AID, OWNERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

THE INVERSE SOVEREIGNTY EFFECT IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

John Overton, Warwick E. Murray,
Gerard Prinsen, Avataeao Junior Ulu
and Nicola Wrighton

Aid, Ownership and Development

One of the key principles for effective aid programmes is that recipient agencies exert high degrees of ownership over the agendas, resources, systems and outcomes of aid activities. Sovereign recipient states should lead the process of development. Yet despite this well-recognised principle, the realities of aid delivery mean that ownership is often compromised in practice.

Aid, Ownership and Development examines this ‘inverse sovereignty’ hypothesis with regard to the states and territories of the Pacific Island region. It provides an initial overview of different aid ‘regimes’ over time, maps aid flows in the region, and analyses the concept of sovereignty. Drawing on a rich range of primary research by the authors and contributors, it focuses on the agencies and individuals within the Pacific Islands who administer and apply aid projects and programmes. There is indeed evidence for the inverse sovereignty effect; particularly when island states and their small and stretched bureaucracies have to deal with complex and burdensome donor reporting requirements, management systems, consultative meetings and differing strategic priorities. This book outlines important ways in which Pacific agencies have proved adept not only at meeting these requirements, but also asserting their own priorities and ways of operating. It concludes that global agreements, such as the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005 and the recently launched Sustainable Development Goals, can be effective means for Pacific agencies to both hold donors to account and also to recognise and exercise their own sovereignty.

John Overton is a geographer who has worked on development issues and the Pacific region for over thirty years. His Pacific education began with a position at the University of the South Pacific in the mid-1980s and has continued through working with many students and colleagues from the Pacific Island region. He is currently Professor of Development Studies at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

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Nicola (Nicki) Wrighton spent many years working in the Pacific Island region for aid agencies, as a consultant and for Pacific organisations, including the Government of Tuvalu. Her master's degree in 2010 on aid and Tuvalu helped shape the Marsden Fund grant that funded the research for this book. She was working on her PhD on aid and sovereignty in the Pacific at Victoria University of Wellington when illness struck and she died tragically in 2014.

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Abbreviations

AAA	Accra Agenda for Action
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific countries
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AMD	Aid Management Division (Tonga)
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
AVID	Australian Volunteers for International Development
CDC	Cabinet Development Committee (Samoa)
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency (disestablished)
CNMI	The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
COFA	Compacts of Free Association (between the USA and Palau, the RMI and the FSM)
COP	Conference of the Parties (to the UN)
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSR	Colonial Sugar Refining Company
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (of the OECD)
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
DFID	Department For International Development (UK)
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
EEC	European Economic Community
EIB	European Investment Bank
ELR	Employment Law Reform (Vanuatu)
EPAs	Economic Partnership Agreements
EU	European Union
EVs	Electric Vehicles
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation (of the UN)
FAP	Forward Aid Programme (Niue)
FATDC	Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FMS	Financial Management Systems
FSC	Fiji Sugar Corporation

FSM	Federated States of Micronesia
GBS	General Budget Support
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFC	Global Financial Crisis
GFC	Green Climate Fund
GNI	Gross National Income
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
IEOM	Institut d'émission de l'Outre-Mer
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFC	International Finance Corporation
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IR	International Relations
ISEE	Institut de la statistique et des études économiques (New Caledonia)
JBIC	Japan Bank for International Cooperation
JcFd	Joint Committee for Development (Government of Niue/ Government of New Zealand)
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LES	Locally Engaged Staff
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (New Zealand)
MIGA	Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency
MIRAB	Migration, Remittances, Aid and Bureaucracy
MoFNP	Ministry of Finance and National Planning Tonga
MSG	Melanesian Spearhead Group
MSGTA	Melanesian Spearhead Group Trade Agreement
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NDA	National Designated Authority (Green Climate Fund)
NDS	National Development Strategy (Solomon Islands)
NECC	National Energy Coordinating Committee (of Samoa)
NEMS	National Environmental Management Strategies
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NZAID	New Zealand Agency for International Development (reintegrated into MFAT)
OCTs	Overseas Countries and Territories (of the EU)
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OIA	Office of Insular Affairs (USA)
PACC	Project and Aid Coordination Committee (Tonga)
PACER	Pacific Agreement on Closer Relations
PACTAM	Pacific Technical Assistance Mechanism
PEFA	Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PRC	People's Republic of China

PROFIT	People, Resources, Overseas para-diplomacy, Finance/taxation and Transportation
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategies
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands
RMI	Republic of the Marshall Islands
RSE	Recognised Seasonal Employer (New Zealand)
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programmes
SBS	Sectoral Budget Support
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDL	Soqosoqo Duavata ni Lewenivanua (United Fiji Party)
SDP	Strategic Development Plan (Fiji)
SDS	Strategy for Development (Samoa)
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SIG	Solomon Islands Government
SOLMAS	Solomon Islands Media Assistance programme
SPARTECA	South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement
SPC	Pacific Community (formerly South Pacific Commission)
SPREP	South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme
SWApS	Sector Wide Approaches
SWP	Seasonal Worker Programme (Australia)
TA	Technical Advisors
TERM	Tonga Energy Road Map
TESP	Tonga Education Support Programme
TSDF	Tonga Strategic Development Framework
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training programme (Tonga)
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	UN programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCRD	UN Centre for Regional Development
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNEP	UN Environmental Programme
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	UN Population Fund
UNGA	UN General Assembly
UNHCR	the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (also known as the UN Refugee Agency)
UNICEF	UN International Children's Emergency Fund (known as the UN Children's Fund)
UNRISD	UN Research Institute for International Development
UNTA	UN Technical Assistance
US-GAO	United States Government Accountability Office
VSA	Volunteer Service Abroad (New Zealand)
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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Tourists and Moai statues, Rapa Nui

1 Aid in the Pacific in historic and geographic context

Aid in the Pacific Islands

There is considerable debate about the impact of aid in the Pacific. Critics of aid range from those who see it as a form of neo-colonial dominance to those who argue that it is at best ineffective and, at worst, a severe constraint on economic growth. The critics on the political left see aid as a tool of control over Pacific Island states by major donors (Stephen 2001). It is, thus, one of a number of instruments which diminish Pacific self-determination, belittle the ability of Pacific Island people to manage their own affairs, and frame the region and its residents as passive, in need, fragile and helpless. On the other hand, critics from the right of politics point to the very large volumes of aid flowing into the region and yet very poor economic performance: a situation that leads to the conclusion that ‘aid has failed the Pacific’ (Hughes 2003).

Yet despite these criticisms of aid in the region and the fact that many of its countries and territories have much more favourable development indices – in terms of literacy, income and life expectancy - than elsewhere in the Global South, aid levels have been maintained or increased in the past two decades. This has been the case even though the global financial crisis of 2007–2008 had severe impacts on the economies of the major donors to the region: USA, France, Australia, Japan and New Zealand. Furthermore, the aid landscape of the region has been continually transformed over recent years: China and other non-traditional donors have become more active; there have been fundamental shifts in the driving principles of established donors; and the climate change issue is becoming a more prominent feature of the narratives concerning aid and donor-recipient relationships.

The mainstream view of aid relationships, often expressed in documents by the OECD or UN, often builds on a set of stereotypes and truisms concerning the region and its ‘inherent’ geo-economic and geopolitical, and environmental vulnerability. This view encompasses the following assertions:

- The island states and territories¹ of the Pacific comprise the most aid-dependent region of the world.

2 *Aid in the Pacific in historic and geographic context*

- Most of these entities are small in size, with populations numbering from thousands to less than one million; their land areas are fragmented in small islands generally over vast swathes of sea; and they occupy a marginal position in the global economy, hampered by very high unit transport costs and limited economies of scale.
- Colonial relationships persist with some territories remaining as integrated parts of metropolitan countries (Hawai'i, Rapa Nui) and others with partial degrees of self-determination (New Caledonia, Tokelau). Such relationships have particular implications for sovereign decision-making and aid volumes.

Whilst some of these assertions are empirical realities and do have detrimental implications for mainstream development indices, it is our contention that the broader outcomes of such factors are complex and contested. Although there are significant problems associated with political-economic power asymmetries, the Pacific is not necessarily as vulnerable or passive as orthodox analyses often portray.

The superficial view of aid relationships touched on above in the region disguises considerable difference and debate with regard to the way Pacific Island people experience, negotiate, manage and benefit from aid. It also hides significant questions about what aid is, why it is given and received and how it relates to processes of development. Experiences of aid in the region vary considerably. For example, although Papua New Guinea receives much more official aid than any other Pacific Island state – \$US 656 million in 2013 (see Table 1.1), its per capita aid receipts (\$US 89) are by far the lowest. On the other hand, the territory of Tokelau received only about \$US 24 million in 2013 but this amounted to over \$US 20,000 for each one of its 1200 residents.

The relationships that shape aid patterns are being played out through a complex set of agreements, and protocols as well as both institutional and personal networks. From the donor side, although the years 2000–2008 were marked by a strong promotion of poverty alleviation as the driving principle for aid, this did not displace the underlying self-interests of donors in engaging with the region. Various donors have recognised a long-standing obligation to some islands resulting from a colonial past; most have sought in some way to gain political support (as in the voting rights of Pacific states in international forums) through aid diplomacy; yet others have sought to use aid as a means of opening and building commercial relationships with the region to steer aid revenues back to their own economies through overt or subtle forms of what is described as 'tied aid'. For Pacific Island states, aid has become a critical and seemingly permanent element of their economies, paying for development projects (roads, airports, water supplies, agricultural schemes), supporting capacity building (training, education), and financing government expenditure (health, education). For many, aid has become, like remittances from citizens working overseas, a key determinant of local living standards.

Table 1.1 Countries and territories of the Pacific Islands²

	<i>Population (estim 2013)</i>	<i>Land area (km²)</i>	<i>Net ODA³ (2013 \$US mill)</i>	<i>ODA per capita (\$US)</i>
American Samoa	56,500	199	n.a.	n.a.
Cook Islands	15,200	237	15.29	1,006
Federated States of Micronesia	103,000	701	143.16	1,390
Fiji	859,200	18,333	91.24	106
French Polynesia	261,400	3,521	n.a.	n.a.
Guam	174,900	541	n.a.	n.a.
Hawai'i	1,374,810	16,634	n.a.	n.a.
Kiribati	108,800	811	64.58	594
Marshall Islands	54,200	18	93.91	1,733
Nauru	10,500	21	28.78	2,741
New Caledonia	259,000	18,576	n.a.	n.a.
New Zealand	4,439,000	268,107	-457.31	-103
Niue	1,500	259	18.30	12,200
Norfolk Island	1,895	35	n.a.	n.a.
Northern Mariana Islands	55,700	457	n.a.	n.a.
Palau	17,800	444	35.46	1,992
Papua New Guinea	7,398,500	462,840	656.54	89
Pitcairn	45	47	n.a.	n.a.
Rapa Nui	5,700	164	n.a.	n.a.
Samoa	187,400	2,934	118.18	631
Solomon Islands	610,800	28,000	288.32	472
Tokelau	1,200	12	24.06	20,050
Tonga	103,300	749	81.15	786
Tuvalu	10,900	26	26.80	2,459
Vanuatu	264,700	12,281	90.89	343
Wallis and Futuna	12,200	142	105.53	8,650

Source: South Pacific Commission, and OECD.Stat.

When examining aid in the Pacific then, it is clear that there are marked inequalities in power. Donors, in the form of governments negotiating bilateral arrangements, or international agencies representing many donors, appear to have much relative power. They can dictate the terms by which aid is received and spent and they can request or demand concessions, both economic and political. Donor power flows from the money they can offer but also from the way they can access or impose technical advice and expertise. Recipients, especially those from small countries, have small overstretched bureaucracies and the principle of being able to interact on an equal basis with donor countries is an illusion. Aid in the Pacific, despite all the rhetoric about partnerships, consultation and recipient ownership characteristic of global 'aidspeak', remains driven by donor systems, donor objectives and donor ways of operating.

The research on which this book is based began with this view above. Nicola Wrighton, our lead researcher, had spent many years working in

Figure 1.1 The Pacific Islands

the Pacific Islands, both for donor agencies (New Zealand) and, latterly, as an advisor for the Government of Tuvalu. In Tuvalu and Kiribati she was struck by the pressures faced by her local friends and colleagues (Wrighton 2010a, 2010b; Wrighton and Overton 2012). They had to receive an endless stream of diplomatic missions, journalists, academics and consultants, all visiting the islands to find information, consult, sign agreements, advise and ‘do development’. They also had to represent their country at numerous meetings overseas, often necessitating them leaving their desks for weeks at a time. And amongst all this, they had to prepare reports (often to comply with donor requests for information) and, somehow, conduct their usual daily jobs, all within a context where they were expected to be readily accessible to local people. Box 1.1 illustrates the conclusions Wrighton drew from Tuvalu on the basis of her research there. Out of her work this project sought to examine the issue on a wider Pacific stage. Its central concern was the way officials and institutions in the Pacific could exert – or not – a degree of control over their own development given the resources and constraints that came with aid.

Box 1.1 Arrivals in Tuvalu

Nicola Wrighton

A survey of visitor arrivals took place over a three week period in 2008. Several tourists and a dozen or so unidentified visitors arrived during this period. However, at least thirty-four people entered the country as part of approximately twenty-five development-related missions or visits over the period. The list at the end of this box gives an idea of the development-related personnel who arrived in Tuvalu over the three week period.

As far as is known, apart from the Pacific Regional Infrastructure Facility mission, none of the other missions represented more than one donor or agency. This is a surprising result given that this is an environment where donors have committed to harmonisation through agreements such as the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Pacific Aid Effectiveness Principles.

This level of arrivals is consistent with annual visitor statistics in 2008, collected by the Tuvalu government, which show that approximately 900 people entered Tuvalu on development-related business that year. This is approximately 10% of the total Tuvalu population (9729 at 1 July 2008 according to the Secretariat of the Pacific Community). Against the total population of Aotearoa New Zealand, this would roughly equate to 400,000 people coming into Wellington annually to discuss development-related matters. The equivalent in the UK would be approximately 6.5 million foreigners visiting government

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departments in London and in the USA a staggering 32 million foreigners knocking on government doors in Washington DC!

I undertook further ‘back of the envelope’ calculations. If each of the development personnel arriving in 2008 had meetings lasting an average of six hours with two Government officials in attendance (as a conservative estimate), five full-time staff would be needed to deal with well over 200 hours of meeting time per week.

Given the small size of Tuvalu’s civil service, the probable squashing of a large proportion of these meetings into the short time period between the arrival of the Tuesday plane and the departure of the Thursday plane, and the general opinion expressed by officials that missions are becoming more frequent, this level of engagement must have a significant impact on the amount of time Tuvalu Government officials have to do their own jobs.

Identified development-related personnel that arrived over the three week period:

- the researcher
- an environmental filmmaker
- an environmental researcher
- several consultants related to the same ADB mission on restructuring State-Owned Enterprises
- two consultants relating to metrology (from different agencies on different missions)
- two consultants relating to tax (from different agencies on different missions)
- four consultants on the same labour and employment mission
- at least six people from four different missions from different agencies relating to the environment
- two Tuvalu Trust Fund Advisory Committee members
- an AusAID placement under Pacific Technical Assistance Mechanism (PACTAM)
- the PACTAM programme manager
- a consultant for the Pacific Regional Infrastructure Facility (PRIF) (jointly funded by AusAID, NZAID, ADB and World Bank)
- an ADB consultant working on the Integrated Framework for Trade
- a consultant working on the government accounts system
- an AusAID official
- a group of three people from the Australia Pacific Technical College
- a consultant with the Tuvalu Public Works Department
- a consultant working with Customs.

Source: Adapted from Wrighton (2010b: 9)

Aid, ownership and sovereignty

Issues of aid are inextricably linked to questions of sovereignty. Although Pacific Island states and territories recognise the value of aid for their incomes and welfare, they are also strongly cognisant of the link between aid and dependence. Relying on donors, particularly on a single donor, for a large component of their economies means making compromises regarding power and control over their financial and other resources. Donors require a return on their ‘investment’ whether that be economic or political. The political or economic price of aid for Pacific Island governments is therefore a significant consideration to be kept in mind, even if it is not always made explicit by donors.

This concern about aid relationships between donors and recipients and the impact on sovereignty is not confined to the Pacific by any means. Indeed, we have identified it as a key element in determining how effective aid can be in addressing key development objectives in general (Murray and Overton 2011a). The global aid environment in the first decade of the present century was dominated by two key global agreements which underpinned the approach of most established donors, those who were members of the OECD’s Development Assistance Committee (DAC). The first was the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals by the United Nations in 2000. These articulated eight key goals and associated targets with the aim of alleviating poverty on a global scale by 2015. Subsequently, the MDGs began to guide many, if not most, development assistance. Aid programmes – whether by multilateral agencies such as the World Bank or the UNDP or by major Western donor countries – adopted this ‘poverty agenda’ and during the following years, many committed more and more funding these MDGs. It meant that, with the alleviation of poverty as the key objective, regions such as the Pacific did receive more aid but the expanded aid programmes were now redirected to activities with an explicit poverty focus as defined by the MDGs: primary education, maternal and child health, gender equality in schools, etc.

The second key global agreement was the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of 2005. This was the second of ultimately four ‘high level forums’ on aid effectiveness brokered by the OECD. The Paris Declaration was the pivotal agreement and its five principles (ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results, and mutual accountability) became central to development policy and practice worldwide. The principles were essentially concerned with improving the effectiveness of aid delivery yet, in retrospect, the core principles represented a remarkable degree of consensus about what made aid work. The ownership principle was the most important and, potentially, the most revolutionary. Despite thorny questions about ownership and legitimacy of different political entities, it acknowledged that the key lesson learnt from decades of aid delivery was that aid and development do not work when they are imposed on the supposed beneficiaries. Instead

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people, communities and states need to define their own development needs and prioritise resource allocation. They should develop their own strategies and solutions, they should be responsible for implementation and monitoring, and they need to live with, and be accountable for, the results.

Supported by the alignment and harmonisation principles, the Paris Declaration had the potential to rewrite global development aid practice. Reversing previous neoliberal approaches to limit and diminish the role of the state in development, it saw a lead role for recipient governments in developing poverty reduction strategic plans and overseeing long-term programmes through government budgets and institutions. And rather than replacing or replicating such state-led activities, donors agreed to support such state efforts, co-funding development efforts through Sector Wide Approaches (SWAs) or, ideally, General Budget Support (GBS). State institutions became critical and, in principle, donors were to step back and let local institutions take the lead.

As with the MDGs, the Paris Declaration had profound effects on the aid environment in the Pacific. Pacific governments were expected to articulate strategic three to five-year poverty reduction plans, all government departments were to implement and monitor these plans and a range of civil society organisations were to be consulted and be involved, along with government, in reducing poverty. In theory, the ownership principle would empower state institutions. Ideally, recipients would lead and donors follow: this would be a remarkable inversion of the apparent power imbalances noted above and national sovereignty, in making development policies, would be respected and encouraged.

However, the reality of aid turned out to be somewhat different. Understandably, donors were reluctant to merely pass on funding without robust systems for ensuring that funds were spent appropriately. They also wanted to ensure that governments consulted widely with their populations and were both transparent in the way their revenues were spent and accountable for any failures or misspending. Donors were keen to ensure that systems, plans and audits conformed to international standards and templates to make the global aid system consistent, workable and understandable. The result of these donor concerns was a plethora of systems, practices, policies, plans, agreements and consultations, all in the name of aid effectiveness but with the end result of a set of new conditionalities imposed upon recipients. Unlike the heavy policy conditionalities imposed during the neoliberal era of the 1980s and 1990s – most notably through much-criticised Structural Adjustment Programmes – these were ‘process conditionalities’. They were to do with the way officials and governments operated – sets of practices that were required as the price of higher aid receipts.

The inverse sovereignty hypothesis

So whilst the Paris Declaration discussed above made much of ‘ownership’, raising the prospect of enhanced local sovereignty over development, the

practice of aid threatened to challenge the independence and flexibility of Pacific governments. Supporting or restoring the recipient state's sovereignty was hailed as the overarching goal, but the actual exercise of sovereignty was curtailed and prescribed by donors. This we termed the '**inverse sovereignty effect**': the Paris Declaration aimed to reinforce policy sovereignty, but it was undermining and reversing it in practice (Overton et al. 2012; Murray and Overton 2011b).

This inverse sovereignty hypothesis guided our research project in the Pacific. Here it was to be given particular form, shaped by the complex issues of scale and political statuses in the Pacific. Nicki Wrighton's observations in Tuvalu (2010b) were a starting point: do small states such as Tuvalu struggle with these new demands and conditionalities more than larger ones? How do local officials cope with these demands in practice? How relevant are aid agendas at the global level to the realities of small island states? Furthermore, these questions could be broadened and reconstituted elsewhere in the Pacific: do those states that are less politically independent face fewer or more demands from their donors, along with higher aid volumes? Are there examples of some Pacific states or regional Pacific institutions that are able to use these new principles better than others? How do Pacific Island officials perceive and work within the aid policy environment in different ways? We hoped that if the inverse sovereignty hypothesis was confirmed, then it would be possible to inform policy at national, regional and global levels so that ownership and sovereignty could be better respected and enhanced.

In pursuing this research, the issue of sovereignty became a central concern. We were influenced by two different sets of debates in the Pacific. One involved the contentious matter of political independence. The Pacific region had been colonised by Western states during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and decolonisation occurred rather later and more slowly than in many other parts of the world. Independence was sought and fought for in the region. In some cases, it came relatively smoothly, and full independence was granted to countries such as Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands (see Table 1.2 below). Elsewhere, the move to independence seemed to stall. In Kanaky/New Caledonia some strong indigenous calls for independence in the 1980s were resisted by other residents. In smaller countries, such as Cook Islands, Niue or Palau, questions about viability of an independent state were tackled by adopting a partial model, where full internal self-government was coupled with a voluntary 'free association' arrangement where the former colonial power retained some powers and responsibilities and citizens were able to retain some rights within the metropole. And in yet other places, such as Tokelau, moves to full independence from New Zealand have been debated, but not followed through. Other Pacific islands, such as Wallis and Futuna, have never really considered independence from France. Political sovereignty remains a contested and complex notion in the Pacific Islands region and the relationship between national sovereignty and development is one we return to in chapter 4.

The second approach to sovereignty that informed this research came from two directions. Firstly, given that most of the research team lived and worked in Aotearoa/New Zealand, the debates there about Maori sovereignty – *tino rangatiratanga* – provided insights into a concept that is much more intricate and complex than the macro level and Eurocentric concept of state sovereignty (see Box 1.2). Instead issues of self-determination and control over one's own development at community or *iwi* (tribal) level arise and suggest that sovereignty should be seen as many-layered, multi-scalar and inherently complex. Secondly the work of Epeli Hau'ofa, in suggesting a Pacific world that extends beyond national borders and spans the ocean in networks of kin (Hau'ofa 1993), was very influential in highlighting the critical agency of Pacific Island peoples and kinship groups in identifying and exploiting a range of opportunities. For Hau'ofa, Pacific cultures and environments are not constraints, and adjectives such as 'small', 'traditional', 'communal' or 'maritime' are not limiting descriptors but help define a range of resources that Pacific people have proven adept at using.

Box 1.2 *Tino rangatiratanga* and Maori sovereignty

Hannah Mackintosh

"Indigenous scholars have argued that sovereignty emanates from the unique identity and culture of peoples and is therefore an inherent and inalienable right of people to the qualities customarily associated with nations" (Barker 1995: 3). From this perspective sovereignty is connected to identity and is defined within the context of particular local realities which are the result of specific historical experiences. This more holistic view moves sovereignty away from absolute power towards the ability to assert a common identity based on cultural practices, language and shared historical experiences.

The term 'sovereignty' itself is not often used within the Māori sovereignty movement. For many Māori, sovereignty is a European concept that carries the weight of a colonial history (Durie 1998; Moon 2000) and does not truly convey the meaning behind Māori aspirations and demands. For this reason, the more favourable term is *tino rangatiratanga* or self-determination⁴ (Melbourne 1995). Article Two of the Treaty of Waitangi of 1840 assured Māori they would retain their *tino rangatiratanga* over "lands, villages and all things precious" (Orange 2004). Sovereignty for Māori in Aotearoa, therefore, revolves around the assertion of *tino rangatiratanga*.

Māori calls for *tino rangatiratanga* in Aotearoa are often viewed as a Māori secessionist claim. Most Māori, however, view it as neither antagonistic nor threatening but rather it is a call for autonomy

and control over all decision-making relating to or impacting Māori (Dixon 2006; Durie 1998; O'Sullivan 2006). It represents the freedom to be able to engage meaningfully in all aspects of society as Māori and to be respected as a partner in the Treaty of Waitangi. This is therefore not necessarily a direct threat to the sovereign power of the state. However, it does call for the rearrangement of the current social order, "It is about forging a new social contract for living together differently" (Maaka and Fleras 2005: 103).

Not all Māori agree on the meaning or the aims of *tinio rangatiratanga*. In reality, it has different meanings for different individuals and collectives (Maaka and Fleras 2000). This has resulted in a movement which embraces a whole range of social, cultural, economic, spiritual and political aspirations (Chile 2006). Upon considering *tinio rangatiratanga*, Mason Durie (1998: 239) sums up the overall aspirations of Māori as:

Economic self-sufficiency, social equity, cultural affirmation and political power, stand alongside a firm Māori identity strengthened by access to *whānau*, *hapū* and *iwi* and confirmation that future generations of Māori will be able to enjoy their lands and forests, rivers and lakes, harbours and the sea and the air.

Thus an appreciation of the debates concerning *tinio rangatiratanga* can provide insights into wider understandings of sovereignty. Moving away from a simple state-centred view of absolute political power, we can appreciate that sovereignty can, and should, encompass how people and communities can exert ownership and control over their own resources, cultures and identity. Such forms of self-determination, then, have to do with politics and institutions but also with how sovereignty is practiced, negotiated and felt on an everyday basis over a range of systems, interactions and relationships.

Extracted and modified from: Mackintosh (2011)

Putting these ideas together, this research adopts a view of sovereignty that seeks to move beyond a simple notion of the supposed costs and benefits of political independence at national level – though that remains important – and instead suggest an additional view of sovereignty that stresses its malleable, diverse and multi-layered nature. Within the context of international aid, sovereignty is practiced and performed on an everyday basis and is not just given and accepted as an absolute state of (political) being. We place particular emphasis on the role of key agents in the aid world: the officials and politicians from both sides, the consultants, researchers, journalists and

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NGO workers who are engaged in aid negotiations, communication, implementation and evaluations.

Despite the clear asymmetries, the crucial issue is how recipients negotiate and interact in overt and less explicit ways in order to challenge the power inequities and capability problems that undermine sovereignty. As a consequence, the costs and benefits of aid to all parties involved are manifested in complex ways across the region. Three major factors affect the interactions and negotiation. Firstly, size and scale are important. Larger states receiving aid may have more to offer by way of resources and have better capacity to deal with the requirements for compliance and implementation that come along with aid inflows. Smaller states may struggle to deal with the burden of aid administration – as we shall see – yet they can also use their size to advantage, often being able to attract more from donors in per capita benefits than their larger neighbours. Secondly, political status is also a key factor. There is a clear correlation between dependence and aid: sovereign independent states generally attract much less aid than those territories that maintain higher degrees of association with a metropolitan ‘patron’ with whom they have a colonial history. And finally, culture is critical. This is not a simple anthropological matter of shared language, rituals, understandings and history – though these factors are of influence – but a more general issue of political and bureaucratic practice in the ways Pacific Island officials deal in different ways, through their attitudes, behaviours and policies, with donor institutions and officials.

If ownership and – by extension – sovereignty are to promote the efficacy of aid and development, then we need to examine it not only as a set of complex political and technical agreements and arrangements but also as an even more intricate set of practices, attitudes, protocols and relationships that work through dynamic personal and institutional networks that have evolved over a long history. In order to contextualise our research we turn in the subsequent section to a brief examination of colonial and postcolonial Pacific history emphasising the diverse and dynamic nature of sovereignty across space and time.

A brief history of colonisation and sovereignty in the Pacific

The interaction of the Pacific Islands with outside powers has moulded its sovereignty over a long period of time. Colonialism and negotiating the influence of external powers over the sovereignty of local polities on Pacific islands did not begin with the establishment of the formal European empires of the 1800s, although this is when it was first codified in a Western legal and political sense. The Pacific was first settled up to 40,000 years ago by humans moving into what is now Papua New Guinea. These people also spread subsequently into the islands of Melanesia (Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia and Fiji). Later, more extensive settlement was carried out by Austronesian people with groups crossing through the Indonesian

archipelago and Papua New Guinea into what is now Melanesia around 4000BP (Before Present), including Fiji by approximately 3000BP. The settlement of the broad area of Polynesia began around 2500BP with the last areas of the triangle to be settled being Hawai'i (1500 BP), Rapa Nui (1000BP) and Aotearoa (perhaps 800–1000BP) (Thorne and Raymond 1989). Conflicts over control of resources – at the time probably expressed through tributary obligation, but in today's terms associated with what we term sovereignty – were likely to have been many and, to an extent, drove the onward migrations of the Pacific peoples.

European contact was made first in the early 16th century with Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese explorers. It was in the 1700s and 1800s that European influence was consolidated through the actions of missionaries, traders and whalers that had built over previous centuries (Campbell 1989; Howe 1984, also Spate 1979). Competition between the two great maritime powers of the time, the British and the French, partly drove this. Firth (2000) refers to this early group of colonists as the 'buccaneers' of global capitalism. The South Pacific became an important strategic location given the political rivalries that existed during this phase of European expansion as it moved from the mercantile to the industrial phases of colonialism. The European powers brought with them their own particular concepts and philosophies such as, for example, Christianity, private property, money and moral codes regarding race, class and gender. Colonists and their supporters back in Europe considered these concepts as tools and as signifiers of progress and civilisation.

While there were economic as well as political interests that drove European colonisation of the Pacific – economic resources such as copra, fruit and sugar, and later minerals, served as inputs in the European industrial complex – resource extraction did not represent the main driver of colonisation in the Pacific. In fact, early colonisation throughout the Pacific in the first half of the 19th century was a rather slow process, still largely driven by mercantile trading interests both of European and Pacific people. We would describe the early colonisation process as one of polycolonialism: a complex and geographically differentiated colonisation process of the Pacific region by different actors, for different motives, at different scales and driven by an exogenous as well as endogenous dynamics.⁵ The exogenous dynamic came from early European traders and missionaries who – in order to support their business and proselytisation activities – called upon the governments of their mother countries to follow them and establish 'law and order'. In other words, the early settlers asked for political and material support from their governments to secure their often tenuous footholds in the Pacific and regulate the conflicts between themselves, as well as with Pacific peoples.

Generally speaking, the European metropolises provided this support rather reluctantly and certainly not in the volumes asked for by the early settlers. If anything, European governments of the time embraced policies emanating from Adam Smith's classic liberalism – free trade and minimal state intervention – and sought the expansion of global trade by private

trading houses. As such, the first dynamic of European colonisation in the Pacific was propelled by the establishment of trading posts of these trading houses, for which their shareholders alone bore the costs. One form of support European governments could give these trading houses was to strengthen their chief traders' positions by designating them their local diplomatic representatives. As representatives of their countries, these 'consuls' could then call upon their nations' battleships to settle business disputes with local adversaries or competing trading houses. For example, the trader John Brown Williams became the US representative in Fiji in 1846 and in 1849 he called in US warships to assert and expand his trade network against local chiefs. Similarly, the network of German trading house Godeffroy – having Chancellor Bismarck as a shareholder – represented Germany throughout the Pacific, with trading posts-cum-consulates in Samoa, Tuvalu and Tahiti.⁶

The endogenous dynamic that facilitated the formalisation of European colonisation resulted from the diverse set of formal treaties, business deals, and informal arrangements between local chiefs and political elites throughout the Pacific and – on the other hand – the European missionaries and traders-cum-consuls. These local Pacific elites used these relationships with European powers to increase their trade revenue and military capabilities and subsequently dominate or conquer neighbouring polities, or to engage in dynastic struggles for local power within Pacific polities. New Zealand's northern Māori polities, for example, were the first to acquire firearms through European traders and they began a violent and dramatic expansion of their influence throughout the entire North Island and as far as the Chatham Islands. These 'Musket Wars' took most of the first half of the 19th century and left tens of thousands of Maori dead or enslaved, overhauling the political map of Aotearoa/New Zealand. An example of a Pacific dynastic struggle that was exacerbated was the First Samoan Civil War between 1886 and 1894, characterised by increasingly violent warfare among rival local factions, each faction having successfully obtained support from equally rivalrous trading houses from Germany, the USA and Britain. This support started with the supply of guns and credit, but later expanded to military training and, after that, combat troops and even warships.

While the encounter between Pacific and European peoples and powers initially resulted in what we termed a polycolonial process, driven by endogenous and exogenous actors alike and each for their own motives, it generally ended by the late 19th century with a clear hegemony or full formal control over Pacific islands by European powers. Control or dominance over Pacific islands was ultimately determined in formal arrangements between European and American colonial powers. This process began notably with the Treaty of Waitangi between the majority of Māori chiefs and the British crown in New Zealand (1840) and, for France, with its unilateral declaration of New Caledonia as French territory in 1853. The process ended around 1900. A clear example of European and American control at the expense of Pacific political elites was the Tripartite Convention on Samoa of 1899

in which Germany, Britain and the USA partitioned the islands of Samoa – without any involvement of local parties. The three parties agreed to respect the territorial claims on Samoa by the USA and Germany and in exchange for withdrawing its claim on Samoan territories, Britain was offered the ‘rights’ to Tonga, from which Germany duly withdrew its claims and trading posts. Table 1.2 summarizes European colonialism and independence in the Pacific Islands. Although generally Europeans did not settle in vast numbers in the region, their influence was profound and far reaching, leading to the establishment of British, French and German colonies in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The German territories included Samoa (1900–1914) and German New Guinea (1884–1914). The French added French Polynesia and Wallis & Futuna in the 1880s and the British presence was centred on Fiji (1874), Papua and Solomon Islands. Thus, until the conclusion of the First World War, the region was controlled by three European powers though their effective power in many territories, especially in Melanesia, was relatively thin. In the late 19th century the USA added a number of territories including American Samoa and Guam, and came to play an especially important role in Micronesia mainly gaining control where the Spanish were defeated or had sold their colonial possessions. European populations settled in the region, but only in New Zealand and Hawai‘i were they able to usurp local polities and establish a degree of independence from the colonial power. French settlement in Polynesia and New Caledonia was relatively extensive but the territories remained part of metropolitan France in a formal sense.

In sum, in our view, colonialism in the Pacific throughout most of the 19th century did not involve a straightforward and successively wider military conquest of Pacific territory by European and American powers. Instead, in the Pacific the contacts with newly arrived non-Pacific actors created a process of polycolonialism; a complex dynamic of trade, conflict and competition among European and North American powers, within and between neighbouring Pacific polities, and also between Pacific peoples and the increasingly present outsiders. However, at the start of the 20th century, the overall balance of power and control was concentrated in the hands of the US and European governments as imperial control over Pacific islands was formalised in international diplomatic treaties. This launched the Pacific into mercantilist production circuits at the periphery of the evolving global economy.

The impacts are summarised by Firth writing on colonialism in 2000:

Globalisation when combined with colonial rule meant incorporation into the global economy on terms that suited the interests of the colonial powers . . . the place of the tropical world in the first globalization was to be subordinate to the temperate and developed world.

(p. 184)

Colonialism was unevenly felt across the region. In some places, such as Hawai‘i and Rapa Nui, the indigenous authority was overthrown, land

Table 1.2 Colonisation of the Pacific Islands

<i>Country</i>	<i>Comments on colonial history</i>	<i>Present political status</i>
American Samoa	After rivalry between Great Britain and Germany, the USA was granted the territory through the 1899 Tripartite Agreement. Named American Samoa in 1911	‘Unincorporated’ US territory (1967)
Cook Islands	European influence and Christianity spread in 1800s. British protectorate in 1888. Annexed by UK in 1900, and incorporated into the colony of New Zealand 1901	Self-governing in free association with NZ (1965)
Federated States of Micronesia	Annexed by Spain in 1885, sold to Germany in 1899 and captured by Japan in WW1. US administration established 1947 as part of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Self-governing as FSM 1979.	Independent with compact of free association with USA (signed 1986, formalised 1990)
Fiji	European settlers in the 1800s. Ratu Cakobau self-declared Tui Viti (king of Fiji) offered to cede to the UK in order to offset US and French power. Accepted by UK 1874	Independent (1970)
French Polynesia	First European settlers 1790s. 1842–1888: Island groups unilaterally declared French protectorate	‘Overseas collectivity’ of France (2003)
Guam	Annexed by Spain 1668, ceded to USA 1898. Occupied by Japan 1941–1944, re-occupied by USA	‘Unincorporated’ US territory (1950)
Hawai‘i	Kingdom of Hawai‘i overthrown in 1893. Republic led by US interests declared. Annexed to USA 1898, and fully incorporated following referendum in 1959	Integrated within USA (state – 1959)
Kiribati	British Protectorate of Gilbert and Ellice Islands became UK colony in 1916. Occupied by Japanese during WW2 until 1943. Ellice Islands became Tuvalu in 1978, and Gilbert Islands and other groups became Republic of Kiribati in 1979	Independent (1979)
Marshall Islands	Annexed by Spain 1874, sold to Germany 1884. Occupied by Japan in WW1 and administered by Japan as a trust territory 1919–1944. US administration 1947 as part of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Self-governing 1979	Independent with compact of free association with USA (1986)
Nauru	Annexed by Germany 1888, captured by Australia 1914, administered as a trust territory by Australia, NZ & UK 1919–1941. Occupied by Japan 1942–1945. Australia, NZ & UK trust territory 1947	Independent (1968).
New Caledonia	First European settlers, traders, missionaries and blackbirders in the 1840s. Unilaterally declared a French possession in 1853	‘Special Collectivity’ of France (1999)

<i>Country</i>	<i>Comments on colonial history</i>	<i>Present political status</i>
New Zealand	Became British territory 1840 following the Treaty of Waitangi. Self-governing 1857, dominion status 1907, 'equal status' with entities of the British Empire 1931, full separation of the UK and NZ crown in 1947 when this was ratified. 1986 Constitution Act adopted. 1987 revoked all residual UK legislative power	Independent (though some technical debate remains concerning the date of and exact nature). 1947 full sovereignty and 1986 Act led to free-standing constitutional monarchy in 1987
Niue	Acquired by UK as a protectorate in 1900, passed to NZ 1901 as part of Cook Islands. Separate status as NZ colony 1903	Self-governing in free association with NZ (1974)
Norfolk Island	Part of New South Wales colony – UK (1788). Territory of Australia 1913	External territory of Australia (1979)
Northern Mariana Islands	Acquired by Spain c.1668, sold to Germany 1899. Japanese UN mandate 1919, US administration 1947 as part of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands	US territory with 'commonwealth' status (1978)
Palau	Acquired by Spain 1574, sold to Germany 1899. Japanese UN mandate 1919, US administration 1947 as part of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands	Independent with compact of free association with USA (1994)
Papua New Guinea	Acquired by Germany (New Guinea 1884) and UK (Papua 1884 then to Australia 1906). Australia full control of Papua New Guinea 1921. Japanese occupation of most of the country 1942–1945.	Independent (1975)
Pitcairn	Early Polynesians became extinct prior to 15th century. Mutineers from the Bounty settled in 1790. UK colony (1838). 1856, entire population emigrated to Norfolk, but a small number returned to Pitcairn.	British overseas territory
Rapa Nui	European contact in 1722; Peruvian slave raids and disease greatly reduced population to less than 120 in early 1870s; annexed by Chile (1888)	Integrated within Chile. Chilean citizenship granted (1966)
Samoa	British missionaries from 1830. Two civil wars (1886–1894; 1898) reflecting Western interests (Germany, UK and USA). German Samoa annexed in 1900 under Tripartite Agreement (1899), occupied by New Zealand 1914–1962 (Western Samoa Trust Territory). Pacifist Mau resistance movement through 1900s. Independent in 1962. Renamed Samoa 1997.	Independent (1962)

(Continued)

Table 1.2 (Continued)

<i>Country</i>	<i>Comments on colonial history</i>	<i>Present political status</i>
Solomon Islands	German protectorate over North Solomons 1886 and British protectorate over southern islands 1893. German portion transferred to UK 1899. Occupied by Japan 1942. UK re-established 1945. Self-government 1976.	Independent (1978)
Tokelau	Missionaries from 1845, Peru slave raiders 1863, British protectorate after 1977, annexed by UK and included as part of Ellice Islands 1916. Placed under New Zealand administration 1925. Became incorporated into New Zealand 1949.	Part of New Zealand with self-governing legislature (1996)
Tonga	Missionaries from 1797. Unified under Tāufa'āhau in 1845 as a constitutional monarchy (constitution granted in 1875). Self-governing as a British protected state from 1900	End of protected status – fully independent (1970)
Tuvalu	Ellice Islands declared a British Protectorate in 1892 as part of British Western Pacific Territories, then as Gilbert and Ellice Islands from 1916 to 1974. Voted for independence as Tuvalu, separate from Gilbert Islands (Kiribati), in 1974.	Independent (1978)
Vanuatu	Labour 'blackbirding' and missionaries from 1860s. France and UK 'joint naval commission' 1887 to protect expatriates but no jurisdiction over indigenous inhabitants. France and UK declared a 'condominium' 1906. Confused administration with dual colonial systems.	Independent (1980)
Wallis and Futuna	First European settlers 1837, local treaties established French protectorate in Uvea (Wallis) 1887 and 1888 (Futuna and Alofi). Annexed as colony 1917 and under authority of New Caledonia. 1961–2003 French overseas territory.	French overseas collectivity (2003)

Source: Expanded and adapted from Murray and Overton (2015: 355)

was seized, and people displaced. In others, there was profound change in Pacific cultures due to the introduction of Christianity, wage labour, diseases and new material goods. In Fiji, Aotearoa/New Zealand, New Caledonia and French Polynesia, new populations from Europe and Asia were settled alongside Pacific societies, with major implications for national identity. In these places, colonialism was dominant, visible and disruptive. Yet, in many rural regions of some territories such as Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and parts of Vanuatu, daily life carried on largely as if colonial rule

did not exist. Indeed, only with the Second World War and the ousting or threatening of the colonial powers by Japan, was there any major visible presence and disturbance of daily life for a significant proportion of the region's population.

The era of formal colonialism in the Pacific lasted until the 1960s by which time colonialism had become consolidated in general terms. There were a number of major events during this period that were of influence and which rendered the colonial map ever-more differentiated. The First World War saw the end of formal German colonies in the region, with German Western Samoa being occupied by New Zealand on behalf of the British Empire in 1914. The remaining German protectorates including New Guinea and parts of Melanesia were formally handed over with the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. Many of the Japanese controlled territories of the early 20th century were transferred to the USA following defeat in the Second World War. Given the declining relative influence of Great Britain following this latter war, and to a lesser extent France, the USA rose to assume both political and economic power motivated in large part by Cold War politics of the post-1945 period. New Zealand and Australia inherited some of the influence over various territories and countries that Great Britain left behind during second half of the 20th century.

To an extent the colonial powers prepared some parts of the Pacific Islands for independence in the post-Second World War period, by recognising, protecting and incorporating elements of indigenous authority into the state's ruling institutions. Thus, in Fiji, selected chiefs became agents of the colonial state, left largely to control indigenous Fijian lands and villages, and in Tonga the royal family and associated nobles received British protection. These were examples, common throughout many parts of the Pacific, of a policy of 'colonial conservation': the maintenance, even strengthening, of a local political and social elite left largely in control of local populations while the European colonial powers managed the commercial and urban sectors more directly. Arguably this was a form of local sovereignty that was protected and nurtured (arguably even created) by the colonial states, albeit a form that ossified social hierarchies and limited the opportunities for social and economic mobility.

When independence did begin to appear in the Pacific Islands, it eventuated later than other waves of decolonisation across the world. This can be explained by debates concerning national viability (for smaller territories), lack of cohesion and potential conflict amongst diverse populations (Fiji, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea) and the important role that some colonies and territories played during the Cold War (French Polynesia and the American Micronesian territories especially). Colonies that moved to full independence included Samoa (1962), Nauru (1968), Fiji (1970), PNG (1975), Solomon Islands (1978), Kiribati (1979), and Vanuatu (1980) (see Table 1.2). Tonga, which had been a protectorate of Britain, withdrew from this arrangement to assume full independence in 1970.

Given the strategic role of the region and viability issues, models of semi-autonomy and other sovereignty arrangements were developed in the Pacific that at the time were unique to the world. In fact, these models were very similar to paths chosen by many other colonised islands in the Caribbean and the Atlantic and these models of unique sovereignty arrangement remain in place or continue to evolve until today – something we will explore further in Chapter 4. For example, the Cook Islands and Niue obtained ‘self-governing in free association’ status with New Zealand in 1965 and 1974 respectively. This sees the latter responsible for defence and much foreign and monetary policy while inhabitants of these countries have citizenship in New Zealand. More recently, in what we later discuss as ‘retroliberalism’ – harking back to the classic liberalism of the early 19th century – the New Zealand government has begun to refer to these territories together with fully dependent Tokelau, and other smaller islands and atolls as the New Zealand ‘realm’ (see Box 2.1). In the case of the USA, various ‘compact in free association’ agreements were reached with the Marshall Islands (1986), FSM (1986) and Palau (1994) – territories that were administered as United Nations trusts following the Second World War and during the height of the Cold War (see Box 3.4). Dependent status as ‘unorganised territories’ was developed in American Samoa and Guam which continue to play important military roles in the Pacific region for the USA. France – and many inhabitants of its territories – have been reticent to let go of its colonial status, despite pressure to do so both from the UN Special Committee on Decolonization and indigenous peoples of the territories. This has resulted in significant conflicts and independence movements in French Polynesia and New Caledonia particularly. The former played a very important role during the Cold War when nuclear tests were undertaken in the small atolls of the territory. The latter has one of the world’s largest nickel deposits which have provided an important mineral wealth resource for export. Each of the French territories has had several different official statuses.

There are also territories that have remained fully incorporated into the administrative structures of the colonial power. Hawai‘i, for example, was originally a Polynesian monarchy which was overthrown by American capitalist elites in order to maximise the gains of fruit and other exports. It became an official US colony from 1898 and incorporated as a state in 1959 becoming the 50th and newest of all the United States. Rapa Nui has also been fully incorporated to one extent or another over time following its annexation by Chile in 1888 after Europeans, including Scottish sheep farmers, had abandoned their economic interests. The current status of Rapa Nui as a *provincia* (the second tier in a four-tier spatial government system) in Region V of Chile is significant and came following the end of the Pinochet dictatorship in 1990 during which it was at the lower rank of *comuna*. Compared to other provinces, the population of the territory is very small and thus it wields relatively large influence within Chile. Despite a visible independence movement there is little prospect of change in the

future, especially given recent expansion of what the central government has termed ‘concessions’ under Bachelet (2014–2018).

However, as we discuss in Chapter 4, the story of decolonisation in the Pacific Islands is not simply a matter of an inevitable trajectory from colonial rule to full independence. Many countries have followed this path yet others appear to remain stalled (Robie 1989), paused (Connell 1988, 1993), or under continuous renegotiation (Baldacchino 2010). To some, incomplete decolonisation appears to be the result of colonial powers being reluctant to leave – such has been the narrative of many for New Caledonia/Kanaky for example. However, there are also examples of Pacific peoples themselves being reluctant to shed strong ties with their metropolitan ‘patrons’. Tokelau has rejected a degree of independence in two referenda, the result of New Zealand being pressured by the UN Special Committee on Decolonization (see Box 4.2). In various other territories (Rapa Nui, Wallis and Futuna, Guam, American Samoa for example) there does not seem to be a strong push for full independence despite some groups advocating this. Indeed, there are some examples of resistance to further decolonisation; in an interesting example of domestic inter-island rivalry, groups in the Marquesas Islands of French Polynesia have stated that, if the Tahitian independence movement was to get its way, it would seek to split from Tahiti and retain a status as a French territory.

There are good reasons for many Pacific islands to seek to maintain ties with the metropole. Beginning with independence and the postcolonial period, there has been a relatively large-scale migration of Pacific Island peoples to the Pacific Rim and beyond – especially to New Zealand, Australia and, to an extent, the USA and France. The remittances sent by migrants back to their homelands combined with high per capita levels of aid and associated government employment and bureaucracy led to the characterisation of the microstates of the postcolonial Pacific as comprised to lesser or greater degree by MIRAB economies.⁷ Remittances have continued through the generations, and although some migrant flows have been stemmed recently, third and fourth generations continue to send high levels of per capita remittances by global standards. To varying degrees, these MIRAB economies are predicated on maintaining constitutional arrangements that link them to their former or present colonial metropolises. For many fully independent Pacific states, the options for migration and remittances – and for high aid levels – are much more constrained. As we discuss at length further in this book, although aid has ebbed and flowed it has remained very high in per capita global terms. As a consequence, the power of donors has remained significant, calling into question the ostensible sovereignty of a number former colonies and semi-autonomous territories.

Political sovereignty, then, is varied and relates to different economic strategies being pursued by a very diverse range of Pacific states. However, sovereignty seems to have an increasingly economic dimension. The arrival of a period driven by neoliberal policies in the 1980s (see Chapter 2) has

caused some commentators to reflect on the economic and political sovereignty or otherwise of the Pacific Island countries and territories. As we explore in the next two chapters, strict conditionalities applied to aid and loans in the 1980s and 1990s attempted to impose neoliberal solutions for the Pacific Island economies, both independent and otherwise. Apart from the evolution of some export-oriented labour – or environmentally-intensive industries such as garments and agro-food exports in some of the larger economies, it has proven very difficult to obtain sustainable outward-oriented economic development. In fact, such developments have often been reliant on trade preferences which have been gradually withdrawn under the past two decades of WTO-inspired and enforced free market trade reform. Only tourism has provided sustainable economic opportunities, although the control and flow of profits is not always retained within the island economies themselves and the broader costs to sustainability can often be substantial. According to Firth, this period of globalisation, beginning in the late 1980s and early 1990s, represented a consolidation of weakened national sovereignty in the Pacific despite political independence:

Just as the place of the Pacific Islands in the first globalisation was to be subordinate to the temperate, developed world, so their place in the second globalisation is also to be subordinate, this time to a set of international institutions that have set the rules of the global economy. The new globalization *now combined with independent sovereign rule*, means incorporation into the global economy on terms that suit the interests of the financial markets, the aid donors, and those relatively few Pacific Islanders who are in a position to benefit from this situation. (Firth 2000: 191)

This complex colonial and postcolonial political and economic history has, as already noted, given rise to a wide range of formal arrangements and actual outcomes in terms of the sovereignty of the region. The process of decolonisation has been partial and diverse. There have been conflicts in the French territories, and to an extent the conflicts of Melanesia (such as Bougainville and the Solomon Islands) come as consequences of the long-term unfolding of colonialism in the region and in particular the creation of independent nation states that retain diverse ethnicities in ways that perpetuate precolonial struggles. It is perhaps not surprising that such postcolonial internal and regional conflicts have occurred in countries that had experienced only a thin veneer of colonial rule and where attempts to establish a single national identity and polity were largely unsuccessful. In contrast, as we have seen in the case of some territories such as Tokelau, there have been continued calls from the indigenous population to retain constitutional ties to the colonial metropole. In this sense formal measures of independence do not tell us the full story of sovereignty – it is fluid, negotiated and more difficult to measure than legal statuses and recognised histories might suggest.

Indeed, a central argument in this book is that sovereignty is as much about the day-to-day performance of political freedoms, independence and self-determination as it about such formal arrangements. Sovereignty is about agency as much as it is about structure.

The relationships between former colonies and the colonial powers remains deeply intertwined, variable, dynamic and complex. Therefore, the postcolonial landscape is one where a variety of institutions and individuals interact in multifaceted ways. Relationships occur at many levels, not just between the nation-states. This, and perhaps every, colonial and postcolonial moment is not monolithic – a concept we referred with reference to historic patterns as polycolonialism, but which may also be extended to the present array of arrangements regarding independence and sovereignty (see Chapter 7). Global structures, signals and flows are interpreted, ignored, adjusted and reformed by agency on the ground. Relationships are numerous, complex, multifaceted and two-way: ‘colonialism’ (defined broadly as the deliberate interpenetration of one system by another in search of material or other advantage) thus occurs in many forms. This involves much more holistic and flexible performances of sovereignty that go beyond formal constitutional arrangements and that ultimately, in the day-to-day affairs of the region, are of at least as much influence.

Researching aid in the Pacific

This book explores the complexities of sovereignty in the Pacific through the workings of international development aid. It analyses the inverse sovereignty hypothesis posited earlier in this chapter. Does the aid regime of the first decade of the 21st-century result in diminished sovereignty of small and overstretched Pacific island states, despite its rhetoric of country ownership and donor alignment and harmonisation? We do this by developing three ‘vertical’ themes and questions through subsequent chapters: (1) how do size and scale affect the ability of Pacific states to engage effectively with aid donors and secure benefits from aid? (2) to what extent does political status relate to the ability to establish policy sovereignty? and (3) what ‘cultures’ of aid – in terms of official and unofficial policies and practices – have developed and how can these help secure policy sovereignty – agency by Pacific islands – in the region?

With support from New Zealand’s Marsden Fund, a three-year research project took place largely from 2011–2014, with ongoing work undertaken since that date. Thesis work by Nicki Wrighton (PhD) and Avataeo Junior Ulu (Masters) and several others combined with the research work of the academic staff (Overton, Murray and Prinsen). Several country case studies were conducted, particularly focusing on the policies and practices of local aid offices and officials, together with an overview of aid volumes and policies in the region. For case studies in the Francophone territories, we received funding from France’s *Fonds Pacifique*. Subsequent funded research

work on migration and education in the Pacific has allowed some continued indirect engagement with a number of the locations and themes addressed in this book.

Although the project began with a plan to choose certain country case studies to cover a range of countries in terms of size and political status, a key principle from the outset that the work had to involve the active participation – and decision to participate – of Pacific individuals and offices. This guided the central research of Wrighton in particular who went to considerable lengths to explain her work then ask individuals and departments to join or not if they wished. It was an ‘opt-in’ principle and there was a strong wish not to contribute to the pressures on officials that Wrighton had noted earlier. Fortunately, officials in several countries were keen to participate and asked to join and were active and forthcoming in expressing their views and telling their stories. Through Wrighton’s work and that of others on the broader team (the supervision of Suaalii-Sauni and the master’s and doctoral research of Mountfort, Kiddle, Broadbent, Geary Nichol, Talagi, Thoma, Christ and Pirnia) we were able to compile a set of country-based material (Tuvalu, Cook Islands, Vanuatu, Samoa, Tonga, New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna, Niue, Solomon Islands). We draw on this work both throughout the text of this book and also through a series of ‘research insights’ boxes. The latter also include contributions from colleagues from throughout the region (Aiafi, Sisifa, Blaise, Mawyer and Taumeofolau) who we met and who challenged and extended our understandings of aid and sovereignty in the Pacific.

Despite the enthusiastic involvement of many Pacific Island participants, the research team remained a group of largely *palagi* (European) researchers based in New Zealand. Many of the team had much experience in the region, some could converse in Samoan, *bislama*, French or Spanish and others spent time working in local institutions. But the view is still largely that of outsiders. This has some advantages, in terms of the ability to retain a more detached global perspective on the issues, yet we could not possibly gain the sorts of relationships, insights and understandings that Pacific Island researchers could.

Overall, the methodological approach of the research was varied. We adopted a quantitative approach for the analysis of aid statistics and policies. Yet, for much of the work, we recognised the importance of the way participants gave meaning and expression to their own experiences. This recognised a more constructivist epistemology, one that recognised that different ways of knowing and communicating knowledge exist in the region (Gegeo 1998; Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo 2001). Qualitative approaches, through the use particularly of in-depth semi-structured interviews and discussions, coupled with observation, often participant observation, were effective in allowing participants to talk widely and freely, and in many instances steer the direction and tone of the conversations. Whilst not explicitly adopting Pacific methodologies, such as *talanoa* (for example Vaioleti 2006; Prescott 2008; Farrelly and Nabobo-Baba 2014; Suaalii-Sauni and Aiolupotea 2014),

we recognised that value of developing relationships through talking in a relaxed and appropriate manner.

Over the three years of the project, the central concern of the project – the inverse sovereignty effect – was questioned and adjusted. We soon found that this hypothesis gave us only a partial and sometimes misleading view of aid and aid relationships. Instead we identified and explored a sort of ‘perverse’ or ‘reverse’ sovereignty effect. Yes, we could see that the top-down compliance burdens of the new conditionalities were undermining policy sovereignty in many instances but there were also many instances of astute bottom-up strategies and practices being used to resist or reshape the nature of external control and influence. Pacific island officials were far from passive or powerless in aid relationships and, in fact, we saw many cases where the Paris Declaration principles were being followed and driven from within the region.

Overall, we reject some previous attempts to frame aid in the Pacific either as strongly negative (*pace* Helen Hughes) or marked by a simple dichotomy between dominant powerful donors and weak and passive recipients. It is the complexity and variability in practices and attitudes that we highlight, and it is in the niches and fissures of personalities, everyday practices and manifold interactions that we see the real exploration and exercise of agency by Pacific actors, expressing policy sovereignty. Nonetheless, we also return to the importance of formal and material aspects of the aid sector. Agreements, policies, statistics, review documents and signed memoranda of understanding are all important in giving substance to what is discussed, negotiated and contested.

The study is not concerned with grand theories or prescriptive approaches. We are not trying to define what is ‘good aid’ or appropriate sovereignty for Pacific peoples. Rather this is a largely descriptive and analytical study focused on policy, practice and the operational aspects of aid in the Pacific islands: we emphasise local agency, capabilities and resources. We aim to gather and compile ideas and examples from the region and globally to help inform how ownership/sovereignty can be given substance in the region and bring the improvements to their lives that Pacific peoples seek. Whilst focusing on the inverse sovereignty hypothesis, we are also mindful, following Hau‘ofa, Helu Thaman and other Pacific scholars, of the need to be critical of academic frames of development which portray Pacific peoples simply as vulnerable, constrained, passive and powerless (Hau‘ofa 1983; Thaman 1993). Thus, as well as being concerned with the way external agencies are imposing conditions and burdens on Pacific institutions and officials through the aid regime, we are keen to uncover ways in which Pacific people exercise appropriate agency in the aid world.

The book begins in the next chapter with a review of the global aid environment. Although our focus is on the period approximately between the years 2000 and 2010, marked by the overriding influence of the MDGs and the Paris Declaration, we place this period in the context of previous aid

'regimes', such as the neoliberalism of the 1980s and 1990s, and the more recent opening up of a 'retroliberal' era. Chapter 3 then paints a picture of aid in the Pacific, mapping volumes and flows of official aid over time and identifying key donors and recipients. It also attempts to place these aid flows against other forms of development assistance, such as trade preferences and migration concessions. We then seek in Chapter 4 to analyse in greater detail what is meant by sovereignty in relation to development aid. This begins with a review of conventional definitions of state sovereignty before exploring the way sovereignty is played out in Pacific island states in particular ways. This sees both a strongly island-centric and terrestrial view of sovereignty – bounded, competitive, territorial, yet contestable and tradable – and a more oceanic view, one that stresses fluidity, mobility, interaction and multiple identities.

In Chapter 5 we move explicitly to the inverse sovereignty hypothesis and assemble evidence of the way donor conditionalities combine with limited local capacity to produce often serious pressures that undermine the ability of local agencies to manage their own development effectively. However, Chapter 6 then examines the many ways in which Pacific Island agents and institutions are developing strategies and tactics to combat these pressures. This is a reverse effect, evidence of the assertion of policy sovereignty through a wide variety of policies, practices, relationships and negotiations. This demonstrates the ways in which many Pacific Island leaders and bureaucrats have proved very adept at engaging with the global aid regime and using it, through locally-adapted systems and social norms, to leverage important local gains and resist unpalatable external demands. Finally, in the concluding chapter, we attempt to pull the thematic strands of the book together, returning to our original questions and hypothesis. We also attempt to present some practical suggestions – drawn from exemplars throughout the region – for ways in which development sovereignty can be strengthened in the Pacific and help achieve the development aspirations of Pacific people.

Notes

- 1 Throughout this book 'island states' refers to independent island state nations (such as Fiji), and 'territories' refers to metropolitan overseas territories of which there is a range of types as we discuss elsewhere.
- 2 Tables 1.1 and 1.2 list island states and territories that we consider to be part of the Pacific Islands. We are aware that this is a subjective selection. We include Hawai'i and New Zealand, for example, because of their high proportional Pacific Island or Pacific Island-descended populations and their deep historical connections to the region.
- 3 Official Development Assistance as measured by the OECD. Negative values represent a net donor.
- 4 "*Tino rangatiratanga*" translates literally as "absolute chieftanship or full chiefly authority." However, in contemporary Aotearoa society it is more broadly defined as "the power to be self-determining" (Fleras and Spoonley 1999: 27).

- 5 This term is intended to counteract a monolithic view of colonialism that unfolds in a uniform way across the region. Similarly it could be argued that the decolonisation process, which is also highly complex and ongoing, has led to complex geographies of sovereignty, representing an extension of this earlier polycolonial process.
- 6 Processes such as those outlined here resonate with the later concept of the aid regime of 'retroliberalism' explored in chapter 2 which has state sponsored mercantilism at its core.
- 7 The acronym MIRAB refers to economies shaped by Migration, Remittances, Aid and Bureaucracy (Bertram and Watters 1985 – see Box 2.2).

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