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PUBLIC POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC POLICY IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

By

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

For my precious family: my parents David and Judy Hassall, and my sister Jane, Katayoun and our sons Hyde and Thomas

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACP	Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of States
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AusAID	Australian Development Agency
CC	Climate Change
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
COP	Conference of the Parties
CROP	Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific
DM	Disaster Management
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
FAIDE	Framework for Actions for Development of ICT for the Pacific
FFA	Forum Fisheries Agency
FSM	Federated States of Micronesia
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
ICT4D	Information and Communication Technologies for Development
IGO	Inter-Governmental Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ITU	Inter-Telecommunications Union
LDC	Least Developed Country
M4D	Mobile Phones in Development
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MSG	Melanesian Spearhead Group
NDMO	National Disaster Management Office
OCO	Oceania Customs Organization
PASO	Pacific Aviation Safety Office
PCCR	Pacific Climate Change Roundtable
PCRAI	Pacific Catastrophe Risk Assessment and Financing Initiative
PIANGO	Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations
PIANZEA	Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand Electoral Administrators Network
PIC	Pacific Island Country
PICISOC	Pacific Internet Society
PICT	Pacific Island Countries and Territories
PIDF	Pacific Islands Development Forum
PIFACC	Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat – established in 1972
PITA	Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association
PNG	Papua New Guinea

PPA	Pacific Power Association
PSC	Public Service Commission
RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SOE	State-Owned Enterprise
SOPAC	South Pacific Geoscience Organization, formerly a CROP agency, later integrated into SPC
SPBEA	South Pacific Board of Educational Assessment. Formerly a CROP agency, later integrated into
SPC	Secretariat for the Pacific Community – first established in 1947 as the South Pacific Commission – now known as the Pacific Community
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, first established the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme
SPTO	South Pacific Tourism Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
SRDP	Strategy for Disaster and Climate Resilient Development in the Pacific
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNISDR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNPAN	United Nations Public Administration Network
USP	University of the South Pacific
WSIS	World Summit for the Information Society

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Graham Hassall studied history at the University of Sydney and Art Education at the University of New South Wales before obtaining a PhD in Pacific History at the Australian National University. He has held research and teaching positions at the University of Melbourne, the University of Papua New Guinea, Landegg Academy in Switzerland, the University of the South Pacific in Fiji, and the Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

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INTRODUCTION

This book offers a comparative study of the structure and operation of government in the small island states known collectively as 'the Pacific Islands'. The term 'Pacific Islands' distinguishes the countries in question from those covered by such terms as 'Pacific Rim', 'Pacific Community', 'Asia Pacific', or 'trans-Pacific' – all of which are too broad. Much writing on government and public policy in Pacific Island nations focusses on a particular country (an approach Riggs called 'idiographic') (Riggs, 2010, p. 752). However, whereas the unique identity of each Pacific society is acknowledged and given much respect, this book addresses their common elements as much as their points of distinction, for I believe that taking interest in multiple systems of government rather than any single one has the advantage of identifying broader ideas about what works better and, hopefully, why. I acknowledge that a comparative approach such as this is risky, for not all countries can be given equal treatment despite their worth as stand-alone studies. However, the 'wide-angle' approach is complemented by 'mid-range' and 'close-up' views that provide more specific instances and scenarios. The book draws on theoretic insights about public-sector management and about the idea of public policy to the extent that these help interpret how governments operate in the region.[1] Theory is 'scaffolding' required to provide mental models when we have difficulty comprehending what we think we see. But there is always the risk that we will only observe the view that the scaffolding allows, and not that which it obscures.

There are at least five 'big questions' that underlie public-sector studies: Why Government? What should governments do? What values or interests should a government promote? What should public administrators do? And how can public organisations and policies perform more efficiently? In attempting answers to these questions, the book draws on the literatures of law, history, and anthropology, in addition to those of public policy and public management, and aspires to viewing its subject matter in global rather than merely national perspective, on the basis that humanity shares a common destiny irrespective of country of origin. Another useful insight offered by theorists from Habermas to Freire suggests that successful alignment of development plans with local needs contributes to the emancipation from oppression (Freire, 1993; Habermas, 1984). This insight becomes useful when comparing the impact of government systems across time and across jurisdictions: are contemporary Pacific societies more free, or more oppressed, than in previous eras, and in what ways?

With the *modernity* brought to the Pacific by colonising missionaries and metropolitan powers, virtually all Pacific societies had their lifeworlds constrained by introduced systems of government and law, and this has resulted in the persistence of a thread of public sentiment that labels contemporary government and its laws as foreign in origin. There is a countervailing view, on the other hand, which

acknowledges the imposition of 'western' systems of government but then proceeds to focus on how the Pacific nations engage with regional, international, and global agendas. Pressures attributed to globalisation include economic competitiveness, out-migration, urbanisation, vulnerability to the effects of climate change and natural disasters, and the illicit trade in drugs, weapons, money, and people, attributed to organised crime. Regional organisations that have influenced the quality of governance within Pacific States include the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, the Pacific Community, and the Melanesian Spearhead Group. International agencies seeking to improve the quality of governance in the Pacific Island countries (PIC) include the United Nations and its many agencies, for example, UNDP, WHO, FAO, etc., the World Bank, and the IMF. There are also the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Electoral Authorities and Monitors, Transparency International, human rights monitors, media monitors, and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. Recent global agendas which have taken much of Pacific Governments' attention include the Millennium Development Goals agreed to by heads of state at the UN General Assembly in 2000, and the Sustainable Development Goals which are shaping much government policy for the period 2015–2030.

Before proceeding further, some explanation of terms is necessary in order to avoid misunderstanding as to how they are used in this book, or what they imply. The term 'traditional' refers to systems of thought and practices that are understood to have existed prior to colonisation. In some instances, 'traditional' practices have continued to the present time. Although some authors might insist that pre-colonial practices which have been modified during the colonial and post-colonial periods are more properly termed 'neo-traditional', contemporary Pacific usage is 'traditional' even where the institution or practice is a colonial-era invention, and it is used to distinguish locally derived practices from others which are 'western'. The term 'modern', conversely refers to systems of thought and practice derived from the 'west'. Some authors use the terms 'traditional' and 'modern' pejoratively, but I do not. To call a practice 'modern' does not imply that it is superior to a traditional practice it has replaced. Indeed, it is often the case that the modern condition is to be rued rather than commended. The term 'country' is often used in this book rather than 'nation' or 'state', in an endeavour to refer to a collective of land/sea and people, irrespective of whether they have sovereign or non-sovereign status. Although the independent states self-identify as 'nation-states' internationally, they also invariably self-identify with sub-national/regional identities and interests domestically. Accordingly, the book uses the term 'Pacific Island Country' throughout.

Gulrajani and Moloney's suggested (after surveying literature on developing country administration), that '… administrative studies of the global South have fractured into a small-scale, disparate, noncumulative, descriptive, and non-comparative field dominated by researchers with Northern institutional affiliations …'. 'A global public administration that moves beyond a North–South administrative dichotomy' they suggest, '… can build knowledge cumulatively through collaborative arrangements that collapse geographic, methodological, and disciplinary boundaries' (Gulrajani & Moloney, 2011, p. 78). Although that study did not include PICs, its findings felt familiar, and I hope that the quest for improved

understanding of how government functions can include datum from the Pacific. Pacific states and their governments are smaller than states elsewhere, but their size does not diminish their importance. In a small state, the effectiveness of government is as important to its people as is government in larger states. Although government in large states may be complex, the functions of government in states both large and small cover the same areas – security, revenue collection, cultivating and maintaining rule of law, and providing public goods.

One particularly useful framework is Habermas' 'lifeworld' and 'system', which suggests that a vigorous interactive relationship between society and its formal systems of rules and regulations is essential to ensure that that these rules provide not only order, but fairness. By 'lifeworld', Habermas means the 'intuitively present', the 'unquestionable' or 'unproblematic character' of everyday life, which has this quality when all actors within the lifeworld are sufficiently embedded in it as to share understandings that render explanations superfluous (Crossley & Roberts, 2004; Habermas, 1984). The model is particularly pertinent to the Pacific region, where peoples living for generations in the same village or town on an island, who share language, culture, and political economy, have had little need to interrogate each other over values and practices ingrained in their traditions and habits of daily life. Their rules were called 'custom', which Melanesian Jurist Bernard Narokobi (1989) called 'the way':

> Leaders do not make or give law. They give wise counsel of what ought to be, or be avoided. Through the institution of the meeting house … masters transmit their knowledge …. Law does not exist as a phenomenon which controls society, but as a part of cognitive knowledge of a community. (p. 30)

Melanesian communities did have, however, known patterns of rule-making (authority), rule-enforcement (power), and dispute resolution, which were not – as Chalmers and Paliwala (1984) have noted – ascribed to the 'state':

> Custom has a system of rules, but the rules are not written and are very flexible. There is no central authority such as a National Parliament to make the laws and no fixed system of courts to enforce the law. However, people obey custom and there are well established methods of settling disputes between them. They follow custom for many reasons. They may do so for fear either of shame or of being thrown out of the community or of their ancestors or of revenge. The most important reason for following custom is that it is intertwined with the way of life of the community …. (p. 7)

Modern state sovereignty diminished this sovereignty exercised by Pacific communities throughout the Pacific Islands prior to their colonisation by Europeans; and post-independence bureaucracies have further diminished their active roles in governance.

By 'system' Habermas means the rationalisation or 'structural differentiation' that brings order to events but consequently limits freedoms to some extent or other. A society may value healthcare, for instance, but its decision to allow into formal schooling only or those children who have been immunised brings order and control to a realm of action formerly unrestrained; each such new imposition of a rule by the 'system' reduces the scope of the autonomous 'taken for granted' operation of the lifeworld. In Habermas' model, such impositions are

inevitable and potentially necessary: the issue is how effectively actors in system and lifeworld communicate with each other. Giddens expresses these processes in another way. 'The dynamics of modernity', he suggests:

> […] derives from the separation of time and space and their recombination in forms which permit the precise time-space 'zoning' of social life; the dis-embedding of social systems (a phenomenon which connects closely with the factors involved in time-space separation), and the reflexive ordering and reordering of social relations in the light of continual inputs of knowledge effecting the actions of individuals and groups. (Giddens, 1990, pp. 16–17)

Contemporary democratic systems and values weave an unsteady path in Pacific societies between individual and collective worldviews and interests, with the rights, interests, and indeed responsibilities, of individuals, frequently deferring to the continuing rights, interests, and responsibilities of the ethnic/linguistic/lineage group of which that individual continues to be a member. The modern state introduced rule of law to remove arbitrary use of power – a value diametrically opposed to the highly contextualised application of law that has applied in the Pacific. In extending its sphere of authority to all individuals, the rule of law breaks the special ties that otherwise existed between individuals. It removed an elasticity that the rule of law classified as 'arbitrariness'. The rule of law handles heterogeneity in a way that custom cannot. Rule of law is viewed as separate from society, and it separates. It is 'law that rules', rather than the ruler using law. Whereas the authority of law is absolute and universal, the authority of custom is relative, contextual, and contained in bounded communities.

The intensity of these 'system and lifeworld' societal interactions over competing conceptions of public-sector institutions and authority, rule-making, and policy processes can range from lethargic, to intense, or even conflict laden. Habermas and others have thus developed a theory of *discourse ethics* based on a distinction between *strategic* and *communicative action* in quest of understanding of communication processes. In strategic action:

> […] actors are interested solely in the success, ie, the consequences of the outcomes of their actions, [and] they will try to reach their objectives by influencing their opponent's definition of the situation, and thus his decision or motives, through means by using weapons or goods, threats or enticements. (Habermas, 1990, p. 116)

Communicative action, on the other hand, is oriented towards reaching common understanding as well as achieving personal goals (Habermas, 1984).[2] Ideally, public discourse towards this end draws on shared language and reasoning, as groups and individuals pursue their strategic (i.e. personal) interest in the broader context of society's collective interests.

Drawing on the model proposed by Habermas, which envisages systems emerging from lifeworlds, this book suggests that Pacific Island societies experienced an inverted relationship in which their 'systems' of government were imposed by external powers during the colonial era rather than borne of their collective societal experience. This being the case, contemporary discursive practices that shape government and public policy in PICs can be viewed as Pacific lifeworlds engaging their 'systems' (i.e. their formal institutions of law and government) in efforts to restore – reclaim even – patterns of order more aligned to

their traditions of authority, leadership, decision-making, and dispute resolution. Therefore, contemporary development plans across the Pacific region continue to reference culture before setting out government plans. What reads as 'history' to the Western reader is the 'living present' to the Pacific Islander. As Vanuatu's National Development Plan for the period 2016–2030 explains:

> For Vanuatu, development is much more than just acquiring material wealth. The country was founded on Melanesian values of respect, harmony, unity and forgiveness. These values shape our cultural heritage, which is the country's strength. They are expressed through our oral traditions, languages, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, traditional knowledge, and our deep connections with our ancestors, land and place, as well as the skills to be productive with our natural resources. Our development must be firmly anchored to these values that hold our society together. (Government of Vanuatu, 2016, p. 3)

In the case of Solomon Islands, a vision statement of 2005:

> The Solomon Islands *will be a nation that is proud of its religious and diverse cultural heritage, progressive in its endeavors, robust in its economy and political leadership and enjoying social justice, peace and harmony*. (Solomon Islands, 2005)

Similar sentiments are expressed in the planning documents and vision statements across the Pacific.

Implicit in study of *government* is the study of *governance*. The distinction between these two terms is subtle, but important. The term *government* has multiple meanings, referring in narrow context to the majority group of members of the legislature who hold executive power, and referring in broader context to the departments of health, education, justice, immigration, public works, etc., that make up the public sector (the term used in this book to refer to bureaucracy). People hold the elected 'government' (i.e. the executive branch) responsible for the way in which public sector departments operate and for the results they achieve. This is the notion of responsible democratic government: elected leaders are expected to lead and manage public service employees on behalf of 'the people' and in pursuit of the 'public interest'. 'Government' thus refers to those institutions and processes constitutionally recognised as possessing the legal right, and the political and administrative powers, to make decisions about a nation's political and economic life, and to implement them.

The World Bank has defined governance as 'the exercise of political power to manage a nation's affairs' and refers to the efficient use of resources – so it is a very economically oriented approach to governance. The Bank definition implies that a country's essential features of a system of governance are the type of political regime; the processes by which authority is exercised in the management of the country's economic and social resources; and the capacity of government to design, formulate, and implement policies and discharge functions.

The United Nations offers a more expansive definition of governance as comprising:

> […] the rule of law, effective state institutions, transparency and accountability in the management of public affairs, respect for human rights, and the meaningful participation of all citizens in the political processes of their countries and in decisions affective their lives. (U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan)

This is a useful definition. Implicit in it is the distinction between government and governance. Government refers to the authority of the state, and governance refers to partnerships that include the state, society, and economy. The term *governance* is more expansive as it encapsulates the interest of civil society, including religious communities, as well as businesses, cultural organisations, etc. – all of which are vitally concerned about the well-being of society and about government's policy choices.

Kooiman (2003) describes governance as:

> […] the totality of interactions, in which public as well as private actors participate, aimed at solving societal problems or creating societal opportunities; attending to the institutions as contexts for these governing interactions; and establishing a normative foundation for all those activities.

In this definition, governance creates opportunities or solves problems. You govern in order to create opportunities. We can work towards establishing ideal conditions of governance concerning, for instance, how we would like members of parliament to speak with each other, how we would like public servants to speak with citizens. *Interactions* consist of dialogue, whether rudimentary or sophisticated, and the normative intent of this model implies that societies continually seek improvement. The quality of governance depends on the quality of interactions between the state, the civil society, and the market, rather than on the decisions of the state alone. The *public sphere*, to the extent that it exists in the Pacific context, was in each village or kin-group. In the modern period – because current problems transcend the scope of those institutions – this public sphere in which public opinion is formed through engagement and interaction requires greater responsive from civil societies and their constituents, as well as greater receptivity to non-state input by small island governments. These changes in turn require the opening up new communicative channels and new decision processes. Some examples of innovative spaces that allow for civil society participation are national economic summits, parliamentary and departmental committee hearings and other forms of intervention, and public participation in budget dialogue and preparation. But all too often such interactions are limited – as is also happening elsewhere – to bureaucrats, politicians, advisors, and consultants (Crossley & Roberts, 2004, pp. 305–306). Effective systems of government and policy-making depend on the adequacy of arrangements constituted from the lifeworld's interactions with the holders of power and authority. Habermas (1996) describes the ideal 'communicative action' required of interaction between citizens in the lifeworld and the formal systems of law and administration established to regulate affairs amongst them. Thinking of governance as a set of relations between state, economy, and people provides a systematic view of how power is distributed and exercised. Political office holders certainly possess considerable power and responsibility, but private-sector leaders also have power, as do 'the people'. Sciulli (1988) refers to this influence of non-state voices on state ordering as 'societal constitutionalism'.

The term *governance* refers to processes undertaken to deliver government but also implies a 'de-centering of the state' such that non-state actors play

increasingly influential roles in policy-making, in responsibility for implementation, and even in participation in monitoring and assessment. Ironically, Pacific societies operated governance arrangements prior to the imposition of colonial rule. For many, the state was already 'de-centred', and sovereignty was exercised at community level. At an abstract level, governance refers more to the 'way affairs are conducted' than to specific institutions such as the parliament, or the courts. It refers to the *quality* of leadership and management in society generally. It is vitally concerned with institutions, but more specifically, it is interested in ensuring that institutions provide adequate incentive structures to reward socially beneficial activity and to discourage the opposite.

The practice of governance has changed in recent decades in at least four important ways. Firstly, from 'command, administration, management and control of societal institutions and spheres' to a 'steering' through the use of more inclusive processes of decision-making and implementation (Van Kersbergen & Van Waarden, 2004, p. 2.); secondly towards more efficient and effective performance inspired by results obtained in the private sector; thirdly, towards a 'good governance' agenda that emphasises transparency and accountability; and fourthly, towards 'multi-level governance', with some responsibilities transferring towards supra-national and trans-national institutions and networks and some transferring to local level.

This paradigmatic shift in relations between these two axes of power – the one that links state actors from the highest authority down to local-level government – and the one that has witnessed the transformation of comparatively docile subjects into interactive citizens (and the frequent inability of these two foci of influence to understand each other) has resulted in tension and conflict in the PICs as much as in other parts of the world. The inability of states to treat their citizens with the regard that they have desired, or to generate the levels of economic growth and development they have anticipated, has fuelled an increased resentment at the unsupervised or overbearing use of public power, and has generated greater levels of public will to call various state agencies to account for the degree of fairness, appropriateness, and effectiveness of their actions.

Governance implies a *complex* set of *relations* between institutions and peoples as they meet their needs, mediate their differences, resolve their conflicts, and create opportunities. A single intervention may have multiple ramifications. Programmes of 'Comprehensive Reform', for instance, which have been implemented at the urging of such international agencies as the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank have had far greater impacts on Pacific states than have efforts to simply bring the cost of government into closer alignment with budget capacities. UNDP's (1997) definition of governance as '… the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels' and as comprising '… the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences' (p. 1) highlights the quality of interaction between the public and the private spheres, and the need for both problem solving and opportunity creation. It alludes also to the notion of 'responsive' governance. Emphasis on these qualities follows the presumption

that good governance improves the pace of human development. An associated presumption is that states exist to promote the welfare and progress of their citizens rather than that of their leaders.

The performance of Pacific Island states is under scrutiny following significant episodes of instability in the region at the turn of the century. Some have feared that 'failed states' might emerge similar to those on the African continent (Lambach, 2004) and refer to an 'arc of instability' (Reilly, 2000, 2004). The Asian Development Bank refers to Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea as 'fragile' (Martinez-Vazquez, 2011). Development agencies routinely issue 'bleak' prognoses, such as AusAID (2006):

> The Pacific island countries, over the last two decades have performed poorly. The region suffers from high unemployment and joblessness, and governments are failing to meet the expectations of their citizens. Several countries suffer from social or political instability, or serious crime. Some face daunting health or environmental challenges. Without an upturn in economic growth, the future for these countries is as best uncertain and at worst bleak.

In this view, the Pacific Islands is a region of poor, oppressed, marginalised societies, run by incompetent and corrupt leaders who are keeping the masses ignorant whilst accumulating public rents. Much of the blame for Pacific states' apparent economic, political, and social stagnation is attributed to a 'leadership deficit' and there is increasing demand for improved leadership in both the public and private sectors (Lawson, 1999; Madraiwiwi, 2007; Masi, 2005; Narsey, 2007; Sanga & Walker, 2005; Tuimaleali'ifano, 1998).

But the Pacific need not be seen this way. The Pacific Islands is a region full of promise, youth, and emerging professionalism, successfully connected to the global economy and absorbed by global politics. Both frames exist; it's just a matter of what you want to focus on, and why. The task in the context of the PICs is to transform *fragile* states into smart, *intelligent* states – where *intelligent* implies the ability to handle knowledge, to learn from experience, and alter ineffective practices (Schuyt et al., 2007). Until mid-twentieth century, the Pacific countries were considered as remote and slow-moving, accessible only by long journeys by boat or plane, and by telegram more than by telephone or facsimile – let alone internet. Now, they are more accurately described as small island developing states connected globally, working at responding intelligently within their rapidly evolving environments, despite such 'vulnerabilities' as small land size, natural resources, and domestic markets, and their isolation from the world's major capital and goods markets. Such tiny states as the Republic of Palau, the Kingdom of Tonga, and the Republic of Vanuatu have demonstrated their capacity as independent states – bearing in mind that this 'independence' includes extensive cooperation with international development agencies. Even the largest of the Pacific countries, Papua New Guinea, with a population of approximately 8 million, remains smaller than many of the world's capital cities, and continues to integrate significant levels of development assistance into government operations.[3]

The Pacific governance agenda focusses on improving human development outcomes and also includes improving the performance of parliament in both its legislative and its executive oversight functions, enhancing the accountability

of the executive branch of government, enhancing the transparency with which government decisions and appointments are made, strengthening the rule of law by ensuring support for improvement of judicial services, attending to adequate protections of human rights, promoting human rights education; improving the democratic quality of electoral systems whilst minimising the disruptive effect of political activities on state services, and promoting and protecting the role of the media as an active agent of civil society. Other challenges include clarifying the public will (due to the nature of political discourse, and particularly the model in Western democracies of 'opposing parties'); maintaining judicial independence; and improving relations between states in federations and between the central and provincial administrations in unitary states. There are also challenges for constitutional dialogue, such as re-examining the place of custom and traditional authority in government systems, and there is the increasingly important challenge of how best to interact with international organisations and global public policy networks. The so-called 'wicked' and 'trans-boundary' problems that affecting health, food, land ownership, water, energy, and so many other aspects of human security, have national dimensions, but in the global era system boundaries are those of the planet rather than of individual nations.

There are thus so many important questions to be addressed: are the public institutions in PICs well suited to the challenges of small states in the global era? Have they developed public values that adequately express traditional norms as well as contemporary ones? Do they have adequate mechanisms for intergovernmental relations at sub- and supra-national levels? Will their economies sustain current and future generations? Are their policy settings driven by domestic needs and aspirations, or are they mere replicas of generic policy settings from other lands? Is justice attainable by small states in the global order as currently constituted?

There certainly are immense challenges to social, economic, and political stability: it is the quality of response that matters. The Pacific states will remain viable to the extent that they meet the needs and aspirations of their rising generations: better provision of services, solutions for such urgent matters as urban growth and flight of human capital, stability in government, transparency, and openness of government decision-making and action, and greater freedom of expression. If we take as axiomatic that humanity's purpose is to transform the conditions of its existence rather than simply submit to them; and that ignorance results in oppression whereas education leads to emancipation, government can be viewed as a technology for societal transformation. This collective effort requires public modes of discourse that result in agreed agendas for action. Failure to achieve this leads to the ineffectiveness and ultimately to the failure of public values and public institutions.

Given the considerations set out above, this examination of the structure and operation of the public sector across the Pacific explores how to set out evidence as to how public policy is constructed, implemented, evaluated, and improved. In attempting this, it examines the roles of political actors and parliament, the public sector, development agencies, and other stakeholders. It examines dialogue processes, drawing on government annual reports, vision statements, and strategic plans; donor and development agency reports; academic studies; media coverage; and practitioner reflections.

To the greatest extent possible, I have endeavoured to assist the reader by drawing on official literature which is less accessible and thus most beneficial to the reader. Each type of report has its value: government reports often focus on task accountability; donor reports seek efficiency and effectiveness; practitioners can learn from each other's experience; press reports are often sensationalist but do assist with highlighting problems; whilst academic literature looks for over-arching theory. Some of the observations made in this book also draw from my own notes 'from the field' – seminars and conferences, briefings, consultancies, and interviews (as not all views candidly expressed are committed to paper). The important topic of digital government, or eGovernment, is not given full extensive coverage in this book as it has recently been written about in *Achieving Sustainable E-Government in Pacific Island States* (Cullen & Hassall, 2017).

With the foregoing commentary in mind, the book proceeds in three chapters. 'Pacific Islands Lifeworlds' introduces the geographic, social, economic, and political contexts of the Pacific and its three sub-regions: Melanesia, Polynesia, and Micronesia. The second chapter lays out the government systems as they have evolved through periods of colonisation and independence. This includes consideration of constitutional frameworks, the structure and operation of executive, legislative and judicial powers, and identification of such persistent problems of government in the region as formation and stability of the executive, legislative functioning, the allocation of vertical and horizontal bureaucratic scope, and ethics and accountability.

The third and final chapter of the book examines policy-making in regional, national, and global context. It analyses policy processes, including issues of multi-level governance (Pacific regionalism and sub-regionalism, and local government), the role of development partners and agencies, policy transfer and policy coherence, capacity development and public-sector leadership, civil society engagement, communication and transparency, and the perennial challenges of implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and policy review. The chapter then reviews the main policy problems in the region – both urban and rural: basic service provision and human security, including health, education, transport, communications, energy, housing, poverty reduction, disaster reduction, climate change mitigation, and economic development. An underlying theme to this section is the slow emergence of the regulatory state and the states' continued direct involvement in markets. A further section examines the position of small states in the global era. It reviews the impact of globalisation on small states, and their engagement with international/global organisations – principally the United Nations and World Bank/IMF but also global trade regimes. The book concludes by mapping three potential futures for the Pacific: a 'status quo' option, in which current government structures and processes continue 'as is'; a 'deterioration' option, in which the quality of government in a number of Pacific states declines drastically through state capture by elite interests, and a 'transformation' option, in which best practices are adopted and government focusses on the generation of public goods. Whereas the third option is most desired, it is also the hardest of the three to pursue, and so the book concludes on a partially optimistic but otherwise cautionary note.

NOTES

1. Pataki-Schweizer (1988, p. 407) reported having seen '... too many research efforts fall short of informing about the situation from which they were derived, and certainly far too many attempts at complex paradigms ineffectually applied to real socio-political problems .... Whatever the approach, three principles appear to hold for these exercises: (a) exegesis of behaviour is not explication of its data; (b) explication of data, if achieved without too heavy a mythological overburden, is not explanation; and (c) explanation of data, where effected, does not provide direct application or utility'.
2. There are two steps to Habermas' ideal discourse model: (a) having all parties agree that the rules of engagement are fair and (b) having the rules of engagement being used properly to derive fair outcomes.
3. A good overview of the Southwest Pacific is provided in Sillitoe (2000).

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CHAPTER 1

PACIFIC ISLANDS LIFEWORLDS

There are three major cultural regions across the Pacific Islands, with a combined population of 10 million: the *Polynesians* of the Eastern Pacific (American Samoa, the Cook Islands, French Polynesia, Niue, Pitcairn Island, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Wallis and Futuna); the *Micronesians* of the North Pacific (Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, the Northern Marianas, and Palau); and the *Melanesians* of the Southwest Pacific (Fiji, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu).[1] Ancient Polynesian societies including Samoa, Tonga, and Hawaii, whilst far greater in number than ancient Melanesian societies to the west, were nevertheless constrained in size by island economies of scale, and the distances by sea between each. In Melanesia, where larger islands exist, the rugged physical environment constrained extended inter-ethnic contact and communication and resulted in patterns of conflict with close rather than distant neighbours (Rodman & Cooper, 1979).[2] The only land border between states in the Pacific Islands is that between Papua New Guinea and Indonesia, with the remainder being maritime boundaries.

With exceptions, Pacific societies were led by chiefs and were patriarchal. Some Melanesian societies developed egalitarian relations in which any person of proven capacity could seek chiefly status. On the northern islands of Vanuatu, such as Pentecost, males achieve 'grades' through ritualised resource accumulation and distribution. In Polynesia, in contrast, hierarchically organised societies were divisible into noble and commoner families. Such societal attributes continue to affect the structure and operation of government at the present time.

Although some of the disparate peoples spread across these Pacific Islands operated complex traditional trade routes, it is only in comparatively recent times have they been brought together as states that share a common leadership and common system of government. There are now some 22 independent and dependent countries, which are referred to as 'Pacific Island Countries' (PICs for short).

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Many are archipelagos – clusters of islands which number in the thousands and on which an even larger number of distinct cultures and languages exist. And much of this 'bringing together' was without the peoples' consent. Their contemporary territorial boundaries, systems of government, major economic partnerships, and political alignments (as described in more detail below) were imposed by one or other hegemonic power: England, Spain, Germany, Japan, Australia, France, USA, and New Zealand.

This is thus a study of the public sector in societies that identify as indigenous, which on the basis of their experience as formerly subject peoples hold in tension some reservations about international organisations, initiatives, and standards, on the one hand, and an acknowledgement of the benefits of acceptance and participation, on the other – sometimes amounting to a 'cruel choice' (Goulet, 1992, 1975). The populations and land size of these countries and territories are set out in Table 1.[3]

Of the 22 territories, 14 enjoy full national sovereignty and 10 have limited sovereignty or remain dependencies of a metropolitan power. Pitcairn, for instance, belongs to Great Britain; New Caledonia, French Polynesia, and Wallis and Futuna are overseas territories of France; American Samoa, Guam, and the

Table 1. PIC population, land and EEZ sizes

Region/Country or Territory	Most Recent Census	Population Count at Last Census	Land Area (km^2)	Exclusive Economic Zone[a]
Melanesia			540,030	
Fiji	2007	837,271	18,333	1,290,000
New Caledonia	2014	268,767	18,576	1,740,000
Papua New Guinea	2011	7,059,653	462,840	1,617,917
Solomon Islands	2009	515,870	28,230	1,340,000
Vanuatu	2009	234,023	12,281	680,000
Micronesia			3,156	
Federated States of Micronesia	2010	102,843	701	2,978,000
Guam	2010	159,358	541	218,000
Kiribati	2015(p)	109,693	811	3,550,000
Marshall Islands	2011	53,158	181	2,131,000
Nauru	2011	10,084	21	320,000
Northern Mariana Islands	2010	53,883	457	1,823,000
Palau	2015(p)	17,661	444	629,000
Polynesia			8,126	
American Samoa	2010	55,519	199	390,000
Cook Islands	2011	14,974	237	1,830,000
French Polynesia	2012	268,270	3,521	5,030,000
Niue	2011	1,611	259	390,000
Pitcairn Islands	2012	57	47	759,287
Samoa	2011	187,820	2,934	120,000
Tokelau	2011	1,411	12	290,000
Tonga	2011	103,252	749	700,000
Tuvalu	2012	10,782	26	900,000
Wallis and Futuna	2013	12,197	142	300,000
Total		10,078,157	551,312	

[a]http://www.marineregions.org/about.php.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are administered by the USA; and Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau are freely associated states of New Zealand. This leaves just 12 PICs with sovereign status and voting rights in international organisations: Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

1. LAND AND SEA

The Pacific Ocean has long been characterised by Western observers as a physical barrier, responsible for the remoteness of the small islands scattered across it, but is perceived by Pacific peoples as the means of connection. Contemporary leaders describe their countries as 'Large Ocean' rather than 'Small Island' states, and regional dialogue is undertaken under the banner of the 'Blue Economy'. The Pacific Ocean is a traditional source of sustenance, and sailing upon it the main means of short as well as long-distance transport. Traditional inter-group trade was by sea rather than land, and marine resources continue to promise some of the best economic returns. For many PICs, income from the ocean's resources is greater than that from land-based activities. Apart from the economic benefits from exploitation of the Ocean's resources, the PICs value their role as stewards of an ocean which covers a third of the Earth's surface, with a number establishing marine protected areas (Fig. 1).

1.1. Land

Scattered across the Pacific Ocean are some of the smallest of the world's nation-states and territories, including the islands of Tokelau 26 (12 km^2), Nauru (21 km^2), and Tuvalu (26 km^2). Ten additional countries have landmasses of between 199 km^2 (American Samoa) and 3,521 km^2 (French Polynesia). The other Micronesian states – notably Kiribati but also the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, and Tuvalu – also comprise chains of islands, whose territorial waters are far more expansive than their landmasses. The landmasses of the five Melanesian states, although small by comparison globally, are nonetheless the largest in the Pacific, commencing with Vanuatu (12,281 km^2), then Fiji (18,333 km^2), New Caledonia (18,576), Solomon Islands (28,230), and largest of all, Papua New Guinea (462,840 km^2).

Consider the impact of Pacific Islands' geography on the structure and conduct of government: establishment of government authority and delivery of public services across islands is far more challenging than is the case on contiguous land. It is difficult to provide energy, schooling, and health services to all of a country's citizens on an equitable basis. Provision on larger islands which may host the administrative and commercial centre and which are generally home to a majority of the population is one matter; but government is expected to provide similar standards of service to each additional island, irrespective of how small or how remote. In larger countries, these services might be established and maintained by road and

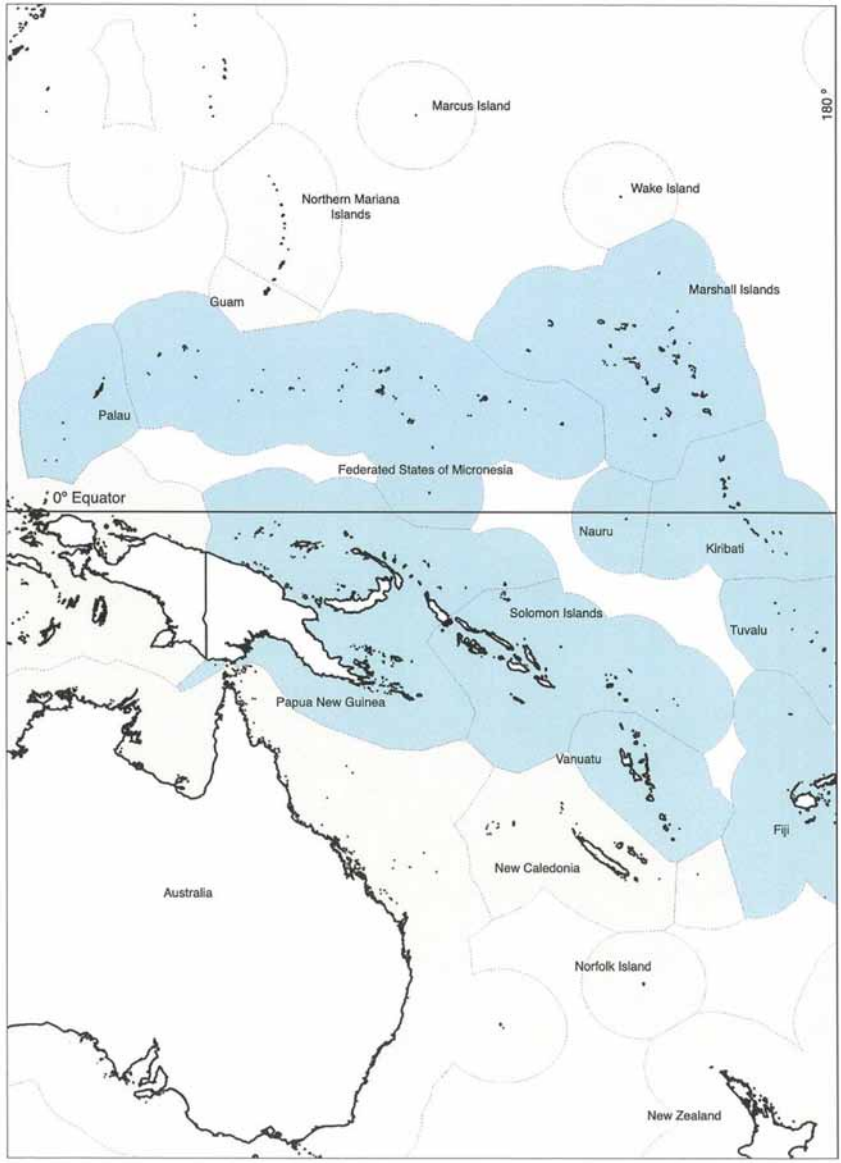

Fig. 1. Pacific Island Country Exclusive Economic Zones (Continue)

rail, and even by air; but in Pacific Island context delivery often depends on sea transportation and in some situations on light aircraft. The hurdles to efficient and effective delivery of government services rapidly become evident.

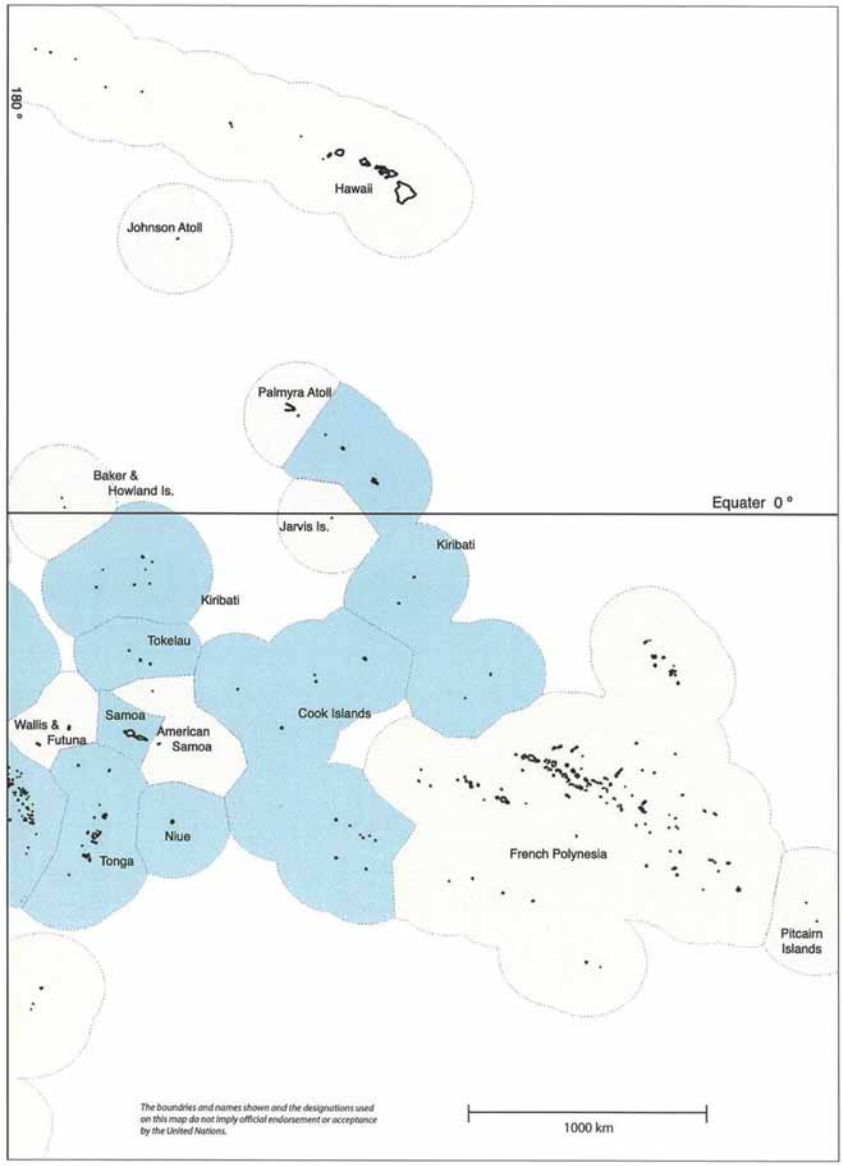

Fig. 1.

Some Pacific Islands sit atop volcanic formations. Those include low-lying 'coral cays' as well as more mountainous formations. All PICs are subject to climate change, but those which are low-lying, such as Tokelau, Tuvalu, Kiribati,

and the Marshall Islands, are far more vulnerable to sea-level rise than are islands in Melanesia. There are active volcanoes throughout the region, and earthquakes claim lives and property. Volcanic activity causes temporary disruption in some instances and permanent relocation in others. In Papua New Guinea the 1994 Mount Tavurvur eruption required evacuation of Rabaul, and in 2018 the people of Manam Island had to be evacuated due to the eruption of Manam volcano. Also, in 2018, the entire population of Ambae, in Vanuatu, required long-term resettlement due to volcanic eruption. The prevalence of such intense natural vulnerabilities means that disaster risk reduction is now mainstreamed in most PIC development plans.

The archipelagic nature of the Pacific Islands has resulted in the separate evolution of relatively small-scale societies and this has hindered expansion of national sentiments and aspirations.[4] Pacific societies have dual identities through the distinctiveness of their individual cultures on the one hand, and the commonality of their circumstances on the other hand. The large number of islands, when combined with their small physical size, has been a primary influence on the creation of ethnic identity. The Marshall Islands, for instance, consists of two archipelagic chains of 30 atolls and 1,152 islands, with the majority of the population of approximately 50,000 concentrated on Majuro and Kwajalein atolls. Palau is a group of 200 islands in western Micronesia, of which just 8 are inhabited.

1.1.1. Customary Ownership

Colonial rule did not necessarily result in removal of lands from their traditional owners, who were more often a collective rather than an individual. The case of Tonga is unique inasmuch as the country's land continues to be owned by the Monarch, and administered on the Monarch's behalf by 33 Nobles, who allocate each adult male one urban and one rural allotment.[5] In contemporary times the issue of 'customary ownership' divides those who value a continued sovereign relationship between people and their land, and those who believe it hinders economic development and advocate more privatisation. Land ownership and usage rights affects government decision-making across the Pacific, since the small amount of freehold land and popular resistance to efforts to acquire land through 'eminent domain' (i.e. compulsory acquisition by government for public purposes) means that government authorities often have to lease land for airports, harbours, and even entire urban areas (in the case of Port Moresby) in order to deliver the services expected by contemporary societies. Many current conflicts between people and government in PICs concern the terms agreed for land use.

1.2. Sea

The sea is more extensive than the land in all PICs, and in 2012, the Pacific leaders suggested in their 43rd joint communiqué that the islands be termed 'Large Ocean Island States' rather than 'Small Island Developing States' (Pacific Islands Forum, 2012). Each nation has rights to its foreshore, continental shelf, and exclusive

economic zone (200 nautical miles from shore), beyond which are 'international waters'. Collectively, they add to 550,000 km^2 of land[6] in 165 million km^2 Pacific Ocean. Obviously, the more scattered a nation's islands, the larger its jurisdiction over the ocean, and this helps to explain the motivation behind several sovereign disputes between Pacific countries over possession of far flung reefs and rocky outcrops: France and Vanuatu dispute sovereignty over Matthew (Umaenupne) and Hunter (Umaeneag) Islands between Vanuatu and New Caledonia; Manihiki Plateau is disputed between Tokelau and Cook Islands;[7] and Tonga claims sovereignty over North and South Minerva Reefs (Teleki Tokelau and Teleki Tonga) which lie within 200 km of Fiji (Schofield, 2010).

Traditional exploitation of the sea for fish, and coasts and estuaries for other seafood from shellfish to seaweed, is still important to coastal peoples, whether for personal consumption or for sale. However, the harvesting of marine resources from coastal areas is threatened by such pressures as urbanisation, tourism, and climate change. Large-scale fishing has grown in significance. It contributes substantial revenues to national economies, but also drives much policy concerning monitoring and verification of catch-size and value, fishing vessel licencing, and marine conservation. The importance of marine resources to the well-being of Pacific societies meant that PICs engaged actively in development of the Law of the Sea, which articulates the ownership of each country's continental shelf and exclusive economic zone.

1.2.1. Minerals

Scientific exploration of the seabed has identified mineral deposits, and Papua New Guinea is amongst the countries which have issued exploratory licences. In 2012, the Cook Islands established a Seabed Minerals Authority:

> […] to develop and mature the Seabed Minerals (SBM) sector of the Cook Islands in order to maximise the benefit of our national seabed minerals resources for the Cook Islands people and our investment and development partners, whilst also taking into account social and environmental considerations.[8]

Cook Islands EEZ is estimated to contain one-quarter of the world's reserves of manganese nodules (Petterson & Tawake, 2019). Opinion on seabed mining is divided, however, on two main grounds: first a concern at the environmental impact, which is not well understood, whilst a second concern is economic, based on doubts as to whether the minerals are in sufficient quantities to be extracted profitably.

1.2.2. Climate Change and Sea-Level Rise

In the late twentieth century some Pacific communities began to experience sea-level rise, commencing with Papua New Guinea's Carteret Islands and the low-lying islands of Kiribati, Tuvalu, and the Marshall Islands. Sea-level rise is not the only phenomena associated with climate change, as the islands are experiencing ever stronger and more frequent cyclones, such as those that have visited

Solomon Islands, Niue, Vanuatu, Yap, and Fiji, in recent years. The risks and impacts of climate change are altering policy behaviour. They now occupy a central position in development planning and development financing, and in some cases are regarded as sovereign risk – risk, that is, to the exodus of populations through 'climate migration' and ultimately, to the very existence of peoples as sovereign nations (Connell, 2017).

2. PEOPLE AND CULTURE

2.1. Demographics

The Pacific includes some of the smallest human communities to be found anywhere on the planet. The British Crown colony of Pitcairn, which is governed by the High Commissioner in New Zealand, has a population under 100. Tokelau, which transferred from the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony into New Zealand administration in 1925 and remains a non-self-governing territory, has a population of some 2,000, administered by the local councils (Taupulega) of Nukunomu, Fakaofo, and Atafu, under a New Zealand-appointed administrator. The small size of populations has stirred debate about how large a population, territory, and economy need be, to maintain sovereign independence – or at least to be self-governing. This subject was discussed when the Ellice Islands separated from the Gilbert Islands to become the nation of Tuvalu; when the Republic of Nauru faced bankruptcy; and when the people of Tokelau were asked at referendum whether they preferred to remain in Free Association with New Zealand or to become an independent nation. Although the people of Bougainville voted overwhelmingly in favour of independence from Papua New Guinea (98%) in a referendum held in late 2019, the results are 'non-binding', and a final decision rests with the national parliament.

Although population growth is high in a majority of Pacific states, the projected increased in the region's population from 10 million at the current time to 18 million by 2050 does not necessarily improve prospects for greater social and economic development (Table 2). Pacific populations are youthful and have high rates of growth and rapid urban drift, and these three factors imply that these expanding populations require ever-larger health and education systems, as well as employment, in the context of economies that are not expected to grow at commensurate rates. Take Solomon Islands as an example: some 900 islands in the southwest Pacific, of which just six contain the majority of the population currently estimated at 650,000 and growing at 3% yearly, whose younger members gravitate to Honiara on Guadalcanal to compete for an insufficient number of jobs. By 2020, the Solomon Islands together with the great majority of Pacific states will have larger populations but they will not necessarily generate the resources to provide improved living conditions.

Whereas much concern has been expressed about the 'out-migration' of talent from Pacific Islands to metropolitan countries, there is also much 'flow' to and from neighbouring countries, which involves talent returning home with the benefit of international experience (Marsters, Lewis, & Friesen, 2006).