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Gender, culture and the Pacific

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to provide a deeper understanding of how culture in the Pacific impacts gender equality and human development. The analysis addresses two views that are widely held in the Pacific: 1) that gender is biologically determined, and 2) that culture is a sacred template should not be meddled with. Both these notions have attracted sound scholarly consideration in the Pacific, which has shown that rather than either being fixed, gender is socially constructed and culture is constituted by contemporary milieu as much as it is by its traditional and historical genealogy.

Key words: culture, human development, Pacific, gender equality

The views expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations, including UNDP, or the UN Member States.

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Gender, culture and the Pacific

Introduction

A scan of Pacific newspapers will immediately alert the reader to the diverse expressions of gender and culture in the region: from the remarkable flourishing of art created by women in the Pacific, to the tragic death of many women accused of sorcery, to the reliability of women's networks that nurture the newborn, to the abysmal rates of women's access to national parliaments, to the fortitude of women's food marketing and exchange arrangements, and the appalling prevalence of gender based violence. To understand these kinds of cultural impressions for the purpose of ensuring gender equality and human development in the Pacific, a dynamic reading of both gender and culture are needed. Behind each of these activities, lie more complex realities. A closer analysis of these realities reveals a constant negotiation of social relations and an intricate entanglement of formal and informal institutions. The results of these negotiations could produce different effects at different times and different places. Most importantly, closer analysis reveals ways in which unequal voice and power is constantly being transformed.

This paper is premised on an understanding of culture as a way of life as expressed by anthropologist Anna Tsing: "culture" in its most coercive, simplistic form: a way of life that draws us in, ready or not, sensible or not" (Tsing 2005, 40). This understanding coheres with gender and development scholar Susie Jolly (2002, 8) who understands culture as "ways of life structured by power and representation". Jolly (2002, 8) notes that this is a "useful lens through which to uncover the dynamics and relations of power through which cultural norms gain their impact". Taking this approach it is possible to better understand the power dynamics involved in supporting or challenging cultural practices that impact woman's human rights.

The analysis of culture is rightfully left to scholars of anthropology. This is especially so given the flourishing of recent critical ethnographies and critical reflexivity on the genealogy of anthropology's own complicity with imperialism, colonialism and development. Further, rights based development work is often challenged from cultural relativist positions that argue for respecting anything because "it's the culture". Anthropology, as a discipline, now widely recognises that cultures are fluid

and changeable and that all cultures are simultaneously part of history and entangled in other cultures in an increasingly interconnected world. However, it is possible to identify many other scholarly disciplines usefully appropriating anthropological concepts in deployment of their own arguments. One particular relevant example for this paper is way that economists are engaging more critically with the concept of formal and informal institutions from a cultural perspective (OECD 2007). In turn, applied anthropologists have another hook upon which to reign in and affect change in policy. To be effective, policies must be able to be implemented and this requires the identification of implementation entities. Formal institutions, with a juridical mandate, regulatory tools and often with a mandate to legally enforce policies, are important implementation entities. However, formal institutions are closely entangled with informal institutions, which are embedded with cultural values like trust, solidarity and equality. This paper delivers its analysis based on critical studies of gender and culture in the Pacific through this framework of ‘entangled institutions’.

Working with a dynamic understanding of gender and culture in a region as diverse and geographically dispersed as the Pacific underlines an important caveat: generalisations about the region or its sub-regions, and undifferentiated reference to women as a single group is flawed. These practices conceal the more exciting possibilities for advancing women’s equality and overall human development. Taking a more dynamic understanding also relaxes expectations of being able to provide a comprehensive survey. This is not an evasive technique. Rather it allows for a closer reading of situations and a greater vigilance in applying policy interventions that work with accepted norms, especially those relating to the promotion of universal human rights for women. Rather than working with simple dualistic understandings of good and bad, positive and negative, this paper argues for the need to understand the broader contours of social transformation that leads towards fair and safe societies. This is not easy given the external environment that affects the Pacific, for instance Western popular culture, climate variability and global economic crises. However, while there is no doubt that social transformation is happening, we need to be able to navigate the diverse terrain upon which this transformation is moving so that universal human rights are not left out.

Politically, this is a critical shift in thinking that has implications for policy development in many areas. It encourages a clearer focus on the power dynamics behind how social relations are negotiated: precisely who is negotiating over what and with what results. All negotiations take place in complex constellations of power wherein all players have some power, even if it is the power to be silent, to actively resist, or to be forceful. Analysing these negotiations in the Pacific region shows how different ways and means of ensuring unequal voice and power can be more constructively addressed. Because we are working with dynamic concepts of culture and gender, the task of understanding the relationship between the two requires thinking in motion. Many people insist on taking direction from particular canons of truth, yet they stumble analytically as they search for ways of keeping people ‘on track’.

In this paper, broad generalised views are avoided and are replaced with more deeply nuanced analyses of particular issues. This ensures that our understandings of gender and culture are clearly situated in place and time, without resorting to cultural relativism. Sometimes, in practice, this requires careful strategic positioning by women’s movements but this is always done cognisant of the shifting micro-physics of power.

Understanding Specific Regional Dynamics

It is always worth repeating that the Pacific is a large and diverse region, geographically covering one third of the planet and comprising 20 to 30,000 islands (McCall 1996) grouped into 22 Pacific Island Countries and Territories¹ (PICTs) with a combined land area of 550,000 km² and combined population of 8 million people (SPC 2009). Spread across 29 million km² of the Pacific Ocean, the Pacific region also includes the combined Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) which covers 15 million km². This is clearly a region of global environmental significance although its population size relative to other regions often renders it globally insignificant. However, while size has no monopoly on complexity as many scholars of islands

¹ American Samoa, Cook Islands, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Tonga, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tokelau, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Wallis and Futuna.

argue (Baldacchino 2008; Helu Thaman 2007; McCall 1996; Hauofa 1993), we must also avoid the “tempting rhetoric of Pacific exceptionalism” (Teaiwa 2006:83). So while the focus is the Pacific region, it is important to consider larger political and economic factors in our understandings of gender and culture. This approach is consistent with the conclusions of scholars and others working at the interface of gender and behaviour change such as in research on HIV/AIDS in the Pacific (Hammar 1998; Jenkins 2000).

Diversity is also evident in the socio-cultural characteristics of the region. Papua New Guinea comprises many different socio-cultural groups within its 462,000km² land area and 5.7 million population divided into over 800 distinct language groups. On the other hand, Niue, with about 1,800 inhabitants, and Nauru at just 24 km² in land area, are comprised of just one socio-cultural group, although with a scattering of new migrants, and with a more sizeable diaspora living in Australia and New Zealand. The Pacific is routinely divided into three sub-regions that evolved from colonial classifications of the racial-cultural nature of the inhabitants and the geomorphologic type of island. *Melanesia* in the western Pacific was understood to comprise large resource rich islands inhabited by dark “savage people” (Linnekin 2004, 8); *Micronesia* in the Northern Pacific was inhabited by people of fairer complexion living on scattered small islands and atolls with limited terrestrial resources but diverse marine resources and, *Polynesia* in the east was inhabited by “sensual hospitable people” (Linnekin 2004, 8) also of fairer complexion but living on many and different kinds of islands with a variety of terrestrial and marine resources. Attached to these racial cultural groups were different forms of social organisation related to the nature of appropriating and distributing resources. In the East, social organisation was broadly distinguished by governance systems of inherited leadership such as chiefs, while in the West, leadership came about through earning rights to govern, such as ‘big men’ in Papua New Guinea (White and Lindstrom 1997).

The connections between race, the nature of leadership and the appropriation and distribution of resources had particular implications for understanding gender relations, many of which survive into the contemporary understandings of difference in the region. Crudely, one commonly held opinion is that women in the more ‘savage-like’ Melanesian countries have a lower status than men because they are

regarded as a resource that can be bought and sold, i.e. with bride price. Notwithstanding the abundant evidence of women's inequality in the western Pacific, this crude analysis reveals a gross misunderstanding of the complexities of gender relations. Numerous ethnographic accounts reveal highly sophisticated practices of exchange of valuable items between men, including their sisters and daughters, which serve to further strengthen bonds between brothers and sisters (Busse 2007). More than anything the simplistic accounts of bride price, bride wealth and marriage exchanges exposes contemporary prejudices against 'Melanesian countries', and often diverts attention from more systematic practices that belittle many women in the Pacific in the contemporary era. It also diverts attention from the demanding but highly valued and critically important work done by women in many subsistence-based economies in the region.

The sub-regions of Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia have gained widespread currency in the Pacific, but their racist underpinnings and the growing scholarly evidence of other ways of understanding the diversity of different groups of people in apparently homogenous populations, such as for instance Melanesian Samoans (Liki Chang-Tung 2007) or Chinese Papua New Guineas (Nelson 2007), are challenging this orthodoxy (Thomas 1999; Jolly 2008; Linnekin 2004). However, recent political entities have appropriated these terms to make a critical statement of sub-regional identity as in the Melanesian Spearhead Group. With regionalism in the 21st century undergoing significant shifts (Fry 1997; Slatter and Underhill-Sem 2008) it is important to keep in mind the politicisation of cultural boundaries. Although it is clear that new labels are emerging to describe the 'sea of islands' that comprises the oceanic continent of the Pacific (Hau'ofa 1993), in the paper, we work with geographical regions as much as possible as a way to liberate 'the discursive field so that the task of imagining alternatives can commence' (Escobar 1995, 4). At times where we do employ these categories in this report, like Linnekin (2004), we reject any notions that these categories equate to race, that they are fixed and that they represent some authentic cultural core.

Another important way of grouping countries in the Pacific is to refer to the particular geo-strategic location and colonial history. There is still a recognised Francophone Pacific and an American Pacific, as well as independent states and territories. The

implications of these colonial relationships for women relates primarily to the relatively higher income levels of the overall population and the greater resources given by central government social services, especially in health and education. However, the pernicious effects of colonialism remains in, for instance, the increasing rates of non-communicable diseases brought about by various life-style changes, revealing rates of obesity for women are higher than for men especially in the eastern and northern Pacific (Gani 2008), and the tragic on-going effects of nuclear testing where women still give birth to “jelly babies” more than 50 years later (Pollock 2004).

In the last two decades, various Pacific countries have faced the growing frequency of extreme climate events like hurricanes, the increasing devastation of natural disasters like floods, the complexity of political instability, the growth of emigration, of trade liberalisation, and of fluctuations in commodity prices. This is all laid on top of geographic isolation from major markets and the resulting high freight costs, the lack of economies of scale, a scarcity of local manufacturing capacity, growing unemployment and increasing rates of urbanisation (Naidu 2006). While the region’s combined GDP was projected to grow by 4.5 per cent in 2008, up from an average of 2.8 per cent between 2005-2007 (European Commission 2008; Naidu 2006), there are real causes for concern especially in the current global financial crisis.

The Pacific is culturally rich and diverse, home to one fifth of the worlds languages, the majority of which are found in Papua New Guinea, with the South West Pacific particularly culturally heterogeneous in comparison to the rest of the region (Hunkin and Mayer 2006). The majority of Pacific people still live in rural areas engaged in subsistence lifestyles, though there are growing populations in urban and peri-urban settings. Low life expectancy, especially of women, poor human development indicators, low literacy rates and education outcomes depict the Pacific as a place where both infectious and life style diseases prevail. Lifestyle diseases such as high rates of diabetes, sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS co-exist with malaria, dengue and tuberculosis. HIV/AIDS rates reach epidemic levels in parts of Papua New Guinea, and the disease is also spreading at high rates in other nations (Gani 2008). The most at risk group is young women, but there are also high risk activities among groups such as sex workers and those involved in non-heterosexual activities, including men who have sex with men (MSM).

The majority of the Pacific is Christian, with significant Muslim and Hindu populations in Fiji, however there is a growing influence of Pentecostal and fundamentalist conservative Christian religions. Historians of religion in the Pacific, such as Swain and Trompf (1995) conclude that women rarely achieve leadership status in religious groups, unless they are from chiefly groups, where rank is more important than gender, or matrilineally organised societies. Often these two traits go together in the eastern Pacific, where sacred women were highly powerful (Gunson 1987). Swain and Trompf (1995) find little evidence of women leaders in religious organisations in the western Pacific. The embedded patriarchy and hierarchy of religious groups in the Pacific are often called upon to reinforce waning tendencies to subordinate women, as they are seen to have more power in the secular economic realm. In the contemporary context, understanding the influence and role of religious teaching and religious institutions within a framework of human rights for women is a challenge (Madraiwiwi 2006). While the situation differs from place to place, gendered issues like the prevalence of violence against women, the extent of polygamous behaviour and the notion of women's subordination can be seen to rest upon the widespread paradox that women have considerable power, so much that it challenges men's power often to the extent that they feel the need to violently control women. This is an issue that has been recognised by religious training institutions in the Pacific, but only recently has this been actively addressed. This is evident at a major theological school in Samoa that teaches Christian ethics and contemporary issues and in 2007 introduced a programme for the theological education for women, specifically for students' wives (author's personal communication with Rev Professor Perelini, Malua Theological College).

PART ONE

Culture, Gender, Continuity and Sexuality: Dynamic Definitions in Dynamic Times

Many scholars have engaged in long and heated debates over the ideas behind culture and gender. There are two related claims that continue to be strongly contested. First, that gender is socially constructed, not biologically determined, and therefore is not unchangeable. Second, that culture 'never sits still' (Tsing 2005, 25) because

“cultures are continually co-produced in the interactions I call ‘frictions’: the awkward, unequal, unstable and creative qualities of interconnection across difference” (Tsing 2005, 04). Cultures are constituted differently at different times and in different places and therefore cannot be generalised. Fewer and fewer scholars of culture and gender globally argue for the ‘template’ view of either construct (Jolly 2002). However, this understanding is still evident in contemporary policies and popular arguments worldwide and in the Pacific. As Sir Michel Somare, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, recently commented:

“I realise that not all my colleagues are keen to positively discriminate in favour of women or to even recognise the value that both genders can add to the development process. Sadly there are some whose minds are already made up on the rightful place of women in our Pacific Island societies”.²

Holding onto a view that women’s place in the Pacific is subordinate to men might be understandable given rapid social change and transformations in livelihood activities. At a global level, such rapid shifts in political and economic events percolate through all societies generating a sense of uneasiness. At more local levels, rapid shifts in food production, environmental changes and population dynamics also challenge the confidence of people to cope with new situations. There is no doubt that communities in the Pacific are living in challenging times, and during such times the appeal to hold onto something firm is strong. Providing a general sense of well-being and the ability to collectively say ‘yes we can’ is something some leaders are able to do with remarkable success. However, the other key reason for holding onto a ‘template’ view of culture and gender is evident in cases of acute inequality, which is case in parts of the Pacific. Clearly, the powerful have much more to lose, and in much of the Pacific men as a group are more powerful. Often, culture is called upon to support this status quo around unequal power relations, thus careful interventions are needed to ensure progressive social transformation.

² Press release source: <http://www.forumsec.org.fj/pages.cfm/newsroom/press-statements/2008/nations-of-pacific-need-have-both-genders-parliament--sir-michael.html>

There are two other thorny conceptual matters that merit discussion. First, because culture is highly valued for its links to the past, debates over the authenticity of culture is hotly contested (Jolly 2008). In the Pacific region, debates were recently aired following the Festival of Pacific Arts in American Samoa in 2008. In addition to the reported vibrancy of the Pacific cultural festivals (Chinula 2008), other frictions of difference around authenticity and respect for other groups were also evident (Ragogo 2008). Among other things, this highlights the difficulty of dealing with cultural continuities in rapidly changing social, economic and political times. It also highlights the difference between culture and tradition that is performed in special events and festivals, which are not the focus of this paper, and the everyday ways of living which that are expressed in routine performance. A separate project is required to examine the gendering of culture that manifests itself as, for instance, visual art, tattooing, *tapa* making, *tivaevae* making, weaving, singing, and dancing, all of which say something about the circumstances of everyday life.

The second knotty issue concerns sexuality. The breadth and complexity of issues of sexuality highlight the importance of explicitly bringing sexuality into development discussions including those around the impact of culture on gender equality. As the UN Rapporteur on the Right to the Highest Attainable Standard of Health, Paul Hunt (2008:1) cogently notes “what is unnamed is more likely to be unsupported, ignored and misunderstood.” Debates over the existence of sex work, abortion and same sex relationships increasingly appear in local and national news alongside more long-standing concerns such as teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and rape. Although there are those who consider these topics to be embarrassing and best left to individuals, families and churches to deal with, increasingly the significance of sexuality to development is becoming apparent. There is no doubt that the HIV/AIDS crisis brought the discussion of sexuality onto the public stage in the Pacific. The proliferation of awareness raising activities around the crisis has flushed out the importance of better understanding the disease. Yet, strong opinions remain about the extent sexuality can be openly discussed. Although, the rhetoric in the Pacific is that we are ‘naturally private people’ and “it goes against the normal practices of Pacific communities, where Christian principles and values are deeply etched into its culture and values” (Lemisio 2008, 104), this is a gross generalisation that glosses over the

many and varied ways in which sexuality is clearly a development issue in the Pacific (Lukere 2002; Jolly 1994, 1996, 1997; Tengan 2002; Butt 2005).

A major task looms in moving from the implicitly heteronormative debates that underlie much discussion about culture and gender in the Pacific. More recent scholarly work is providing the critical discussions needed to move the debates away from moral arguments embedded in religious doctrines. Anthropologist Tengan's (2002) work on Pacific masculinities and Besnier's (2002) on transgender performances in Tonga, herald new and exciting times for debates on gender and culture. In relation to Pacific masculinities, Tengan (2002) shows that because people are often situated in multiple complex ways, they are able to draw on dominant gender constructs for contradictory, even subversive purposes. Besnier (2002) shows how transgender performances in Tonga rest on tensions between local and trans-local identities and, like Raiskin's (2008) work in Samoa, signals the existence of alternative gender constructs. However, in the process, traditional cultural practices of gender are delineated and through the transgressions made by *fa'fafines* (which means 'men who are like women'), the boundaries women must respect are revealed and reinforced.

One way to handle the dynamic interaction of gender and culture is to work from a perspective of entangled institutions with intersecting interests of rank, race, class and gender. While it is possible to recognise that some of these intersecting points are more fixed than others, such as rank, the concept of intersections allows for more complex analysis that deepens understandings of the nature of the relationships between different groups of people.

Culture and Gender in the Pacific

"It feels like nothing so much as 'culture' in its most coercive, simplistic form: a way of life that draws us in, ready or not, sensible or not" (Tsing 2005, 40).

"The challenge of cultural analysis is to address both the spreading interconnections and the locatedness of culture" (Tsing 2005, 122).

These two quotes deftly raise the contradictory tendencies evident in the discussion of culture in the Pacific. On the one hand, culture is such a part of daily life that, everyone is part of it, intentionally or not. Rarely are cultures closed to the influences of other cultures, yet we are more likely to privilege some more than others. For instance, the refrain still widely repeated in the Pacific - that feminism is a foreign flower - stand in stark contrast to the relative ease with which sports such as rugby have captured the everyday lives of many people in the Pacific. In spite of these contradictions, where the gendering of preference for 'external influences' is clear, there have been many notable instances of significant attempts to transform the impact of culture on gender in the Pacific. Clearly, culture is more than a sacred template that should not be interfered with.

For instance, Gampat and Chambers (2009:58) point to the UNDP Human Development Report for Bougainville in Papua New Guinea, which clearly recognizes that "culture is not monolithic" and cultural imperatives do not characterize a whole society (ibid). Communities are diverse. There are likely to be some parts with its foot more in *kastom* or culture than in modernity, and vice versa. The evidence is that a sector or even cultural majority of the population accord women high respect. But this does not deny the Report's suggestion of a cultural imperative against women's advancement especially in public decision-making and negotiation in post-conflict society. Rather, it clearly speaks of competing cultural interest groups. And while contested ideas are the norm, there is no place for ambivalence regarding equity and women's choices.

In most parts of the Pacific, social organisation is based on some sort of hierarchical principle that governs gender norms – women are subordinate to men, as are commoners to high ranking persons, the youngest to eldest lineages, and younger to older siblings. In many parts of the eastern Pacific, these hierarchical principles work in ways that make rank more important than gender. Although hierarchy is often more important than gender, especially in the eastern and northern parts of the Pacific where elder sisters take precedence over men in cultural matters and women can hold high rank with paramount titles. But in many other parts of the Pacific, this is reversed with women being explicitly treated as property to be transferred between kin groups. Much has been said about bride price, bride wealth and the diversity of exchanges that

take place between groups when people marry (Modjeski 1982; Busse 2007). Even within small geographical areas, there are distinct differences in the understanding of marriage exchanges – such that one universal is that negotiation is a fundamental feature (Strathern 1984). For instance, in one area in Papua New Guinea, where the understanding is that once ‘bride-price’ (not a word translatable into the lingua franca) is completed, their daughter or sister or niece ‘belongs’ to her husband’s family. However, the husband’s family, from a village only two hours away by foot, understands the ‘bride-price’ is only a small gift of recognition because women are too valuable to put a price on: “you can’t buy a woman – not enough money in the world for that” (author’s personal communication). On-going negotiation between these two Christian influenced villages will continue, with perhaps not surprisingly, the husband’s village having the last word.

The enormous number of ethnographies of Pacific societies, especially in the western Pacific, has contributed significantly to deepen our understanding of culture and gender.³ Unsurprisingly, this has generated contentious debates and commentaries, especially around the themes of cultural identity, custom and representation (Chappell 1995; Hereniko 1995). These issues have and continued to be deeply probed and widely debated resulting in a vast amount of scholarly literature and, often more succinctly, poetry as Grace Molisa’s memorable words:

“Custom misapplied bastardised murdered a Frankenstein corpse conveniently recalled to intimidate women the timid the ignorant the weak.”

(Molisa 1995)

Molisa’s poem eloquently insinuates that men have used custom or traditional ways, as a pretext for controlling women. In addition, many men do manipulate custom to gain power for their own benefit, but they do not silence women poets.⁴ More recently, Samoan novelist Sia Figel moved away from the innocent island women of the colonial past to vividly depict a young girl’s life in Samoa. As Crowl (2005, 192) notes, “more women than ever before are writing and published, adding their voices

³ See for instance the prolific writings of Marilyn Strathern, Jocelyn Linnekin, Penelope Schoeffel, Phyllis Herda and Margaret Jolly.

⁴ See Konia Helu Thaman from Tonga, Jully Makini from Solomon Islands, Nora Vagi Brash from Papua New Guinea, Arlene Griffen from Fiji and Makerita Va’ai from Samoa.

to advocating what is of value in their societies”. Looking specifically at Vanuatu, Jolly (1997) argues that while women were part of grassroots independent movements in Vanuatu, as in many other places, it was independence for men not for women.

Understanding culture is about understanding how to keep in play a tendency to want unity, cohesion and structure at the same time as the tendency to want to be creative, inventive and free. Success in keeping these opposing tendencies in play is where cultural systems become important so that inventiveness and creativity are hallmarks of culture (Siikalla 2005). Finalising meanings and fixing expression goes against the logic of culture because culture is not the order but the ordering system that allows for contestation to be accomplished. This is the way it creates unity.

Many parts of the Pacific are colonial creations (almost all nation states for instance, as well as the cultural areas of Melanesia, Micronesia and Melanesia) with significant internal variation and many common features. Many cultures are tradition-conscious and specialised experts are understood to be guardians of traditional knowledge. These specialists and guardians derive contemporary significance in the ancestor-oriented social structures in various ways, i.e. advice on land matters, kinship obligations, naming, rites of passage and conflict resolution. In the process, cultural categories are generated and continuity is assigned to some activities and practices. This is the creative, inventive and generative nature of cultural systems. It enables certain cultural themes to be embellished with significance and others to be played down. This process of ordering is not random, however. “Who says what, how and when is the systematic result of the culture as a metacultural system that determines the significance of phenomenon. Thus it also generates the arrangement of people into groups or other kinds of social collectives and their mutual relationships” (Siikala 2005, 281).

When culture is understood as a script to be followed, the social action of an individual is the execution of the existing system and therefore not the responsibility of individuals. However, when culture is understood as a conceptual system that defines what is significant, then one can interpret something unforeseen into the script. This can be seen in the many instances of women taking on new economic roles, controlling their fertility, or being invited to have a public role. This is the enabling

property of culture that encompasses and assimilates novel situations and events. In this way, it is possible to find situations where men play a major role in the intimate care of children, where despite taboos associated with the potent effects of women's birthing fluids, husbands will deliver babies, and where women's groups are able to appropriate the use of a 'mens haus' to run a workshop on community health.

What is very clear is that as a way of life, 'culture' is not closely interrogated by those who live it. Culture has a 'taken-for grantedness' about it that it becomes a taken for granted.

The mostly widely accepted understanding of gender in the Pacific is that men and women are traditionally cooperative in their livelihood activities. Men did more physical work in gardens, rivers and seas while women did the maintenance work in gardens and around sleeping and cooking areas. This also allowed them to nurture the younger, sick and older members of their family (Fairbairn-Dunlop 2005). This perspective is reinforced by Christian references to the complementary roles of men and women. However, this view is increasingly contested as a growing number of scholars provide ample evidence to the contrary, without renouncing their Christianity (Liki Chang-Tung 2007). Despite this scholarly evidence, the inclination to take this overview is pervasive as many documents from regional organisations report.

This is both an injustice to women and men who, in their routine activities, are equally proficient and competent in physical and nurturing activities.

Anthropologists have always taken an interest in one way or another in the reproduction of societies. It is often in this context that women's childbearing and lactating capacities are discussed. Because of the association of women with nature and men with culture, Rosaldo (1980) argued that women were restricted to child-oriented spheres while men were free to move in more public spheres taking care of more significant relationships. And because of Eurocentric notions of culture being of a higher value than nature, women were subordinate to men. A decade later however, Ralston (1990, 65) challenged the argument that women's reproductive functions "led to their closer association with nature, while men were concerned with the reproduction of culture".

How this plays out in terms of legal struggles for collective and individual rights varies, but the struggle is about incorporating dissent in successful processes of continuity. This is especially so in the case of accessing resources, land ownership, law and justice.

Pacific peoples are all interested in continuities, especially since such continuities continue to deliver the resources that people need. Genealogies and folklore for instance work to embrace a notion of culture that has relevance in contemporary times and with critical threads from the past woven carefully in. Yet this is one of the biggest challenges in the Pacific as it undergoes rapid social transformation of many aspects of life. Culture retains its contemporary relevance by ensuring that key threads from past times and places in time and space remain recognisable in contemporary practices. Gender has a contemporary relevance because it is a concept that allows for flexible interpretations of the power relations between men and women. It is open for changing interpretations while still remaining rooted to particular times and places. Both are constituted by an array of interests and the remarkable strength of both is that they carry with the desirability of continuity.

Intersecting interests and entangled institutions

The sobering recognition of the huge gap between aspirations for social transformation and the limited although important gains, urges greater conceptual and analytical clarity. Gender inequality has been more stubborn than anticipated and in many areas of life women's inequalities have worsened (see Appendix), not improved. This is the case despite legislative reform. There is still a pressing need to make those changes in political and economic realities to use new laws because gains in one sphere (more women working) have produced new forms of inequality (gender based violence). Despite an emphasis on democracy, women still have to fight to get their voices heard.

Part of the problem is that the norms that reproduce this inequality rest on gender relations of power, which is why they are so hard to change. Recognising the interactions between formal and informal institutions is useful because it provides greater clarity around their complex entanglements. Not all formal institutions are

good for women. Lay-offs due to pregnancy – because of concern for the child – and then mothers only being reinstated at entry level is hardly progressive for women’s human rights. And not all informal institutions are bad for women. For instance, informal wealth rotation among women provides otherwise unattainable credit. As feminist economist Gita Sen (2002, 3) argues, “once we acknowledge that informal formal institutions (like formal ones) can have positive and negative elements when viewed from the standpoint of gender equality and women’s rights, we can better understand how women themselves attempt to adapt them to their needs wherever is possible”.

This entanglement of institutions is evident in the following examples presented in Part Two. However, it is important to keep a wider perspective on pressing external trends that inevitably will impact the nature on formal institutions in the Pacific. The current global financial crisis will affect many economic transactions undertaken by governments, which will affect women’s livelihoods. The extent to which informal institutions can moderate the impact will be telling.

PART TWO

The Economic Crisis and the Pacific

Geography and the nature of colonial history conspire to create a challenging context of Pacific Island economies. Challenging factors include inadequate and deteriorating infrastructure, high utility costs, shortages of government revenue and inadequate funding to public services such as health care, education, police and welfare. Despite high levels of remittances and aid, the risk of deindustrialisation through moves towards trade liberalisation, and the severe shortage of capacity to report on and implement international commitments are troubling (Naidu 2006).

Economic growth in the Pacific is also highly volatile, reflecting a range of factors such as narrow economic bases, dependence on a few commodity exports (agricultural, forestry, fishing and minerals) being sold into often volatile international markets in which the PICTs are price-takers, the impact of natural disasters such as cyclones, and poor governance and political (and policy) instability (Stewart 2006, 96).

Furthermore, individual economies have been facing their own challenges. For instance, Fiji faced an economic downturn following the December 2006 coup and continued political instability that impacted tourism. The storm and floods in January 2009 further undermined tourism activities. Combined with the loss of sugar preferences and rapid decline in the garment industry (Harrington 2000), Fiji's economy is not in the best shape.

The transformation of Pacific economies in the face of global economic conditions is not new. However, each new shift results in further transformations in the process of negotiating access to resources. These negotiations require a reconfiguration of power, and because men as a group are able to exert more power over resources than women as a group, regardless of claims that women are culturally respected, rarely do women end up better off. On the contrary, in situations of economic stress in families, households and countries, the less powerful often bear the physical signs of this stress.

This is where an understanding of the impact on the current financial crisis is important.

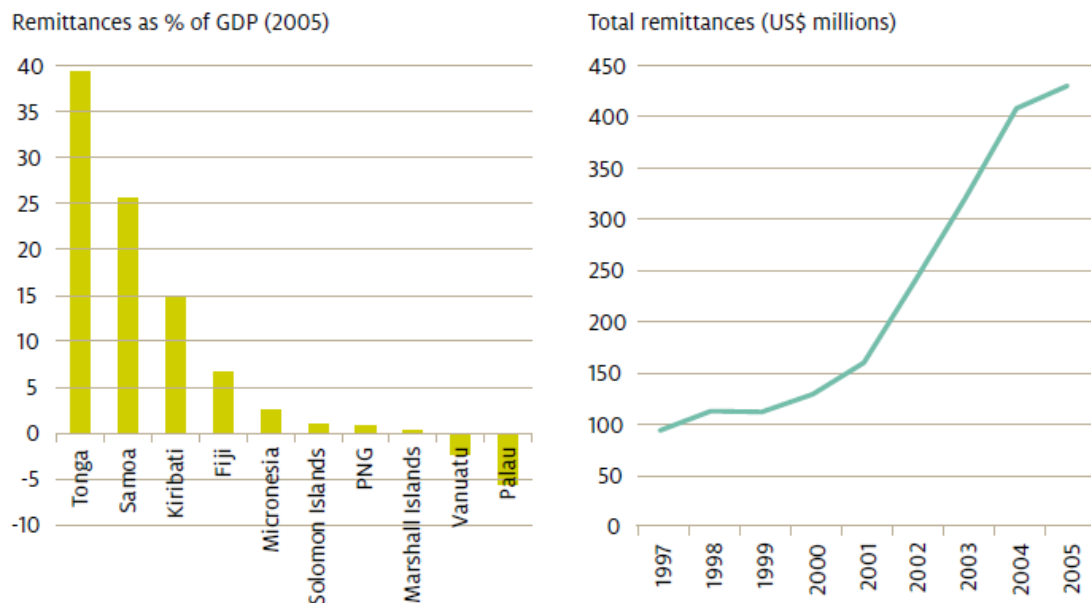
In general, the Pacific is considered to be “largely isolated from the short-term instability in the global financial markets, [though] will experience negative impacts over time” (Caparas et al. 2008:18). However, in 2008 while Pacific economies were already facing significant challenges through global price rises in fuel and food, they are now faced with the global financial crisis, brought about through the collapse of the subprime mortgage markets in the United States. This has had a domino effect around the globe and has led to an international crisis of confidence in global markets with significant impacts in the United States, the European Union (EU), China, Japan and Australia, as well as New Zealand.

The flow on effects of the global financial crisis to the Pacific is likely to be experienced indirectly through five factors: the impact on offshore investments, remittances, aid, tourism and commodity prices (and the net impact trade).

Instability connected with superannuation and trust investments offshore, or reliance on international equity or property markets will mostly affect countries such as Tuvalu and Kiribati that have become ‘overly dependent’ on draw-downs from their off-shore trust funds or Revenue Equalization Reserve Funds (RERF) (Caparas et al. 2008:18). Superannuation schemes are relatively protected as, where possible, the larger Pacific Island countries invest most superannuation schemes locally (Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and the Solomon Islands) meaning schemes would only be indirectly affected through downturn in domestic growth. However, Papua New Guinea is more exposed through the onshore investments in mining, oil and other commodity based stocks that have decreased in price (Caparas et al. 2008:18). Conversely, where sufficient local investment opportunities are lacking, as in the Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru and Tuvalu, superannuation schemes that have been invested offshore, such investments are likely to significantly decrease in value through the crisis though will rebuild over time, as long as countries have avoided investing in now-failed entities (Caparas et al. 2008).

Loss of remittances due to economic hardship for the Pacific diaspora could be an issue for remittance dependent countries. However, ADB reports that there is “resilience shown by remittances to the Pacific to changes in economic growth in neighbouring countries” (Caparas et al. 2008, 18). Remittances are a key factor in countries that have had migration access, particularly Fiji, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Tonga and Samoa that received approximately 90 per cent of remittances in 2005 (AusAID 2008; Ferguson and Sugden 2008), whereas Melanesia is not reliant on remittances but aid is more significant. “Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands net official remittances in 2004 were actually negative at -3.2, -2.7 and -1.5 per cent, respectively” (Stewart 2006, 112). In Tonga, 90 per cent of households receive remittances, and in Fiji, 40 per cent. Aid is still more important than remittances, though remittances have been growing at 36 per cent (annualised average growth), as shown in Figure 1. (AusAID 2008).

Figure 1 Remittance volumes 1997-2005



Source: AusAID 2008

Declines in remittances have had an impact on household finances and this could have a variety of gendered impacts. As household budgets tighten, any cash expenditure will be restricted, with a potential consequence being children being kept back from school or tertiary studies. In some contexts, this will disproportionately impact girls.

Less money to pay for transport can mean potential access problems to health care, markets as well as any items like medicine and fuel. Poorer households that have less cash will be hardest hit. Rural areas with food security are likely to be buffered through their resilience of subsistence agriculture. Urban dwellers with expenses for basic necessities such as rent, electricity, and water may face food security risks, with impacts on nutrition. Particularly at risk groups include those that do not have access to credit or the option to return to clan lands, the majority of whom are women.

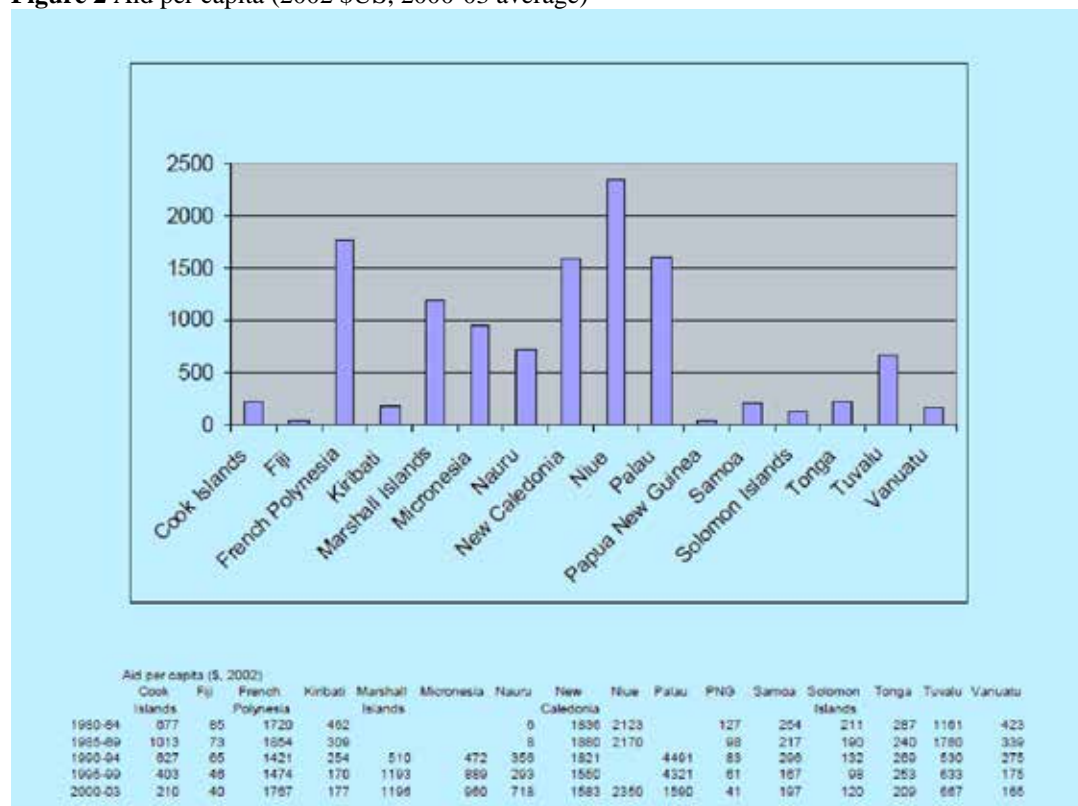
For women in rural areas this can mean increased responsibility of cash cropping on top of subsistence living requirements. For women in urban areas this could mean seeking additional informal economic opportunities to fund household necessities. There is already evidence of impoverished households in Kiribati resorting to the prostituting of girls to fishing boats as “korekorea girls” for income, as well as reporting of prostitution in Fiji, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Tonga (Lemisio 2008). Urban squatter settlements or small rural settlements with tenuous access to resources are at risk of resorting to selling sex to supplement livelihoods.

There is increasing discussion about risk to aid flows due to economic downturn in donor countries. Key donors in the Pacific are Australia, New Zealand, the United States the EU, and increasingly China. The Pacific receives high levels of aid relative to other developing countries worldwide as well as per capita in some countries (see Figure 2). Approximately one third of aid goes to Papua New Guinea, one third to states in compact of agreement with the United States, and one third to the rest of the PICTs (Sampson 2005). Australia and New Zealand account for half the aid to the Pacific, the majority of which is from Australia (90 per cent) and goes to Papua New Guinea (66 per cent of Australian aid). Almost all American aid to the Pacific goes to its former territories, and 10 per cent of aid comes from multilateral donors. The real value of aid to the Pacific has fallen by 40 per cent over the past 25 years (see Figure 3) (Sampson 2005).

China’s interest in the Pacific has grown exponentially from an aid budget of US\$33million in 2005 to US\$78million in 2006 and then to US\$293million in 2007, or between US\$100-150 million if concessional loans are excluded. This was more

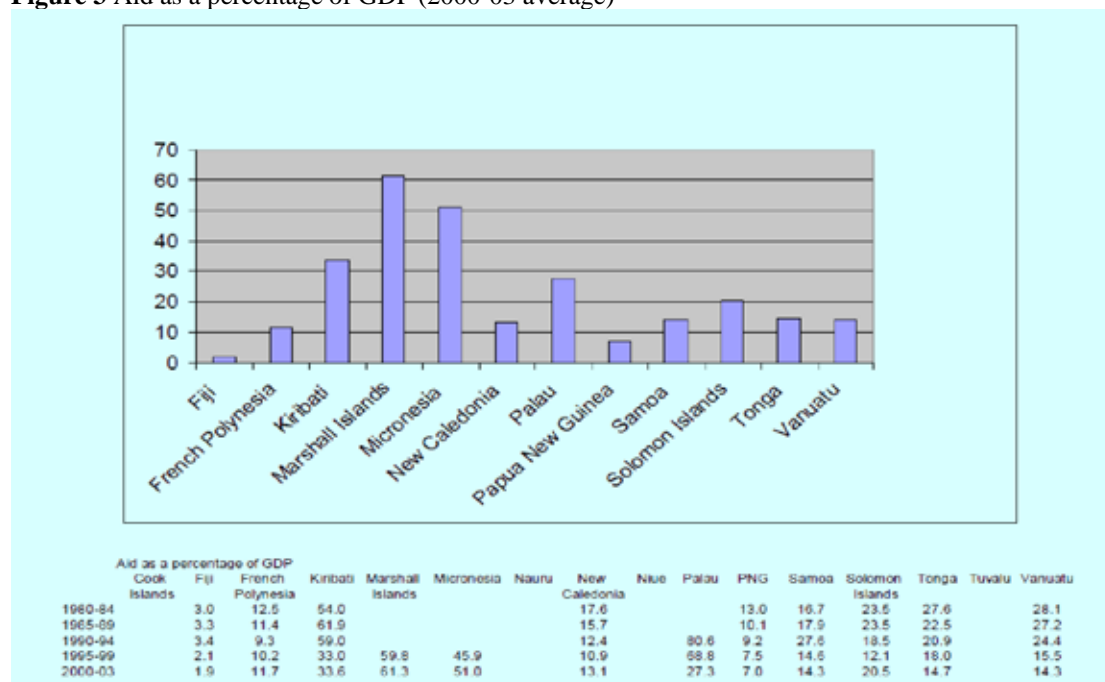
than New Zealand's aid budget for the Pacific, but was less than Australia's, which was US\$560million in 2006-07 (Powell 2008).

Figure 2 Aid per capita (2002 \$US, 2000-03 average)



Source: Sampson 2005.

Figure 3 Aid as a percentage of GDP (2000-03 average)



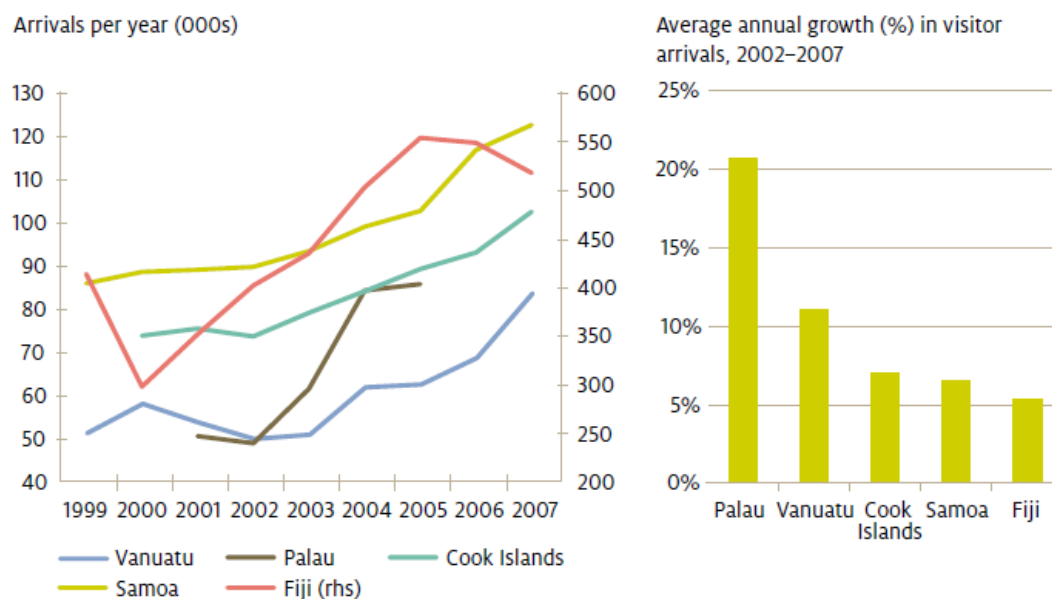
Source: Sampson 2005.

Aid is more significant to Western Pacific countries as they do not have the same volume of remittances as the Eastern Pacific. Aid is a significant factor in Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Kiribati, Samoa and Tonga. The Asia Development Bank notes that while aid flows will decrease due to currency devaluation from Australia and New Zealand, as the main donor countries, this is offset by the fact that most imports of goods and services funded by aid come from these countries, so roughly the same volume of goods and services will be accessible (Caparas et al. 2008)

Gender impacts from cuts to aid (aside from decreases due to currency fluctuations) could be significant as funds from Australia, New Zealand and the EU are responsible for the core gender initiatives in the region. Key institutions pushing the gender agenda in the region are SPC which has a regional reach, and is predominantly funded by AusAID and NZAID grants (see Annual Reports of SPC). There have already been warnings of aid cuts to gender initiatives in the Pacific although recently considerable funds were given to Regional Rights Resources Team to continue their work on the Convention for Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) focusing on advocacy/lobbying and training in addition to legislative and compliance work.

There may be decreases in tourism due to economic hardship in key tourist markets, particularly Australia, New Zealand, Asia, the EU and the United States. Tourism is driving growth in Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu, Cook Islands and Palau (see Figure 4) (AusAID 2008). “In 2005, tourism accounted for 49 per cent of GDP in Palau and 47 per cent in Cook Islands, and for 18 per cent of employment in Vanuatu and 13 per cent in Fiji”. (AusAID 2008). ADB reports that visitor arrival numbers from Australia and New Zealand show greater sensitivity to events in the Pacific (political instability, or coups) than changes in their home economies, unlike visitors from Asia which fluctuate with economic climate (Caparas et al. 2008).

Figure 4 Growth of tourism in selected countries, 1999-2007



Sources: Various national and UN sources.

Notes: Annual average growth for Palau for 2002-2005. 2007 figures are estimates based on six to seven months worth of data.

Source: AusAID 2008

Tourism comprises a significant proportion of GDP for both Fiji's and Samoa's economies (AusAid 2008). Drops in tourism numbers could mean job losses, loss of revenue for supply sectors such as agriculture, transport, retail and handicrafts. Reorienting of the tourism sector towards budget travellers is another possible implication of economic downturn in client economies.

There are gender implications in employment loss in the tourism sector itself, where considerable numbers of semi-skilled women workers are employed as administration, cleaners, and for cultural entertainment services, as well as in cash cropping and farming industries that hotels use for supply of raw foodstuffs. The cultural handicraft and retail industries will be impacted by decreased tourist numbers, or "lower yield" budget tourists. Traditional handicrafts are sourced at the village level, so has a direct impact on women's pockets and as a source of household income.

Finally, the main overall impact of the global financial crisis is likely to be decreased government revenue, particularly in Papua New Guinea, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Cook Islands and Nauru. Papua New Guinea will suffer because it has enjoyed commodity

price rises over the last few years, serving as the main driver of economic growth. For Tuvalu and Kiribati, government revenue comes, in approximately equal measure, from tax revenues, fish licensing, Revenue Equalization Reserve Fund (RERF) and other non-tax revenue sources, such as aid (Ferguson and Sugden 2008). In the Cook Islands, decreases in government revenue may push back plans to borrow to repair and maintain deteriorating infrastructure, which would hamper tourism as well as local supply of utilities (Ferguson and Sugden 2008).

The gendered impact of this further reduction in government revenue may be severe in some Pacific countries where structural adjustment policies have already instituted stringent financial policies. Government revenues have already been eaten away through various measures of economic liberalisation including reduction in tariffs and taxation. The global financial crisis has also resulted in fluctuations in commodity prices, particularly for key Pacific exports in minerals and agriculture, as demand drops in market uncertainty. Historically high commodity prices have driven economic growth, especially in minerals for the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea over the last three years, however now it is a point of vulnerability:

With a banking and finance sector devoid of the toxic debt instruments that has been the source of international woes, Papua New Guinea's only major exposure is to falling revenue receipts on the back of lower prices for commodities (Nasfund 2009).

While PICTs are experiencing relief in lower fuel prices, which may have a positive flow on the affects in tourism and manufacturing, much is offset by the drop in commodity prices of exports, as well as strengthening Pacific currencies against trading partners, particularly New Zealand and Australia. Falls in revenue from minerals will mostly impact government and foreign interests, however falls in agricultural export revenue will impact women and rural areas, particularly in PNG, where women have a strong hold of small markets as a way to generate cash for family and domestic needs, especially school fees.

Advice to governments has been to "tighten their belts, and improve revenue collection" (Pacnews 2008,1). All this spells risk for those vulnerable and marginalised populations in the Pacific who have less power to negotiate better access

to resources. Strained economic times provide real challenges to uphold the important cultural principles identified in the Pacific. Caring for all members of one's family or wider household can put added strain on low-income earners. Honouring long-standing cultural exchanges and participating in reciprocal social engagements requires continued access to a wide variety of resources from cash to food that may be receding. On the other hand, culturally sanctioned activities like sharing excess garden or marine food and contributing more to collective in-kind activities have in the past contributed to the resilience of many Pacific communities. This is particularly so where there is a high level of food security, as in the western Pacific. However, this culturally inspired economic resilience is challenged in the face of transformations also occurring in the area of human security and the growing frequency and intensity of severe weather events.

Women's Seats in Papua New Guinea's Parliament

Papua New Guinea is the most recent country in the world to experiment with the use of policy instruments to facilitate women's participation in parliament. Policies on temporary special measures, such as reserved seats for women or party quotas, are already being used in the Pacific in Bougainville, New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Wallis and Fortuna. (Clark and Rodrigues 2008). A successful example of the use of temporary special measures is Rwanda, which reserved 30 per cent of its parliamentary seats for women in 2003. At the time this paper was commissioned, 56 per cent of parliamentarians in the Rwandan legislature are women. The 30 per cent threshold is not a final goal, but is a percentage at which women in a legislature have been seen to achieve a "critical mass" of influence (Clark and Rodrigues 2008:91). Over 10 years ago in 2000, the Women in Parliament programme (PNGWIP) in Papua New Guinea, put forward in a policy submission on the Organic Law of Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates, for a 30 per cent quota for women candidates. The result was that a provision was created for one woman to be nominated by any one political party (UNIFEM 2003). This clearly has not happened, thus in 2003, a new initiative emerged based on the constitution. It is intended to serve as an interim measure until an Organic Law on Gender Equity (which will include provision for reserved seats by elective process) is in place for the 2012 election (Post Courier 2008).

Historically, Papua New Guinea has had very low participation of women in formal decision making structures, especially parliament. With a population of 6.3 million, 109 constituencies and 109 legislators, Papua New Guinea only has one woman member of parliament, resulting in the percentage of women in parliament being 0.9% and one of the lowest in the Pacific (see Table 1) (Clark and Rodrigues 2008).

Table 1: Women in Forum Islands Country Legislatures as of December 2008

Country/ Territory	Size of legislature	Number of women	% women
Niue	20	4	20.0
Fiji	103*	13	12.6
Cook Islands	24	3	12.5
Palau	29 [#]	2	6.9
Samoa	49	3	6.1
Kiribati	42	2	4.8
Vanuatu	52	2	3.8
Marshall Islands	33	1	3.0
Tonga	33	1 ^{&}	2.9
Papua New Guinea	109	1	0.9
Solomon Islands	50	0	0.0
Nauru	18	0	0.0
Tuvalu	15	0	0.0
Federated States of Micronesia	14	0	0.0
Average	766	32	4.2%

* This number refers to both Houses of Parliament (71 elected member House of Representatives and 32 appointed member Senate), prior to the suspension of Parliament following the December 2006 coup.

& The one woman in the Tongan legislature was appointed by the King.

This numbers refer to both elected Chambers (16 member House of Delegates and 13 member Senate)

(Clark and Rodrigues 2008)

The history of women in Papua New Guinea's parliament reveals significant challenges of not just standing for election but actually winning a seat. Three women first contested parliament in 1964. In 1972 there were 4 candidates and 1 was elected. In 1977, three women were elected into parliament out of the 10 candidates. Following a campaign to get women into parliament campaign in 1997, 55 candidates stood and two were successful (Sepoe 2002; Schoeffel 2004). In 2002, 75 of the 4,359 candidates were women, but only one made it into the National Parliament: Dame

Carol Kidu. In local and provincial government there have been however, over 1,000 women representatives (UNIFEM 2003).

The Papua New Guinea Constitution currently allows up to three members to be nominated by two-thirds majority vote⁵ (Clark and Rodrigues 2008). Currently, Papua New Guinea is in the historic process of selecting women to nominated positions in parliament. The use of temporary special measures to facilitate women's participation in parliament is considered within the country's constitutional framework:

s.55(1) of the PNG Constitution which explicitly recognises the equality of all citizens, sub-section 2 specifically accepts that “subsection (1) does not prevent the making of laws for the special benefit, welfare, protection or advancement of females, children and young persons...” (Clark and Rodrigues 2008:91).

The selection process began in late 2008 with 95 women registering themselves to be shortlisted to six, by a seven member panel of women. The shortlisted names will be submitted to Prime Minister Sir Michael Somare and Opposition leader Sir Mekere Morauta for deliberation and selection of the final three for nomination to parliament (The National 2009).

This carefully considered move towards getting more women in Parliament has however met with some opposition on the grounds that these measures are undemocratic (Post Courier letters 28th May and 16th December 2008). Technical concerns were also raised by constitutional lawyer Professor John Nonggorr who noted that the powers that the nominated person will exercise would need to be clarified by legislation and that if this is not done, major constitutional issues may be raised later on (ibid). Clearly, even once the three nominated women begin work in parliament, their powers are likely to be closely scrutinised.

The provision for nominated women MPs is intended to last three years only, with the hope that there is special legislation for Reserved Seats for Women by the 2012 election (Kidu 2009). Reserved seating within the current constitution would mean

⁵ Section 101(1)(c) and Section 102 (nominated members) are the sections that allow up to three nominated positions, to be nominated by a two-third majority; respectively.

expanding the current parliament of 109 sitting members by 11 seats to 120, beyond which a constitutional amendment is required. To reach the 30 per cent threshold, the parliament would need approximately 41 additional seats to the existing 109 (Clark and Rodrigues 2008). Another option is to expand the number of seats in parliament, requiring a constitutional amendment.

In Papua New Guinea, it has been suggested that consideration could be given to adding 20 reserved seats to Parliament, with one woman elected from each province, plus the National Capital District (NDC). This would result in women comprising 15.5 per cent of an enlarged Parliament of 129 members, well below the 30 per cent target. It would require 40 reserved seats, or two women from each province and the NDC, to bring the minimum percentage of women in the Parliament closer to this target, at 26.8 per cent (Clark and Rodrigues 2008:91).

It is worth noting that Papua New Guinea has proportionately fewer MPs to constituents than other PICTs, with a ratio of one MP per 57,798 people. By comparison, the Solomon Islands has a ratio of one MP per 10,780 people, while in the Cook Islands the ratio is one MP per 687 voters (Clark and Rodrigues 2008). Therefore, to expand parliament would be entirely reasonable.

Culture and power are significant factors in explaining women's participation in formal decision making bodies. Yet to reach the 30 per cent threshold of women in parliament, whether by expanding parliament or within the current system, would necessarily mean a significant number of voting constituents supporting female candidates. Historically, this has been difficult with a strong gendered bias against women in leadership positions throughout Papua New Guinea, even women do not vote for women (UNIFEM 2003).

Statistics and the legacy of existing mechanisms are testament to the significance of cultural norms shaping women's participation. In the 2007 election there were 109 electorates, and 101 women candidates out of 2759 candidates (4 per cent). Out of the 101 women, 42 were endorsed by various political parties and 59 were stood as independents (Post Courier 2008). Papua New Guinea has a variety of programmes to improve women's participation in politics, such as having the longest operating

Women in Politics programme in the region started in 1993 (UNIFEM 2003). In 1995, Papua New Guinea's Organic Law on Provincial Governments and Local-Level Governments was enacted allowing for one women's representative to be nominated in each of the 20 Provincial Assemblies and for two women to be appointed in the rural Local Level Governments and one in urban Local Level Governments as well (Huffer 2006; Sepoe 2006).

However, the current electoral system is considered disadvantageous to women because the system itself gives rise to corruption and vote buying (UNIFEM 2003). The key challenges relate to addressing a very strong gender bias in social and political leadership. This can be seen in that women do not vote for women (UNIFEM 2003), 65 per cent of women are illiterate (UNIFEM 2003), and the women's department has been downgraded (Huffer 2006). Huffer (2006) further argues that the barriers and challenges facing women entering Parliament include male dominated cultural norms and societal values. Even in traditional kinship structures that are matrilineal, the power structures that moderate everyday life are male dominated. Societal stereotypes not only actively discriminate against women, though the promotion of particular gender stereotypes (the subordinate hard working wife and mother), the protection of male privilege in private space especially in relation to violent sexual behaviour, and the constant under-valuing of the work of women (Huffer 2006). So while the legislative and institutional framework is in place, entanglements with the informal institutions and the cultural values embedded in them dampened the otherwise progressive momentum towards addressing unequal power and voice.

The Family Law Act, Fiji

The successful campaign to institute the Family Law Act in Fiji is an example of achieving pro-women family law in the context of political instability, patriarchal society and religious conservatism. Pro-women law reform and instituting women's rights faced strong opposition from churches and conservative political actors: "Race, religion, class and sexuality were all used to oppose changes to the family laws" (FWRM et al. 2007, 16). Analysis of the campaign however, shows that actors

worked in a complex interplay between informal and formal institutions, to ultimately be successful after 12 years of work (Ibid)

The campaign was able to achieve family law which is based on a no-fault principle of divorce, utilizes a non-adversarial counseling system and a specialist Family Division of the Court which prioritizes children's needs and parental support. It removes all forms of discrimination against women and grants them rights to enforceable custody and financial support for them and their children. It legitimates and requires recognition and implementation of the major UN human rights conventions affecting family law. From early results it appears that the new Fiji Family Law Act will substantially reduce the costly use of lawyers and Legal Aid (FWRM et al. 2007, 8-9).

The content of the law reform objectives faced some serious opposition, particularly from the Methodist Church of Fiji, which is constituted by about 80 per cent of all indigenous-Fijians. There was considerable opposition from churches because of the fear that the bill would allow homosexuals to marry.⁶ In response, compromises were made including the exclusion of same-sex and *de facto* marriages. No fault divorce was also an issue because it was seen as “a threat to Fijian patriarchal practices and religious beliefs” (FWRM et al. 2007, 16). A survey conducted by FWRM found that there was a some misinformation and a significant level of confusion about the bill, so the campaign responded by continued engagement through materials and community consultation using indigenous vernacular (personal communication).

The campaign was also marginalised structurally in that “The Government of Fiji was not, at that stage, and is still not ready to formally recognize the added value of working 'with NGOs.’”(FWRM et al. 2007,13). To work around this the campaigners (FWRM) established themselves as technically sound by working closely with the Regional Rights Resource Team. They also built their credible over seven years through close consultation with communities in rural and urban areas. They also forged strong relationships with key actors and institutions within the government such as the Office of the Attorney General, the Fiji Law Reform Commission, and the

⁶ For further information, please visit [http://www.wluml.org/english/newsfulltxt.shtml?cmdf\[157\]=x-157-23006](http://www.wluml.org/english/newsfulltxt.shtml?cmdf[157]=x-157-23006)

Ministry of Women and Culture. Campaigners also strategically targeted sympathetic actors in various state institutions to gain insights on tactics delaying the law reform and how to assist with moving the law reform forward.

Another key success factor in instituting the bill was the particularities of leadership and in especially the ability of the leader to negotiate contested spaces, using both formal and informal institutions. Navigating and performing culture is fundamental to this. In the 1990's, women's organizations in Fiji sought to "emphasise the consonance between human rights values and custom. They referenced traditional ideas about the complementary nature of gender roles within customary practices" (George 2008, 182), yet they also recognised that referring to these "cultural protocols and beliefs systems...contributed to women's ongoing subordination" (George 2008, 182). This kind of tactic was essential to establish credibility in a volatile patriarchal and militarized political context. While consistent funding over time necessarily underwrote a strong campaign that was technically proficient, well networked and had politically savvy leadership, it was ability to work with entangled institutions that ultimately resulted in success for gender equality.

Religious Groups Empowering Women?

Throughout the Pacific religious women's groups play an important social and spiritual role in the lives of many Pacific women. Such groups are perceived as conservative, and often discounted by development theorists and feminists alike as not empowering to women because of their welfare approach and focus on traditional activities such as sewing classes, pastoral care and social work (Scheyvens 2003). However, "this does not preclude women's groups from engaging in strategic activities for the empowerment of women" (Scheyvens 2003, 24).

In the post-colonial era, it is often asserted that the status of women had declined through the mix between indigenous and colonial institutions, especially through the institution of the church, which advocated for women to be domestic, not do burdensome work, with implications for gender power dynamics and the status of women in their communities (Scheyvens 2003). This does not do justice to the more sophisticated entanglements of both formal and informal institutions involved in the

practice of religious activities in the region. The church is an institution recognised across the Pacific. It is both indigenised (Douglas 2002), but it is also connected globally. It operated both as a vehicle for conservative patriarchal values and religious fundamentalism, but the church also provides a vehicle for promoting human rights and women's rights in particular. The principles of equality and peace are universal to all religious doctrines which is why churches are acknowledged for their role in conflict resolution and political crises (Douglas 2002) as well as having taken the lead on critical issues facing the region.⁷

The hierarchy of churches is mostly filled by men (Douglas 2002). It has traditionally been seen as “an arena for male power” (Eriksen 2008, 99), but just as it cannot be assumed that women's organisations are necessarily avenues for women's empowerment (Sen and Grown in Scheyvens 2003), so too must we look at ways in which the church can become avenues for women's empowerment. As Scheyvens (2003) argues:

The potential for empowerment comes through collectivisation of women. In addition to teaching women skills and involving them in the administration of the organisation, which builds their confidence and contributes to psychological empowerment, women's groups can contribute to social or political empowerment by providing a safe environment in which women can articulate their concern, develop solutions to their collective problems, and explore their potential (Scheyvens 2003, 28).

Eriksen's study on Ambrym Island in Vanuatu (2008) found that the nature of power relations within the church, as communal, benefited women's status in the community through challenging male hegemony and opening new arenas in which women move and operate (Eriksen 2008).

⁷ Such as the World Council of Churches publication of *A Peoples' Guide to the Economic Partnership Agreements with the European Union*

Changing Gender Relations in Tari: Bride Wealth and Passenger Women

Many Pacific communities are facing big changes that involve challenging cultural understandings of gender relations. This includes the spread of HIV/AIDS, economic changes, and labour migration in search of employment. In the Tari area in Papua New Guinea, gender relations changed in a significant and interesting way. A new dynamic was identified in a 2002 study that showed that some rural women were choosing to work as *pasindia meri* (“passenger-women” or sex workers) due, not to economic necessity, but in response to their anger and frustration about male kin no longer upholding their customary obligations to them as women - especially after they had been raped (Wardlow 2002).

Gender relations in Tari have been impacted by male labour migration to a nearby goldmine, which exacerbated frequent sexual liaisons between men and women who had no intention of marrying each other. This is tacitly tolerated to a large extent by most wives who remained at home in their villages. As in other places in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea, in Tari, women’s sexuality is connected to bride wealth. For example, a husband who has paid the bride wealth has the responsibility to protect his wife’s honour. If she is raped, for instance, he is obliged to bring the case to the village court. One case is the story of a young woman who had been raped twice, and whose family had received reparation through the courts. At first the woman perceived this as solidarity from her family, but later she was angered and felt betrayed when her family who had received some of the compensation, refused to assist her with paying school fees, or to purchase other items such as soap or cigarettes. “The first time a man raped me I supplied 15 pigs for my father’s family, and the second time a man raped me I supplied 15 pigs for my mother’s family, but my relatives never give me anything” (Wardlow 2002:144). In response, she decided to raise money as a *passindia meri*, reasoning that she did not need the money, but she wanted to punish her family by depriving them of the bride wealth they were claiming by trading on her sexuality in the courts. To deprive her family of the social capital underwriting the bride wealth, the young woman purposely ruined her reputation by

engaging in promiscuous and transactional sex. In effect she preventing her family from “cashing in” on her sexual reputation in the future. “They treat me *oslem maket* (like a commodity)” ... “*Oslem, me fri. Laik bilong mi,*” “Therefore, I’m free. My choice” (Wardlow 2002:145).

In similar stories, women in Tari who felt betrayed by their husbands and brothers have begun exercising the sanctity of their sexuality back on the men that have let them down by becoming *pasindia meri* and also through cases relinquishing ‘womanly duties’ such as gardening, caring for children, rearing pigs and even marrying at all, thus refusing to do the work of production and reproduction and thereby challenging both societal and economic power relations (Wardlow 2002). Though this case is complex and context specific to Tari (and should not be generalised to other parts of Papua New Guinea), it shows women’s agency, and how gender power relations are evolving, first through male absence in society, their inability or refusal to fulfill customary obligations, and how this plays out in a particular context.

Conclusion

This paper has taken a non-traditional approach to understanding the complexity of gender and culture in the Pacific. As a complex and diverse region, which has attracted considerable scholarly work on this topic, there are many possible ways to deepen our understanding of unequal voice and power.

The key messages from this paper are:

- Gender and culture are not fixed, but are constituted by tradition and historical genealogies as much as by the contemporary milieu
- Formal and informal institutions are entangled in ways that often allow particular agency for women
- Sexuality needs to be a named part of culture in ways that make it inclusive of more than biological reproduction
- Larger economic and political shifts need to be tracked for the challenges and opportunities they present for gender relations

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Appendix: Statistical Data (supporting graphs and charts)

Table a.1 Proportion of population aged 15-24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS (per cent)

Sub region	Country/Territory	1990	2000	2006-07
East Pacific	American Samoa			
East Pacific	Cook Islands	45.8 (1991)	43.8	...
West Central Pacific	Micronesia			...
South West Pacific	Fiji Islands	31.0 (1991)	44.0	24.4 (2006)
East Pacific	French Polynesia			
West Central Pacific	Guam			
West Central Pacific	Kiribati			23.2 (2006)
West Central Pacific	Marshall Islands	30.6 (1995)	34.0 (2001)	94.1 P (2007)
West Central Pacific	Nauru			70.3 P (2007)
South West Pacific	New Caledonia			
East Pacific	Niue	35.9 (1991)		...
West Central Pacific	Northern Mariana Islands			
West Central Pacific	Palau		17.2	...
South West Pacific	Papua New Guinea		25.9 (1996)	...
East Pacific	Pitcairn			
East Pacific	Samoa			14.3 (2006)
South West Pacific	Solomon Islands		6.8 (2001)	96.2 P (2007)
South West Pacific	Timor-Leste			
East Pacific	Tokelau			17.9 (2006)
East Pacific	Tonga		32.8 (1999)	...
East Pacific	Tuvalu	39.0	31.6 (2002)	97.8 P (2007)
South West Pacific	Vanuatu	15.0 (1991)	28.0 (1999)	25.8 (2007)
East Pacific	Wallis et Futuna			

MDG Stats 6A

Notes: P Provisional

... Data not available

Sources: SPC HIV/AIDS Section (Second Generation Surveillance (SGS) Surveys), Demographic Health Survey, SPC TB Programme

Table a.2 Adolescent Birth Rate (per cent)

<u>Sub region</u>	<u>Country/Territory</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>1997-2007</u>
East Pacific	American Samoa			
East Pacific	Cook Islands			68.0 2000-02
West Central Pacific	Micronesia			48.0 (2000)
South West Pacific	Fiji Islands			43.0 (2003)
East Pacific	French Polynesia			
West Central Pacific	Guam			
West Central Pacific	Kiribati			39.0 2004-05
West Central Pacific	Marshall Islands			138.0 P (2007)
West Central Pacific	Nauru			69.0 P (2007)
South West Pacific	New Caledonia			
East Pacific	Niue			28.0 2001-06
West Central Pacific	Northern Mariana Islands			
West Central Pacific	Palau			35.0 2003-05
South West Pacific	Papua New Guinea			70.0 (2000)
East Pacific	Pitcairn			
East Pacific	Samoa			45.0 (2001)
South West Pacific	Solomon Islands			67.0 P (2007)
South West Pacific	Timor-Leste			
East Pacific	Tokelau			43.0 1997-01
East Pacific	Tonga			24.0 (2005)
East Pacific	Tuvalu			42.0 P (2007)
South West Pacific	Vanuatu			59.0 (1999)
East Pacific	Wallis et Futuna			

MDG Stats 5.B 5.3, 5.4

Notes: P Provisional

... Data not available

Sources: National Health Reports, MDG Reports, Demographic and Health Survey, SPC 2007 Population Poster

Table a.3 Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (per cent)

<u>Sub region</u>	<u>Country/Territory</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2004-2007</u>	
East Pacific	American Samoa				
East Pacific	Cook Islands			40.0	(2005)
West Central Pacific	Micronesia			23.0	(2004)
South West Pacific	Fiji Islands			43.1	(2007)
East Pacific	French Polynesia				
West Central Pacific	Guam				
West Central Pacific	Kiribati			21.5	(2004)
West Central Pacific	Marshall Islands			42.4	P (2007)
West Central Pacific	Nauru			25.1	P (2007)
South West Pacific	New Caledonia				
East Pacific	Niue			...	
West Central Pacific	Northern Mariana Islands				
West Central Pacific	Palau		17.2	...	
South West Pacific	Papua New Guinea			24.3	(2006)
East Pacific	Pitcairn				
East Pacific	Samoa		42.6 (1996)	...	
South West Pacific	Solomon Islands			27.3	P (2007)
South West Pacific	Timor-Leste				
East Pacific	Tokelau			...	
East Pacific	Tonga			23.9	P (2006)
East Pacific	Tuvalu			22.4	P (2007)
South West Pacific	Vanuatu		28.0 (1999)	...	
East Pacific	Wallis et Futuna				

MDG Stats 5.B 5.3, 5.4

Notes: P Provisional

... Data not available

Sources: National Health Reports, MDG Reports, Demographic and Health Survey, SPC 2007 Population Poster

Table a.4 Maternal Mortality Ratio

<u>Sub region</u>	<u>Country/Territory</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001-2004</u>
East Pacific	American Samoa			
East Pacific	Cook Islands			
West Central Pacific	Micronesia	83.0 (1992)		...
South West Pacific	Fiji Islands	41.1 (1988)	57.6	...
East Pacific	French Polynesia			
West Central Pacific	Guam			
West Central Pacific	Kiribati	10.0	56.0 (1995-2000)	158.0 2001-04
West Central Pacific	Marshall Islands	0.0	73.8 (2002)	...
West Central Pacific	Nauru			(a)
South West Pacific	New Caledonia			(a)
East Pacific	Niue			(a)
West Central Pacific	Northern Mariana Islands			(a)
West Central Pacific	Palau			(a)
South West Pacific	Papua New Guinea	345.0	328.0	...
East Pacific	Pitcairn			
East Pacific	Samoa			(b)
South West Pacific	Solomon Islands	550.0 (1992)	135.0 (1999)	...
South West Pacific	Timor-Leste			
East Pacific	Tokelau			(a)
East Pacific	Tonga	39.0	78.2	...
East Pacific	Tuvalu		1.0	...
South West Pacific	Vanuatu	89.1 (1995)	96.3 (1998)	...
East Pacific	Wallis et Futuna			

MDG Data 5.A

Notes: ... Data not available

Sources: National Health Reports, MDG Reports, Demographic and Health Survey, SPC 2007 Population Poster

Table a.5 Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector (per cent)

<u>Sub region</u>	<u>Country/Territory</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2005-2007</u>
East Pacific	American Samoa			
East Pacific	Cook Islands	38.4	44.6	...
West Central Pacific	Micronesia	33.6 (1994)	33.6	...
South West Pacific	Fiji Islands	44.6 (1996)	38.1 (1999)	...
East Pacific	French Polynesia			
West Central Pacific	Guam			
West Central Pacific	Kiribati	33.5	37.6	36.6 (2005)
West Central Pacific	Marshall Islands	33.5 (1988)	36.0 (1999)	58.0 (2007)
West Central Pacific	Nauru	a	a	a
South West Pacific	New Caledonia			
East Pacific	Niue	42.6 (1991)	42.8 (2001)	44.9 (2006)
West Central Pacific	Northern Mariana Islands			
West Central Pacific	Palau	38.7	40.1	36.5 (2005)
South West Pacific	Papua New Guinea	18.0	15.2	...
East Pacific	Pitcairn			
East Pacific	Samoa			29.5 (2006)
South West Pacific	Solomon Islands	23.2 (1986)	29.6 (1999)	...
South West Pacific	Timor-Leste			
East Pacific	Tokelau	29.0 (1991)		...
East Pacific	Tonga		35.6 (1996)	42.3 (2006)
East Pacific	Tuvalu	37.8 (1991)	44.1 (2002)	
South West Pacific	Vanuatu	23.2 (1989)	40.3 (1999)	
East Pacific	Wallis et Futuna			
MDG stats 3.A				

Sources: PRISM - Pacific Regional Information System

Table a.6 Proportion of seats held by women in National Parliament (per cent)

<u>Sub region</u>	<u>Country/Territory</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2007-2008</u>
East Pacific	American Samoa			
East Pacific	Cook Islands	6.0 (1995)	8.0 (1999)	12.5 (2008)
West Central Pacific	Micronesia		7.1 (1998)	0.0 (2008)
South West Pacific	Fiji Islands	0.0	15.5	11.3 (2008)
East Pacific	French Polynesia			
West Central Pacific	Guam			
West Central Pacific	Kiribati		4.8 (1998)	8.7 (2008)
West Central Pacific	Marshall Islands	3.0 (1983)	3.0 (2003)	3.0 (2008)
West Central Pacific	Nauru	6.0	6.0	0.0 (2008)
South West Pacific	New Caledonia			
East Pacific	Niue		10.0 (2002)	20.0 (2008)
West Central Pacific	Northern Mariana Islands			
West Central Pacific	Palau	3.7	3.7	0.0 (2008)
South West Pacific	Papua New Guinea		0.9 (2004)	0.9 (2008)
East Pacific	Pitcairn			
East Pacific	Samoa		6.1 (2001)	8.2 (2008)
South West Pacific	Solomon Islands	2.0 (1995)	0.0 (2003)	0.0 (2008)
South West Pacific	Timor-Leste			
East Pacific	Tokelau		14.3 (1999)	25.0 (2007)
East Pacific	Tonga	0.0	0.0	3.3 (2008)
East Pacific	Tuvalu	8.0	0.0 (2002)	0.0 (2008)
South West Pacific	Vanuatu	1.9 (2002)	3.8 (2004)	3.8 (2008)
East Pacific	Wallis et Futuna			

MDG stats 3.A

Sources: PRISM - Pacific Regional Information System

Table a.7 Literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds; women and men (per cent) [*]

<u>Sub region</u>	<u>Country/Territory</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>year</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>year</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>year</u>
East Pacific	American Samoa								
East Pacific	Cook Islands			93.0	(1996)	99.0	99.0	99.0	(2001)
West Central Pacific	Micronesia	71.0	(1994)	95.0		94.0	96.0	95.0	(2000)
South West Pacific	Fiji Islands			93.0	(1996)	99.0	99.0	99.0	(1996)
East Pacific	French Polynesia								
West Central Pacific	Guam								
West Central Pacific	Kiribati	92.0				96.0	97.0	97.0	(2005)
West Central Pacific	Marshall Islands	74.0	(1989)	98.0	(1999)	98.0	98.0	98.0	(1999)
West Central Pacific	Nauru			99.0	(2002)	99.0	99.0	99.0	(2002)
South West Pacific	New Caledonia								
East Pacific	Niue	95.0	(1992)			99.0	99.0	99.0	(2006)
West Central Pacific	Northern Mariana Islands								
West Central Pacific	Palau			91.0	(1995)	99.0	99.0	99.0	(2005)
South West Pacific	Papua New Guinea	60.6		61.7		64.0	59.0	62.0	(2000)
East Pacific	Pitcairn								
East Pacific	Samoa	96.0	(1991)			99.0	99.0	99.0	(2004)
South West Pacific	Solomon Islands	62.0	(1992)	85.0	(1999)	87.0	81.0	85.0	(1999)
South West Pacific	Timor-Leste								
East Pacific	Tokelau					99.0	99.0	99.0	(2006)
East Pacific	Tonga	98.8	(1986)	99.3	(1996)	98.0	99.0	99.0	(2006)
East Pacific	Tuvalu	95.0	(1991)	99.0	(2002)	99.0	99.0	99.0	(2002)
South West Pacific	Vanuatu	34.0	(1989)	87.0	(1999)	88.0	86.0	87.0	(1999)
East Pacific	Wallis et Futuna								

Sourced from MDG updated 2.A chart 2.3

Notes:

[*] For some countries, proxies are used for literacy based on proportion of adults who had less than four years of formal education.

... Data Not Available

Sources: Pacific Regional Information System

Table a.8 Population

Sub region	Country/Territory	Year	Population	Urban Males	Urban Females	Rural Males	Rural Females
East Pacific	American Samoa	2000	57,291	...	...	...	...
East Pacific	Cook Islands	2006 p	19,569	7,165	6,998	2,767	2,639
West Central Pacific	Micronesia	2000	107,008	12,017	11,876	42,174	40,941
South West Pacific	Fiji Islands	2007	839,324	...	...	...	...
East Pacific	French Polynesia	2007	259,596	...	...	...	...
West Central Pacific	Guam	2000	154,085	...	...	...	...
West Central Pacific	Kiribati	2005	92,533	19,435	20,876	26,177	26,045
West Central Pacific	Marshall Islands	1999	50,840	...	...	...	...
West Central Pacific	Nauru	2006	9,086	4,600	4,486	...	...
South West Pacific	New Caledonia	2004	230,789	82348	81887	34137	32417
East Pacific	Niue	2006	1,788	296	286	571	583
West Central Pacific	Northern Mariana Islands	2000	69,221	...	...	...	...
West Central Pacific	Palau	2005	19,907	6648	6028	4051	3180
South West Pacific	Papua New Guinea	2000	5,190,786	372,453	313,848	2,319,291	2,185,194
East Pacific	Pitcairn	2004	52	...	...	...	...
East Pacific	Samoa	2006	180,741	19,120	18,588	74,557	68,476
South West Pacific	Solomon Islands	1999	406,598	34,785	27,557	175,105	169,151
South West Pacific	Timor-Leste						
East Pacific	Tokelau	2006	1,466	...	...	736	730
East Pacific	Tonga	2006	101,991	11,860	11,798	39,912	38,421
East Pacific	Tuvalu	2002	9,561	2,281	2,211	2,448	2,621
South West Pacific	Vanuatu	1999	186,678	20,726	19,368	74,956	71,628
East Pacific	Wallis et Futuna	2003	14,944				

Source: PRISM Data

Table a.9 Life Expectancy

Sub region	Country/Territory	Year	All persons	Male	Female
East Pacific	American Samoa	2006	72.4	68.5	76.2
East Pacific	Cook Islands	2001	71	68	74
West Central Pacific	Micronesia	2000	67	66.5	67.5
South West Pacific	Fiji Islands	2007	65.4	63.8	67.8
East Pacific	French Polynesia	2006	74.9	73	76.9
West Central Pacific	Guam	2002	77.7	74.5	80.8
West Central Pacific	Kiribati	2005	61	58.9	63.1
West Central Pacific	Marshall Islands	1999	67.5	65.7	69.4
West Central Pacific	Nauru	2006	56.2	55.2	57.1
South West Pacific	New Caledonia	2007	75.9	71.8	80.3
East Pacific	Niue	2006	71.5	67	76
West Central Pacific	Northern Mariana Islands	2000	75.1	72.5	77.8
West Central Pacific	Palau	2005	69.2	66.3	72.1
South West Pacific	Papua New Guinea	2000	54.2	53.7	54.8
East Pacific	Pitcairn	...	...	...	...
East Pacific	Samoa	2006	73	71.8	74.2
South West Pacific	Solomon Islands	1999	61.1	60.6	61.6
South West Pacific	Timor-Leste				
East Pacific	Tokelau	1990	69.1	67.8	70.4
East Pacific	Tonga	2006	70.2	67.3	73
East Pacific	Tuvalu	2002	63.6	61.7	65.1
South West Pacific	Vanuatu	1999	67.3	65.6	69
East Pacific	Wallis et Futuna	2003	74.3	73.1	75.5

Source : PRISM

<http://www.spc.int/prism/Social/Demog/HealthInd.html>

Table a. 10 Ratio of Boys to Girls in Primary Schools

Sub region	Country/Territory	Primary		
		Primary 1990	Primary 2000	Primary 2000-2007
East Pacific	American Samoa			
East Pacific	Cook Islands	0.98	0.89 (2003)	0.88 (2007)
West Central Pacific	Micronesia	0.92 (1994)	0.94	0.96 (2006)
South West Pacific	Fiji Islands	0.94 (1992)	0.98	0.95 (2005)
East Pacific	French Polynesia			
West Central Pacific	Guam			
West Central Pacific	Kiribati	0.98	0.93	0.98 (2005)
West Central Pacific	Marshall Islands	0.85 (1988)	0.80 2002-03	0.91 (2005)
West Central Pacific	Nauru	1.03 (1992)	1.15	0.94 (2007)
South West Pacific	New Caledonia			
East Pacific	Niue		0.90 (2001)	1.06 (2007)
West Central Pacific	Northern Mariana Islands			
West Central Pacific	Palau	0.89	0.97	0.92 (2005)
South West Pacific	Papua New Guinea		0.86	0.80 (2000)
East Pacific	Pitcairn			
East Pacific	Samoa			0.93 (2005)
South West Pacific	Solomon Islands	0.80 (1986)	0.86 (1999)	0.89 (2005)
South West Pacific	Timor-Leste			
East Pacific	Tokelau		0.96 (2003)	0.96 (2003)
East Pacific	Tonga		0.90 (2001)	0.90 (2005)
East Pacific	Tuvalu	0.87 (1991)	0.93 (2002)	0.88 (2006)
South West Pacific	Vanuatu	0.88 (1991)	0.91 (1999)	0.90 (2007)
East Pacific	Wallis et Futuna			

MDG stats 3A 3.1

Sources: PRISM - Pacific Regional Information System

Table a.11 Ratio of Boys to Girls in Secondary Schools

Sub region	Country/Territory	Secondary			
		Secondary 1990	Secondary 2000	Secondary 2005-2007	
East Pacific	American Samoa				
East Pacific	Cook Islands	1.12	0.94 (2003)	1.01	(2007)
West Central Pacific	Micronesia	0.98 (1994)	1.04	0.99	(2006)
South West Pacific	Fiji Islands	1.05 (1992)	1.07	1.06	(2005)
East Pacific	French Polynesia				
West Central Pacific	Guam				
West Central Pacific	Kiribati	1.16	1.14	1.01	(2005)
West Central Pacific	Marshall Islands	0.91 (1988)	1.04 2002-03	0.98	(2005)
West Central Pacific	Nauru	0.75 (1992)	0.84	1.06	(2007)
South West Pacific	New Caledonia				
East Pacific	Niue		0.83 (2001)	0.87	(2007)
West Central Pacific	Northern Mariana Islands				
West Central Pacific	Palau	1.08	0.88	1.05	(2005)
South West Pacific	Papua New Guinea		0.67		
East Pacific	Pitcairn				
East Pacific	Samoa			1.06	(2005)
South West Pacific	Solomon Islands	0.57 (1986)	0.70 (1999)	0.77	(2005)
South West Pacific	Timor-Leste				
East Pacific	Tokelau		1.12 (2003)		
East Pacific	Tonga		0.99 (2001)	0.98	(2005)
East Pacific	Tuvalu	1.05 (1991)	0.86 (2002)	1.21	(2006)
South West Pacific	Vanuatu	0.84 (1994)	0.93 (1999)	0.99	(2007)
East Pacific	Wallis et Futuna				

MDG stats 3A 3.1

Notes:

a No data collected from 2002 census and 2006 mini census to derive indicator

...

Sources: PRISM - Pacific Regional Information System

Table a. 12 Ratio of Boys to Girls in Tertiary Schools

Sub region	Country/Territory	Tertiary	
		Tertiary 1990	Tertiary 2000
East Pacific	American Samoa		
East Pacific	Cook Islands	0.9	1.0 (2001)
West Central Pacific	Micronesia	0.8 (1994)	1.1
South West Pacific	Fiji Islands	0.8 (1995)	1.0
East Pacific	French Polynesia		
West Central Pacific	Guam		
West Central Pacific	Kiribati	1.0 (1995)	1.0
West Central Pacific	Marshall Islands	0.5 (1995)	0.9 1002-03
West Central Pacific	Nauru	0.6 (1995)	2.2
South West Pacific	New Caledonia		
East Pacific	Niue	1.6 (1995)	2.5
West Central Pacific	Northern Mariana Islands		
West Central Pacific	Palau	0.7	1.3
South West Pacific	Papua New Guinea		0.6
East Pacific	Pitcairn		
East Pacific	Samoa	1.2 (1995)	1.1
South West Pacific	Solomon Islands	0.3 (1995)	0.3
South West Pacific	Timor-Leste		
East Pacific	Tokelau	1.3 (1995)	0.7
East Pacific	Tonga	0.8 (1995)	0.7 (2001)
East Pacific	Tuvalu	0.4 (1991)	0.9 (2002)
South West Pacific	Vanuatu	0.4 (1995)	0.5 (1999)
East Pacific	Wallis et Futuna		

MDG stats 3A 3.1

Notes: a No data collected from 2002 census and 2006 mini census to derive indicator

...

Sources: PRISM - Pacific Regional Information System