

3

Swirling and divergent waves: Selected security dilemmas in Oceania

Just as the sea is an open and ever flowing reality, so should our oceanic identity transcend all forms of insularity, to become one that is openly searching, inventive, and welcoming.

Eveli Hau'ofa

One of the dilemmas in studying security in the Pacific is the wide diversity of cultures, political systems and states in the Pacific and the multiplicity of cultural, political, economic and cultural factors that are linked to security issues, thus making it difficult to provide a neat and generalised narrative. Attempts to create regional hard security and human security frameworks by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) have not met expectations due to difficulties in satisfying all the individual country conditions through unifying consensus. Like waves in a Pacific cyclone, they are often 'swirling' and 'divergent'. With this in mind, this chapter attempts to probe a number of interrelated aspects of regional security in a selected way, focusing on security perceptions and securitisation in relation to the terms 'failed state' and 'arc of instability', and the following internal political security dynamics among Pacific Island Countries (PICs): geopolitics and regional security, regional security mechanisms, human security, free trade and human security, hegemony and patronage, and climate change. Although these might appear to be disparate issues, in fact they are all connected to each other and to security at different levels and in different ways.

These selected issues are examined using some of the conceptual lenses discussed in Chapter 2, in particular the postcolonial, securitisation and human security lenses.

Because of the specific historical characteristics of the PICs and the contemporary regional and global power dynamics that confine them to a relatively subaltern position, the postcolonial prism is employed to examine political, economic and cultural dynamics of interest. As former colonies, the history, sociocultural norms, sociopolitical structures and socioeconomic systems of most Pacific states are shaped to a significant degree by colonial hegemony and the effects of that are still felt today, despite years of formal independence. However, we need to keep in mind that there is a danger in applying concepts and theories simplistically. There are complex challenges in applying concepts, especially in relation to the interpretation of knowledge (epistemology), the subjectivity of meaning and the context in which the concepts are used. These complexities are compounded by the inherent cultural, political, historical and economic diversity of PICs (referring to sovereign national entities) and Pacific communities (referring to sociocultural groupings), which are often ignored in the clamour to create a generic ‘regional’ narrative such as the ‘arc of instability’.

In the foreword to the book *Securing a Peaceful Pacific*, which provides a collection of articles by some of the Pacific’s leading experts on security, Don McKinnon, secretary general of the Commonwealth Secretariat and former foreign minister of New Zealand, proclaims:

The first decade of the 21st century in the island communities of the southern and central Pacific Ocean is proving to be a watershed period for the region’s security—change has already occurred and further change is imminent. (McKinnon, 2005: xi)

McKinnon goes on to identify three major security concerns: being ‘exposed and vulnerable to wider global forces’; ‘tension between traditional and ... imported forms of leadership’; and ‘international, trans-border issues’. McKinnon’s solution lies in using collective regional approaches such as the Pacific Plan to consolidate ‘regional *collaboration*’ and even extending this to ‘regional *integration*’ (McKinnon, 2005: xi).

While some aspects of the hard security issues identified by McKinnon may still be valid, circumstances have changed in the last few years because of the increasing realisation of the importance of human security,

the emergence of climate change as a dominant security concern and the reconfiguration of intraregional geopolitics as a result of Fiji's political manoeuvres since 2006. Also, the argument that regional collaboration is the panacea to national and local security problems needs closer scrutiny. While regionalism is a unifying discourse and practice, it is also potentially hegemonic and could become a political façade to hide entrenched interests and stratified power relationships. The two major Pacific hegemons, Australia and New Zealand, together with Fiji, a subhegemon, have carved out their own spheres of influence around which they define and impose their national interests over those of the other Pacific island states. Therefore when we talk of regional security we cannot sensibly talk of a unitary and shared security interest, but rather must consider a scattered, often contradictory set of ideological framings and political practices that are driven by inherent national interests, artificially framed and projected as universally applicable and consensually accepted under the euphemism of 'regionalism'.

Therefore it is important to unpack the concept of regional security in terms of different layers of interests, thinking and activities that are intertwined in a complex web of often ragged and disjointed relationships. This chapter attempts to do so by, first, critically examining the terms 'failed state' and 'arc of instability', which have been used as ideological prisms for framing Pacific security in recent years. The chapter examines the connotative and prescriptive imagery of the terms in the context of Said's notion of orientalism and how such imagery carries resonance from the scientific racism movement of the Enlightenment.

The first part of the chapter uses the postcolonial prism to unpack the 'arc of instability' assumptions regarding common primordial characteristics that run through the 'unstable' Pacific archipelagos, the so-called arc. The argument this chapter makes is that the PICs are so diverse in terms of their historical, political and cultural realities that to refer to them as an arc linked by common political and cultural experiences is an oversimplistic hypothesis. The chapter then provides a brief overview of regional geopolitics and implications on security. The following and related section looks at some regional security mechanisms and their role and implications in relation to the broader geopolitical and internal national dynamics of the region. Geopolitics is often the focus of regional security analysis in the Pacific and overrides other security considerations such as human security.

The discussion on human security that follows is based largely on the attempt to put together a regional framework, which so far has proved challenging. The chapter then provides a critical examination of free trade in the form of the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER Plus), together with its human security implications. This is followed by a discussion of the power dynamics of security, in particular the issue of patronage and hegemony and how they play out in the relationship between the small PICs countries and the bigger states, Australia and New Zealand. The last security factor to be discussed is climate change, which is a critical human security issue in the contemporary Pacific.

While admittedly these might not constitute all the security issues in the Pacific, they are significant in shaping the social, political, economic and cultural life of the Pacific and certainly do have potential to transform Pacific societies in dynamic ways in the future. The issues are not self-contained but are interrelated and shape each other in complex ways.

The Pacific context

The diverse histories of the Pacific can be understood in the context of a chronological continuum from the earliest inhabited islands in the west to the most recently inhabited ones to the east. New Guinea (consisting of West Papua and Papua New Guinea), the largest of the Pacific Islands, was inhabited about 60,000 years ago while Aotearoa (New Zealand) to the east is estimated to have been inhabited around 700 years ago. The genesis of the Pacific people who live east of the Solomons can be traced back to Taiwan and South China. After more than 10,000 years of moving down the chain of islands in South-East Asia, they reached the Pacific Islands after admixtures with those who have already settled around Papua before continuing the journey eastwards. As shown by DNA of recently discovered skeletons in Vanuatu and Tonga, certain Asian groups might have continued to migrate eastwards without admixtures on the way and settled in Vanuatu, Fiji and the rest of the eastern Pacific. The darker-skinned Papuan groups might have migrated eastwards later, resulting in more admixtures. Genetic tests indicate significant admixtures across the Pacific with varying degrees of traces of Papuan and Asian DNA, the former being prominent in the western part of the Pacific and the latter dominant in the eastern island groups (Kayser et al., 2008).

This migratory process helped to create a transnational Austronesian cultural system, which starts in Taiwan, spans South-East Asia, crosses the Pacific and even includes Madagascar. People within the Austronesian cultural system largely share linguistic, cultural and genetic characteristics and are connected by the vast migratory routes that span tens of thousands of kilometres (Spriggs, 1997).

Despite the shared Austronesian cultural complex, different communities developed social structures, languages, norms and belief systems, which reflected their local conditions. The Pacific, where about 1,500 distinct languages are spoken by about 10 million people, is now the most culturally diverse region in the world. This is 25 per cent of the 6,000 spoken languages of the world (Lynch, Ross & Crowley, 2002).

Attempts have been made in the past to categorise Pacific peoples into various anthropological groupings (Thomas, 1989). The most enduring was one by French explorer Jules Sébastien César Dumont d'Urville, who constructed and popularised three categories, namely Melanesia (black people), Micronesia (small islands and people) and Polynesia (many islands and peoples) to cover the diversity of Pacific peoples and cultures across the entire Oceanic region (D'Arcy, 2003). Although variants of the 'Polynesian' category had been used earlier, the significance of these categorisations was that they framed Pacific peoples into racial boxes that became the basis for defining their identity. These categories were problematic because they assumed primordial and distinct differences between the different categories by drawing straight rigid lines to demarcate one racial region from the others (Hau'ofa, 1975). This fallacious narrative failed to consider the fluidity, continuity and interconnectedness of cultural systems across the Pacific from west to east. Genetic studies have also shown the complex admixtures among the Pacific peoples, thus making a mockery of these rigid racial classifications (Kayser et al., 2008; Spriggs, 1997).

European encounters

The early Europeans who visited the Pacific came in phases. The first were the explorers who arrived in the 1500s and for the next three centuries were engaged in various activities, including claiming islands for their countries (Rigby, Van Der Merwe & Williams, 2018). Whalers, sealers, traders, planters, missionaries and a whole range of beachcombers arrived

in the early 1800s and their influence in transforming the cultures and social structures of the Oceanic communities were profound and long lasting (Edmond & Smith, 2003). The once autonomous subsistence societies were, because of such encounters, incorporated into the global capitalist system through the setting up of plantation economies, recruitment of cheap labour for other parts of the world such as Australia and South America, and trading of local products such as *bêche-de-mer*, sandalwood and other things (Campbell, 2011b).

Apart from missionaries, colonialism was probably the most transformative foreign force. Almost every major colonial power was active in the Pacific, and every PIC became either a full colony or some sort of territory of a colonial power. Different European powers entered the Pacific and claimed colonies at different times with the Spanish being the first as early as the 1600s, followed by the Portuguese, Dutch, British, French, Germans and Americans in the 1700s and 1800s (Rigby, Van Der Merwe & Williams, 2018).

The Spanish annexed Guam and Mariana Islands in 1668 while the Portuguese took over East Timor in 1702 until independence in 1975 after which the Indonesians invaded and controlled the country. The British created their first colony in Australia in 1788 and Pitcairn Island, where descendants of the *Bounty* mutineers lived, in 1790. It later expanded its empire in the Pacific to incorporate New Zealand in 1840, Fiji in 1874, Kiribati (Gilbert Islands) in 1892, Niue in 1888, Tuvalu (Ellice Islands) in 1892, Solomon Islands in 1893 and Tokelau in 1899 (Fischer, 2013). The British were in competition with the French, who had established colonies in French Polynesia around the same time that Britain annexed New Zealand: Wallis and Futuna in 1837 and New Caledonia in 1853. Vanuatu was later added to the list but as a condominium with Britain in 1886, under a 'joint naval commission' and joint rule in 1906. Except for Vanuatu, none of the French colonies has become fully independent.

The Germans also acquired territories such as Nauru in 1888 and Samoa in 1900; the latter occurred after the two Samoas (East and West) were split between the Germans and Americans in 1899 (Meleisea, 1987). It also established control of the north-east quarter of New Guinea, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Marshall Islands and Caroline Islands. Germany lost all its colonies to the Allies during World War I with Nauru being taken over by Australia and Samoa by New Zealand. Japan assumed control of FSM, Palau and the Marshall Islands after World War I but

lost them again during World War II. Although Dutch explorers were in the Pacific from the 1600s, most of their colonial activities were focused on the western part of the Pacific. Apart from Indonesia, their territories were limited to West Papua, which was initially under the Dutch East Indies from 1828 to 1949, when it became an overseas territory of the Netherlands (Matsuda, 2012).

New Zealand and Australia, which were themselves British colonies, became proxy mini colonial powers for Britain. New Zealand became the administering power for Western Samoa (1920–62), Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau, while Australia took over administration of Papua from Britain in 1906 and German New Guinea in 1914. The United States was mostly involved in the northern Pacific. It annexed Hawaii in 1893, took control of Guam and Philippines from Spain in 1898, gained control of American Samoa in 1899, and, in 1945, took over Marshall Islands, Palau and Northern Marianas from Japan (Fischer, 2013).

The colonial encounter transformed the Pacific communities in deep and complex ways. Some of the typical reconfigurations included the centralisation of power under a single authority using both legal and coercive means to pacify the local population; imposition of a new political system that mirrored the colonial political values and structures; the establishment of a capitalist economy and development strategy to serve the interests of foreign traders, planters and investors; the imposition of taxation that forced locals to generate cash by whatever means for the colonial state; the creation of a local working class through the appropriation of local cheap labour; the alienation and commodification of land by Europeans; and the creation of a local comprador class to serve as a conduit between the colonial state and the local communities (Crocombe, 2001).

These developments had different manifestations in different PICs, given their unique circumstances. They also redefined the security configurations of the PICs in significant ways. In many cases, there was outright resistance to taxation, loss of land and political power, and in some cases there was a certain degree of collaboration and willingness by locals to accept colonial rule. By the time of independence, the colonial legacies were still instrumental in defining the shape and direction of political, economic and social changes in the PICs (Crocombe, 2001).

Postcolonial developments

The independence process in the Pacific took more than two decades, starting with Samoa in 1962 and followed by Nauru in 1968. The 1970s and 1980s saw a wave of decolonisation sweep across the Pacific with Fiji and Tonga (a British protectorate) becoming independent in 1970, Papua New Guinea in 1975, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu in 1978, Kiribati in 1979 and Vanuatu in 1980 (Firth, 1989). The US territories of Marshall Islands and Federated States of Micronesia achieved self-governing status and entered into a Compact of Free Association arrangement with the United States in 1986 and 1994 for Palau (Hezel, 2013). None of the French colonies has become independent and, officially, the British still possess a territory in the form of Pitcairn Island.

Upon independence, the PICs had to respond to the new demands of statehood in a fast-changing regional and global environment. Colonialism had transformed then into subaltern entities at the margins of global power, and one of the first tasks was to claim a place at the table of nations where they could be recognised as sovereign states, a right they were denied under colonialism (Connell, 1981). One way of doing this was to join the United Nations as full voting members and forming regional organisations such as the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) in 1971, University of the South Pacific in 1972 and Air Pacific, to name a few. These organisations were expressions of political self-actualisation and autonomy in a region contested by the two Cold War antagonists, the United States and the Soviet Union.

The PIF was established by some independent PICs as an alternative forum to the South Pacific Commission (SPC), a regional organisation set up in 1947 by the Pacific colonial powers to provide development support for the PICs as well as to keep the Pacific in Western hands and free of Soviet influence during the Cold War (Croccombe, 2001). The PIF allowed for discussions of political matters, unlike the SPC, and, after a major reorganisation of regional institutions, it became focused on issues of governance, security and trade whereas the SPC was responsible for the more technical, cultural and scientific aspects of regional development. To some degree, the end of the Cold War lifted the pressure on small Pacific island states to adhere to the Western bloc's ideological agenda, enabling them to focus on other important aspects of regional security and sovereignty (Henningham, 1995).

The political systems of the PICs differ considerably. The former US territories, Nauru and Kiribati, have presidential systems whereas the others have various localised versions of the Westminster system (Ratuva, 2011b). Tonga is the only monarchy, modelled pretty much along the lines of its British counterpart. One of the features of the political systems is the syncretic relationship between, on one hand, the indigenous social structures and norms, and the Western model of liberal democracy on the other (Ratuva, 2004). The relationship between these two systems involves a dynamic process of accommodation, contradiction and synthesis over time. While there are moments of accommodation, there are also moments of tension and contradiction, and at times aspects of the two systems may synthesise into new structures and norms. Most PICs have experienced different types of conflict that are unique to their specific circumstances (Henderson & Watson, 2005).

While attempts have been made to paint conflict in the PICs using a broad brush under such generalised labels as ‘arc of instability’, the reality, as this book tries to demonstrate, is that those conflicts—whether they be coups in Fiji, violence in Solomon Islands, riots in Tonga, land conflict in Samoa, civil war in Bourgainville and so forth—have nothing to do with each other and result from the specific historical and sociopolitical dynamics in those respective countries. As in any other country, most of these conflicts have their genesis in colonial and postcolonial developments and need to be understood in those contexts rather than using superficially constructed stereotypic labels to avoid the difficult questions of historical causes (Henningham, 1995).

The economies of the PICs are quite diverse in terms of size, resources and productivity (Duncan, 2016). The bigger countries to the west of the Pacific are much more resourceful than those towards the east. For instance, the economies of Papua New Guinea and Fiji combined make up more than 80 per cent of the total PICs economies (AFTINET, 2018). Fiji, with its relatively advanced industrial base, constitutes more than 80 per cent of intraregional trade outside Australia and New Zealand. The western Pacific countries of Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea are part of the Melanesian Spearhead Group trade bloc. The disparity in the trade relations among themselves, especially given Fiji’s dominance, might not be healthy for regional solidarity in the long run.

The largest money-earners for some PICs are tourism, remittances, fisheries, mining and forestry. Remittances in particular have become the economic backbone of local communities because money received is non-taxable, goes straight to families and provides an important social safety net against poverty (Choong, Jayaraman & Kumar, 2011). The large diaspora Pacific community and short-term seasonal labour schemes to New Zealand and Australia sustain the remittance economy. Aid, as we shall see later in the chapter, is still a significant source of development funds, the leading donors being Australia, the United States, China, New Zealand and Japan (Dornan, 2013). There are, however, fundamental differences in aid strategies. Australia is focused more on institutional reforms with money flowing back to Australia through the use of subcontractors and consultants, most of whom are Australian-based; US aid is focused more in its former territories in the North Pacific under the compact arrangement; and Chinese aid is through 'soft' loans for largely public infrastructural purposes (Dornan & Pryke, 2017). Chinese development assistance is the fastest growing and provides more than 50 per cent of Fiji's external infrastructural funding and 30 per cent of aid to Cook Islands, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu. Australia and New Zealand recently increased their aid allocation to the PICs in response to the expansion in Chinese economic influence (Lyons, 2018).

Despite the commitment to economic growth and trade, most PICs still rely on the semi-subsistence sector to support families on a daily basis. More than 70 per cent of the people in Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands live in rural areas and rely primarily on subsistence living (Ratuva, 2010). Different countries have different degrees of urbanisation and subsistence dependency. At the same time, urbanisation has been increasing at a phenomenal rate with young people moving into urban areas for education, employment and other reasons. This has led to increases in crime, unemployment and associated problems. Inequality has also been exacerbated by the push towards neoliberal growth, which has led to social and economic problems as well as threatening security (Gamage, 2015).

Despite the fact that most PICs do not export any products, many have recently signed the PACER Plus, a regional free trade agreement spearheaded by Australia and New Zealand. Perhaps the most significant regional issue now, apart from regional trade, is climate change because of its potential impact on regional economies, environment, social stability and general well-being of the people.

Outsider perceptions of Pacific peoples

Sociologically, perceptions are powerful mechanisms for framing others, and often the imagery constructed can shape subconscious attitudes to a group (Jussim, 2012). The encounter between Pacific peoples and Europeans involved both conflict and accommodation as the two strange cultures cautiously engaged and monitored each other for signs of hostility or friendliness. The two encountering groups held vastly different cultural world views. The views of the early Europeans were shaped by the philosophical, religious and cultural norms and ideals of their European societies whereas for many Pacific communities, social solidarity, reciprocity, collective ownership and subsistence production were the basis of their social organisation and cosmological world (Salmond, 1991).

Many Pacific Islands were named according to how they conformed to certain European cultural and moral imaginations (Gascoigne, 2014). For instance, when Magellan crossed the Pacific and came across Guam and the Mariana Islands by accident in 1521, he named the Marianas 'Island of Thieves' after locals who helped themselves to pieces of iron from his ship (Bergreen, 2004). Captain Cook named Tonga 'Friendly Islands' (after being surprised by the welcoming and congenial attitudes shown by locals) and referred to Hawaii as 'Sandwich Islands' in honour of John Montagu, Fourth Earl of Sandwich, who as First Lord of the Admiralty was one of his sponsors (Hough, 2003). For a long time, Fiji was known as 'Cannibal Isle', a name that compelled sailors to avoid the place (Peck, 2010). Tahiti was named 'New Cythera' by Bougainville after the Greek islands where Aphrodite, goddess of love, rose from the sea (Martin, 2008).

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's notion of humanity as naturally good and noble was influential in the way Bougainville constructed the Tahitians he encountered in mid-1767 (Martin, 2008). He coined the term 'noble savage' to refer to those who still lived an idyllic and romantic life in the islands, which were abundant in food, and where people were naturally hospitable and sex was freely practised without much moral restriction (Marcelles, 2011). This played well with the European image of the innocence of savages, untouched by the vagaries of Westernisation. Two notions of the noble savage were identified, namely 'soft primitivism', such as Tahiti, because of the romantic, easy, pure and bountiful lifestyle, and 'strong primitivism', such as Australia and New Zealand, where the

indigenous inhabitants had to work hard because of harsher climates, which made them tough and Spartan. The 'soft primitivism' narrative was the more durable. It was the commodified version that became part of tourism imagery in later years. Paul Gauguin memorialised these myths in his paintings of Tahitian women (Staszak, 2004).

The other side of the coin was the term 'ignoble savage' to refer to those of darker skin colour on the western side of the Pacific, who were seen as barbarous, blood-thirsty savages and cannibals (Kabutaulaka, 2015). These stereotypes were reinforced by their classification as Melanesians, a term first used by Jules Dumont d'Urville, a French explorer, to refer not only to skin colour but also their 'inferior' and 'dark' moral and social character. Missionaries later reinforced these stereotypes through their emphasis on the 'light' and 'dark' spiritual dichotomy, which was taken literally to also include God's human creations. This played into the intra-Pacific racial prejudice with Polynesians regarding Melanesians as inferior (Kabutaulaka, 2015).

The romantic imagery of the 'soft primitivism' variant has been popularised in Hollywood movies such as *South Pacific* (1958), a romantic musical based on James Michener's *Tales of the South Pacific*, and *Paradise Hawaiian Style* (1966), starring Elvis Presley. There have been other movies with the same thematic narratives over the years, including *Moana* (2016), a celebrated animation by Disney. *Moana* was a classical attempt to construct a mythological paradise using demeaning stereotypes about the child-like, innocent and supernatural-minded nature of 'noble savages' (Perry, 2016). Disney was making about US\$300 million a month from the film while the Fijian indigenous owners of the knowledge argued that this was a clear case of intellectual theft and wanted compensation (Amid, 2014). This was a case of bio-piracy and intellectual property theft that enriched a large multinational at the cost of the indigenous people.

By the 1990s, new imagery began to emerge, including the 'fatal impact' theory proposed by Alan Moorehead in his book, *The Fatal Impact, 1767–1840*, in which he argued that colonialism and European contact had caused unimaginable destruction that was beyond the control of Pacific peoples (Moorehead, 1990 [1966]). It had the social Darwinian notion that diseases and cultural influences were inevitable. The fatalistic narrative failed to consider the fact that the Pacific peoples were also conscious agents of change and active participants in historical change rather than just passive driftwood floating around at the whim of the waves in a sea

of transformation. By the 2000s, scholars and policy-makers began to see the Pacific through the deficit lenses of the ‘vulnerability’ thesis (Barnett & Waters, 2016). Predicated on the neoliberal economic narrative of scarce resources and commodification, the Pacific countries were framed as economically backward, lacking in resources, poor in skills and low in technological innovation, and therefore in need of the saving hands of Western aid donors (Rustomjee, 2016).

The Pacific has acted as a laboratory for racial categorisation and labelling and a testing ground for those trying to ensure the workability of their stereotypic ideals and Eurocentric views about humanity. In the next section, the notions of ‘arc of instability’ and ‘failed states’ will be explored in detail in the broader context of securitisation, including their implications on intergroup perception and security.

Pacific orientalism and securitisation: The ‘failed state’ and ‘arc of instability’ imagery

As the securitisation theory suggests, using politically and ideologically loaded labels to frame a group of people or a country has the capacity to shape the security environment and people’s consciousness of a threat. In the context of this approach, threat is constructed via perception and articulated as ‘real’. This is where the securitisation and postcolonial approaches converge, at least to some extent. The use of words that influence action (as securitisation theorists emphasised) and the use of imagery to cast a culture in stereotypic imagery (along the lines of Said’s notion of orientalism) is an important convergence point to delve into the phenomenological implications of the ‘failed state’ and ‘arc of instability’ (FASAI) thesis. Such imagery has profound implications for security because of the way they cast Pacific communities as potential threats to peace and stability, not only to themselves but also to Australia and New Zealand (the two regional Western powers) and the greater region. The FASAI discourse has been unashamedly repeated over and over again by scholars and the media to provide easy answers to complex problems, to the extent that it has gained near-universal traction as well as being institutionalised (through the introduction of the Fragile State Index) as part of the mainstream political discourse. It has even been used as a basis for framing regional intervention strategies by Australia (Fry & Kabutaulaka, 2008).

I argue that the subtexts behind FASAI go beyond the positivistic level of political science typology. In fact they conjure deeper phenomenological meanings, reminiscent of the social Darwinian idea of racialised stratification that has its theoretical genesis in the Enlightenment. Perhaps the starting point here is Said's notion of orientalism, described as:

Dealing with the Orient [Third World] by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient ... politically, sociologically, scientifically, and imaginatively. (Said, 1978: 3)

Said was making reference to a host of images predicated on negative stereotypes, paternalism and prejudiced assumptions that shaped European perception of the 'orient', which by and large referred to the postcolonial world. Today, in our changing postmodern world where cyberspace communication, social media and unrestricted information consumption envelop our daily lives, constructed imagery become powerful expressions of security and power that shape our attitude, behaviour and actions.

Over the years a proliferation of negative imagery has been used to 'securitise' the Pacific. This ranges from the region as an 'arc of instability' (Ayson, 2007) consisting of 'failed states' (Wainwright, 2003) to some even making global comparisons by referring to the situation as an 'Africanisation of the Pacific' (Reilly, 2000). An Australian political commentator argued that the notion of 'failed state' might not be reflective of the situation and suggested an equally grim label of 'barbed wire' reality (Dobell, 2007). Some have tried to express 'sympathy' by substituting the term 'arc of opportunity' for the term 'arc of instability' (Wallis, 2015) to reframe the situation, but the fundamental orientalist assumptions are still latent.

While these terms might be recent constructions, the images they conjure have similar deficit and demeaning connotations to the 19th-century notions of 'noble savages', of romantic but primitive Polynesia or the 'ignoble savages' of Melanesia, consisting of morally despicable cannibals some of whom populated the 'Cannibal Isle' (Fiji). These images continue to resonate in such terms as the 'arc of instability' and 'failed states', referring to countries deemed to consist of people who are somewhat politically unstable, unreliable, unsophisticated and warlike; lack values of good governance; are unable to run their economies; and are corrupt and perpetually in a state of intertribal antagonism. Under the façade of

diplomacy, racial and cultural prejudices are often concealed but remain as latent cultural variables that seek to justify patronising and often imposing and intimidating approaches by bigger powers in the form of aid and interventionist foreign policy.

FASAI has been much more associated with so-called Melanesia, which itself is a racially loaded terminological designation, which refers to 'black' people of the western Pacific. The term 'Melanesia' has become intellectually institutionalised as a racialised category. Not only does the term describe the colour of skin pigmentation of people but also over the years it conjured up connotations and images associated with savagery, cultural backwardness and intellectual inferiority (Kabutaulaka, 2015). Dumont d'Urville (2003: 164) classified 'the many varieties of the human species that live on the various islands of Oceania' who were different by virtue of 'their many peculiar moral and physical features [which] no doubt require us to regard them as two separate races'. Melanesians, he suggested, are:

People with very dark, often sooty, skins, sometimes almost as black as that of the Kaffirs, and curly, fuzzy, fluffy but seldom woolly hair. Their features are disagreeable, their build is uneven and their limbs are often frail and deformed ... Nevertheless, there is as much variety in skin colour, build and features among the black people of Oceania as among the numerous nations who live on the African continent and make up the race that most authors have referred to as Ethiopian. (Dumont d'Urville, 2003: 164)

The reference to Africa reflected the European obsession with the 'dark continent' mythologised in European travel accounts and literature over the years (as in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*) as the antithesis of European civilisation. Similar comparisons between Africa and Melanesia were made by a number of people, including Reilly (2000) and Downer (2003a).

Dumont d'Urville's ideas reflected the growth of essentialism and scientific racism in European thought during the period of the Enlightenment, whereby societies were stratified according to their level of civilisation and progress, and black races were positioned at the lowest stratum of humanity (Fredrickson, 2000). It was not only a matter of skin colour: deeper than that was what Western observers saw as the primitive and decadent nature of their cultural life, their low level of intelligence, their moral depravity and their archaic social system. Scientific racism

had roots in the works of Chevalier de Lamarck about the inheritance of inborn biological traits over generations and was given prominence by various scholars, including Charles Darwin, who popularised the theory of evolution in his book, *On the Origin of Species* (Darwin, 1859). Some social scientists used Darwin's theory as a basis for constructing hierarchies of societies according to levels of civilisation. The dominant assumption was that Western societies were the fittest and had the capacity to outlive the inferior black races. This came to be known as social Darwinism, a discourse that heavily influenced some 19th- and 20th-century writers from diverse disciplines (Hodgson, 2004). Early colonial officials such as Fiji's first governor, Sir Arthur Gordon, were not only influenced intellectually and morally by this trend of scholarship but also used it as justification for their colonial policies to control and pacify the colonised who were deemed intellectually and socially inferior.

The Darwinian idea of lineal progression and stratification was prominent in major disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, political science, psychology, philosophy, economics, literature and other areas of study in the 19th and 20th centuries. In the mid-19th century, it shaped the ideas of such social scientists as Auguste Comte, regarded as the father of sociology, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber and even Karl Marx, all of whom attempted to use the 'scientific method' to discover laws of human behaviour to promote human freedom and progress (Seidman, 2008).

By the 20th century, the idea of human progression and hierarchical development was developed further into more complex narratives of social structures, norms and behaviour. Influential American sociologist Talcott Parsons identified variables such as 'particularism', 'ascription' and 'diffusion' as characteristics of primitive societies as opposed to 'efficacy', 'achievement' and 'specificity' for advanced societies (Parsons, 1991). These differentiated societal characteristics became the 'scientific' basis for the modernisation theory, which by the 1960s had become the mainstream development discourse to justify global capitalism. Lerner, a leading American proponent of the modernisation discourse, saw Caucasian races as more advanced intellectually and technologically and boasted:

Modernity is primarily a state of mind—expectation of progress, propensity to growth, readiness to adapt oneself to change. The nations of the North Atlantic area first developed the social process—secularisation, urbanisation, industrialisation, popular participation—by which this state of mind came to prevail. (Lerner, 1965: viii)

For non-Caucasians, their 'traditional' status, reinforced by inherited characteristics that inhibited their drive towards modernity, would soon give way to superior cosmopolitan cultures. To this end, Cyril Black, in his book, *The Dynamics of Modernisation*, said:

Cosmopolitan criteria of personal association replace the restraints imposed by race, creed, family and caste. The former divisions between peasants, townspeople and aristocrats have given way to a more homogeneous society in which one's position depends more on individual achievement than on inherited status. (Black, 1966: 19)

The idea of progression and stratification was also prevalent in development economics. One of its proponents, Walt Rostow (1960), outlined five stages of growth, from 'traditional' to 'high mass consumption', which many used as the defining discourse for modernity and legitimisation of global capitalism as the only natural system. Rostow's theoretical schema has been criticised for being ahistorical, culturally prejudiced and a justification for US global imperialism. Nevertheless, this narrowly Western-centric view was also prevalent in mainstream political science, where people like Samuel Huntington proclaimed Anglo-Saxon models of liberal democracy to be the most developed and mature form of political system, which ought to be emulated by underdeveloped non-Western societies (Huntington, 1965).

Moreover, by the end of the Cold War, the idea of the triumph of Western culture, capitalism and liberal democracy became an ideological obsession of right-wing scholars such as Huntington and Francis Fukuyama. Fukuyama's *End of History* (1995) used the Hegelian historical dialectics discourse of the contesting interaction between 'thesis' and 'anti-thesis' (representing the competition between capitalism and socialism) to argue that capitalism had finally triumphed. With the collapse of the Soviet empire, Western liberal democracy was seen as the yardstick for political stability, democracy, participation, efficiency and progress while other systems were seen as inappropriate or 'failed'. Despite its fundamentally flawed assumptions and the fact that the 'end of history' thesis quickly became redundant as a result of fast-changing global events, for a short time it had traction and some supporters:

The rise and fall of nation-states is not new, but in a modern era when national states constitute the building blocks of legitimate world order the violent disintegration and palpable weakness

of selected African, Asian, Oceanic, and Latin American states threaten the very foundation of that system. International organisations and big powers consequently find themselves sucked disconcertingly into a maelstrom of anomic internal conflict and messy humanitarian relief. Desirable international norms such as stability and predictability thus become difficult to achieve when so many of the globe's newer nation-states waver precariously between weakness and failure, with some truly failing, or even collapsing. In a time of terror, moreover, appreciating the nature of and responding to the dynamics of nation-state failure have become central to critical policy debates. How best to strengthen weak states and prevent state failure are among the urgent questions of the twenty-first century. (Rotberg, 2003: 1)

Rotberg's quote above is representative of widespread and entrenched views among the scholarly and diplomatic communities in the West and captures the underlying sentiments of the dominant powers in relation to the so-called 'failed states'. The same sentiments are also reflected in the words of Alexander Downer, Australia's minister for foreign affairs from 1996 to 2007:

When you have a failed state, it's a state that can be exploited by people such as money launderers, drug traffickers, people traffickers, possibly even terrorists. It's an environment which can be exploited by those types of people ... It has happened where states have tottered on the edge of failure or in the case of Somalia been failed states. I don't want the analogy of Somalia to be taken too far. But I think these are very real risks and it's important Australians understand that this is expensive; there are some dangers involved in this. It's not highly dangerous like the war in Iraq, but there will be islands to become a failed state and a failed state to fester off the coast of Australia, then we don't know what that failed state could be exploited for, and by whom it could be exploited. But it does constitute risks to Australia in the medium term. (Downer, 2003a)

Downer was securitising Australia's relationship with the Pacific states by directly constructing a security divide, which saw Australia as the victim to be protected from the Pacific threat. The subaltern, postcolonial states of the Pacific, as possible spaces for nurturing terrorists, posed security threats to Australia, an advanced democracy. Rhetoric was different from reality because Australia, not the Pacific Islands, became a fertile breeding ground for terrorists, as evidenced by the capture of a number of terrorists

in the country over the following years (Donnelly, 2011). The association made with Somalia intensified the Africanisation imagery that Ben Reilly, an Australian scholar, advocated:

As these facts suggest, it is hard to escape the conclusion that we are today witnessing the progressive 'Africanisation' of the South Pacific region. 'Africanisation' refers to four interrelated phenomena that have long been associated with violent conflict and the failure of democratic government in Africa: the growing tensions in the relationship between civil regimes and military forces; the intermixture between ethnic identity and the competition for control of natural resources as factors driving conflicts; the weakness of basic institutions of governance such as prime ministers, parliaments and, especially, political parties; and the increasing centrality of the state as a means of gaining wealth and of accessing and exploiting resources. (Reilly, 2000: 262–3)

It has been argued that Reilly's theory is full of inaccurate empirical observations and fallacious assumptions (Fraenkel, 2004).

It was, however, not the first time that the Pacific had been compared to Africa, as we saw earlier in the case of Dumont d'Urville. Since the Enlightenment, Africa has often been seen in the popular Western imagination as a marker of primitivism. The tendency to link the Pacific to African countries is part of the racialisation of discourse that Said was talking about in his orientalism theory. Hall (1996), as we saw in Chapter 2, also elaborated on this in his 'West and the rest' thesis. Critics have argued that the notion of the failed state is a pre-emptive ideological strike weapon that gives big powers an excuse for intervention in the affairs of smaller powers (Nay, 2012). It had been suggested that this is a salient factor in Australia's 'cooperative intervention' policy (Fry & Kabutaulaka, 2008).

The notions of 'failed' and 'fragile' states are not just academic typologies used by both liberal and conservative scholars; they are also widely used as policy and analytical tools in the areas of peace-keeping, development strategies, aid programs, diplomatic negotiations on global security, humanitarian assistance, poverty reduction strategies, international trade agreements and foreign intervention by states, international agencies and even civil society organisations (Wallis, 2015; Fry, 1997; Wainwright, 2003). However, there has been growing criticism that the terms are ideologically and politically defined to distinguish countries that do not

conform to Western values and thus provide justification for intervention in these countries under the pretext that they are security threats (Nay, 2012). The invasion of Iraq and the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) were justified by means of this narrative. The terms 'failed' and 'fragile' state are Western-centric and frame the world into a 'them' (failed) versus 'us' (non-failed) binary, which Hall (1996) talked about, and in doing so demarcates the world into a security dichotomy. This is problematic because it attempts to fit all countries into a one size fits all generic security template and ignores their cultural and historical diversity (Call, 2008).

Often the term is defined in a realist way where the state is perceived as a strong and coercive entity and its ability to exert itself on the population determines its legitimacy, stability and robustness. This narrow definition denies the existence of non-state structures, social networks, indigenous world views, cultural capital and informal social systems that keep society together. In addition to this, the term 'failed' state is defined and used liberally in different ways by different people to suit their political interests. As such it often takes on very negative connotations, which are readily used to condemn, intimidate or dismiss the state as unworthy of being included in the civilised global order.

Thus, in the broader context of Pacific regional security, the terms used matter as they can shape perception, behaviour and policies. Concepts are not isolated symbols but are part of a bigger language-cultural system that frames the world in particular ways. The terms 'failed' and 'fragile' state and 'arc of instability' are securitising terms that define images of the Pacific to suit the political and ideological fashion of the beholders. They are not 'neutral' political science typologies as some scholars want to pretend but loaded concepts that reinforce the 'them' versus 'us' security dichotomy as well as transforming the nature of interstate relationships. They are among the latest classificatory concepts within the broader discourse of lineal progression and stratification of humanity and have their theoretical genesis in the Enlightenment. Inherent in this is the dichotomous idea of 'advanced' versus 'primitive' and, in this case, 'successful' versus 'failed'. Within this dominant world view, European societies belong to the positive and non-European societies belong to the negative sides of the equation. This same intellectual tradition had branded Pacific societies as 'savages' and now deems them to have 'failed'. The point to make here is that the demarcation and ranking of people

and repetition of words to reinforce these judgements becomes part of the political language and reality and an integral part of the Pacific security discourse over time.

Often Pacific regional security is defined and understood only in relation to events and geopolitical relationships. While this is significant, it is also important to understand the more subjective meanings of labels and imagery used to categorise countries and people. They represent certain views, assumptions and attitudes, often hidden behind the veneer of diplomacy, yet which have the potential to shape security thinking and policies in profound ways.

Securitising the Pacific as generic region: Deconstructing the myth

The 'Pacific' is often seen in generic terms as a region consisting of people of similar cultures, thinking and social systems. In New Zealand, for instance, the term *Pasifika*, a 'localised' version of Pacific, implies people of similar identities who are stereotyped as dumb, fat, lazy and welfare parasite 'coconuts' (Salesa, 2017). A similar deficit insinuation is implicit in the term 'arc of instability', which paints the Pacific as a bunch of countries that share the same 'unstable' characteristics that make them 'vulnerable'. There is a subconscious assumption about a virus of instability spreading like wildfire across the Pacific and enveloping the region in an infectious way. In the broader security prism, the Pacific is seen as a high-risk and volatile area that needs constant supervision and oversight by big powers.

These generalisations do not take into consideration the different historical, socioeconomic and sociocultural specificities of individual countries and the fact that their security issues are unique to their particular conditions and are not a shared characteristic. A broad scan across the Pacific from west to east will show not a pattern of similarities but a range of diversity in terms of historical experiences, sociopolitical structures, cultural norms and the factors that led to conflicts. I want to emphasise this point by briefly examining the situations in a number of countries and identifying their salient differences.

Let us start with Timor Leste, the westernmost state in the arc. Perched on the Asia-Pacific 'border', Timor Leste has been going through a process of post-independence transformation after years of colonial subjugation under the Portuguese, later the Japanese and, most recently, the Indonesians. Tens of thousands of Timorese lost their lives over the years as a result of brutality by the Japanese and Indonesian invaders. Their eventual independence in 2002 provided a chance to construct a new nation from the ashes of colonial dismemberment and civil war (Jardine, 2002). When the Indonesians invaded East Timor in 1975, Australia, Britain and the United States were complicit parties by endorsing Indonesia's takeover. Australia continues to be a beneficiary of its proximity to East Timor by claiming oil reserves within East Timor's territorial waters. This has put a choke hold on Timor Leste's economic capacity and is a major cause of the rift between the two countries. While the 'arc' theory places the blame for political misfortune on the incapacity of the country's people to sort out their own domestic affairs, the contribution of external colonial actors are often ignored. Colonisation, wars and genocide have ravaged the country so badly that it has taken considerable effort by the international and local communities to rebuild it. The simplistic label of 'unstable' does not help in understanding the country's complex colonial history.

Next door to Timor Leste is West Papua, whose only link with Timor Leste is having a common colonial power in the form of Indonesia. West Papua had been a playground for resource competition by the European powers, but the Dutch eventually made their claim in the 1800s. Indonesia claimed West Papua as well as other Dutch colonies when it became independent in the 1940s (Leadbeater, 2018). West Papua was caught up in broader Cold War politics with the United States. This thwarted the West Papuan move towards independence. Negotiations led to the New York Agreement in 1962, whereby the United States and the Netherlands, with the support of other powers and the United Nations, conspired to transfer the territory to Indonesia. To legitimise the deal, the United States supervised the Act of Free Choice as a referendum to determine whether West Papuans wanted independence or integration with Indonesia. The Indonesians picked 1,025 men out of 800,000 people and coerced them into making their pro-Indonesian choice. The vote was considered 'unanimous', and West Papua became the twenty-sixth province of Indonesia under its new name of West Irian. West Papua's relentless struggle for independence, in which hundreds of thousands of people have died, continues to this day (Leadbeater, 2018).

The point to note here is that most of the problems of West Papua thus far have been due to foreign colonial interests, including big mining conglomerates like Freeport, which benefits handsomely from Indonesia's colonialism. West Papuans do not have a state of their own to run, and this distinguishes them from other Pacific states in the 'arc'.

The situation in Bougainville (Papua New Guinea) had unique features that were different from the previous two cases because it involved indigenous landowner resistance to the exploitative and environmentally destructive extraction of their resources by Rio Tinto, the Australian mining conglomerate, facilitated by the Papua national government. The violence that followed shifted from a military-style confrontation between the Papua New Guinea Defence Force and the Bougainville Revolutionary Army to intracommunity violence. The consequences for the small Bougainville community were devastating. A peace agreement and the eventual setting up of an elected autonomous government paved the way for political stability, but the task of creating a viable economy with or without mining and total independence from Papua New Guinea remains a major challenge for the future. A planned referendum will eventually determine the future of the country (Adams, 2002).

On the PNG mainland itself, issues of law and order are not necessarily linked to Bougainville but are consequences of the country's dramatic transformation from a tribal subsistence economy with community-based sociocultural structures and norms to full-blown capitalism and liberal democracy. Enthused by an abundance of cash from natural resources, the grey area between tradition and modernity has been the site for violence, crime and corruption. This is a major challenge for many resourceful postcolonial societies where the state becomes the conduit between competing modes of production and competing elites vying for power and resources (Lucker & Dinnen, 2010).

Solomon Islands, as a former British protectorate, also has a very different colonial history from Timor Leste and West Papua. It was largely governed through the British governor in Fiji, who was also high commissioner for the western Pacific. The paternalistic governance arrangements created tension between the British and the locals, and often the punitive reaction of the British was swift. This served only to worsen the relationship. The establishment of the colonial plantation economy created a system of internal labour migration, and the consequent pressures on land and resources contributed to tension between the people of Guadalcanal, who were the local landowners, and the people of Malaita, who were mostly

migrant labourers (Moore, 2004). The growing inequality and power imbalance further aggravated the tension, which erupted into full-fledged intertribal violence in 1999. Regional intervention through RAMSI was an Australian-funded regional initiative to respond to the escalating security situation in Solomon Islands. RAMSI will be examined in more detail in Chapter 6.

The Vanuatu situation is quite different from the Timorese, West Papua, Bougainville and Solomon Islands situations in several respects. Vanuatu was a condominium (joint colony) of France and Britain and, while there was an attempt at secession by a group backed by French and other business interests, the country has been relatively stable, except for riots in 1989, a prison breakout, the occasional stand-off between the police and the military, and changes in government as a result of changing loyalty of politicians. The National Council of Chiefs, or Malvatu Mauri, has been a strong cultural pillar in reconciliation in times of disturbances. Competition over wealth by the elites, as seen in PNG, is not much of an issue in Vanuatu because of a lack of mineral resources. Instead, there is a major push by the government and community for preservation of the subsistence indigenous economy and a disdain for individualistic capitalism (Wirrick, 2008). However, there have also been cases of corruption involving politicians and, in a recent case, a former prime minister was imprisoned for bribing other parliamentarians, who also met the same fate.

Fiji's political and security situations are quite distinctive from those of other countries mentioned for a number of reasons. For a start, a large diaspora population consisting mainly of Indo-Fijians, together with other ethnic groups, shaped both the demographic and ethno-power politics, which largely revolved around contestation for power by the indigenous Taukei and the Indo-Fijians. Although ethnicity has often been seen as 'the' major driver of conflict in Fiji, the situation is much more complex and needs to be understood in terms of the dynamic interplay between ethnicity, elite competition for political power, socioeconomic inequality, intracommunal loyalty, racialised perception, religious affiliation, role of the military, cultural identity and the politics of land and resources. On top of these is the role of ethnic entrepreneurs in whipping up ethnic sentiments to serve political ends. The coups in Fiji between 1987 and 2006 were associated with various combinations of some of these, and in any particular case some factors would be more dominant than others (Ratuva, 2011a).

While some of the variables associated with Fiji politics might be similar to those present in other PICs, the nexus between them, including the historical and the sociopolitical circumstances under which they occur, are quite different from interactions elsewhere, and the results and consequences are also different.

Although, in terms of history, genealogy and culture, Tonga and Fiji share a lot in common, the factors that shape their internal security situations are very different indeed. Tonga's political conflict emanates primarily from its rigid class system, whereby the monarchy and its loyal band of nobles rule over an increasingly disgruntled commoner class (Campbell, 2011a).

The differences between the hereditary ruling class's desire to maintain its power and privileges and the commoner's desire for emancipation from the clutches of the constitutional monarch through greater democratisation of the political system led to tension, culminating in the 2006 riots. The constitutional reforms in 2010 saw the relinquishing of some power by the monarch and the establishment of provisions to enable the first commoner prime minister to be elected.

In Samoa, conflict tends to be confined to villages, where social fractures caused by disputes over land and titles are pervasive and are among the major causes of tension and instability (Tiffany, 1980). Although Samoa does not have a military, unlike Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu (which has a paramilitary force) and PNG, it does have a well-equipped riot police unit armed with semi-automatic high-powered rifles, which is deployed when there is a serious security situation. The widespread use of firearms in village conflicts in Samoa is a threat to future stability in a country where strict adherence to tradition and admiration for modernity are simultaneously celebrated in a paradoxical way.

Conflict in the French territories of New Caledonia and French Polynesia has been influenced largely by socio-economic inequality and resistance to colonial rule, although there are also existing intercommunal tensions between non-French groups (Fisher, 2013). In New Caledonia, violence in the form of killings, hostage crises, riots and assassinations have been common. The referendum on independence on 4 November 2018 was won by anti-independence voters (56.4 per cent to 43.6 per cent), a victory that was followed by unrest triggered by dissatisfied indigenous Kanaks. Under the Noumea Accord agreed between the political leaders, there is a possibility of further referendums in 2020 and 2022 (Fisher, 2018).

However, as yet, there is no timetable for independence for French Polynesia, although it has been reinscribed on the UN decolonisation list despite protests by France. The push for independence is still strong, and how it plays out in the future remains to be seen.

These brief examples show that conflicts among the Pacific countries have little relationship with each other in terms of one directly influencing the other. While it is undeniable that national conflicts have some degree of influence on regional politics and security in terms of regional responses, they are generally self-contained and, apart from RAMSI in Solomon Islands, solutions to conflicts are often found within the affected countries themselves. The growing consciousness about peace-building at the regional level has led to the growth of civil society organisations, regional organisations such as the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and international organisations such as UNDP, participating actively in conflict resolution and security projects. Regional solutions to national conflict problems might work up to a point, but, for sustainability, local citizens must be at the helm in providing direction and the appropriate mechanisms.

The point here is that securitising an entire region using generalised narratives such as ‘arc of instability’, ‘Pacific identity’, ‘Pacific way’, ‘Pacific security’ and so forth does little to eliminate complex local realities. While there are of course shared security issues relating to inequality, gender, climate change, poverty and other human security factors, these are universal conditions, happening elsewhere in the world, which emanate from similar circumstances taking place simultaneously but are not transmitted from one country to another. Addressing specific historical conditions and their local consequences is important in understanding the security situation more clearly, rather than framing generalised securitising narratives and labels that neither illuminate the historical and security reality nor help in formulating viable strategies for addressing them. This is the reason for using the detailed comparative case studies approach in this book.

Geopolitical security narratives and responses

Because it is sandwiched between the major powers in the form of the United States to the east and Russia and China to the west, the Pacific Ocean has inevitably become a common space for strategic, political and economic interaction (Ratuva, 2014). While the economic and strategic focus has been on Asia, the PICs, despite their small size, also play a vital role in the bigger strategic picture. The geopolitical significance of the Pacific to global politics was first realised during World War II when it became the battleground against Japanese invasion. Almost all countries in the northern and western Pacific were invaded by Japanese forces, and other PICs contributed to the war effort by sending soldiers to fight the invading Japanese military (Van der Vat, 1992).

The end of World War II and the start of the Cold War heralded a new era of Pacific regional security. The two contending nuclear powers, the US and the USSR, and their respective allies, used the Pacific for naval and other military bases, and as a testing ground and deployment arena for their forces (Firth, 1987). Meanwhile, PICs—many of which were colonies of Western powers like Britain, Australia, New Zealand, France and the Netherlands—were shepherded into a Western sphere of influence to prevent their being influenced by communism.

One of the first attempts to do so was the setting up of the South Pacific Commission (SPC) under the Canberra Agreement of 1947. The work and policy prescriptions of the SPC, consisting of the colonial powers and their colonies, were based on technical and developmental issues and deliberately ignored political and security matters that were of concern to most PICs. The need to openly address political and security issues such as independence and nuclear testing, which the colonial powers were not willing to discuss, was a decisive factor that led to the formation of the Pacific Islands Forum in 1971 by the independent PICs (Crocombe, 2001).

Regional security in the Pacific from the 1940s to the 1980s was very much shaped by Cold War geopolitics. Under the policy of 'strategic denial', the ANZUS (Australia, New Zealand and United States) treaty provided a broad security umbrella to keep Soviet influence at bay and to maintain the Pacific as an 'American lake' (Hayes, Zarsky & Bellow, 1987). Aid was an important source of leverage to ensure that PICs remained within the

ANZUS political and ideological orbit at a time when PICs were eager to express their independent identities in a dramatically changing world. To cement their nuclear and strategic capabilities, the major colonial powers—the United States, France and Britain—tested nuclear bombs in their respective territories (Firth, 1987). The United States tested their bombs in the Marshall Islands from 1946 to 1958, France on Moruroa Atoll in French Polynesia from 1966 to 1996 and Britain on Christmas Island in Kiribati from 1956 to 1958. Within the half-century from 1946 to 1996, the three nuclear powers conducted more than 315 nuclear tests in the Pacific (Maclellan, 2015).

These tests had environmental, health, economic and political consequences for the islands. Many islanders, like servicemen who were involved, were exposed to large doses of deadly radioactive materials, which continued to linger over the years. In the broader geopolitical context, the tests incorporated the Pacific peoples as reluctant participants in the realities of Cold War contestation and the arms race and made them pawns in the swirling politics of global power. While it is easy to dismiss nuclear tests as merely matters of military and strategic interest, we must not forget that they had a profound influence in providing coercive legitimacy to colonialism at a time when anti-colonial ‘winds of change’ were blowing around the world. The nuclear bombs were a symbolic representation of the big powers’ hegemonic territorial claims, although, unlike the local population, citizens of the big powers did not have to live with the environmental and health consequences. Having said this, it is important to also emphasise that many servicemen involved in the tests suffered both short-term and long-term health consequences as a result of the tests (Maclellan, 2018).

The tests were just part of the broader trend of militarisation in the Pacific in the form of military bases and alliances. Although the United States was, at least in terms of Roosevelt’s rhetoric, not predisposed towards classical British-type colonialism, it nonetheless had formal control of a number of PCIs in the north, which it used to serve its strategic interests. As part of its strategic containment thrust against the Soviet Union, the United States had numerous military bases and other military facilities around the Asia-Pacific region. There were 343 of these in 1947, 235 in 1949, 291 in 1953, 256 in 1957, 271 in 1967, 183 in 1975 and 121 in 1988 (Blaker, 1990). The number of bases decreased further over the years, especially after the Cold War.

Sandwiched between the two major contesting adversarial powers, the Pacific people found themselves reluctant players in a game of domination by foreign powers, and this inspired the establishment in 1975 of people-led resistance movements against nuclear imperialism in the form of the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific (NFIP) movement (Robie, 1992). This testified to the growing discontent of Pacific peoples about the activities of the major powers in their part of the world, as well as concern about the future security and livelihood of the region (Maclellan, 2015). The multiple campaign issues of the NFIP movement recognised the interconnected nature of different aspects of colonial hegemony, including nuclear tests, land rights, militarisation, unequal and exploitative development, human rights, colonialism, environmental degradation and other related concerns. For a long time it was the major critical voice against colonialism and the major advocacy network for both hard and human security in the Pacific.

It must be remembered that the NFIP movement was part of the wave of anti-nuclear sentiment that swept the world. In the Pacific this led to the declaration in 1984 of a Nuclear Free New Zealand by the ruling New Zealand Labour Party under Prime Minister David Lange, who, in an Oxford Union debate against Jerry Falwell, leader of the American Moral Majority, declared nuclear weapons to be ‘morally indefensible’ (Lange, 2004). This was followed by the signing of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (SPNFZ) by 13 member countries of the Pacific Islands Forum on 6 August 1985 in Rarotonga, Cook Islands. As we will see later, the SPNFZ was the first regional security agreement, and it set the tone for more regional security agreements in the future.

By the end of the Cold War there was a dramatic shift in the regional security configuration as a result of both internal and external dynamics. The United States started to reduce its economic assistance to PICs, except for its northern Pacific territories. It closed the USAID office in Suva and reduced its military presence around the Asia-Pacific region, including closing the Subic Bay naval base and Clark air force base in the Philippines and reducing the numbers of military personnel in Japan. This withdrawal meant that Guam, in the North Pacific, became the major fall-back position.

The resulting strategic vacuum in the Pacific was quickly filled by China, a growing world power whose economic and political influence in the Pacific increased greatly as a result of its soft power approach in the form of aid and other non-military means (Wilkins, 2010). This has been a major challenge to Australia and New Zealand, two close allies of the United States, whose sense of territorial hegemony as major regional players was often based on the rather paternalistic ideological assumption that the Pacific was their 'backyard' (Fry & Kabutaulaka, 2008).

The involvement of external powers in the Pacific had a competitive dimension, with countries trying to win support and loyalty. Obama's pivot to Asia and the Pacific saw the intensification of US economic, political and strategic engagement in the Asia-Pacific region at a time when China had established itself as a major Pacific power. Over the years, China had outdone the United States in providing aid to the Pacific and in gaining diplomatic leverage (Ratuva, 2014). Concerns about losing control of the Pacific (Hayes, Zarsky & Bello, 1987) inspired a reversal of the immediate post-Cold War strategy of rolling back from engagement with the region towards re-engagement, culminating in the visits to the Pacific by presidents Bush and Obama, as well as senior US officials such as Hillary Clinton, who attended the Pacific Island Forum leaders meeting in Rarotonga in 2012. The PICs have always voted with the United States and the Western allies in the UN general assembly, and this was an asset the Western bloc did not want to lose to China or any other potential adversary.

On the other hand, the Chinese, who have become the largest aid donor for many Pacific states, had to deal not only with the United States but also with Taiwan in a long-running battle for global recognition (Atkinson, 2010). Since the 1980s, both have been involved in cheque book diplomacy as a way of gaining recognition as the legitimate representative of the Chinese people among the PICs. Taiwan actually needs recognition by other states as a way of fulfilling the UN definition of a 'state'. Six countries in the Pacific (Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Nauru, Palau and Kiribati) recognise Taiwan as a result of economic inducements. The competition between China and Taiwan has influenced the behaviour of political elites and internal political instability in various ways in Solomon Islands, Vanuatu (which changed allegiance) and Kiribati over the years (Ratuva, 2014).

Apart from the Chinese, other powers like Russia and Georgia began to show interest in the Pacific Islands because of their voting potential in the United Nations. Russia has been campaigning for recognition by the United Nations of the Georgian breakaway provinces of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, whereas Georgia has been adamant that this is not going to happen. Both countries therefore splashed money to win hearts, minds and, of course, votes (Ratuva, 2014). The Arab League also actively campaigned in the Pacific before the UN vote to accord Palestine a ‘non-member observer state’ status in 2012. Four Pacific states (Nauru, Palau, Marshall Islands and Federated States of Micronesia) voted against Palestine, and the rest abstained. Indonesia has also been actively campaigning diplomatically to counter the region-wide support for West Papuan independence (Firth, 2013).

Among the Pacific island states themselves, the existence of subregional groupings in the form of the Melanesian Spearhead Group and the separate leaders’ meetings of the Polynesian and Micronesian groups has created a certain degree of political division in the region, although they have not really led to any deep fragmentation in the region. Perhaps the most divisive issue revolved around Fiji. After Fiji’s suspension from the PIF, it proceeded to set up its own alternative regional body called the Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF) (Dornan, 2013).

The tension between Fiji and the two big Pacific powers, Australia and New Zealand (whom Fiji consistently accused of spearheading its suspension from the PIF), had repercussions for regional stability and security. Fiji used the opportunity to engage proactively with its ‘look north policy’, which saw China being embraced as a saviour in Fiji’s hour of need. The close political, economic and military links between Fiji and China raised concerns among the Western powers, which felt threatened by what they saw as China’s expansionist agenda in the central Pacific, close to Australia and New Zealand. Relationships between Fiji, Australia and New Zealand began to thaw, and full diplomatic relations were restored after the Fiji general elections in 2014. Despite that, tension still lurks beneath the surface.

The brief regional security narrative above is really meant to provide a broad overview of some of the salient geopolitical issues that have shaped the geopolitical security environment in the Pacific. There are a number of important points to remember here. First, while the individual countries have unique historical experiences and internal sociopolitical

dynamics, as discussed earlier, at another level, they are linked by strands of security policies, thinking and practices, emanating from external powers or from among the PICs. Regional security therefore becomes the site for negotiation between national sovereign security interests and collective regional and global security interests. Second, when we talk about regional security, we are referring to a changing and dynamic phenomenon. Changes in the geopolitical balance of power, as witnessed at the end of the Cold War and with the rise of China, often result in changing security dynamics and responses of individual PICs or groups of PICs (as a regional bloc). Third, the PICs often find themselves subsumed into a vortex of security contestation of the big powers, as we saw during the Cold War and the period after. In some cases, PICs saw themselves as pawns in the power game between the contending external powers (Ratuva, 2017a). Fourth, PICs can no longer ignore the fact that they are now part of the bigger global security agenda, and the challenge they face is how they redefine their identity in a way that comfortably facilitates both the local and global narratives. Fifth, as we saw in the case of Fiji, emerging fault lines caused by political differences may see more intraregional tension, more so at a time when subregional groups are beginning to exert their identity and significance. The last point here is that, in the long term, regional security problems will need to be sorted out internally using local mechanisms for conflict resolution. This should be built into the regional architecture as part of the political process rather than something to be activated only when problems arise.

Regional security mechanisms

Members of the PIF countries share a growing consciousness about their role in determining the future trajectory of regional security as a result of emerging issues relating to transnational crime, development, environmental concerns and political stability (Anderson & Watson, 2005). The response by the PIF was to put in place a number of declarations that were meant to be guidelines for dealing with emerging security situations. The first of these was the Declaration on Law Enforcement (Honiara Declaration) signed in Honiara, the capital of Solomon Islands, in 1992 (PIF, 1992). Although this declaration focused largely on regional cooperation regarding law enforcement relating to crime, it had the latent function of regionalising the security concerns of individual PIF countries. The rationale was that an adverse law enforcement environment

posed a major threat to the sovereignty, security and stability of the region. The Forum Regional Security Committee (FRSC), consisting of security-related government personnel and departments, was tasked with coordinating security-related activities and met just before the leaders' meeting in order to provide advice for the leaders on matters pertaining to security.

Five years later, in 1997, the PIF leaders crafted the Aitutaki Declaration during their retreat on the island of Aitutaki in the Cook Islands. This agreement was more comprehensive than the Honiara Declaration and was far more specific about issues of regional security. It outlined a number of principles relating to: promoting a comprehensive, integrated and collaborative approach to security; good governance, sustainable development and international cooperation, including preventive diplomacy; overcoming vulnerability, building mutual confidence and strengthening the overall security of states in the region; and recognition of the need to resolve conflict by peaceful means, including by customary practices. An interesting aspect of the Aitutaki Declaration was the recognition of the need for preventive diplomacy using the FRSC, the offices of the Forum Secretary General, eminent persons, fact-finding missions and third-party mediation (PIF, 1997).

These principles reflected the shifting realities on the ground, anxiety about unpredictable political conflict and the need for collective responses with an emphasis on preventive measures. However, it just fell short of prescribing intervention—this was to be provided for by the Biketawa Declaration. Signed in Kiribati in November 2000, the Biketawa Declaration was a direct response to the Fiji coup in May 2000 and the Solomon Islands political crisis of the same year. It reiterated and also tightened up key aspects of the Aitutaki Declaration, but perhaps the most significant provision dealt with the possibility of intervention. While it respected 'the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of another member state', the Biketawa Declaration proclaimed:

Forum Leaders recognised the need in time of crisis or in response to members' request for assistance, for action to be taken on the basis of all members of the Forum being part of the Pacific Islands' extended family. The Forum must constructively address difficult and sensitive issues including underlying causes of tensions and conflict (ethnic tensions, socioeconomic disparities, lack of good governance, land disputes and erosion of cultural values). (PIF, 2000: 1)

One of the significant aspects of this provision was that possible intervention was to be requested by a member country. A formal request by the Solomon Islands Government led eventually to the signing of the agreement for RAMSI deployment in 2003. However, the situation was much more complex than it appeared to be. Two Solomon Islands prime ministers had earlier made requests to Australia in 2000 and 2001, at the height of the conflict, but these were turned down. In fact the Australian Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer, was adamant that:

Sending in Australian troops to occupy the Solomon Islands would be folly in the extreme. It would be widely resented in the Pacific region. It would be difficult to justify to Australian taxpayers. And for how many years would such an occupation have to continue? And what would be the exit strategy? The real show-stopper, however, is that it would not work ... foreigners do not have answers for the deep-seated problems afflicting Solomon Islands. (Downer, 2003a)

As a result of 9/11 and the changing global security climate, Australia made a U-turn and agreed to the Solomon Islands' request. Underpinning this change in view was the assumption that Solomon Islands was a 'failed state' and a potential breeding ground for terrorists, from where they could attack Australia. Thus, on 24 July 2003, Solomon Islands signed an agreement with six member states of the Pacific Islands Forum, namely Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Tonga and Samoa, to allow the security forces from those countries to enter Solomon Islands under the umbrella of RAMSI. We will look at the details of the conflict in Solomon Islands, as well as some of the shortcomings of RAMSI, in Chapter 6.

On the other hand, the PIF response to the Fiji crisis in 2006 was an exercise in futility because Fiji's coup leader, Commodore Frank Bainimarama, did not take the eminent persons delegation of the forum seriously and ignored the PIF's appeal for an early election. This was one of the reasons for Fiji's suspension from the PIF, a decision that still has repercussions today. Fiji's suspension provided it with an opportunity to create an alternative geopolitical configuration to suit its regional ambitions. We look at the Fiji situation in more detail in Chapter 4.

While the Biketawa Declaration has attracted considerable attention, little is known of the Nasonini Declaration, another regional agreement signed in the wake of 9/11 following the UN Security Council Resolution 1373

on counter-terrorism. Signed in Suva in 2002, this was an anti-terrorism declaration framed within the broader rubric of global and regional security. Governments and regions around the world were required to put in place anti-terrorism mechanisms in support of Resolution 1373 and, for the PIF states, the Nasonini Declaration, named after the Suva suburb where the PIFS office is located and where the signing took place, was part of their contribution to the war on terror.

While the various security declarations above unified the Pacific under formal security rubrics, the reality on the ground in terms of internal political dynamics is more complex than any universal regional agreement can fully grasp. Even the Pacific Plan, which was created in 2005 as a blueprint for regional governance, growth, sustainable development and security, failed to address the multiplicity and complexity of security issues. The new Regional Framework established in 2015, and meant to be the substitute for the Pacific Plan, has been facing difficulties in terms of implementation because of the challenges in addressing the diversity and complexity of security issues.

Regional human security: Integrating diversity

We saw in Chapter 2 how the notion of human security has taken global policy thinking by storm since the 1990s. Although human security is a relatively new concept in the Pacific, its influence on regional and national policies has grown exponentially over the years. This growth is due to the combined efforts of international agencies and aid donors in instilling the virtues of human security in Pacific island states and civil society organisations through multilateral and bilateral relations, aid, policy engagement and civic education. Although hard security has been the dominant regional narrative (see for instance Henderson & Watson, 2005), the affirmative reception to the concept of human security is due to its all-encompassing nature, which blended well into Pacific indigenous cultural world views where political, social, economic, psychological and cultural components of life are inseparably linked.

The regional human security framework is a result of a series of consultations between the UNDP, PIFS, civil society organisations and governments over a period of a few months in 2007. The consultations arrived at some degree of broad understanding about some of the shared human security issues in the Pacific relating to development, land, ethnic

relations, climate change, environment, resources distribution, inequality, gender, education, human rights and other issues (UNDP, 2007). Nevertheless, there is still a divergence of opinions over what human security should specifically entail, especially given the diversity of Pacific cultures and national interests. For instance, there is debate as to whether human security should be framed in terms of threat to individuals, as the UNDP argued, or threat to the community, as many Pacific civil society organisations suggested during the consultation. The compromise reached was that both are important. One of the lessons learnt by UNDP during a regional consultation in Nadi, Fiji, was that the cultural context is important and, for many Pacific communities whose ethos revolves around communal-based and semi-subsistence life, well-being is fundamentally defined by the shared culture of the group.

The 2007 consultations, which were attended by the author, also reached a consensus that gender equality was a critical issue in understanding the security of the group, especially in times of transition and conflict in predominantly patriarchal Pacific communities. Gender issues, it must be noted, permeate social categories and communities, although how they are conceptualised differs considerably across the social spectrum; at one end of the continuum are the more conservative cultural traditionalists and fundamentalist Christians, who believe in the natural inferiority of women, while on the other side of the scale are the more educated and progressive thinkers who believe in gender equality (UNDP, 2007). And there are, of course, those who oscillate in between. Participants in the consultation saw the progressive position as providing the necessary ideological fulcrum for the future trajectory of gender relations and social transformation in the Pacific. The tension between the two ends of the social continuum will continue, and arriving at a consensus, especially at the national and community levels, is a major challenge.

One of the major challenges with the operationalisation of the concept of human security in the Pacific is the difficulty in incorporating it into public policies in a genuinely serious way. The political pressure by donors and international partners might open up possibilities of countries manufacturing data that could get them a higher ranking in the UNDP Human Development Index (HDI), where human security variables are used extensively. Annual reports of human security projects are also written in an exaggerated way to please donors. The lack of expertise in appropriate interdisciplinary field methodologies is a major drawback,

more so because most professionals in the Pacific are trained in a mono-disciplinary fashion. Another major drawback is the lack of consciousness of what human security is and its importance in national development.

In response to these concerns, PIFS devised a common template for a human security framework for the small island states. The framework resulted from a region-wide consultation in collaboration with UNDP, other regional organisations, civil society organisations and government agencies. The framework aims to ‘provide a clear common foundation and strategic guidance to Forum Island Countries, the Secretariat and other stakeholders for improving the understanding, planning and implementation of human security approaches in stand-alone and broader peace, security and development initiatives in the unique Pacific context’ (PIF, 2009). Apart from the consultations held between 2006 and 2008, the framework also draws from the major regional security declarations including the Aitutaki Declaration (PIF, 1997), Biketawa Declaration (2000), Leaders’ Vision (2004), Pacific Plan (revised 2007) and directives from the FRSC in Outcome Statements (2006–11).

One of the problems with the framework is that it is too rigid in its definition and, at the same time, too abstract; it lacks clarity about the way it is to be actualised in unique real-life Pacific situations. One of the PIF’s dilemmas is to ensure that policy-makers in member governments understand the policy utility and beneficial outcomes of human security in relation to development, governance, well-being and security generally. Even the FRSC, whose task is to provide regional security policy direction for the Forum leaders, has been unable to fathom the significance of the term. At its Auckland meeting in 2008, attended by the author, it was clear that ‘hard’ security was still paramount and should remain a primary factor in the regional human security framework. This position was not surprising because of the way in which traditional hard security psychology was firmly implanted in the perception and ideology of state institutions. It will take time to ensure that human security becomes an integral component of contemporary strategic and policy thinking.

Although the regional human security framework is based on the five principles of being preventive, localised, inclusive, collaborative and people-centred, there is no clear direction as to how these are to be applied in practice. Not only does the framework lack internal conceptual coherence, it also lacks analytical depth and strategic direction for effective

implementation. It is largely an isolated document created by regional bureaucrats who have minimal links to communities outside the PIFS headquarters in Suva, Fiji.

Free trade and human security

In recent years, the impact of free trade on Pacific communities, especially its impact on human security, has been vigorously debated. Central to the debate is whether free trade is necessary to enhance the development of Pacific societies or is destructive to their lives and undermines their well-being. The discussions have revolved around the possible impact of PACER Plus, the region's most recent free trade agreement, which was signed on 14 June 2017 by Australia, New Zealand, Tonga, Niue, Nauru, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Tuvalu and Cook Islands.¹ Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu refused to sign, although Vanuatu has since changed its mind and will probably sign soon. Other countries that did not sign were Marshall Islands, Palau and Federated States of Micronesia, and the excuse given was transportation difficulties.

Proponents of PACER Plus are of the view that regional free trade is a panacea for the future growth challenges of PICs' economies. Trade liberalisation and alignment with World Trade Organization (WTO) trade rules, it is argued, will allow for greater competition and a wider variety of choices in terms of goods and services for Pacific customers, thus driving down prices. Although import tariffs, an important source of revenue for governments, will be lifted, based on a formula implemented progressively over time, advocates of neoliberal policies firmly contend that other forms of taxation such as Value Added Tax (VAT) will make up for the deficit. For instance, Ronald Duncan, a well-known Australian scholar and advocate of neoliberal economics argued:

Trade liberalisation with the rest of the world is likely to be the most beneficial policy for Pacific countries to follow, whether done unilaterally or by joining the WTO ... Once trade liberalisation is identified as an important policy reform, the most important issue

¹ Apart from PACER Plus, other regional trade agreements include the South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement (SPARTECA), a non-reciprocal preferential agreement between the PICs and including Australia and New Zealand, which started in the 1980s; Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA) between the PICs and excluding Australia and New Zealand; and the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), a trade agreement with the European Union.

would be the identification and removal of the binding constraints to its adoption. These may be institutional, economic, policy-related, or cultural, among others—including the opposition of vested interests. Within the Pacific, opposition to open markets is very strong and supported by vested interests, ideology, and cultural beliefs. Economic issues also constrain the response to changes in the terms of trade through trade liberalisation, such as insecurity of land tenure and poor access to credit. (Duncan, 2008: x)

The reference to social and cultural issues as ‘binding constraints’ that need ‘removal’ represents a typical neoliberal narrative, which sees unrestrained hard economics as undisputedly paramount over other aspects of human security. The reference by Duncan to ‘vested interests’ is contentious because it assumes that critics of free trade in the Pacific, who largely consist of academics, activists and civil society organisations, somehow stand to gain financially from the absence of free trade.

In 2009, Australia’s Minister for Trade, Simon Crean, vaunted the virtues of PACER Plus as both a free trade and development-based agreement that goes a long way to integrating the Pacific economies as well as opening up their borders to a greater flow of goods, labour and services:

PACER Plus is not just a trade agreement: it is fundamentally concerned with developing the capacity of the Pacific region. It is clear that PACER Plus could address a number of issues common to the whole region. For example, how to comply with the quarantine requirements into Australia and New Zealand; developing consistent rules of origin within the region; the importance of improving aviation links to encourage greater tourism; and liberalisation of the telecommunications industry are just a few areas that have been raised with me. It is also clear that there is great potential to develop a region-wide labour mobility and skills development program for the Pacific. Of course, each country will have individual concerns specific to their nation and people—and we envisage that this too will be part of the structure of future discussions as we move forward. (Crean, 2009)

Although in the same speech Crean denied that Australia pressured the PIF to start negotiation on PACER Plus, the chief trade adviser for the PICs, Dr Chris Noonan (a University of Auckland academic), thought otherwise: ‘The pressure to negotiate a WTO-compatible agreement is

coming from Australia and New Zealand rather than the Forum Island Countries. That's been the whole history of the PACER-Plus process' (Maclellan, 2011).

Australia and New Zealand committed themselves to providing funds of up to A\$1 million initially for three years for the Office of Chief Trade Adviser (OCTA) to provide advice for the PICs in response to their plea for more advice and capacity-building towards future negotiations. This financial offer complicated matters because it was perceived as compromising the independence of the OCTA. Australia even suggested that, as chief bankroller, it should have a say in the governance of the OCTA. Shifting the OCTA to Port Vila was seen as a much better idea than having it housed in the PIFS in Suva because of direct influence by Australia through the economic governance director, an Australian (Pacnews, 2010).

Strong sentiments were expressed about the need to make OCTA independent from the PIF because of possible interference by Australia and New Zealand. Noonan resigned as director of OCTA due to what he saw as the bullying tactics by Australia and New Zealand in leveraging their powerful position to force negotiations on small island states. He was replaced by Dr Edwini Kessie, a WTO employee and passionate believer in trade liberalisation, who oversaw the negotiations until the end.

The major pro-free trade narratives revolve around a number of selling points, including creating a more open and predictable trading environment; consistency and transparency of rules throughout the region on sanitary and phytosanitary measures, technical barriers to trade and customs procedures; greater liberal and product-specific rules of origin; growth of investment in the region, particularly by New Zealand and Australian investors; greater certainty around tariffs for exporters; more opportunities for trade-related development assistance for PICs; and a more mobile labour force in the region (NZMFAT, 2017).

When PACER Plus was finally endorsed on 20 April 2017, the event was hailed as a great success by the New Zealand Minister for Trade, Todd McClay, who said:

This is a significant achievement. After 8 years of negotiations, we can now focus on implementing an agreement which future-proofs our access whilst helping develop their export economies ... PACER Plus is a unique trade and development agreement. It includes a development package of more than \$55 million

that will help raise standards of living, create employment opportunities and increase export capacity in Pacific Island countries ... The agreement will also create a common set of trading rules covering goods, services and investment in support of economic growth. These rules will help reduce tariffs and red tape for exporters and investors, which will increase the attractiveness of the region for trade and investment. (NZMFAT, 2017)

Is agreement on free trade to be considered a 'success' or, as opponents would argue, a threat to the well-being of the Pacific people? The argument that PACER Plus is a threat to vulnerable PICs is based on broader human security concerns. The removal of tariffs means a significant reduction in revenue for import-reliant PICs. PICs will need to make up this financial loss through other means such as VAT and other forms of taxation, which will burden local consumers further. In addition, local industries, especially in manufacturing, processing and agriculture, can be overwhelmed by the unrestricted flood of foreign goods entering the local market. Local industries do not have the resilience and ability to compete with global producers on a level playing field. The reality is that there is no level playing field because foreign companies have the advantage of greater capital outlay, technology and resources and are backed by more powerful economies. Although goods might be cheaper, the resulting unemployment can lead to poverty, social marginalisation and crime. Economic grievances built up over time have the potential to fuel political agitation and violence. We have seen this in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Tonga, the three case studies in this book, where feelings of socioeconomic marginalisation have readily translated into explosive political grievances and violent action.

The unrestricted availability of cheap unhealthy food such as New Zealand mutton flaps is a major concern for Pacific peoples at a time when the rate of diabetes and obesity among them is one of the highest in the world. Already the propensity to consume cheaper manufactured food such as noodles and fizzy drinks is high in many Pacific communities, and this can be exacerbated by the availability of more varieties of cheap high-sugar and high-carbohydrate foreign food products. In addition, the waste from the manufactured food products adds more pressure on already fragile atoll environments, where waste disposal and the impacts of climate change have been major challenges. Climate change has damaged and transformed the coastal configuration of many islands and limits their capacity for waste storage.

Another major concern is the hegemonic power leveraging and imposition of dominant interests associated with the agreement. Behind the veneer of diplomacy, it has been observed that discussions on PACER Plus were fraught with subtle bullying tactics. The trade justice campaigner for the Pacific Network on Globalisation (PANG), Adam Wolfenden, said:

Australia and New Zealand are again using PACER Plus to get what they want out of the Pacific, this despite the constant rhetoric from the region's biggest neighbours that this is a development agreement for the Pacific. The Pacific Island Countries have long argued that Labour Mobility and Development Assistance are the two areas of possible benefit to them under PACER Plus and yet those are the areas that Australia and New Zealand are showing practically no flexibility on. That some of the smallest nations in the world are the ones who are shouldering the flexibility in these negotiations is typical of what we have come to expect in relationships with our biggest neighbours in the region. The power dynamics in the PACER Plus negotiations mean that Pacific Island Countries development gets sacrificed to demonstrate our good faith. It is the Island Countries who continue to negotiate in good faith. (Fonua, 2014: 1)

Other PIC officials expressed their displeasure with the PACER Plus negotiations. The chair of the Negotiating Group on Labour Mobility for Solomon Islands expressed regret that:

We are nowhere near achieving an agreement on the core demands of the PICs ... While we acknowledge the efforts of New Zealand to bridge the gaps in the negotiating positions of the Parties, we believe that the proposed Arrangement falls far short of our expectations in many respects. (Fonua, 2014: 1)

As expected, a number of compromises had to be made as the Tongan chair of the Negotiating Group on Development Assistance asserted:

We have managed to demonstrate considerable flexibility to overcome some of the initial divergences we held at the inception of these negotiations ... In the spirit of compromise, we have been able to overcome that fundamental difference, without which we would not be seeking to elaborate on the structure of the 'Development Assistance' component. (Fonua, 2014: 1)

Despite these reservations, the chief trade advisor for the PICs, Edwini Kessie, remained optimistic and suggested that:

We are making good progress in the negotiations, especially on the sticky issues of labour and development assistance and other issues such as sanitary and phytosanitary measures, technical barriers to trade and customs procedures as well as negotiations on trade in services and investment. (Fonua, 2014: 1)

Kessie criticised the PANG opposition to PACER Plus by saying:

A PACER Plus Agreement will help the PICs to put in place a coherent trade and investment policy framework that should create the necessary conditions for trade and investment to flourish and for the long-term economic development of their countries. The Agreement should enable them to push through reforms that would provide a pathway for the sustainable growth and development of their economies. (Pareti, 2014)

Dr Roman Grynberg, a former senior economist with the PIF, disagreed with this optimistic assessment:

It is very likely that the two principle bargaining objectives of the Pacific Islands, to get a trade agreement that gives them security of labour market access for Pacific islanders to Australia and New Zealand (ANZ) and security of development assistance, will not be met. ANZ have made it perfectly clear that they will never make bound commitments in either area because of the precedent this will establish for FTA negotiations with India and other large countries. What ANZ are expecting is a profoundly unequal treaty, i.e. the islands agree to bind their tariffs at zero or at low levels and in return ANZ promise to be nice and, if they are in the mood, will grant labour market access and development assistance but certainly no legal commitments on either issue. This outcome is all the more absurd and unjust given that the island states already have duty free access for their exports under the unilateral SPARTECA treaty and so will stand to gain almost nothing from Pacer Plus. (Grynberg, 2014: 2)

Despite the fact that PACER Plus is now signed, debates about its impact will continue. The disagreement over PACER Plus's conditions is reflective of the bigger power dynamics of inequality and hegemonic relations. The fact that Australia and New Zealand provide most of the funds for regional organisations such as PIF and SPC is seen as justification for influence and control of these regional organisations.

The long-term economic security of the small PICs depends very much on a number of critical factors, including the conditions of trade and aid they have to engage with. Often, trade imbalance and poorly implemented development aid can undermine their capacity for growth and sustainability. The only PIC with a sizeable manufacturing, processing and export base is Fiji, which also controls about 80 per cent of intraregional trade, and its absence from PACER Plus means that the power balance is extremely skewed, with Australia and New Zealand providing approximately 90 per cent of the goods for trade. The trade-off in the form of labour mobility will depend very much on changes in the immigration and labour policies of New Zealand and Australia in the future. The current seasonal workers schemes have been working satisfactorily in terms of providing employment for unskilled workers, while the recent attempt to hire skilled workers will affect the progressively depleted skilled labour force in the PICs. How the increasingly strict rules that restrict skilled immigration to New Zealand and Australia will affect labour mobility in the future is a cause for concern.

For countries that have largely subsistence economies, the prospect of benefiting from a free trade deal might not be the best way forward because of their inability to participate equally and meaningfully. Free trade is sensible and workable as a two-way process only where there is reciprocal trade and power is shared relatively equally. This is far from being the case with PACER Plus, where trade flow is one-directional and the distribution of benefits skewed. This raises a range of concerns in relation to equity, food security and other forms of human security.

Patronage, economic disparity and security

One of the significant factors in security is the imposition of power, as Foucault (1991) reminds us. In a situation of patronage, the imposition of power and power imbalance can create conditions for oppression and marginalisation of smaller or weaker groups, which could exacerbate differences. Economic power differentials in the Pacific revolve around the patronage-type dominance of Australia and New Zealand in the economic as well as political affairs of the region (Ratuva, 2008). A classic example of this is in regard to PACER Plus, which is, as we saw earlier, an agreement between countries with extremely unequal power. For instance, the combined population of Australia and New Zealand is about 30 million with a combined GDP of about US\$1,560.231 trillion

and an average GDP per capita of US\$54,506. This compares rather unfavourably with the combined economic capacity and performance of 10 PICs that are members of the World Bank (Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu) with a total population of 2.28 million, a total GDP of US\$8.009 billion and average GDP per capita of \$US3,460 (World Bank, 2013).

This large disparity is also reflected in the trade figures, which favour Australia and New Zealand disproportionately. For instance, in the calendar year ending 31 December 2011, New Zealand's exports to the Pacific were worth more than NZ\$1.5 billion, reflecting a 12 per cent growth from 2010. This was in contrast to a mere NZ\$98 million worth of exports from the PICs to New Zealand, representing a deficit of NZ\$1.4 billion (NZMFAT, 2012). The lack of domestic production and export, as well as New Zealand's strict biosecurity rules, have contributed to the disparity.

Australia and New Zealand's patronage is further strengthened through aid. Aid for building up trade capacity, together with the prospect of more labour mobility, were used as leverage to buy the consent of PICs to sign PACER Plus. Both countries have been prolific dispensers of aid in the region, with New Zealand disbursing more than half of its total aid in the islands, justified on the basis that the Pacific includes 'some of the world's smallest and most isolated states' and 'the region faces a range of economic and social development challenges, and much of the region is vulnerable to natural disasters' (NZMFAT, 2014). New Zealand's total estimated aid to the Pacific in the 2014–15 period was NZ\$121.5 million for bilateral aid and \$NZ19.5 million for Pacific regional agencies. At the same time, Australia's aid to the Pacific (excluding PNG) was A\$174 million in 2013–14 and A\$196.9 million in 2014–15. Apart from bilateral aid, its multilateral aid program for the period 2014–17 included A\$21.6 million for the PIF, A\$51.5 million for the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and A\$14.9 million for the Pacific Leadership Program (PLP). Australia's view is that bilateral and regional aid complement each other:

Australia's regional program complements our bilateral program investments to support economic growth and poverty reduction in the Pacific. Many of the Pacific's challenges cannot be addressed solely on a country-by-country basis. The regional program adds value where it is more efficient and effective to work through regional approaches. (DFAT, 2014)

Australia's justifications for its aid to the Pacific are based on:

Isolation, both in terms of geography and communications; small, often dispersed, populations and markets that limit economies of scale and domestic revenue opportunities; limited natural resources; rapid population growth that outstrips job creation, income earning opportunities and social services; a shortage of critical infrastructure with poor maintenance; high vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and natural disasters, and economic shocks such as fluctuating international fuel and food prices. (DFAT, 2014)

These challenges, it is argued, are 'exacerbated by the limited capacity in Pacific island public sectors', difficulty in 'managing the requirements of modern business and government' and their inability to 'deliver essential functions including providing services such as health, education and policing' (DFAT, 2014). In 2012, Australia's bilateral aid to the PICs consisted of the following: Fiji (A\$46 million), Kiribati (A\$35 million), Papua New Guinea (A\$494 million), Samoa (A\$41 million), Solomon Islands (A\$235 million), Tonga (A\$33 million) and Vanuatu (A\$66 million). In per capita terms, aid to some of the PICs is among the highest in the world. While aid flows were justified using manifest deficit narratives, the more politically latent role of aid to maintain a sense of patronage and manufacture consent among the PICs cannot be discounted easily. Australia, together with New Zealand, largely funds the PIF, and this makes the regional agency susceptible to ANZ control and influence (Grynberg, 2014).

Interference in the Economic Partnership Agreement

This power imbalance and patron–client psychology was also reflected in the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations between the Pacific-based African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and the European Union, in which Australia and New Zealand insisted on provisions for their involvement, although the agreement had nothing whatsoever to do with them. In doing this, the two countries hoped to keep their regional patronage undisturbed by the influence of other outside powers.

Roman Grynberg described this thus:

This [EPA negotiation] was deeply resented by Australia simply because the Forum works on consensus and the fact that the islands would provide a consensus on trade issues and prior to the ACP group, Australia could effectively veto anything they did not like. But what the ACP negotiations provided to the islands for the first time in their history was a relatively well-funded mechanism by which they could come to decisions in their own interests without having to appease Canberra and Wellington. This sort of independence by Canberra's vassal states in the Pacific islands, i.e. what it sees as 'its lake', was unacceptable to their policy-makers. (Grynberg, 2010: 1)

The use of the term 'Canberra's vassal states' is interesting here and connotes a feudatory relationship, in which the economic and political survival of Pacific communities is predicated on their loyalty to the two countries and, in turn, on the two countries' patronage of Pacific countries.

Australia and New Zealand are always wary of the influence of the European Union in the region through the EU-funded Pacific ACP group, which included only the 14 Pacific Islands and excluded the two larger powers. Australia, in particular, felt uneasy about the fact that its power to veto any PIF decision and its capacity to induce a consensus were going to be undermined by another competing hegemon. The ACP negotiations provided the opportunity for the small island states to make 'decisions in their own interests without having to appease Canberra and Wellington' for the first time in their history (Grynberg, 2010: 1).

Attempts to initiate trade agreements through PICTA, which did not involve Australia and New Zealand, with China, Taiwan and also Australia and New Zealand did not succeed. In 2009, Roman Grynberg, the PIF director of trade who had been sympathetic to the small island states' cause and was a thorn in the side of the Australians, was removed and was replaced by an Australian. That Australia exercises direct influence on some PICs, such as Papua New Guinea, through Australian businessmen in PNG who influence trade policy 'has long been the talk of the Forum', as they have 'sabotaged the EPA negotiations by negotiating behind the backs of other Pacific islanders and completely undermined Pacific solidarity' (Grynberg, 2010: 1). The concern raised here is that, by signing a separate EPA deal with the EU for fish market access, PNG would be

in a position to solicit fish supplies from other PICs, a move that would benefit these Australian commercial interests. Agreeing to an EPA that was devoid of important provisions such as labour mobility and aid, crucial for PICs, would have provided a very bad precedent for the PACER Plus negotiations.

The EPA negotiations have been temporarily suspended due to the inability of the EU and the PICs to achieve consensus on some issues, such as EU access to fishing resources in the Pacific as payoff for some concessions. PACER Plus has been endorsed and signed, although some countries, including Fiji and Papua New Guinea, have refrained from committing themselves. The refusal of those two countries to sign is based on the recognition that the agreement has the potential to undermine their productive capacity by killing off local industries that cannot compete against bigger Australian and New Zealand importers and investors. For the small PICs, who have been led to believe that the agreement is the panacea for their economic woes, the full impact of free trade is still to set in and, because they are bound by the agreement, it will not be easy to extricate themselves in the short term.

The point to emphasise here is that, while Pacific regionalism is often hailed as a consensual and harmonious configuration of consenting sovereign states, the reality is very different. The two dominant powers, Australia and New Zealand, wield much greater power than any other state, which enables them to keep the small states under their hegemonic control. Their ability to influence and buy loyalty through aid creates a regional patronage relationship that is hidden beneath the façade of regionalism. The security implications of these arrangements are latent rather than manifest. The loss of sovereignty and autonomy of small island states to determine their own foreign policy direction and economic development choices is a great concern in an era of globalisation, where states are expected to be more assertive and independent minded. External manipulation and patronage can be disempowering and create a sense of insecurity. Expressing one's political sovereignty, independence and determining one's policy trajectory for the future provides a sense of self-empowerment and security. This is an important psychological prerequisite for both national and regional stability.

Climate change and human security

There is a growing consensus that climate change is probably the single most important future threat to human security in the Pacific. Many low-lying, small island countries such as Tuvalu, Kiribati and Marshall Islands are not in a position to mitigate the persistent increase in sea level and erosion in the foreseeable future. In addition, the increase in the number of climate-induced disasters such as cyclones, coral bleaching due to high sea temperatures, floods and droughts are socially and economically disruptive and, in many cases, very costly. While these trends have been part of the Pacific people's daily challenges for years, it is only in the last 20 years or so that, as a result of greater consciousness-raising through international and regional campaigns, the issue of climate change has become prominent.

The discourse on climate change is highly political, as much as it is environmental and scientific. Although about 97 per cent of the world's scientists now acknowledge the climate change phenomenon to be 'real', there are climate change 'agnostics' (who are not sure about aspects of the matter) and even outright deniers, some of whom are linked to the energy industry and conservative political camp and who see climate change as a left-wing fear-mongering scam. The deniers' position has been given an ideological boost by US President Donald Trump's stance that climate change is a 'Chinese hoax' and by his anti-climate change policies, which include potential US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement (COP21) on climate change, expected withdrawal from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the undoing of Obama's climate change strategies. Any US withdrawal from the estimated US\$100 billion GCF will affect the small Pacific island states. The United States had committed itself to giving US\$3 billion to the fund, with US\$1 billion being paid so far. The discontinuation of the US contribution means that funds for climate adaptation and rehabilitation will be reduced considerably, thus affecting the small Pacific states' mitigation and resilience capability. So far, six Pacific island states have acquired funding from the GCF: Fiji (US\$31 million for an urban water supply and wastewater management project), Tuvalu (US\$36 million for a coastal adaptation project), Vanuatu (US\$23 million for climate information services for resilient development), Samoa (US\$57.7 million for integrated flood management to enhance the climate resilience of the Vaisigano River catchment), Cook Islands (US\$17 million for the Pacific Islands renewable energy investment

program) and Solomon Islands (US\$2.5 million for the Tina River hydro power development project) (GCF, 2017). Other island countries are still processing their applications through various accredited institutions.

Increasingly, various other forms of bilateral and multilateral aid to the Pacific are related, either directly or indirectly, to steps to mitigate the short-term or long-term effects of climate change. However, a main concern is whether aid related to climate change actually reaches those who really need it. Although conventional assumptions perceive climate change aid as humanitarian, the reality is that it is latently political. Climate change has now become a commodified political issue, and many donors use the opportunity to be seen as generous, hoping that this will help promote their status as good global citizens. This competition for glory and tight control over the GCF have overshadowed its humanitarian aspects. The challenge is how to connect the global political discourse to realities on the ground. The influx of aid and climate change experts into the Pacific, funded by the GCF and other donors, can be disempowering for local communities whose innovation and indigenous knowledge of adaptation and resilience have been undermined and considered irrelevant amid the newly introduced and externally funded technologies and skills.

A major challenge is how to create space for conversation between the externally driven global discourse on climate change and local indigenous innovations and knowledge in the Pacific. The state, as a conduit for global and regional policies, can play a critical role in engaging and integrating the two levels. This requires changes in thinking and in approaches to engender more inclusive and diversified policies in response to climate change. One way forward is to frame climate change as a human security issue that affects the livelihood of the local communities and to seek ways in which local communities can be empowered to directly participate in climate change mitigation. This could promote the importance of community-based innovations and knowledge for adaptation and resilience.

While climate change is a creeping disaster that has the potential to affect all aspects of security in profound ways—economic, social, cultural, environmental or political—the way Pacific communities respond to it depends very much on, first, their understanding of the problems; second, the will to address the problems; and third, the availability of the means to address these problems. The first issue is critical because it affects the second and third issues. In some countries such as Tuvalu and Kiribati,

many still believe that climate change is the ‘will of God’ and that there is nothing we can do about it, while some even argue that climate change mitigation is against God’s will. At the same time, the more progressive members of the churches have been actively trying to confront this view through greater consciousness-raising with the help of governments and civil society organisations. The challenges associated with changing people’s thinking are immense and one of the greatest barriers to climate change campaigns.

For some island countries such as Tuvalu and Kiribati, the option of relocation is now a real possibility. Kiribati has purchased 6,000 acres of land in Fiji as a possible site for relocation if the situation demands it. Climate change migration poses even bigger challenges in relation to logistics, integration and political status. For instance, for argument’s sake, if the 116,000 people of Kiribati decide to migrate to Fiji, there are a number of challenges that need careful consideration. Will they migrate as individuals, to be absorbed and integrated into Fijian society? Will they relocate as a ‘state’, in which case Kiribati would become a mini ‘state’ within the Fijian state? Or will Fiji give them a semi-autonomous status to run their own affairs as part of the Fijian state, similar to the Banaban people, who were relocated from Ocean Island in Kiribati to Rabi Island in Fiji by the British in 1954, after their island was mined for phosphate? Another critical question is what will happen to the submerged atolls, reefs and so on after the relocation of the state? Do they still remain part of the sovereignty of the relocated Kiribati state or would Kiribati make a deal with Fiji to make Kiribati’s exclusive economic zone a part of Fiji’s territory in exchange for setting up an autonomous Kiribati political entity in Fiji?

The issue is more complex than it seems, especially if one considers the issue of land politics, resource distribution, ethnic relations and population expansion in Fiji, a country already beset by a multitude of security issues. What we might see in this situation are layers of security issues feeding on one another. This is why it is important to have very clear guidelines in the beginning, based on dialogue for a win-win end result between Fiji and Kiribati. Nevertheless, Fiji has declared its willingness to take in people from Tuvalu and other Pacific Islands as climate change migrants, although, in the broader scheme of things, the region should be involved proactively through the PIF. Unfortunately, Australia and New Zealand’s ungenerous refugee and immigration policies might not be conducive to a comprehensive and humane regional approach.

Moreover, climate change is an issue that has deepened the wedge between Australia and New Zealand on the one hand and Pacific island states on the other, especially in relation to what is perceived as Australia and New Zealand's lack of commitment to reduction of carbon emissions under the Kyoto Protocol. A former Australian prime minister, Tony Abbott, suggested that like-minded centre-right governments around the world should form an alliance to resist global moves towards carbon pricing and in favour of more 'direct action' measures. Representing the voice of desperation of small island states, Kiribati's president lamented:

We're not talking about the growth GDP, we're not talking about what it means in terms of profit and losses of the large corporations, we're talking about our survival. What will happen in terms of greenhouse gas emissions levels agreed to internationally will not affect us, because our future is already here ... we will be under water. (ABC, 2014)

The same sentiment was expressed by Christopher Loesak, president of the Marshall Islands, a country that still suffers from the effects of US nuclear tests in the 1950s:

I'm very concerned that the Prime Minister [of Australia] is setting the wrong tone in what needs to be a very determined effort to tackle climate change. Prime Minister Abbott's comments on Monday with Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper are a further indication that Australia is isolating itself on this issue. We see all the time the problem is getting worse, but we don't want to lose hope. We believe that there are still opportunities to curb this problem and we look forward to working with the world community to talk about it, and to do anything we can to help them to do something about climate change. (ABC, 2014)

The PICs have also been critical of the fact that many developed countries have not fully committed themselves to the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Even the UN Kyoto Protocol Adaptation Fund established in 2001 has been largely shunned by prospective donors. Furthermore, access to the GCF has been bureaucratically cumbersome. This involves applying for assistance through accredited organisations, which will help put together a proposal for the government concerned.

In July 2014 representatives of four of the world's most vulnerable atoll countries—Kiribati, Maldives, Marshall Islands and Tuvalu—met in Kiribati to discuss some of their shared challenges in relation to global

warming. To make their voice stronger they formed the Coalition of Atoll Nations on Climate Change (CANCC). Such international solidarity by small states plays a crucial role in providing psychological security and hope in a world where parochial national interests supersede global moral responsibility.

The issue of climate change has raised the global profile of PICs in international forums, and Pacific leaders have assumed prominence in the global campaign. By chairing the Conference of the Parties (COP25) on climate change by global leaders, Fiji has demonstrated the deeper sense of global responsibility that Pacific island states have in saving their islands and planet Earth. Despite the turnabout by the United States, the momentum of the global campaign will continue and, in the Pacific, the people will have to respond to climate change challenges by consolidating their efforts, both locally and globally.

The empire strikes back: The new Pacific diplomacy

The response of the PICs to the need to engage with the big power more effectively was to pull their political and moral resources together using more creative diplomatic approaches. This required some independent and strategic thinking because of the need to overcome some of what they see as patronising and exploitative tendencies by the bigger powers such as Australia and New Zealand (Fry & Tarte, 2015).

This ‘new Pacific diplomacy’, as Fry and Tarte (2015) call it, seems to have been galvanised in part by Fiji’s suspension from the Pacific Islands Forum and the rise of climate change as a major security threat. Following its suspension in 2009 and sanctions by Australia and New Zealand, Fiji proceeded to unravel the regional governance and security architecture as part of its ‘revenge’. One such move was the setting up of the Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF) as a counter to the PIF, which has been dominated by Australia and New Zealand through funding and direct political influence. Although PIDF has faced funding challenges over the years, its diplomatic and geopolitical symbolism and statement of resistance was unmistakable. This geopolitical manoeuvre was aimed at weakening the hegemonic foothold of Australia and New Zealand

in the region as well as softening the dominance of traditional regional organisations such as the PIF (Dornan, 2013). Some countries showed support for the PIDF while still members of the PIF but some did not.

In addition to the PIDF was the invigoration of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) as the main lobbying group for small Pacific states at the United Nations. This was in recognition of their much sought-after UN votes as well as the desire to be independent of the PIF, which had been the major negotiating mechanism for the PICs (Manoa, 2015). The PSIDS started in the early 1990s as a collective negotiation group for the PICs, but it took on a new political energy and trajectory after 2009 through Fiji's influence. Also associated with this is Fiji's attempt to breath energy into the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG), again as a way of weakening the 'core' of regionalism in the form of the PIF. However, internal tensions within the MSG probably overshadowed any hope of a strong subregional bloc. Fiji's opposition to the PIF might have also been influenced by its opposition to Australia and New Zealand, which it wanted expelled from the PIF because of their sanctions on Fiji after the 2006 coup, among other reasons. Fiji's headship of the UN G77 countries (which included China), as well as presidency of the UN General Assembly, gave it the international status to leverage its influence within as well as beyond the Pacific.

Protecting Pacific resources from foreign resource predators in the form of fishing fleets has always been a major challenge for Pacific states, and this was one of the reasons behind the formation of the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) by the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu, which control about 60 per cent of the western and central Pacific's tuna supply. The role of the PNA was to empower the PICs to protect their quickly depleting tuna stock as well as protect the environment from overexploitation and destructive fishing methods (Tamate, 2013). Only certain PICs are members of PNA. There have been other cases of the way the new Pacific diplomacy scenario has unfolded, including the new policy directions by Meg Taylor, secretary general of the PIF, and the push to separate the PACER advisory office from the PIF (Fry & Tarte, 2015).

The issue of climate change has heightened the status and significance of PICs considerably. With Kiribati's and Tuvalu's voices being echoed internationally and Fiji's leadership of the COP25, PICs have now found

themselves at the forefront of the global fight against climate change (Williams & McDuaie-Ra, 2018). The question of how this translates into states committing themselves to the Paris Agreement is still to be seen.

My criticism of the new Pacific diplomacy concept is that some of the manoeuvrings involved, such as Fiji's attempt to outflank New Zealand and Australia, are actually beyond the realm of diplomacy and involve geopolitical contestation of power and influence. This regional power contestation (rather than 'diplomacy') caused fractures within the regional diplomatic regime, and it took not so much diplomacy but unfolding of political developments, such as the Fiji election, for relations to normalise. Also, the term 'new' can be misleading because, while the actual events described were somewhat new developments, some of the underlying principles and dynamics, including intra-Pacific consensus and solidarity *vis-à-vis* contestation, are not new at all (Ratuva, 2005). Even the formation of the PIF itself was based on resistance to political domination by the colonial powers that controlled the South Pacific Commission. The cycle of consensus and contestation has been part of the normal process of diplomacy and geopolitics in the Pacific, and new variations of these have emerged when circumstances demanded. Some of the hype of a decade or so ago has fizzled out, and what was seen as 'new' then has now become 'old'; consequently, resurrection of 'old' ideas and practices can now become 'new'.

Conclusion

The notion of a speech act, as the securitisation theorists remind us, is a powerful mental and political tool to influence and transform our thoughts. The power of words and texts associated with security shape our beliefs and attitudes and contribute to securitising the social climate. Indeed terms like 'failed' and 'fragile' states as well as 'arc of instability' play a decisive speech act role in the securitisation and orientalisation of the Pacific. As this chapter has tried to demonstrate, the implications in terms of policies and regional power relations places PICs in a neocolonial subaltern position. The need to deconstruct these ideologically, culturally and politically prejudiced terms is required from critical scholars as a way of demystifying regional politics.

Furthermore, cultural, socioeconomic, political and historical diversity in the Pacific makes it rather naive to attempt to make generalisations about security in the Pacific. Even using a particular conceptual framework might not capture the multifaceted and diverse manifestations of security dynamics in a region so wide and scattered yet so globalised and constantly in a state of transformation. The Pacific peoples are scattered around the globe; for some countries, there are more citizens living outside than inside the country, and therefore the changes they exert in their respective communities are wide-ranging and profound. Security in the Pacific must be understood in the context of multiple forces, circumstances and lenses. This includes a combination of external factors such as the impact of global neoliberal capitalism, international cultural imperialism and climate change, and of internal factors such as geopolitical contestation, disputes over resources, competition over political power and issues relating to well-being.

The concept of human security can be useful in linking aspects of political, economic, social and cultural life that threaten the Pacific people's well-being. However, at another level it becomes too nebulous in the way it securitises almost every aspect of life, to the extent that it becomes quite challenging for policy-makers to frame relevant policies to address security issues. Because the human security framework is top down in its conceptualisation and implementation, there is a large disconnect between international and regional discourses and policies at the national level. Even within a country, there is a gap between the state policy bureaucracy and the local community, because, for many Pacific island communities, daily security priorities are often determined by daily needs, which are often different from those of pre-designed official templates.

Security issues such as resource disputes and contestation of power at the local level have the potential to expand and create much bigger conflict issues and dynamics at the national level, and also have the potential to oscillate downwards, as we will see in the case studies of Fiji, Tonga and Solomon Islands in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. While there are unique issues that are locally induced, there are some, such as climate change, that are more global than local, although there are locally devised innovations designed to mitigate their effects. Climate change is probably the most high-profile and most devastating and costly security threat to Pacific communities, largely because it is associated with climate forces beyond human control.

Pacific leaders have been at the forefront of campaigns to mitigate climate change in an effort to persuade industrialised countries to reduce their carbon emissions.

There are other security issues that are created by human activity and ordinarily are too overwhelming or even impossible for small Pacific island states to change. These include issues relating to global economic crises and free trade, which have the potential to harm local communities. Debates about the desirability of free trade, such as PACER Plus, continue, and the fact that most PICs have signed up to PACER Plus means that voluntary risk-taking is part of the way we deal with security. Thus, rather than being passive players in a world of global economic competition, small states still have access to windows of opportunity, albeit in a limited way, to affect policies that could affect their long-term economic security.

The gap between regional and local security discourses poses a challenge in terms of legitimacy and the practicality of security policies, especially when regional security thinking is defined by global security templates. Rather than a top-down approach, there should be more emphasis on grounded and localised discourses as the basis for building up a national and regional security framework. In addition, the specific circumstances of the individual countries should be taken into consideration and, rather than just providing a regional solution, there should be innovative responses based on local dynamics and realities. The three case studies in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 show that, rather than manifesting similarities, there are wide differences between PICs—differences that are often overlooked in favour of quick fixes and easy explanations based on negative stereotypes that cast the Pacific as consisting of ‘failed’ or ‘fragile’ states in an ‘arc of instability’.

This text is taken from *Contested Terrain: Reconceptualising Security in the Pacific*, by Steven Ratuva, published 2019 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.