

Internal Migration in the Pacific Islands: a regional overview

Vijay Naidu and Linda Vaike

ABSTRACT

Internal migration in the Pacific islands, especially in Melanesia has become more widespread and intense over the last 50 years. However, this movement of people from smaller 'outer' islands and interior regions of the larger islands to 'main' islands and coastal towns and cities is less documented, and studied when compared to international migration from Pacific Island Countries PICs). This paper seeks to provide an overview of internal migration in PICs using the apparently contradictory standpoints of urban bias theory, and new economic geography as well as by using historical and contemporary information to provide the context of current internal migration trends. It is shown that there are significant gaps in the provision of statistics relating to both inter-provincial migration and urbanization, particularly with regards to gendered information. The paper maintains that with modernization there has been on-going improvement in girls and women's access to education, and opportunities of employment in the formal sector. As both higher educational and employment opportunities are primarily found in urban areas, the previously male dominated migration patterns are being replaced by movements that exhibit greater gender parity.

Key words: *Internal migration, urbanization, gendered migration, informal settlements, and ethnic enclaves*

INTRODUCTION

This paper seeks to describe trends in internal migration in Pacific island countries (PICs) over the last 50 years based on existing literature, population censuses and media reports. It eclectically uses elements of Urban Bias Theory (UBT) and the opposing ‘new economic geography’ approach in its examination of these trends. It notes that historically towns and cities were places for Europeans and Asians where indigenous people generally, and indigenous women in particular were only itinerant ‘strangers’. This situation changed in the post-Second World War era, and especially since the 1960s with the initial movement of mainly men followed by increasing numbers of women, the latter reflecting changing gender relations over time.

In their discussion of the continuing debate about UBT and its critiques, Corbridge and Jones (2010) point out that UBT has shifted over time from the argument that ‘price twists’ (distortions) for rural products favour urban consumers to a more generalised policy orientation that favours the concentration of administration, commerce and other services as well as better infrastructure and utilities in towns and cities. This appears to have some validity (Lipton, 1977; Lipton, 2005). Interestingly, policy makers in PICs have not been favourably inclined to urbanisation. According to the World Bank:

“Despite the many benefits of urbanization, many policy makers in the region continue to view towns with concern, if not alarm. They cite the profound effect on customary traditions and relationships as well as the difficulty of providing and maintaining public infrastructure and services, the proliferation of informal settlements, worsening environmental conditions, and increasing social problems associated with unemployment and underemployment. (ND, 3).”

However the recent ‘new economic geography’ perspective, (Corbridge & Jones, 2010; Ellis & Harris, 2004) perceives urban centres as ‘engines of growth’ with numerous positive linkages to rural areas. Cities are looked upon very positively by all international financial institutions as well as UNESCAP (ADB, 2010; IMF-World Bank, 2015). The standpoint of this paper is that in PICs there appears to be some urban bias in policy making reflected by relative neglect of rural areas, however urban areas are not all centres of growth but do have complex interconnections with rural hinterlands (see McDonald, Naidu & Mohanty, 2014).

Internal migration in the Pacific has become widespread. Hitherto international migration and attendant internal migration characterized nearly all Polynesian and Micronesian countries but not the larger countries of Melanesia, the exception being Fiji. While scholarly research on emigration and its effects up to the contemporary period in the region is well established (see Hugo & Bedford, 2013; Connell, 2011), the equally significant longer term movements of people within Pacific island countries (PICs) is not so well researched. Among reasons for this state of affairs is that information relating to internal migration is somewhat more difficult to garner, and even national census data are not altogether adequate for analysis of internal migration (Walsh, 2006). This paper will explore the various types of internal migration in PICs including urbanization with a focus on gender dimensions of these forms of longer term population mobility. It argues that with the emerging trends in education and employment there will be more demographically balanced migration involving men and women in the future.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Population movements were not uncommon in pre-colonial Pacific countries in the sense of people, usually groups of them moving spatially from the territorial area of one tribal group to another. Although there was no nation state in the Pacific prior to European colonialism, polities comprising a tribal group or a number of such groups, and even proto-states did exist (see Crocombe, 1971, Gilson, 1970, Nayacakalou, 1975; Sahlins 1970, Valentine, 1970, Naidu 1988). Both matrilineal and patrilineal systems existed with a number of societies exhibiting attributes of the two systems. In terms of gender relations, the division of labour was based on clearly defined work for men and women. The extent of ownership over resources such as land and power held by men and women varied from society to society and in accordance to the extent to which they were patrilineal or matrilineal. However in all Pacific societies women played important roles in production of food, artefacts and in the provision of services, as well as in reproduction and nurturing. They also were part of exchange relations between communities. Relationships between neighbouring tribes as well those more distant were established and reinforced by marriage ties, with the exchange of women and gifts. These also strengthened trading relations and alliances during times of war (Chowing, 1973). Conflicts between clans and tribes often resulted in the relocation of the defeated group. The victors took the territory and not unusually women from the vanquished. The era of 'black birding' and slavery followed by the Pacific labour trade extracted more than 100,000 islanders to labour in the guano mines of Peru, Guatemala, and Mexico, and to toil in the plantations of Queensland, Fiji, New Caledonia, Samoa and Hawaii (MacArthur, 1968; Parnaby, 1972; Graves, 1984). This labour trade ceased in Australia in 1900 with the Australian Federation and the adoption of racist 'White Australia' immigration policy which included the forceful repatriation of islanders and their families, but it continued as an adjunct to the Indian indentured labour in Fiji until 1920s. Mostly men, but women, boys and girls were also recruited.

"Prices for good-looking women were highest, around 13 pounds per head, for men, from 9 pounds, for boys and girls, from 5 pounds to 7 pounds..." (Ross, 1964, p. 72).

Labour recruitment in the islands occurred during a period of declining populations largely because of islanders' lack of immunity to European diseases (Moorehead, 1966). With young able bodied persons leaving to labour in mines and plantations abroad, their villages increasingly faced poverty and disorganization. This in turn encouraged those who had returned to their home countries to return to work abroad again. Some 30 percent of the workers in Queensland in the later period had previously laboured in other islands (Graves, 1984, p. 121).

The labour trade began with coastal 'salt water' people but ended up with the recruitment of inland people in the larger islands of Melanesia (Parnaby, 1972). And it was not unusual that on their return passage on several occasions labourers were dumped on islands and communities other than their own. When these labourers were unable to find their way home, and if they survived the ordeals of being in hostile territory, and if allowed by generally suspicious resident land owners, they and their descendants settled among host communities assimilating their languages and cultures. This engendered the settlement of people in a new locality which would not have happened without the labour trade.

Following the conversion of many Pacific islanders and the imposition of colonial rule, movements of people became safer and more established. With conversion to Christianity, it was common place to separate and relocate the converted from those who were perceived to be pagans. This practice was began by the missionaries and reinforced by the colonial authorities. Nuclear families based on monogamous relationships were encouraged together with a gender division of labour not unlike Victorian English practices. In-land communities were encouraged to move to coastal and more accessible localities. What are deemed to be 'traditional villages' in a number of PICs are the products of this nineteenth and early twentieth century process.

However, in most cases indigenous people were encouraged by colonial authorities to inhabit designated villages and hamlets, and to continue to engage in subsistence livelihoods unless required to labour in the colony's plantations, mines, other economic activities and public works. Generally speaking such in-country labour recruitment was short term to ensure that wages would be kept low, and the terms and conditions of labour (for instance, housing) also assured high profit margins. Initially a clear majority of labourers for mining and plantation work were men, although overtime small numbers of women were engaged. The pre-capitalist modes of production subsidized the capitalist venture. It was only in the post-second world war period that there was more permanent recruitment of island labourers, married couples and somewhat improved housing (Emberson-Bain, 1994; Amarshi, Good & Mortimer, 1979).

With the exception of Dili in Timor Leste, and Hagåtña in Guam, urban centres in PICs are relatively new phenomenon. Most are less than 150 years old, and some half as old. As places of native settlement, there are even more recent still. In the early period too, the emerging port towns and cities were not for 'natives', these were places for Europeans, and sometimes Asians (Spoehr, 1963). These foreigners dwelled in the foreign enclaves whilst indigenous islanders were compelled by law to reside in their villages. A system of 'pass law' prevailed in Fiji which required indigenous Fijians to have an official permit to travel outside their village. However, as labour was needed for onerous physical work such as road construction, building and stevedoring there was some relaxation on the tight control of the movement of able bodied male 'natives'. Small migrant settlements were established unobtrusively at the margins of urban areas especially from the 1950s. For instance, by 1959 Honiara had a population of 3,534 comprising 80% Melanesian and Polynesian Solomon Islanders, 10% Europeans and 8% Chinese. "Males outnumbered females by three to one in 1959 with a sex ratio in Honiara of 315 (males per 100 females), reflecting the fact that population circulation and cash employment at that time were dominated by males (Government of Solomon Islands, 2008, p. 18).

Both in towns and cities and in mining and plantation localities, more and more women began to join their men-folk. In mining settlements female company was sought by white male workers as well as indigenous men. Mining companies often turned a blind eye towards prostitution in the midst of company settlements (Emberson-Bain, 1994). It can be said that towns and cities (often port towns and cities) which in the late 19th and early 20th centuries began primarily as places for Europeans and Asians, increasingly, in the latter half of the 20th century became home to indigenous men, and only very gradually to indigenous women.

URBANISATION IN THE POST-COLONIAL PERIOD

Internal migration to places of commercial economic activities including the movement of people to urban centres gained momentum in the last 50 years. According to the Director of Statistics and Demography Programme, Secretariat of the Pacific Community:

“A major structural change has taken place in Pacific rural-urban migration from the late 1970s/early 1980s onwards, with formerly temporary rural urban mobility from a strong rural basis becoming more long-term, or permanent in nature, as Pacific peoples adopt a more pronounced urban focus to their lives. The result is urban growth rates that have outpaced rural population growth everywhere in the Pacific over the past 25 to 30 years. At present, this pattern is almost universal. At current rates, urban populations throughout Melanesia are expected to double in one generation (25 years), with the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu likely to achieve this in 16 and 17 years respectively, and American Samoa, Kiribati and the Northern Marianas in 20 years. This poses serious challenges for planning, land use, water and sanitation, housing and general infrastructure, as well as some serious rethinking of current social, health and employment policies (Haberkorn, 2008, pp. 109-110).

The former foreign urban enclaves have become settled mainly by male and female Pacific Islanders, although as pointed out by Gerald Haberkorn not in entirely salubrious ways. Unplanned urbanisation has been on-going in the region, with South Tarawa and Ebeye in the Kwajalien Atoll providing perhaps the worst examples of overcrowding, sub-standard housing, and insanitary conditions.

A majority of the smaller PICs have predominantly urban populations, and in Melanesia the rate of urbanization at 3.1% is larger than the average population growth rate (ADB, 2012, p. 23). Intermixed with the emergent and burgeoning towns and cities there is a very complex array of population movements. They include step migration from smaller islands to larger islands, from smaller villages to small towns and then to the larger centres, from remote interior regions to coastal localities and towns with different rates of movements of communities, of chain migration and of men and women (Connell, 1990; Connell & Lea, 1995). As noted above, in the earliest phase the movement of indigenous persons to such centres was primarily a masculine activity. However over time women also began to move and to settle in these towns. Towns and especially the capital were centres of administration and services. The latter included health and education as well as entertainment such as cinema, dance halls, and sports. At the absence of rural health clinics, more and more women began to access the hospital and medical services available in urban centres during pregnancy and child-birth. Parents accompanied their children to support them while they attended schools in urban localities. A cadre of lower ranked public service workers such as clerks, primary school teachers, and police men formed the beginnings of an urban dwelling lower middle class of islanders by the 1950s and 1960s. In some instances, segregated government housing was provided in native settlements for such persons and their families (see McCreary, 1973 for a discussion of the structure of Pacific towns in this period).

Besides the ‘bright lights’ of towns and cities alluded to by Connell (2011), rural-urban migration is engendered by inequality in opportunities and access to services. While the economic factor

is important, the socio-psychological also matter as PNG poet, Korop observed in his poem, 'Village Life':

"Life is boring, so dull and isolated

One thing you wish for

The bright lights" (cited in Crocombe, 2001, p. 65)

There is a clear 'demonstration' effect of different standards of living. This is reinforced by the improved communication between rural and urban kin networks fostered by radio, and mass media, and in the current period by the massive increase in the use of mobile phones. The movement is tending towards greater gender balance with many women, especially girls and single women who have sought better educational and employment opportunities in towns and cities as well as other places of economic growth (McCleary, 1973; Meynen & Stephens, 1995; Obaid, 2006; Sijapati, 2015).

As observed earlier internal migration data is not readily available and requires close scrutiny of census figures. These tend to dwell on inter-provincial movements, and do not always capture the movements within provinces, especially larger provinces (Walsh, 2006). Two primary factors contribute to this state of affairs. First, there is a lack of qualified personnel to design research instruments, and to collect, analyse and present data; and second, the wide scatter of islands in archipelagic countries, together with the difficult terrain in the continental high islands make such research extremely difficult and costly.

INTER-PROVINCIAL MIGRATION

It is evident that there has been increasing inter-provincial migration in nearly all PICs that is captured in their national censuses, however intra-provincial migration is not so well documented, nor are statistics provided on gender aspects of internal migration. Table 1 below shows internal migration in 2009 between the provinces of the Solomon Islands with largest net migration to Honiara, the capital province, and to Guadalcanal province where the capital is located. It is noteworthy that there were both in-and out-migration in all provinces, but in 6 out of the 10 provinces there was a net loss of people. Malaita with 30,046 people leaving their island experienced the largest internal movement which can be assumed to be for Honiara and Guadalcanal. Relatively to population size, the net migration rate takes the highest negative values in Temotu (-158 per thousand population) followed by Makira-Ulawawith (-150), and the highest positive values in Honiara and Guadalcanal (+193 and +126 net migrants per thousand population respectively (Table 1).

TABLE 1: *Inter-provincial lifetime migration in Solomon Islands, 2009*

Province	In-migrants	Out-migrants	Net Migration	Net Migration rate per 1,000 population
Choiseul	4,610	3,545	1,065	40.38
Western	10,090	10,973	-883	-11.52
Isabel	3,172	3,915	-743	-28.40
Central	6,068	3,656	2,412	92.71
Rennell-Bellona	637	758	-121	-39.79
Guadalcanal	15,656	3,822	11,834	126.41
Malaita	9,421	30,046	-20,625	-149.89
Makira-Ulawa	1,832	3,856	-2,024	-50.07
Temotu	1,314	4,683	-3,369	-157.70
Honiara	34,833	22,379	12,454	192.76
Solomon Islands	87,633	87,633	0	-

Source: Adapted from Solomon Islands Population and Housing Census (2009)

The ethnic tension and related conflicts (1998-2003) between land owning groups on Guadalcanal and Malaitans erupted in violence, resulting in an estimated 30,000 internal displaced persons in Honiara. However, following the establishment of law and order by the Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands, RAMSI, Malaitans have continued to migrate to the capital city and the province on which it is located (Solomon Island Government, 2009, p. 6).

Table 2 provides figures that show inter-provincial migration in Tonga in 2011. These figures reveal that all outer island provinces are depopulating with most former residents leaving for Tongatapu. It is unclear what proportion of these migrants has set their eyes on moving to other countries after their sojourn on the main island. The Table also shows that while all provinces experienced both in-and out-migration, the residents of Tongatapu were less inclined to migrate. The northern Ha'apai and Vava'u provinces experienced the largest number of departing inhabitants, while in relative terms the Ongo Nui Division experienced the largest population loss (-1140 migrants per thousand population), followed by Ha'apai and Vava'u Divisions (with a net migration rate of -766 and -282 respectively). The highly positive value of the net migration rate in Tongatapu (+144 migrants per thousand population) makes it the only division gaining population as a result of migration.

TABLE 2: *Interprovincial lifetime migration in Tonga 2011*

Division	In-migrants	Out-migrants	Net Migration	Net Migration rate per 1,000 population
Tongatapu	14,809	3,944	10,865	144.07
Vava'u	2,544	6,748	-4,204	-281.73
Ha'apai	1,479	6,546	-5,067	-765.87
'Eua	1,635	1,767	-132	-26.31
Ongo Nui	357	1,819	-1,462	-1140.41
Tonga	20,824	20,824	0	-

Source: Tonga Department of Statistics and SPC (2014)

The pattern of internal migration from outer islands and provinces to the province that has the national capital is repeated in Vanuatu. Sefa province comprising primarily of Efate Island on which Port Vila is located received the most in-migrants over the 5 years before 2009. Table 3 shows that all other provinces had a net loss of residents. The net migration rate per thousand population is high in Penama followed by Malampa province with -73 and -56 migrants respectively. The net migration rate is high positive value in Shefa province with 74 migrants per thousand population suggesting that the province receives more migrant population in Vanuatu.

TABLE 3: *Interprovincial migration in Vanuatu, 2004-2009.*

Province	In-migration	Out-migration	Net Migration	Net Migration rate per 1,000 population
Torba	321	595	-274	-29.28
Sanma	2,593	3,180	-587	-12.80
Penama	847	3,102	-2,255	-73.17
Malampa	1,339	3,377	-2,038	-55.50
Shefa	8,525	2,704	5,821	73.94
Tafea	975	1,642	-667	-20.50
Vanuatu	14,600	14,600	0	-

Source: Vanuatu National Statistics Office (2010).

Provinces of net out-migration in the Solomons, Tonga and Vanuatu are characterized by the relative lack of services and employment opportunities. Those with net in-migration include towns and capital cities and provinces where there are a larger range of services and employment possibilities. Not insignificantly, the provinces where the major city is located tend to have the largest influx of migrants. The 2012 Asian Development Bank study of urbanization in PICs noted that:

“In PNG, for example, the latest census shows that 20% of the total population was not born where

they were enumerated. Of these migrants, 37% were counted in urban areas. Males were slightly more likely than females to be migrants in urban areas. Significantly, 58% of Port Moresby's population comprised migrants. In other words, more than half of all urban residents were not born in Port Moresby. In urban areas, migrants were more likely than those in rural areas to have moved long distances, with 70% of migrants having moved between provinces (Government of PNG, 2003). In Kiribati, the 2005 Census showed that only 49% of South Tarawa residents were born in South Tarawa" (ADB, 2012, p. 15). In the case of Honiara in 2009, 53.9% of the residents were not born in that province.

GENDER AND SOCIAL DIMENSIONS IN INTERNAL MIGRATION

WOMEN AND INTERNAL MIGRATION

It is apparent that changing gender relations and dynamics which include women's education and possibilities of non-agricultural livelihoods have also contributed to greater participation of girl children and women in internal migration. As noted above, early forms of internal migration for hard labouring work was dominated by men who were followed by their spouses and children, but with the possibility of many other employment opportunities, women have increasingly become significant migrants in their own right. From being passive migrants in the company of their men folk and families, girls and women have increasingly moved independently to places of opportunity including urban centres. It is apparent that more and more girls and women are moving on their own for education and employment. However, more research is needed to understand specific questions about female migration such as the extent of single women migration, their employment status, and whether migrating women leave their children with family in the rural community.

In this regard two points are noteworthy: first, more girls and women have been accessing education in the last three decades, and second, in all PICs there are established employment areas for women in the formal sector. This process has been significantly pushed by the second goal of educational for all and gender parity in education in the MDGs. According to the 2013 MDGs Tracking Report (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2013) many PICs have achieved gender parity in primary education. The exceptions being PNG, Tonga, Solomon Islands and Palau, with some recent significant gains in both Solomon Islands and Tonga. The days of more than 60% of girls not attending primary schools are certainly over.

In all PICs more girl children and women are going to school, and post-secondary institutions in contrast to a generation ago when mainly boys tended to be leave home for education especially at secondary and post-secondary levels. Women have made significant gains through education and have taken education most seriously. At the regional University of the South Pacific in recent times there are more women graduates, several of whom have also been recognized for their academic accomplishments. They become spatially mobile as they seek higher education, and employment outside their provinces of birth. They appear just as keen as young men to escape the restrictive norms that regulate their lives in rural communities (Connell, 2011). In short, the search for educational opportunities, and the gains reflected at a higher level of education feed further internal migration.

Educated girls and women tend to seek employment opportunities in the formal sector, and some increasingly turn to self-employment as professionals and business people (IFC, 2010). Until recently in most PICs there were split labour markets. Certain professions and jobs were dominated by women and deemed to be suited for them. These included teaching especially in primary schools, and as nurses and secretarial support personnel. Fish processing and canneries have also been important for women's employment in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and American Samoa. Women have also been heavily engaged in the garment and footwear industry in Fiji. However, women have branched out into other professions including as accountants, lawyers, senior public servants, and business executives. And new opportunities are taken on a regular basis. There are women journalists and media personalities, police officers, pilots, scientists, engineers, and academics. Such women have become role models for other girls and women.

Despite these achievements, gender barriers continue to exist in nearly all professions, and in the labour market generally, and there is clearly no gender parity in many areas of employment. As a result of the previously gendered division of labour, formal sector employment of women has lagged behind, and as pointed out by Narsey (2007) in the case of Fiji wage and salary rates are lower for women compared to men's emoluments. In his gender analysis of the 2004-05 Annual Employment Survey data of the Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, Wadan Narsey shows that female labour force participation is 37% compared to 46% for Mauritius and 51% for Trinidad, and that in Fiji there are twice as many economically active males compared to females. He points out that women continue to constitute 99% of household workers, and although females do 52% of all time work done in the economy, they received only 27% of all income earned. With regards to formal sector work (primarily in urban areas) and the role of Economically Active women, Narsey observed that they

“..tend to push their households into the higher deciles ranked by Household Income per Adult Equivalent: the Bottom 3 deciles (containing 30% of the population) contains only 14% of Economically Active Females (but 23% of Economically Active Males); while the Top 3 deciles (containing 30% of the population) contains 47% of the Economically Active Females (and 35% of the Economically Active Males).” (Narsey, 2007, p. xi).

He noted that there was a sizeable gender gap of 19% in average incomes earned by economically active men and women. The former on average earned FJD 9,393 and the latter on average earned FJD 7,600 (Ibid, x).

Women's engagement in the modern economy albeit in the informal sector is very revealing. In Fiji women make up 87% of market vendors, in PNG nearly 60% of women reported selling subsistence produce in the market, 90% of the vendors in the market are women in the Solomon Islands, and in Vanuatu where 90% of the private sector is constituted by informal businesses, women head 60% of them. “Despite its small-scale, vending and other informal sector activities, contribute between 15-40 percent of GDP across the countries’ (PIFS, 2013: 36). These activities include internal migration, circulatory migration and commuting.

It is apparent that women prefer urban life styles which free them from the more restrictive

norms of rural villages and settlements. These are coupled with property rights over land and other chattels being largely in the hands of men, and with the likelihood of inheritance by males. However, women do face continuing challenges of gender based discrimination at the point of recruitment, at the work place in terms and conditions of work which include emolument and promotion, as well as sexual abuse and violence. A majority of PICs continue to have less than 50% of formal sector employment held by women because of the continued gender division of labour, and gender stereo-typing (PIFS, 2013, p.34). Although PICs governments have committed themselves of gender equality (PIFS, 2013) and a majority have acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), cultural and structural barriers including patriarchy, and the stereotype that women's role is primarily in the domestic sphere pose significant challenges (Emberson-Bain, 1994).

ISLAND AND ETHNIC ENCLAVES IN URBAN CENTRES

In most Pacific towns and cities there are a number of interesting aspects of internal migration. First, some communities (whether inland or outer island) have longer traditions of migrating to urban centres and places of economic activities. Early migrants have been followed by their families over the generations and distinct communities have emerged with their original island/ethnic identities still intact. More than 40 years ago, McCleary (1973, p. 14) noted that,

“Such a social structure lays the way open for population groupings whose network is constructed of relationships which do not come from the urban situation. Ethnic networks, island networks, village networks, are all found in Pacific towns with church groups frequently reinforcing the other divisions. These groupings not only lay the basis for conflict but may also be a variable in the migrant's adaptation to town-life”.

The term ‘cultural permeation of urban areas’ has been used in Papua New Guinea to describe distinct aspects of such settlements (see ADB, 2012, p. 18). In Suva, there are discrete communities living under customary arrangements (*vakavanua*) from the islands of the Lau group, Lomaiviti group, Ra and other parts of the country. There are distinct ethnic settlements in Honiara and Port Vila. Such communities maintain ties with their home villages by periodic exchanges including remittances, regular communication and travel, as well as commemorating significant anniversaries. Women often play a leading role during such events as organisers, fund raisers and producers of various goods that are sold. As primary care givers their role in socialising children into the language, values and norms, and to the ethnic culture of their respective communities cannot be underestimated. Women also act as leaders in the local community including in religious activities, albeit in ways that also subordinate them to men's authority (see Naidu et al. 2013).

INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

Another feature of internal migration to towns and cities, and especially to the capital is the emergence of informal or squatter settlements throughout Melanesia and some parts of Micronesia and to a lesser extent in Polynesia. The ADB study noted that nearly half of urban residents in PICs dwell in such settlements; “all Pacific towns and cities, especially Melanesian capitals of Honiara, Port Moresby, Port Vila and Suva having squatter or informal settlements

that have 15% -50% of their total urban population” (2012, 3). Ebeye Island on Kwajalein atoll and South Tarawa also represent overcrowded urban slums. These settlements reflect the rapid demographic shift taking place from rural localities to urban areas. They are a manifestation of the failure of the colonial and post-colonial state in providing land and housing for internal migrants, and the near complete failure of urban planning (Connell, 2011; ADB, 2012; Storey, 2006).

The settlements are generally on marginal land most exposed to environmental hazards and climate change related risks. In low-lying areas periodic floods inundate settlements, and those housed on slopes are vulnerable to land-slides. Whole communities may be compelled to relocate as a result of environmental changes. In May, 2014 the Matanako and Lunga rivers in Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands burst their banks and caused havoc for the residents of the informal settlements that lay between them causing the deaths of 20 residents (Wood, 2014). Under normal circumstances there is inadequate sanitation, water supply, electricity and roads. While these settlements may reflect a degree of hope about future wellbeing deemed to be better than the boredom of rural life (Connell, 2011), residents are generally employed in low paying menial work, and often struggle to survive. Some are self-employed and form the core of the informal economy associated with these settlements, frequently dominated by women (Naidu & Matadradra, 2014; Naidu et.al, 2015).

In Fiji, most of the informal squatter settlements occupy formerly vacant state land. According to a supplementary report to the 2015 National Budget address, the state land currently occupied by squatters will be subdivided and residents be given 99-year land leases (The Fiji Times, 21 November, 2014). In order to reduce rural-urban migration, and thus the squatter dwellers in urban areas, the government has also village development initiatives (The Fiji Times, 9 January, 2014).

In Port Moresby and other Pacific cities informal settlements are associated with illicit activities. Often young men turn to peddling drugs, homebrew and pornographic material, and girls and young women to prostitution (see UNICEF, 2007). A minority of residents in these settlements, usually males, do hold positions in the public service and have higher incomes and secure jobs. They include clerical officers, police men, school teachers, taxi, mini-van and bus drivers. Their earnings however are not sufficient to invest on land and building materials outside the settlement.

OTHER SOCIAL ISSUES

Urbanisation and increasingly mobile populations are seen as contributing to overall productive gains in PICs and if managed better, internal migration generally and urbanization in particular are perceived as positive social transformation. However several issues have emerged in the context of internal migration and urbanization. The movements of people to towns and cities in some cases have depopulated rural areas and have caused concerns about their future viability. With girls and young women seeking education and employment opportunities in urban centres, in some localities such as the Lau Group in Fiji, it has been reported that young men have difficulties finding marriage partners. With able bodied and educated persons moving out of rural communities, often the very young and the elderly remain which increases their vulnerability.

In the urban centres, there is often serious overcrowding and inadequate physical and social infrastructure to cater for the growing populations. The absence of employment and livelihood opportunities for all urban residents has meant that poverty has increased.

Unemployed persons, particularly male youth have become entangled with the criminal justice system because of substance abuse, and offences against the law that range from petty thefts to seriously violent crimes. Impoverishment, patriarchy and substance abuse contribute to tensions and conflicts within households, among neighbours, and in Melanesia between ethnic groups. Inter-ethnic violence and urban riots have occurred in Honiara, Port Moresby, Port Vila, Suva and even Nukualofa. Violence against women generally, and especially intimate partner violence, has affected 60% to 80% of women in Melanesia and other PICs (UNFPA, 2013) While gender violence occurs in both rural and urban areas, the presence of women's NGOs and women's refuges in urban areas as well as easier access to hospitals and the police encourage victims to report incidents of violence against them. Patriarchal cultures, and an amalgam of attitudes and values about masculinity that combine traditional and modern ideas and practices together with changing gender roles, and increasing independence of women have contributed to this unacceptable state of affairs. In the urban context, while there is freedom from the wider kinship group and social norms of rural communities, the protection afforded to women by close relatives and these very norms are often missing. In urban localities nuclear families are more prevalent with or without some close relatives present, which is not the case of rural households that are generally in close knit communities of relatives. The widespread consumption of alcohol and binge drinking by men contribute to violence generally, and especially violence against women and children.

GOVERNMENTS' RESPONSE AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Besides the perceptions of the 'good life' in the larger islands and port towns and cities, a significant dimension of internal migration and urbanization is the failure and negligence of PICs governments in both rural development and urban planning. Rural neglect is reflected in inadequate and often deteriorating rural roads, shipping and transport and communication networks. There has been a relatively lack of decentralization of services. Until recently, for every higher level service provision, people were compelled to travel to the capital city. In addition the absence of satisfactory infrastructure and rural services has also meant that employment and livelihood opportunities have been limited. Lack of rural development and increasing poverty have triggered what is becoming an exodus of migrants from rural localities. Severe bottlenecks have emerged in urban areas because of the massive unplanned growth (Corbridge & Jones, 2010; Davis, 2003). Demands for more land subdivisions, affordable housing, improved roads, water supply, sewerage and sanitation, schools, health services and so on accompany the rapidly growing population. PICs governments have hitherto been disinclined to support the growth of towns and cities and did not have the appropriate policies and planning in place to tackle the numerous challenges of urbanization. There is a huge governance and human capacity shortfall at both the central and municipal government levels (see Storey, 2006).

Fiji Government recognised in its Strategic Development Plan 2003-2005 the importance of

urban economy and planned for an urban sector strategy (Government of Fiji, 2004). The urban development strategy aimed at providing support to increase the viability of rural development. Urban Policy Action Plan 2004-06 with a vision for this urban strategy strongly recognised the importance of economic and social rural-urban linkages (ibid). In response to rapid urbanization, apart from road and infrastructural improvements, provided by the Fiji Roads Authority (FRA), Government has been providing financial support for urban and peri-urban development in partnership with municipal councils (Government of Fiji, 2015). New town development in Fiji for example, in Seaqaqa and Nabouwalu has been planned by Government with a budget allocation of F\$2 million in 2015 (ibid). According to Fiji Government, 'further development of these centres will reduce rural-urban migration and create employment in these areas'. Government of Fiji has provided "F\$530,000 for the City Wide Squatter Upgrading Project to upgrade settlements in urban and peri-urban areas in the Suva-Nausori corridor, Nadi-Lautoka corridor, Labasa and Savusavu" (ibid). Government has also been encouraging development and upgrade of proper market facilities in urban and peri-urban centres to support income generation from agro-based activity (Government of Fiji, 2015).

Rural and village development is a high priority on Government's development agenda. Government has placed special emphasis on the provision of roads, electricity, water supply and income generating opportunities in the rural region (Government of Fiji, 2015). Nearly F\$1.6 million is provided for the construction of Rural Sports Complexes in Gau and Kadavu (ibid). These development initiatives of government in both in rural and urban areas will not only lead to regional development and bridge the rural-urban divide and in turn, help reducing rural-urban drift, but also meet the growing demand for infrastructure and basic services in urban and peri-urban areas. Such policy initiatives will make a difference to rural lives generally as difficulties of transport and communication and access to services have been seen as drivers of internal migration. Both men and women will benefit in terms of being able to enjoy improved living standards, transport produce and handicrafts, and access health facilities. The latter is especially important for pregnant women.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Since independence there has been a qualitative shift in internal migration with urbanisation, especially to capital cities, increasing at twice the rate of population growth rates in most PICs. It is likely that in Polynesia and Micronesia there is some confluence of internal migration and international migration. However, for much of Melanesia, internal migration has been predominant. Movements from smaller to larger islands, from outer islands to the main island, and from small villages and towns to the capital city can be discerned. Whereas during the colonial period internal migration largely involved men engaging in mining and plantation work, over time, and especially over the last three decades women have become increasingly mobile. Like their male counterparts, women seek the opportunities for education and employment, and the greater availability of services in Pacific towns and cities. The split labour markets of the past with career opportunities for women in teaching, nursing, secretarial work have been supplemented by other opportunities in formerly male dominated areas.

There have been considerable inter-provincial population movements with the provinces that have the main island, and the capital city receiving the highest number of in-migrants. Infrastructural bottlenecks have resulted in land, housing, public utilities, transport and communication shortages. These have led to the mushrooming of informal or squatter settlements in nearly all Melanesian and some Micronesian urban centres. The demands of urban living, unemployment, criminal activities, impoverishment, and the close proximity of culturally diverse groups in these crowded settlements have contributed to tensions and conflicts. Women and children have been the victims of violence. Life time violence against women has affected 80% of them in some countries. Contributing to this unacceptable situation has been established systems of patriarchy and changing gender roles.

Internal migration will continue to be a feature of PICs socio-economic condition with the uneven and unequal development of peoples and places. It is likely that urban centres and especially the capital city will continue to be the places with the most employment opportunities as well as various forms of livelihood and the widest range of services. These will provide the drawbacks for those living in less endowed rural places and outer islands. The greater ease of communication and transportation, and the massive increase in the use of mobile phones will further encourage such movements. With more girl children and women becoming educated, there will be growing gender parity among internal migrants.

Several recommendations can be derived from this descriptive account of internal migration. To begin with there is hardly any gender disaggregated statistics on inter-and intra-provincial migration or on movement of islanders to urban centres to provide a meaningful basis for policy formulation, and/ or urban planning. This lack of crucial demographic data has been commented by Haberkorn (2008) needs to be addressed at both the national and regional levels. The aggregated statistics of rapidly increasing urbanisation and the growth in informal settlements in virtually every Pacific urban centre points to the need of PIC governments to address access to land for residential sites, as well as other economic activities. In this regard there is continuing demand for more affordable housing for low income earners who together with their families suffer insecurity of tenure and unsanitary conditions in the informal shelters they call homes.

Governments in partnership with community based organisations, faith based organisations and NGOs need to address rural social services especially in education and health. The decentralisation of such services is likely to reduce the rate of movement of people from rural to urban localities. Clearly the diversification of rural livelihoods and better transport and communication networks may also reduce the flow of urban drift. Urban growth cannot be stemmed as town and cities do contribute to economic growth and are places of a wider variety of economic activities, employment and livelihoods. Pacific islanders recognise urban centres as places of new opportunities, and governments need to give serious attention to urban planning, capacity building and urban governance (Storey, 2006).

Such opportunities together with easier access to services and the relative freedom from restrictive rural norms make towns and cities especially attractive to younger people and women, as well as for sexual minorities.. However, not all migrants are able to fulfil all their expectations of city life and there are numerous dangers that can adversely affect them. Young men without jobs are

often caught in a downward spiral of petty crimes, substance abuse, violence and more serious crimes. Young women may also become subjects of sexual abuse, violence and some may be recruited into the growing sex industry. Changing gender relations as women gain higher levels of education and become economically more independent have resulted in a large number of men resorting to violence against their partners to assert their authority and control over them. Legislation proscribing domestic violence including 'no-drop' policy by the police together with education and awareness campaigns by government and NGOs need to be adopted more widely in PICs.

As women enter the labour market in larger numbers gender discriminatory recruitment, promotion, and unequal pay require more effective action by governments and advocacy groups. Employment relations as they pertain to gender require scrutiny and review in all Pacific countries if the commitment to gender equality by Pacific island country leaders at the regional level, and their accession to CEDAW are to be meaningful. Pacific islanders irrespective of gender and other social markers have fundamental rights to equitably enjoy the benefits of development and security in their search for better opportunities in various parts of their country including the rapidly growing capital cities and other towns.

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