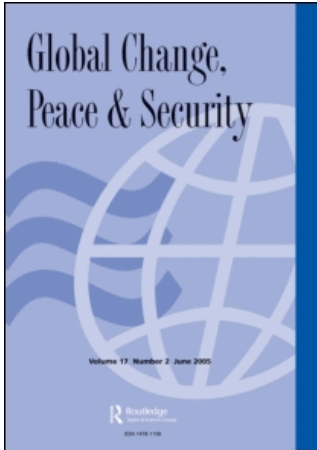


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# Melanesian Seasonal Migration as a Potential Contribution to Security

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*The Pacific Region has justifiably become increasingly concerned about insecurity in the Pacific island countries. In the longer term, the solution to this insecurity lies not in the military intervention of Regional Assistance Missions, or the external imposition of good governance programmes, but in economic development that specifically gives young people a stake in their country rather than a motivation for unrest or permanent emigration. The paper discusses the potential for seasonal migration from Melanesia, as contrasted with permanent emigration from Polynesia, to make a contribution both to island economies and to regional security. Kiribati's and Tuvalu's experiences with the temporary migration of seafarers are examined for possible lessons. The recently implemented New Zealand seasonal migration programme for the Pacific is set out as a possible model for further development.*

## Introduction

The idea of migration acting as a safety valve for the Pacific island countries is certainly not new.<sup>1</sup> The concept of MIRAB—Pacific economies dependent on *migration, remittances, aid and bureaucracy*—was originally formulated in the mid 1980s and has been widely discussed since.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, back in prehistory, the original settlement of the island countries could be seen as the result of population pressures leading to canoes setting off to seek new lands.<sup>3</sup> However, to date, the great majority of discussions of modern emigration have been limited to Polynesia and Micronesia and to permanent or semi-permanent emigration.<sup>4</sup> This paper argues that short-term emigration could play a significant role for Melanesia. Certainly, as with most complex problems, there is no one solution to the excess of labour and the lack of employment in the islands. Those who promote permanent emigration are delivering a strong message that conditions at home are not likely to improve and that the best solution is to leave and send home remittances to those left behind. Currently, in very broad terms (and excluding the French territories and the areas in the American sphere), there are three main groups of Pacific countries with different migration experiences;

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- 1 Vasantha Krishnan, Penelope Schoeffel and Julie Warren, *The Challenge of Change. Pacific Island Communities in New Zealand, 1986–1993*, (Wellington: New Zealand Institute for Social Research and Development, 1994), p. 1; Ron Duncan and Satish Chand, 'The Economics of the "Arc of Instability"', *Asia Pacific Economic Literature*, 16, (2002) pp.1–9; Helen Ware, 'Pacific Instability and Youth Bulges: The Devil in the Economy and in the Demography', paper presented at Australian Population Association, Canberra, (15–17 September 2004).
- 2 Geoff Bertram, 'The MIRAB Model Twelve Years on', *Contemporary Pacific*, 11, 1, (1999), pp. 105–138.
- 3 John Irwin, *The Prehistoric Exploration and Colonization of the Pacific*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press 1996).
- 4 See for example the bibliographies in Charles Stahl and Reginald Appleyard, *Migration and Development in the Pacific Islands: Lessons from the New Zealand Experience*, (Canberra: AusAID, 2007) and John Connell and Richard Brown, *Remittances in the Pacific: An Overview*, (Manila: ADB, 2005).

(1) Samoa, Tonga, the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau—Polynesian countries with as many resident overseas as remain at home; (2) Kiribati and Tuvalu—seafaring countries with temporary migration of sailors; and (3) Melanesian countries with minimal out-migration (see Table 1). Fiji is an outlier as a Melanesian country with significant emigration but mainly by the Indian rather than the indigenous population, although this is beginning to change.<sup>5</sup>

Most Pacific Island countries are faced with the problem that their economies are stagnant or growing at a very slow pace. This means that the standard of living for many of their people is little improved over what it was two decades ago and their hopes for the future are circumscribed.<sup>6</sup> The recipe for improved growth proposed by the international financial institutions and bilateral donors such as Australia and New Zealand has changed little: the message has simply been re-iterated that the failure of growth continues because the policies advocated by these institutions are not being implemented with sufficient vigour and rigour. The increased emphasis on good governance stems from the belief that better governance would deliver better economic policy, since a major barrier to reform is the opportunities for corruption and rent-seeking provided by the current systems. In the absence of reform there is stalemate, with the people at the grassroots in the urban squatter settlements, the villages and the outer islands continuing to suffer as the need for cash incomes to supplement subsistence lifestyles becomes increasingly acute. Outside fisheries and tourism, prospects for trade in goods and services are restricted by distance, lack of economies of scale and high costs. Taking the labourers to countries where the work is brings more profit than taking the work out to the islands.

Even the most optimistic do not envisage rapid economic growth for the Pacific island countries in the near future.<sup>7</sup> Yet civil unrest is either a present actuality for many (Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga) or in prospect (Papua New Guinea with its elections due in 2007, ever politically volatile Vanuatu, even Samoa [see below]). If island economies cannot be rapidly jumpstarted using solely indigenous assets then there are prospects for examining new combinations of local and external resources. To date, Pacific migration has largely been considered in terms of permanent emigration from Polynesia. The focus here is on examining the potential for short-term migration from Melanesia as one part of a potential package of solutions. The case of the short-term emigration of seafarers from Tuvalu and Kiribati will be used as a possible indicator of how remittances might be used in Melanesia.

The linkages between migration and security are multidirectional. 'While it is true that migration is both an outcome and a source of insecurity it is equally valid to consider migration as a contributing factor to security and stability.'<sup>8</sup> Civil disruptions in small countries with less than a million people can cause great havoc very quickly, but can also sometimes be quelled with relative ease. However, for the Pacific island countries and Timor Leste, preventing their recurrence has proved to be very challenging.

The island countries of the Pacific are spread across vast stretches of ocean but are very small in population terms.<sup>9</sup> The Pacific Island Forum is the regional political organization.

5 Brij Lal, 'Fiji Islands from Immigration to Emigration', *Migration Information Source*, (April 2003) presents a Fijian perspective; the Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics' Migration Statistics 1987–2004 show that the proportion of indigenous Fijians amongst those emigrating grew from 6 per cent in 1987–1999 to 8 per cent in 2000–2004.

6 AusAID, *Pacific 2020 Report*, (Canberra: AusAID, 2005).

7 AusAID, *Pacific 2020 Report*.

8 Colleen Thouez, 'Migration and Human Security', paper presented at Consultations on International Migration, Berlin, (21–21 October 2002), p. 1.

9 Kiribati, population 93,100, has a land area of 726 square kilometres, but so spread out over many distant islands that it has an exclusive economic zone of 3.6 million square kilometres; see Forum Secretariat website <<http://www.forumsec.org/pages.cfm/about-us/member-countries/>> (accessed 5 July 2007).

**Table 1.** South Pacific: data on youth bulges, income, remittances, overseas populations circa 2003

Country	Population	Youth bulge 15–24 as % of 15+	Gross national		ODA per capita (US\$)	Remittances per person (US\$)	Remittances as % GDP	Human development index 2003	% resident overseas
			income per capita 2005 (US\$)	income per capita 2005 (ADB)					
Cook Islands	14,000 declining	25	9067 (ADB)	263	—	—	—	—	76
Fiji	836,000	30	3170	61	185	7	—	75	12
Kiribati	93,100	33	1210	191	73	12 [26]	—	(51)	1
Nauru	10,100	[45]	5828	1242	—	—	—	—	(10)
Niue	1600 declining	26	(4750)	8750	—	Net flows are outwards	—	—	92
Papua New Guinea	5,700,000	31	500	40	1	0.2	—	52	0.2
Samoa	182,700	33	2020	186	253	14	—	78	57
Solomon Islands	460,100	31	620	132	4	1	—	59	0.3
Timor Leste	1,015,000	33	600	172	—	—	—	—	(1)
Tokelau	(1600) declining		(500)	(3550)	—	—	—	—	82
Tonga	98,300	32	1750	270	650	39	—	81	46
Tuvalu	9600 declining	26		520	460	36 [30]	—	—	18
Vanuatu	215,800	33	1560	154	43	3	—	66	0.6

Sources: Population: Forum Secretariat Database 2004 Estimates, Youth Bulge: data from Richard Curtain 'Facing the Youth Bulge: Livelihood Opportunities for Young People in Timor-Leste', *Development Bulletin*, 72, (2007), Table 1. GNI per capita, Atlas method: World Bank Development Indicator Database 2007. Cook Islands, Nauru: ADB Database. ODA per Capita: OECD Database for 2003; UN Statistics Database. Remittances per person and as % GDP: AusAID, *Pacific 2020 Report*, Table 4.3. Square-bracketed estimates of remittances as % GDP are from P. Clark, *Economic Tracer Study for Pacific Island Seafarers' Expenditure*, (Suva, Fiji: SPC, 2003). % Resident overseas: reworked from data in Ware, 'Demography, Migration and Conflict in the Pacific', Table 3. HDI data: UNDP, 'Human Development Index Report 2003', <<http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2003/>> (accessed 4 July 2007). Figures in parentheses are author's estimates from a range of individual sources.

Its members are the 13 island countries<sup>10</sup> with a total population of less than two million people between them, plus Papua New Guinea with five million, New Zealand with four million and Australia which dominates with 21 million.<sup>11</sup> Their very small population size, often combined with considerable geographic dispersion, makes it hard for Pacific economies to become self-supporting but, by the same token, makes it much easier for Australia and New Zealand to open up their markets not only to free trade in goods but also to free trade in labour from the Pacific. As will be shown below, New Zealand has been much more open to Pacific immigration than Australia and appears to have a better understanding of the links between Pacific Islander migration possibilities and security.

The argument here is that insecurity within the Forum island countries is essentially a matter of weak economies and high unemployment.<sup>12</sup> There are not great divides over political or religious philosophies and Pacific political disputes are essentially over who gets access to resources. Because island economies remain in the doldrums, they cannot provide jobs for young people and therefore they are liable to repeated civil disturbances enacted by dissatisfied youths.<sup>13</sup> The contention is that in the absence of prospects of rapid local economic growth, the best source of paid employment will remain in Australia and New Zealand, but the best chance of making those jobs in turn translate into economic growth at home is through seasonal migration. The claim, to be elaborated further below, is that seasonal migration will have a different impact upon the island economies and social structure than does the current permanent emigration from Polynesia and Fiji. In contrast to many other solutions, such as structural adjustment, which have been imposed upon the islanders, this is a solution desired both by the potential migrants and by their national leaders. Those Pacific islanders, predominantly Melanesians, who wish to continue their traditional lifestyle can do so, but the bulk of young people who desire something more can have a chance to pursue their dreams. If seasonal migration is only open to those with clean police records then there is a clear motive to avoid violence.<sup>14</sup> Unlike 'good governance', which is top-down and centred on capital towns, the rewards of seasonal migration are paid directly to the workers, who, if programmes are designed with care, may be rural villagers, even coming from remote outer islands.

The assumption is that broadening the opportunities to participate in development will reduce the proportion of young people with an interest in participating in riot and crime and that, therefore, the more people who ultimately have a chance to be involved, the greater the impact. Understandably, there are few statistics on the characteristics of those who participate in riots, but almost all of the media reporting, video footage and eye-witness accounts would suggest that the great majority of those who join in are young, male and unemployed.<sup>15</sup> Opportunities to go overseas to work can have a direct impact in reducing public violence and unrest, as when young people, who get one chance to go to New Zealand for some months, knowing that they may be able to return for a further working visit if they maintain an unblemished criminal record, are both kept busy and motivated to be

10 The 13 are the Cook Islands 14,000; Federated States of Micronesia 112,700; Fiji 836,000; Kiribati 93,100; Marshall Islands 55,400; Nauru 10,100; Niue 1600; Palau 20,700; Samoa 182,700; Solomon Islands 460,100; Tonga 98,300; Tuvalu 9,600 and Vanuatu 215,800: see Forum Secretariat website.

11 2004 population estimates are from the Forum Secretariat website.

12 Urbanization is a closely related factor: see Peter Gizewski and Thomas Homer-Dixon, *Urban Growth and Violence: Will the Future Resemble the Past?*, (Washington: American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1995). See also Rob McCusker, *Transnational Crime in the Pacific Islands: Real or Apparent Danger?*, (Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology, 2006).

13 Matthew Allen, 'Greed and Grievance: The Role of Economic Agendas in the Conflict in the Solomon Islands', *Pacific Economic Bulletin*, 20, 2, (2005), pp. 30–39.

14 Clark McPhail, 'Civil Disorder Participation: A Critical Examination of Recent Research', *American Sociological Review*, 36, (1971) pp. 1058–1075.

15 For media reporting on the Pacific, Radio New Zealand has a good online archive.

well behaved. It can also work more indirectly, as those who have not yet had a chance to go overseas both see the opportunities that may in turn become available to them and see prospects at home open up through the small-scale enterprises established by some of the returnees.

To envisage a specific example, the brother goes to Australia to help with vegetable-harvesting and comes home with plans and seeds for a small venture growing vegetables for sale at home, plus chance to take some handicrafts with him to sell when he returns to Australia next time. Perhaps he has acquired a mentor in Australia from a church or sporting group there. These modest plans are still enough to require the labour of a couple of his siblings and three or four cousins who also aspire to visit Australia. Such small-scale activities cannot be expected to have a dramatic impact on the economies of any but the smallest of the island states, but they can play a role in growing the crucial access to cash to prime the start of small enterprises in rural Melanesia.<sup>16</sup> Small businesses started by returned migrants also have the great advantage of promoting development at the grassroots level and from the bottom up. This is the advantage of having earnings from short-term migration taken home by the workers themselves. They are the ones who will decide how the money will be spent, and, because they have to envisage a future in their home country, they are the ones with the motivation to find ways to invest in enterprises that will continue to bring in a return. If a village group combining young people with two or three respected leaders travel together for seasonal work, they may be able to work out together how new enterprises are to be structured in ways that fit within evolving village traditions.<sup>17</sup> Returnees do not have the option of shifting their lives and their investments offshore where financial returns are undeniably greater. In a region littered with failed projects imported from overseas it is difficult to overstress the importance of people working on their own development projects as a factor in the success of such projects.<sup>18</sup> Whilst it is important not to exaggerate the potential for returnees to establish small businesses there are a range of niche opportunities and localized opportunities that in the case of the Solomon Islands could include establishing exports of Pacific island nuts including cut nut and gnali nut, chicken- and pig-farming, eco-tourism and possibly furniture-making.<sup>19</sup> Remittances sent home by those who have left on a permanent basis often perform very different functions, even providing for different generations: they are sent to pay for the living expenses of elderly parents, for school fees for young siblings left behind or, as often happens in Polynesia, to boost the prestige of the whole family by large public donations to the local church.<sup>20</sup>

## Youth Bulges

Whilst it is an oversimplification to say that large proportions of young people manifesting as youth bulges in the demographic profile are necessarily a problem, it is certainly true that a youth bulge accompanied by high levels of unemployment is a recipe for civil unrest.<sup>21</sup> Although definitions vary, a youth bulge can be defined as occurring where the proportion

16 AusAID, *Pacific 2020 Report*, p. 44, states that 'Credit is difficult or impossible to obtain for all but the largest businesses' yet remittances can replace credit as a source of investment financing for small businesses.

17 Jamon Halvaksz, 'Cannabis and Fantasies of Development; Revaluing Relations through Land in Rural Papua New Guinea', *Australian Journal of Anthropology*, 18, 1, (2007), pp. 56–71.

18 James Cox, 'Economic Initiatives for the Poor in Context: Growth from the Grassroots', *Development Bulletin*, 72, (2007), pp. 79–82. 'Pacific Islanders are finding that the space between their customary lives and the modern world is a difficult one to negotiate': Cox, 'Economic Initiatives for the Poor in Context', p. 79

19 Russ Grayson, 'Six Ways to Turn the Solomon Islands' Youth into a Long-Term Asset', *ON LINE Opinion*, 1 April 2004, <<http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=2110>> (accessed 4 July 2007).

20 Connell and Brown, *Remittances in the Pacific*, Chapter 5.

21 Helen Ware, 'Demography, Migration and Conflict in the Pacific', *Journal of Peace Research*, 42, 4, (2005), pp. 435–454.

of young people aged 15 to 24 is a high proportion of the total adult population aged 15 and above.<sup>22</sup> The theoretical justification for choosing this calculation, rather than the simple proportion of youth in the total population, is that the issue of concern is that young people see themselves as a large group competing for a restricted number of opportunities currently held by a smaller group of older workers. Where fertility remains high, as in Melanesia and indeed much of Polynesia, there are large numbers of children under age 15 too who will be biting at the heels of those in their twenties and teens. Youth bulges require fast-growing economies to provide schooling, jobs and economic opportunities for ever larger youth cohorts. If the size of the population is growing at three per cent per annum, as currently is happening in Melanesia and in East Timor and as could still happen in Samoa and Tonga in the absence of emigration, then the economy also has to grow at three per cent per annum just to keep the standard of living at a constant level. In reality few Pacific economies attain this level of economic growth.

Table 1 presents data on the youth bulges in the Pacific island countries, defined as the percentage of youths to total adults. It can be seen that the percentage is approximately one-third for all the countries except the Cook Islands, Niue and Tuvalu, which are all micro countries with ready access to New Zealand. Both human development index (HDI) and the gross national income (GNI) data also show quite clearly that the peoples of Polynesia and Fiji are significantly better off in terms of both income and social well-being than are those of Melanesia. Although the relationship is not necessarily a causal one, the Polynesian countries also have higher proportions of population resident overseas and remittances as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP).

The concept of the youth bulge has now entered discourse among Pacific countries. Thus, the Australian government recognizes that 'although the conflict in the Solomon Islands was often inflamed by ethnic rhetoric, the root causes went much deeper than that', including 'land tenure disputes, the clash between traditional and non traditional authority structures, systemic population issues including a "youth bulge", unequal access to government services ... economic opportunities, and a failure to properly enforce the rule of law or administer justice'.<sup>23</sup> For the Solomons, Christopher Chevalier has described how 'many young people have experienced an individual and collective demoralisation due to their perceived "failure" at school and their failure to find work ... *Masta Liu* has become an important new cultural concept characterising the young and frequently unemployed people who come to Honiara. Short-term migration (*wokabaot*) to town in search of work and new experiences has long been a feature of young people's lives in Solomon Islands. Alienation and marginalisation have been reinforced by an urban youth culture with opportunities for freedom from traditional authority, recreational sex, and in recent years use of marijuana and homebrew.'<sup>24</sup> To be a *Masta Liu* is to be a layabout, a master of the art of doing nothing because there is nothing to do. In Papua New Guinea *raskolism* has a more specifically criminal connotation, but has the same causes and potential for young men to leave if they can find alternative sources of resources and prestige.<sup>25</sup> One reason why Pacific youths face problems is that their role may be new to a local culture in which children

22 Henrik Urdal, 'A Clash of Generations? Youth Bulges and Political Violence', *International Studies Quarterly*, 50, (2006), pp. 607–629.

23 AusAID, *Solomon Islands Transitional Country Strategy 2006 to Mid 2007*, (Canberra: AusAID, 2006), p. 3.

24 Christopher Chevalier, 'Threats and Opportunities in Solomon Islands: Sinking or Swimming in Unchartered Waters', *Development Bulletin*, 53, (2000), pp. 84–88. The *Masta Liu* are the young men who hang around town. They have avoided the hard labour and boredom of village life but have to renegotiate parts of *kastom* to make their urban lives meaningful.

25 Sinclair Dinnen, 'Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition—Criminal Group Surrender in Papua New Guinea', *Oceania*, 66, 2, (1995), pp. 103–119. See also Paul Roscoe, 'The Return of the Ambush: "Raskolism" in Rural Yangoru, East Sepik Province', *Oceania*, 69, 3, (1999), p. 171.

formerly were initiated into adulthood without passing through a 'youth' stage. In the Solomon Islands today 'youth' are seen as an intermediate category between 'students' and 'adults'. In this view, young people who go through to tertiary study or skills training and emerge able to get prestigious work and help their communities with their knowledge never become youths, since they pass directly from being students to adulthood. A child is thus like a caterpillar that will emerge as an adult from the cocoon of being a student. Sadly, only a minority achieve this and in most cases 'the cocoon breaks, and the half-formed young one falls back into the village unlikely now to ever get prestigious work and unknowing how to manage a village life'.<sup>26</sup> Older people actually refer to youths in their twenties who have failed to find work as 'useless', noting that under custom there was a direct passage from childhood to manhood or womanhood.<sup>27</sup>

Across the Pacific a barometer of the potential for unrest is provided by the gap between the number of students who leave school each year and the number who can find jobs. In Tonga, where 73 per cent of the population is under 35, more than 1000 youths leave school each year but there are jobs for less than 200. Indeed, given an ongoing programme of public service downsizing by approximately 20 per cent, still being implemented with Asian Development Bank advice,<sup>28</sup> and the very small size of the private sector in Tonga, the total number of jobs available is actually in decline.

A youth bulge can be both the cause of civil disturbances and the tool through which dissatisfaction is acted out. The government of Tonga states, 'the majority of the thousands that were arrested after 16/11 [2006 riots] were Tongan youth under the age of 24 . . . Right now, we have thousands and thousands of unemployed youth roaming the streets day and night. Some are looking for opportunities in the criminal sense while others simply roam out of sheer boredom. It is said that "our youth are our future" and so far it looks bleak. Youth unemployment was a staggering 11.9 percent in 2003 . . . but has risen as high as 20 percent according to unofficial estimates.'<sup>29</sup> The Tongan analysis of the problem is excellent; unfortunately the proposed solutions—co-operation with the private sector and vocational training—are much weaker.

Until the riots broke out in the Tongan capital in November 2006, there was a general assumption that the Pacific arc of instability was essentially a Melanesian phenomenon. The feeling was that both the strength of the traditionally hierarchical Polynesian cultures of Samoa and Tonga and the existence of a longstanding emigration safety valve would protect them from major civil disturbances. Weaknesses in the cultural assumption are discussed in the section on Tonga below, but the demographic misunderstanding can be addressed here. Part of the reason for believing that emigration acts as a safety valve in the Pacific was an assumption that it would reduce the pool of the young and unemployed as well as bringing in remittances. The incorrect assumption was that, because Samoa and Tonga had experienced heavy rates of emigration over several decades, they would not have large numbers of young people and therefore high levels of youth unemployment at home. This was invalid because, as Table 1 shows, proportionately, the Samoan and Tongan youth bulges are amongst the highest in the Pacific. Emigration has served to almost stop population numbers growing in Samoa and Tonga but it has not been enough

26 This concept is discussed in AusAID, *Youth in Solomon Islands: A Participatory Study of Issues, Needs and Priorities, Final Report*, (Canberra: AusAID, 2003), p. 9.

27 *Youth in Solomon Islands*, pp. 9–10.

28 Asian Development Bank, *Tonga and the ADB: Fact-Sheet*, (Manila: ADB, 2006).

29 Government of Tonga, 'Tonga Develops Strategy to Address Youth Concerns', *Tonga Now*, 14 February 2007, <<http://www.tonga-now.to/Article.aspx?ID=2397>>. A 2001 Survey by UNICEF/WHO found that 59 per cent of school youth in Tonga were unemployed. Even more worryingly 48 per cent of students thought it unlikely that they would ever be employed: see *Pacific Magazine*, 1 January 2004.

to drain the pool of the young and unemployed. Indeed, it is possible that the youth of these countries of heavy emigration are more dissatisfied because they see their peers leaving for adventure and bright lights overseas and they are left behind. The ballot that operates to select Tongans to emigrate to New Zealand might be especially galling in that context.

One expensive way in which developing countries can employ their youth bulges is to have large standing armies. Most Pacific island countries have succeeded in avoiding this trap. Many such as Kiribati, Samoa, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu have no army at all and Fiji discovered how to make a profit out of hiring out its service personnel to the United Nations as peacekeepers.<sup>30</sup> However, having a standing army, as Fiji has repeatedly discovered, creates the risk that the soldiers will decide to remove the government of the day.<sup>31</sup>

## Remittances

Several of the Pacific island countries have become famous, or infamous, for being MIRAB economies based upon migration, remittances, aid and bureaucracy.<sup>32</sup> For these countries remittances, both formally and informally transmitted and sent in cash and in kind, can represent up to one-third of their GDP.<sup>33</sup> Tongan migrants' remittances including goods represent about half of Tonga's GDP with some A\$114 million going through official channels and the remainder in money and goods passing through informal routes.<sup>34</sup> In Samoa remittances contribution fluctuates but was estimated to represent 35 per cent of GDP in 1989 and 20 per cent in 2002–2004.<sup>35</sup> Officially recorded cash remittances to Fiji have grown from 50 million in 1999 to \$300 million in 2004 plus some \$150 million in remittances in kind (1 Fiji dollar is roughly 75 cents Australian and 62 cents US). This means that Fiji earns more from remittances than from garments and sugar and possibly tourism. 'Everyone should say thank-you to all our peacekeepers, security personnel, nurses, sportspersons and family members abroad for helping us pay for our imports.'<sup>36</sup> In Fiji 'each year 17,000 persons enter the labour force actively looking for work. Of these only 7,700 can expect to find formal sector employment—2,000 will replace those migrating overseas and 3,300 will replace those retiring and only 2,400 will fill new jobs resulting from economic growth.'<sup>37</sup>

Remittances can become essential to the maintenance of national order. As early as 1992, Campbell argued that 'any lessening in the level of remittances will cause an abrupt fall in Tongan imports. A reverse multiplier effect would cause many bankruptcies . . . and a declining standard of living that would force many people back into the subsistence economy . . . Political upheaval could be a further downstream effect.'<sup>38</sup> Having a significant proportion of their citizens overseas experiencing developed country living standards, Tongan expectations have risen more rapidly than their standard of living or anything their government

30 Manoranjan Mohanty, 'Globalisation, New Labour Migration and Development in Fiji Islands', paper presented at the Globalisation, Governance and the Pacific Islands Conference, Canberra, (25–27 October 2005), pp. 6–7.

31 Ware, 'Demography, Migration and Conflict in the Pacific'.

32 Geoff Bertram, 'Introduction: The MIRAB Model in the Twenty-First Century', *Asia-Pacific Viewpoint*, 47, 1, (2006), pp. 1–13.

33 Connell and Brown, *Remittances in the Pacific*.

34 Helen Lee, "'Tonga Only Wants Our Money': The Children of Tongan Migrants", in Stewart Firth (ed.), *Globalisation, Governance and the Pacific Islands*, (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2006).

35 Jean-Louis Rallu, 'Recent Trends in International Migration and Economic Development in the South Pacific', *Asia-Pacific Population Journal*, 11, 2, (1996), Table 5; ESCAP (United Nations' Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific), 'Mid-Term Review of the Brussels Programme of Action for Asia and the Pacific LDCs', (Bangkok: ESCAP 2006), p. 31.

36 Savenaca Narube, 'Address to the Fiji–Australia Business Forum by the Governor of the Reserve Bank of Fiji', Shangri-La, Fiji, (17 October 2005), pp. 5–6.

37 Fiji Human Resource/Labour Market Task Force, *Report*, 4 March 2001.

38 Ian Campbell, 'The Emergence of Parliamentary Politics in Tonga', *Pacific Studies*, 15, 1, (1992), p. 71.

can afford. In 2005 Tongan public servants went on strike demanding pay rises of up to 80 per cent—the levels finally agreed to mean that three-quarters of all government expenditure will now be spent on public service wages.

As a national strategy for Pacific countries, relying on migrant remittances to date has required relatively high levels of education.<sup>39</sup> Samoans and Tongans have been able to move because their countries have universal literacy and speak English, I-Kiribati and Tuvaluans can move temporarily because of their seafaring skills and training. Melanesian countries have lower levels of education and apparently less interest in permanent migration. It is very difficult to estimate how far Melanesians do not emigrate because they do not want to, or because they lack the opportunities to do so. Ethnographers describe Melanesians as 'dividuals' in contrast to Western 'individuals', arguing that their personal survival depends on continuing links with their social group and the area where they were born.<sup>40</sup> Yet the *Vanuatu News* ran a poll that showed that many of their educated readers would wish to emigrate. Australian data on people who enter as visitors who do not then leave show that Samoa, Nauru and Tonga all feature in the top ten countries with between seven and five per cent of their people failing to return home.<sup>41</sup> Melanesians are much less likely to be overstayers, despite the proximity of Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu. Whether by choice or force of circumstances, in sharp contrast to their Polynesian cousins, few Melanesians live outside their home countries (see Table 1).<sup>42</sup>

Obviously, the impact of remittances on the economy as a whole, and on employment levels in particular, partially depends on what the money is spent on. The argument that is being made here is that remittances/money earned overseas by short-term migrants is likely to be spent in different ways that may well be more immediately productive and employment-creating than remittances sent back by permanent and long-term emigrants. If remittances from those who stay overseas indeed make such a contribution to the economic well-being of Polynesian countries, it might be asked why the Tongan economy has exhibited such sluggish growth. One possible answer is that too much of the Tongan expenditure goes on keeping the flow of education and emigration going rather than investing in job creation at home. This may come about because there are few other opportunities for investment in Tonga whilst there are greater opportunities in resource- and land-rich Melanesia.

Connell and Brown carried out an extensive overview of the available information on remittances in the Pacific for the Asian Development Bank in 2005.<sup>43</sup> Their chapter on 'The Use and Impact of Remittances' reviews evidence on remittances being used for debt repayment, consumption, housing, savings, airfares and education, investment, community use and social uses. But they were not able to estimate a comparative order of magnitude for these widely varying uses. Also, expenditure on a given item such as school fees may serve a range of purposes: placating siblings left at home; conspicuous consumption where the school is prestigious; investing in the future of the next generation. A significant proportion of remittances may actually be spent on facilitating the migration of the next waves of emigrants through paying first for the education necessary to win skilled positions overseas and then for the actual travel costs. Some remittances also constitute implicit or

39 Jacqueline Boreham, 'Education: How Employable Are Pacific Islanders: Skilled People Are Moving to Where the Money Is', *Islands Business*, 18 June 2007.

40 Sabine Hess, 'Strathern's Melanesian "Dividual" and the Christian "Individual": A Perspective from Vanua Lava, Vanuatu', *Oceania*, 76, (2006), pp. 285–296.

41 Department of Immigration, *Managing the Border: Immigration Compliance*, (2004–2005), Figure 5.7, <<http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/compliance/managing-the-border/pdf/mtb-chapter5.pdf>> (accessed 5 July 2007).

42 The question of how far this is due to different forms of attachment to the home place is too complex to cover here.

43 Connell and Brown, *Remittances in the Pacific*.

explicit 'debt' repayments for earlier expenditure on education and travel costs by the emigrants' parents and kin. From the viewpoint of remittances contributing to island security, arguably the most important expenditure is that which creates employment. However, from the viewpoint of the individual family, purchasing or building a permanent cement block and corrugated iron house can contribute to security in village communities where traditional houses have roofs but no permanent walls or places to lock up valuables.<sup>44</sup>

There is, as yet, an absence of data on how Pacific migrants engaged as seasonal workers in New Zealand are spending their wages. There is, however, considerable data on the expenditure and savings behaviours of Pacific seafarers from Kiribati and Tuvalu, a particular category of migrants, who are employed on relatively short-term contracts that may then be repeated several times with the German, Korean and Japanese merchant marines. The case of these seafarers, who know that they are not going to be allowed to settle overseas, and who are obliged to remit some 50 to 70 per cent of their earnings, has similarities with what might be expected of seasonal migrants. In Tuvalu even the National Census collects data on remittances. In 1991 44 per cent and in 2002 34 per cent of all Tuvaluan households were in receipt of overseas remittances.<sup>45</sup> Data from their employers show that I-Kiribati sailors put an average of 60 per cent of their remittances into personal bank accounts for their return.<sup>46</sup> Tuvaluan sailors save some 50 per cent of their wages. Money is saved to buy land and houses and to set up small businesses such as shops, bakeries and blouse-makers. Thus the evidence from seafarers suggests that those migrants who know that their stay overseas is finite do use a significant proportion of their earnings for savings and investment. This is a considerable achievement, as they are usually acting as breadwinners and school fee providers for their extended families at the same time. On the outer islands of Kiribati and Tuvalu, a major constraint is still the lack of opportunities for cash purchases; almost any equipment, however basic, for establishing a small business, say an outboard motor or a sewing machine, has to be brought in from the main island. The lack of electricity is also a significant limiting factor. Some 70 per cent of the Pacific region's population lacks access to electricity.<sup>47</sup>

## Beyond Cash: The Intangible Benefits of Seasonal Migration

Any access to dependable sources of cash incomes can be hypothesized to improve security by giving people a stake in the community. It has become something of a cliché to argue that poverty in the Pacific is as much a problem of lack of opportunity as of lack of basic resources.<sup>48</sup> Migration also brings many intangible benefits, which are harder to measure but may be equally vital for the island countries. Essentially, these benefits are the result of migration creating links with the outside world and an understanding of how the world works. The falling copra prices they face are determined by a world market, but daily life for Melanesian villagers with no road, electricity or newspaper can result in a very localized view of the world. Beyond entrepreneurial skills and insights, returning migrants can also bring back skills to build up civil society and broaden political debate and they may have a clearer understanding of the rights of women and minorities.<sup>49</sup> An example of a skill that

44 Maria Borovnik, 'Working Overseas: Seafarers' Remittances and their Distribution in Kiribati', *Asia-Pacific Viewpoint*, 4, 1, (2006), p. 158.

45 Fakavae Taomia, *Remittances and Development in Tuvalu*, (Suva, Fiji: University of the South Pacific, 2006).

46 Jennifer Dennis, *Pacific Island Seafarers: A Study of the Economic and Social Implications of seafaring on Dependents and Communities*, (Suva, Fiji: SPC, 2003); Borovnik, 'Working Overseas', pp. 151–161. Borovnik had access to actual banking data for I-Kiribati sailors.

47 Yogita Chandra and Anare Matakitivi, *Energy and Gender in the Pacific*, (Suva, Fiji: SOPAC, 2006).

48 David Abbott and Steve Pollard, *Hardship and Poverty in the Pacific*, (Manila: Asian Development Bank, 2004).

49 Hein de Haas, *Engaging Diasporas*, (Oxford: International Migration Institute, 2006).

seasonal workers should be able to acquire in their travels is financial competence; the workers can learn how to establish bank accounts and deal with financial institutions.<sup>50</sup> People from Melanesian countries who are used to thinking of themselves as originating from a particular village can also learn to speak and think of themselves as Solomon Islanders or ni-Vanuatu.<sup>51</sup>

It is clearly challenging to explain how an opportunity, which has only just opened up in the case of New Zealand, and which has yet to be created in Australia, will work in practice. To give a specific example, one could envisage a church group in Vanuatu linking up with a church group in rural Australia to facilitate seasonal migration for fruit-picking. Whilst in Australia, the ni-Vanuatu are able to save enough money to establish a small bakery back home, and they also have the opportunity to see rural bakeries at work and get advice on the purchase of equipment and pricing and management issues. The strong church links of many Pacific islanders already facilitate visits and gifts from Australia and New Zealand to the islands, and many involved Australian and New Zealand church members would be happy to help islander visitors understand the workings of their economy and cultures. The Council of Europe has acknowledged that ‘home-town associations and diaspora organizations can play an important role in collecting and transferring collective remittances to their place of origin, which can be used for infrastructural and other projects that bring benefits to whole communities rather than to individual households. There is also scope for such collective remittances to be combined with matching funds provided from public sources or by development agencies.’<sup>52</sup> In the Pacific, group remittances (except for churches) have been little discussed in the literature but, especially amongst Polynesians, ex-students’ associations, sports clubs and kava clubs are all used for fundraising to channel money back home. With organized groups travelling together for seasonal migration, there could well be scope for some individualized remittances to be combined with collecting remittances for group purposes. It might then be possible to merge such funds with donations from the Australian end or, later, with government or aid funds. This was considered by the Australian Parliament in 2003.<sup>53</sup> As with adult learning in general, a project chosen by those involved has a much better chance of success than one brought into the village and dumped on the villagers. Equally, just living in Australia will expose the seasonal workers to seeing how ideas can be made into realities, in areas such as how to make demands for political accountability stick and the advantages of family planning. At present, islanders who have never before seen a holiday resort are expected to serve tourists used to global standards—they need to see the behaviour they are expected to copy. Parts of the Pacific present ideal locations for small scale eco-tourism; an excellent way to start this off would be by Australians visiting seasonal workers who have returned to their home villages.

## Why Temporary Migration?

The three countries in the Pacific with the best economic growth records—the Cook Islands, Samoa and Tuvalu—are all strong emigration countries.<sup>54</sup> Indeed the Cook Islands and to a

50 Jonathan Sibley, ‘Financial Competence as a Tool for Poverty Reduction: Financial Literacy and Rural Banking in the Pacific’, *Development Bulletin*, 72, (2007), pp. 23–29. This describes how, in relatively compact Fiji, partially inspired by the growth of remittances, the ANZ Bank aims to provide financial literacy training and mobile banking to 250 out of the 1200 villages.

51 Solomon Islanders are so little used to regarding themselves as constituting a single nation that a proposed draft federal constitution limits rights of movement from island to island within the country.

52 Council of Europe, ‘Immigration Brief’, *Dialogue Newsletter*, 52, (November 2005), <[http://www.coe.int/t/e/north%2Dsouth\\_centre/programmes/5\\_europe%2Dafrica\\_dialogue/h\\_pd\\_newsletter/pdnews\\_52.asp#TopOfPage](http://www.coe.int/t/e/north%2Dsouth_centre/programmes/5_europe%2Dafrica_dialogue/h_pd_newsletter/pdnews_52.asp#TopOfPage)>.

53 Senate Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade References Committee, *A Pacific Engaged—Australia’s Relations with Papua New Guinea and the Island States*, (Canberra: Australian Senate, 2003).

54 AusAID, *Pacific 2020 Report*, p. 37

lesser extent Tuvalu are actually seeing the size of their native populations decline (Table 1).<sup>55</sup> The government of Tuvalu has a history of promoting overseas migration and the inflow of remittances. Between 1989 and 2005 annual real growth in GDP grew by an average of 4.3 per cent per annum. For Tuvalu 'temporary migration is the way to go, since it is a win-win situation for both Tuvalu and the recipient country, however, there is need to put proper criteria and immigration conditions for both parties to strictly agree upon and follow'.<sup>56</sup> Remittances in Tuvalu are most valued for financing domestic private sector investment and expanding the demand for domestically produced goods and services but they also help to meet education costs, improve housing conditions and finance community projects on outer islands. Tuvalu has recognized that different forms of migration play different roles. Increasingly Tuvaluans are also to be found in Fiji and Australia improving their education and in New Zealand working. Even with this emigration, unemployment is recorded as nine per cent on Funafuti, where 47 per cent of the population lives, and five per cent on the outer islands, with female rates being almost double male rates.

The contributions that migrants make to their country of origin partially depend on whether their migration is temporary or long term/permanent. The great majority of studies of remittances in the Pacific have involved emigrants who have become established overseas with a limited likelihood of returning home to live.<sup>57</sup> Permanent emigrants can send home remittances, in cash or kind, and their departure can directly contribute to reducing unemployment levels at home. There is an interesting question whether temporary emigrants going for seasonal harvesting work in New Zealand and Australia would actually be drawn from the pool of the unemployed or would come from those in low-paid employment or self-employed agricultural and fisheries producers. In reality, because of the very significant differences in wages between the Metropolitan countries and the islands it would be worthwhile for many island workers who are already employed at home to take up such seasonal employment.<sup>58</sup> Temporary emigrants will send or bring home remittances, but their direct contribution to reducing unemployment may only last as long as their absence, unless the skills or capital they bring back with them enable them to create additional employment at home.

A country, such as Samoa or Tonga, which has a policy of encouraging permanent emigration is implicitly recognizing that there are limited opportunities at home. As an expectation of emigration builds up, many of those who are left behind may begin to feel that they are in some way failures. Elsewhere high suicide levels amongst young people left behind have been associated with this belief.<sup>59</sup> As long ago as 1987, the Macphersons discussed blocked migration opportunities as a result of a downturn in the New Zealand economy as a factor in Western Samoan youth suicide rates that ranked amongst the highest in the world.<sup>60</sup> In Samoa there is now the additional problem that so many more females than

55 The complex question of who is counted in the census is covered in Stephen Boland and Brian Dollery, 'The Economic Significance of Migration and Remittances in Tuvalu', *Pacific Economic Bulletin*, 22, 1, (2007), pp. 102–114.

56 Taomia, *Remittances and Development in Tuvalu*, p. 21.

57 See the bibliography in Connell and Brown, *Remittances in the Pacific*.

58 A New Zealand research group measured actual wage differentials between Tonga and New Zealand for long-term migrants. The migrants, who averaged 11.7 years of education, gained a 263 per cent increase by migrating which is significantly greater than the cost of living differentials: David McKenzie, John Gibson and Steven Stillman, 'How Important Is Selection? Experimental vs Non-experimental Measures of the Income Gains from Migration', World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 3906, (2006).

59 Council of Europe, 'Immigration Brief', (November 2005) refers to the problem where remittances create 'a culture of migration' in emigration countries, as a result of which young people can place excessive hopes on finding an opportunity to move abroad.

60 Cluny Macpherson and La'avasa Macpherson, 'Towards an Explanation of Recent Trends in Suicide in Western Samoa', *Man*, 22, (1987), pp. 305–330.

males leave that there are 139 males for every 100 females with the deficit setting in at the age when young men start to think of romance.<sup>61</sup>

Insofar as there is a tendency for those who leave to be more entrepreneurial than those who stay behind, a country that promotes emigration could be subject to a constant decline in the level of entrepreneurialism. This is quite different from any debate about a brain drain. Countries may well calculate the number of teachers and nurses needed to provide ample services on a per capita basis and then train more teachers and nurses (but rarely the more expensive doctors) than are required, in order to develop an export market in skilled labour.<sup>62</sup> Since such training schemes are difficult to cut back on once they are established and since second-generation migrants are less enthusiastic to send money home, such a strategy will generally require a constant outflow of emigrants to keep a steady stream of remittances flowing back and to avoid the creation of a pool of professional unemployment. The Australian government is now funding the Australia–Pacific Technical College ‘to provide Australian-standard training to Pacific island students from throughout the region. The college will assist economic growth . . . by addressing skills shortages and increasing workforce competitiveness, and will also assist mobility of skilled workers between the Pacific and developed countries.’<sup>63</sup> The budget of \$149.5 million for the establishment and operation of the college is equivalent to the total GDP of Kiribati for 18 months.<sup>64</sup> Australia, through its aid programme, is committed to two propositions: firstly that ‘labour markets in all Pacific countries are characterized by a lack of skilled labour’ and secondly that if islanders are to be allowed to come to Australia they must come as skilled migrants.<sup>65</sup>

The reasons for the focus on opportunities for temporary migration relate both to the source countries from which the migrants come and to the destination countries where they are to find work. Australia and other destinations have become increasingly unwilling to accept unskilled migrants. After World War II Australia was happy to take in former peasant farmers from Italy, Greece and Yugoslavia with little education and less English to work as builders’ labourers and factory workers. Those days are now gone, and the government is discussing whether English language proficiency should be made a requirement for citizenship. The argument is that ‘Australia does not have a migrant underclass, for example, like France, because Australia’s migration program has remained selective, skilled and tightly managed’.<sup>66</sup> The government opposes guest workers but welcomes student backpackers, because, although the students are willing to accept unskilled work on a temporary basis, if they do decide to stay on they have skills the Australian economy can use. Australia issued 104,000 Working Holiday Maker Visas in 2005–2006 but the Treasurer Peter Costello, responding to a question about Pacific guest workers, said, ‘I don’t think that it is a part of the Australian ethos, I don’t think it is consistent with our culture and I don’t think it would be acceptable.’<sup>67</sup> If unskilled workers from the

61 Figures from the US Census Bureau International Database.

62 Professional trade unions will understandably bemoan the departures from their ranks but have little interest in revealing that the market may be liberally overstocked: Ware, ‘Pacific Instability and Youth Bulges’, pp. 8–10.

63 Prime Minister of Australia, ‘Australia–Pacific Technical College’, media release, (22 October 2006). Actually estimating the shortage of skilled labour is very difficult: Ray Grannall and Helen Ware, *Requirements for Technical Training across the Pacific*, (Canberra: AusAID, 1998).

64 World Bank Development Indicators Database 2007.

65 The quotation is from the Foreign Affairs and Trade (AusAID), *Budget Statement 2006–2007*, Chapter 4. The distaste for unskilled workers emerges very clearly in the Transcript of Questions and Answers for Foreign Minister Downer’s National Press Club Address on 26 April 2006, where he describes how both he and the Prime Minister ‘feel a bit uncomfortable’ about how unskilled migration from the Pacific could have ‘unintended consequences, which could be rather unpleasant’.

66 Adrienne Millbank, ‘A Seasonal Guest Worker Program for Australia?’ Parliamentary Library Research Papers 16, (2005–6), p. 1.

67 Reported in Elizabeth Coleman and Glenda Korporal, ‘“Guest” workers Prop up the Economy’, *The Australian*, (3 March 2005) p. 1. Costello repeated this view specifically in relation to the Solomon Islands crisis in July 2005.

Pacific are going to be able to secure employment overseas this is most likely to be on a temporary basis and this may well suit islanders with very strong links to their families left back at home.

As long ago as 1982, it was written of rural–urban migration in the Pacific that it is ‘an almost inevitable decision that they will have to make sooner or later and once this view is accepted a sort of migration momentum develops’.<sup>68</sup> Currently the capitals and main islands of many of the Pacific Island countries are overwhelmed by the rural–urban migration of young people who still move despite the fact that they cannot find work in town. They are the tinder from which riots ignite. If young people with limited skills can nevertheless have the opportunity of an adventure working overseas in seasonal agriculture, then they can return in glory to their villages or, if they still want to move to the urban centres, they will have some capital and skills to start with. For the sending countries, the advantages of seasonal migration are that the country gets the remittance income but it also secures the benefit of the return of workers who have been up-skilled and have some capital to set up a small business or to further their education.

Remittances sent home to family members from workers who stay abroad might, as some theoretical economists fear, have a disincentive effect upon the workers left behind.<sup>69</sup> But remittances brought back by seasonal workers who have earned them with their own sweat should be more likely to be well invested. If islanders choose to spend their earnings upon improved housing or schooling for their children that is their choice. There are also the valuable personal links that are built up between people in the two countries: there is more value in links between a country town in Australia and a village in the Solomon Islands than in official, impersonal aid through government channels which rarely reaches the villages. Important as assistance to ‘good governance’ may be, it only has a very indirect impact, if at all, on the villager struggling to establish a fishery co-operative. Creating new personal links is increasingly important, as those such as administrators, teachers and health workers who were involved in colonial days and stayed on to help in the early years of independence have retired. If the metropolitan countries are to understand what is going on in the Pacific countries they need to have citizens who have personal links there.

## The New Zealand Experience<sup>70</sup>

Significant numbers of Pacific islanders have already migrated to live in New Zealand but many more would like to move there. New Zealand’s concessional immigration policies are designed to assist Pacific island countries in their economic development.<sup>71</sup> The residents of Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau already have New Zealand citizenship and can therefore move across at will. A Samoan quota scheme established in 1970 allows up to 1100 Samoan nationals per year to become permanent residents of New Zealand. The Pacific Access Category (PAC) introduced in 2002 annually permits 250 people each from Fiji and Tonga and 75 each from Kiribati and Tuvalu to become permanent residents. Selection under PAC does not depend upon skills, and names are picked through a ballot. New Zealand is already helping with a pilot seasonal migration scheme for Pacific islanders. The Minister for Immigration has now announced formalization through the Recognized Seasonal

68 A. Walsh, *Migration, Urbanization and Development in South Pacific Countries*, (Bangkok: ESCAP, 1982).

69 World Bank, *Global Economic Prospects: Economic Implications of Remittances and Migration*, (Washington: World Bank, 2006), pp. 48–51, 130. This study, however, is generally upbeat regarding the contribution of remittances. See also Susanna Mitchell, *Migration and the Remittance Euphoria: Development or Dependency?*, (London: New Economics Foundation, 2006), p. 16.

70 The government website <[www.immigration.govt.nz](http://www.immigration.govt.nz)> provides current information on New Zealand immigration policy, including access to the Operations Manual and updates.

71 Charles Stahl and Reginald Appleyard, *Migration and Development in the Pacific Islands: Lessons from the New Zealand Experience, Report to AusAID*, (Canberra: AusAID, April 2007).

Employer Work Visa starting in April 2007. There are 5000 visas for up to seven months' work during any 11-month period available to citizens of Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu and ultimately all 'members of the Pacific Island Forum'.<sup>72</sup> However, the recent army takeover means that Fijian citizens are not currently eligible. The Minister explained, 'we are prioritising Pacific people as temporary migrants for these industries [horticulture and agriculture] given our special relationship with and commitment to the Pacific region. This policy will lead to the upskilling of Pacific workers who will then return to their home countries with new experiences and capabilities.'<sup>73</sup> Employers are only granted Recognized Seasonal Employer (RSE) status for two years after Immigration New Zealand has checked their bona fides with other government departments and the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions. After two years, the employer has to demonstrate that they have met the requirements, such as promoting the welfare of workers, before their RSE status can be renewed for a further three years. It would still be an improvement to such schemes if there were specific provisions for mentoring and sponsoring of groups of migrants by churches, sports and other social groups in the receiving country. The relatively friendly relationship between the government and the trade union movement in New Zealand has facilitated both the introduction of the seasonal worker scheme and the establishment of a monitoring mechanism.

The New Zealand scheme is designed to allow unskilled workers 'to earn an increased income, and to aid knowledge transfer through work experience'.<sup>74</sup> Potential employers have to pay market rates and provide 'pastoral care for workers'.<sup>75</sup> Since, as in the longstanding Canadian scheme, workers who perform well can plan to return each year, illegal over-staying should be minimized. Selling the policy to New Zealanders, the Minister added, 'New Zealand has a broad interest in seeing the Pacific being prosperous and stable. Temporary work access can make a positive contribution to our objective of encouraging economic development and stability in the region.'<sup>76</sup> He could also have added that it provides significant benefits to the Pacific islanders whilst costing the New Zealand tax-payers a minimal amount.

## The Australian Response

In determining the 2004–2005 migration programme, the Australian Federal Cabinet considered and rejected a proposed seasonal guest worker programme for low-skilled workers from the Pacific region.<sup>77</sup> Australia has not followed New Zealand's lead in this area, despite two Parliamentary Committees that have recommended in favour of such a scheme in 1989 and 2003.<sup>78</sup> Indeed, the 2003 Senate Committee concluded that a guest work scheme would advance 'Australia's national interest in so far as it would contribute to the sustainable economic and social development of the region, contributing to its stability'.<sup>79</sup>

Although the Australian government now claims to adopt a 'Whole of Government' approach to security and development issues in the Pacific, it is still true that migration bureaucrats, not known for their broadmindedness, think of security within Australia rather

72 New Zealand Minister for Immigration, 'Backgrounder', 25 October 2006.

73 New Zealand Minister for Immigration, 'Backgrounder', 25 October 2006.

74 New Zealand Minister for Immigration, 'Backgrounder', 25 October 2006.

75 New Zealand Minister for Immigration, 'Backgrounder', 25 October 2006.

76 New Zealand Minister for Immigration, 'Backgrounder', 25 October 2006.

77 Millbank, 'A Seasonal Guest-Worker Program for Australia?', p. 1. Graeme Dobell 'Australia and the Pacific's Lost Generation', *Quadrant*, 51, 3, (2007), pp. 9–17. discusses the politics that surrounds the debate within Australia. In 2005 the ALP was prepared to accept up to 10,000 temporary Pacific immigrants per year.

78 Millbank, 'A Seasonal Guest-Worker Program for Australia?', pp. 6–7.

79 Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, 'A Pacific Engaged', p. 23.

than the security of Australia's neighbours. Part of the answer also lies in Australia's domestic battles over the politics of industrial relations. Labour, even the trade unions, formerly supported temporary immigration of Pacific rural workers, specifically from Fiji, but have now backed off because of their opposition to employers using temporary 457 Skilled Work Visas (457 visas) to bring in cheap labour.<sup>80</sup> For their part, the employers and the federal government appear to consider Filipino and Chinese migrants to provide more skills at a cheaper price.<sup>81</sup> The neo-liberal Centre for Independent Studies has argued against importing seasonal workers on the grounds that, irrespective of where they live, Aborigines should be obliged to take up unskilled harvesting work.<sup>82</sup>

Summarizing the debate for the Australian Parliament, Millbank reported that the opponents of seasonal migration largely depend upon three arguments: (1) it would represent a departure from Australian migration tradition; (2) there would be a serious risk of visa overstay; and (3) there would be a serious risk of exploitation of the workers. The first argument essentially amounts to saying that the government is disinclined to move in the direction of temporary migration (despite issuing 40,000 temporary 457 visas in 2005–2006 plus 80,000 working holiday visas). This argument is directly linked to the next point: because they are skilled and/or well educated, the government is not seriously concerned whether British backpackers or IT experts with temporary 457 visas decide to stay on. Often the debate suggests that overstayers are only of concern if they are unskilled and non-white.<sup>83</sup> It is also disingenuous to say that Australia could not discriminate in favour of Pacific islanders in issuing seasonal work visas when working holiday visas are already restricted to nationals of listed countries. Those who are concerned at the potential for overstayers often focus on the costs of ensuring visa compliance, which, given the small numbers likely to be involved in a seasonal worker scheme, would be insignificant alongside other border security measures such as the maintenance of off-shore detention centres. Apart from the claim that temporary migration is antipathetic to Australian culture, possibly all of the objections to a seasonal migration scheme can be met by a well-designed and implemented scheme—which is presumably why New Zealand decided to go ahead with a pilot scheme. The longstanding Canadian scheme is also a good precedent.<sup>84</sup> Good design focuses on ensuring that the incentives motivate people to behave well. Good design can ensure that workers are willing to return home because a proportion of their money is waiting for them there and they know they can return in subsequent years. Good design can also prevent exploitation by ensuring that employers are vetted in advance and that workers have links in the Australian community with groups who can explain to them what their rights are and how to ensure them. The most exploited workers are the illegals who dare not complain and who have no local friends to stand up with them. As with 457 visa holders the trade unions will have a strong motivation to ensure that seasonal workers are not being exploited and thereby undercutting local workers.

80 The Department of Immigration and Citizenship admits that a third of the 40,000 supposedly skilled entrants in 2005 were paid no more than the minimum wage.

81 Lachlan Colquhoun, 'Australia's Visa Regulations Produce Mixed Feelings', *Financial Times*, 14 September 2006, p. 23.

82 Helen Hughes and Gaurav Sodhi, *Should Australia and New Zealand Open Their Doors to Guest Workers from the Pacific? Costs and Benefits*, (Sydney: Centre for Independent Studies, 2006).

83 Not just the debate: a New Zealand study in 1985–1986 showed that Pacific islanders who comprised one-third of overstayers made up 85 per cent of all prosecutions for overstaying. In contrast, UK and US citizens, who also made up almost a third of overstayers, only accounted for 5 per cent of prosecutions: see Ann Beaglehole, 'Immigration Regulation' in *Te Ara—The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, (Wellington: Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2007), <<http://www.teara.govt.nz>>. Impressionistically the situation is comparable in Australia but data are not available.

84 Service Canada, 'Caribbean & Mexican Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program Overview', Agriculture Programs and Services: Overview, (2007), <<http://www1.servicecanada.gc.ca/en/on/epb/agri/overview.shtml>> (accessed 4 July 2007).

Another aspect of good design relates to who would be eligible to participate in such a scheme. A short-term policy aimed at maintaining the peace in Melanesia would focus on young men but include some older leaders. Sponsorship by church or other groups at both ends would fit in well with the Melanesian way of organizing matters and help to ensure good behaviour and prompt return home, especially if a group's ability to arrange future working visits depended upon a complete return of earlier seasonal workers. From an equity viewpoint and from a longer-term perspective, including young women would fit with their roles in Melanesian agriculture and could lead to a reduction in fertility rates and a much needed slowdown of population growth rates. However, the best opportunities for young women given the ageing of the Australian and New Zealand populations and the worldwide demand for nurses and carers for the aged would realistically be for them to move as nurses and nurses' aides. Indeed the Kiribati Cabinet, wishing to balance the opportunities available for males to serve as merchant mariners, has determined to train an excess of nurses and nurses' aides in order to create an export industry in remittance-sending nursing staff. Evidence to date suggests that nurses are excellent remitters but tend to stay overseas.<sup>85</sup> Nurses' aides might be more accepting of temporary 457 type visas.

### The Views of the International Financial Institutions

A 2005 Report to the Pacific Forum by the Asian Development Bank and the Commonwealth Secretariat argues that some of the greatest potential for benefits from Pacific regionalism could come from 'a carefully constructed policy of providing temporary market access to labor markets of all Forum members [which] would create very substantial economic benefits for all parties . . . to create the necessary pool of benefits and an optimal Pacific "club" Australia and New Zealand must become meaningful partners with FICS'.<sup>86</sup> Australia is used to regarding the views of the Commonwealth Secretariat and to a lesser degree the Asian Development Bank as intellectually lightweight. But now Washington is also taking up the cudgels. Indeed, the World Bank sees its role as being to 'elevate labour mobility from domestic immigration policy to an *international development issue—undertake policy advocacy on behalf of small countries* . . . Be an "honest broker" in the *dialogue* on this sensitive topic in a politically neutral manner [and] facilitate labour mobility through advice and technical assistance to *prepare sending country systems to improve the supply chain*.'<sup>87</sup> It thus becomes awkward for Australia to advocate that the island countries follow World Bank advice to the letter, but then to reject the Bank's advice when it strikes home in Australia. The islanders favour seasonal migration to Australia: instead Australia offers them 'good governance' and a technical college.

### Temporary Migration as Peacekeepers and Mercenaries

Whereas Kiribati and Tuvalu have extensive experience of the temporary migration of seafarers, Fiji has been sending soldiers to the Middle East as peacekeepers since Sinai in 1973 and for UNIFIL (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon) from 1978 to 2000.<sup>88</sup>

85 John Connell and Richard Brown, 'The Remittances of Migrant Tongan and Samoan Nurses from Australia', *Human Resources for Health*, 2, 2, (2004), <<http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=407854>> (accessed 4 July 2007).

86 Asian Development Bank and Commonwealth Secretariat, *Towards a New Pacific Regionalism*, (Manila: ADB, 2005), p. 8

87 Manjula Luthria, 'Presentation', Small States Forum, Singapore, (18 September 2006) (emphases in the original); see also World Bank, *At Home and Away: Expanding Job Opportunities for Pacific Islanders through Labour Mobility*, (Washington: World Bank, 2006).

88 Mohanty, 'Globalisation, New Labour Migration and Development in Fiji Islands'.

Some Fijian families and villages have become so dependent on this income that their fathers and sons are still going to Iraq, despite all the risks, as privately hired security guards.<sup>89</sup> The potential for Fijians to join the British army or the UN peacekeepers has another interesting link with security. Such opportunities, which require clean police records, have acted as a brake upon the impetuosity of young men and their willingness to join in destabilizing adventures at home. Interestingly, Fijian youths with a reputation for wildness in the villages, are well known for the discipline and hardiness when with the British Army in Northern Ireland or former Yugoslavia. There are 2000 Fijian soldiers in the British Army. 'They make very, very good infantry soldiers.'<sup>90</sup> Some estimates have as many as 20,000 Fijians, some female, applying to work (often paying a recruitment fee) in army (British and UN forces) and security roles in the Middle East.<sup>91</sup> The link between good behaviour and migration possibilities is reinforced by quotas for recruitment for security work in the Middle East being allocated to Methodist church circuits in Fiji. Young Samoans and Tongans have also fought with the Americans in Iraq. In general and when casualties are not too high, the Fijian government supports this migration. In January 2005 the then Minister for Labour, Kenneth Zinck, said, 'more men are leaving for Kuwait and Iraq and it is a good thing, because it is providing employment for the unemployed'.<sup>92</sup> Conversely, unemployed former soldiers from Fiji have appeared in Bougainville contributing to local instability.<sup>93</sup>

Instability in Fiji poses serious threats to some migration possibilities. After the UN recruited 12 soldiers from Fiji as bodyguards for Iraq, the New Zealand Prime Minister made it clear to the United Nations that the UN should not use Fijian troops for peacekeeping since the December 2006 coup.<sup>94</sup> Further, the US Defense Force put on hold its plans to establish a joint academy for training peacekeepers at Vatuwaqa.

Recognizing the benefits that come from returning migrants, Fiji has created a new category of Permanent Residency to encourage former Fijian citizens and their families to return. Interim Prime Minister Commodore Voreque Bauinimarama said, 'This will allow them the freedom to invest, work and conduct business in Fiji on the same basis as Fijian citizens. It shall also help to arrest the brain-drain which has caused and continues to cause major socio-economic problems in our country.'<sup>95</sup>

## Tonga: An Exceptional Case?

Until late 2006 it could be said that all of the major cases of civil unrest in the South Pacific had occurred in Melanesia, where emigration is very limited. Emigration was widely believed to act as a crucial safety valve in Polynesia. Indeed, as recently as 2002, Duncan and Chand published a paper on 'The Economics of the "Arc of Instability"' which focuses on 'why are the Melanesian states . . . experiencing considerable civil unrest and, in this respect, why are they so different from the other small island states of the Pacific region?'<sup>96</sup> The authors argued that three sets of factors were involved: (1) a lack of easy emigration opportunities leading to large pools of underemployed people; (2) a wealth of natural resources; and (3) weak central governments.

89 Nic MacLellan and Peter Mares, 'Labour Mobility in the Pacific: Creating Seasonal Work Programs in Australia', in Firth, *Globalisation, Governance and the Pacific Islands*; Samisoni Pareti, 'Fiji's Long, Risky Road to Kuwait', *Pacific Islands Report*, (22 April 2005), <<http://archives.pireport.org/archieve/2005/April/04-22-ft.htm>>.

90 Charles Heyman, *BBC OnLine*, (11 September 2004), <[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/3996677.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/3996677.stm)>.

91 When the Fijian army called for 30 women to go to Iraq it got 300 volunteers.

92 *Fiji Times*, 19 January 2005.

93 'Bougainville: Fiji Soldiers "Want Out"', *Pacific Magazine*, 4 July 2006.

94 'PM Clark Stance over Fiji Troops "Weak"', *Islands Business*, 24 January 2007.

95 Fijilive, <[http://www.fiji.govfj/publish/page\\_8375.shtml](http://www.fiji.govfj/publish/page_8375.shtml)> (accessed 15 February 2007).

96 Duncan and Chand, 'The Economics of the "Arc of Instability"', pp. 1-9.

Thus, as noted above, the incorrect assumption was that easy migration serves to drain the pool of the unemployed. In reality, even very heavy permanent emigration does not necessarily solve the problem. The 2001 census round showed that nearly as many ethnic Tongans lived overseas, including in the United States (37,000), Australia (15,000) and New Zealand (41,000), as in Tonga itself (98,000). Yet one-third of all adults resident in Tonga are still youths with little prospect of finding paid employment or remunerative opportunities for self-employment at home. In 2001 four per cent of Tongan households were living on less than US\$1 a day and 22 per cent received incomes below a Basic Needs Poverty Line of US\$760 per person per year.<sup>97</sup> Tongan couples in Tonga average 4.2 children but the population barely grows because, on average, two of those children will emigrate. In a country whose chief export, apart from its own citizens, is squash, land is in short supply and there are few opportunities for employment. Economic data suggest that it is the more adventurous and entrepreneurial who depart, leaving behind the more traditional as indicated by their high fertility.<sup>98</sup> Remittances sent home have not created employment opportunities at home, more often financing further emigration, which senders correctly see as a better investment. The most frequent use of remittances to create employment is where second-hand goods are sent home to be sold in the Nuku'alofa market. In contrast, in Melanesia greater land availability makes for much more extensive agricultural opportunities.

Until recently the assumption also was that the hierarchical nature of Polynesian culture and the fact that Polynesian countries are based on a single ethnic group were strong factors protecting countries such as Samoa and Tonga from civil violence. Then, in November 2006 rioters torched and looted up to 80 per cent of the buildings in the central business district of Tonga's capital, including the Prime Minister's Office, several Chinese-owned businesses and the offices of the controversial monopoly power-company Shoreline, headed by the new king.<sup>99</sup> Eight died in the fires. Australia and New Zealand sent in police and troops to back up the Tonga Defence Services and the police, who were reluctant to act against perpetrators, many of whom were their relatives. This extensive, lethal rioting was a first for any Polynesian country.

In an article published in 2003, Kerry James, an anthropologist with extensive fieldwork experience in Tonga wrote, 'In the light of the 1987 and 2000 coups in neighbouring Fiji, the vast majority of Tongans seek to avoid major civil upset, but at the same time a number of less well-placed aspirants and political reformers have become increasingly resentful of the various forms of parasitism on the state . . . They seek either to consolidate their position in Tonga through the acquisition of property and influence or to remedy it by social and geographical relocation through emigration overseas.'<sup>100</sup> Even more immediately before the troubles, writing in September 2006, the ethnographer Heather Young Leslie wrote in a congratulatory tone of the general strike as demonstrating a uniquely Tongan ability to stage 'a peaceable coup' but also noted examples of car-burnings and student violence on the main island and on Vava'u during August 2005.<sup>101</sup>

In September 2006 King Tupou IV, who had reigned for 41 years, died. Then in November 2006 demonstrations began when Parliament went into recess without voting on proposals for democratic reforms to Tonga's semi-feudal system, in which the majority

97 ADB, 'Asian Development Bank and Tonga: A Fact Sheet', (Manila, 2007), p. 1.

98 McKenzie et al., 'How Important Is Selection?'

99 Mary Fonua, Linny Folau and Pesi Fonua, 'Riot in Streets of Nuku'alofa', *Pacific Islands Report*, (16 November 2006), <<http://archives.pireport.org/archive/2006/november/11-16-up.htm>> Mark Hayes, 'What Really Happened in Tonga', *Webdiary*, (20 November 2006), <<http://webdiary.com.au/cms/?q=node/1748>> (accessed 4 July 2007).

100 Kerry James, 'Is There a Tongan Middle Class? Hierarchy and Protest in Contemporary Tonga', *Contemporary Pacific*, 15, 2, (2003), p. 327.

101 Heather Young Leslie, 'Polynesia in Review: Issues and Events 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006: Tonga', *Contemporary Pacific*, 19, 1, (2007), p. 275.

of members of Parliament are elected by the nobles and Cabinet members can be appointed for life by the king. However, it would be a mistake to see the rioters as simple pro-democracy activists (locally known as the ‘Temo’). Rioters had been primed with alcohol and included two gangs: the Bush Boys and the Deportees, whose names display their origins.<sup>102</sup> Also, the properties targeted included the offices of two newspapers campaigning for democracy.<sup>103</sup> Part of the tragedy of these riots is just how much of the very limited infrastructure of the Pacific capitals is destroyed—by youths led on by people fighting for access to government and the wealth that comes from association with those in power.

In essence, what has happened is that the ground is shifting in Tonga, and, despite massive inflows of remittances, the Tongan economy is in dire straits. Thus, Tonga’s OBN TV (Oceania Broadcasting Network) was not subject to undemocratic governmental repression; it simply could not afford to keep going.<sup>104</sup> Emigration opportunities, especially for those with limited educational qualifications, have declined. In 2002 New Zealand introduced a lottery scheme by which 250 people with job offers could migrate. Since New Zealand’s real per capita GDP is 15 times Tonga’s this is an enticing prospect. However, it is those who are better endowed with human capital (including English-language skills) who get to leave. Beyond money, migrants are also seeking better education and health facilities, a more varied social life and less cultural constraints on their behaviour. The imposition of quotas on migration can impact on the whole economy. ‘A quota means that domestic employment and output become responsive to growth of the labour supply . . . Thus, in contrast to the situation of unrestricted access to a high wage foreign labour market, population growth can be a threat to living standards.’<sup>105</sup>

Economists have placed a great deal of the blame for the lack of economic development across the Pacific on communal land-holding and the lack of secure, individual tenure. Yet Tonga has a leasehold land-holding system based on that found in New South Wales thanks to an 1853 study tour by a more farsighted Tongan monarch. The problem in Tonga is just that there is not enough land to share.

There are a number of elements common to recent riots in the Pacific, such as the role of alcohol and the targeting of Chinese-owned businesses. Another element is a deep-seated belief in equity, that whilst there may be some people who do well out of economic changes, they have a responsibility to share the opportunities around.<sup>106</sup>

In line with the argument of this paper, the Tonga National Youth Strategy 2007–2012, finalized after the riots, lists actions to ‘encourage participation of youth in overseas short-term employment schemes’.

## Where Next?

Now that even highly traditional Polynesian Tonga has succumbed to rioting, the question ‘where next?’ has even greater salience. Both Samoa and Vanuatu are potential candidates for somewhat different reasons. Actually it is something of an unrealistic assumption that both countries have been totally spared to date. Samoa has experienced riots associated with tax changes. Vanuatu has experienced riots on several occasions, including

102 The Bush Boys are rural urban immigrants and the Deportees are former emigrants who have been deported home after being associated with various criminal activities overseas.

103 Hayes, ‘What Really Happened in Tonga’.

104 Kalafi Moala, ‘Misinformation: Nothing New in the Islands’, *Pacific Islands Report*, (April 2007), <<http://archives.pireport.org/archive/2007/April/04-18-comi1.htm>>.

105 Malcolm Treadgold and Patrick Laplagne, ‘Some Implications of External Labour Mobility for the Development of Micro-States’, *International Journal of Social Economics*, 23, 4–6, (1996), p. 278.

106 Donovan Storey and Warwick Murray, ‘Dilemmas of Development in Oceania: The Political-Economy of the Tongan Agro-Export sector’, *Geographical Journal*, 167, 4, (2001), pp. 291–304.

inter-ethnic riots over allegations of sorcery in March 2007.<sup>107</sup> These were effectively calmed by the Vanuatu Mobile Force. Both countries have significant youth bulges. This is especially striking in the case of Samoa, which, despite having 57 per cent of its people overseas, has 33 per cent of its adult population, or 35,000 people, aged 15 to 24 (see Table 1). 'Surveys of urban unemployment among youth suggest an unemployment rate of 40%.'<sup>108</sup> The Editor of the *Samoa Observer* has a clear vision of the importance of emigration: 'exporting labour saves us from having to attract industrial activity here, which is difficult in the first place, given our relative isolation, narrow resource base, and diseconomies of scale'. This is matched by an appreciation of the politics of aid whence he argues that Samoa should continue to exploit its position as one of the few Pacific success stories to which aid donors can give aid and boast of their success. Indeed there is a real problem with donors' policies of taking aid away from poor performers and giving it to the successful. This may reward good performance but it fails to meet the needs of countries in dire circumstances such as Papua New Guinea and results in considerable hypocrisy, as donors need to pretend that countries are succeeding economically and combating corruption in order to be able to give them aid.<sup>109</sup> Vanuatu may not merit its US badge as being one of the 11 most reformist developing countries, but the accompanying US\$66 million over five years to improve its transport system should help to create employment. One virtue of an immigration scheme is that it could be linked to the performance of individual island governments.

Vanuatu has many of the features that have been held to be the cause of the continuing crises in the Solomon Islands. Levels of development, especially on the outer islands, are very low; there are many ethnic groups; a significant youth bulge; and many unemployed youths hanging out around the capital. One argument for continued stability in Vanuatu is simply that the country has survived so much so far. It is almost impossible to predict how long a country that has muddled through for many years despite the handicap of inheriting a francophone/anglophone divide will continue to do so. Currently the government of Ham Lini has been in power since 2004; prior to that there were nine governments in nine years. The 2005 assessment of Vanuatu by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said that it 'fulfils many of the theoretical requisites for strong economic growth; a relatively sound macroeconomic environment with low public debt, limited inflation, and an open trade regime'. This may be contrasted with Transparency International's damning report on the country as having failed to internalize the values of transparency and the avoidance of corruption.<sup>110</sup> The great majority of those who write on the Pacific would see Vanuatu as being much more fragile than Samoa. In the author's personal view Samoa's excess of young men, exceeding the number of young women, does pose a threat. For Samoa, foreclosure of the existing migration opportunities for the relatively unskilled would present a severe threat. For Vanuatu there are currently very few such opportunities.

## Environment, Migration and Security

The ultimate insecurity is having the land washed out from under one's feet. Even now, storm high tides in the Marshall Islands' capital Majuro atoll wash right across the airport runway, mixing salt water with the island's water supply. Jon Barnett has reviewed the literature

107 'Vanuatu Remains Mostly Harmonious', *Islands Business News*, (30 April 2007).

108 Afamasaga Faamatala Toleafoa, 'Some Reflections on a Sustainable Development Strategy for a Least Developed Small Island State, Just Graduating to Developing Country Status', submission by the Editor of *Samoa Observer* to 2003 Samoa Forum.

109 Helen Hughes and Gaurav Sodhi, 'Annals of Aid: Vanuatu and the United States Millennium Challenge Corporation', *Issue Analysis*, (5 April 2006), p. 15.

110 Transparency International, *National Integrity Systems: Vanuatu 2004*, (Canberra: TI Australia, 2004).

linking security and climate change. He concludes that atoll countries such as Kiribati and Tuvalu will be most seriously affected, as sea-level rises could engulf their land masses, most of which rise no more than two metres above sea level.<sup>111</sup> This would then raise the question of what happens to the sovereignty of a country with no land base. As the atolls are flooded, their inhabitants will have to move elsewhere. New Zealand has already agreed to take half of the population of Tuvalu under these circumstances. Australia will probably be obliged by public opinion to follow suit and take the remainder. It would not be in anyone's interest to have the population of Kiribati put to sea to look for new homes to grab by force, although this is what would have happened in prehistoric times. If Australia is to take climate change seriously it would be in the national interest to build links with the people of Kiribati and Tuvalu through seasonal migration so that, should they ultimately be forced to move by inundation, they would already have communities in Australia ready to welcome them.

## Conclusion

There is clearly no single solution to the increasing insecurity to be found in the Pacific island countries. Even good governance, often touted as the universal cure all, is of limited use given a continuing absence of economic opportunities for young people. Samoa is relatively well governed, but its long-lived head of state has recently died and its peaceful status would be unlikely to survive the closure of the Yazaki factory which employs some 1800 people, mostly women, or almost ten per cent of the formal labour force, or the cutting off of the Friendship Treaty quota that allows 1100 Samoans to move to New Zealand each year. The partial solution proposed here would allow Pacific islanders and particularly Melanesians to enter the metropolitan countries on a short-term basis for lower-skilled seasonal work. This would have the twin advantages of providing money for development and of reducing the pressures of youth unemployment at home. It would also serve to build up vital interpersonal links between islanders and friends in the major cultures in Australia and New Zealand. In the Pacific, poverty does not equate with starvation; rather it is the bleak poverty of lack of opportunity which increasingly drives youths out to demonstrate on the streets.

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111 Jon Barnett, 'Security and Climate Change', Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Working Paper 7, (2001), pp. 1–5.