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Negotiating Pacific island development in the post-independence era¹

In the ‘new South Pacific’ of the 1970s and 1980s, ‘development’ sat alongside ‘security’ and ‘self-determination’ as one of the key global discourses impacting on the way Pacific island societies were organised. As elsewhere in the postcolonial world, development was the main preoccupation of the new national governments. Much of the debate about what form development should take, what ideas it should contain and how Pacific societies should engage with the global economic order was conducted at the regional level. This debate was explicit in relation to the establishment of development-oriented regional organisations such as the SPEC and regional enterprises such as Air Pacific, and in relation to joint approaches to negotiating Pacific interests in trade and resource protection. It was also implicit in the contending views on Pacific island development contained in regional reports and assessments by international agencies and donor countries, and in the dissenting views and regional assessments of Pacific NGOs. Policy-related academic studies also emphasised a regional discourse on development in their characterisations of, and recommendations for, an idealised Pacific island state economy.

1 Parts of this chapter were first published in ‘International Co-operation in the South Pacific: From regional integration to collective diplomacy’, in W. Andrew Axline, *The Political Economy of Regional Cooperation* (London: Pinter, 1994). I am grateful to the publishers for permission to reproduce this work.

The leaders of postcolonial states in the 1970s were confronted with inherited colonial economies with a narrow base of primary industries, foreign ownership and a large, vibrant village-based subsistence economy. With low tax revenue, the new states were immediately dependent on the export-oriented industries and markets established in the colonial period, as well as on economic assistance from their departing colonial power. As well as the economic imperative of finding funds to financially support the operations of the new state, the populace had expectations that there would be a focus on development to provide improved education and health services.

The new Pacific states were starting from very different economic bases. There was considerable variation in the size of economies—for example, between the larger and more complex economies of Fiji and Papua New Guinea and the smaller, simpler economies such as those of Tonga and Western Samoa. There was also a significant variation in the main export industry—for example, gold and coffee in Papua New Guinea, sugar and gold in Fiji, copra in Western Samoa, phosphate in Nauru and citrus fruit in Cook Islands. They also had very different land areas and resources. But they held in common the challenges of remoteness from markets and accessibility to appropriate transport. They also had in common a large rural population living in an efficient and self-sustaining subsistence economy. The majority of Pacific islanders produced most of their own food.

The development objective and approach that the Pacific leaders promoted at the regional level in the 1970s reflected a tension between two contending discourses: a global liberal discourse emphasising economic modernisation and growth and the ‘Pacific way’ discourse with its emphasis on preserving Pacific cultural values and asserting Pacific control of the development agenda.

Liberal ‘modernisation’ ideas

We saw in Chapter 4 that, in the late colonial era, region-building in the Pacific was associated with particular European ideas of ‘native welfare’. The focus was on providing training and education to develop skills in making the transition from a ‘traditional’ to a ‘modern’ world. This was particularly reflected in the work program of the SPC in the

1950s and 1960s.² At the time of independence, Pacific governments were working in a global context in which particular Western ideas of modernisation as the only path to development for postcolonial states were dominant. A central tenet of this modernisation discourse emphasised *economic* development and self-sustaining economic growth as the ultimate objectives.

However, the economic modernisation discourse of the 1970s was not pure market liberalism of a kind that would be recognised by Adam Smith or later embraced by neoliberals. It departed from pure market liberalism in advocating, or at least allowing for, a significant role for the state sector in the economy and even promoting some aspects of a command economy through the advocacy of development plans. It also encouraged a transfer of economic assistance to kickstart developing economies on the road to self-sustaining economic growth. The agents of this economic modernisation discourse, which dominated all development thinking in newly independent countries, were the departing colonial governments, international agencies, donor countries and development advisers in the national planning offices in Pacific island capitals.

Liberal modernisation theory was also the dominant discourse at the regional level. It was promoted by Western countries, international agencies and the academy as the development norm for region-building. The key liberal idea influencing region-building was the assumption that regional integration was the most effective approach for postcolonial states to achieve economic modernisation.³ The idea of making one larger economy, following the European experience, was also promoted in Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America. This global discourse was a major influence on the thinking of Pacific leaders as they began to set up their own regional institutions in the early 1970s. This regional integration discourse was based on several seemingly compelling liberal premises: that larger units do better than smaller ones (particularly very small ones); that rationalisation of industry across the region would maximise economies of scale, or at least reduce the diseconomies of scale that would otherwise occur; that small countries could not each afford shipping lines, universities, airlines and development banks; that a free-trade area would be trade-creating for the region; and that cost-cutting

2 See Smith, *South Pacific Commission*, Chs 8–10.

3 See, for example, Joseph S. Nye, ed., *International Regionalism: Readings*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1968.

could be achieved through bulk purchasing. These ideas were implicit in the early proposals of the SPF, in the tasks given by the first forum to a committee on trade, which met in 1971, and in the tasks given to the newly created SPEC in its founding agreement.⁴

There were, however, two influential tenets of liberal modernisation theory, applied at the regional level, which departed from classical liberal economic theory. The first was that developing states should be regarded as a special category in the global market, requiring special assistance in regional trade arrangements with the industrialised North. The liberal modernisation paradigm of the 1970s accepted, and indeed promoted, the idea of nonreciprocal preferential regional free-trade schemes—a departure from the assumption of pure liberal free-trade theory. This approach assumed that developing states needed special treatment to enter the market on a fair basis. This was very attractive to Pacific states trying to establish infant industries behind tariff protection. The creation, in the 1970s, of the South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement (SPARTECA) with Australia and New Zealand, and the Lomé Convention with Europe, represented a meeting of minds between Pacific island governments and their Global North partners on this liberal modernisation idea. As we shall see in Chapter 11, this was not the case with subsequent attempts by Northern partners to negotiate replacement free-trade areas based on neoliberal principles.

The second major departure from pure liberal theory was the idea that ‘smallness’, and especially the small *island* state, should constitute a special category in the global political economy, deserving of special treatment. This was a concession over and above the exceptions granted to developing states in the global market. It involved recognition of the special disadvantages of smallness, island-ness and remoteness, and advocated appropriate additional support in response. This discourse began with a depiction of the small island state ‘problem’ and ended with region-building as a key solution to the problem.⁵ The international community’s depiction of an idealised small Pacific island developing state created a highly influential regional preconception for development policy in the Pacific.

4 SPF Secretariat, *Final Communiqué: South Pacific Forum, Wellington, 5–7 August 1971*; and *Final Communiqué: South Pacific Forum, Canberra, 23–25 February 1972*.

5 Burton Benedict, ‘Introduction’, in Burton Benedict, ed., *Problems of Smaller Territories*, London: Athlone Press for the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 1967, pp. 1–10, at pp. 9–10.

The academic discourse on ‘smallness’ was primarily initiated and developed by economists and geographers.⁶ The policy community in the international agencies such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Commonwealth Secretariat were also prime agents in developing the ‘smallness’ concept and category.⁷ From the early 1970s, the international community began to recognise that ‘developing island states’ formed a special category in development terms, sharing problems that were not only quantitatively, but also qualitatively, different from those of larger continental developing countries. This recognition first became evident in the context of UNCTAD III in May 1972. The conference recommended that a panel be set up to examine the special problems faced by developing island countries, giving particular attention to the difficulties associated with isolation.⁸ In 1976, UNCTAD IV took the issue further, recommending special assistance for all developing island countries.⁹ The following year, the UN General Assembly requested that the relevant UN agencies incorporate UNCTAD IV’s recommended actions within their programs.¹⁰

The United Nations went a step further than merely recognising island states as a special category and implementing special programs for them through its agencies. Particularly important for our present purposes is that the UN agencies came to regard regional cooperation as an effective means of approaching these problems. The panel of experts that emerged as a result of UNCTAD III stated:

6 See, for example, Percy Selwyn, *Small, Poor and Remote: Islands at a Geographical Disadvantage*, Discussion Paper 123, Sussex: Institute of Development Studies, 1978; R.T. Shand, ed., *The Island States of the Pacific and Indian Oceans: Anatomy of Development*, Development Studies Centre Monograph No. 23, Canberra: Development Studies Centre, The Australian National University, 1980. For a critical perspective on the usefulness of ‘island-ness’ as a category/concept in conjunction with ‘smallness’, see Percy Selwyn, ‘Smallness and Islandness’, *World Development*, 8(12), 1980: 945–51.

7 See, for example, Edward Dommen, ‘Some Distinguishing Characteristics of Island States’, *World Development*, 8(12), 1980: 931–43.

8 United Nations Economic and Social Council, *Special Economic Problems and Development Needs of Geographically More Disadvantaged Developing Island Countries*, E/5647, New York: ECOSOC, 27 March 1975, p. 1.

9 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development [hereinafter UNCTAD], *Proceedings of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development: Fourth Session, Nairobi, 5–31 May 1976. Volume 1: Reports and Annexes*, E.76.II.D.10, New York: United Nations, 1976, available from: unctad.org/en/Docs/td218vol1_en.pdf, Part 1, s. A, Resolution 98 (iv).

10 United Nations General Assembly, *Progress in the Implementation of Specific Action in Favour of Developing Island Countries: Report of the Secretary-General*, A/32/126, New York: United Nations, 28 June 1977, p. 3.

[T]he regional aspect is central to any consideration of developing island problems ... basically regional co-operation between groups of island countries is needed in order to carry out activities which it is difficult or impossible for them to carry out individually.¹¹

Significantly, the UN General Assembly, in its thirty-second session (in 1977), urged

the United Nations organisations concerned, in particular the United Nations Development Programme and the regional commissions, to give attention to programmes of regional and sub-regional co-operation in respect of developing island countries.¹²

The Pacific leaders not only embraced this global discourse on 'smallness'; they also took actions to extend its utility in their global economic engagements. In a move obviously aimed at encouraging this developing international recognition of island states as a special category, the eighteenth South Pacific Conference (in 1978) 'called on donor countries and international organisations to accept developing Island countries and territories as a special development group' and 'invited aid donors, both bilateral and multilateral, to initiate and undertake special measures and assistance ... to developing Island countries'.¹³

The singling out of small island states as a special category of development need also took place in the Commonwealth Heads of Government Regional Meeting held in Sydney on 13–16 February 1978. The SPEC Secretariat prepared a paper for the meeting emphasising the shared special needs of Pacific island states. The Pacific was successful in having the meeting recognise the need for special assistance; it requested that the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth examine ways to support such countries.¹⁴

11 UNCTAD, *Developing Island Countries: Report of the Panel of Experts*, New York: United Nations, 1974, p. 20.

12 United Nations General Assembly, Resolution A126, Thirty-Second Session, para. V.

13 SPC, *Report of the Eighteenth South Pacific Conference*, p. 18, Resolution 13.

14 South Pacific Bureau for Economic Co-operation [hereinafter SPEC], *The Special Problems of Small States: The Developing Island Countries of the South Pacific, Commonwealth Regional Meeting, Sydney, 13–16 February 1978*, Suva: SPEC, 30 December 1977; and M.T. Somare, 'Closing Address by the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, the Right Honourable M. T. Somare', Press release, Commonwealth Heads of Government Regional Meeting, Sydney, 16 February 1978, pp. 9–10.

In summary, liberal modernisation ideas provided the dominant framing of the objectives and approaches of regional development in the 1970s. However, the ‘regional integration’, ‘smallness’ and ‘nonreciprocal free trade’ discourses heavily influenced the definition of the problem and the desired pathway for moving towards a regional norm of development. While accepting many of the liberal premises of modernisation theory, the Pacific leaders were also influenced by another homegrown discourse in their region-building activities. These ideas moderated the influence of the global discourse of liberal modernisation.

The ‘Pacific way’ discourse

From the start of the SPF in 1971, and even before, at the creation of PIPA in 1965, Pacific leaders made it clear that their shared goal in regional collaboration was to renegotiate the foundations and terms of the Pacific’s engagement with the global economy. This was aimed at getting a better deal within the global liberal capitalist system. As we saw in Chapter 6, the SPF was partly created on the idea of challenging neocolonialism, overcoming dependency and facilitating collective diplomacy to negotiate a better deal within global economic structures.

Allied to this—and forming part of the same ‘Pacific way’ ideology discussed in Chapter 6—was a commitment on the part of the Pacific leaders to defend Pacific cultural values in any negotiation of the transfer of the economic modernisation model to the Pacific. All Pacific island states protected customary land tenure even as they pursued modernisation. At the regional level, there was also a powerful discourse stressing the importance of not accepting anything in modernisation theory that would unduly damage these cultural traditions. Just after the creation of SPEC in 1973, its Deputy Director-General, Ken Piddington, found it necessary to stress the significance of this commitment to a New Zealand audience:

The Bureau has been instructed not to transpose ‘international’ recipes for economic development but rather to work out how these recipes need to be rewritten for the South Pacific ... Economic progress is the goal, but it will only be pursued on terms which are acceptable to the Governments and peoples of the Island nations.

SPEC's message is a simple one; we recognise the need for accelerated economic development in the region; we are convinced that the key to this lies in a collective effort; but it must be pursued in harmony with local values and local attitudes—in brief, economic progress through regional co-operation 'in the Pacific Way'.¹⁵

For various members of the regional intelligentsia, meeting at the Seminar on Social Issues in National Development conference at the USP in 1973, there was an even stronger expression of these two key aspects of the 'Pacific way' discourse on development. They were concerned both with the need to temper powerful modernisation discourses with social developmental norms drawn from Pacific cultures and with changing the neocolonial economic relations restricting Pacific island states' control of their own economies. Such a stance was indicated in the title, *The Pacific Way*, given to the collection of papers from this important workshop.¹⁶ In his introduction to the collection, Ron Crocombe states that 'the real fear of becoming neo-colonial puppets, subservient and manipulated, concerned many speakers'.¹⁷ More effective regional cooperation was seen as one of the 'essential prerequisites to stem the neo-colonial tide'.¹⁸ A number of speakers—among them John Momis from Bougainville (later its president), Sione Tupouniua from Tonga (an academic) and Francis Bugotu from Solomon Islands (later the Minister for Education)—called for strategies that would lessen neocolonial dependence. As Bugotu put it:

The challenge for us Pacific Islanders is not to stand wide-eyed at one side of the arena, blankly watching our interests being manipulated and aspirations changed by foreigners ... The task is to find a design for a future which serves our interests, and need not necessarily be patterned on western lines, nor serve western strategic, economic or political aims.¹⁹

At first, in the 1970s, there was a broad meeting of minds between the Pacific island states and regional civil society on the 'Pacific way' discourse on development. The experience of region-building in the 1970s,

15 Ken Piddington, *The South Pacific Bureau: A New Venture in Economic Co-operation*, Wellington: New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, 1973, pp. 3, 16.

16 Sione Tupouniua, Ron Crocombe, and Claire Slatter, eds, *The Pacific Way: Social Issues in National Development*, Suva: South Pacific Social Sciences Association, 1975.

17 Crocombe, 'Seeking a Pacific Way', p. 6.

18 *ibid.*, p. 6.

19 Francis Bugotu, 'Decolonising and Recolonising: The Case of the Solomons', in Tupouniua et al., *The Pacific Way*, pp. 77–80, at p. 77.

however, provoked a radical critique of the ‘Pacific way’ discourse as being complicit with the more exploitative aspects of liberal modernisation. This new gulf between civil society and the government elites on the development question also reflected the growing influence of the global discourse of neo-Marxism as a critique of global capitalism in the 1980s.

Regional integration in practice

In the 1970s, the SPF decided to work actively on regional integration and instructed its research arm, SPEC, to explore and initiate various regional integration projects. In the event, proposals for comprehensive regional economic integration, such as economic union, free trade and industrial rationalisation, did not pass initial inspection by consultants and committees. They failed largely on the basis of the supporting arguments as examined by officials and consultants rather than because of the political positions of member countries in formal negotiations. Industrial rationalisation was thought to be premature when an industrial base simply did not exist in the island countries, except in Fiji. Interisland trade was minimal; their products were either the same (for example, copra, bananas) or, where different, were not the type of product that other island states had the capacity to process (for example, copper, phosphate, gold, nickel). While a regional free-trade area would benefit Fiji’s economic development, it would be damaging to the other island economies. Incorporation in a wider free-trade area with Australia and New Zealand had similar implications. The larger countries would simply attract investment and employment, leaving the island economies with little chance for development. Significantly, SPARTECA did not establish a regional free-trade area; instead, it negotiated a Lomé-style agreement, which accorded nonreciprocal access for island products into the Australian and New Zealand markets.²⁰

Thus, comprehensive regional economic integration was effectively removed from the regional agenda in the early years of the SPF’s activities. Forum states focused instead on sectoral integration, particularly in

20 *South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Co-operation Agreement*, Signed in Tarawa, Kiribati, 14 July 1980, available from: www.forumsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/South-Pacific-Regional-Trade-and-Economic-Co-operation-Agreement-SPARTECA-1.pdf. For an early critique of SPARTECA, see William Sutherland, ‘Australia’s Economic Relations with the South Pacific: A Pacific Perspective’, in Brendan O’Dwyer, ed., *Australia and the South Pacific*, Canberra: Centre for Continuing Education, The Australian National University, 1982, pp. 63–73.

education and training, and shipping and civil aviation. Some prominent regional institutions, such as the USP and Air Pacific, had already been created in these sectors in the last years of the colonial period. They became controversial in the 1970s as Pacific island leaders outside Fiji began to question whether these Fiji-based institutions were adequately serving their interests.²¹ Although conducted by SPF members, the debate over the character of these institutions took place largely outside forum meetings.

It was to be expected that these issues would prove controversial. Decisions about international transport were vital for new island states that were geographically isolated and totally dependent on metropolitan countries for services. Most were on air and sea routes regarded as uneconomic. Furthermore, commitment to a regional arrangement meant that the prestige gained from having a national flag carrier would be forgone. It would also require a substantial commitment of resources.

The idea of a regional airline, based on an expansion of the existing Fiji Airways, was first developed in the late 1960s by the British, Australian, New Zealand and Fiji governments. In 1968, the (British) Western Pacific High Commission on behalf of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate, the Gilbert and Ellice Islands colony and the Kingdom of Tonga, joined the existing shareholders in the consortium—Qantas, Air New Zealand, the British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC) and the Fiji Government. In the following year, Western Samoa and Nauru became shareholders and, in 1971, Fiji Airways changed its name to Air Pacific.²²

By the early 1970s, however, it was evident that, among the island states, only Fiji was keen to develop Air Pacific further as a regional consortium. Despite their shareholdings in Air Pacific, the independent island countries were clearly interested in developing their own national airlines. Nauru had already established Air Nauru in 1969, and Polynesian Airlines, with the Western Samoan Government as majority shareholder, was set up in the same year. In 1972, in a move described as beginning ‘the cancer which has eaten away at Air Pacific’s strength’, Nauru formally withdrew from the board of Air Pacific while retaining its

21 The dissatisfaction with the USP is examined in Ron Crocombe and Uentabo Neemia, ‘Options in University Education for the Pacific Islands’, *Pacific Perspective*, 12(1), 1983: 5–17.

22 Based on author’s interview with Captain P. Howson, former chairman of Air Pacific, Sydney, 19 July 1976.

shareholding.²³ In the following year, the King of Tonga first announced his intention of establishing a national airline and Papua New Guinea established Air Niugini. The other island states demonstrated their lack of commitment to the development of Air Pacific by their reluctance to increase their shareholdings as the metropolitan airlines withdrew and the airline required more capital for expansion. As a result, Fiji became a majority shareholder and the airline became increasingly identified as a national carrier.

After the Rarotonga SPF meeting in March 1974, Ratu Mara had warned that ‘the South Pacific Forum will stand or fall on civil aviation ... Civil aviation will be the real test of Pacific regional co-operation’.²⁴ Two months later, he was saying that ‘civil aviation is a notable failure’.²⁵ The idea of a regional carrier was effectively at an end. While various proposals for cooperation among national airlines, such as rationalisation of air routes and cooperation on the purchasing of equipment, would later be countenanced, full sectoral integration in the civil aviation field was effectively off the agenda until proposed again, unsuccessfully, by Australian prime ministers Paul Keating, in 1994, and John Howard, in 2003. The main reason for this failure was the perception held by island states that Air Pacific was dominated by Fiji. They pointed to the fact that it was Suva-based, it had its origins in Fiji, Fiji was the main shareholder and Fijians gained the most from the employment provided by the airline. And, it was claimed, Fiji subsidised internal airfares by setting fares on certain regional routes higher than they should be.²⁶

The bitterness this issue engendered was felt not only on one side. It was clear that Fijian leaders took offence at the rising complaints about Fijian dominance. At the 1974 Fiji Tourism Convention, for example, Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau, the Minister for Communications and Tourism, ‘lashed out’ at Western Samoa and Tonga. He criticised them for not committing themselves to a ‘single regional airline’ and complained they both ‘benefitted from the Air Pacific consortium and had an influence over Air Pacific’s plans, but Fiji received no corresponding benefit from these countries’.²⁷

23 Stuart Inder, ‘Up Front with the Editor’, *Pacific Islands Monthly*, June 1974: 3.

24 ‘Forum Co-op Wanted, Not a Talking Shop’, *Pacific Islands Monthly*, May 1974: 105.

25 Mara, ‘Regional Co-operation in the South Pacific’, p. 13.

26 Inder, ‘Up Front with the Editor’.

27 *Pacific Islands Monthly*, June 1974, p. 75.

The failure of the 'one regional airline' concept had important spillover effects on other areas of regional cooperation. The neofunctionalist theory of regional integration underpinning European integration at this time assumed spillover effects in a positive direction as success in one sector influenced success in other sectors. In the Pacific case, however, this was a spillover effect that threatened to take regional integration in the other direction. This was the first major issue causing division among the Pacific island states. Although the negotiations were conducted largely outside SPF meetings, the experience significantly affected the willingness of these states to cooperate on substantive issues within the SPF in its early years. For those Pacific states other than Fiji, their experience of what they saw as Fiji's dominance within Air Pacific affected their perception of Fiji's role within the regional movement more generally.²⁸

The experience was also a disillusioning one for Fiji. The lack of support for the consortium and the public criticism of Fiji's role in the venture by its partners caused Fiji to reappraise its attitude to regional integration. By 1975, Ratu Mara had tired of the constant criticism of Fiji's role. In a statement to the press in November of that year, he indicated considerable disillusionment with regionally run organisations such as Air Pacific and the USP. He drew attention to the difficulties associated with joint management of a regional program or institution. In particular, he objected to the fact that under such an arrangement the 'pace of development is determined by the slowest member'. He cited as an example the conflict concerning whether the USP should have chairs in accounting and engineering.²⁹ Fiji supported this move because of its requirements for such skills while smaller countries opposed it because they did not have economies in which such skills were in demand.

Ratu Mara advocated a move away from joint management of regional institutions to a situation in which the host country was responsible for the running of the regional institution. This, he thought, would ensure that 'development would be determined by the fastest'.³⁰ When Ratu Mara made this statement, he had in mind the proposed Regional

28 Based on interviews conducted by the author during a fieldtrip through the region, September to December 1975.

29 Fiji Ministry of Information, 'The Prime Minister's Post-Cabinet Press Conference', News Release No. 625, Suva, 13 November 1975.

30 *ibid.*

Telecommunications Training Project then before the Fiji Cabinet. Significantly, it was subsequently established as a Fiji-run regional organisation with places available for others in the region.

The establishment of a regional shipping line was the only exception to the general trend towards disillusionment and the retreat to nationalistic positions that dominated the early years of the SPF in relation to regional economic governance. Whereas Air Pacific and the USP were part of the colonial inheritance, the shipping line was homegrown. Beginning as a proposal within PIPA in 1971, it was taken over by the newly formed SPEC as a major initiative in 1973. The first proposal considered by SPF countries in the period 1973–74 was for a regional shipping corporation.³¹ Some members found it unsuitable because they thought it would require too much capital commitment. In addition, Nauru and Tonga were not keen to sacrifice their national shipping lines for an untried regional line. Consequently, SPEC was sent back to the drawing board to work up a more acceptable proposal.

The proposal that was ultimately accepted was a ‘pooling’ concept: an operating company that would charter ships from member countries.³² This overcame most of the obstacles that had confronted the earlier proposal. The capital outlay was not prohibitive, existing national shipping lines were not threatened, shareholdings were equal, profits and losses were to be shared equally and its establishment was based on a detailed market survey showing potential commercial viability. Consequently, the Pacific Forum Line began operations in 1978. Its shareholders—all SPF members except Australia and Niue—contributed only A\$12,250 to the share capital of the line. The line initially chartered three vessels from its ‘shipping members’: Nauru, Tonga, Western Samoa and New Zealand. It was the only significant example of sectoral integration established by the island states, and even here the level of integration was limited to a pooling concept.

Unlike the Air Pacific experience, the significant divisions that occurred among Pacific states in relation to the shipping line concerned its formation and proposed form rather than its operations once established. There were

31 Francis Hong Tiy and R.G. Irwin, *A Survey of the Development of Inter-Government Proposals for a Multi-National Regional Shipping Line in the South Pacific*, Discussion Paper for the Papua New Guinea Harbours Board South Pacific Ports Conference, Port Moresby, 17–19 March 1975.

32 SPEC, *Director's Annual Report 1976/77*, pp. 19–20, and *Director's Annual Report 1977/78*, p. 20; “If We Break Even, We’ll Be Laughing”: PFL’s Modest Aim’, *Pacific Islands Monthly*, August 1978: 77–9.

significant variations in the level of enthusiasm for the venture. Western Samoa was the main supporter. Unlike Fiji, it was not well served by shipping and, unlike Tonga and Nauru, it did not have its own national line. Fiji's experience with Air Pacific made it at first reluctant to support the formation of a regional shipping line, but Ratu Mara was reported as having moderated this attitude at the Rarotonga SPF meeting in March 1974:

[H]e had almost decided not to support a regional shipping line because of Fiji's experience with [the] regional airline, but having heard the afternoon's discussion, he had come around again to supporting it in principle.³³

From this point it appears that Fiji adopted a position of qualified support—the qualification being that the line should be financially viable. The Air Pacific experience also affected how Solomon Islands initially viewed the proposal. Its perception of a Fiji-dominated Air Pacific made it sceptical about how such a line would operate.³⁴

By the end of the 1970s, it was clear that Pacific island states were wary of economic integration schemes requiring high capital outlay, centralisation in one island state or a sacrifice of national autonomy. The USP and the Pacific Forum Line were the only examples of a significant degree of sectoral integration. Under vice-chancellor Maraj's leadership, the USP maintained its regional support during the 1970s by decentralising the campus. New campuses and units—set up in Western Samoa, Kiribati and Tonga and promised at that time for Vanuatu—went some way to placating regional concerns about the uneven distribution of benefits.³⁵ The Pacific Forum Line succeeded at that time because it did not involve high-level integration. The 'pooling' concept, involving an operating company that would charter ships from member countries, allowed an identifiable national component in this regional scheme and kept capital outlays to a minimum. In most areas of cooperation, the emphasis shifted to the supplementation of national efforts through shared expertise, information and coordination, rather than a more ambitious level of sectoral integration.

33 SPF Secretariat, 'Summary Record and Final Press Communiqué'.

34 Based on author's interview with chief minister Solomon Mamaloni, Solomon Islands, September 1975.

35 Ron Crocombe and Malama Meleisea, 'Achievements, Problems and Prospects: The Future of University Education in the South Pacific', in Ron Crocombe and Malama Meleisea, eds, *Pacific Universities: Achievements, Problems, Prospects*, Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1988, pp. 341–87, at p. 359.

The Pacific island states were fortunate they did not venture far down the path of comprehensive or sectoral integration common in other parts of the developing world at this time. Had they done so the experience would have likely poisoned any chance of moving to the more workable forms of cooperation later achieved. Their attempts at significant sectoral integration in tertiary education and civil aviation indicated the kinds of tensions that would have pulled more ambitious schemes apart. Regional management boards are not like corporation boards in the private sector. They are composed of representatives of national governments in a context where the most desirable outcome for 'the region' is not necessarily the most desirable outcome for an individual state or, at least, for the politicians running the state. Moreover, despite the assumption of shared 'smallness', isolation and product range, which has informed the dominant approaches to regional development, there was in fact considerable variation among Pacific island states. These differences quickly revealed a serious rift between the centrally located, relatively large and well-endowed Fiji and the other participating states over the costs and benefits of sectoral integration.³⁶

There was not only the issue of equity; there was also the question of whether the individual state could achieve a more cost-effective result outside the regional scheme. There were also the political costs. For politicians, the visible national venture, however irrational in terms of economic theory, was far more likely to earn local support than a regional venture headquartered in some distant island country.

Resetting the terms of global economic engagement

In the 1980s, Pacific cooperation on development found its strength in the shift in emphasis from regional integration to collective diplomacy—joint action aimed at resetting the terms of the Pacific's global economic engagement. Collective diplomacy of this kind was in fact evident right from the start of the SPF; and, by the end of the 1970s, there had already been some significant successes.

36 These rifts are examined in Neemia, *Cooperation and Conflict*.

Trade diplomacy

The SPF employed this approach, for example, in relation to negotiations with the EEC over the Lomé Convention. The Pacific Group, coordinated by the SPEC, successfully represented the interests of Pacific island states. Prior to the expiration of the Yaoundé Convention, which governed the economic association between the EEC and the former African colonies of France, Belgium and Italy, the EEC invited these African countries, together with former colonies within the Commonwealth, to negotiate a new association with the community. The Pacific states that qualified for membership were Western Samoa, Fiji and Tonga. Following a SPEC study on 'whether and on what conditions' the three should seek associate status, it was agreed they would 'negotiate with the enlarged Community as a group'.³⁷ In January 1974, the prime ministers of the Pacific countries 'endorsed the value of the collective approach' to the negotiations that had begun in Brussels in July of the previous year.³⁸ The SPF leaders gave SPEC the task of coordinating and servicing the group's approach to the negotiations and, in February 1974, SPEC's deputy director established a Pacific Group Secretariat in Brussels.

According to Fiji Government sources, the Pacific Group had a relatively significant impact on the negotiations. They claimed that Ratu Mara, as spokesperson for the group, was influential, particularly in relation to the acceptance of the principle of an export utilisation scheme.³⁹ Ratu Mara was subsequently appointed chairman of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group Council of Ministers and, in April 1977, he hosted a meeting of the council in Suva. Significantly, this was the first global grouping hosted in the Pacific. From July 1978, SPEC again became the coordinator of the Pacific Group in negotiations for the successor treaty to the Lomé Convention. This time the Pacific Group included Papua New Guinea, the Gilbert Islands (later called Kiribati), Tuvalu and Solomon Islands.⁴⁰

37 'Third South Pacific Forum: Final Communiqué', *New Zealand External Relations Review*, September 1972: 26–30, at p. 28; and Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, *Report on Foreign Affairs for the Period 10 October 1970 – 31 December 1973*, Parliamentary Paper No. 19, Suva: Parliament of Fiji, 1974, p. 7.

38 SPEC, *Director's Annual Report 1973/74*, p. 6.

39 The Fijian Government, *The Lomé Convention: How It Benefits Fiji*, Suva: Government Printer, 1975.

40 SPEC, *Director's Annual Report 1977/78*, p. 31.

The SPF also facilitated a collective Pacific approach to the Australian and New Zealand markets. As we have seen, the SPF and SPEC, its economic research arm, had been established to, among other things, create a more favourable balance of trade with developing countries. As major trading partners for the island states, Australia and New Zealand were obvious focal points for regional diplomacy. In the early years of the SPF, Ratu Mara led Pacific island state pressure on Australia and New Zealand to consider preferential access into their markets for Pacific island products.⁴¹ Australia and New Zealand resisted this pressure, arguing that any such move would be counter to the most-favoured nation principle under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.⁴² Fiji countered with the example of preferential access being negotiated in the proposed Lomé Convention with Europe.

Ultimately, the Pacific island states' argument prevailed. It was significant that the thinking in Canberra had already changed direction in granting the newly independent Papua New Guinea preferential access under the Papua New Guinea–Australia Trade and Commercial Regional Agreement signed in Port Moresby in 1976.⁴³ Following a study of possible options for industrial development and regional trade, the director of SPEC hinted in his 1977–78 annual report that it was time for SPEC to move on the question of regional trade policy. At the subsequent SPF meeting in September 1978, the Pacific leaders resolved that senior trade officials should meet to consider

the possibility of a preferential non-reciprocal arrangement between Australia, New Zealand and Pacific island countries as well as other measures aimed at improving trade and industrial development in the region.⁴⁴

With Australia and New Zealand now persuaded, negotiations moved quickly: SPARTECA was signed by most member states in Tarawa, Kiribati, in July 1980. All states had signed by 1982.

41 Tarte, 'Fiji's Role in the South Pacific Forum', p. 99.

42 SPF Secretariat, *South Pacific Forum, Suva, Fiji, 12–14 September 1972: Summary Record of Proceedings, (Confidential)*, Suva: SPF Secretariat, 1972, pp. 18–29.

43 *Agreement on Trade and Commercial Relations between the Government of Australia and the Government of Papua New Guinea*, entered into force on 1 February 1977.

44 SPEC, *Director's Annual Report 1977/78*, p. 14; and SPEC, *Press Communiqué: Ninth South Pacific Forum, Alofi, Niue, 29 September 1978*, Suva: SPEC, 1978, p. 2.

SPARTECA was

a nonreciprocal trade agreement under which the two developed nations of the South Pacific Forum, Australia and New Zealand, offer duty free and unrestricted or concessional access for virtually all products originating from the developing island member countries of the Forum.⁴⁵

As such, the agreement was welcomed as a good deal for the Pacific island states, in that it was seen to have the potential to restructure the trade relationship and create future opportunities for trade expansion. The sting, however, was in the detail; the exceptions schedule as well as country-of-origin provisions meant that the projected change in the trade balance was not realised. From the mid 1980s, academic critiques joined the concerns of the Pacific leaders, and of the regional secretariat, on this question. Writing in 1986, William Sutherland argued that SPARTECA had not delivered on the key objective of addressing the highly unequal trade relationship with Australia and New Zealand.⁴⁶ On the contrary, he argued, based on figures prepared for SPEC, New Zealand imports from SPF island countries decreased in real terms by 4.9 per cent while Australian imports from SPF island countries decreased by 24.9 per cent.⁴⁷ In the same year, Max Robertson drew attention to three critical points that were being taken up at the political level by Pacific leaders: that the liberalisation of access provisions in the initial SPARTECA had not been very generous; that the value content rules were severe and had been administered unsympathetically; and that the smaller SPF island countries considered that SPARTECA had little to offer them.⁴⁸

Law of the Sea and the archipelagic principle

The SPF was also successful in facilitating a collective approach to the Law of the Sea negotiations during the 1970s. It formed the Oceanic group that successfully represented the views of the island states, particularly in relation to the rights of archipelagic countries. From the first SPF meeting

45 SPF Secretariat, *SPARTECA: South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Co-operation Agreement—A Reference Handbook for Forum Island Country Exporters*, Suva: SPF Secretariat, 1989.

46 William Sutherland, 'Microstates and Unequal Trade in the South Pacific: The SPARTECA Agreement of 1980', *Journal of World Trade Law*, 20(3), 1986: 313–28.

47 *ibid.*, p. 322.

48 Max Robertson, 'The South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement: A Critique', in R.V. Cole and T.G. Parry, eds, *Selected Issues in Pacific Island Development*, Canberra: National Centre for Development Studies, The Australian National University, 1986, pp. 147–75.

in 1971, the Pacific states recognised the advantages to be gained from taking a joint approach to the UN Law of the Sea conferences.⁴⁹ A special Law of the Sea Forum was held in May 1974 to develop a common position for the approaching UN conference in Caracas. The special forum meeting decided to promote the setting up of a broader ‘island lobby’ to support Fiji’s ‘archipelagic principle’—a key issue for island states. As put to the UN Seabed Committee in New York in March 1973 by the Fiji delegate, S. Nandan, the principle was:

An archipelagic State, whose component islands and other natural features form an intrinsic geographical, economic and political entity, and historically have or may have been regarded as such, may draw straight baselines connecting the outermost points of the outermost islands and drying reefs of the archipelago from which the extent of the territorial sea of the archipelagic State is or may be determined.⁵⁰

The Oceanic Group, as the SPF grouping came to be known in the context of these negotiations, met prior to UN Law of the Sea meetings in 1975 and 1976. In its joint declaration on the subject in October 1976, the SPF declared the intention of its member countries to establish 200-mile exclusive economic zones and affirmed their interest in a comprehensive Convention on the Law of the Sea, which satisfied ‘the special concerns of archipelagic and other island states’.⁵¹ Their successful joint diplomacy on the Law of the Sea set the foundation for later achievements in tuna diplomacy and ocean management.

Resource diplomacy

From the mid 1970s, two major developments drew the attention of the South Pacific states to the possibility of cooperating in the management of their marine resources. One was the large-scale movement into South Pacific waters of the fishing fleets of the United States, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan and the Soviet Union, in search of skipjack tuna. The other

49 ‘South Pacific Forum’, *Current Notes on International Affairs*, [Canberra], August 1971: 431; ‘South Pacific Forum’, *New Zealand External Relations Review*, January 1972: 28; and ‘Third South Pacific Forum: Final Communiqué’, *New Zealand External Relations Review*, p. 29.

50 S.N. Nandan, ‘Statement to the Meeting of the UN Seabed Committee, New York, 15 March 1973’, in Mara, *Report on Foreign Affairs*, Appendix IV, p. 35.

51 SPEC, *Director’s Annual Report 1974/75*, p. 19, and *Director’s Annual Report 1975/76*, pp. 43–4. The text of the joint declaration was issued with the press communiqué of the October 1976 special SPF meeting. See ‘South Pacific Forum’, *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, p. 556.

was the island states' declaration of exclusive economic zones, which, due to the archipelagic nature of the island states, amounted to a joint claim over control of marine resources in nearly the whole of the South Pacific Ocean. Pacific island countries began to recognise that they shared a highly valued marine resource but that if it was to avoid being fished out by the distant water fishing nations (DWFNs), with little return to the island states, it would require joint management.

The negotiations to establish a regional agency to carry out this task were conducted within the SPF between 1976 and 1979. At the 1976 SPF meeting, leaders were stimulated by a paper prepared by the Fiji Government on the implications of developments then taking place in the Law of the Sea negotiations. At the conclusion of the forum, they made a declaration (the Nauru Declaration) in which, among other things, they indicated their intention of exploring the possibility of developing a coordinated approach to negotiations with DWFNs and to maritime surveillance and policing.⁵² An SPF officials meeting held later in the year recommended the establishment of a regional fisheries agency and the 1977 SPF meeting endorsed this proposal in the Port Moresby Declaration.⁵³

In turning this intention into a convention acceptable to all SPF members, the negotiators ran into two major obstacles over the next two years. One concerned the proposed role of the agency. Was it to be solely a resource management role or was it also to be concerned with maximising the returns on this resource for island states? The other was a related point: should DWFNs be members of the organisation? The draft convention worked up by officials for the 1978 SPF meeting in Niue envisaged a resource management role for the agency. This was unacceptable to most of the leaders at Niue, who asked for a redrafting of the convention to bring it more in line with the sentiments of the Nauru and Port Moresby declarations.⁵⁴

52 SPF Secretariat, 'Declaration on Law of the Sea', in *Seventh South Pacific Forum, Nauru, 26–28 July 1976*, Suva: SPF Secretariat, 1976, available from: www.forumsec.org/seventh-south-pacific-forum-nauru-26-28-july-1976-3/.

53 SPF Secretariat, 'Declaration on Law of the Sea and a Regional Fisheries Agency', in *Eighth South Pacific Forum, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, 29–31 August 1977*, Suva: SPF Secretariat, 1977, available from: www.forumsec.org/8th-south-pacific-forum-port-moresby-papua-new-guinea-29-31-august-1977/.

54 Florian Gubon, 'History and Role of the Forum Fisheries Agency', in David J. Doulman, ed., *Tuna Issues and Perspectives in the Pacific Islands Region*, Honolulu: East–West Center, 1987.

The question of membership of the proposed agency created a significant rift between Pacific island states at the Niue SPF meeting.⁵⁵ US membership was supported by a Western Samoa-led group, while a group led by Papua New Guinea and Fiji—which included Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Nauru and Tonga—took the view that US membership should be opposed on the grounds the United States did not recognise coastal state sovereignty over the highly migratory skipjack tuna, which was the main resource the agency would be controlling. Fiji's position was made clear in the month following the SPF meeting when, in an address to the UN General Assembly, its ambassador, Berenado Vunibobo, stated:

We have now reached a situation where the formation of such an agency is threatened ... The main reason for this sorry state of affairs has been due to the wishes of a dominant power foreign to the region, to join the Agency on its own terms ... We view this ... as yet another attempt to dominate our region and to dictate to us the terms and conditions in which we should run our affairs.⁵⁶

An additional objection, held particularly by Papua New Guinea, was that the United States, as one of the main DWFNs, should not be a member of an agency controlling the activities of such nations on behalf of the South Pacific states. The issue was not resolved at the SPF. By the end of the meeting, the Papua New Guinea/Fiji group was threatening to set up its own fisheries agency. As a compromise, it was decided to proceed with the establishment of an agency comprising only the SPF countries, leaving the question of DWFN membership for further negotiation. A redrafted convention establishing the new Honiara-based South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) was subsequently signed at the 1979 SPF meeting.⁵⁷

Virtually as the ink was drying on the convention, some of the FFA members were already negotiating the formation of a more exclusive alliance comprising those island states that enjoyed a relatively large share of the region's tuna resources. These discussions culminated in 1981 with the creation of the 'Nauru Group', comprising five Micronesian states (Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru and

55 Jones, 'US Tuna Fishing a Divisive Issue for Forum Members'; and *Sydney Morning Herald*, 'Islanders Wary of US Bait'.

56 As reported in *The Canberra Times*, "'New Colonialism" Over Fishing'.

57 SPF Secretariat, *Leaders Communiqué: Tenth South Pacific Forum, Honiara, Solomon Islands, 9–10 July 1979*, Suva: SPF Secretariat, 1979, available from: www.forumsec.org/tenth-south-pacific-forum-honiara-solomon-islands-9-10-july-1979/.

Palau) and two Melanesian states (Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands).⁵⁸ Although they made it clear this move was not to be seen as threatening the unity of the FFA, and that the Nauru Group would be working closely with the FFA, it inevitably was seen by some as doing just that. The formation of the Nauru Group reflected a feeling of frustration with the difficulties and time involved in establishing the FFA. These countries particularly wanted to sharpen the resource diplomacy and maritime surveillance aspects of regional fisheries management. The negotiations leading to the creation of the FFA had made them concerned about the commitment of the Polynesian states to move firmly on these issues. They established a regional register of vessels and agreed minimum terms for their bilateral negotiations with DWFNs. They worked closely with the FFA, including FFA representatives in their negotiations and using the FFA as their secretariat. The FFA also took over the Nauru Group's regional register of vessels.⁵⁹

The existence of the Nauru Group pointed to a division in regional politics that was present in the negotiations leading up to the FFA. This was the division between those countries that were resource-rich and those that were resource-poor—geographically, a split between the west and east of the region. It was also present in the attitudes taken to the FFA's most impressive achievement in resource diplomacy, the treaty between the FFA members and the United States. The rift did not, however, appear significant during the 10 rounds of negotiations between 1984 and the treaty's signing in April 1987. The Pacific island states were united in their desire to extract some return for the enormous amount of tuna being taken out of the region by US purse seine vessels. For 10 years, the United States had been seen as the main threat to the resource security of the Pacific island states because of its failure to recognise the jurisdiction of coastal states over highly migratory species. Spurred on by the Soviet fishing deal with Kiribati in August 1985, and urged on by its regional

58 *Nauru Agreement Concerning Co-operation in the Management of Fisheries of Common Interest*, Nauru, 1981.

59 David J. Doullman, 'Fisheries Co-operation: The Case of the Nauru Group', in David J. Doullman, *Tuna Issues and Perspectives in the Pacific Islands Region*, Honolulu: East-West Center, 1987, pp. 257–77; and Roniti Teiwaki, *Management of Marine Resources in Kiribati*, Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1988, pp. 108–12.

allies Australia and New Zealand, the United States ultimately signed a treaty that overrode both its own legislation and its general position on the Law of the Sea.⁶⁰

Although initially heralded as a mighty achievement for the weak against the strong, the terms of the treaty awakened old divisions in the Pacific island community. The seeds of the rising discontent lay in the treaty's provision to distribute a portion of the A\$60 million payment equally among the FFA nations, regardless of the location of the resource or size of catch. The resource-rich—particularly those for whom tuna was the primary income earner, such as Kiribati—began to question why those countries which had no tuna should receive the same as those which had a significant resource. There had been some discussion as to whether the resource-rich states would have done better to negotiate bilateral deals with the American Tuna Boat Association.⁶¹

Such divisions did not plague the other major achievement in resource diplomacy and management, that of gaining the agreement of Japan, South Korea and Taiwan to a prohibition on driftnet fishing in the South Pacific. All SPF members were very concerned about this new fishing practice of the late 1980s, which threatened to seriously deplete the stocks of albacore tuna. The negotiations, held under the auspices of the FFA, began in Suva in November 1988 among island states. At the first meeting of the FFA's members with DWFNs in June 1989, Japan and Taiwan were intransigent, indicating their intention to continue driftnetting. A year later, Japan announced its intention to suspend driftnetting in the region for the 1990–91 season as a response to the 'grave concerns' of the SPF states. Events had moved quickly in the interim. In July 1989, the SPF states signed the Tarawa Declaration, which signalled their intention to develop a convention establishing a regional ban on driftnetting; in

60 *Treaty on Fisheries between the Governments of Certain Pacific Island States and the Government of the United States of America*, Port Moresby, 2 April 1987; SPF Secretariat, *Forum Communiqué: Thirteenth South Pacific Forum*; SPF Secretariat, *Forum Communiqué: Fifteenth South Pacific Forum, Funafuti, Tuvalu, 27–28 August 1984*, Suva: SPF Secretariat, 1984, and *Forum Communiqué: Eighteenth South Pacific Forum, Apia, Western Samoa, 29–30 May 1987*, Suva: SPF Secretariat, 1987; Jon Van Dyke and Carolyn Nicol, 'US Tuna Policy: A Reluctant Acceptance of the International Norm', in Doullman, *Tuna Issues and Perspectives*, pp. 105–32; and Teiwaki, *Management of Marine Resources in Kiribati*, pp. 113–15.

61 See, for example, Roniti Teiwaki's comments, as reported in 'Kiribati Gets Too Much Aid; Must Learn to Say "No" Says Opposition Leader', *Pacific Report*, 6(22), 1993: 6.

October, the Guam South Pacific Conference endorsed the Tarawa Declaration and, in an unprecedented move in the 'no-politics' SPC, criticised Japan and Taiwan in a resolution of the conference.⁶²

In the same month, the US House of Representatives endorsed the Tarawa Declaration and urged the US Government to support the efforts of the Pacific states. In November 1989, the Convention for the Prohibition of Fishing with Long Driftnets in the South Pacific (known as the Wellington Convention) was signed by seven SPF states following a meeting with DWFNs at which Japan remained intransigent.⁶³ In December, the United States, together with the SPF states with UN membership and their supporters, placed a resolution for a ban on driftnetting in the South Pacific before the UN General Assembly. Japan responded with its own resolution calling for scientific evidence for the claims concerning the impact of driftnetting. A compromise was found in UN Resolution 44/225 (1989), which called, inter alia, for a cessation of driftnetting in the South Pacific by 1 July 1991, and until such time as there were 'appropriate conservation and management arrangements for South Pacific albacore tuna resources'.⁶⁴

This achievement was viewed as the high-water mark of South Pacific collective diplomacy aimed at resetting global economic engagements and promoting a Pacific regional interest. The gradual forging of coalitions within the region, within the Commonwealth and then at the United Nations, the use of legal conventions and declarations and the embarrassment of Japan and Taiwan at regional conferences—all contributed to the success of this joint policy. Greenpeace, an international NGO, also played a very significant role in educating Pacific island leaders about the impact of driftnetting.⁶⁵ Australia and New Zealand also took

62 See SPF Secretariat, *Tarawa Declaration*, Suva: SPF Secretariat, 11 July 1989, available from: www.forumsec.org/tarawa-declaration/; Author's observations at the Twenty-Ninth South Pacific Conference, Agana, Guam, 9–11 October 1989.

63 See SPF Secretariat, *Forum Communiqué: Twentieth Pacific Islands Forum, Tarawa, Republic of Kiribati, 10–11 July 1989*, Suva: SPF Secretariat, 1989; *Forum Communiqué: Twenty-First South Pacific Forum, Port Vila, Vanuatu, 31 July – 1 August 1990*; *Forum Communiqué: Twenty-Second South Pacific Forum, Palikir, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia, 29–30 July 1991*; *Pacific Report*, 19 July 1990; and Richard A. Herr, 'The Region in Review: International Issues and Events, 1989', *The Contemporary Pacific*, 2(2), 1990: 350–7, at pp. 353–4.

64 UN General Assembly, *Large-Scale Pelagic Driftnet Fishing and its Impact on the Living Marine Resources of the World's Oceans and Seas*, A/RES/44/225, New York: United Nations, 22 December 1989, available from: digitallibrary.un.org/record/82553?ln=en.

65 See Michael Hagler, 'Driftnet Fishing in the South Pacific', in Ramesh Thakur, ed., *The South Pacific: Problems, Issues and Prospects*, New York: St Martin's Press, 1991, pp. 95–104.

a major part in the coalition-building in wider international forums and in devising an appropriate legal regime. The FFA secretariat, under the leadership of Phillip Muller, played a major part in putting the issue on the regional agenda, in providing information on the driftnetting practice and in organising the negotiations with DWFNs.⁶⁶ Furthermore, all Pacific island states were unified in their outspoken opposition to the practice. This was generally a cost-free exercise for SPF members, although Fiji, for one, was concerned that the legalist approach taken to this issue by Australia and New Zealand might needlessly offend Japan, thereby affecting gains in other areas.⁶⁷

Conclusion

In the 1970s and 1980s, Pacific leaders embraced the economic development goal of the liberal modernisation paradigm, but they tempered this acceptance with a commitment to the defence of Pacific cultural values, particularly as seen in the regionwide protection of customary land tenure. There was also a ready adoption of liberal modernisation's depiction of 'smallness' and advocacy of regional integration as the logical remedy. But, with the failure of regional integration schemes in the 1970s, Pacific region-builders began to focus more on the idea of renegotiating the structures of engagement with the global economy. Here, they were more successful in their regional approach to development. As we shall see, both approaches to region-building for development—regional integration and joint diplomacy aimed at renegotiating the terms of engagement with the global economy—revealed tensions between Pacific states, as well as between the outside world and the Pacific island states. In the 1970s, there was broad accord between political leaders and civil society on the promised assertion of a Pacific regional perspective on modernisation. But increasingly, in the 1980s, this consensus broke down as parts of civil society started to question whether the Pacific way and an elite state-driven regionalism was

66 David J. Doulman, 'Fisheries Management in the South Pacific: The Role of the Forum Fisheries Agency', in Thakur, *The South Pacific*, pp. 89–92.

67 Jioji Kotobalavu, 'Trends in Perceptions of Security', in David Hegarty and Peter Polomka, eds, *The Security of Oceania in the 1990s. Volume 1: Views from the Region*, Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, The Australian National University, 1989, pp. 25–30, at p. 28.

delivering appropriate development for Pacific peoples. We will examine this critique as it becomes more vocal as an alternative framing of Pacific development in Chapter 11, as part of an exploration of the ascendancy of neoliberalism as a development framework.

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