

1

Introduction: Interconnected and multifaceted security

*We must concentrate not merely on the negative expulsion of war, but
on the positive affirmation of peace.*

Martin Luther King

The few months I spent in the United States in 2018 as a senior Fulbright scholar at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), Duke and Georgetown reinforced in my mind some of the contradictory manifestations of security in our contemporary era. Here was a country so militarily, politically and economically powerful, yet so insecure and paranoid about its own sense of identity, being and security. Here was a country that prided itself in being a hub of multiculturalism, yet there was so much division, tension and anxiety. Here was a country that marketed itself as the richest in the world, where the ‘American dream’ was a divine destiny, yet I witnessed so much poverty, homelessness and economic insecurity as I wandered the streets of Los Angeles and other major US cities.

This situation of contested narratives of security reflects the philosophical backdrop to this book. An experience of ‘security’ in one context may be the basis for ‘insecurity’ in another. Contending notions of security define the shifting prisms through which we socially construct our lived experiences and the dramatically changing world around us.

The concept of security is often contested, given the different normative and empirical approaches as well as the different conceptual emphasis used by scholars (Baldwin, 1997). The normative differences can be a result of varying methodologies used and competing political, gender and cultural assumptions as well as different ideological outlooks, which may colour how security is conceptualised in everyday life or operationalised in policies (McLeod, 2015). The same can be said of Pacific security, where discussions have been wide-ranging with different authors emphasising different discourses and priority areas. One of the latest Pacific regional security agreements, the Boe Declaration on regional security endorsed by the Pacific leaders in September 2018, emphasised the primacy of climate change as ‘the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and well-being of the peoples of the Pacific’ (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2018: 10). Others see political security and conflict as central issues that need greater focus, given some cases of instability in some Pacific countries in the past (for instance, see Henderson & Watson, 2005). The point is that while the selective emphasis may appear to help desegregate and simplify issues, it tends to prioritise and privilege some approaches while undermining the significance of some. At the same time, it has the potential to conceal the social synergies and historical connections between issues.

This book attempts to contribute to discussions on Pacific security using the analytical eclecticism approach, which selectively recombines different strands of discourses and focuses on connecting abstract theorisation with applied analysis and policies (Sils & Katzenstein, 2010). Within this broad parameter, the book weaves together different discourses in an interdisciplinary way to examine various dimensions of security and their connecting synergies, including their policy implications. The use of multiple prisms could help in enriching our understanding of the complex interconnections between the different aspects of Pacific security, some of which are more visible and some of which are more subtle. Each aspect, whether, political, economic, sociocultural, environmental or psychological, is interconnected in both manifest and latent ways. In doing so, the book attempts to provide a critique of some paradigms often used in analysis of Pacific security and raises questions about their reliability in the context of a fast-changing and complex region. In this regard, the book deliberately sets out to combine both theoretical discourse and empirical analysis of case studies. The first three chapters are heavily conceptual and attempt to unpack some of the philosophical assumptions and sociological debates about the nature of security at the

global and regional spheres, which are often overlooked, and these are followed by three empirical chapters that draw their conceptual narratives from the theoretical discussions.

The book does not in any way claim to provide definitive answers to the myriad of security questions in the Pacific but rather to raise some critical questions about some of the existing security assumptions and discourses and how they are articulated and operationalised in the context of competing paradigms and contested methodologies. While the use of multiple conceptual prisms provides us with a broader picture of unfolding realities, the use of comparative case studies (Fiji, Tonga and Solomon Islands) is equally important to enable us to understand the unique historical experiences of Pacific Island Countries (PICs). The Pacific is not a homogeneous and generic entity, which is easily generalisable, but consists of diverse countries and communities that have undergone different forms of security experiences that have influenced their political, social and economic developments.

Context and approach

The notion of security is multifaceted and is constructed differently in varying contexts, depending on the theoretical, ideological, cultural and political prisms deployed to make sense of particular circumstances (Brooks, 2010). The questions of what constitutes a security problem, what is a risky situation, what and who poses threat to our lives, have been part of humanity's self-exploratory journey since time immemorial as we construct and adapt our identities and define our social boundaries. As globalisation incorporates disparate societies into a collective hegemonic embrace, security becomes fundamentally ethical in nature as we attempt to make sense of the diverse manifestations of threat at different levels—global, regional, national and local (Burke, Lee-Koo & McDonald, 2016). Many of these security issues will continue to haunt humanity in the future as long as the basic causes are insufficiently addressed or even ignored.

Threats posed by terrorism, climate change, socioeconomic inequality, political marginalisation, hunger, racism, environmental degradation, war, crime, violence, poverty and gender discrimination are not isolated phenomena with distant roots but are bred by the very conditions of which we are an integral part. Furthermore, they are manifestly or latently

interconnected in complex ways and manifest themselves in different degrees (Xuetong, 2009). They represent in multiple ways humanity's social tendency to dominate, accumulate, appropriate and transform at the cost of others. Competition over resources, grabs for power and a desire for influence have left many threatened by powerlessness, marginalisation and oppression, in turn often creating a chain reaction of resistance and counter-resistance. Many security issues, such as poverty, terrorism and climate change, are 'glocal', meaning that they manifest themselves locally while having a global character and impact. This is indeed a challenge of significant proportions. How can these security issues be addressed simultaneously at the local and global levels to ensure a reasonable, sustainable and effective way of containing them without further contributing to their escalation? This book is a modest attempt to explore some of these issues. However, to avoid being swallowed up by the huge chorus of security narratives, the book focuses on selected security issues in the Pacific and how they articulate themselves uniquely in different island countries.

When American sociologist C. Wright Mills coined the term 'sociological imagination', he was referring to how humans, as agents of social consciousness and transformation, are able to expand their analytical faculty to connect and make sense of seemingly disparate issues, whether local or global, in a coherent and meaningful way (Mills, 1959). With this idea of interconnectedness and encompassment in mind, this book is an attempt to make sense of the complex relationships between various aspects of security at the global, regional and local levels, focusing on the PICs, in particular Fiji, Tonga and Solomon Islands, as case studies. In a broad way, the conceptual narrative used to capture this diversity is 'analytical eclecticism', which refers to consciously addressing and selectively recombining the theoretical and applied approaches of different theoretical schools to understand the multidimensional and complex issues related to security in different situations (Suh, Katzenstein & Carson, 2004). Due to the multifarious nature of security, the idea is to move away from the parochial obsession with deploying a single theoretical position to narrowly frame a multilayered and shifting phenomenon such as security to embracing a more multidimensional approach that allows for theoretical flexibility and adaptation. The singular approach tends to privilege particular ideological and analytical narratives over others and often leaves gaps in analysis. Different conceptual prisms such as the securitisation theory, postcolonial discourse, human security,

constructivism, realism and liberalism, to name some, have something to offer, although some more vigorously and inspiringly than others. Theories are not meant to impose a near-divine blueprint for constructing social reality, but rather they need to be treated as dispensable tools to help illuminate one's path in the exploratory journey towards enhancement of knowledge. Thus the use of the analytical eclecticism approach in the book is really an acknowledgement of the multiple ways in which one can make critical discursive inroads into the issue of security without having to be limited by the confinements of singular theoretical dogma.

As a generic concept, security has universal relevance, but as a social construct it manifests itself differently when seen through different political, ideological or cultural lenses. We examine this in more detail in Chapter 2 when we analyse some of the contending discourses on security and their assumptions. There is a natural tendency to define security parochially in relation to threat to one's immediate social environment and thereby ignore other levels of threat deemed remote and therefore irrelevant, such as the global aspects. This is understandable given the way security is intimately linked to people's collective sentiments, identity as a group, shared notion of nationalism and sense of being and belonging. We can no longer ignore the fact that globalisation has connected the world in diverse ways; therefore societies that once saw themselves as 'isolated' are now drawn into the whirlpool of neoliberal values, overwhelmed by the hegemonic effects of Hollywood imagery, absorbed into unhealthy cravings for McDonalds and Coca Cola, or captured by the culturally transformative addiction of cyber-technology (Stiglitz, 2002). Pacific societies are no exceptions and, as part of these complex changes, their security challenges also go through a process of transformation and rearticulation (Lockwood, 2003).

Challenges in defining security

In everyday use, the term security seems to be quite straightforward and easily understood because it relates to people's sense of safety and well-being. However, it becomes more complex as we probe more deeply into the levels of epistemological genesis, ontological essence and social manifestations (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde, 1998). Different schools of thought define security not from the vantage point of a universalised principle but from specific ideological, political and cultural prisms.

This lack of consensus is not abnormal in academia and is often a result of competing narratives of history, geopolitics, human psychology and environment. For instance, as we shall see in Chapter 2, the securitisation theory, which emerged from the post–Cold War paradigm shift, moved the focus from the realist mainstream ‘hard’ security position towards a more constructivist prism, where conceptual constructions and words framed notions of security (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde, 1998). In contrast, the postcolonial theorists framed security in relation to power differentiation as responses to Western hegemony (Ayoob, 1995). Central to the postcolonial position were the notions of domination and subalternisation and the need to invert the hegemonic colonial perceptions using subaltern gazes (Green, 2011). Deconstructing and even decanting colonial hegemony and its security apparatus (institutional and ideological) is often a challenge because of the way in which it has been deeply intertwined with our contemporary lives (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2013). On the other hand, the human security project (with origins in the early 1990s), which saw security through multiple disciplinary lenses, was a response to the increasing diversity and interconnectedness of the world (Chandler, 2012). In some ways, it muddied the water further with its boundless and nebulous representation of security by declaring almost every aspect of life as being security related. The feminist approach was closely linked to the postcolonial approach in terms of the centrality of power and inequality in the discourse, but goes further by critiquing the inherent masculine-oriented framing of security. These differences in approach should not be seen as invalidating and neutralising the term ‘security’, but rather should alert us to the fact that it reflects the multidimensional, transformative and adaptive nature of the term, as we shall see in Chapter 2.

‘Security’ is no doubt one of the most high-profile issues in contemporary political, economic and social discourse, across nations and cultures, because of people’s obsession with self-preservation and perpetuity in the face of emerging threats and challenges to individuals, social groups, states, regions and the global community generally. Nevertheless, there is no consensus in terms of how it is experienced and perceived. Hence what may be experienced and perceived as a security ‘threat’ by one group may be different from the experience and perception of another. Different circumstances and conditions create different security situations, and people’s responses may also differ. Any attempt to frame a common conception is increasingly thwarted by the array of political, cultural, economic, psychological and social variables associated with security

in response to diverse issues such as war, poverty, human rights abuse, terrorism, genocide, internal conflicts, global geopolitical tension, global financial crisis and gender violence, just to name a few.

The horizontal and vertical configurations of security create an even more complex situation, especially when it comes to identifying and isolating individual security variables for study. Security can be assessed in relation to its 'horizontal' configuration (referring to the different types of security situation) as well as its 'vertical' configuration (referring to the different security contexts in a stratified way) at the levels of the individual, family, community, cultural group, nation, region and global community. It is very much a contextual construction as people frame their sense of fear, anxiety, safety and well-being individually or collectively in situations that they consider to be a 'threat'. The source of a threat can be seen and felt directly or it can be 'perceived' (i.e. the source of fear may be imagined). Regardless of whether a threat is 'real', the psychological and social impact on an individual or group can be deep and long lasting. Identifying the sources of threat can be cumbersome and controversial because what might be a threat to an individual or a group might not be so to another. Threats, and responses to threats, can be constructed by some groups to suit their specific purpose at particular historical moments. For instance, stereotyping a group as a source of threat could be used as justification for the vilification or even annihilation of that target group, and this might serve the interest of some other groups. The opposing and incompatible construction of security images, paradoxically, can itself nurture security threats. For instance, competing groups casting each other as terrorists can escalate hatred and violence and entrench the spiral of violence.

The use of the term 'security' itself is often aligned to specific power interests. For instance, the term 'national security' has many faces, depending on the context and the underpinning political, ideological and cultural interest of those who define it. In the context of war between two countries, national interest is often defined in relation to protection and preservation of sovereign territory, people and state against foreign intrusion. However, this definition changes in times of internal strife, when national security could mean the safety of the citizens, and it could also strongly imply the protection of the elites in power. Often, as Pierre Bourdieu (1977) suggests, it is a means of mystification and legitimisation of the interests of powerful groups who falsely articulate it as universally representing the interest of the entire society.

Because of the breadth and diversity of the subject, studies of security have largely been selective and based on specific research interests, political and social agenda, ideological orientation or policy demands. For instance, those studying global security may be interested in a range of issues such as big power rivalry, nuclear weaponry, terrorism, transnational crime or global peace; those studying national security may be interested in civil–military relations, state repression, social control or social movements; while those studying human security may be interested in a whole bundle of issues revolving around people’s sense of well-being, ranging from poverty to environmental degradation.

Security as leverage: Justification and legitimisation

Because of its multiple levels of expression, meaning and appeal, the term ‘security’ is readily deployed to frame foreign, economic, immigration, development, food and environmental policies and strategies. It is also used as a convenient justificatory device for xenophobia, genocide, ethnonationalism, anti-immigrant policies and religious intolerance. Ethnic, cultural and religious stereotypes are often constructed around security, especially in situations where cultural diversity intersects with other factors such as resource distribution and contestation over political power. This connection is made more explicit and sharper in times of crisis and, as the crisis deepens, this relationship becomes more intense and often assumes a cyclic and symbiotic pattern, where security becomes inseparable from everyday issues. It is common for certain actions, behaviour, ideas and groups to be cast as threatening to justify a response—and often these responses provoke another cycle of insecurity.

The construction of ‘threat’ is a political act that enables a group or institution—whether state, religion, political organisation or ethnic community—to legitimise the exercise of moral or physical coercion on another group. In some cases, it can be a way of inducing and extracting political or economic advantage. For instance, the US military–industrial complex, which is critical for the US economy, needs the construction of a broad climate of regional or global threat, and even identification of specific threats, to sustain itself through arms sales. Subtler than this is how the military–industrial complex, under the guise of national security, engages in latent militarisation of society through Hollywood, cyber communication and other means (Turse, 2008).

A direct consequence of threat identification is the creation of policies and practices aimed to contain a particular group. Trump's attempt to create an immigration policy targeted at certain Muslim countries is linked to the broader climate of Islamophobia associated with the 'war on terror'. Security is often inflamed through identification or construction of a threat or perceived threat, whether from within or outside a society. The source of threat is usually constructed and defined using the prism and security variables selectively chosen by the 'threatened'. The circumstances in which this threat takes place have a profound bearing on the intensity and urgency of the threat. How imminent the threat of war is, for instance, is dependent on the level of tension, the preparedness of the two sides and the existence of certain factors such as provocation, media intimidation and propaganda, which would heighten the possibility of a war. However, as in the Cuban crisis, when a full-blown military confrontation was thought to be imminent, interfering variables such as the decision of a Soviet submarine commander to disregard the order to fire, could quickly mitigate and even invalidate the threat. The collective sense of threat is a shared psychological state of anxiety, which can be readily provoked and heightened, and sometimes this can be quickly dispersed when favourable circumstances prevail.

Sometimes, identification and realisation of threat can be a long-term process, as in the case of climate change. The issue of climate change is socially and environmentally complex and involves a relatively long period. Climate change deniers, many of whom are supporters of the fossil fuel industry, use this long span of time to throw ambiguity and doubt into the scientific arguments on the global climate data and even reinterpret scientific evidence to support their arguments, against the opinion of the majority of scientists. The climate change debate shows that a diversity of factors, such as economics, ideology and political interests, have an influence on defining the nature of the threat. Debates on whether a phenomenon is a security threat may heighten or reduce the perceived threat level, depending on the persuasive discursive power of a particular position. Again, as in climate change, a generic threat may be directly or indirectly associated with other forms of threat. For instance, climate change is associated with displacement resulting from sea level rise and erosion and destruction of properties, plantations and livelihood by cyclones, floods and droughts. It is also associated with exacerbated poverty, child malnutrition, conflict over land and scarce resources as people migrate, and reinforcement of gender inequality as women tend

to be the ones more at risk than men, because of their culturally defined subordinate role in the domestic sphere looking after children and family subsistence.

In the same vein, responses to a perceived political threat have the potential to provoke more threatening situations, as we saw in the invasion of Iraq. Justified by the invented myth of Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction, that action led to a series of destructive events, including the sectarian civil war between Sunnis and Shiites that destabilised the country and created more threats than expected. The resulting chaos and destruction spawned the rise of the Islamic State (ISIS), whose expansionist intent spilled over into Syria, another country going through a civil war, thus plunging the already volatile region into an abyss of destruction and suffering, creating refugee problems and prolonged instability. The threat is further internationalised by the involvement of the United States and Russia, which have deeply embedded economic, political and strategic interests in the Middle East.

The Israeli/Palestinian conflict raises the important relationship between security and legitimacy. The issue of legitimacy is central to many conflicts around the world as competing groups construct philosophical, legal, cultural, political or historical narratives to give credibility to their claims and actions to defend those claims. The Israelis use the apartheid Zionist ideals for a separate Jewish state, based on the biblical myth of the 'chosen people' and 'promised land' to stamp their claims on what used to be the state of Palestine. On the other hand, Palestinians, whether Christian or Muslim, justify their claims on the basis of immemoriality; that is, they have always been there, and Palestine as a state was a legal and sovereign entity before being overwhelmed by Jewish immigrants. Israel sees Palestinians, whether youth, women and even children, fighting against Israeli occupation, domination and displacement, as 'Islamic terrorists' while Palestinians frame the Israeli military as agents of 'Zionist terrorism'. The cycle of violence and counter-violence, justified by the negative framing of the other, fuels the burning fire of conflict. Both have competing historical memories to stake their claim on a common territory as their respective 'motherland'.

The multidimensional approach

The book approaches security from a multilayered vantage point, through a comparative study of three PICs: Fiji, Tonga and Solomon Islands. The first layer of analysis examines some of the global discourse on security and the way security has been defined and articulated over the years. The second layer of analysis provides a wide panoramic view of Pacific regional security, and the third layer focuses on the case studies on the ground, drawing on some of the strands of discourses in the first two layers. The idea is to construct an interconnected epistemological structure that links knowledge of the local, regional and global in a dynamic and coherent way. Our framing of security is enhanced by acknowledging that security is not a static construct but a dynamic phenomenon that oscillates between different layers of articulation.

The broad global security narrative

The general theoretical prisms that frame security discourses, as we shall see in Chapter 3, range across academic disciplines and are informed by varying ideological positions, from Samuel Huntington's 'clash of culture' position, which helped shape and justify the neoconservative political rubric of world politics, to Edward Said's 'orientalism' discourse, which has inspired generations of postcolonial thinkers and activists; from the securitisation school's emphasis on the post-structural action-based value of language, to the human security framework initiated by the United Nations. The list goes on. It is important to note that the general theories of conflict are based on multiple interpretations of history and human society, broad assumptions about power and institutions and, in some cases, responses to some existing modes of explanation that are deemed either theoretically unacceptable or empirically untenable.

Despite dramatic changes in the world in recent times, some modes of analysis remain unchanged, as adherents cling to vestiges of past thinking that are supposedly universal in terms of time and space. Some theories are more flexible and adaptable to the changing contours of events as they unfold, and some, like Francis Fukuyama's 'end of history' thesis, which was meant to celebrate the triumph of capitalism, are quickly overtaken by events and then die a quick death. Some theories, especially those that are supported by a deeper and broader panorama of history and human culture, are able to survive in different forms, despite dramatic social

transformations. For instance, Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony, although unrefined in its original form, influenced the way security has been defined by generations of left-wing scholars and postcolonial writers in the fields of sociology, anthropology, development studies, media studies, indigenous studies, cultural studies and literature. Two of the most prominent discourses of the Gramscian tradition are Noam Chomsky's idea of manufacturing consent and Edward Said's orientalism.

As Chapter 2 shows, the book avoids being caught in the narrow confines of a mechanical and one-dimensional dictionary definition. The term 'security' is not defined in any one universally relevant theoretical narrative or applied schema, but the concept is left open to theoretical contestation to allow for a critical examination of how the term is defined in different contexts from different vantage points.

Regional discourse

The book's focus on regional analysis in Chapter 3 is significant in two major ways. First, it frames the most immediate geopolitical and sociocultural context for the case studies and, second, it provides some common political, economic, cultural and environmental characteristics on which the case studies draw and that help to define some of their shared commonalities. Although the Pacific, in which more than a thousand languages are spoken, is the most culturally diverse region in the world, the PICs themselves have much in common in terms of the security threats they face. Many of these threats, such as vulnerability to the dictates of the global neoliberal agenda, are externally generated, whereas many others, such as political tension, are internally induced. There are many that are, in equal measure, shaped and affected by both internal and external forces.

The region is going through dramatic transformation, and many of the emerging security issues, such as inequality, poverty, environmental degradation, climate change, crime and land disputes, to mention only some, affect these PICs differently, depending on their capacity to respond to change, the availability of resources, the level of expertise available and political will. The scattered PICs are linked through regional institutions such as the South Pacific Commission (now called the Pacific Community), Pacific Islands Forum and a number of other educational, environmental, sporting, religious, civil society, developmental and professional organisations. In the midst of global power dynamics, PICs

find common solace in regional cooperation as a means to ensure that their collective voices are heard and their interests are recognised at the United Nations and other international forums. The regional security analysis this book presents tries to link, in a critical way, the different security narratives and historical strands to make sense of the complexities and challenges of security in the small island states, separated by thousands of miles of open sea. This provides the backdrop for the three case studies.

Local comparative case studies

The approach to the case studies of Fiji, Tonga and Solomon Islands in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 is based on the diverse variable method where, instead of using the same template for every case study, the approach for every case study differs in terms of method and emphasis. Using the same template and variables for comparative purposes tends to be mechanical and static, and effaces the uniqueness of the case studies. Each case study is different, and the idea is not to compare and contrast one against the other but to showcase each country's own unique historical, political, social, cultural and economic realities. Fiji, Tonga and Solomon Islands are very different, and it would be both analytically flawed and theoretically unsound to make superficial comparisons, as certain variables would favour one case study over the others. Each case study is examined in the context of what, in my opinion, are the most pressing sociopolitical security issues. The three countries were chosen because they have all experienced major security upheavals in recent years in the form of internal political conflict, from which they have barely recovered. It is of interest to determine what lessons we can learn from them in terms of the broader regional security agenda.

Chapter 4 is focused on Fiji and emphasises the power contestation and ethnopolitical conflict and the ramification of these for Fiji's multicultural society. The chapter broadens the panorama of security lenses and links major security issues of the precolonial, colonial and postcolonial era. A historical reflection reveals that some aspects of precolonial political culture continue in various forms and in some cases contributed to ethnopolitical conflict in latent ways during the colonial and postcolonial eras. Fiji's security issues are complicated by intracommunal loyalties, religion, culture and socioeconomic inequality, which in some instances tend to intersect with ethnicity. The role of the military has become increasingly pronounced since the first coup in 1987 and is now seen

as both a stabilising factor in times of potential turmoil and a usurper of democracy. The chapter looks at various attempts to address the multidimensional security situation in Fiji, including the formal constitutional process, civil society peace initiatives and community-based conflict resolution mechanisms.

Chapter 5 provides an assessment of the political power contestation in Tonga, in particular between the ruling monarchical class and the pro-democracy commoner movement. Of all the Pacific countries, Tonga is probably the most hierarchical and certainly has the most rigid political and class structure, consisting of the monarch, nobles (*nopele*), who act as feudal lords, below whom are the commoners, the equivalent of the serfs. The internal contradictions have been well concealed through various means, including the appeal to culture and divinity. The tension built up over the years erupted into violence in the form of riots and burnings in Nukualofa, the capital, in 2006. This changed the complexion of Tongan politics in a significant way as the military, untested in local situations, began to build up its capacity to respond more effectively to internal security conditions.

The focus on the Solomon Islands in Chapter 6 is principally on the historical conditions and dynamics that helped to create conditions that built up to the 1999 violent conflict, the worst in the history of the country. Multiple factors contributed to the conflict, and many of them were rooted in the colonial history of Solomon Islands and how these shaped the economic, political and ethnic landscape. British colonialism was half-hearted, patronising and exploitative and pitted the locals, who wanted greater autonomy, against the colonial hierarchy, which was directly controlled from Fiji, the main British colonial base in the Pacific. Development was minimal, and the state infrastructure was embryonic. The inequality and incompatibility between the colonial state and the local population became a security issue. Anti-colonial resistance was viciously suppressed as the British sought to use local police against their own people. The British recruited local cheap labour, principally from Malaita Island, to work in plantations in various parts of Solomon Islands, especially Guadalcanal, and this contributed to land disputes and tension. A combination of land disputes, inequality, resource appropriation, corrupt leadership and lack of a unifying political culture helped to inflame the conflict. In a paternalistic way, Solomon Islands also became a laboratory for peace-building in the form of the Regional Assistance

Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI), in which international agencies, academics and civil society organisations tried new methods of conflict resolution to serve their particular agenda.

The different approaches of the following chapters provide us with multiple prisms and angles of analysis that focus on aspects of conflict unique to those countries. Although the PICs may be geographically small and isolated, they must not be considered insignificant just because of this, but rather the rest of the world must learn from some of their successful ventures into peace-building. At a time when conflict pervades every corner of the globe and when world leaders, international organisations and countries (torn by wars and destruction) are looking for solutions to the plight of millions of people, the PICs can provide some lessons for humanity: lessons of peace. Conflict in the PICs seems to be short-lived because solutions are deeply entrenched in their culture and in their way of seeing conflict and the world. State intervention in the form of formal institutions of the law and politics might have a role, but expressions of resilience, hope and endurance among the communities, which have been part of culture for centuries, need serious attention.

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