Global Migration Futures

Pacific Region: Drivers, Processes and Future Scenarios of Migration

PROJECT REPORT – JANUARY 2013

International Migration Institute

IMI

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

National Institute of Demographic and Economic Analysis
Te Rūnanga Tātari Tatauranga
THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO

Acknowledgements

International Migration Institute (IMI)

Established in 2006, IMI is a member of the Oxford Martin School and forms part of the Department of International Development and collaborates with other migration centres and researchers at the University of Oxford. IMI is committed to developing a long-term and forward looking perspective on international migration, seeing migration as part of broader processes of global change and development. In 2008, IMI, with support from the Oxford Martin School, the Foundation 'The Hague Process on Refugees and Migration', Boeing's Global Corporate Citizenship Program, began the project 'Global Migration Futures: Towards a Comprehensive Perspective', and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the aim of developing scenarios for the future of global migration. The project promotes innovative thinking about unexpected changes in the structural factors driving migration and builds an international network of migration experts and stakeholders.

www.imi.ox.ac.uk

The University of Waikato

The National Institute of Demographic and Economic Analysis (NIDEA) at the University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand was established in 2010. NIDEA links together a virtual and evolving community of leading national and international researchers whose focus is the interaction of demographic, social and economic processes. NIDEA's primary goal is to help inform choices and responses to the demographic, social and economic interactions that are shaping the futures of New Zealand and its neighbours in Oceania, especially Australia and the Pacific Islands. The University of Waikato is New Zealand's only provider of demographic qualifications and one of only four in Australasia. NIDEA absorbed the University's Population Studies Centre which was set up in the early 1980s.

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Contents

1 Introduction

In 2030, in the Pacific region,[1] the total population of the island states and territories will exceed 14 million people, and the growth of the population in urban areas in Melanesia and Polynesia will be increasing steadily,[2] despite the active discouragement of urbanisation for more than a century. In the Pacific, migration is a leading driver of urban growth, in contrast to other world regions where urban migration features less significantly and where natural increase is the leading factor fuelling urbanisation.[3] 'A critical question for politicians, planners and policy makers in the island countries as well as in Australia and New Zealand is how best to deal with the on-going urbanisation of Pacific peoples, especially of the populations of Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu', where more than 80 per cent of the population was living in rural areas as of 2010, and where the growth rates of the youth population – the most mobile of the age cohorts – are highest.[4]

Moreover, while rates of population growth and demographic distributions are relatively certain trends over the next 20 years in the Pacific, there is a greater number of less certain factors also affecting and being affected by migration, such as economic growth rates, labour markets, political and social stability, international political alliances, the extent of diaspora involvement in the Pacific, and issues associated with customary land tenure, to name a few. Hence, additional key questions for the future will include: How will Pacific Island countries pursuing political and economic alliances in East Asia impact migration flows? How and from where will New Zealand attract both higher and lower skilled workers in the future? How might the various outcomes of Fiji's 2014 election affect the country's political stability and in turn migration flows to and from the country?

Little research is available that explores future mobility patterns and trends in the Pacific and research on the drivers of migration tend to focus on relatively certain factors such as demographic shifts and urban growth. Research is scarce on more uncertain migration drivers and what exists tends to explore issues related to environmental change. Similarly, little work has been carried out on the future of migration in the region using a more comprehensive, multi-dimensional and multi-stakeholder perspective.

Between September and December 2012, the International Migration Institute (IMI) of the University of Oxford and the University of Waikato collaborated on a project that endeavoured to help fill this gap by employing a scenario methodology developed by the Global Migration Futures project at IMI to examine future migration in the Pacific region. Using a number of research tools, the project engaged a group of Pacific migration experts and stakeholders from a cross section of private and public backgrounds to think innovatively about potential future migration dynamics and develop scenarios using their varied expertise.

Briefly, the key objectives of the project were to:

► Contribute to a greater understanding of the factors directly and indirectly impacting regional migration and, in turn, the numerous impacts of migration on regional social, economic, and political factors;
► Prompt stakeholders to play a key role in knowledge production;
► Generate debate with and between experts and stakeholders about policy responses to possible migration futures and raise awareness of the importance of broader transformation processes (such as technological change and changing public perception of migration) in shaping migration when formulating national and supranational migration policies; and

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[1] The island nations that comprise Polynesia, Micronesia and Melanesia as well as Australia and New Zealand
[2] United Nations Population Division (2011) *World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision*, Total Population (Both Sexes Combined) by Major Area, Region and Country annually for 1950-2100 (thousands), Medium-Fertility Variant, POP/DB/WPP/Rev2010/02/F01, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York.
[3] Connell, J. (2011) 'Elephants in the Pacific? Pacific urbanisation and its discontents', *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, 52(2): 121-135.
[4] Bedford, R. and G. Hugo (2011, September) 'Population movement in the Pacific: A perspective on future prospects'. Report commissioned by the Department of Labour (New Zealand) and the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (Australia): p. 6.

► Develop tools – i.e. scenarios – for policy makers, civil society, business persons, and researchers that increase understanding and awareness about future migration.

This report synthesises the project's implementation of the scenario methodology and the insights gained about future migration in the Pacific. It is organised by sections that reflect the scenario building process. **Section Two** outlines the main elements of the scenario methodology and the specific methods employed during the project. **Section Three** examines factors and trends that are relatively certain to shape future migration patterns. **Section Four** explores factors that are highly uncertain in terms of whether they will take place in the future, but have the potential to significantly impact migration patterns. **Section Five** presents two in-depth scenarios for future migration in the Pacific developed through a scenario-building workshop with Pacific migration experts and stakeholders. Lastly, **Section Six** explores potential insights for researchers and policy makers gained through the process of identifying and examining the relative certainties and uncertainties and generating the scenarios.

2 Methodology

This section presents key elements of the International Migration Institute's (IMI) scenario-building methodology and outlines the specific steps taken in developing scenarios for the Pacific region. It concludes with a reflection upon the methodological best practices learned through the project.

IMI's scenario methodology is an approach to generate visions of possible futures of international migration constructed primarily from variables of which the future outlook is highly uncertain. Scenario-building activities prompt learning, innovative thinking, and information sharing amongst a select group of migration experts and stakeholders who are instrumental in the scenario-building process. Through this process, these experts and stakeholders are led through a series of exercises to construct scenario narratives while assessing the state of their own knowledge on the future of international migration. For these reasons, this project's scenarios are not conventional projections; rather, they are tools for envisioning what 'might' take place.

Focusing on plausibility, rather than probability, is a fundamental feature of scenario-building. This methodology finds that we are often least prepared for the occurrence of factors that are highly uncertain, for they are often perceived as unlikely and thus discounted from future analyses. It also finds that these same factors have the greatest potential to significantly alter the future. Conventional methods to study the future like forecasting tend to use models built around variables that are relatively certain, and assume that more uncertain variables will remain unchanged. This assumption is one of the reasons why the predictive value of such models has been weak and hindered the ability of decision-makers to explore and plan for the future.[5]

> *I thought the workshop was an interesting exercise that highlighted the diversity of views across the Pacific. I was regularly surprised that each individual in my group had comments that seemed to reflect their own national circumstances. So even though everyone was very knowledgeable about factors affecting migration from their country's perspective we all had a lot to learn about migration in the region (myself included). I think it really demonstrates that people-to-people links in the Pacific region are fairly weak and that the region is quite fragmented – hence the workshop was useful to promote this awareness. In terms of policy I think this means we need to tread carefully and try to promote information-sharing as much as possible.*
>
> LABOUR MOBILITY & TRADE, PACIFIC DIVISION, AUSAID

This methodology conceptualises two types of uncertainty that must be considered when exploring international migration futures. First, there are 'model uncertainties', which refer to the 'still limited theoretical understanding of how social, economic, cultural and political factors affect the volume, direction and nature of migration.'[6] This limited understanding is in part the result of the complex and multi-dimensional dynamics of migration processes. Migration policies demonstrate how such complexity leads to model uncertainties; policies may fall short of meeting their objectives because they are based on dynamics that are not well understood, such as the role of migrant networks in promoting or even undermining future migration, or because they fail to account for unintended feedback effects embedded in a migration function, including migrants switching legal immigration categories when one becomes inaccessible. Second, there are 'contextual uncertainties', which refer to 'the constantly changing macro-contextual situation in which migration occurs….this pertains to the direction the main factors affecting migration are likely to evolve in the future.'[7] An example of a contextual uncertainty is future labour market demand or political conflict. Scenario-building provides a way to explore how the main drivers of migration, constituting the contextual environment, may take shape in the longer term.

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[5] Dustmann, C., Casanova, M., Preston, I., Fertig, M. and Schmidt, C. M. (2003) 'The Impact of EU Enlargement on Migration Flows'. Online Report. Home Office.

[6] de Haas, H. and Vargas-Silva, C., and Vezzoli, S. (2009) 'Global Migration Futures: A conceptual and methodological framework for research and analysis'. Project report. International Migration Institute, University of Oxford.

[7] *Ibid.*

As mentioned previously, while the contextual environment is dominated by uncertainty, some factors exist that are 'relatively certain' to occur in the future based on the knowledge and data that exists about them. For instance, demographic trends are often 'relative certainties' because they are guided by events that have already taken place (e.g. births) and are relatively assured or predetermined for the future (e.g. through ageing). Exploring demographic trends assists future planners in understanding what may be some of the future needs of society, such as primary schools and teachers, healthcare demands, and employment opportunities. Thus, while not the sole focus of scenarios, relative certainties are important to identify to understand some future developments, their potential consequences for migration, and their potential interactions with relative uncertainties.

To determine the parameters of the contextual environment and as part of the first phase of this project, the research team defined the unit of analysis and time horizon for the scenarios. The unit of analysis is 'migration in the Pacific region', which includes the island nations that comprise Polynesia, Micronesia and Melanesia as well as Australia and New Zealand. The time horizon is 2030. The time horizon depends on the expected rate of change of the subject under examination, in this case migration, and extends into the long-term where there is a greater degree of uncertainty. Migration is determined by a range of political, economic, social, legal, technological, and environmental factors, which have differing rates of change. Environmental models typically work on time scales more than 50 years into the future, while technological models might work on scales between one and five years into the future. Thus, a time horizon of two decades serves as the middle ground among these varying sectors.

The first phase of this project also included background research on past, present, and potential future migration drivers and patterns in the Pacific. The primary background document for the project was Richard Bedford and Graeme Hugo's 2012 report entitled 'Population Movement in the Pacific: A perspective on future prospects', which was commissioned by New Zealand's Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and Australia's Department of Immigration and Citizenship.[8] Briefly, the report details past and present Pacific migration drivers and patterns; discusses migration policy development; explores potential migration patterns for the future; and examines in-depth four trends that are relatively certain to impact migration futures—urbanisation, increasing education, increasing labour demands in Papua New Guinea (caused by extractive resource economies), and environmental degradation. In addition to reviewing the academic and policy literature, the research team analysed the available data on socio-economic and demographic drivers of migration in the region, to identify preliminary relative certainties and possible assumptions about the future in advance of working with the project's Pacific migration experts and stakeholders. Please refer to the data annex of this report for summaries of these data.

The second phase of this project involved the selection of migration experts and stakeholders to participate in an online survey about future migration in the Pacific and a scenario-building workshop, followed by the dissemination of the online survey. Project participant selection is one of the most important steps in scenario-building because participants are the producers and consumers of the insights generated by the scenarios. To ensure a rich diversity of survey responses and a successful workshop, migration experts and stakeholders must be balanced according to gender, and geographic and thematic area of expertise. Moreover, migration stakeholders must represent a range of sectors, including businesses and private sector employers, governments and policymakers, civil society, and international organisations. Migration experts should come from a diverse array of academic and research institutions.

The objective of the online survey, answered by more than 50 respondents, was to learn what migration experts and stakeholders perceived would be significant factors in facilitating, constraining and shaping Pacific migration patterns in the future. Additionally, the survey enabled the research team to learn what respondents believed to be likely and unlikely scenarios for future migration.[9] This information assisted the

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[8] Available at: http://www.dol.govt.nz/publications/research/population-movement-pacific-perspective-future-prospects/report.pdf
[9] For a briefing summarising the survey responses and insights, see IMI (2012) 'Exploring the future of migration in the Pacific: Survey insights'. IMI Policy Briefing No. 12. Global Migration Futures project, International Migration Institute, University of Oxford.

research team in structuring the scenario-building workshop, gaining insight into what experts and stakeholders assumed about the future of the region, and allowing respondents who also participated in the workshop to compare their before-and-after approaches to futures thinking about Pacific migration.

This project's third phase involved the planning and execution of a scenario-building workshop. This workshop is the main form of data collection for the project, as it results in the generation of a series of future migration scenarios and a list of relative certainties and uncertainties about the future. It is also the primary vehicle through which migration experts and stakeholders challenge their own assumptions about migration and enhance their understanding about Pacific migration processes. The workshop took place over four days in late October 2012 and included approximately 30 migration experts and stakeholders, who were divided into five working groups, each with a facilitator and note-taker.

The workshop consisted of a series of exercises that built upon one another. An introductory exercise prompted participants to create a timeline of past factors and trends that have impacted the migration patterns observed in the Pacific region today. This timeline helped participants to understand how seemingly 'weak signs' had pre-empted significant migration drivers and to visualise the extent to which migration processes had been multi-dimensional. It was crucial for participants to achieve this understanding to complete the subsequent scenario-building exercises, which focused on conceptualising the future. The first of these exercises prompted groups to identify, discuss, and agree upon a set of relative certainties about the future.

> *I learnt so much from the Scenarios planning, and have certainly applied some of the techniques … in some of my practical problem-solving with Pacific counterparts and New Zealand employers over the last few months here in the RSE (Recognised Seasonal Employer) space at the New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment.*
>
> RSE; SETTLEMENT, PROTECTION & ATTRACTION DIVISION; IMMIGRATION NEW ZEALAND; MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT

The second and third exercises asked participants to identify and come to a consensus about a set of relative uncertainties about the Pacific's future and rank and debate these uncertainties in terms of their potential to impact migration and degree of uncertainty. As mentioned previously, scrutinizing more uncertain variables is a defining feature of the scenario methodology, for they become the main components of the different future scenario narratives.

The fourth exercise of the workshop had groups construct scenario matrices using the two factors identified by each group as having the greatest amount of uncertainty and greatest potential to impact migration to form the axes of their scenario matrix. Each of the four quadrants created by the intersection of the axes represents a different scenario that is shaped by the interaction of the two axes variables as well as all of the other relative certainties and uncertainties identified by each workshop group. The final exercise had experts and stakeholders develop scenario narratives using the uncertainties and relative certainties. In-between each of the exercises, there were plenary sessions where participants reported their groups' insights, shared challenges, and discussed reflective questions posed by the research team.

The fourth and final phase of this project involved the analysis of the data obtained from the workshop, the refining of the first-generation scenarios, and multiple in person and online feedback rounds with workshop participants. Participants' feedback is highly valuable to the process of scenario-building as it affords participants the chance to return to the scenarios, relative certainties and uncertainties, and inform the research team of any further considerations, changed positions, insights gained, or new questions that may have arisen since the scenarios were created.

After reviewing the key concepts of the methodology and the four phases of the project, this section now concludes with some reflections on scenario-building best practices, compiled from discussions within the research team and feedback from project participants. Two elements which drove the success of this scenario-building initiative were the careful and systematic selection of survey and workshop participants;

and the multiple feedback sessions following the scenario-building workshop. As mentioned previously, the selection of survey and workshop participants followed a set of criteria to ensure a rich diversity of responses. Most notably, the project was able to secure support for the participation of several representatives from Pacific Island countries and territories. This selection process was expanded and taken a step further by having discussions with prospective participants about the objectives of the initiative, the commitments required, and the outcomes that could be expected. As a result, there was significant buy-in and continuous commitment to the scenario-building process.

The multiple in person and online feedback sessions between the research team and participants also enhanced the outcomes of this project. During these sessions, the research team had the opportunity not only to continue conversations started during the scenario-building workshop, but also to learn of any individual and sector-specific insights participants gained and how they planned to integrate these into their work. The research team found that having feedback discussions assisted participants in reflecting upon their experiences and retaining more from the workshop.

My involvement in the workshop has improved my knowledge of migration in the Pacific in a number of areas – conflict, the role of aid, China's involvement, the politicization of remittances, alliances between Pacific states, and demographic change. Perhaps most importantly, the workshop has connected me with a large number of experts in this area, enabling me to better source information should I need to, and to put others in touch with the relevant expert.
RESEARCH, INVESTIGATIONS AND MONITORING UNIT; AUCKLAND COUNCIL

If it were possible to hold a second Pacific migration scenario-building workshop, the research team would schedule more time for plenary sessions and open discussions. It is during these sessions that participants from different exercise groups get the chance to exchange ideas and ask each other questions, which often leads to the discovery of key insights and new research questions. Additionally, given the vast amount of regional expertise workshop participants have, the research team would consider integrating short informational sessions into the workshop in which a number of participants could give brief presentations on their areas of expertise (e.g. patterns of environmental change or employment trends in the region). Again, this would require the timespan of the workshop to be increased.

After outlining the main components of the scenario methodology and the specific steps taken to build scenarios about migration in the Pacific in 2030, this report will turn to discuss the content generated during the scenario-building workshop. It will begin by examining the factors that the project's migration experts and stakeholders identified as being relatively certain to take place in the Pacific in the next 20 years.

3   Relative certainties for the Pacific in 2030

Relative certainties are factors that are fairly sure to take place in the future, based on the knowledge and data that exist about them. For instance, population ageing in Europe is relatively certain to continue in the coming decades because there is presently a large cohort of working-age adults in Europe, while only a relatively small cohort of children, and every year we know that these individuals will get older. Identifying relative certainties is a key step in the scenario-building process because such certainties form the inner architecture of each scenario; they remain relatively stable and constant across the scenarios, and the scenarios diverge from one another based on how the factors that are more uncertain evolve and combine in different ways with the relative certainties. Identifying relative certainties is also important because it prompts participants to reflect on the factors that they assume to be certain (e.g. political influence of Australia and New Zealand on the Pacific). Consequently, this process often leads to the identification of numerous uncertainties that are examined in later stages of scenario-building.

Relative certainties in the Pacific over the next 20 years

Political

EXTERNAL
▸ Increasing geo-political importance of Pacific
▸ Increasing influence of China in Pacific Islands

Economic

REGIONAL ECONOMY
▸ Persisting Australia and New Zealand (ANZ) economies of scale relative to Pacific Islands
▸ Closer ANZ economic relations

FOREIGN ECONOMIC INTERESTS
▸ Increasing net FDI in Pacific
▸ Increasing foreign aid dependency
▸ Increasing interest in Pacific natural resources by foreign companies

Social

EDUCATION
▸ Increasing education aspirations
▸ Improving education access
▸ Increasing literacy

HEALTH
▸ Declining maternal mortality

CULTURE
▸ Persisting Pacific norms and cultures
▸ Persisting importance of kinship ties

Demographic

URBAN
▸ Urbanisation

POPULATION
▸ Youth bulge in Melanesia
▸ Declining fertility
▸ Population growth in absolute terms
▸ Ageing population ANZ, EU, North America
▸ High youth population in Pacific Islands relative to ANZ

MIGRATION
▸ Growing Pacific diaspora

Environmental

SLOW ONSET CLIMATE CHANGE
▸ Rising sea levels

LAND
▸ Persisting importance of customary land tenure

Technological

INFORMATION AND NETWORKS
▸ Advancing ICT
▸ Increasing ICT usage and connectivity

During the scenario-building workshop, migration experts and stakeholders devoted one exercise to uncovering and debating relative certainties. All participants in a given group had to agree that a factor was relatively certain for it to be recorded as such and built into the scenarios in the latter part of the workshop. If one participant cast doubt on a factor's certainty because of contradictory data or expertise that he or she held, then the group had to consider the factor as an uncertainty. However, different groups were able to identify different and conflicting certainties; especially as such instances provoked important discussions during the plenary sessions. For this reason, the reader may notice that a few relative certainties in the full list identified by workshop participants shown above – e.g. increasing geo-political importance of the Pacific and persisting Pacific norms and culture – overlap with some of the relative uncertainties identified in the subsequent section.

To show how relative certainties are used in scenario-building exercises to think innovatively about the future, this section describes three identified relative certainties in depth by defining them and exploring their consequences for migration. These relative certainties are: increasing information and communication technology (ICT) usage and connectivity, increasing youth and working-age population in Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTS), and increasing literacy.

Increasing Information and communication technology usage and connectivity

Access to information and communication technologies has been improving in the Pacific since the early 1990s, albeit with a considerable disparity in access between PICTs and Australia and New Zealand. According to the International Telecommunications Union, people living in New Zealand and Australia have at least one mobile subscription, while approximately half of people living in PICTs have one subscription (see Figure 1). Additionally, approximately 80 per cent of people living in New Zealand and Australia are internet users, while in PICTs this figure is between 10 and 35 per cent (seeFigure 2).

Given the low rates of mobile telephony and internet penetration in the Pacific, relative to many parts of the world, and the importance of such technology in connecting peoples in islands spread out over thousands of miles of ocean, an objective of the Pacific Island Forum's Pacific Plan is to implement a regional digital strategy to improve ICT.[10] This strategy aims to improve access to ICT, enhance ICT skills, increase bandwidth, and lower ICT costs.

Figure 1: Mobile subscriptions (per 100 people)
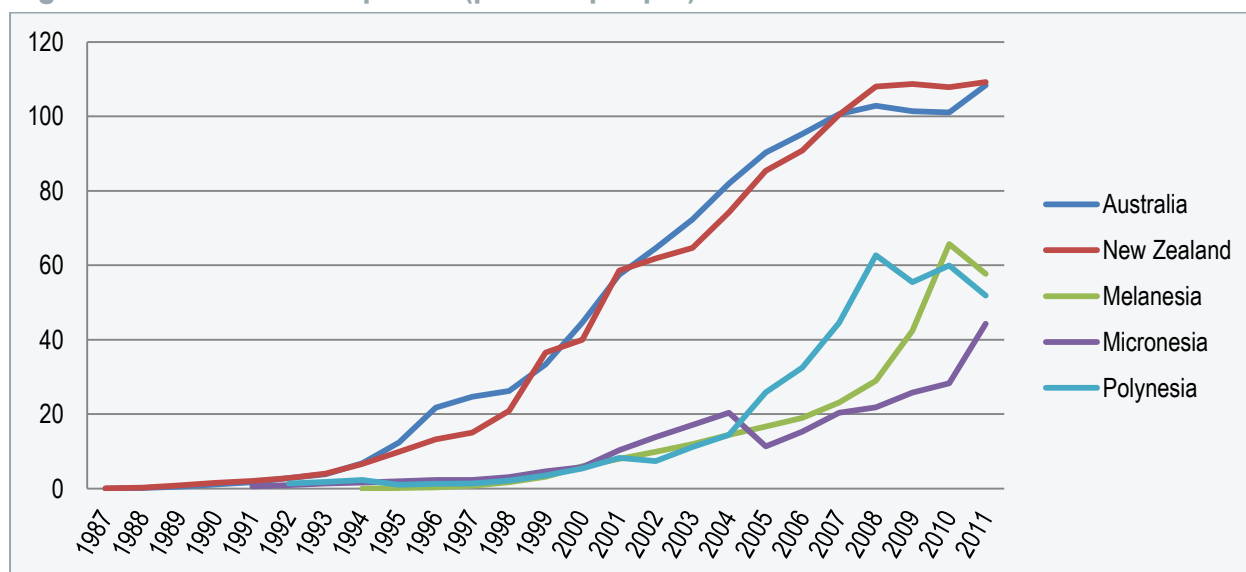
Data source: International Telecommunications Union

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[10] Pacific Island Forum (2006) 'The Pacific Plan for Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Integration: Pacific Regional Digital Strategy'. Available at: http://www.forumsec.org/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/Pacific%20Regional%20Digital%20Strategy.pdf

Figure 2: Internet users (per 100 people)
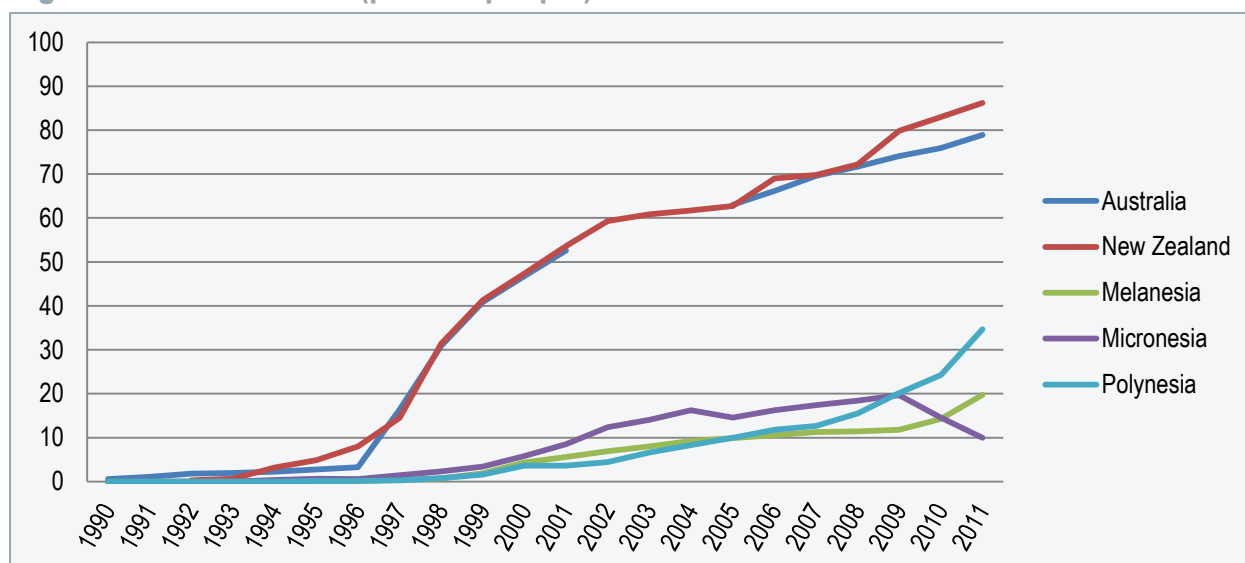
Data source: International Telecommunications Union

It is relatively certain that ICT usage and connectivity will continue to increase into the future because of regional and governmental commitments to this cause, the current relatively low rates of ICT penetration in PICTs, and the overall increase in penetration in the region for the last two decades. This technological trend may have different implications for migration in the region. Increasing ICT usage and connectivity may alleviate some of the demand for movement within the region. For instance, in Fiji and Papua New Guinea, mobile healthcare services are becoming increasingly available, reducing the need for people to travel long distances (and at times over international borders) for medical consultations. Instead, people can text their questions to medical professionals or consult webpages updated in real-time for information about diseases and treatments.[11] Similarly, employment-related mobility may be reduced if workers are able to 'telecommute' using the internet.

On the other hand, increasing ICT usage and connectivity might promote migration by increasing people's aspirations and capabilities related to migration. Mobile phones and the internet may provide potential migrants with information about destination societies that motivates them to move and may enable contact among family members living outside of PICTs, encouraging family ties to be maintained over large distances. Information and communication technologies can also facilitate migration by reducing the costs and risks associated with relocation; for instance, they can help migrants secure jobs in advance of their movement, find housing, and connect with a social network, to name a few.

Increasing Working-Age Population in Pacific Island countries and territories

The percentage of the working-age population, people between 15 and 64 years of age, in Pacific countries has been steadily increasing since the 1970s. In New Zealand and Australia in 2010, this figure peaked at 66.5 per cent and 67.6 per cent, respectively, and will decline between now and 2030 to approximately 60 per cent of the total population. Over the next 20 years in PICTs, individuals of working-age will reach between 63 and 65 per cent of the population, according to medium variant projections by the United Nations Population Division (see Figure 3).

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[11] Cave, D. (2012) 'Digital Islands: How the Pacific's ICT Revolution is Transforming the Region'. Policy paper. Lowy Institute for International Policy: Sydney.

Figure 3: Population aged 15–64, percentage of total (medium variant)
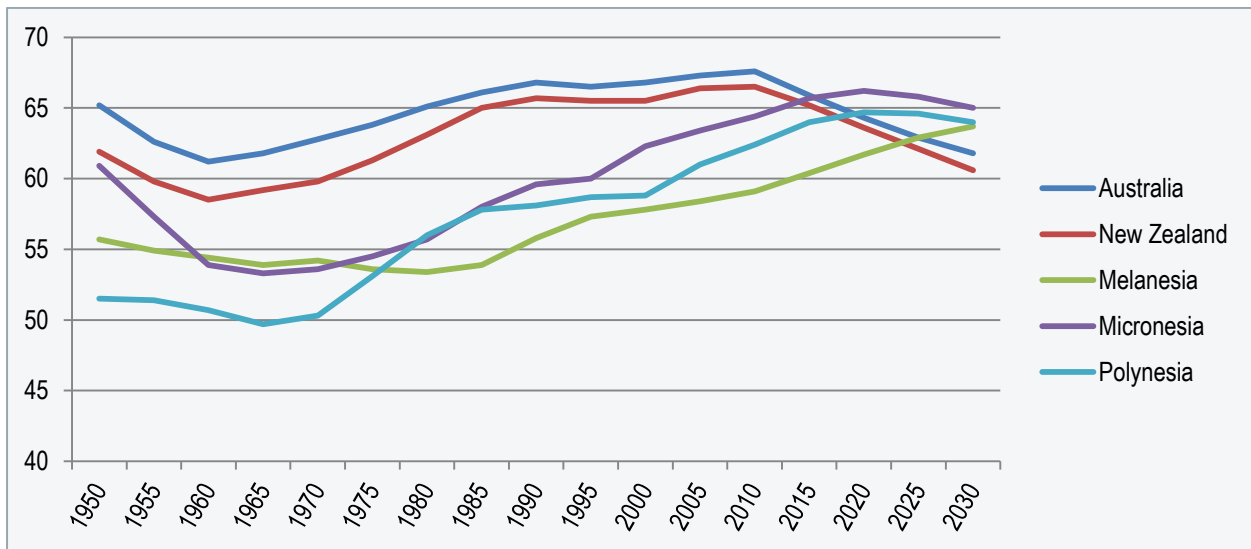
Data source: United Nations Population Division, 2010 revision

Secondly, an increase in the working-age population in PICTs over the next 20 years might prompt an increase in their emigration to economic hubs in the region, maintaining current trends of urbanisation fuelled largely by migration. This would depend on the extent to which origin cities and countries offered work opportunities, the education and skill levels of potential migrants, as well as relative economic growth and labour market demands in destination cities. As mentioned previously, the working-age population in New Zealand and Australia will be in decline between now and 2030, which could increase demand for specific types of lower and higher skilled labour. Additionally, education levels are steadily increasing in PICTs, potentially shifting the skill profile of the working-age cohort in 2030.

Of these working-age individuals in PICTs the youth population, those aged 15 – 24, will slowly decline to be approximately 15 and 16 per cent of Micronesia and Polynesia's populations respectively, and approximately 18.5 per cent of Melanesia's population (see Figure 4). The youth population in PICTs peaked in the 1980s and 90s. In contrast, New Zealand and Australia's youth populations have been declining since the 1970s, and will reach approximately 12 per cent by 2030.

Figure 4: Population aged 15–24, percentage of total (medium variant)

Data source: United Nations Population Division, 2010 revision

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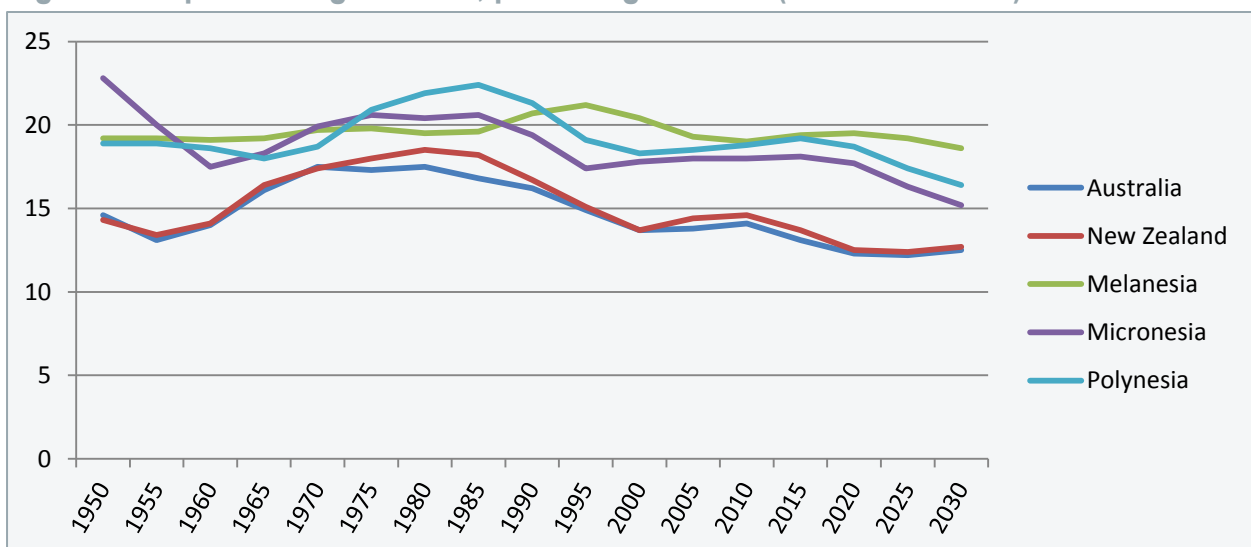
Based on current fertility trends in the Pacific region and the certainty of ageing, it is relatively certain that the working-age population in PICTs will increase and the youth population will remain high relative to Australia and New Zealand. These demographic trends have several implications for the size and structure of migration flows in the Pacific. Firstly, the 15–24 age group is the most mobile of age cohorts, for youth are likely to have a greater sense of desire and motivation to migrate related to educational attainment, family formation, employment, and cultural requirements (e.g. rite of passage migration). Youth are also less likely to have family obligations and can also expect to earn the highest lifetime gains from migration. With a youth population of approximately 18.5 per cent in 2030, Melanesia may see a rise in lower and higher skilled mobility within the Pacific in the event of a concurrent increase in education and economic growth. Should Melanesia experience a rise in education attainment but no economic growth, a large youth cohort with sufficient resources to move and to a rise in immobility for those without the resources but with the desire to migrate. This, in turn, may lead to social and political tensions and, in a more extreme scenario, a future that features forced migration flows.

Increasing literacy in Pacific Island countries and territories

Although the data available on adult literacy in PICTs is sparse, it reveals that rates have been steadily increasing since the 1970s. In 2001, Ministers of Education, party to the Pacific Islands Forum, met to develop an action plan for improving basic education in the region. In addition to reaffirming their commitment to the Dakar Education for All initiative,[12] members also set a goal for improving levels of adult literacy by 50 per cent by 2015. More recently, this plan has transformed into a regional framework, aligned with the Pacific Plan and Millennium Development Goals.

A significant disparity in literacy levels continues to persist between people from PICTs and New Zealand and Australia, an indication that Pacific Island literacy has room for growth in the future. This disparity also appears when comparing Pākehā New Zealanders and Maori New Zealanders or New Zealanders of Pacific Island descent. A recent report by New Zealand's Ministry of Education argues that this gap is not decreasing.[13] While it is relatively certain that literacy levels will continue to improve in absolute terms in PICTs over the next 20 years, it is not clear whether such rates will improve sufficiently to close the gap with New Zealand and Australia.

Increasing literacy is an important trend to examine when exploring future migration because having a high level of literacy, and more generally having an education, increases people's capacities to migrate as well as their life aspirations, which can in turn increase their desires to migrate. For instance, literacy and education can raise people's livelihood expectations and notions of 'the good life', and may potentially motivate them to migrate if those expectations cannot be met at home. A high level of literacy may also better equip people to use information and communication technologies and take advantage of opportunities outside of their community or country.

Additionally, becoming highly literate may enable and motivate the attainment of further education and skills training, potentially qualifying individuals for a greater number of domestic and international jobs. A relative lack of opportunities for further education may as well prompt migration in search of more advanced or specialised educational opportunities.

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[12] The Education for All initiative 'is a global commitment to provide quality, basic education for all children, youth, and adults.' As a part of this initiative, 164 governments pledged to meet six education goals by 2015, including improving adult literacy by 50 per cent, reducing gender disparities in education attainment, and ensuring that all children have access to free, quality primary education, to name a few. See UNESCO (n.d.) 'Education for All Movement'. Available at: http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/education-for-all/.
[13] Lawes, E. (2009) 'Literacy and Life Skills For Pasifika Adults: Results from the Adult Literacy and Life skills (ALL) Survey'. Comparative Education Research Unit, Research Division, Ministry of Education: New Zealand. Available at: http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/topics/research/all

4 Relative uncertainties

Relative uncertainties are factors of which developments may have different outcomes in the future, either because of a lack of knowledge and data that exist about them or because of the complexity of cause-and-effect mechanisms underlying them. For instance, political violence in Fiji following the election in 2014 is highly uncertain. We know that political tensions are high and political violence has occurred in the past, but it is extremely difficult to know how other factors will develop and interact with each other in the future to affect an outcome of political violence. Identifying and examining relative uncertainties stands at the centre of the scenario-building process as uncertainties drive the scenario narratives and it is often the uncertainties for which planners are least prepared. Identifying uncertainties is also important for it reveals to experts and stakeholders involved in the scenario-building the great extent to which migration futures are bound up in multiple layers of uncertainty.

Relative uncertainties in the Pacific over the next 20 years

Political

NATIONAL
- Immigration/emigration policies
- Political restructuring and reform, especially Melanesia
- Political instability and conflict

PACIFIC REGION
- Shifting geopolitics in Pacific
- Regional integration and cooperation
- Strengthening of sub-regions
- Territorialisation of Pacific waters

INTERNATIONAL
- Influence of China and Asia in Pacific
- US/China relations in Pacific

Economic

NATIONAL
- Relative economic growth
- Supply of and demand for skilled labour
- Economic development agendas

REGIONAL
- Regional economic integration

INTERNATIONAL
- Global economic volatility
- Global financial recovery
- Foreign investment in Pacific
- Diversification and expansion of remittances

Social

MIGRATION
- Social polarisation between migrants and non-migrants
- Erosion of traditions and cultures
- PICTs' attitudes towards migration
- Media & public portrayal of migrants and asylum seekers in ANZ
- PICTs and NZ as attractive destinations to settle
- Extent of diaspora engagement in Pacific

EDUCATION
- Education access and quality
- Education outsourcing
- Technical & professional skill levels
- English language proficiency

HEALTH
- Healthcare access and quality

GENDER
- Changing gender roles

Demographic

POPULATION
- Declining fertility

Environmental

SLOW ONSET CLIMATE CHANGE
- Sea level rise effects and adaptation strategies
- Water salination

RAPID-ONSET DISASTERS
- Incidence and intensity of extreme weather events and natural hazards

SECURITY
- Food security
- Water security
- Energy security
- Bio security and conservation

LAND
- Customary land tenure reforms

Technological

INFRASTRUCTURE
- Changes in transportation

HEALTH
- Changes in production systems

During the scenario-building workshop, migration experts and stakeholders devoted two exercises to uncovering, debating and ranking relative uncertainties in terms of their degree of uncertainty and potential impact on migration. Above is a full list of relative uncertainties that workshop participants identified. To show how the project used relative uncertainties to think innovatively about the future of migration in the Pacific, this section will describe three relative uncertainties in depth by defining them and exploring their consequences for migration. These relative uncertainties are: shifting geopolitics of the Pacific, customary land tenure, and diversification and expansion of remittances.

Shifting geopolitics in the Pacific

It is highly uncertain the extent to which Australia, New Zealand and the United States will maintain their positions as centres of political power in the Pacific. In 2010, the United States and Australia strengthened their joint security interests in the region and Australia agreed to be a new site for a United States military base in 2016, to act as a bridge between the United States and Asia.[14] This appears to be taking place as part of a broader political strategy by the United States, referred to by Washington, DC as a 'pivotal shift', to engage more economically and diplomatically in the Asia-Pacific, and to move away from previous 'hard power' politics in the Middle East.[15] Additionally, despite the United States' stance on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and past military actions a part of the War on Terror, New Zealand seems more ready to accept the hegemon as a political and economic ally. Hence, it is possible that over the next 20 years that these traditional Pacific powers will maintain their dominance.

In contrast, it also seems possible that states from outside of the region might become significant sources of political influence, shifting the balance of power. For the past decade China has been strengthening economic, diplomatic, and cultural ties with Pacific Island countries and territories.[16] Moreover, Russia and South Korea have introduced policies of greater engagement in the region and may emerge more prominently as key political actors. An increase in the presence of external actors has been facilitated by PICTs, who have sought foreign support and alliances as a way to strengthen their positions in the Pacific against the dominance of Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. After Fiji's failure to hold elections in 2009 following its military coup in 2006, Fiji was suspended from the Pacific Islands Forum, the region's primary political body. In response, Fiji formed new political alliances through its 'Look North' policy with China, Russia, and North Korea, to name a few, who see in PICTs a potential future source of international support, a counterpoint to US and EU power, and a source of natural resources. Fiji also strengthened the power of its sub-regional alliances, including the Melanesian Spearhead Group.[17]

Fiji's actions have been regarded highly by other PICTs as providing a way forward for achieving a greater role in international and regional politics, and greater independence from traditional powers. Already there may be signs that the political influence of PICTs could increase in the future, although to what extent remains highly uncertain. In 2013 Fiji will chair the 132-member G77 plus China, and in 2014 Samoa will host the Global Small Island Developing States Conference.

The future geopolitics of the region may significantly impact migration flows, as political and economic ties between countries open channels for the movement of people. Should new, external powers become more influential in the region, Pacific countries may witness a rise in new migration destinations as well as potential immigrant populations. Additionally, if regional and international powers begin to compete for

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[14] Iskander, R. (2011) 'From Down Under to Top Center: Australia, the United States, and this Century's Special Relationship'. Strategic paper. German Marshall Fund of the United States. Available at: http://www.gmfus.org/archives/from-down-under-to-top-center-australia-the-united-states-and-this-centurys-special-relationship/

[15] Tarte, S. (2012) 'The Pacific islands in 2012: navigating diplomatic cross currents'. Special Feature: 2012 review and the Year Ahead. East Asia Forum. Available at: http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2012/12/27/the-pacific-islands-in-2012-navigating-diplomatic-cross-currents/

[16] O'Keefe, M. (n.d.) 'Viewpoint: A New Era of Geopolitics in the region'. Islands Business International: Suva. Available at: http://www.islandsbusiness.com/islands_business/index_dynamic/containerNameToReplace=MiddleMiddle/focusModuleID=20060/overideSkinName=issueArticle-full.tpl

[17] Larsen, E. (2012) 'Bringing Fiji Back into the Fold: A U.S. Perspective'. Center for Strategic and International Studies: Washington, D.C. Available at: http://csis.org/publication/bringing-fiji-back-fold-us-perspective

preferential positions in the Pacific, PICTs may experience increased economic investment and development, eventually leading to the improvement of people's livelihoods and their abilities and ambitions to migrate. Economic development may also lead to a rise in immigration or return migration, if greater opportunities for employment emerge.

Customary land tenure

Varied attempts have been made by governments to amend aspects of customary land ownership in Pacific Island countries and territories. Some policymakers and scholars perceive current systems of customary land ownership as being sources of inequality, preventing urban planning, and impeding economic development. Others see such claims made against traditional tenure as misinformed and motivated by interests to appropriate such land for commercial production. These people would have current customary policies updated and improved rather than dismantled.[18]

In the past, unfavourable proposals to change customary land ownership have contributed to conflicts, such as in Fiji in 2000 and in Papua New Guinea in 2002. At the very least, issues associated with customary land tenure are high and contentious priorities because of their far-reaching effects. In Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu, 97 per cent of land falls under customary ownership,[19] and in Fiji and the Solomon Islands, 90 per cent of land is customarily owned.[20] Across the PICTs, between 80 and 98 per cent of land is under customary tenure.[21]

While it appears relatively certain that the issue of customary land ownership will remain a high priority in the Pacific and may have to be addressed within the next two decades, it is highly uncertain how governments will carry out reforms and what impact such reforms will have on political, economic, and social stability. Given the high degree of uncertainty associated with this variable, the potential impacts on migration are equally diverse. Should Pacific Islands transition from a system of customary to private tenure, it is possible that the islands would experience a rise in immigration or return migration of people and businesses looking to purchase and settle on, or make productive previously unavailable plots of land. Similarly, emigration prompted in part by land unavailability and poor prospects for rural employment might decline. The scales of these potential migration flows are unclear. On the other hand, if land reforms take effect without widespread public support, it is plausible that conflict might ensue and prompt asylum migration flows to neighbouring Pacific countries. Should no reforms occur, PICTs are likely to experience continued or increased urbanisation and possibly emigration, perhaps to New Zealand, Australia, or the United States, where there exist relatively higher livelihood opportunities.

Diversification and expansion of remittances

In 2011, the sum of remittances sent by overseas Samoans back to Samoa, expressed as a percentage of GDP, was the seventh highest in the world at 21.4 per cent. Not far behind were Tongan migrant remittances at 16.4 per cent. The data available on other PICTs shows rates between 0.1 and 4.2 per cent. Worldwide, remittances appear to be following a steadily increasing trend; however, in the Pacific, the data appear less conclusive than in regions such as North Africa, South Asia, and the Middle East where economic development has increased emigration and fuelled strong remittance growth.[22]

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[18] AUSAid (2008) 'Making Land Work: Reconciling Customary Land and Development in the Pacific'. Volume One. Australian Agency for International Development: Canberra. Available at: http://www.ausaid.gov.au/Publications/Documents/MLW_VolumeOne_Bookmarked.pdf

[19] Filer (2011) argues that in reality this figure is closer to 86 per cent, based on a process of land grabbing in which governments leased land and then re-leased it to private, commercial users. Filer, C. (2011) 'The Political Construction of a Land Grab In Papua New Guinea'. Canberra: The Australian National University, Crawford School of Public Policy (READ Pacific Discussion Paper 1). Available at: http://crawford.anu.edu.au/rmap/pdf/Rpapers/2011/READ_PDP1_CF.pdf

[20] Chandi, S. (2011) 'Planning Now for Pacific Land Reform'. Development Policy Centre, Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University: Canberra. Available at: http://devpolicy.org/planning-now-for-pacific-land-reform/

[21] Paterson, D. (2001) 'Some thoughts about Customary Land'. Paper presented at Australasian Law teachers' Association Conference, 1-4 July: Port Vila. Available at: http://www.paclii.org/journals/fJSPL/vol05/7.shtml#fn1

[22] Ratha, D., Aga, G. A., Silwal, A. (2012) 'Remittances to developing countries will surpass $400 billion in 2012'. Migration and Development Brief No. 19. Migration and Remittances Unit, Development Prospects Group, World Bank: Washington, D.C.

The future diversification and expansion of remittances to the Pacific is highly uncertain as it is dependent on a number of different variables. Political and social remittances may emerge more prominently, relative to what is observed today. Already there are weak signs of members of the Tongan and Samoan diaspora participating in social and political life in the PICTs. It is also plausible that financial remittances may be increasingly used to improve economic development in PICTs, through investments in business ventures and other economic projects, in addition to being consumed by individuals and households. The future expansion of remittances will be greatly influenced by transfer costs, as high money transfer fees hinder remittance flows. At present, Australia and New Zealand have some of the highest remittance sending costs in the world at approximately 12 per cent.[23] Recognising the need to reduce these costs, in 2009 the Australian and New Zealand governments created an online platform that allows individuals to compare the costs of remittance-sending services. Researchers at the Migration and Remittances Unit at the World Bank argue that a long-term and considerable reduction in costs may depend on banking and telecom companies coordinating their services.

Coordination between the banking and telecom sectors may also facilitate money transfers using mobile telephony. At present, numerous obstacles are preventing such mobile innovations, including but not limited to, a lack of integration of different Pacific bank networks and different mobile telecom networks and difficulties in authenticating the identities of parties engaged in transfers. Digicel provides a successful example of a telecom company that has adopted biometric technology to authenticate users' identities and has enabled mobile money transfers from New Zealand and Australia to Fiji, Tonga, and Samoa. In addition, the future expansion of remittances will depend on the sustained interest of migrant communities to remit, reinforced by the steady flow of migrants to destination countries. A report from the Asian Development Bank argues that Pacific remittances 'continue at high levels for very long periods except when close kin die or when families reunite in the host country. Second generation migrants however, are likely to send smaller amounts only on demand.'[24]

The expansion and diversification of remittances may impact future migration patterns in several ways. First, if remittances become easier to send, more individuals may be motivated to migrate to participate in such exchanges. Moreover, more households may be prompted to invest in the migration of a family member to receive remittances. Second, an expansion of financial remittances may lead to an increase in people's aspirations and capabilities to migrate as education is one of the top forms of remittance investment. Third, an increase in financial remittances without diversification towards economic development might lead to increasing consumption and reinforce dependency. Lack of economic development and limited employment opportunities combined with increases in capabilities for migration may yield increased emigration flows. Fourth, growth in social remittances may contribute skills and knowledge needed in island communities and may contribute to broader processes of socio-economic development, slowing emigration and potentially creating prospects for immigration. However, financial and social remittances alone may not overcome the structural constraints responsible for poverty, inequality and slow economic growth. Yet, once political and economic reforms are put in place, remittances may be able to accelerate processes of socio-economic development.

This section has presented relative uncertainties about the Pacific's future identified through this project and examined three of them in-depth to demonstrate how they may develop within scenario narratives and, more generally, what insights they can reveal about the future. The following section will detail the key characteristics of scenarios and discuss how workshop participants generated scenarios using the relative certainties and relative uncertainties. It will also feature two scenario narratives created by two of the workshop groups and selected by participants for further development and inclusion in this report.

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[23] *Ibid.*

[24] Connell, J. and Brown, R. (2005) 'Remittances in the Pacific: An Overview'. Pacific Studies Series. Asian Development Bank: the Philippines.

5 Future migration scenarios: Pacific in 2030

Scenarios are stories about possible future drivers and patterns of migration. They explore potential changes in the broader context within which migration takes shape, for instance opportunity structures or political stability, to understand possible migration outcomes. A key feature of the Global Migration Futures project's scenario methodology is that it involves a range of migration experts and stakeholders – from governments, international organisations, the private sector, academia, and civil society, to name a few – in the scenario-building process to reflect the multi-dimensional nature of migration drivers and patterns.

Scenarios are different from predictions or forecasts. They reveal what 'might' occur, rather than what is perceived as 'likely' to take place in the future. The primary distinguishing feature between scenarios and forecasts is that scenarios focus on highly uncertain variables for which there are little or no data, and use expert knowledge and intuition to explore how such variables may take shape. In contrast, forecasts focus on analysing relatively certain variables and hold more uncertain variables constant along their present trajectories. As mentioned previously, examining more uncertain factors is crucial to studies of migration futures, for it is the more uncertain factors for which we are often the least prepared.

Effective scenarios must therefore be creative and challenge the *status quo*, while remaining plausible and convincing. Scenarios should be used as tools to prompt innovative thinking about future opportunities and challenges as well as potential insights as to how to move forward. No single scenario attempts to get the future 'right'; instead a collection of scenarios may present a range of insights for the future.

This section presents two scenario matrices and two extended scenario narratives created by migration stakeholders and experts at the project's scenario-building workshop from 24 - 27 October 2012.[25] A scenario matrix is defined by two uncertainties, which were identified by each working group as the most uncertain and as having the greatest potential to affect migration in the Pacific in the future. Each of the four quadrants created by the intersection of the axes represents a different scenario that is shaped by the interaction of the two axes variables and all other uncertainties and relative certainties identified by the working group. In describing the matrices, this section briefly defines the parameters of each matrix and outlines the four scenarios formed from each quadrant. The scenario narratives are in-depth and creative stories of plausible future political, economic, social, demographic, technological and environmental developments in the Pacific, and their potential consequences for migration.

The details and events described in each scenario are included to provide a more tangible 'feel' for how the Pacific region appears in the described scenario. Please consider all of the names, dates, and other such specifics included in each scenario as proxies for types of events, and not as likely or necessary conditions for any particular scenario to unfold.

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[25] The remaining three scenario matrices created by participants at the workshop are presented in the Scenario Annex to this report.

Scenario Matrix: Human Development and Regional Integration and Co-operation

The scenario matrix below comes from a workshop group that felt that the two factors that were the most uncertain and that would have the greatest impact on future migration in the Pacific are High versus Low Levels of Human Development and Regional Integration and Co-operation versus Regional fragmentation and No Co-operation. These factors form the axes of the matrix and produce four scenarios for future migration.

Mana Pasifika

describes a future of high levels of human development and regional political and economic integration, leading to high levels of mobility, particularly higher skilled labour, trade-related and educational mobility. Concentrations of economic and political power have largely remained the same as what was observed in the 2010s. Pacific countries are more interdependent, making it crucial that 'no country be left behind'.

This scenario is further elaborated below.

Looking for Greener Pastures

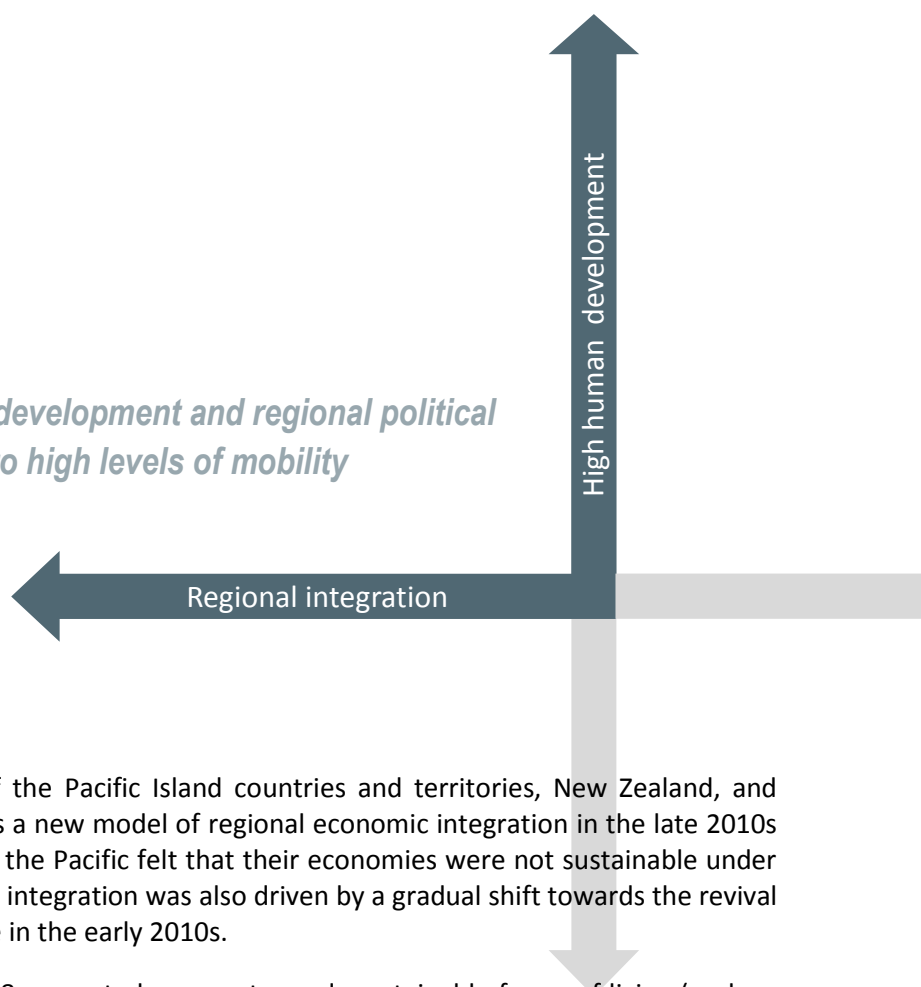describes a future of high levels of human development, regional fragmentation, and the strengthening of national borders. Migration to and within the region has declined as a result of a shift in immigration policies in PICTs and Australia and New Zealand to restrict various migration channels, particularly lower-skilled labour mobility schemes. This has led to an increase in irregular migration and overstaying, as well as in the importance of international social networks to facilitate migration.

High human development

Regional integration | Regional fragmentation

Low human development

Dominatrix

describes a future of low levels of human development, greater inequality between countries, and regional political and economic integration. Fewer opportunities for successful livelihoods exist in Pacific Island Countries and Territories and people are increasingly dependent on remittances for income. The exploitation of natural resources in PICTs by foreign multinational companies is on the rise as PICTs' governments look for new sources of revenue. Migration from PICTS to New Zealand and Australia is at an all-time high, in spite of highly selective immigration policies, causing considerable brain drain and a decline in wages paid to Pacific workers.

Downward Spiral

describes a future of low levels of human development, greater dependence on foreign aid and investment, and regional fragmentation. Sub-regional alliances are strengthening, particularly between countries and territories within Melanesia, Polynesia, and Micronesia. Former colonial connections with France, Britain, Australia, and New Zealand are being strengthened and tensions are increasing between sub-regions. Rising youth unemployment is a Pacific-wide concern, adding to fears of regional instability. Migration and mobility have reduced alongside declining opportunities for employment and education.

High human development

Mana Pasifika

A future with high levels of human development and regional political and economic integration, leading to high levels of mobility

Regional integration

Scenario narrative

In 2030 the Pacific region is comprised of the Pacific Island countries and territories, New Zealand, and Australia. The Pacific region shifted towards a new model of regional economic integration in the late 2010s to early 2020s because several countries in the Pacific felt that their economies were not sustainable under previous political models. This shift towards integration was also driven by a gradual shift towards the revival of Pacific cultures, which was already visible in the early 2010s.

The global financial crisis that began in 2008 prompted a move towards sustainable forms of living (such as community-based subsistence farming), a greater sense of solidarity, and a search for improved resource distribution and social welfare throughout the world. In the Pacific, Maori and Pacific Island cultures had been in a process of transformation with tensions between traditional and globalised lifestyles introduced by migration. By the late 2010s, the Maori experience of slowly reclaiming sovereignty and the right to self-determination catalysed other PICTs to take charge of their resources and human capital and become more active in regional and global politics. One of the first steps in taking charge was to form a Pacific economic union called 'Mana Pasifika'.

Once Mana Pasifika received backing from foreign governments in 2020, transnational communities supported the union by remitting funds and lending academic, technical, and administrative expertise. Now, for the first time, people as well as goods are moving freely within in the region. Mana Pasifika citizens have the right to live and work anywhere in the region. This has re-energised relations between Australia and New Zealand, on one hand, and the Pacific Islands, on the other hand. The Pacific Union is eager to engage outside trading partners such as China, which continues to have a strong presence in the region.

For the last few years, the Pacific's private sector has provided significant contributions to universities and research institutions in the region, to find solutions for environments 'under threat'. This has occurred in part as a result of a growing research hub of Pacific technology experts specialising in environmental adaptation and preservation, eco-friendly mineral extraction, and alternative energy production. Tuvalu has become a showcase of adaptation strategies to mitigate the effects of sea-level rise. The region's private sector is also witnessing the growth of manufacturing plants that are building some of the base equipment and material for environmental adaptation and alternative energy production. Products from New Zealand, Hawaii, and Australia are sought throughout the world, as environmental challenges have increased in coastal cities worldwide. As a result, higher skilled workers and students are migrating to the region to work in the growing environmental sector.
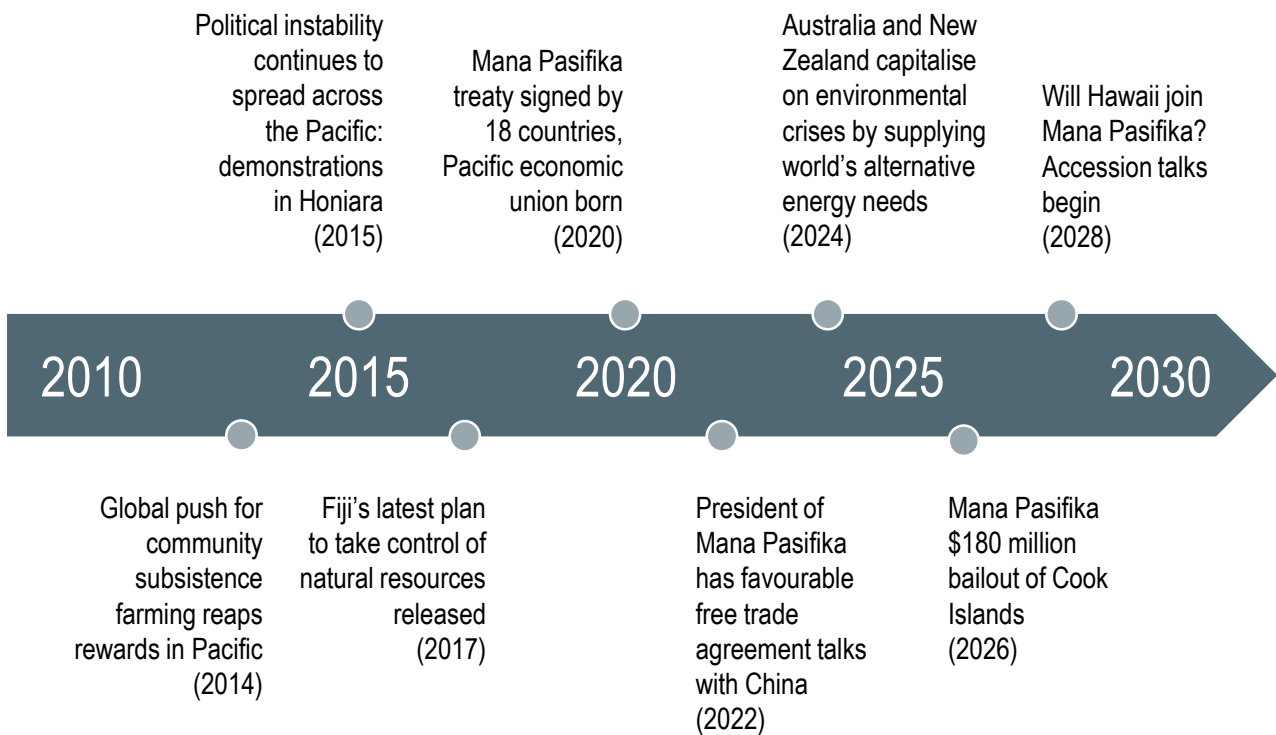
The increased involvement of diaspora communities in the Pacific has led to a large push for improved education systems, health care, and social provisions. Their remittances are effectively harnessed and invested into large state and regional development projects. For this reason, migration has been and continues to be a key engine of human development for some countries in the region.

While Mana Pasifika has been widely regarded a success, some countries have not been able to thrive within this model. The Cook Islands and Tokelau have not greatly benefited from Mana Pasifika and, after the initial provision of development funds by the union, their economies have stagnated. Much like before the union, the people of these islands feel marginalised and believe they function as markets for cheap goods and sources of labour. Slowly, these countries are becoming tourist resorts.

The cultural differences among Pacific Island countries and territories have been strengthened by Mana Pasifika, rather than diluted. Individual tensions still exist, but the growth of shared interests, increased access to information and communication technologies, education, and connectivity with diaspora communities has led to the development of both communal and Pasifika identities. These identities are particularly strong within younger generations.
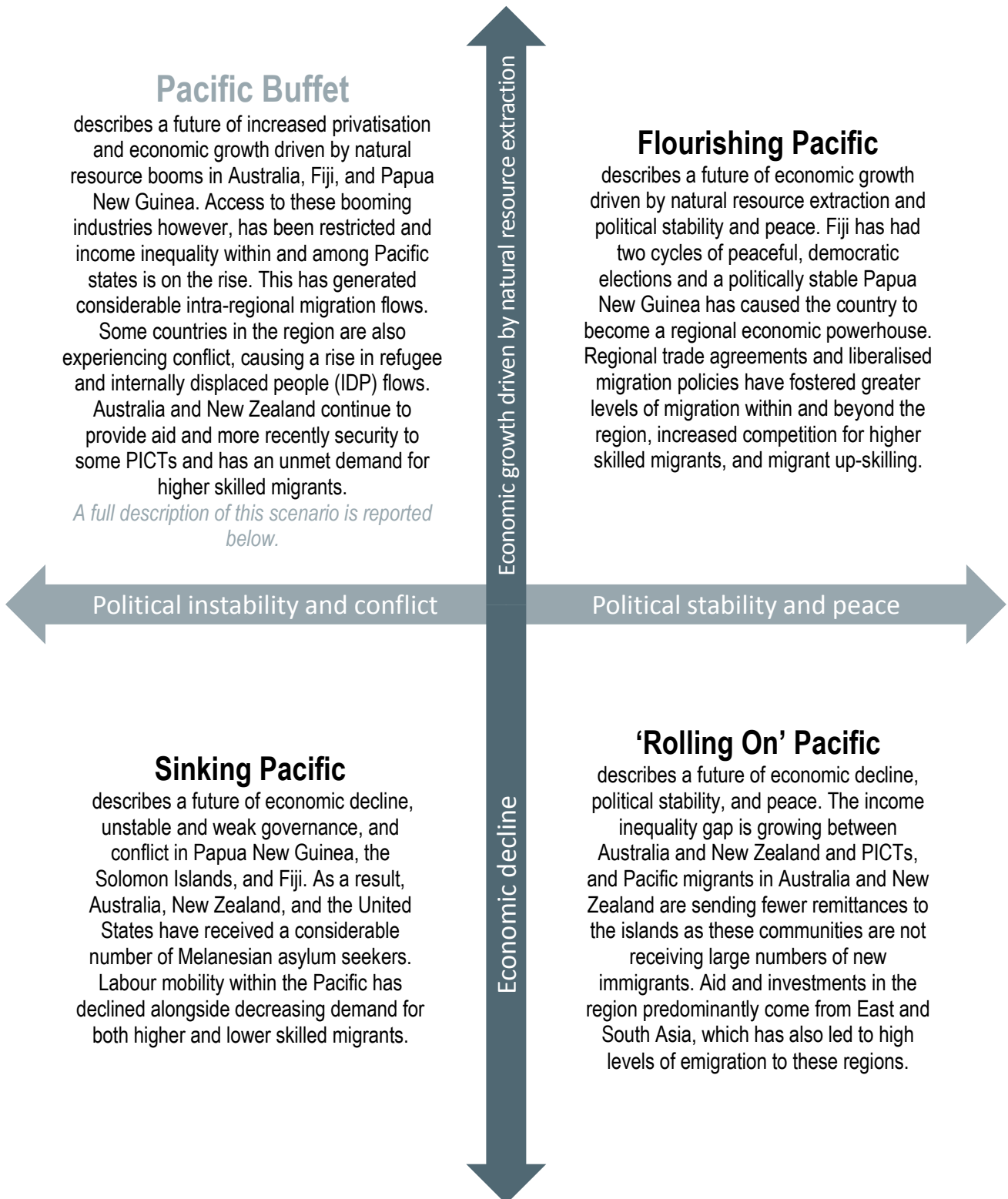
While Mana Pasifika still has a lot of work ahead to provide stability, reduce inequality, and provide sustainable opportunities to its youth, its developments have been impressive, particularly because of its short history. Mana Pasifika's mantra to try to work as a community beyond its economic objective, with a common vision of a shared past and future have allowed it to overcome moments of crisis that could have terminated this initiative. The ultimate sign of its promising future is that, as the US economy has declined, Hawaii has been considering full accession to Mana Pasifika, which will include the adoption of the free regional mobility scheme.

Headlines in 'Mana Pasifika'

Political instability continues to spread across the Pacific: demonstrations in Honiara (2015)

Mana Pasifika treaty signed by 18 countries, Pacific economic union born (2020)

Australia and New Zealand capitalise on environmental crises by supplying world's alternative energy needs (2024)

Will Hawaii join Mana Pasifika? Accession talks begin (2028)

2010   2015   2020   2025   2030

Global push for community subsistence farming reaps rewards in Pacific (2014)

Fiji's latest plan to take control of natural resources released (2017)

President of Mana Pasifika has favourable free trade agreement talks with China (2022)

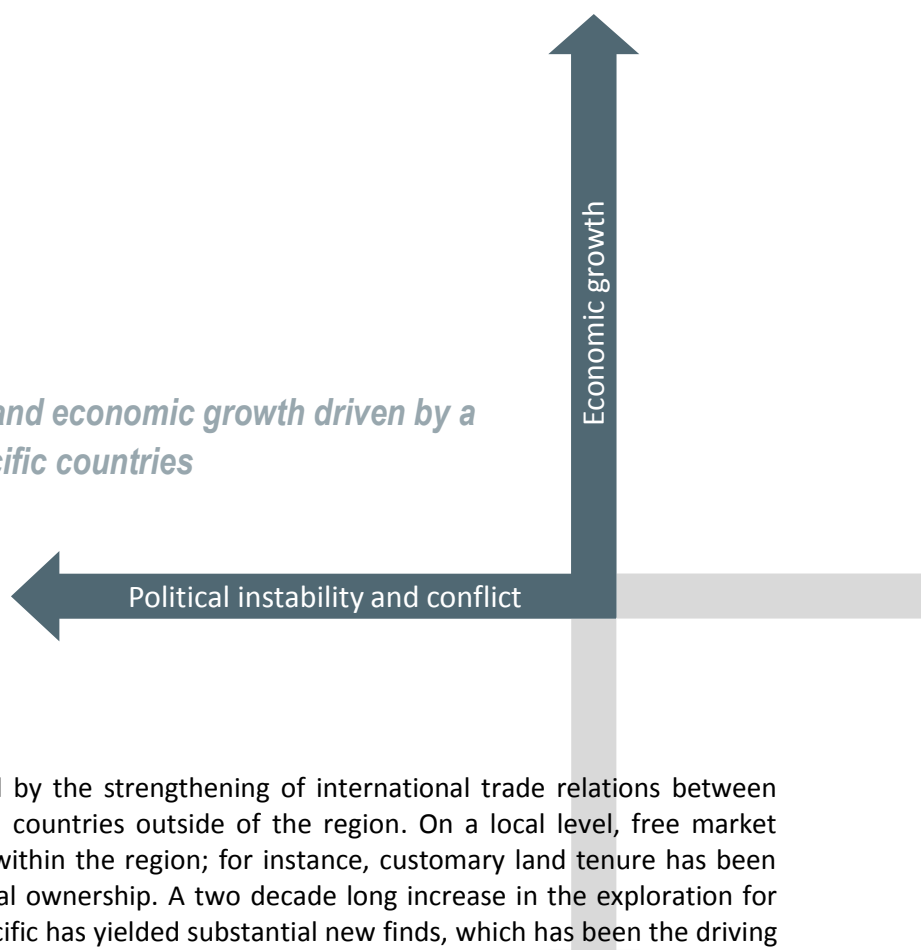Mana Pasifika $180 million bailout of Cook Islands (2026)

Scenario Matrix: Economic Growth and Political Stability

This scenario matrix comes from a workshop group that felt the two factors that were most uncertain and would have the greatest impact on future migration in the Pacific region are **Economic Growth Driven by Natural Resource Extraction versus Economic Decline** and **Political Instability and Conflict versus Political Stability and Peace**. These factors form the axes of this matrix and produce four scenarios for future migration.

Pacific Buffet

describes a future of increased privatisation and economic growth driven by natural resource booms in Australia, Fiji, and Papua New Guinea. Access to these booming industries however, has been restricted and income inequality within and among Pacific states is on the rise. This has generated considerable intra-regional migration flows. Some countries in the region are also experiencing conflict, causing a rise in refugee and internally displaced people (IDP) flows. Australia and New Zealand continue to provide aid and more recently security to some PICTs and has an unmet demand for higher skilled migrants.

A full description of this scenario is reported below.

Flourishing Pacific

describes a future of economic growth driven by natural resource extraction and political stability and peace. Fiji has had two cycles of peaceful, democratic elections and a politically stable Papua New Guinea has caused the country to become a regional economic powerhouse. Regional trade agreements and liberalised migration policies have fostered greater levels of migration within and beyond the region, increased competition for higher skilled migrants, and migrant up-skilling.

Economic growth driven by natural resource extraction

← Political instability and conflict

Political stability and peace →

Economic decline

Sinking Pacific

describes a future of economic decline, unstable and weak governance, and conflict in Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Fiji. As a result, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States have received a considerable number of Melanesian asylum seekers. Labour mobility within the Pacific has declined alongside decreasing demand for both higher and lower skilled migrants.

'Rolling On' Pacific

describes a future of economic decline, political stability, and peace. The income inequality gap is growing between Australia and New Zealand and PICTs, and Pacific migrants in Australia and New Zealand are sending fewer remittances to the islands as these communities are not receiving large numbers of new immigrants. Aid and investments in the region predominantly come from East and South Asia, which has also led to high levels of emigration to these regions.

Economic growth

Pacific buffet

A future of increased privatisation and economic growth driven by a natural resource boom in many Pacific countries

Political instability and conflict

Scenario narrative

By 2030 the Pacific region is characterised by the strengthening of international trade relations between Pacific Island countries and territories and countries outside of the region. On a local level, free market practices have been increasingly adopted within the region; for instance, customary land tenure has been steadily replaced by private and commercial ownership. A two decade long increase in the exploration for oil, gas, and mineral deposits across the Pacific has yielded substantial new finds, which has been the driving force behind this shift. In the late 2010s oil and gas were discovered in Papua New Guinea, and in the early 2020s additional nickel and gold deposits were found in Fiji. More recently in 2026, sizable gold deposits were discovered on the west coast of Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands.

This boom in natural resource industries has led to increased urbanisation in Melanesia and Polynesia at much higher rates than was anticipated by policymakers in the early 2010s. In Papua New Guinea, Port Moresby's population has increased from approximately 500,000 to more than 2 million since 2010. Rapid urban growth in this country, which previously had one of the lowest percentages of urban populations globally, has caused a significant increase in new urban dwellers living in slums with minimal access to basic public services.

In Fiji, the expansion of open cast mining has led to increased urban migration flows. This increase is attributed to the displacement of communities living in areas where land has been directly reallocated for mining and to the migration of communities that had largely relied on employment in sugar cane production taking place in some of the reallocated land. National and local governments throughout the region are trying to catch up with urban growth, by inviting urban planners, businesses, and government officials from the region's major cities to come up with innovative urban planning solutions. Some countries are considering requiring that new foreign businesses investing in their country carry out urban impact studies and pay special infrastructural taxes.

Many of the Pacific Island countries enjoying the rapid growth of their natural resource economies are also experiencing increased income inequality, as wage and livelihood gains are not widely distributed amongst their populations. In Papua New Guinea, foreign companies have gained nearly exclusive exploration rights and, along with members of the political elite, have largely appropriated the wealth generated by oil and gas discoveries. Corruption has remained a significant challenge in this country and there are no signs of national legislation being created to change this in the near future.
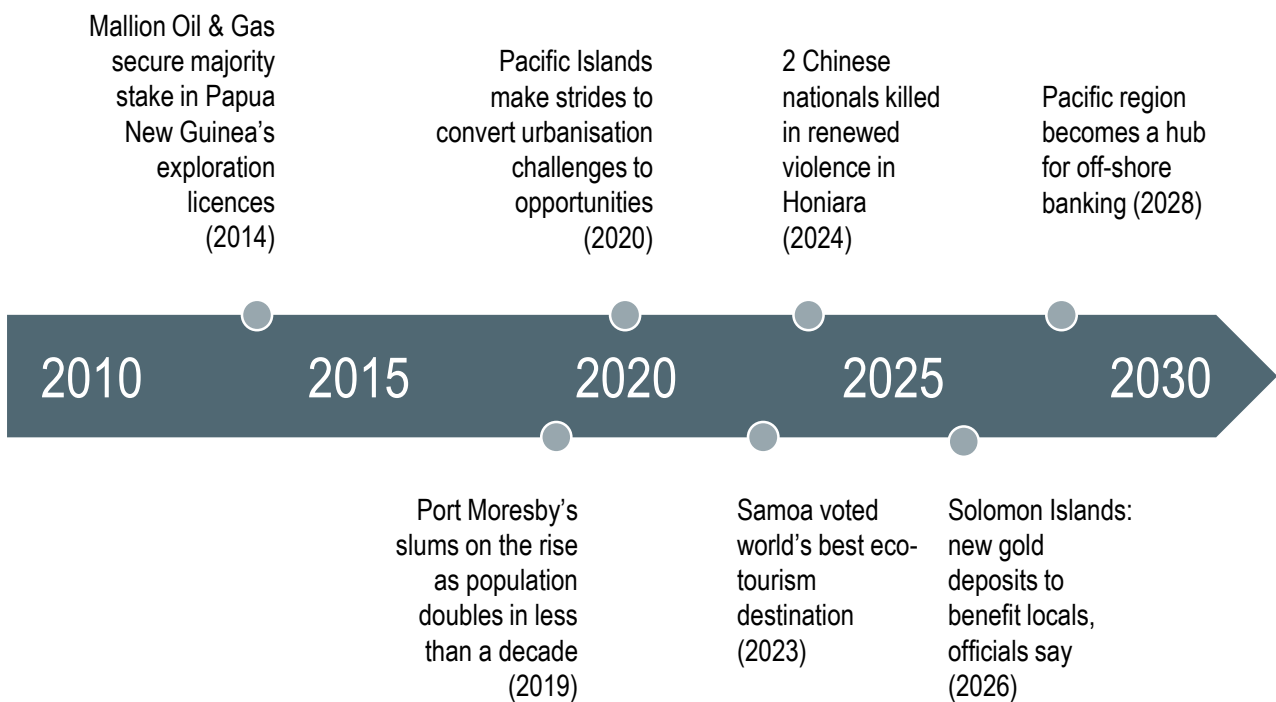
Similarly, in the Solomon Islands, the government issued a Chinese state-owned enterprise a 75-year lease license granting it the largest stake in exploration rights. For the last five years, Chinese companies have developed much of the infrastructure found today in the Solomon Islands. There has been significant internal migration to Honiara to compete for jobs directly and indirectly related to the gold industry.

Competition for jobs and land disputes has in part also resulted in the revival of inter-communal tensions marked by periodic outbreaks of violence. This has prompted some internal displacement in the Solomon Islands as well as irregular migration to Australia. A number of Chinese nationals have been killed in the violence and the Chinese government has landed a stability force at its mining sites to provide security for its nationals and protect its investments. New Zealand and Australia have also sent a combined peacekeeping force to Honiara. International aid, largely from Australia, the United States, and New Zealand has risen significantly to the Solomon Islands, along with humanitarian and development assistance structures. Consequently, the country has seen a rise in the presence of overseas higher skilled workers.

While several Pacific Island countries and territories have experienced a resource boom, the 'resource poor' island nations have witnessed substantial expansions of their tourism industries, caused by currency appreciation in research-rich countries. In particular, Vanuatu and Samoa have enjoyed significant tourism-led economic growth, especially from widely popular eco-tourism vacation packages.

The discovery of new resources and the general diversification of the demand for skilled and semi-skilled labour have fostered an improvement in the education and skill level of youth populations in the Pacific Islands, particularly through vocational skills training programmes and apprenticeships. This has contributed to substantial increases in mobility within and out of the region. The New Zealand and Australian economies have continued to expand and the natural mineral resources boom in Australia has continued. This, combined with an ageing population has led to increased demand for both skilled and semi-skilled labour in both countries throughout the last two decades. Many of the labour shortages have been filled by skilled and semi-skilled Pacific island workers. This increase in skilled migration has contributed to increased remittances from a wider variety of destination countries.

Headlines in 'Pacific Buffet'

Mallion Oil & Gas secure majority stake in Papua New Guinea's exploration licences (2014)

Pacific Islands make strides to convert urbanisation challenges to opportunities (2020)

2 Chinese nationals killed in renewed violence in Honiara (2024)

Pacific region becomes a hub for off-shore banking (2028)

2010	2015	2020	2025	2030

Port Moresby's slums on the rise as population doubles in less than a decade (2019)

Samoa voted world's best eco-tourism destination (2023)

Solomon Islands: new gold deposits to benefit locals, officials say (2026)

6 Insights for future migration research, policy, and practice

Scenarios serve as tools to identify possible sources of future political, economic, social, demographic, technological and environmental change, and to explore the impact such change might have on the size, direction, and makeup of migration flows. Scenarios also enable migration stakeholders to consider how they should reposition themselves to prepare for potential migration futures.

This section synthesises some of the preliminary insights for future migration research, policy, and practice gained from the various steps in the scenario-building process: the analysis of relative certainties, the exploration of key uncertainties, the generation of scenario matrices, and the development of extended scenario narratives. The research team developed many of these insights from ideas and questions that arose multiple times during the Auckland scenario-building workshop and from follow-up discussions with participants. It is possible that readers of this report from particular migration stakeholder groups might identify alternative or additional insights, more targeted towards their work. This is precisely the intended function of scenarios, which are meant to spark new insights, raise questions and help readers imagine that the future of the Pacific may in fact be very different from expectations and require alternative responses.

Movement to cities
In the Pacific, migration is a key driver of urban population growth. In the next 20 years Pacific urbanisation is likely to increase as fertility levels remain above replacement levels, the working age population peaks in Pacific Island countries and territories, and education rates increase.

► Future research might explore the extent to which increasing urbanisation is inevitable for all of the Pacific Islands, and examine which factors, if any, might shift current trends.
► Moreover, future research should explore how shifting aspirations about internal versus intra-regional and intra-regional versus inter-regional urban migration might affect the scale of future movements to cities.

Increasing urban growth may have significant consequences for Pacific Island countries and territories because of the very low levels of urbanisation today and the fact that between 80 and 98 per cent of land is under customary tenure.

► Future research might consider the extent to which migration to urban areas might impact issues associated with customary land tenure.
► Future research might also explore the positive consequences of movement to cities for PICTs, such as greater access to social services.
► Furthermore, future research might examine the impact of urban migration on household gender dynamics in PICTs.

Urban growth, in turn, can boost rural-urban migration as well as onward, international migration.

► Internal and international migrants should become a key voice in future research and policy related to urban infrastructural planning, environmental degradation in urban areas, tertiary education and skills training development, welfare planning, and socio-political stability.
► Additionally, future migration research might be aimed at understanding how urbanisation may interact with more uncertain factors, such as labour market developments or land redistribution, to produce different migration outcomes.

New immigrant communities

New political and economic alliances between Pacific countries and countries outside of the region may lead to new immigration flows, or the restructuring of current immigration flows, in terms of country of origin as well as skill level.

► Future migration research might examine the emergence of new migration corridors as well as the potential impacts of new immigration populations on labour markets, education markets, and society.

Increasing levels of education and the spread of information and communication technologies in Pacific Island countries and territories, as well as the strengthening of global, transnational ties among people from PICTs is likely to transform the identities and skill profiles of Pacific Island immigrants in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States.

► Future research might explore the potential future effects of such transformations for remittance economies, socio-economic integration in destination countries, and economic developments in home countries.

New emigration destinations

New political and economic alliances between Pacific countries and countries outside of the region may lead to new emigration flows in terms of country of destination and the skill levels of emigrants.

► Future migration research might explore the extent to which countries in Asia may become hubs for Pacific emigrants, shifting flows away from the United States and Australia.

Future political and economic reforms in Papua New Guinea might make the country a regional hub for lower and higher-skilled Pacific workers. More generally, political and economic reforms across Melanesia might transform the sub-region into a Pacific migration hub.

► Future migration research might consider the impact that the strengthening of Pacific sub-regional alliances (Melanesia, Polynesia, and Micronesia) might have on mobility patterns. Already there are signs that the Melanesia Spearhead Group appears to be gaining in strength and consolidating its political and economic objectives as a sub-region.
► Moreover, if economic integration and free mobility zones were to develop within or across sub-regions, research should explore the effects this would have on Pacific migration patterns.

Pacific Diasporas

The Pacific region is home to several island countries and territories which have diaspora communities that are as large as or exceed the number of citizens living in their home countries (see for example, Niueans, Tokelauans, and Cook Islanders).

► Future research should examine what future roles the diaspora might play in both origin and destination societies as the generational gap between members of the diaspora and kin living in home countries increases, and as ideas about identity, belonging, culture, and gender norms transform over time.
► Moreover, as the generation gap increases, future research should explore whether the scale and financial character of remittances will remain stable. It should seek to understand whether monetary remittances will remain a dominant linking feature, connecting and supporting specific individuals and families, or whether members of the diaspora will leverage remittances and use them more widely to participate in the social, political, and economic spheres of their origin countries.

Understanding how Pacific diaspora communities may promote and constrain the migration of people from Pacific Island countries and territories might prompt policy makers to think strategically about issues such as infrastructural development for information and communication technologies, diaspora engagement initiatives, and supporting transnational modes of life.

Environmental change and migration

Policies aiming to address 'environmental drivers' of migration are likely to be ineffective, given the indirect impact of environmental factors on migration. Instead, policies centred on improving people's access to education, health care, and labour markets will improve people's capabilities and enable them, individually, to make the most favourable decisions about their livelihoods and about migration.

The most significant climate change impacts, such as sea level rise and water salination, are likely to take effect over the longer term. Rapid-onset environmental events, such as tropical cyclones, and human-induced environmental degradation may therefore be of greater concern to policy makers when exploring the future of the Pacific within a 2030 time horizon.

► Environmental degradation linked to unregulated urban growth and industrial development, for instance in natural resource extraction industries or the exploitation of forests and fisheries, may be areas of environmental concern that governments may position themselves to address and that future research should examine.

► Future research might also explore the pace of slower-onset environmental changes, such as sea level rise or water salination, and potential factors which could accelerate or decelerate changes.

Labour markets and migration

Increasing access to information and communication technologies (ICT) in Pacific Island countries and territories has several potential consequences for migration. On the one hand, it may increase regional migration flows by increasing people's awareness of employment opportunities in other countries. On the other hand, it may facilitate regional mobility and alleviate the need to migrate on a longer-term basis for work, and increase telecommuting and reduce the need for certain forms of work-related mobility.

► Future migration research might explore the varying degrees of the 'net effects' of ICT on migration flows.

Public perceptions of migrant workers, from Pacific Island countries and territories and further afield; their positive or negative portrayal in the media; and their inadequate socio-economic integration in Australia and New Zealand may affect the future attractiveness of these countries as migration destinations and may constrain the abilities of both lower and higher skilled migrant workers not only to provide for their households, but also to contribute to their host societies.

There appears to be a rising interest among Pacific governments in seasonal employment schemes. It is possible that in the future we might see the proliferation in the number and variety of such schemes, as well as in the interest of PICTs to join existing schemes in Australia and New Zealand.
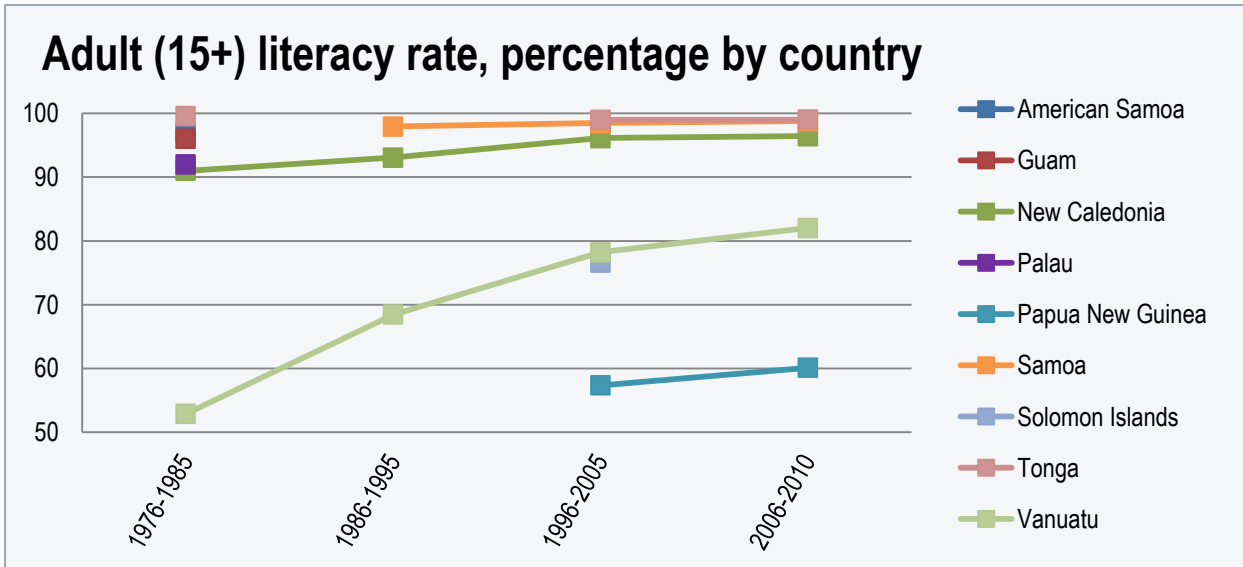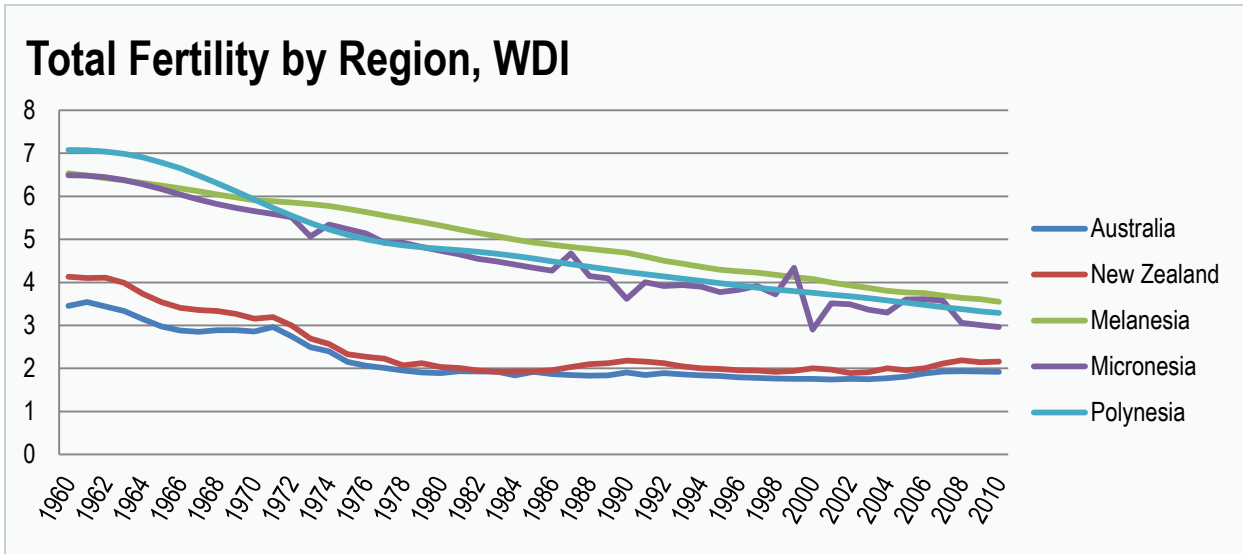
Data Annex

Population Growth

Population growth rates, annual
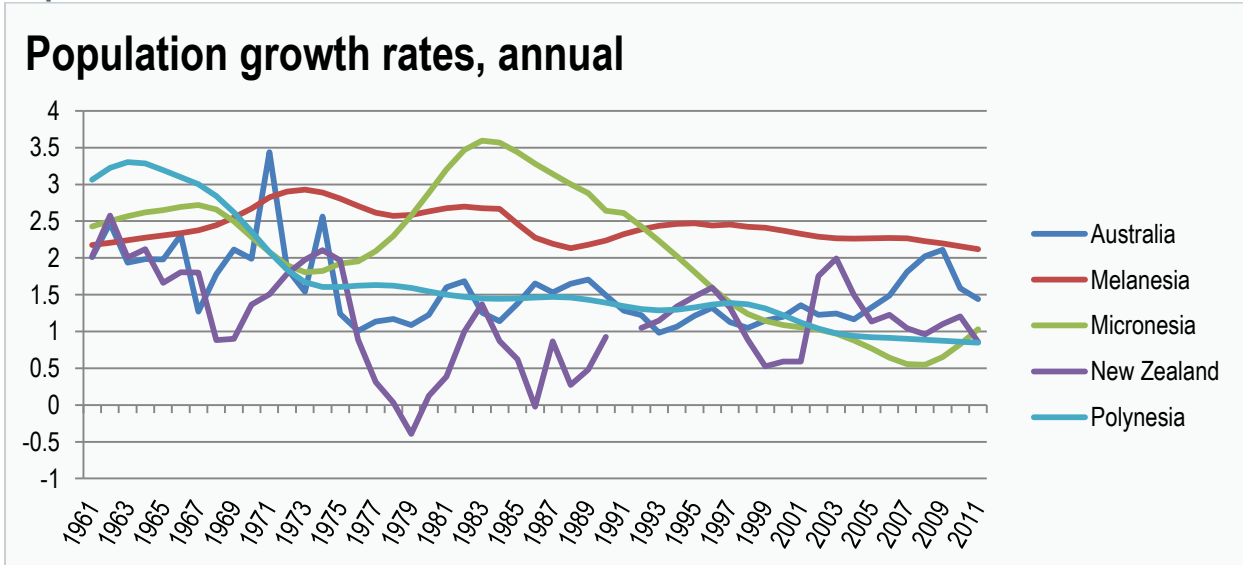
Data source: World Development Indicators

Education

Adult (15+) literacy rate, percentage by country

Data source: World Development Indicators

Health

Total Fertility by Region, WDI

Data source: World Development Indicators

Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)

Data source: World Development Indicators

Life expectancy at birth, WDI
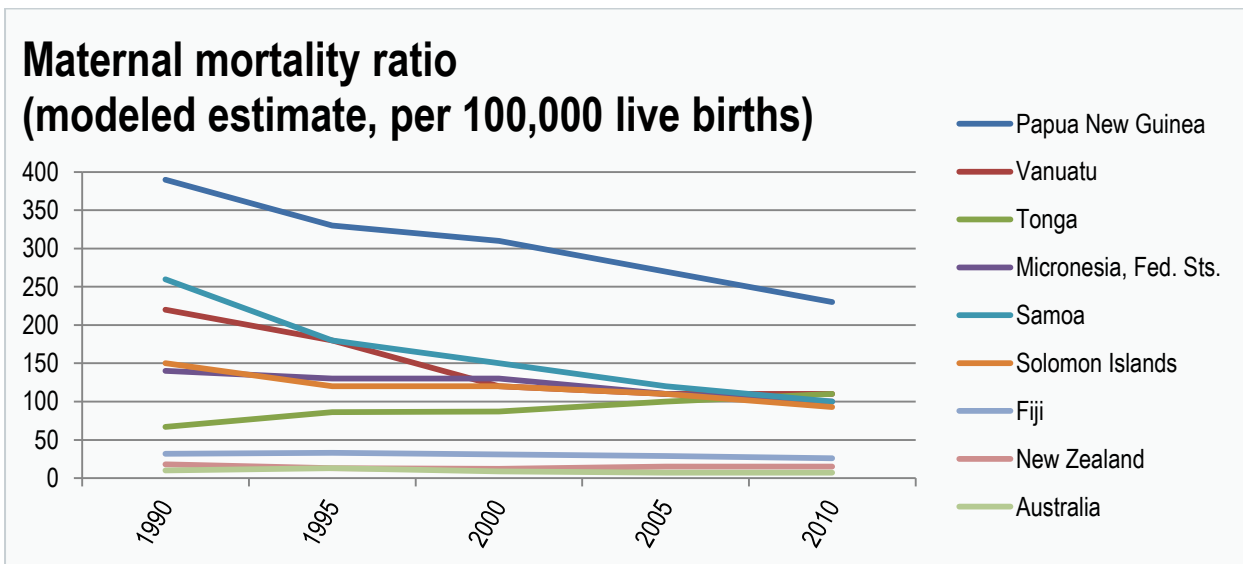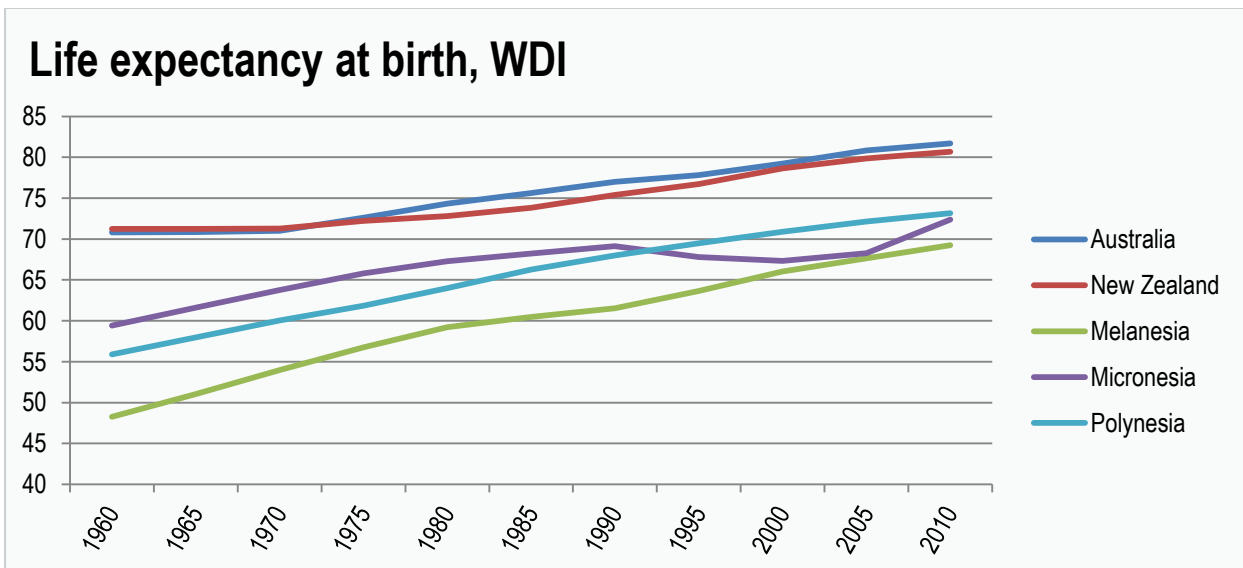
Data source: World Development Indicators

Urbanisation

Percentage of Population Residing in Urban Areas
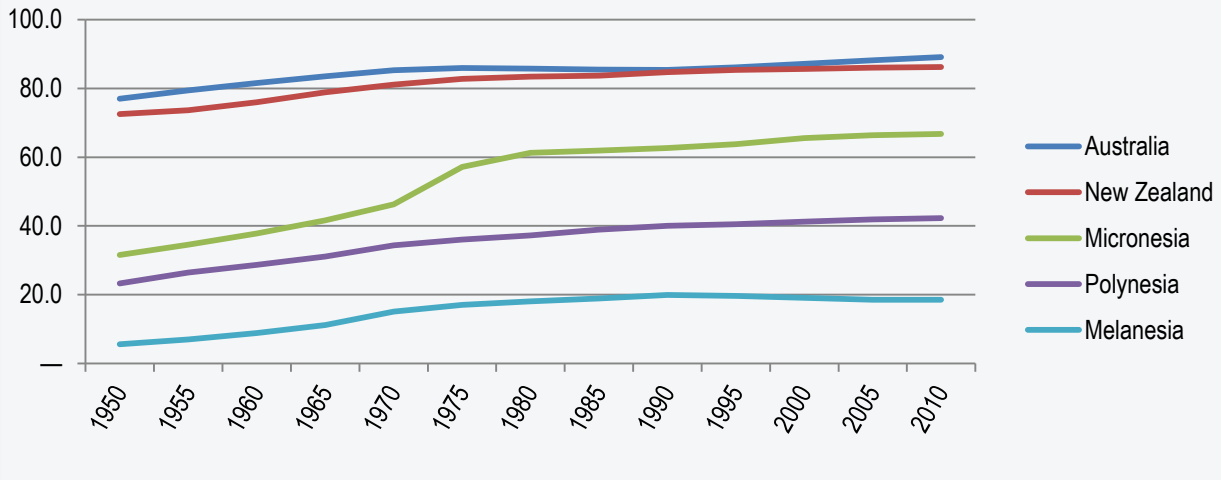
Data source: UN DESA, World Urbanization Prospects, the 2011 Revision

Income Levels

Gross Domestic Product based on purchasing-power-parity per capita (current international dollars)
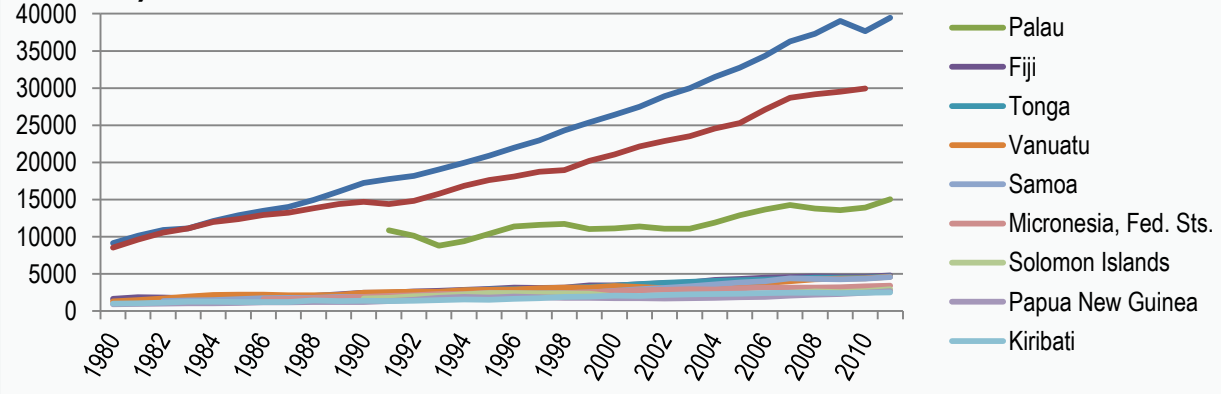
Data source: World Development Indicators

Scenario Annex

This annex presents the remaining scenario matrices developed during the project's scenario-building workshop on 24 – 27 October 2012. At the workshop, each working group comprised of between six and seven Pacific migration experts and stakeholders created one scenario matrix. Accompanying each matrix below is a synthesis of some of the themes and ideas about the future that its group raised during the scenario-building exercises and wider discussions.
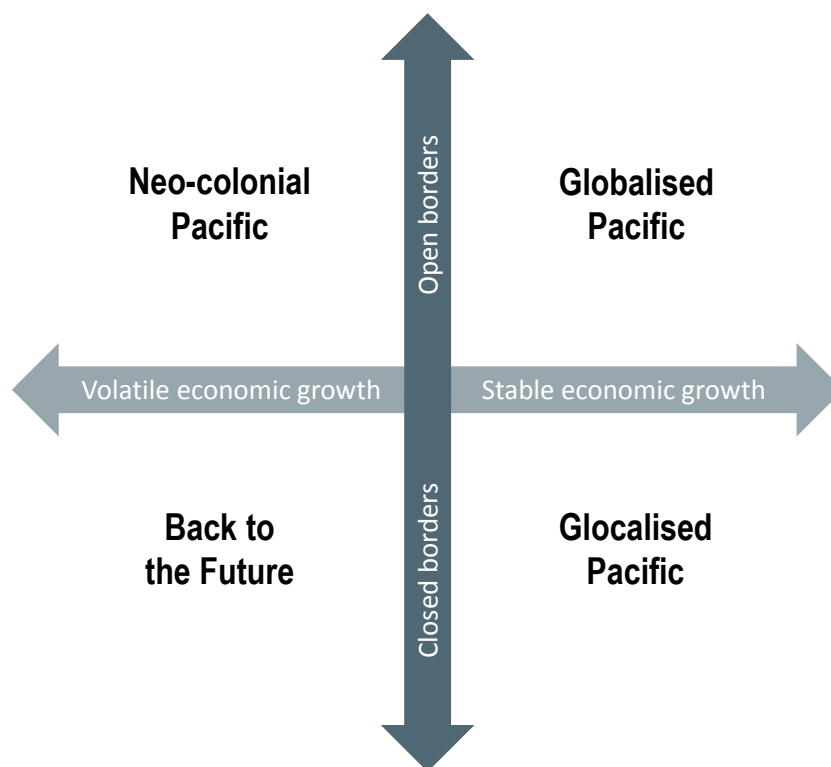
	Open borders	
Neo-colonial Pacific		**Globalised Pacific**
Volatile economic growth		Stable economic growth
Back to the Future		**Glocalised Pacific**
	Closed borders	

This scenario matrix comes from a workshop group which felt that the two factors that are most uncertain and will have the greatest impact on migration in the Pacific are **Open versus Closed Migration Policies in the Pacific** and **Volatile versus Stable Economic Growth**. In developing the scenarios generated by this matrix, several themes emerged through the group's discussions: the rise of Asian states as neo-colonial powers, the significant impact that Melanesia might have on the Pacific's socio-economic and political future, the emergence of sub-regional alliances, shifting identities and the rise of hybrid identities, and changing roles of diaspora communities. Below, these themes are briefly defined.

In 'Neo-Colonial Pacific', participants could envision a future in which countries such as China, Japan, South Korea, and India would become the primary investors and donors in the Pacific and form political alliances that would rival previous colonial ties between Pacific and European countries. The major role played by China as an investor and donor in parts of Africa today was thought to be possible over the next two decades in PICTs. East and South Asian countries would be keen to develop ties with PICTs in exchange for access to natural resources, advantageous political positioning in Pacific waters, and support in the international political arena. The proliferation of political and economic links would likely coincide with the proliferation of migration corridors between the Pacific and East and South Asia.

Participants could also foresee that Melanesia might play a significant role in the region. In some scenarios, conflict would persist in this sub-region, creating refugee flows and threatening regional stability. In other scenarios, political and economic reform combined with a large youth population would turn the sub-region, and particularly Papua New Guinea, into an economic powerhouse, attracting overseas labour and

producing higher skilled emigrants. More generally, participants saw in some futures a tendency towards the strengthening and formalisation of sub-regional alliances in Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia. Such alliances would provide individual PICTs with greater political and economic bargaining power in the Pacific. Sub-regional alliances would also reflect attempts to strengthen and differentiate Pacific identities.
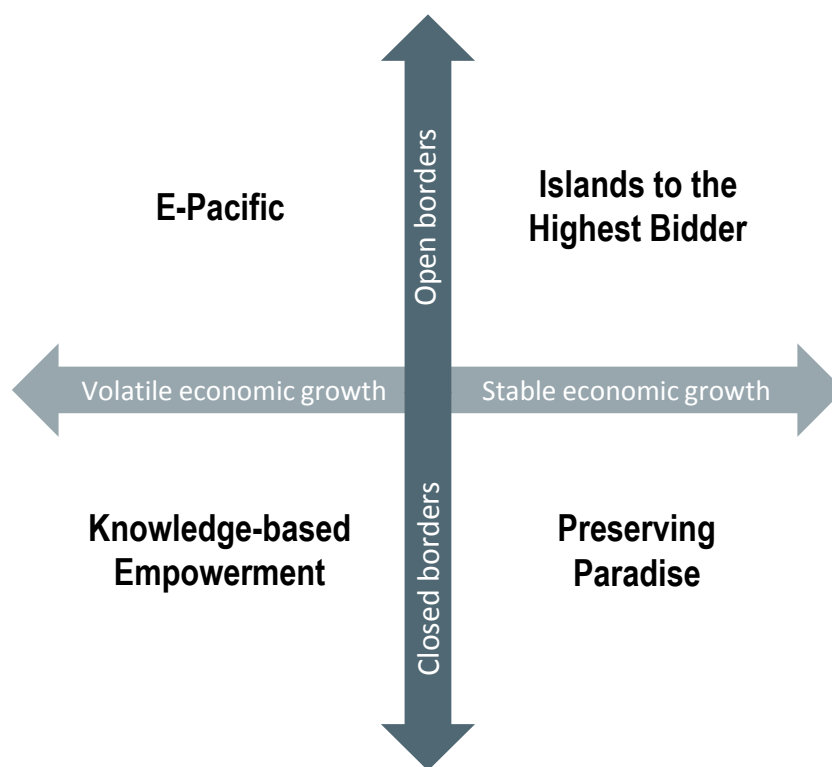
As people from the Pacific intermarry and migrate within and outside of the region, participants could envision a rise in hybrid Pacific identities and new forms of ethno-nationalism. They believed this nationalism would transcend traditional connections with the land and extend into diaspora communities. For their part, members of the diaspora might increasingly use remittances as a vehicle for participating in the social, political, and economic affairs of their home nation(s). Remittances might be sent to invest in particular projects and campaigns, as is the case in Somalia today.
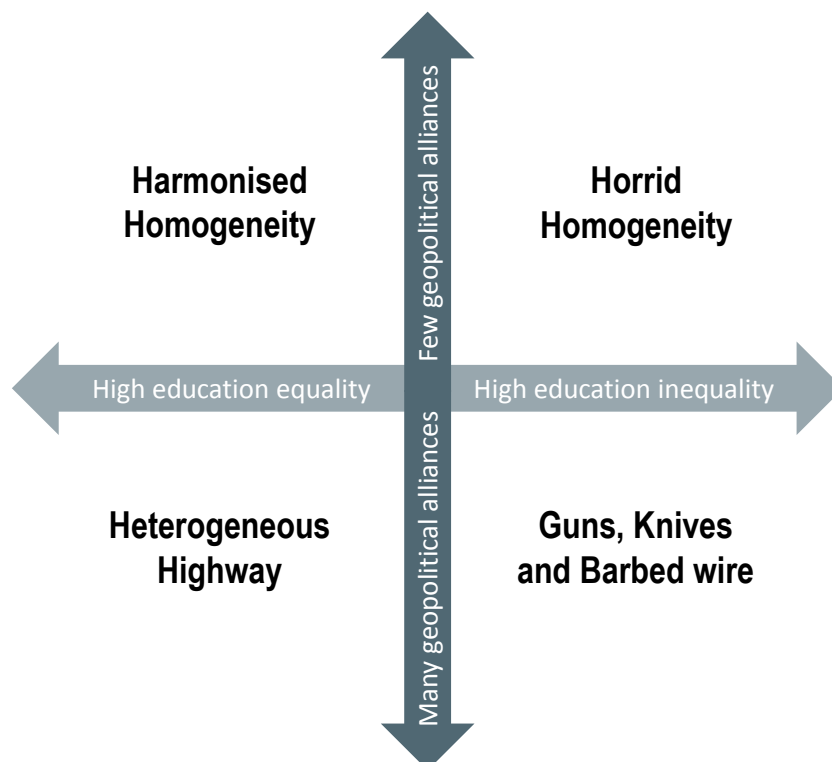
This scenario comes from a workshop group that felt that the two factors that are highly uncertain and will have the greatest impact on migration are **Few Geopolitical Alliances versus Many Geopolitical Alliances** and **High Education Equality versus Inequality**. This group defined 'geopolitics' as the state struggle for power over the Pacific territory and largely refers to alliances made by Pacific Island countries and territories. The two ends of the geopolitical axis represent PICTs entering into few alliances with larger political powers, such as the United States and China versus entering into many political alliances with a range of smaller and larger powers, such as with other PICTs, Ukraine, and India. In discussions on the region's political future, participants considered additional dimensions, including political isolationism for PICTs versus greater political engagement, partnerships with new allies versus traditional allies based on colonial links, alliances with non-state actors like businesses and diaspora groups, and mutually-beneficial relationships versus more exploitive influences.

Discussions also arose within this group about how to assess different forms of education across the region. Participants thought inequality was a better measure of education than educational outcomes in absolute terms. They believed education was vital to explorations of migration futures because of minimum skill requirements and qualifications recognition in destination countries and because of the relationship between quality education and migration, both in terms of people migrating to obtain it and migrating after having received it, to increase their employment opportunities.

Similar to the previous group, participants in this group also emphasised the potential role played by Papua New Guinea in the region's future, should economic and political reform take place, and by an increase in the scope of Pacific diaspora involvement in the region. Additional key factors raised by participants included population ageing in Pacific Rim countries and simultaneous youth bulges in PICTs caused by declining fertility rates. Participants maintained that these factors were relatively certain to be a part of the region's future and so they used their scenarios to explore how this would affect supplies of higher and lower skilled labour and whether governments and businesses would need to expand labour recruitment programmes and improve up-skilling and education initiatives to meet market demands.

	Open borders	
E-Pacific		**Islands to the Highest Bidder**
Volatile economic growth		Stable economic growth
Knowledge-based Empowerment		**Preserving Paradise**
	Closed borders	

This scenario matrix comes from a workshop group which felt that the two factors that are most uncertain and will have the greatest impact on migration are **Regional Integration versus Fragmentation** and **a Knowledge- and Technology-Based Economy versus a Labour-Based Economy**. Participants in this group defined regional integration in both economic and political terms, envisioning Pacific countries' adoption of a common currency and elimination of internal border controls. In contrast, regional fragmentation represented distinct yet interdependent economies as well as strengthened national borders and highly restrictive migration policies seeking to tightly control mobility.

In terms of the second axis, participants defined a knowledge- and technology-based economy as a dynamic environment centred on the development of education and expertise hubs in the Pacific. Participants explored the extent to which such hubs would enable the region to improve its healthcare systems, alleviate the need for students to go abroad for education and work, find solutions to potential challenges associated with food insecurity, and innovate modes of production. For instance, in the E-Pacific scenario, participants described a future in which a newly developed robotics industry would not only attract higher skilled workers, but also the technology itself would enhance worker productivity and change the way healthcare would be accessed in more remote areas in the Pacific. On the other hand, participants defined a labour-based economy as being one in which workers would be the Pacific countries' primary export. Visions of a Pacific labour-based economy arose from in-depth discussions about youth bulges in PICTs; availability of labour supplies in Pacific Rim countries, particularly as the proportion of people in older age cohorts increases in Australia and New Zealand; and the effects of continued urban migration and disengagement from land in rural areas in PICTs.

The future of Pacific labour markets was a strong theme in this group's scenario-building work. After exploring potential futures for domestic workers, participants considered what impact China's demographic shifts over the next two decades would have on Chinese immigrants living and working in the Pacific. Participants could foresee such immigrants returning to participate in China's labour markets and generating a gap in Pacific workforces.

Lastly, similar to other groups, participants emphasised the potential role of Melanesia in the region's future, particularly if education reform takes place, and by the diaspora's potential contributions in the region. They questioned whether remittances will wane over successive generations and how kinship will be defined and upheld among future generations.