited national resources. The provision of maternal and child care services, and of sustained family planning campaigns, are expensive in terms of both personnel, and capital.

The implications of the demographic trends for employment are both qualitative and quantitative. Many island countries experience the apparent paradox of simultaneous shortage and surplus of labour. The paradox usually has two dimensions, one related to skills and the other to population distribution. A shortage of skills, especially management skills, is widespread although if present education policies continue, more countries may eventually mirror Tuvalu which has had a surplus of skilled workers for some

years (Knapman et al. 1976:15). Meanwhile youth unemployment, especially in the towns, continues to increase and the situation in Tonga in 1980 is more typical. Here, for every one of the thirty new urban jobs created, there were a hundred school leavers of whom ten had New Zealand university entrance qualifications. While island governments continue to hope that young people will enter rural occupations, their parents and indeed their teachers promote the values of urban employment. Swelling urban populations are by no means fully employed now and rising unemployment levels are inevitable. Because people in towns are less able than villagers to meet their basic needs of housing, food, water, sanitation, fuel and transport, greater stress is placed on the public provision of these needs, diverting potential development capital to the provision of social services. In the allocation of services and resources between rural communities and townspeople, governments all too often show a bias in favour of the towns where it is simpler and cheaper to serve any given number of people, even though more immigrants from outer islands may be drawn to the towns in consequence.

The second part of the paradox, the co-existence of rural labour shortages and growing levels of unemployment nationally (Jones and Ward 1981) is explained by out-migration from rural areas. In the industrialised nations a decline in the proportion of the workforce engaged in agriculture was part of the structural diversification of the economy which led to an overall growth in productivity, but in South Pacific countries where the agricultural workforce has declined, perhaps only Fiji has achieved a degree of sectoral diversification and increased productivity.

Systems of land tenure and social organisation often mean that absenteeism leaves land idle and other resources unused rather than expanding the production possibilities for those who remain, although access to land is rarely a sufficient condition for rural development in the Pacific. Outer islands might retain more people and produce more commodities if their people had greater security in matters such as transport, markets and incomes. Instead, the production of food and commodities for national development is left to fewer people. As households and villages are depleted of their more enterprising and energetic members dependency ratios become locally higher, placing a greater burden on those remaining (often women) to support families; family breakdown, destitution and economic stagnation are not uncommon. Further consequences are a rising demand for imported foods and a decline in nutritional status, especially of working women and their children in villages and towns. Remittances may relieve the strain on some households but the contribution of remittances to national welfare is minor and may even be negative.

In those islands in which rural out-migration is not severe, the prospects for the future as populations inevitably grow may include the over-use of resources, declining yields, land shortage and intensification of land disputes, environmental deterioration and declining levels of welfare as more household production is needed for consumption. Should the generally high levels of rural out-migration be reversed these prospects may be more widely realised. However, it has been found that population pressure may be an asset rather than a liability in environmental management. In the Caribbean Brookfield (1983:54) found 'little correlation between numbers of



people on the ground and the real pressure that they exert on natural resources' and that all of the eastern Caribbean islands the best management of the environment is to be seen in Barbados, the most densely-peopled of the group. Brookfield concluded that the way in which resources are used and allocated, and the sharing of opportunity between advantaged and disadvantaged members of the community are 'far more important in environmental management than are simple numbers of people' (1983:56). In single-island states like Barbados other factors, such as ease of administration, give important advantages over archipelagic nations. It remains to be seen whether successful environmental management will go hand in hand with population growth in the Pacific; meanwhile considerable evidence is available in neglected and abandoned farms overgrown with weeds that the converse applies.

### Regional Implications

These countries meet as equals in various regional political, economic, and cultural groupings. In population matters, however, they are far from equal. Population dynamics are likely to become a major, and perhaps destabilising, factor in the growing inequality between the island countries. More or less subtle 'pecking orders' already characterise relations between the countries but wider differences may be expected as population growth in the resource-poor members of the region lowers their standards of living.

It seems unquestionable that more people will try to emigrate from the non-Melanesian countries in coming decades. The need to find alternative homes for some of the people of Tuvalu and Kiribati is becoming especially acute and some Nauruans have raised again the question of an alternate home as

the end of phosphate mining approaches. No island country these days, however, will extend its neighbourliness to the acceptance of any significant number of permanent immigrants from other parts of the region. All, whatever their numbers and resources, face the accelerating problem of employment creation and in most countries, land tenure legislation and customs do not permit permanent resettlement of immigrants or allow land to those who marry nationals. Schemes have been organised in recent years to enable skilled workers to find temporary employment elsewhere in the region but on occasion this has resulted in scarce skilled labour being lost to other countries offering higher wages.

Assuming then that the re-settlement within the region of any substantial number of people is unlikely in the coming decades, we must turn to those rim nations with which the South Pacific has long associations. Most Islanders who now reach a rim country legitimately do so through family reunion programs or as temporary immigrants for education and training; guest worker schemes are not common. Opportunities for the international migration of Pacific Islanders to the rim countries have diminished in the last decade due to economic recession, rising unemployment, slow growth rates and the influx of Southeast Asian refugees. The political climate has thus become increasingly unfavourable in these potential host countries for the introduction of concessionary immigration policies for Islanders from even the most needy countries, although the numbers involved are relatively minor. For example, the number of Vietnamese refugees accepted by Australia in recent years is almost as many as the total population of Kiribati. Undoubtedly Australia could accept a quota of settlers from Tuvalu, Kiribati and Tonga under an

immigration policy of positive discrimination, applying the lessons learned from the experience of Pacific immigrants in other countries to ease the transition. The difficulty with international migration schemes is that all too often they provide a short term solution for the island governments but create economic and social problems in the longer term unless policies are adopted to reduce the negative consequences of absenteeism and remittance economies. In an earlier paper (Howlett 1982) I referred to some of the strategies considered by Kiribati in confronting its population and employment problems. This government now requires its overseas workers to remit 75 percent of their monthly salaries to Kiribati for family support, savings deposits, and union funds (Pacific Islands Monthly September 1984). Unless remittances and, for that matter, aid can be directed toward production and consumption which promote national as well as personal welfare, and unless vacated land can be used productively by those remaining, emigration whether temporary or permanent will contribute little to the solution of island development problems.

A number of observers of the South Pacific have forecast recently that the future for most countries will include declining levels of welfare, long term aid dependency and both increasing incorporation and marginalisation in the international economy (e.g., Fisk 1981; Ward 1982; Jackson 1984). The experiences of the Cook Islands and Niue, and of the Micronesian islands, offer little hope that high levels of aid and unrestricted emigration will lead to national development and improved levels of welfare. Neo-Malthusian futures which include exhausted resources, degraded environments and declining living standards seem more likely than favourable development prospects. Two

years ago I wondered whether the Pacific might not gain some advantage from the technological innovations which are transforming the economies of industrial nations, particularly through reducing the region's joint tyrannies of small size and remoteness (Howlett 1982). I have lost what optimism I then had in this regard, as the processes have intensified by which people in the larger developing countries are incorporated in the international economy. Neither the relocation of commodity production and industry to the developing world, nor the restructuring of post-industrial societies, seems likely to benefit the South Pacific nations.

The margins between over-population and under-population, between population distributed in balance with resources and population maldistribution, are always much closer and reached sooner in small island nations. No country in the South Pacific has room for complacency.

## FOOTNOTES

1. However, population decline did not occur in all islands and those which were affected did not suffer to the same degree.
2. No definition of arable land is applicable throughout the region, as evaluation of land potential depends on cultural and technological as much as on environmental factors. Few Melanesians or Samoans would regard any land in Kiribati or Tuvalu as arable.

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## EDUCATION IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

by

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### Introduction

I have found it useful in looking at the needs of education in the Year 2000 to discuss first the concept of education and its application to the Pacific islands; second, to examine its development with particular emphasis on the development of formal institutions and how these attempted, as they were expected, to meet the changing needs of Pacific societies. In the third and final part of the paper, an attempt is made to discuss some of the major education needs of the next two decades especially those that will have major impact on education in the Year 2000.

It is necessary also to discuss at the outset the particular difficulty that one faces in dealing with a wide and diverse area as the Pacific islands. A Pacific islander of colour, Dr. Farnafi Larkin of Western Samoa, was reported to have remarked that the only thing Pacific islanders have in common is the water around them.

The Pacific islands refer to those islands that lie immediately to the North and South of the equator in the Pacific Ocean which were settled, though not exclusively, by people of Melanesian, Polynesian and Micronesian descents. Since the settlement of these islands by the Melanesians, Micronesians and Polynesians, a lot of other racial groups have also moved

into them, such as the Indians in Fiji, French Caucasians in New Caledonia, Chinese in Tahiti, Japanese and American Caucasians as well as other Asian groups in Hawaii. This makes the Pacific islands a very diverse region ethnically, culturally, and linguistically.

The Pacific islands may be grouped in terms of their political affiliation and status. First, there are those that are affiliated to or associated with the United States; these are often called the American Pacific and the group includes the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, North Marianas, Guam and Marshalls in the North Pacific and American Samoa in the South Pacific—with a total population of about 294,000.<sup>1</sup> The second group is affiliated to France—the 'French Pacific'—it consisting of the French colonies of New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna and French Polynesia, with a total population of about 303,000. The third group consists of the independent and/or self-governing islands of the South Pacific. This group was administered either by United Kingdom, Australia or New Zealand and stretches from Papua New Guinea in the west to Cook Islands in the east; Nauru in the north to Tonga in the south, and has a total population of 4.5 million.

In this paper, one has to make many generalizations about Pacific islanders, and the most common of these either relate to their racial/cultural groupings or their political association and status; these generalizations do not deny the diversity that exists within and between each group. In addition, the generalizations, when made, are intended only to assist the identification of commonalities and/or differences between and within groups.

## Education and Change

Education is defined broadly as initiation into the ways of life of a community or society<sup>2</sup> and includes both the informal initiation that takes place in the home and formal schooling. A great deal of change has taken place in the Pacific islands particularly during this century and the Pacific islanders have had to change correspondingly fast in order to keep pace.

The Pacific islanders, in the words of Papua New Guinea's Ambassador to the United Nations, Mr. Renagi Lohia, "have had to run in order to remain on the same spot." Because of the rate of change, education itself—its goals, content and form—had to change in order to be effective in initiating people into their communities.

Perhaps the greatest amount of change has taken place in the educational systems of the independent or self-governing islands of the South Pacific, as they have had to meet the required manpower demands of independence for their countries in a very short time and satisfy the rising education aspirations of their populace. The French Pacific group, although gradually moving towards self rule, are still very much in a colonial situation; their schools' curricula and goals are still tied to that of metropolitan France.

The islands which are a part of the American Pacific group are still very much under the influence of the American educational system, but there appears to be a growing realization among them, especially those that have achieved some degree of self independence like Northern Marianas, Palau and the Federated States of Micronesia, of the importance of developing their own identities in which education must play a significant part.

In order to understand some of the current issues of education in the Pacific Islands and to be in a position to identify some major education needs in the next two decades leading up to the turn of the century, one needs to have a brief look at the development of education in the Pacific islands.

### Education Developments

Education for Continuity. Education, unlike schooling, was not introduced to the islands; it was carried out in villages by older members of society prior to the coming of the missionaries.

A number of early studies by anthropologists<sup>3</sup> have captured some of the ways in which societies in the islands ensured that their values, skills and attitudes were passed on to the younger generation. This type of education is referred to as 'informal' to differentiate it from 'formal' education which takes place in a school setting.

Informal education was (and is) concerned with the continuity of society in which adult members passed on to the younger generation what they acquired through experience. Much of the learning took place in practical situations in which young members of society would observe and imitate the adults and, with adult supervision, would learn to develop appropriate skills in various fields. Similarly, by observing adults or those older than themselves, the young people would learn appropriate attitudes towards their elders, peers and members of outside groups. The elders of the tribe or group would relate legends and stories to the young which would explain their history, their origins, their value systems and their view of the universe. Learning was

pragmatic and practical; its outcomes were easily observable in terms of the acquisition of food and other necessary materials and comforts for the family, and the demonstration of acceptable attitudes, values and behaviour for community survival.

Today, informal education exists side by side with formal education and it plays an important role in teaching survival skills, particularly in rural areas where the extended family is still largely intact and the economy predominantly at the subsistence level.

In towns, many functions performed by informal education are passed on to the schools, but because of the inability of schools to perform such tasks much is lost. The parents and elders of the present generation in the South Pacific did not receive as much schooling as their children, but when and if they move from their villages to towns to join their children and relatives who may work there, they might be able to continue to play some role in the informal education of the young people in that setting. At best, they could pass on to the young in the new setting the cultures of their group and thereby maintain some continuity.

### Education for Change

Mission Schools. The concept of the school was introduced to most of the islands of the Pacific by the Christian missions. The mission efforts were later followed by government efforts but the objectives of the missions and governments in the education field, at least during the pre-independence period, were different and even contradictory.

The mission schools were primarily concerned with the evangelization of the islanders. Wherever they settled, the missionaries translated the Bible into the local languages and their schools taught the local people how to read and understand their scriptures. The curricula of the mission schools focussed on reading and writing in the local languages and in basic numeracy. They also taught practical skills like agriculture, house building and elementary hygiene. The medium of instruction was usually the vernacular language of the local area.

The missionaries were concerned with total societal changes and both the church and the school played a part in that effort. The islanders were not only converted—which was the main objective of the missions—they were also introduced to new and more "civilized" ways of living, based on Christian principles. The school became an agent of change and it taught the package of skills necessary for living in what was conceived by each mission group as constituting a Christian society. The early schools were conducted in churches or in the compound of the missionary who, in some cases, was also the teacher. Gradually, separate school buildings were built and a separate cadre of teachers came onto the scene.

### Government Schools

The government entered the field of education fairly slowly and almost reluctantly, especially in former British or New Zealand territories like Fiji, Western Samoa, Solomon Islands and Kiribati.

Government involvement in education preceding independence or self-government of many of the islands may be divided into two phases. During the first phase, colonial governments in the islands were concerned largely with the training of clerks and public servants in order to enhance the effectiveness of their administration. The second phase occurred when the education systems were expected to respond to the needs of self-government or independence, however these needs might be conceived.

The first phase began with the government entry into the field of education and continued until the government recognized the needs for its education system to be preparing citizens for political independence. The duration of this phase varied from one island to another but it did not occur for any of the British colonies (including those in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean) any earlier than the end of World War II when the British Government accepted as its official policy to guide colonies along the path of full responsible government within the Commonwealth.

The government schools emphasized different objectives and content from mission schools. The governments, unlike the missions, were not as interested in total societal change, at least at this stage. Instead, they were concerned with the development of an efficient colonial administration and they needed clerks, administrators and other kinds of public servants. The early government schools were aimed at producing these types of people.

In terms of the content of education, government schools used the language of metropolitan powers, such as English, French and German as the medium of instruction and they also introduced foreign curricula and examinations. This is still the case in some of the independent countries of the South Pacific;

the New Zealand School Certificate and the New Zealand University Entrance Examinations, which are taken at Forms 5 and 6 respectively, are still being taken by most of the secondary schools of the independent countries of the South Pacific. In the past, foreign teachers were brought in to teach at the schools from either New Zealand or Great Britain, and a few came from Australia. The use of Peace Corps teachers in the American Pacific group was aimed at the same purpose. As a result, schooling placed a lot of emphasis on academic and often irrelevant learning for the purpose of passing external examinations.

When technical education was introduced, it did not receive the same status and emphasis as academic education. In time, it became "academic" in orientation through its inclusion as an examinable subject in external examinations and thereby received greater respectability. In cases where this did not happen, such subjects or courses and others like them were earmarked for those who were considered not "bright" academically.

#### Government and Christian Mission Relations

The government and mission schools existed side by side serving different functions and different groups in society until the government exerted its influence on the mission school through financial assistance. Gradually, the mission schools were taken over except for a few which preferred to be independent. As part of the conditions of taking over, the governments set certain requirements relating to the medium of instruction, curricula, examinations, and on the minimum qualification of teachers. In other cases, as in the Solomon Islands, the missions were not entirely happy with



government intervention and it led to a period of strained relationships. However, the development of a more coordinated and rationalized education system enhanced the capability of such systems to respond to greater demands such as those associated with self government and independence.

Meeting the Needs of Independence and Self-Government Education for National Development. During the 1950s and 1960s the notion of government involvement had become well established at least in the South Pacific region. Hitherto, increased government involvement had been hampered by lack of financial resources. However, during the 1950s and 1960s, the austerity of the immediate post-war years had passed and a more favourable period of economic growth had set in. The colonial governments in the islands were faced with the need to prepare their countries for their gradual movement towards independence. On the international scene, economists were pointing to education as a critical component for national development and they stressed the importance of developing human resources and manpower, and the need for national planning.<sup>4</sup>

Increased government participation in education marked the second phase of government involvement. In contrast to the first phase, the government was no longer just a participant in the venture; it was expected that it should be coordinating and directing not only education, but also the whole social, economic and political development of the country.

The colonial governments in the islands had envisaged for the school a much broader role in development as they prepared for independence; and they wanted the school to foster a number of broad objectives as for example:

- . The development of national consciousness in Fiji.
- . The development of an appreciation for the limited opportunities of an atoll environment in Kiribati.
- . The countering of the prevailing academic trend in education in the Solomon Islands and Fiji.

The outcomes of schemes designed to bring out the above stated objectives were not encouraging. In each of the above cases, except perhaps in the development of national consciousness in Fiji—the results of which are difficult to quantify—the objective has not been accomplished. On the other hand, in the case of the objective of preparing manpower for independence, the result was an astounding success.

#### Academic Evaluation

As can be seen from the above, much was expected of the school during preparation for independence and self-government, which previously the school did not have to worry about. Many of the objectives expressed in the education plans and reports contained ideals that education planners and professional educationists desired, but these were new to the teachers, let alone the parents. The latter paid hefty school fees for their children and they expected them to receive the kind of education which would give them good jobs such as those to be found in the public services of the Pacific islands. They knew that these jobs were obtained by people with academic qualifications and hence their desire to have a similar type of education for their children.

The school can be an agent of reform but it cannot of itself be expected to avert or solve certain major problems of society without any program of reform based on some widely held ideology such as the Ujamaa in Tanzania.<sup>5</sup> The latter was often referred to but not well understood by the public or its teachers. The teachers gave lip service to the new ideas but went on to do what they knew best, which was to teach in the formal and academic way.

### Agro-Technical Education

During the 1970s, governments of the South Pacific countries were concerned about the over-emphasis on academic education in their schools and plans were devised for the establishment of practically-oriented schools to be located in the rural areas to serve the needs of the majority of the students. In Fiji, the Education Commission in 1969 endorsed this idea but cautioned that because the schools would necessarily be located in rural areas, they should not be "second best." The Commission urged that they should be of high standard, and careful consideration should be given to their location.<sup>6</sup>

In the Solomon Islands, the Education Policy Review Committee came to a similar conclusion when they recommended the establishment of the (then) Area High School in 1974 (later known as the New Secondary School).

The Community High School in Kiribati—established in 1978—was supposed to be anchored in the community and be a center of community adult education training. It was to rely on the community for the teaching of traditional skills. It was therefore like a halfway house between the school and the community, serving the school leavers and the community. Its anomalous

position created some difficulties because the villagers looked on it as a school trying to teach some of the skills of the village which they thought could be better learnt from living in the village.

In Fiji the number of Junior Secondary Schools mushroomed to about 20 in the first two years of operation, and it was not possible to maintain the level of quality in both facilities and teachers that the Fiji Education Commission recommended. Insidiously, the pressure for academic programs build up and the practical-oriented courses became examinable in the external examinations and the school, in time, became a poor replica of its urban academic counterpart.

The Area High School in the Solomon Islands had a difficult struggle to survive. It lacked the necessary resources and teachers with appropriate orientation, and its role was not well understood by the community. Even if it had the resources and the teachers, it would still have difficulty in surviving in its original form because it lacked the support of the parents.

The attitude of the parents in Kiribati towards the Community High School was aptly described by its Minister for Education Training and Culture in a statement on August 26, 1980, when he announced the results of an investigation on this project and plans for its winding up. The Minister said,

"They (the parents) want an academic type of education which would pave the way for paid employment. So Government has been trying to develop a type of schooling which concentrates on practical skills considered to be relevant to pupils who will live in the rural areas and not obtain cash employment. While all the time the people desire an education with an academic bias designed to prepare children for employment in the urban areas."<sup>7</sup>

The statements of the Minister for Education from Kiribati probably echo the sentiments of the parents in the South Pacific, particularly in the rural areas, in their expectation of the school to provide their children with modern skills and the knowledge to enable them to get a good job. It has always been the function of the school, since the government entered the field of education, to train people for the public service. Employment opportunities of educated people have widened with the opening up of other sectors of employment, but the parents' view still holds true that education leads to employment in the modern sector. Any change in the function or form of the school will be difficult to sell to the parents unless it can be demonstrated that those graduating from it can gain comparable, if not better, financial rewards than those graduating from academic institutions. Only then will they see the school as worth their investment and support.

#### Education, Manpower and Employment

One of the things that the school has done very effectively has been the production of manpower to meet the needs for independence or self-government for the islands, particularly those needs pertaining to posts in the public services. Most of the islands, except for the few remaining colonies of France and the United States, have now become self-governing or independent, and the transfer of responsibilities of governance to the local people has been remarkably smooth. Most of the critical positions in the public services have been taken over by the local people and the process of localization has been largely successful. In some cases, the pace of localization has been

thought to be too rapid and that local people without the necessary qualifications and experience have been placed in responsible positions leading to a drop in the quality of the public service.

Most of the posts in the public services in the islands have been filled, but the education system continues to turn out academically trained people who cannot continue to be absorbed. The number of people that can be absorbed by the private sector—which in the Pacific islands is necessarily small—is limited. As a result, a lot of school leavers become unemployed. In the case of Fiji only about half of the 15,000 annual school leavers can be expected to find jobs, the others will have to find alternative occupations or join the ranks of the unemployed—running at about 10 percent. Even university graduates are not finding it easy to find employment; the hunger strike in Fiji in 1984, by students who had completed their teacher-education qualifications at the University of the South Pacific but were not offered teaching positions, has brought this problem to the fore.

The relationship between employment and education has now become very apparent in the islands. One of the factors of islandness—limited size and population—puts a constraint on the size of the public service and, more particularly, on the extent to which the private sector can expand to absorb the ever increasing number of school leavers. This highlights the need for rapid job creation, especially in islands with a high proportion of youthful population as in the Melanesian and Micronesian island groups.

#### Delayed Problems for Non-Independent Islands

Many of the problems faced by the independent countries of the South Pacific group, as discussed above, have not been faced to the same extent by

the French Pacific group, as the countries involved are colonies of France and as such are not at the stage where they have to be wholly responsible for funding their education system. Similarly, the American Pacific group of islands, including those under the Compact, are still receiving a lot of American funds and support and consequently do not feel the full brunt of the problems that independent island countries have had to face or are facing. It is only a matter of time before the French Pacific group of islands will become independent and at that stage, they will have to face up to similar education problems which their South Pacific independent neighbours have faced over the last two and a half decades. The Compact countries of the American Pacific group will have to face up to similar problems soon, perhaps theirs will be worse in that the U.S. cultivated policy of dependence conceived in the 1960s will undermine not only the islanders' will for greater independence but also their very ability to cope with resultant problems.

#### Education in the Eighties and Beyond

In looking at the major educational needs and directions of the Pacific Islands in the next two decades and beyond, I have relied on four assumptions which I feel would exert some influence on education in varying degrees.

These are:

- that certain major changes in the educational system will continue by virtue of built-in educational traditions and institutional pressures;
- that continuing demands on basic education services will continue to be exerted as part of democratic changes occurring in the Pacific countries;

- that greater pressure for involvement in the affairs of Pacific people will continue to be exerted by Pacific rim metropolitan powers in the light of the increasing importance of the region; and that
- the development in science especially in the information technology area will have major impacts on education, language and culture and these will also have wider political and socio-economic ramifications.

### Academic Education

One thing clearly emerges from the previous section. Parents and pupils will continue to demand an academic type of education and will continue to be reluctant to accept non-academic alternatives, as for example agro-technical education. This is because academic-type education yields better jobs than do the other types of education in the Pacific islands setting, and so long as this situation exists, it would be reasonable to expect such demand to continue. An academic type of education normally prepares people for the public sector; this is the major avenue for wage employment in the islands. Usually, the smaller the country, the greater is the proportion of people employed in the public sector. So despite the efforts of the governments to diversify education and build technical, agricultural and other forms of non-academic institutions, existing demands for academic type of institutions both at the secondary and tertiary levels will continue to grow at least in the next two decades.

As a consequence of this, a lot of school leavers prepared only for general skills will continue to be produced every year, of which only a small proportion might be absorbed into the workforce. This trend will exacerbate the growing unemployment and underemployment especially in the urban centres and will generate other associated problems. Such a situation would raise



questions relating to what the value and aims of education should be especially for those countries that have not faced the full brunt of this issue. This would pose a major problem in many of the islands in the Year 2000.

### Agro-technical Education

The conventional remedy of education planners to the increasing unemployment of school leavers, that of developing agricultural and technical schools, is hardly an answer in all the islands because the employment of the graduates of these schools would continue to be problematic. Evidences not only from African experience, but also from experience of some Pacific countries<sup>8</sup> indicate that despite expectations, technical and agricultural school leavers tend to seek out 'white collar' jobs instead of those that would require people to 'soil their hands', so to speak. It seems that it cannot be assumed that just because they received training in skills which predominantly involve the use of their hands, apart from their heads, that they should automatically prefer jobs relating to such skills within the public sector, let alone generate their own jobs in their respective skill areas in the business or private sectors.

The critical factor to the solution of this problem lies in the creation of a structure of incentives within the economic system, generating the need for skills to which such agro-technical institutions could respond. Unless such institutions are responding to identifiable marketable skills, there will always be a danger of training people who cannot be employed.

In the Pacific islands, there is likely to be a greater demand for more specialized agricultural and technical skills in the bigger island groups of Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Solomon Islands and probably New Caledonia; these countries are in a better position to support a system of technical and agricultural schools. These islands have a sufficient resource base to support a comparatively large population and would also have a greater potential for the development of their private sectors than small island groups. For these reasons, one would expect to see the development of a comprehensive network of agro-technical schools in the above islands over the next two decades.

#### Non-Formal Education

In the smaller island groups of the Pacific where the development potential of the private sectors is limited as in the case of Tonga, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Western Samoa, the American group, etc., a greater emphasis would be placed on non-formal education. This type of education is aimed at developing various types of skills using the resources in the community, to assist people generate their own employment. There is already a wide acceptance of this type of education as it tends to attract young and no so young adults who know the kind of skills they need. Non-formal education and training can be used to develop basic practical mechanical and technical skills without reliance on the expensive resources of formal institutions; this is being attempted fairly successfully in Fiji.<sup>9</sup> Not only is the development of non-formal education and training critical, equally critical is the need to coordinate formal and non-formal education and to rationalise these activities. Only a few

countries in the Pacific include non-formal education in their education planning considerations. Non-formal education is particularly pertinent in a region where many of the countries cannot afford to commit much more of their limited government funds to formal education. Non-formal education could assume a much greater importance in the next two decades particularly for the smaller island groups.

#### Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Education

One of the things that is difficult to satisfy, especially for newly independent countries, is the demand for more education. The independent countries of the South Pacific except those in Melanesia have a comparatively high rate of literacy. A great push for universal primary education is therefore likely to be exerted by the Melanesian islands such as Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and on independence, French Polynesia and New Caledonia.

Those islands whose basic primary education needs have stabilised would be looking towards providing more secondary—and tertiary—level education. Secondary education is expected to be met locally by most countries but tertiary education is not as easily available for the islands except perhaps for Papua New Guinea. To date, two regional groupings exist in the Pacific region either to provide or coordinate the provision of tertiary education: the eleven independent or self-governing countries (except for Tokelau) of the South Pacific group that support the University of the South Pacific (USP), and the Pacific Post Secondary Education Council, membership of which comprises all the American Pacific group and which coordinates post-secondary

education for the American Pacific islands. Without such co-operation it would be inconceivable for any of the Pacific islands given its population base apart from Papua New Guinea, to support a full-fledged university from its own resources.<sup>10</sup>

It would not, however, be out of the reach of many of the island groups, to have colleges of higher education that might meet the needs of middle level manpower requirements. In certain cases, the establishment of such colleges have involved substantial aid from metropolitan sources. Some of the big islands will see it politically desirable for them to have a national college of higher education which could provide for various courses in needed areas and at the same time, ensure that its services are rationalised with its associated regional university (e.g, USP) or with an outside metropolitan university. A similar rationalisation of efforts is expected to occur in the American Pacific group under the coordination of the Pacific Post Secondary Education Council.

There is a greater potential for increased coordination between the various island groups particularly between the American Pacific group and the South Pacific group especially in the provision of tertiary education. Most of the doctors currently practising on the American Pacific group of islands were graduates of the former regional Medical School in Suva, now known as the Fiji School of Medicine. In October 1984, the University of Guam signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of the South Pacific and this could enhance greater co-operation in the field of education between the two regions. The University of the South Pacific and the University of Papua New Guinea are represented on one another's Council and they have already

identified areas of possible co-operation including an exchange scheme for their respective students. Even the idea of the development of a confederation of universities in the South Pacific involving the two universities in Papua New Guinea and the USP has been raised by Dr. James Maraj, the previous Vice-Chancellor of the University of the South Pacific.<sup>11</sup>

There is much to be gained in co-operative efforts and indications are that this will be much stronger in the Year 2000; such co-operation will contribute to a greater Pacific consciousness, provided, of course, that metropolitan pressures through bilateral aid arrangements do not undermine such co-operation.

#### New Colonialism in Education

For a variety of reasons, a number of metropolitan powers in the Pacific rim are exerting increasing influence on Pacific islands. Some of the influences are traditional and long standing as is the case with New Zealand and its neighbours like the Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau and Western Samoa; the United States with its Micronesian states and American Samoa; Australia with Papua New Guinea; and France with its Pacific colonies. Increasing efforts have been undertaken, both by Australia and the United States to exert their influences in the independent countries of the South Pacific; with promise of increasing aid and assistance, they are beginning to develop affiliations that could influence education significantly in the islands. In a recent Foreign Affairs report for example, it has been suggested that Australia should accept workers from Tuvalu and Kiribati as part of its development assistance scheme.<sup>12</sup> If this is implemented the goal of education in these two countries would shift to preparing people not only for working but also for living in Australia.

New Zealand has already been influencing the national curricula of many of the South Pacific countries through its examinations; it has also allowed many Polynesians to work and migrate to its shores, thus reducing unemployment in the islands somewhat. It also admits island students to study there and many of them do not return to the islands. This situation has often been referred to as aid to New Zealand by the Pacific Islands.<sup>13</sup>

The United States takes in people from the American Pacific group for education, employment and also gives them citizenship after a period of residency, not to mention the high level of aid or 'handouts' it gives them. The same is happening with respect to islanders in the French Pacific group.

The end result of all this is, of course, a greater degree of dependence, a new colonialism. While it may have beneficial effects, it is bound to undermine the development of a coherent national educational system of the respective groups of islands and to encourage the loss of needed skills and manpower. This problem is bound to continue well into the Year 2000. Perhaps, the Pacific islanders need to work out very urgently the form of assistance they can get without putting themselves in a irreversible situation which is now more evident in some of the American Pacific group of islands.

#### Science and Information Technology

The impact of the development of science and technology cannot be ignored, although much of the technology is inappropriate to small island states. The fact that such high technology is available and that it is in the interest of metropolitan powers to have it accepted by the Pacific island states in itself helps to perpetuate an incongruent situation between island needs and

technological supply. This situation highlights the need to generate a greater consciousness for more appropriate technologies especially those that depend on renewable energy sources for which the Pacific has a rich resource base such as the sun, the wind and ocean currents.

The availability of modern information technology can be used to enhance education developments especially in the area of computers, video cassettes, television and satellite. This of course calls for careful identification of needs in terms of knowledge and skills, the development of appropriate curricula and the choice of suitable media to be used in respective areas.<sup>14</sup> Apart from the use of satellite in distance education in the University of the South Pacific region, and the abortive attempt to introduce education television in American Samoa in the 1960s,<sup>15</sup> the Pacific Islands have been generally slow in making appropriate use of these technologies more particularly in the field of education. This is going to lead to the wholesale use of imported overseas programmes as is currently the case with video programmes in countries like Fiji and Papua New Guinea. The availability of satellite television would also mean that the Pacific islands could be exposed to overseas television (usually American) programmes at the touch of a switch.

The continual exposure of the Pacific islanders to imported programmes through video and or satellite television cannot be without its effects on their values, cultures and traditions. This would exacerbate a cosmopolitan orientation and undermine the development of a stronger Pacific consciousness.

### Language and Culture

As the Pacific increasingly becomes an area of competing powers, great stress will be placed on technology science and generally on developments in the modern sector. While it is desirable and perhaps timely that the Pacific should move into the 21st century, it is hoped that it will not do so at the expense of its unique Pacific cultures and traditions which have given it a distinctive lifestyle. In order to do this, its cultures, languages and traditions need to be fostered and developed through various avenues including the schools and through whatever modern information technology is used.

### Conclusions

The school traditions of the Pacific islands were derived from exported varieties from metropolitan countries. The schools were set up to support imposed systems and were relied upon to produce the necessary manpower particularly during the transition of the islands from a colonial to a self-governing and/or an independent status. The school systems generated their own sets of problems, and attempts made to re-direct their orientation, form and content did not meet much success.

The above problems continue to bedevil the Pacific islanders and they are bound to affect their educational developments in the near and distant future. These are going to be compounded by other developments such as the increasing demand for basic education by new nations achieving greater self-determination, the pressure by metropolitan powers to have greater involvement in Pacific affairs, and recent developments in science and information technology. The directions which Pacific islands education are going to take in the Year 2000 are going to depend on the extent to which these considerations are utilised by Pacific islanders to their advantage.



## Notes

1. This excludes Hawaii which geographically can be regarded as Pacific islands but politically is an integral part of the United States of America.
2. See R. S. Peters, Ethics and Education (London: Allen & Unwin, 1966), p. 65.
3. See M. Mead Growing up in New Guinea (New York: Blue Ribbon Book, 1930); M. Mead Coming of Age in Samoa: A Study of Adolescence and Sex in Primitive Societies (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1943); R. Firth We the Tikopia: A Sociological Study of Kinship in Primitive Polynesia (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1936).
4. See for example, M. J. Bowman et al. (Ed). Readings in the Economics of Education (Paris: UNESCO, 1968); C. Anderson and M. J. Bowman (Eds.). Education and Economic Development (Chicago: Aldine, 1965); E. A. G. Robinson and J. E. Vaizey (Eds.). The Economics of Education (London: McMillan, 1966).
5. See J. K. Nyerere, Ujaama: Essays on Socialism (Dar es Salaam: East Africa Publishing House, 1968).
6. Education for Modern Fiji: Report of the 1969 Fiji Education Commission (Suva: Fiji Government Printer, 1969), p. 52.
7. Minister for Education, Training and Culture 'New Priorities for Classes 7, 8, and 9 Primary Schools' (Tarawa, mimeographed, August 27, 1980), p. 2.
8. An example of this is the Navuso Agricultural School in Fiji which was primarily set up to train village farmers. The majority of Navuso graduates—about 80%—do not take up farming; the majority of its graduates seek government jobs in the Fiji public service.
9. An example of this is the Fiji National Training Scheme which is concerned with the training of workers in the field.
10. Francois Doumenge, (Viability of Small Island States: Report to United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, TD/B/950, July 1983) argues that a population of about 1 million is necessary to support a full-fledged university.
11. See Fiji Times article 'Maraj Moots Federal USP' 26 May, 1982, p. 1; see also 'Statement of the Vice-Chancellor' The University of the South Pacific Bulletin, vol. 15, 4, p. 15, 28 May, 1982.

12. Report of the Committee to Review the Australian Overseas Aid Programme: The Jackson Commission (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1984).
13. For example, Joris de Bres How Tonga Aids New Zealand: A Report on Migration and Education (South Pacific Action Network, 1974); Joris de Bres Worth Their Weight in Gold (Auckland Resource Center for World Development, 1975).
14. Dr. Lasarusa Vusoniwailala, personal communication, 18 October, 1984.
15. See Wilbur Schramm et al Bold Experiment: The Story of Educational Television in American Samoa (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1981).

## THE FUTURE OF OUR PAST

by

Epeli Hau'ofa

Towards the end of the nineteenth century and in the early years of the present century, scholars, colonial administrators, missionaries and the like were genuinely concerned that Pacific islanders quite possibly faced physical extinction. The voluntary and not-so-voluntary recruitment of Melanesians to work on distant overseas plantations, the kidnapping of Polynesians to work in mines in South America, greater destructiveness of warfare due to the introduction of firearms, and especially the ravages of introduced diseases, were some of the factors behind the alarming decline of island populations in the Pacific. But with improved health care, better control of labour recruitment, the proscription of internecine warfare, and so forth, the situation was gradually reversed.

There is a parallel between the situation that I have just sketchily outlined and the preoccupation, toward the end of our century, with the continuity or survival of the traditional cultures of the same groups of

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The title of this address has been taken from that of the journal Review (USP), No. 10, 1983, by Simione Durutalo.

people. With a few exceptions (such as Niue and the Cook Islands because of emigration) there is no longer any concern about population decline. What seems problematic for many people, islanders and interested outsiders alike, is the survival of the so-called traditional cultures. Programmes have been mounted in the islands, funded largely by international organisations, for the preservation of traditional cultures. I must confess that I am baffled by this concern with culture preservation. If we take it that 'culture' means the totality of the way of life of a given population at any given time, and that this way of life is subject to alteration as its environment changes, then I do not see why the cultures of ex-colonial peoples should be singled out for preservation, or for that matter, for much concern about their survival. Those industrial countries that have dominated the Pacific islands over the last two hundred years have not displayed much concern with the preservation of their own cultures as such; in fact their position of dominance has been achieved and maintained through constant ruthless changes in their traditions; the whole idea of growth and development means continuous change of technologies and value systems. In view of this, one cannot help but suspect that underlying the seemingly humane concern with the preservation of the traditions of the islands of the South Pacific, and indeed of the Third World in general, are some rather insidious motives including keeping sections of communities contented with their relative poverty and oppression.

But I'm not here to grind an axe, or to make accusations about neo-colonial exploitation. I'm in a good mood, so let us as scholars do what we are good at, and that is making mountains out of mole-hills, constructing realities out of illusions, endowing triviality with significance, and talking

about traditional value systems in the year 2000 not knowing exactly what we mean by the term 'traditions' in the context of the contemporary South Pacific, let alone their potential for survival into the twenty first century.

If by 'traditional' we mean purely indigenous, as many people have taken the term to imply, then there are very few things in the Pacific islands today that could be labelled 'traditional.' Of those few things that could be so designated, the most important are the native languages spoken by islanders today; but even here, the languages have been greatly affected by non-Oceanic influences, especially in the area of vocabulary. In most other areas of culture, aspects loosely termed 'traditional' are in fact things that have either been borrowed holus-bolus or have been mixed to varying degrees with introduced elements from Europe, America and Asia. The present aristocratic systems of Fiji and Tonga are in fact the creations of the 19th century - mixtures of indigenous and non-indigenous elements. Yet these systems are considered 'traditional' by Fijians and Tongans alike. So, for the purposes of this paper, I take 'traditions' and 'traditional values' to mean practices and beliefs held by a given population over a period of time, say, one hundred or so years. I also consider as traditional, practices and values deliberately created and cultivated recently by island leaders for their fellow men and their descendants to follow. Here then, we have traditions that are old and those that have been relatively recently established but increasingly accepted and having potential for long term growth and survival, although that potential can only be roughly estimated.

The other thing about traditions, and this seems to be the important issue, is the nature, or more precisely the origins, of the various elements that constitute a particular tradition. The question here is the identification of the origins of the elements of a particular tradition, which elements are indigenous and which non-indigenous. The indigenous elements are those whose origins can be traced back to the values and practices that existed before the earliest contact with alien cultures, in particular those originating outside Oceania. The non-indigenous elements are those aspects of a tradition that were introduced from cultures outside the Pacific islands region. This distinction between indigenous and non-indigenous elements of contemporary traditions is very important because generally, when people think of the survival of the traditional value systems, they, in fact, mean the continuity or persistence of indigenous (or aboriginal) elements of traditions rather than the traditions as such, for as mentioned above, there are very few important traditions in the islands today that are purely indigenous.

Finally, the degree of indigenosity of particular traditions held by a people varies according to the extant interests of different classes and other divisions within the society. In the internal politics in Tonga, Western Samoa, and Fiji, for example, the leaders often emphasise the indigenous aristocratic elements of their leadership tradition because it is in their interests that this should be so. Those who tend to stress the non-indigenosity aspects of leadership are more likely to be members of classes other than the chiefly ones. Furthermore, the rural dwellers, who are generally poor, are more likely to practise indigenous aspects of traditions than the culturally alienated, urban-based elites whose adherence to things indigenous is often more professed and idealistic than practical.

What I refer to as indigenous values, as distinct from traditional values, have their roots in the past of Pacific island societies before the invasion of European values. Indigenous values are rooted firstly in subsistence economies with non-metal, non-mechanical tools, and with generally highly perishable products; secondly, in transportation modes based on foot and canoes; thirdly, in the scale of society that was generally small and intimate; and fourthly, in exclusively oral methods of communication. Since the economic, transportation and communication systems and the population structures of the Pacific have changed and are changing, the value systems based on them must necessarily have changed too. But it is often the case that changes in value systems lag far behind changes in other areas of culture and society. It is the existence of these persistent values evocative of the past that causes concern about the survival of traditional cultures. The persistence of such values is due to the fact that changes in the economic, transportation and communication systems are not yet total: subsistence or semi-subsistence economic activities exist side by side with modern commercial activities; the improvement in transportation systems is limited to certain areas of societies; and illiteracy and semi-literacy are still with us. Moreover, the persistence of outmoded values can be politically useful to powerful interests in modern island societies, and these values seem also to provide the essential elements for the formation of distinctive local, national, regional and ethnic identities.

But what were the values that sprang from and were appropriate to the conditions outlined above? I am conscious here of the danger of over-generalisation, but I am compelled to resort to this tactic because it is

only through a degree of over-generalisation that we are able to transcend the relativity and the great complexity of Pacific island cultures, of which there are probably more than a thousand. Keeping this in mind, I venture to suggest that the most important indigenous values held by Pacific islanders were as follows.

1. The primacy of group interests over those of individuals as such. Unlike people in Western societies, Pacific islanders stressed the importance of groups rather than that of the individual. The main responsibilities of an individual were not for himself or herself but for various groups to which he or she belonged. Individualism as we know it was considered selfish and anti-social behaviour. This emphasis on the group was an essential feature of subsistence existence based on primitive tools, and of uncentralised political systems that were prone to inter-group violence in the settlement of disputes. Economic and political interdependence necessitated the emphasis on group solidarity at the expense of individual interests. And Pacific islanders grouped themselves mostly according to the principles of kinship ties, and secondarily along the principle of locality.

2. Sharing of goods and services. The ideas of sharing and of mutual assistance were highly valued. Most inter-personal and inter-group relationships were created and sustained through constant acts of giving and taking and sharing. These values were based on the necessity for group efforts in the performance of heavy tasks using primitive tools, and for the consumption of highly perishable products such as root-crops, fruits and meats, given the lack of methods for effective food preservation.



3. A sense for place and for social continuity. The sense for place is the attachment to the physical locality in which one ancestors lived and died and in which one lives. The sense for social continuity is the importance people place on their continuity with their ancestors and with their future generations. The sense for place and continuity developed out of limited physical mobility in the past because of elementary forms of transportation, rugged terrain and watery isolation between islands or groups of islands. Personal and social identities were rooted in kinship ties and in ancestral territories.

4. Intimacy in interpersonal relationships. This was very important even in the relationships between people at different levels of society. Personalised relationships, especially those based on ties of kinship and locality, were the order of the day. (Impersonal relationships are still alien to most Pacific islanders.) This was a function of the smallness in the scale of island societies. Within each socio-political unit everyone knew everyone else, and if pressed people could actually trace kinship connections with each other. The relationships between leaders and the led were usually phrased in terms of kinship relationships. The smallness in the scale of societies resulted from elementary technologies of warfare, transportation and production, as well as from geographical and demographic factors.

5. The recording and communication of ideas, of customary laws, genealogies, historical events, and rights and obligations of all kinds were very flexible, creative and highly politicised. Truth was, and still is to a large extent, negotiable. The idea that Pacific islanders were slaves to the dictates of their cultures is a myth; islanders were in fact masters of their

cultures - they manipulated them at will. This was made easier because of the absence of written records. Pacific cultures were based on oral traditions; and as we all know, when everything is transmitted orally and in no other form, anything can happen provided that the transmitters have the ability and power to make things happen. So every group had its expert orators, spokesmen and other liars to tell, and if possible force through, their versions of truth.

6. Self-sufficiency and self-reliance. Most people provided through their own efforts for all their needs. Only a very small number of groups depended on trade, which was conducted as barter between long established partners, and hardly ever between total strangers. Exchange was largely in terms of luxury goods, or more correctly, items of ceremonial value - feathers, shells, mats, tapa and so forth. Self-sufficiency and self-reliance was a function of integrated subsistence existence.

7. Care for members of society - especially for the elderly and the otherwise disabled. There were no social welfare services as we know today so people had to take care of their own. And because of the close kinship bonding that sprang from lifelong togetherness, of reverence for ancestors whose spirits had to be appeased as they were considered active in the world of the living, and of future security for themselves, people never entertained the idea of abandoning their elderly and their disabled relatives. Caring was ultimately a responsibility to one's corporate kin-group, which always comprised the dead, the living and the future generations. There were very

few exceptions, all found in resource poor environments, but the general pattern was as described above. This sense of caring for one's relatives is still strong throughout the island societies.

8. The arts and entertainments were integrated into community life. There was no such thing as art for art's sake. The sense for beauty was always imprinted on objects of utility: tools, implements, houseware, personal effects, canoes, buildings and sacred images. Poetry, music and dance were mostly integrated into, and usually performed as part of, some religious or community festivals or ceremonies. And there was a great deal of entertainment and fun in most serious group activities: in gardening, fish drives, construction of private and public buildings, and in religious ceremonies, even when these were connected with mortuary rites. The easy enjoyment of life and the sense of fun that people associate with islanders is not just a myth; it is a reality. Perhaps one reason why many islanders do not appear willing to give sustained effort to the so-called development activities is that such activities are not only foreign, they are also so deadly serious and devoid of any sense of enjoyment and fun. The Protestant work ethic is a prescription for a life of joyless toil - and it has no place in the islanders' view of the good life.

The conditions under which these indigenous values developed have changed over the last two hundred years. I shall not enter into a discussion of these changes in the economic, transportation and communication systems and demographic structure because we are very familiar with them. Suffice it to say that changes in technology and in population must in the long run be accompanied by changes in value systems. As far as I am concerned it is

impossible to maintain values, however laudable they may be, if their material bases have been altered dramatically. Given the changes that have occurred in the environment, our problem is to pinpoint the directions of change in indigenous values. The rest of the present paper deals with these trends.

1. We examine first the value related to the primacy of group interests over those individuals as such. There is much talk by island leaders about islanders leading lives that emphasise the community rather than the individual. Fr. Walter Lini's concept of Melanesian Socialism is based on this value. The fact is that the inexorable shift from subsistence to a capitalist mode of production belies the professed value because capitalism, at least in its Pacific manifestation, emphasises the individual profit motive and accumulation. The direction of change is unmistakably from group orientation to greater individualism; and national financial institutions, especially the development banks, are supporting this movement. We can see this very clearly in the changes occurring in the systems of land rights. Indigenous land tenure systems vested the major rights to land in social groups such as extended families, clans and so forth. But the mode of development to which island nations have committed themselves prescribes the increasing individualisation of land rights. Tonga was the first Pacific island nation so to change its land tenure, and presently there is a move in Tonga to introduce a freehold system for the entire country. Fiji leads the rest in the individualisation of land holding; and development banks throughout the island South Pacific demand as collateral for loans for agricultural and other land related development, individual leases on tracts

of land held by kinship groups. There are other factors for this trend toward individualism at the expense of the indigenous value of group solidarity, but the example given above is sufficient to illustrate the point.

I consider also as a trend toward individualism and the greater atomisation of society the emerging decline in the significance of extended family systems and the rise of the nuclear family as the basic social unit. This is also a consequence of the shift from purely subsistence toward commercial production, as well as demographic changes, the influence of Christian teachings, urbanisation and modern Western-type education. There is also a trend toward family life with absentee fathers, that is toward matrifocal family units, because of the increasing labour mobility not only from rural to urban areas, but also from one country to another. This is especially true of Polynesia because of the relative ease with which Polynesians can emigrate to New Zealand, Australia, Hawaii and West Coast USA.

Individualism is increasingly becoming the life-style of the urban-based island elites that often advocate group solidarity for the rural masses. But given the opportunity within the capitalist mode of development, rural dwellers, if they really want to overcome their relative poverty, will have to strive toward individualism, despite efforts by their leaders to get them organised into co-operative groupings of various kinds.

2. Sharing of goods and services. This was relatively easy in the past when most people in a society performed roughly the same tasks and produced virtually identical goods. But changes in economic activities have meant, among other things, that people are performing a much greater variety of tasks than before, and producing a much wider range of goods. Goods and services

therefore vary greatly in value, making it increasingly difficult for people to share things fairly; this affects adversely people's willingness to share.

As mentioned above, because of the high perishability of goods produced in the subsistence economies of the islands, people had to give their surpluses to their relatives and friends if things were not to be wasted. But today, because money is not so perishable and can be stored at home or in banks, there is a mounting inclination for people to keep their money for themselves rather than to give it away.

The indigenous values of sharing and meeting one's social obligations have also come under intensifying attack by development officials and agencies who consider these values to be inimical to progress.

Under conditions outlined above it appears that Pacific islanders who have always stressed the virtue of generosity, are heading toward being increasingly mean and accumulative - values that are appropriate to modern modes of development.

3. The tremendous increase in physical mobility brought about by changing modes of production, the introduction of efficient systems of transportation, the creation of larger territorial units to which people belong, and so forth, have wrought changes in islanders' sense for place and social continuity. Although people still identify themselves with the localities of their origins, they are also required to identify with several larger units - districts, provinces and the nations themselves. This is a particularly traumatic experience in western Melanesia because of the size and cultural complexity of, as well as the recency of their being organised into, national entities. But such identifications vary in accordance with the individual's

actual mobility and the territorial extent of his or her interests. Those who live mostly in villages still maintain the indigenous sense for place. Those who occupy positions in national institutions or in large-scale enterprises identify themselves more easily with the larger territorial units. Among the elites, there is also growing transnational identification with regional units, and with international groups with which they have professional or business connections. The trend seems to be that the more sedentary sections of societies, which are generally poor and rural dwelling, maintain very confined social worlds, while the more mobile sections have worlds that are far larger than their actual places of ancestral origins. The sense for continuity with the ancestors and therefore with the past is strongest among the poor and weakest among the more mobile elite groups. Ancestors and ancestral spirits do not have significant influences over their lives. They are learning to live without them. This alienation from ancestors is part and parcel of the broader alienation from the past, and therefore, from the indigenous elements of traditions. The greatest danger for the survival of the indigenous elements of traditions is posed today not so much by outsiders as by the educated, relatively wealthy, urban-based local elites. They are the ones who are locally instrumental in deciding the directions of change for their countries.

Paradoxically, it is also from the ranks of the alienated elites that conscious efforts for culture preservation and for cultural revival have emerged. The sensitive and creative minded people who live outside or on the margins of traditions are the most vocal in their efforts to preserve what little indigenous elements of traditions they still retain, or to review other

elements. This is fine so long as preservation or revival does not cost them their modern life styles. They are, therefore, highly selective in what they wish to retain or to retrieve. This underlies the belief that people can consciously combine the best from the past and the present. It never works out that way, for when it comes down to actual choices, the best of the past is always sacrificed even for the worst of the present.

4. Intimacy in personal relationships. The enlargement of the scale of society from largely village or small island communities into national units, the rapid population growth rates, and the increasing use of money as a medium in the relationships between people, are at certain levels transforming the nature of interpersonal relationships from intimately personal into remote, impersonal and contractual relationships. This trend in changing values is distinctly discernible so that by about the turn of the century intimate personal relationships, which pervaded entire societies of the past and still are relatively pervasive today, will be more restricted and increasingly replaced at strategic levels by impersonal, contractual relationships which are more appropriate to mass societies.

5. The flexibility with which social relationships were conducted, with which information of all kinds was gathered, interpreted and transmitted, and with which truth was negotiated, is rapidly giving way to rigidity because of the codification of rules of behaviour, documentary recording of events, precisely written contracts and other forms of agreements. The informality which characterises much of the interpersonal relationships in the islands is giving way to formal and rigidly structured relationships. Spontaneity is losing ground to calculation, the ultimate expression of which is canned laughter on radio programmes of today.



6. The progressive movement away from subsistence existence toward commercialism and the progressive adoption of expensive life-styles on the part of the ruling elites have eroded the indigenous values of self-reliance. Perhaps the most unfortunate effect of modern forms of development on islanders is the transformation of hitherto economically independent people into wards of rich countries. The idea that the present kinds of socio-economic development will restore self-reliance is a falsehood. All of Micronesia and Polynesia are heading toward complete neo-colonial dependence on their former colonial masters. French Polynesia, Niue, American Samoa, Tokelau and the former Trust Territories of Micronesia are retired, pensioned societies. Western Samoa, Tonga, Cook Islands, Tuvalu and Kiribati are in semi-retirement, living partly on the dole. To a greater or lesser degree all other South Pacific island countries are dependent in one form or another on foreign aid. Perhaps the only self-reliant groups of people in the island world are the few small communities in Melanesia who prefer to live in their remote and almost inaccessible localities, for example, the mountain Kwaio of Malaita, the pagans of South Pentecost and some similar groups in Papua New Guinea. These people have deliberately made the decision to keep their distance from alien influences including Christianity. Their few involvements with modern society are very restricted and highly selective.

7. Caring for members of society. The indigenous method of social security in which the elderly and the disabled are taken care of by their families is still strong and likely to remain so for a long time to come. This is just as well because so far the island states are incapable of providing their entire populations with alternative forms of social security

services. Nevertheless, Fiji, the most urbanised and highly developed of the island countries, already has a number of old people's homes, orphanages, and mental institutions. And beggars have started to appear on the streets of island capitals. With rapid population growth and increasing poverty in the islands, the care for the elderly, the disabled and the destitute will become a problem in the region. But this appears to be a long term prospect.

8. The demise of indigenous religions and their attendant rituals and ceremonies, the replacement of wood and bone tools and implements by imported factory products, and the passing away of the canoe and indigenous building designs, have meant the disappearance of many of the art forms of the islands, some of which have been revived in modified forms in recent years for commercial purposes, especially for sale to tourists. Indigenous forms of entertainment, once performed in communities for people's enjoyment, are increasingly deployed for commercial purposes - in connection with tourism or with fund-raising for community projects. Where once these entertainments were performed by everyone in the community who wished to participate, today we have an increasing number of professional entertainers and professional dance groups who perform at hotels and even take their shows abroad. Commercialism and professionalism go hand in hand, at the expense of community participation and amateurism.

On the other hand, the rich heritage from the past - of carving, designs, music, poetry and mythology - is a source of inspiration for the rising number of creative artists in the islands. Modern sculptors, painters, musicians, poets and writers are tapping this wealth for their own creations. Melanesia tends to produce excellent carvers, sculptors and artists, whilst from

Polynesia come some really good poets and writers. These artists work in modern media to produce art works that are distinctively modern Oceanic in character - they are producing new images and new voices for the new Pacific Islands.

The indigenous elements of Pacific island cultures have also been deployed for other purposes. In the multi-cultural situations of Melanesian countries, national leaders appeal to common cultural elements that their people share in their efforts to forge real unity for their countries, and to create new and distinctive national identities. In Papua New Guinea Bernard Narokobi propounded the Melanesian Way in order to provide the then new nation with a philosophy for unity. In Vanuatu, Father Walter Lini, who used the appeal of Kastom to unite the New Hebrideans in their fight for independence, now propounds the philosophy of Melanesian Socialism for his country. Apart from these national political usages of indigenous elements of culture, the idea of a Melanesian Alliance based on broad similarities in the indigenous elements of the cultures of Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu is in the air. In reference to the Melanesian Alliance, Father Walter Lini, in the September (1984) issue of Islands Business, had this to say.

"What seems to be the position, as it appears in the media, is the creation of a Melanesian bloc. That there is going to be a Melanesian bloc and a Polynesian bloc. In fact, our view of the Melanesian bloc is in trying to encourage Melanesian traditions, and to try to see them more clearly. We are not talking about a political alliance. It is a misconception. We are simply talking about Melanesian ways, customs and values. It is very important to educate the young people to be able to know them again."

A rather stunted cousin of the Melanesian Way is the Pacific Way, which represents half-hearted attempts by some rather unconvinced politicians and regional academics to provide a form of ideology and identity for regional unity among Polynesians, Melanesians and Micronesians. The Pacific Way comprises cultural elements, both indigenous and non-indigenous believed to be commonly shared by islanders. The Pacific Way has not yet developed into a real ideology - and is unlikely to become anything other than a convenient label for things that the mobile island elite groups share - especially their privileges. Part of the problem is that the Pacific Way as an idea is confined to the regional elites; there has been no attempt to have it rooted in island societies at large. It is probably not possible to popularise the idea beyond a small group of the privileged and the regionally mobile.

There is also a rising Polynesian consciousness. Despite great distances and centuries of isolation, the various peoples of Polynesia have maintained close cultural similarities that are rooted in a parental culture of some two thousand years ago. They share similar myths, ancient religions, languages, and physical appearances. The population mobility of recent years has brought many Polynesian peoples together in places like Auckland, Wellington, Sydney, Honolulu and other cities on mainland USA. There are of course mutual suspicion and inter-group hostilities, but there is also an increasing mixing of these peoples of the same ethnic stock.

Polynesian writers, poets, artists and scholars are now using images from each other's traditions in their own creations. Te Rangi Hiroa was probably the first pan-Polynesian man whose works on Polynesian cultures remain a milestone in Polynesian scholarship. I myself have only recently established

contacts with Polynesian scholars, writers, poets and artists here in Hawaii, and with the Maori of New Zealand as well as with those of Fiji, Samoa and Cook Islands. It is a very exciting experience - to meet people who were totally strangers but who, upon the first meeting, realise instantly a kind of affinity - a kinship of spirit - the roots of which go far, far back into mythological times.

What I'm saying here is that although the past two hundred years have done much to destroy or change indigenous cultures, the experiences of the late twentieth century have brought about an awareness of broad cultural similarities among the peoples of the Pacific islands. The Melanesian consciousness is rising, and so is that of Polynesians. It is perhaps the old gods themselves, Maui, Tangaroa, Kane and others, who have drawn Polynesians from their far flung islands to flock to Aotearoa and Hawai'i in order to help keep their ancient imprints alive. An increasing number of those who have not emigrated are establishing links that will help to keep the old spirit of Polynesians alive, well into the twenty first century.

## Suggested Readings

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