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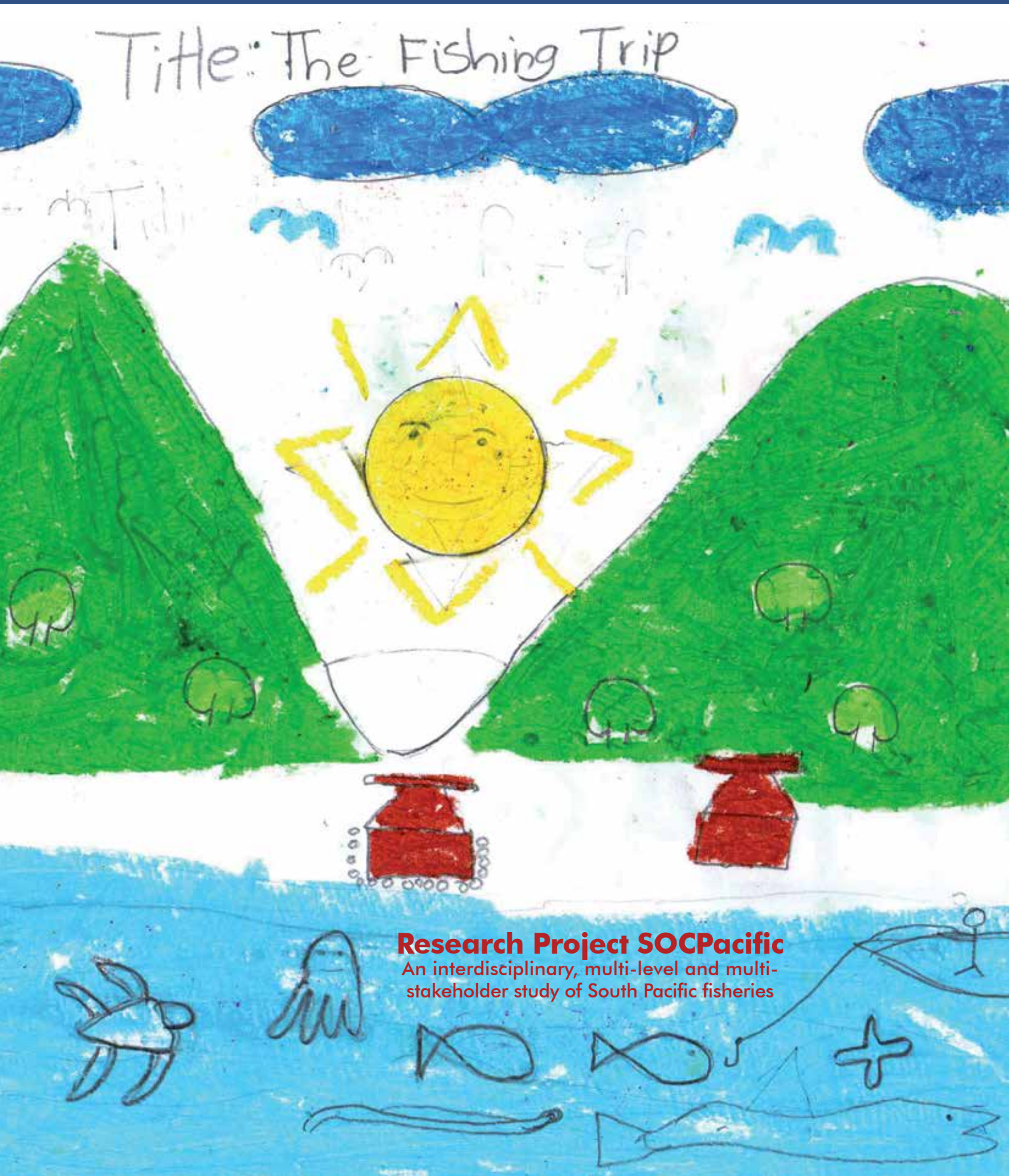

Research Project SOCPacific

An interdisciplinary, multi-level and multi-stakeholder study of South Pacific fisheries

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EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

Once again, we are convinced that we have been able to gather an interesting kaleidoscope of contributions.

The first article takes a closer look at the Solomon Islands, a country which remains underdeveloped despite decades of development assistance. The author Rob Lamontagne argues that the failure to account for the country's hybrid governance, in which governance codes of Western liberalism, capitalism, Christianity and Melanesian custom interact, impede the country's development. He introduces a new concept, 'governance arbitrage', to explain how actors could navigate a hybrid governance environment.

Within the second paper, Kristina Großmann and her co-authors discuss the role of networks in Indonesia. Their analysis is based on the case study of a workshop, a result of cooperation between German and Indonesian researchers, which was successfully prepared and implemented in the provincial capital of Central Kalimantan.

Elodie Fache and Annette Breckwoldt introduce the new bi-national research project, SOCPacific, which investigates South Pacific fisheries from an interdisciplinary, multi-level and multi-stakeholder perspective.

We present you with two conference reports. One by Harald Werber & Simon Batterbury who inform us on the 12th European Society for Oceanists Conference, which recently took place at Cambridge University. The other by Carola Klöck, Hellena Debelts & Michael Fink give insights on a conference whose topic was the implementation of adaptation strategies in small islands against the backdrop of global climate change.

An essay about Hanoi completes the present issue of Pacific Geographies. George Burchett, an artist born in the Vietnamese capital, and great lover of his city, takes a critical look at the newly erected urban structures. He laments the omission of respect for indigenous culture and that instead embraces the grotesque resemblance to models "favoured by tycoons, megalomaniacs and Las Vegas casino developers".

We sincerely hope you enjoy your readings of this issue.

The managing editors, Michael Waibel & Matthias Kowasch

Pacific Geographies

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In order to uphold scientific standards, the PG is implementing a peer-review process. Articles marked as „scientific papers" have been peer-reviewed by two external reviewers. Articles marked as „research notes" have been peer-reviewed by one external reviewer and a member of the editorial board. All other articles have been reviewed by the editorial board. Scientific papers and research notes receive a Digital Object Identifier (DOI).

The Association for Pacific Studies (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Pazifische Studien e.V., APSA) was founded in 1987 at the Department of Geography of the University of Technology in Aachen. Activities include workshops, conferences, public lectures and poster exhibitions. The book series PAZIFIK FORUM was initiated in 1990. In 1992, it was complemented by the journal PACIFIC NEWS. APSA-Members receive the PACIFIC GEOGRAPHIES at no cost as a membership benefit.

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COVER PICTURE
Drawing of the reef by a ten-year old schoolgirl on Gau island, Fiji
Source: Collected by Elodie Fache in 2016

Bigmen justice: Governance arbitrage in Solomon Islands justice delivery

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Abstract: Solomon Islands remains underdeveloped despite decades of development assistance. I argue this is due, in part, to the failure to account for the country's hybrid governance in which governance codes of Western liberalism, capitalism, Christianity and Melanesian custom interact. There is a need for contributions that discuss and explain the practical impacts of hybrid governance on those who live in the region. To help fill that gap, I review and analyse the relevant secondary literature, introducing a new concept, 'governance arbitrage', to explain how actors navigate a hybrid governance environment. I show governance arbitrage is widespread within the justice system, and is a tool used by elites and non-elites alike. I conclude by suggesting possible new avenues for research

Keywords: Melanesia; governance; governance arbitrage; hybridity

[Submitted as Research Note: 25 January 2019, Acceptance of the revised manuscript: 20 February 2019]

The Solomon Islands state remains weak despite decades of development assistance. While there are many possible causes to explain this weakness, one important yet relatively neglected explanation is that development efforts have failed to account for the country's hybrid governance in which governance codes of Western liberalism, capitalism, Christianity and Melanesian custom interact. Although hybridity in the region is explored by academic observers (Boege et al., 2008; Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2016; Wallis et al., 2016; Forsyth et al., 2017), there is a need for contributions that help explain the practical impacts of hybrid governance. In other words, understanding that governance in Solomon Islands is hybrid is the first step; understanding how hybrid governance functions is the second.

To help fill that gap, this paper introduces a new concept, 'governance arbitrage', to explain how actors, elite and non-elite alike, navigate a hybrid governance environment by calling on different governance codes in the pursuit of their goals. I argue the concept of arbitrage – profiting by taking advantage of the difference in values for the same commodity – is useful for interpreting the actions of Islanders because it shows how hybridity works in practice.

To illustrate governance arbitrage in action, I use the example of the justice system in Solomon Islands, for two reasons. The first is that delivering justice is the definitional task of effective governance that asserts legitimate authority (Finnemore, 1996), which is in turn the first goal of development under the good governance agenda (World Bank, 1997). The second is that justice in Solomon Islands has long been an area of hybrid contestation between the governances codes of the Western liberal state, customary practices and Christian churches against a backdrop of unfettered capitalism. I build on the discussion of the justice system to contrast elites and non-elites as governance arbitrageurs of differing resources, experience and skill at operating in the hybrid 'mix of formal and informal institutions through which the exercise of power plays out' (Allen et al., 2017:p.7).

Elaborating on the connection between governance, legitimacy, authority and justice, Allen and others (2007) are right that power 'plays out' through institutions. Institutions legitimate power when they provide some kind of public good, creating an obligation by the public to support that institution. This legitimate power expresses itself as authority, as opposed to illegitimate, coercive and larcenous power (Barnett & Finnemore, 1999).

Turning to governance, Solomon Islands does not have a single, unified justice system with discrete venues designed as an authoritative and legitimate institution, except on paper. Instead, the hybrid reality of justice-seeking in Solomon Islands means that courts are sites for mixing governance codes in ways that are dynamic and uncertain. In contrast to the cut-and-dried ways of common law legalism, the hybrid actions of Islander governance arbitrageurs make sense in the context of an 'arbitrary governance environment' characterised by the 'constant making and unmaking of public authority...

Source: Anne Paulsen.

Figure 1: Child playing with an old tyre at a beach on Savo Island, Solomon Islands.

where it is frequently unclear to the citizenry which authority, if any, will take responsibility for handling any given complaint' (Tapscott, 2016:p.42).

In this paper, I review the relevant secondary literature and make an argument for governance arbitrage as having explanatory advantages over an alternative such as forum shopping. This review of literature in the region brings together voices on both the Solomon Islands justice space as well as anthropological perspectives on how people – both elites and non-elites – have operated in other parts of Melanesia to identify and explain a phenomenon that holds back development efforts in Solomon Islands. This raises a concern about conflating literatures by using literature that is specific to Solomon Islands as well as another literature that includes Melanesia more broadly, particularly Solomon Islands' neighbours of Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu. There are a number of reasons why I have chosen to override this concern and go forward. First among them is that Melanesia as a region of social science study is defined by the omnipresent diversity between governance codes. As a result, bringing perspectives from one part of Melanesia to another can illuminate common issues. At the same time, adopting national boundaries as barriers to research seems inappropriate. Finally, I am following in the tradition of the literature by comparing like-cases to generate fruitful insights (Douglas, 2005; Evans et al., 2010).

My argument is as follows: in a developing state like Solomon Islands, development requires effective governance. Effective governance, in turn, requires a justice system that resolve disputes in a way that is seen to be fair and reasonable by participants; in a word, the justice system must be legitimate. That legitimacy comes from rightful authority, but in Solomon Islands, what precisely constitutes rightful authority is a highly complex problem and contested issue.

This paper begins with a brief description of the social geography of Solomon Islands through the four codes of governance at work in the country, and use that discussion to define elites and non-elites in Islander history. I elaborate on hybridity, and then defend governance arbitrage as a better heuristic tool than the alternative of forum shopping. Having developed my theoretical approach, I then use the example of the Solomon Islands justice system as a space where governance arbitrage is omnipresent. I close by summarising and offering my views of what governance arbitrage's use in future research programs. My objective is to show that governance arbitrage is a novel and useful description for an ongoing phenomenon with deep roots in Solomon Islands in particular and Melanesia more broadly. My conclusion is that understanding governance arbitrage is vital for explaining the pervasive uncertainty for justice-seekers in the region.

Solomon Islands: a social geography of four governance codes

Solomon Islands is an archipelagic developing country in the southwest Pacific. A part of Melanesia, it is part of the most ethnolinguistically diverse region on the planet, with the varieties of governance to match (Putt et al., 2018). The substrate of Islander governance is the traditional, or customary code. It includes a vast range of variations, but common features to be discussed shortly it together as a code (Wittgenstein, 2009). While the customary preceded contact with Westerners, custom since sustained contact is called kastom in Melanesian pidgin, reflecting its hybrid reality. Alongside custom is Christianity, introduced two centuries ago and the faith of virtually all Islanders today. Alongside both is the Weberian liberal state, with its institutions and assumptions of selfhood, citizenship and governance. Alongside all three is capitalism, the pursuit of economic profit by private actors. This section explains what these codes are, in the small space available.

The basic building block of Solomon Islands society is the customary code of governance; and the basic building

block of the customary is what is now called the wantok. A group of people who view themselves as sharing a common identity reified by mutual reciprocity (de Renzio, 1999), wantoks express 'cooperation, caring and reciprocal support, and a shared attachment to locality' (Nanau, 2018:p.244). Literally meaning 'one talk' in pidgin, wantoks often share a common language, but may also offer commonality across, but not exclusive to, kinship ties, geographical origins, social associations, and religious affiliations. Wantoks remain 'the primary reference point for most Solomon Islanders' (Allen et al., 2017:p.6), and wantokism is the omnipresent 'invisible hand' (Nanau, 2018:p.248) of social interaction and governance in the country.

Like kastom, the wantok is a social phenomenon that emerged in response to contact with other, foreign governance codes, but by the same token, represented something that had existed long before contact. Fundamentally a 'system of generalised obligations and supports', wantoks express a customary approach to constantly shifting interrelations between groups, that sees exclusivity as alien (Brigg, 2009:pp.151-152). As Harrison argues, the kastom code with its focus on 'transactional networks and lines of transmission rather than ... discrete and bounded entities' (2006:pp.70-71) leaves individuals as 'partible' people who act 'as composite beings constituted of the detached parts/relationships of other persons through prior ... exchange' (Mosko, 2010:p.215). Kastom and wantokism model a sense of selfhood based on dividual selves: selves defined in relations to others; meaning generated by what Harrison calls the 'commerce of cultures' (1993).

Intertwined after nearly two centuries of missionary activity and holding the allegiance of 95% of the Solomon Islands population, Christian practice is also based in sociality and collectivity. Literally parochial in a way that has hybridised well with kastom, Islanders themselves regard the two codes as 'inextricably linked' (Timmer, 2008:p.199) even if they disagree about the precisely how and to what extent, and see the two codes as focusing on reciprocity, spirituality and a rich cultural ritual practice (Douglas, 2005). However, tensions abide, and at least one observer notes how a Protestant-dominated Melanesian Christianity based on an unmediated relationship with God can drive individualism in a way that undermines social stability (Robbins, 2004). Yet Whiteman argues that far from being passive recipients of a foreign creed, Islander Christians were, and are, 'active participants, reinterpreting, modifying, accepting and rejecting change advocated by the missionary' (1983:p.432).

Two other Western governance codes, liberalism and capitalism, resolve the tension between individualism and collectivity by relying on a vision of the 'possessive individual' who is the unique 'the proprietor of his own person and capacities, for which he owes nothing to society' (Macpherson, 1962:p.263). The individual citizen is the basic component of Western liberalism expressed through a Weberian state structure with an elected political leadership and an implementing disinterested bureaucracy together exercising rational-legal authority (Weber, 2013). Of course, being a 'possessive individual' is not merely a statement of political citizenship, but a description of an egoistic, rational, benefit-maximising economic actor who is committed to the formal equality of all citizens under the law, but also to the pursuit of inequality in private profit under capitalism. Although the capitalist and the liberal codes of governance intertwine, they do so in tension (Sykes, 2007).

The uneven interaction between these four entangled governance codes has resulted in what Porter and others call 'social disintegration'. This is particularly clear in the example of youth and migration. In a post-colonial country with half the population under 25, and the young stuck between the past while also struggling to build a stable future, there is a growing sense that the traditional institutions are inappropriate or obsolete. This feeling is strongest in the towns and city (2015:p.2), places where the governance and social and economic 'mix is changing fast[est]' (Moore, 2014:p.29).

Returning to wantoks, we can see this disintegration and reformation occurring in real time. Wantoks may provide social cohesion, comfort and support in the village, but transformed by an aggressive brand of capitalism and weak liberal government systems, wantoks of elite actors reshape reciprocity from a means of sharing and mutuality into a means of 'exploitation and political expediency' (Nanau, 2018:p.248). This 'manipulation of custom' (Fraenkel, 2004) is not confined to elites, but elites by definition have the power, authority and capacity to act more freely than non-elites, as Fraenkel points out in his discussion of militia leaders strategically misapplying customary principles of compensatory justice to rationalise their attempt to blackmail the liberal state for money payments to call a truce. This example from the violent ethnic Tensions of 1998-2003 is only one example of how the customary has become

> "increasingly monetised, separated from its social foundations, and often used instrumentally to extort and intimidate, or otherwise used to promote particular material or political interests" (Allen et al., 2017:p.5).

Grassroots and bigmen: elites and non-elites

The question of defining and outlining elites and non-elites is a question of the hybrid interaction of governance codes in every way as much as kastom or the wantok. This section discusses who elites are in Solomon Islanders, as well as non-elites. There are three kinds of elites: those pre-contact, during the colonial era, and finally the current, post-colonial era. In contrast, the relative ratio of non-elites is surprisingly consistent across all three eras, with change coming very recently.

In Islander societies, the vast majority of people live by subsistence farming from time immemorial. Even today, between 80% and 90% of the population still live in this way, in village life. These non-elites – what Martin calls the grassroots (2007) – have recently begun taking part in the capitalist economy, whether in small doses in the village, or by moving to provincial towns or the capital, Honiara. By virtue of exerting capitalist agency, grassroots individuals join the 'working class', the Melanesian term for those engaged in the wage economy. If successful, they also begin ascending toward elite status.

On the other hand, elite status is

something that must be both earned by the individual, and conferred on the individual by others. The sources of legitimating elite authority before sustained contact with Westerners lie in the ability of individuals to set themselves above by ritual achievement (earning the post-contact status of 'great man') or by entrepreneurial, acquisitive achievement (the 'bigman') (Harrison, 1993:p.156; compare Sahlins, 1963). Later, Western capitalists and colonialists attempted to define elites by offering more alien monikers: bigmen and great men were 'chiefs', and elite chiefs were 'paramount chiefs' (Goddard, 2010:p.11). As we will see shortly, British colonial officials attempted to create a new, specifically collaborationist elite by appointing some chiefs as 'headmen'. Finally, in the post-colonial era, the rapid hybridisation of governance created a proudly, aggressively Western kind of elite figure eager to define themselves through their liberal and capitalist identities as a 'possessive individual': the 'big shots' who had risen to the top end of the working class (Martin, 2007).

Source: Patrick Rose.

Figure 2: Peter rows the ferryboat between Taro and Supizae in Choiseul. Every year the distance gets longer because both islands are shrinking as the sea level rises. Hundreds of times a week, Peter rows his passengers across the short stretch of water taking people to work and returning them home. Because of climate change, the township of Taro will relocate to the mainland leaving Peter facing an uncertain future.

Hybridity

Rather than crossing a fluid boundary between public and private, I argue that in Solomon Islands, people repurpose codes of governance, whether custom, Christian, capitalist or liberal, with elites having much more practice, facility and therefore ability at doing so. However, to say actors switch between discrete codes is to present them with solid and stable, not fluid and dynamic, boundaries. Moreover, while some codes have closer relationships than others (for example custom and Christianity as kastom), they are all interrelated. Capitalism has found its way into even the most remote corners of the country, while liberalism has outpaced the reach of its feeble Western state – providing at least ideas to Islanders, if not basic services.

This section shows that hybridity is the most useful heuristic, as some of the preeminent experts in its use have said, to 'explor[e] complex processes of interaction and transformation occurring between different institutional and social forms, and normative systems' (Forsyth et al., 2017:p.408) in Solomon Islands. We must understand how the four governance codes in Solomon Islands interact and constitute a hybrid governance space.

Why is this specifically hybrid, and not something else? To say these codes have been and are hybridising is mixture, but it is not random bricolage. At the same time, making this an example of Marxist or Hegelian dialectic is too a priori prescriptive. 'Norm-grafting' implies a simplistic addition of one plus one making two. Hybridity, however, is just right: it captures the fluid dynamism of different codes interacting, but on unequal terms according to context. The rest of this subsection unpacks hybridity before introducing examples of authority arbitrage that illustrate how elite actors call on different codes of governance to assert authority against a backdrop of rapid social, economic, political and cultural change.

Hybridity is a relatively new entrant into scholarly research. Emerging from postmodernism as a repurposing of the Marxist dialectic, hybridity became a key concern of postcolonial writers and then with observers of globalisation after the Cold War. Hybridity has since become a common reference among the new and fast-growing literature of peacebuilding, if only slowly rising to prominence in others. Its rapid rise stems from the problems encountered in stopping and preventing civil conflicts, (counter-) insurgencies and mass atrocities in the developing world. As Boege and others point out (2008), the good governance agenda relied on the presence of legitimate institutions; these institutions required an authoritative state; authoritative states required liberalism to be legitimate, and so it was necessary to build or impose liberal states on developing countries. However, from Africa to Afghanistan and Iraq to Solomon Islands, it rapidly became clear that the Western liberal state

"does not have a privileged position as the political framework that provides security, welfare and representation; it has to share authority, legitimacy and

capacity with other [community and customary] structures. In short, we are confronted with hybrid political codes, and they differ considerably from the [W]estern model state" (Boege et al., 2008:p.10).

Hybridity therefore emerged from the need to describe something that 'good governance' could not: the reality that effective governance is not found in the liberal state alone, but nestled among other 'local', religious, customary, formal and informal sources.

While this description is relatively uncontroversial, what is controversial is the attempt of some to operationalise hybridity and make the descriptive, prescriptive. Naturally, this prescriptive hybridity is a 'double-edged sword' (Wallis et al., 2016:p.161). Drawing on evidence from hybrid peacebuilding efforts in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste, Wallis, Kent and Jeffery point out that this 'instrumental' (ibid.) hybridity can fail as a result of Western technical experts attempting to appropriate local customs for their own ends, or equating so-called local ownership with locals being responsible for implementing the strategies Western experts give them (Boege et al., 2008).

Yet, while prescriptive hybridity has its 'dark side' (Wallis et al., 2016:p.159), hybridity simply is, and observers and practitioners must use it as a descriptive tool to better understand how governance functions. Actors must accommodate some form of instrumental hybridity to have any effect at all, and that is what governance arbitrageurs are an example of.

How hybrid is forum shopping?

To clarify the benefit of using governance arbitrage in a specifically hybrid environment, let us contrast it with another candidate used in an excellent article on the phenomenon of (North) Solomon Islands justice-seeking: 'forum shopping' (Cooper, 2018)[footnote: I thank an anonymous reviewer for making this point.]. Forum shopping, a term taken from Anglo-American legal studies, is the 'act of seeking the most advantageous venue in which to try a [legal] case' (Algero 1999:p.79). It assumes, however that both vertical and horizontal fora options (whether appealing to higher courts or moving cases from one jurisdiction to another) are distinct, discrete, and legible to the participants.

Forum shopping means weighing and up selecting mutually-exclusive fora, i.e. going from one forum to another forum and choosing between them, as one would between different items at the market. Forum shopping requires a choice between a liberal resolution process, a Christian resolution process or a customary resolution process. While these labels can be attached to different examples, the hard-and-fast distinction breaks down on contact with reality: each is captured in turn by the others on shifting ground. The analytic clarity that forum shopping offers should not be dismissed, but in Solomon Islands justice-seeking, the choice is not between fora, because the national justice space is essentially one big forum, in which the four governance codes vie and overlap.

If forum shopping is about choosing different options within one framework of governance, governance arbitrage is about both choosing and creating different options for governance outcomes amongst intertwined governance codes. In contrast to forum shopping, where justice-seeking strategies are delimited by space and time (i.e. changing venue or pursuing an appeal by scheduled dates with final judgements handed down), hybrid justice-seeking means arbitrageurs seek their outcomes without regard to time (no sub-ideal outcome is ever final) and ranging across different hybrid spaces: examples include local courts that meld Western liberalism and customary-Christian kastom, pursuing Christian church dispute resolution if unsuccessful, or petitioning the state for compensation which is non-customary by calling on kastom (Evans et al., 2010). Distinct, discrete and legible accurately describe forum shopping, but do not accurately describe this process. We must move beyond a 'hierarchical approach to legal pluralism' in Melanesia that 'obscure[s] a more complex interplay between the interwoven spheres of "traditional law" and "state law" and a new sphere of "blended' law"' (Corrin, 2009:p.29).

Governance arbitrage and justice

This section uses justice as the example of how governance arbitrage works in practice. I begin with outlining the Islander justice system, pre-contact, before moving onto the installation of a Western justice system under the British Solomon Islands Protectorate and colonial attempts to use governance arbitrage to assert their authority. I then outline the decline and collapse of the justice system outside the capital – the Native Courts, then area, or local courts – since independence. Throughout, we see elites and grassroots alike pursuing justice, but the elites using their greater resources as arbitrageurs to tip the procedures and outcomes of the justice system in their favour.

Before Westerners, dispute resolution in Melanesia included a variety of methods from sorcery to vendetta-warfare, but not courts as Westerners would think of them. Customary practices did not constitute a formal, written code of laws because there was no writing and therefore no formality. Different groups with their unique requirements of right and wrong, fairness and justice made the reconciliation of differing accounts difficult without a common body of law or venues. Even the collaboration of relevant chiefs virtually never resulted in a final, acceptable settlement, a feature of Island justice that survives in this century. Understandable due to the fluid boundaries of different groups' cultural practices, compensation in the form of gifts, people, and other offerings such as cultural rituals often represented the only way to bring conflict to a close. It was only with the coming of Christian missionaries – themselves often brutal in the treatment of sinners – that peaceful mediation became a method of conflict resolution (Harrison, 1993; Goddard, 2010).

The coming of colonial power in the late nineteenth century filled a role of the disinterested, bureaucratic adjudicator whose rulings were seen as unbiased and therefore legitimate. In the British Solomon Islands Protectorate, officials followed the Australian example in neighbouring Papua and New Guinea by sending junior officers on patrol (Dinnen & Braithwaite, 2009), in part to serve as circuit judges. However, because these District Officers were so few in number – at its height, the Protectorate employed 100 staff to oversee 28,000

square kilometres (McIntyre, 2014) – the British co-opted customary institutions by appointing bigmen as 'headmen' (Putt et al., 2018) of their village or district and presidents of the 'native court', to be assisted by other Islanders serving as constable and clerk (Evans et al., 2010). Banned from issuing decisions on religious matters, the headmen were both empowered as the link between customary and Western justice, yet disempowered as their authority came from Western justice alone (Goddard, 2010): whether officers, or the later magistrates, and finally European judges in the capital, colonial officials always reserved final adjudicating power for themselves.

British officials built on their cooptation strategy and formalised the headman system as the Native Courts (later renamed 'area courts' under the Local Government Act) dealing with land disputes and customary matters. After the Second World War, headmen were slowly replaced by administrative resident clerks, support magistrates on their circuits, and issue processes. As the decolonisation push began in the mid-1960s, locally-elected councils were created to oversee the courts. However, while the councils were meant to oversee the courts and administer their areas, they were created with no rules for how they were supposed to operate. Plans were drawn up to devolve real powers to the councils, but that was never done (Timmer, 2008).

Nevertheless, there was a functional justice system upon independence in 1978. Sixty-five local courts sat around the country, heard cases and issued decisions to settle disputes or to refer them to the liberal system. The courts worked well as part of a hybrid order: wantoks were represented through the councils, and the distant coercive powers of the state supported and strengthened the courts. Most important was that the courts operated in a way that was legible to Islanders with jurisdiction over problems they wanted solved: 'a range of social order problems' (Porter et al., 2015:p.7) like public drunkenness and delinquency and also the single most important problem in Solomon Islands political economy, land rights. However, this also represented a binary problem that hybridity could not solve: the impossibility of codifying customary land rights in liberal law, starting with the reality that is customary land use, the use of the land itself could never be legitimately alienated to the liberal system, only stolen (a matter in any event beyond the remit of the courts, which were banned from adjudicating whether or not land was customary or not). Outside observers have often noted the virtually inevitable failure of 'chiefs', however defined, to settle land disputes in Solomon Islands, and the resulting failure of the local courts to solve these disputes (Evans et al., 2010; Goddard, 2010); however, the impossibility of reconciling two completely different governance codes to a legitimate state in either goes largely unremarked.

Independence was followed by the withdrawal of the state from the local courts, and from the rural areas more broadly. Funding dropped for the resident clerks who served as the linchpins of the integrated justice system. The waiting times for oversight and action by the Western system lengthened, undermining the courts' legitimacy and attractiveness by progressively removing avenues for appeal referral. The courts evaporated, and by 1986, halved in number. As what was left of the system was nationalised and placed entirely within the liberal state judiciary, justice became inaccessible (Hammergren & Isser, 2015:p.10). By 1998, only three courts remained outside the capital, and magistrates could no longer effectively go on circuits to hear cases (Porter et al., 2015). This vanishing from the periphery 'severely hampered [locals'] ability to deal with social crises' (Porter et al., 2015:p.2); in 1998 the Tensions broke out and the local courts and their councils were finally abolished in law; no court would hear a case until 2010 (Hammergren & Isser, 2015).

Communities filled the gap as best they could with 'local arrangements', but these arrangements lacked the legitimacy of the courts. They were overburdened with the sheer range of complaints they had to resolve, whether public order issues, those dealing with land rights or logging or murder (Porter et al., 2015:p.2). While it is true that Islanders 'navigate [hybrid] power relations in more subtle and nuanced ways' than are readily apparent to outside observers (Allen et al., 2017: 9), the absence of the courts' provision of a space to transparently categorise and refer disputes, combined with the radical social, political, economic and cultural changes occurring, opened opportunities of exploitation for unscrupulous elites.

The 'retreat of the state' (Dinnen & Allen, 2016:p.79) strengthened elite authority by removing alternate sources of effective governance (Evans et al., 2010). Without the courts, justice provision naturally fell back to bigmen and elders, which reinforced 'immense practical challenges in determining who the chiefs [were]' (Timmer, 2008:p.197). Weakened communities 'routinely challenged' claims of authority by bigmen, especially those who had sinned according to church doctrine by 'partak[ing] in alcohol and...are seen as colluding with loggers' (Porter et al., 2015,p.7).

Collusion with loggers brings up the acetylene-torch role of capitalism in undermining justice and effective governance in Solomon Islands (Allen, 2011), and the role of logging in Solomon Islands's political economy cannot be understated. Currently the country's main export commodity earning 70 per cent of all export income (DFAT, 2014), the logging industry has played a major role in destroying both local ecologies and traditional modes of governance by incentivising the breakdown in traditional collective ownership administered by chiefs and elders, and its replacement by local 'trustees' according to Western law who behave as private owners and take the profits, permitting fees and bribes for themselves (Baines, 2015; Monson, 2015), creating an atmosphere of universal suspicion.

This brings us to the core of governance arbitrage. Those who wield authority do so by appeals to multiple sources of legitimacy, often at once. The kastom bigman is a Western state trustee of a wantok's traditional land while serving as a Member of Parliament and a Christian church elder – and if they are not actually the same person, they usually share kin or personal networks (Baines, 2015). Once a bigman would proffer justice with oversight by

elders; then church pastors offering their religious views entered the picture; then Western authorities with their liberal state functions; and finally capitalists with their eagerness to pay pennies to make millions. Now, elites range across these codes to gain and maintain authority, even when asserting authority under one code undermines authority in another; in fact, the practice undermines each code but leaves the power concentrated in relatively few hands (Cooper, 2018; McDougall, 2015; Monson, 2015). Bigmen can and often do abuse their customary authority to line their own pockets with rents and payments from logging companies, the state and foreign aid actors rather than distributing these funds to their kin, and escape retribution by calling on precisely the traditional roles of authority they abuse (Baines, 2015; Hviding, 2015).

Likewise, the withdrawal of that very system under the postcolonial state is another example of the new elite asserting its authority by deprioritising the provision of effective and non-personalised justice outside provincial capitals. While Solomon Islands is a state cursed with the wicked problems of building a liberal democratic state without much money in a context of economic and ethnic volatility, the agency of national elites should not be denied, especially when considering the elites' decades-long approach to subverting the Constitutional mandate to decentralise power and fighting federalism and power-sharing (Nanau, 2017a; Nanau, 2017b; Scales, 2008). Fundamentally, while much remains outside the control of elites, much does.

At the grassroots, non-elite Islanders also understand the differences between governance codes, but see them as generally complementary. Customary, chiefly procedures, Christian mediation and local liberal courts can be complementary (McDougall & Kere, 2012). More importantly, 'local communities ... [combine] the most efficacious elements of indigenous and introduced regulatory systems with reasonable efficiency' (Evans et al., 2010:p.29) in classic arbitrageur fashion. While these views may be optimistic by privileging inputs of governance arbitrage while discounting the outputs of widespread governance failure in terms of ecological disaster, ongoing ethnic tensions, and state weakness that strengthens elites, the fact remains that elites and non-elites alike are attempting to make the best of a less-than-ideal situation through governance arbitrage in a hybrid governance environment.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that one vital yet neglected explanation for the poor development outcomes in Solomon Islands is the failure to account for the hybrid interaction of governance codes – customary, Christian, capitalist and liberal – in the country. As a result, despite the presence of four governance codes, effective hybrid governance remains harder to find. Nevertheless, Islander elites and non-elites alike make the best of the situation through governance arbitrage.

In this paper, we have seen litigants bringing customary expectations to a liberal court; bringing the liberal to customary practices; bringing the Christian to both. In hybridity, we see not just distinct venues, but fluidity and overlap between governance codes – and while national elites may be able to navigate the system through the acquisition of experience and the deployment of resources, non-elites in local communities struggle to make do; the difference between the two groups is one's luxury of strategy, the others' reliance on tactics. Both groups, however, are trying to make the best of their situation, to get what they want.

The purpose of this paper has been to identify a gap in the literature, namely examples of hybridity in Melanesia in action. The purpose has been to argue for the concept of governance arbitrage as a useful addition to the literature, using the example of the Solomon Islands justice space. The goal is to recommend new pathways for research, e.g. moving away from the assumption that the liberal justice system with its 'possessive individuals' is the only way to justice and finding examples of governance arbitrage in the emergent legal system. More important that this is seeing Solomon Islands's politics as politics, and looking for governance arbitrage both in the actions of its political actors and as a core component of the slow building of a political settlement in the country.

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Figure 3: Typical housing on the Solomon Islands, Savo Island.

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RESEARCH NOTE
Strategies for shaping change: Networks for gaining access, enhancing exchange and obtain status

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Abstract: Networks were important in the forming of a collaborative workshop where representatives of relevant groups discussed strategies to shape socio-ecological change in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. Networks enhanced capacity, power, control and exchange. Furthermore, participants increased their social capital and status. Being part of established networks was on the one side a precondition for conducting the workshop. On the other side, the fact that two researchers are affiliated to a German university and thus were not part of these networks in Central Kalimantan enabled a dialogical character of the workshop. Communication and the transfer of formal and informal information in networks were widely conducted via WhatsApp, quite unusual for the German researchers but a common procedure in Indonesia. Establishing networks with 'white people' or 'bule' was a motivation for encounters between one German researcher and Indonesian workshop participants where issues of exotism arose. Furthermore, establishing networks between universities in the global North and the global South are an inherent aspect of transdisciplinary research and engaged anthropology.

Keywords: trans-disciplinarity; workshop; networks; resources; Indonesia; Kalimantan

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Networks are a crucial factor for enhancing capacity, power, control and exchange. Through networks, people not only gain access to material resources but also to social capital and status. Networks were the main points in the organization and implementation of a collaborative multi-stakeholder workshop held in Palangkaraya, the provincial capital of Central Kalimantan, Indonesia in March 2018.[1] The one-day workshop, titled 'Central Kalimantan in the year 2030: Natural Resources, Social Justice and Sustainable Development', brought together around 30 participants from universities, civil society organizations, local media and the provincial government to discuss current and future pathways of natural resource, justice and environmental governance in Central Kalimantan. The aim of the workshop was to elaborate on diverging future visions regarding natural resource extraction on an intersectoral expert level and furthermore, to find correspondences between different scenarios. Four guiding questions related to Central Kalimantan were addressed in the workshop:

1) How is the status quo regarding the social, political, ecological, and economic situation?
2) What will the future look like in 2030?
3) How are pathways towards utopia and dystopia?
4) Who might be relevant actors and what are their relationships and their power relations?

Soruce: Alessandro Gullo.

Figure 1: Workshop Participants

All participants described the current and future situation as increasingly worrisome. Accordingly, deforestation and environmental degradation were interlinked with increasing social injustice, a loss of culture and local knowledge and a declining local economy. All participants agreed that Central Kalimantan is rich in natural resources but performing poorly in regard to social, political, and economic development. The low level of development was related to a weak government dominated by companies. Conflicts in the last decades are mostly related to the decrease of access, control, and management of land. Participants argued that the civil society is currently weak because community members and activists are excluded from relevant political processes. However, participants described opportunities for change in the establishment and strengthening of civil society organizations which should challenge, control, and change the executive and the legislative.

The workshop was organized by Kristina Großmann, the project leader, Alessandro Gullo, a student assistant, Semiarto Aji Purwanto, an associate professor in Anthropology at the Universitas Indonesia in Depok/Jakarta doing research on mining in Central Kalimantan, Marko Mahin, a priest, director of an indigenous rights organization and associate professor at the Universitas Kristen in Palangkaraya as well as Pinarsita Juliana and Meta Septalisa who both worked for several international and national civil society organizations in Central Kalimantan. The organizing group brought together people with diverse backgrounds and interests, with access to different networks.

The workshop revealed that networks in the sense of encounters and collaborations with specific groups of people were a key issue in terms of power and access as well as representation and positionality – taking serious (self-)reflection as an obligatory part of participative research (Wittmayer et al. 2013). Access to networks is an asset that can enable people's ability and capacity to gain control (Ribot and Peluso 2003). Networks also function as social capital which, according to Robert Putnam (1995), enables participants to act together more effectively in order to pursue their aims. Establishing networks as asset and social capital was also a driving force in encounters between the Alesandro Gullo and Indonesian workshop participants where issues of exotism arose.

Selecting key conveners and participants: Importance of established networks

Kristina Großmann, Marko Mahin and Semiarto Aji Purwanto first began to collaborate in 2015, when the two Indonesian scholars were invited to the scoping workshop 'Environmental Transformation, Ethnicity and Gender in Kalimantan, Indonesia' which took place at the University of Passau. Kristina Großmann continued to meet with Marko Mahin and Semiarto Aji Purwanto every year since during visits in Indonesia to deepen the exchange and discussions on current conflicts regarding resource extraction in Central Kalimantan and the three scholars developed the idea for a research project on mining. In 2017, they finally started a project and Kristina Großmann, building on the preceding collaboration, invited Marko Mahin to act as a co-convener of the workshop observing his skills as a 'frontrunner'; a critical discussion partner and able to provide access to networks of people working on issues of environmental transformation in Palangkaraya. Marko Mahin is not only a Protestant priest, associate professor, and former vice president of the Universitas Kristen, but also the head of an indigenous peoples' rights organization promoting the rights of Dayak, the indigenous inhabitants of Kalimantan. Due to his manifold positions, Marko Mahin is well connected and has established networks to the political and intellectual elite in Palangkaraya. He has access to various networks such as to universities, the government, and Dayak organizations all on the provincial level. The collaboration also involved Pinarsita Juliana and Meta Septalisa who work with various environmental and indigenous peoples' rights organizations and hence have access to a broad range of civil society organizations and media. Consequently, when the preparation team started to discuss whom to invite to the workshop, it became soon clear that Marko Mahin, Pinarsita Juli-

ana and Meta Septalisa led the selection process of the participants as they were very well connected to a set of relevant actors. Generally, Kristina Großmann was glad that the cooperation partners in Palangkaraya headed the invitation process because this ensured that relevant actors to whom she didn't have access to, attended the workshop. During the first preparatory meeting, they collected about 60 potential participants from various sectors and decided to invite 25 of them. However, when it came to the selection process whom to invite, Kristina Großmann felt she lacked knowledge on the social and political relevance of the suggested civil society organizations, education institutions and local newspaper. Thus, Marko Mahin, Pinarsita Juliana and Meta Septalisa had to slow down their pace in the decision-making process and had to give background information of respected institutions to the others in the preparation group. Additionally, in order to get introduced to the still unknown invited participants Kristina Großmann joined Pinarsita Juliana and Meta Septalisa handing over the written invitation personally.

Creating a space for discussion: (Not) being part of networks

One major task of the preparation group was to bring together relevant actors from different sectors to discuss issues with environmental governance, such as extractives and palm oil production. The organizing committee created a space for critical discussion where power relations were rather questioned than reaffirmed. Besides from companies, representatives from all other sectors took part and discussed the status quo, conflicts and future visions in regard of socio-ecological transformation in Central Kalimantan. This would have not been possible without the access to diverse networks and the respected position of the group members from Palangkaraya. Marko Mahin is a well-known person in the provincial capital, linked to the university and the Protestant church, which both tend to be associated with rather providing spaces for dialogue in regard to conflicts than advancing political and economic interests. Pinarsita Juliana and Meta Septalisa worked already in several programs of different civil society organizations as advocate, mediator and field researcher.

Thus, the conveners are not only well connected but also respected because of their vast experience of the situation and conflicts 'on the ground' and their personal engagement to enhance the situation of community members. Moreover, the fact that Kristina Großmann as one of the main conveners is a representative of a German university and thus coming from 'outside' Central Kalimantan and being not part of a certain network signaled also a dialogic character of the workshop. Invited participants were curious what will happen during a transdisciplinary workshop as it was their first one in this manner. They stated that they gained new and comparative insights in discussions with scholars from Germany and Depok/Jakarat and the working atmosphere was affirmative.

WhatsApp as means to transfer information, communicate and control in networks

During the first planning phase of the workshop, Kristina Großmann, who was in Germany, and Marko Mahin, who was in Indonesia, corresponded via the messaging application WhatsApp. Marko Mahin designated two female assistants, Pinarsita Juliana and Meta Septalisa, by sending Kristina Großmann a picture via the messenger depicting the three of them underlined with the title "Team of Success". Kristina Großmann knew only Meta Septalisa before and actually wanted to ask her to collaborate, but Marko Mahin was faster. It turned out that Pinarsita Juliana and Meta Septalisa were very experienced, cooperative and reliable in the preparation and implementation of the workshop, thus Marko Mahin's initiative was most welcome by Kristina Großmann and his choice was excellent. The workshop preparation group decided that a moderator should chair and orchestrate the whole event being responsible for introducing into the topic, leading the general discussions and keeping the time frame. Therefore, the group decided to meet him in advance to discuss the topic and the procedure of the workshop. Marko Mahin suggested a colleague of him from the Universitas Kristen who is not only well known but also very busy. Unfortunately, the meeting with him one day ahead of the workshop had to be cancelled because of the delay of his flight to the provincial capital. Marko Mahin instead sent him the discussion topics, the procedure of making future scenarios and what he should explain in the introduction mainly via WhatsApp until the evening before the workshop. The moderator fulfilled his tasks very professional as if we would have met several times before for preparation.

Another area where WhatsApp seemed to be indispensable was sending workshop reminders to invited participants. When delivering the written invitations, Pinarsita Juliana and Meta Septalisa requested a mobile phone number for contact of each invited participant. In the following they reminded them – especially the invited state officials – via the messenger several times before the workshop in order to ensure their participation. This way of using a messenger service was quite unusual for the German members of the preparation group but a common procedure in Indonesia. However, WhatsApp was not only used as a formal means to transfer information and maintaining the contact to invited participants when personal meetings were not possible. The preparation group also used the messenger vibrantly for their internal communication in order to find and affirm dates for meetings, exchange the status quo on current tasks, discuss questions and encourage group members if problems occurred. Thus, WhatsApp was not only used for formal and informal information transfer and communication amongst participants of certain networks but also as a tool for reminding and trying to control the invited participants.

Exotism: Establishing networks with 'bule'

In regard of his German background, Alessandro Gullo encountered forms of exotism during the workshop, which are closely connected to the concept of whiteness. While racism is most often defined in regard to the rejection of something foreign, exotism emphasizes the attraction of something foreign. Still it is a special form of racism that endorses a sexualization of something foreign and turns the racist rejection into exotic attraction (Danielzik & Bendix, 2010). The 'advantage' is to be defined as 'white supremacy'. As Applebaum (2016: 4) argues, 'white supremacy' is not understood as in the ways groups such as the Klu Klux Klan portray themselves as the superrace, but rather "the continual pattern of widespread, everyday practi-

ces and policies that are made invisible through normalization and thus are often taken for granted as just what is". Hence, in the words of Mills (1997), white supremacy is a form of suppression that is unintentionally reproduced by daily practices.

In the context of the workshop, whiteness played a crucial role in a situation that took place at the end of the workshop. During the workshop discussions, the participants debated about different topics in a serious and critical manner. However, after the official closing mostly female participants changed this attitude, what was quite sudden for Alessandro Gullo. Within seconds the analytical and critical atmosphere turned into impulsive, emotional and stereotyping encounters. In this Alessandro Gullo was prompted to take a series of pictures with different female participants. While this is not an uncommon situation, if one is traveling as a 'white person' in Indonesia, the sudden change of behavioral manners in the context of the workshop was remarkable for Alessandro Gullo. Hence, also in academic contexts in Indonesia, the appearance of white people is still something exotic.

In reflecting the described situation, Pinarsita Juliana explained that according to her opinion, many Indonesians are very proud when they meet or work together with foreigners, especially with people coming from the global north and having a white skin. She describes that people she knows in Indonesia have high expectations about 'white' or 'bule' people, as they are labeled as rich, smart and clever. According to her perception, it is almost like an inherited perspective and like a syndrome of the past. Thus, the described puzzling encounters for Alesandro Gullo and the following discussion make clear a prevailing thinking of white supremacy amongst participants and team members. Consequently, it poses a challenge for the researcher to be aware of exotism in a research process and (re)act in an appropriate manner. Thus, the researcher must be self-aware of his positionality in an encounter that is still coined by colonial thinking. Hence, strong (self-)reflexivity on the whole research process is needed. This includes, in the words of Yancy (2008: 231), that researcher needs to stay vigilant, in order to address and counter the "structural and material power racial hierarchies" and thus not reproduce white supremacist values and beliefs.

Networks: Gains & Synergies

On the base of the successful preparations and implementation of the workshop the organizers plan a follow up for 2019. This first joint workshop showed that the organizers could rely on each other, could complement their experiences and competencies, and could exchange information and knowledge. The Indonesian scientists stressed that in the course of the collaboration with German scholars they could enhance their knowledge on the global embedment of environmental transformations in Kalimantan and further their knowledge in theoretical approaches. Moreover, for them, international networks are important indicators for their academic performance in order to get promoted, first and foremost when collaboration results in joint workshops and articles. For Semiarto Aji Purwanto and Kristina Großmann while doing research in Central Kalimantan, encounters and relationships with intellectuals and activists in Palangkaraya is important in order to discuss and test arguments and gain information and knowledge on complex issues on socio-ecological transformations. Furthermore, establishing and maintaining networks between universities in the global North and the global South and including the expertise of non-academicians is an inherent aspect of transdisciplinary research and engaged anthropology aiming to make research accessible and applicable for the public and for communities with whom researchers work (Low and Merry 2010; Jahn et al. 2012).

Endnotes

[1] Conducting future workshops is one methodological pillar of the participative and trans-disciplinary research project FuturEN, which is led by Kristina Großmann. Applying a participative research approach and combining theories from anthropology and sustainability science, the project members of FuturEN analyze power relations, conflicts, and implementations of future visions in coal mining in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia along the nexus of ethnicity, gender, and status. They aim to mitigate conflicts, enhance participation, and generate transformation knowledge in correspondence with extra-scientific actors such as villagers, members of civil society organizations, and representatives of the state and companies. The project with the title 'FuturEN- Governance, Identities and Future along Categories of Differentiation. The Case of Coal Mining in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia' is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).

[2] For further information about the aims, results and impacts of the workshop, see Großmann 2018.

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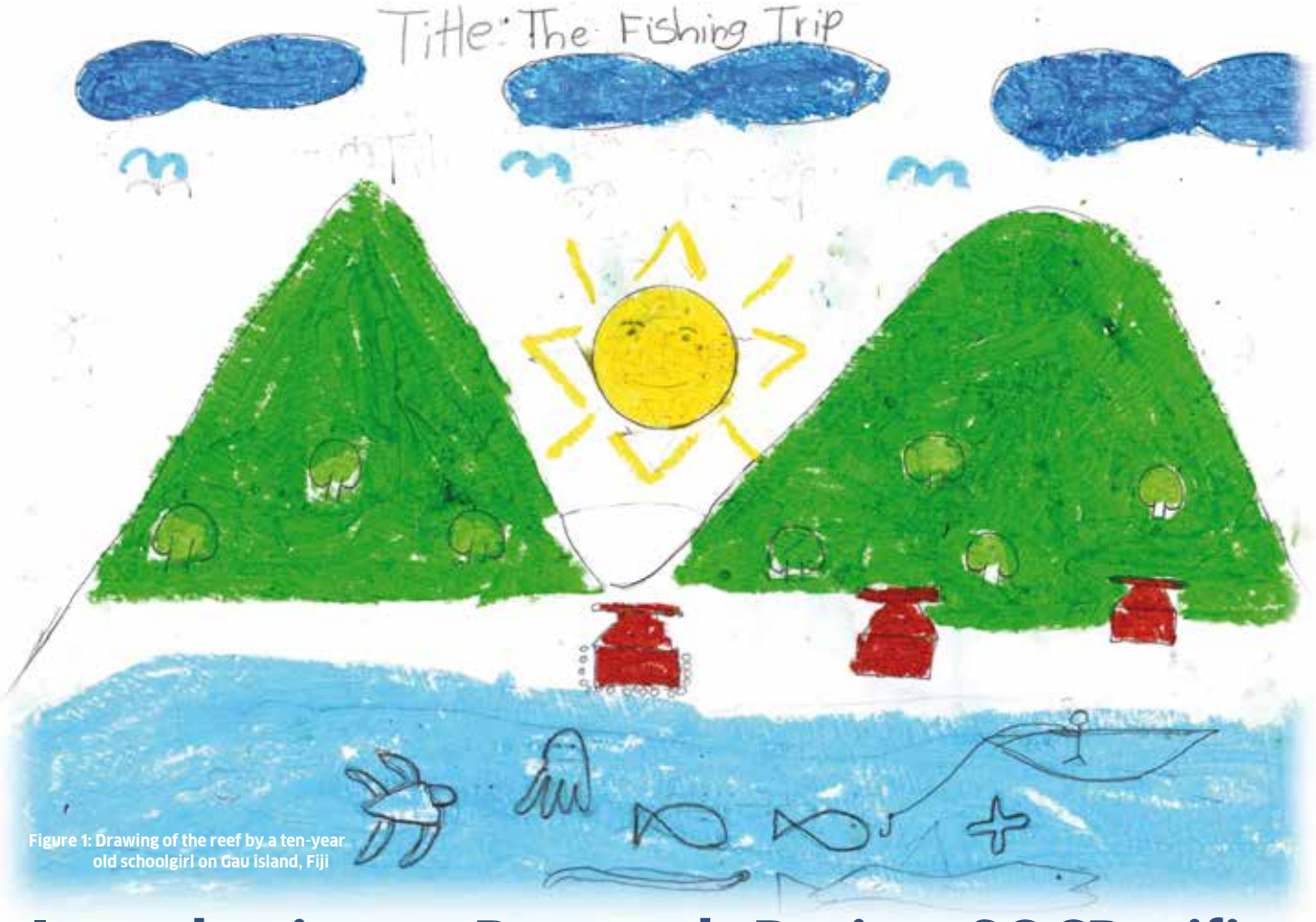

Figure 1: Drawing of the reef by a ten-year old schoolgirl on Gau island, Fiji

Soruce: Collected by Elodie Fache in 2016.

Introduction to Research Project SOCPacific: A Sea of Connections: An interdisciplinary, multi-level and multi-stakeholder study of South Pacific fisheries

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Abstract: The Franco-German research project 'A Sea of Connections: Contextualizing Fisheries in the South Pacific Region' (SOCPacific, 2018-2021) aims to explore the large web of socio-cultural, policy and geopolitical connections within which both coastal and oceanic fishing practices and fisheries management endeavours occur in this intricate and ever-changing regional setting. After some brief background, this research note presents the project's set of more specific objectives. It then outlines the rationale for choosing three study areas (New Caledonia, Vanuatu and Fiji) for our analysis of the complex and dynamic 'sea of connections' in which South Pacific fisheries are embedded. Finally, it outlines the combination of research tools and concepts that make up the core of the prospected interdisciplinary, multi-level and multi-stakeholder investigations related to these study areas. This approach intends to contribute to the advancement of cross-cutting knowledge in the multi-faceted field of local fisheries management and marine governance.

Keywords: small-scale fisheries; conservation policies; marine governance; Pacific studies; interdisciplinary

[Submitted as Research Note: 02 February 2019, Acceptance of the revised manuscript: 15 February 2019]

Introduction

The interdisciplinary research project 'A Sea of Connections: Contextualizing Fisheries in the South Pacific Region' (SOCPacific) has been set up in response to the Franco-German Call in Humanities and Social Sciences (FRAL) jointly run by the Agence Nationale de la Recherche (ANR) and the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG). Launched mid-2018, it will be funded for 3 years and is based on an institutional partnership between the French National Research Institute for Development (IRD) in Montpellier and the Leibniz Centre for Tropical Marine Research (ZMT) in Bremen. The core research team includes thirteen members and two jointly recruited PhD students, all of which also benefit from the large SOCPacific consortium of external partners and collaborators (see https://socpacific.net).

The core team members' research expertise and experiences allow for interdisciplinary dialogues within the social sciences (mainly anthropology, geography and political ecology) as well as between the social and natural sciences (marine biology, ecology, geology). This interdisciplinarity is indeed crucial for a comprehensive and innovative study of fisheries in the South Pacific, which represents a unique context. This region is the locus of geopolitical competition related to three interrelated objectives: (1) to exploit marine resources (in particular fish species of outstanding economic relevance and deep-sea minerals); (2) to protect the ocean's biodiversity (mainly through marine managed and protected areas); and (3) to control marine spaces (through various territorial strategies, such as the negotiation of new coastal management rights or maritime boundaries) (Fache, Le Meur & Rodary, 2018). In this context, fisheries management and marine governance are major policy concerns, at both the regional and national levels. Moreover, local communities and their political representatives are increasingly committed to integrated management of marine resources and territories, after a predicted dissolution of related community-based activities in the 1970s (Johannes, 1978; Johannes, 2002).

SOCPacific's main objective is to 're-embed' South Pacific fisheries, both coastal and oceanic, in this intricate context, by exploring the large web of socio-cultural, policy and geopolitical connections within which fishing practices and fisheries management endeavours occur. To do so, the core team is carrying out multi-level and multi-stakeholder investigations in three study areas: New Caledonia, Vanuatu and Fiji, articulated around three main interrelated thematic areas:

1) the social values of places and resources in connection with inshore and offshore fisheries;

2) the connections and tensions between fishing and conservation interests and practices, in particular within marine managed and protected areas;

3) the ways fisheries and existing management tools are integrated into the marine spatial planning (MSP) schemes that are currently under development in the South Pacific region, and the multi-faceted issues these raise.

After some brief background, the more specific objectives of SOCPacific will be presented, followed by the rationale for the selection of sites and methodologies on which our investigations are based.

Brief state of the art and background

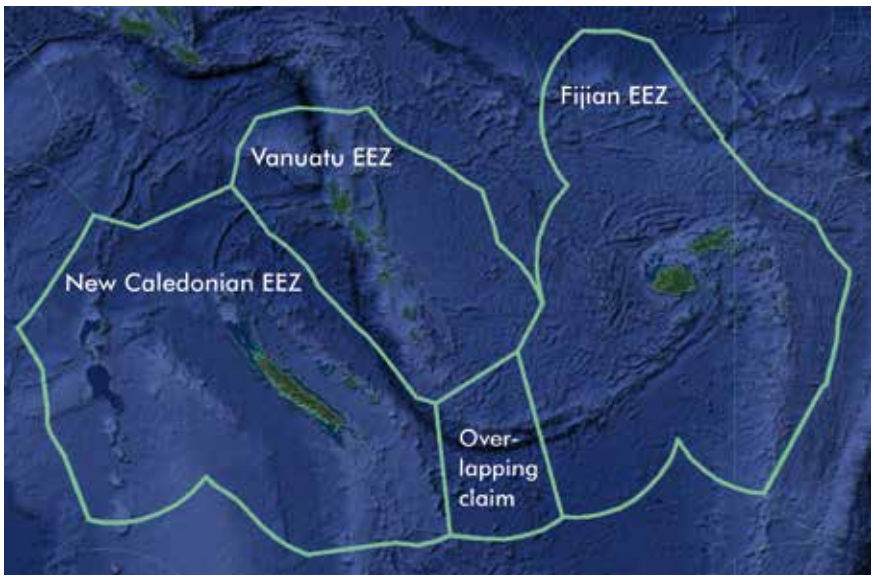
SOCPacific aims at broadening recent research endeavours to take into account, through the articulation of social-ecological perspectives, the multi-faceted aspects of South Pacific fisheries.

To date, economic and ecological research on fisheries in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) has had a strong focus on tuna species, because of their outstanding economic relevance and, as a consequence, concerns about overexploitation. The tuna fishery in the WCPO is indeed the largest in the world, with a catch of more than 2.5 million tonnes in 2017, representing 54% of the global tuna catch (WCPFC, 2018). The tuna fishery is therefore the main priority of the regional and subregional organisations[1] that have specific mandates to assist the Pacific island nations with sustainable management of their marine resources. Yet, despite the increasing number of both locally managed marine areas (LMMAs) and large-scale marine protected areas (LSMPAs) in the region (Bartlett, Pakoa & Manua, 2009; Govan et al., 2009; Leenhardt et al., 2013), legal overfishing is taking place throughout the Pacific Ocean and particularly threatens tuna stocks (e.g., for Bigeye tuna, Harley et al., 2015; McKechnie, Pilling & Hampton, 2017). Likewise, so-called Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported fishing activities (IUU) remain a significant threat for Pacific tuna fisheries (MRAG Asia Pacific, 2016). Therefore, there is a continuing need for the strengthening of current regulation arrangements (FFA, 2018).

The research programmes, development schemes and management frameworks focused on the Pacific tuna fishery draw most attention to monitoring large-scale, industrial and offshore fishing activities, operated mainly by purse-seine and longline fleets. As a result, this diverts attention from smaller-scale fishing activities, operated by artisanal and subsistence fishers in nearshore and coastal areas, both of which still remain less important economically. These are monitored less at a national level (Zeller et al., 2015), despite their unmatchable importance for aspects of local livelihoods and food security.

Most research on South Pacific coastal fisheries pays attention to economic factors, ecological dynamics or their interrelationships. In the 1980s-1990s, researchers examined traditional fisheries and fisheries-related resource management with a particular focus on changes brought about by increasing development pressures (e.g., Hviding, 1996; Leblic, 1991; Veitayaki, 1998). Since the early 2000s, the "ecosystem approach to fisheries" (Garcia et al., 2003) has been widely promoted and implemented across the world, including in the South Pacific. This approach recognises the interdependence between human well-being and ecosystem health as well as the need to maintain the productivity of ecosystems for present and future generations. It aims for better planning and management of fisheries, in a way that ensures sustainability in its broadest sense. Its implementation seems to have given momentum to the analysis of the interplay between fisheries development and coastal management initiatives (e.g., Hamel, Andréfouët & Pressey, 2013).

Despite this, the multi-faceted connections between oceanic/offshore and coastal/inshore fisheries remain insufficiently explored. This research gap requires urgent attention, as such connections seem to have a strong relevance for:



Source: https://globalfishingwatch.org/map/ (accessed on 19/02/2019), modified by the authors.

Figure 2: SOCPacific's study areas (the 'overlapping claim' refers to the disputed area between Vanuatu, New Caledonia and France around the uninhabited Matthew and Hunter Islands)

- spawning, nursery and feeding areas of both reef fish and epipelagic/oceanic predator species (Allain et al., 2012);
- Blue Growth Initiatives such as aquaculture (Szuster & Albasri, 2010);
- sustainability challenges and the switching of human efforts from the coastal fisheries sector to the pelagic one when overfishing occurs (Roeger et al., 2016; Veitayaki & Ledua, 2016); and
- the articulation between customary coastal rights and marine tenure systems (including sacred sites), national fisheries regulations, and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Lastly, because recent research on South Pacific fisheries usually considers their oceanic and coastal components separately, it conveys an antagonism between local aspirations and constraints on the one hand, and global conservation and market drivers on the other. This local/global opposition can be understood as the outcome of a distribution of power where global interests and stakeholders tend to influence local fishing decisions and practices (Eriksson & Clarke, 2015), but there are undoubtedly multi-level processes at stake that need to be explored.

Objectives

SOCPacific's main objective is to assess and analyse the complex web of relations, practices, activities, policies and networks within which fisheries are currently embedded and fishing practices occur in the South Pacific region, with a particular focus – as mentioned above – on the socio-cultural, policy and geopolitical dimensions of the complex interactions at stake. It also endeavours to study the connections between coastal and oceanic fisheries (generally considered and examined as separate sectors of activities and practices), beyond economic and ecological perspectives only, and from the point of view of all the stakeholders involved (including various categories of fishers, Pacific Islanders, national governments, regional frameworks and institutions, and global conservation and 'conservation-as-development' movements).

SOCPacific also aims to achieve a set of more specific research objectives, mainly:

- to examine the regional and national mechanisms that contribute to the translation of global economic and ecological imperatives and influences into specific local uses of marine resources and management schemes and, conversely, the upward diffusion of customary forms of fisheries management and marine tenure and their (at least partial) integration into policy apparatuses;
- to analyse the multiple levels and current developments of the regional fisheries management policy landscape, and outline how the latter can be equipped to support local efforts to not only conserve and restore fisheries resources, but also to minimize the negative ecological impacts of fishing while securing returns (food, revenues, immaterial outcomes) that ensure sustainable well-being;
- to identify, from a locally grounded perspective, key pressures, challenges and obstacles related to the previous objective, and to facilitate communication on the matter between the various stakeholders and policymakers concerned via adaptable knowledge exchange pathways.

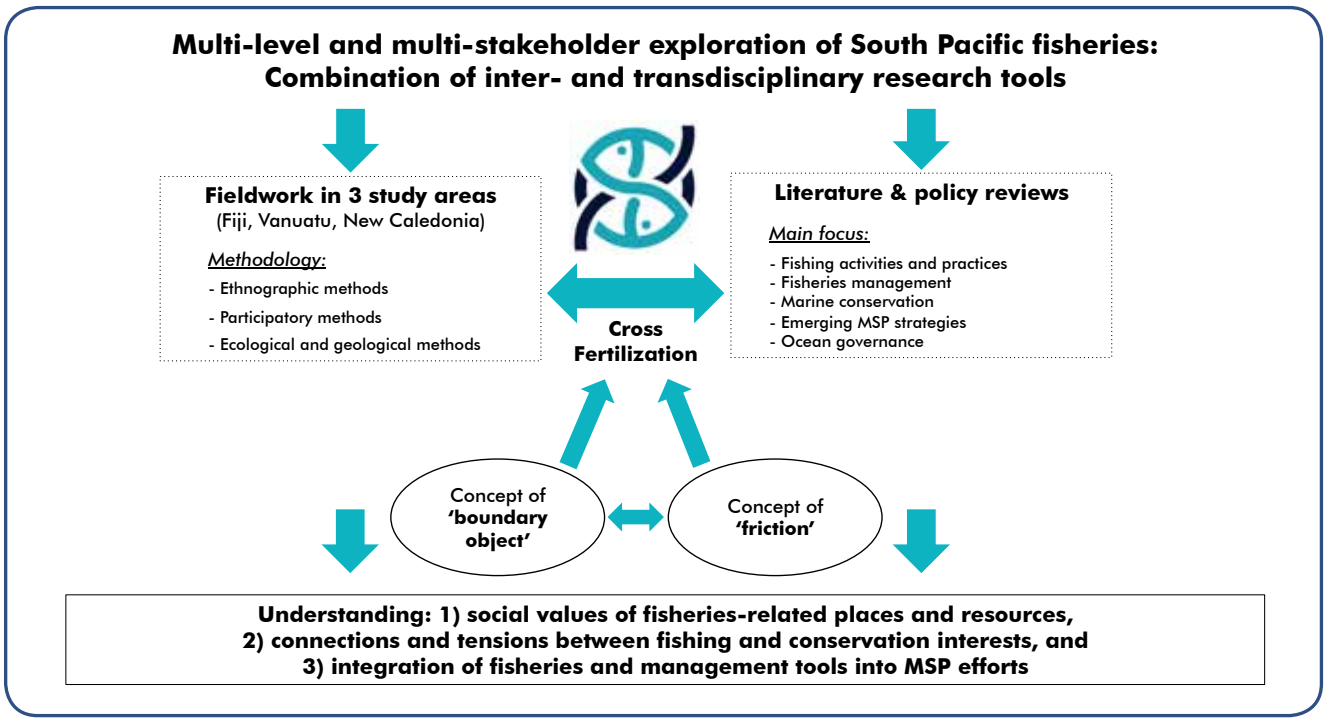
This project will bring relevant insights to be used by Pacific island communities in the ongoing discussions related to the building of new forms of integrative fisheries management and marine governance including all stakeholders.

Study areas

Fiji, Vanuatu and New Caledonia are the core geographical focus of this project. Fiji (a former British colony) and Vanuatu (a former Franco-British condominium; an unusual colonial arrangement) gained their independence quite recently, in 1970 and 1980 respectively. New Caledonia is still an overseas territory of France, but the question of its future independence is currently raised through a series of referenda that started in 2018. Together, they form a highly interesting triangle with contiguous and extensive national waters that remain (for fishing and other issues such as deep-sea mining, transport, technical cooperation) of huge relevance for the European Union. Their coastal fisheries seem to share some of the features that are widespread in the South Pacific region, such as a lack of adequate monitoring data, despite a trend of overexploitation and an over-reliance on no-take areas as the main fisheries management tool (Gillett, 2014).

Yet, these three settings differ in terms of, among various other aspects (some of which are mentioned below), their development level, the fisheries-related management and conservation tools in place, as well as the importance of their offshore fisheries (within EEZs). They therefore represent critical cases for a comparative approach of a) an articulation between conservation and extraction of fisheries resources, and b) the policy (dis)connections between coastal and oceanic fisheries, as they are perceived and addressed by various stakeholders.

The development of the Fiji Locally Managed Marine Area (FLMMA) network operates at multiple levels, and this network now appears as a leader and model both within the South



Soruce: Fache / Breckwoldt.

Figure 3: Research concept

Pacific region and beyond (Fache & Breckwoldt, 2018). It is "a non-profit and charitable association of resource conservation NGOs, government departments, academic institutions and over 400 communities working together to promote and encourage the preservation, protection and sustainable use of marine resources in Fiji by the stewards of these marine resources" (http://lmmanetwork.org/who-we-are/country-networks/fiji/). This multi-stakeholder partnership has become the main national space for advancing coastal fisheries management and, thereby, maintaining or improving local livelihoods. To date, it has also assumed a large part of the coastal fisheries management activities that should be part of the mandate of the government, which has focused significantly more attention on the management of the country's extensive offshore fishing activities, predominantly targeting albacore tuna (Thunnus alalunga) (Gillett, Lewis & Cartwright, 2014; WCPFC, 2015a; WCPFC, 2015b).

New Caledonia is not part of the Asia-Pacific (and progressively supra-regional) LMMA network, and its longline fleet is very small (WCPFC, 2015b). In 2008, the lagoons of New Caledonia were inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List in recognition of the diversity and 'natural beauty' of their coral reef systems. The classification of six non-contiguous marine clusters – and not the lagoons in their totality – was a concession to the mining sector that accounts for around 95% of the New Caledonian exports, has historically polluted sections of the lagoon and reef systems, and will continue to impact these through mining and transport activities. The inscription process has given momentum to the development of several national marine protected areas (MPAs) (Bodmer, 2010). In 2014, the Natural Park of the Coral Sea was declared, covering New Caledonia's entire EEZ and aiming to contribute to international biodiversity conservation commitments[2], while the inclusion of fisheries in its management plan remains unclear (e.g., 'no-take area' vs 'multiple-use area').

Vanuatu is also not a member country of the Asia-Pacific LMMA network, but was one of the first countries to implement LMMAs in the 1990s. Vanuatu's National Ocean Policy - our ocean, our culture, our people (2016), which sets out the new marine management policy direction for the country, is mainly articulated around the concepts of ecosystem-based management, MSP and MPAs. While the longline fleet flagged under Vanuatu is not far behind Fiji's (in terms of both number of vessels and volume of catch), fisheries is not a significant contributor to the country's economy (WCPFC, 2015b). For historical and geological reasons, Vanuatu claims sovereignty over the uninhabited Matthew and Hunter Islands, currently included in New Caledonia's EEZ. These small uninhabited islands are therefore a matter of geopolitical tensions between Vanuatu and New Caledonia (and hence France), connecting border issues with fishery strategies at the regional level (David, 2011).

Methodologies

In each study area, SOCPacific's core team will conduct fieldwork in a (yet to be finalised) selection of sites. This selection includes the capital cities, the bases of most national, regional and international institutions (government agencies, regional bodies, worldwide NGOs, etc.). It also comprises two or more rural island settings where both fishing and marine management activities are important in the daily life of residents. The site selection depends on feedback from our local and international partners, with the ambition to align SOCPacific with the research projects and programmes carried out in the region. It is also conditional on the logistics of organising joint fieldwork periods for team members in each study area.

The project will employ a combination of inter- and transdisciplinary research tools and concepts allowing a multi-level and multi-stakeholder exploration of South Pacific fisheries. While focusing on current situations,

the investigations include a diachronic perspective whenever possible. Besides the fieldwork periods, these investigations involve literature and policy reviews focused on fishing, fisheries management, marine conservation (in particular marine managed and protected areas), emerging MSP strategies and ocean governance. The corresponding discourse analysis considers scientific, historic and legal texts; newspaper articles; international, regional, subregional and national strategy and policy documents (incl. pending ones and blueprints). The study of current fisheries management frameworks and trends also draws on meetings with representatives from regional and non-governmental organisations (in particular those that are based in Suva and Nouméa), government agencies, and local customary authorities.

The field investigations mainly involve ethnographic methodologies, especially non-participant and participant observation and qualitative interviews. Observations will provide important insights on involvement of local men and women in fishing, fisheries management and related (marine and terrestrial) activities and practices. Interviews with individuals and focus groups will complement these insights by exploring the views and values, and the challenges and aspirations, that islanders associate with such spheres. These observations and interviews also aim to explore the (dis) articulations between various registers of knowledge and values (customary, religious, scientific, technical, legal, policy-oriented, administrative, etc.) regarding fisheries, as well as how these registers are used, rejected, made invisible, ranked, etc. in relation to our three thematic areas. Participatory methods, such as drawing and ranking activities by schoolchildren, are planned to be applied too, always using the same protocol, in at least one site of each study area, to facilitate our comparison endeavours. In addition, some ecological and geological methodological elements – such as underwater visual census, species sampling and measurement, water salinity tests, mapping of seamounts, etc. – will be integrated in order to correlate the composition of fish populations and some features of coastal and offshore fishing grounds with the social values of these resources and places as well as with the geography of fishing, conservation and other (such as deep-sea mining) interests. In parallel to the work conducted in each study area, a process of exchange and cross-fertilization of generated data is envisaged.

SOCPacific's study of global changes and drivers is based on the concept of 'friction' as defined by Anna L. Tsing (2005). The attention to 'friction' allows the study of heterogeneous, cross-cultural, long-distance encounters and of "the awkward, unequal, unstable and creative qualities of interconnection across difference" that lead to "new arrangements of culture and power". The attention to 'friction' involves the study of the *in situ* interactions and negotiations between the various stakeholders of South Pacific fisheries, for instance aiming to tackle overfishing[3]. It also requires the examination of translation mechanisms of international statuses, norms and regulations at the national and local levels, as well as of customary norms in policies, and of what these processes produce.

The conceptual approach to investigating the multi-faceted aspects of South Pacific fisheries – including regional and national current fisheries management frameworks and trends, local perceptions and practices, and global changes and drivers – draws on the concept of the 'boundary object' (e.g., Mollinga, 2010). This concept allows the study of different abstractions of 'fisheries' based on its different meanings in the different disciplines and perspectives within SOCPacific.

Outlook

At this stage (February 2019), it is too early to dare providing any findings or conclusions. Yet, some challenges of our approach are already evident/visible. One of these is the transparent co-production of knowledge that is meaningful and useful for the stakeholders of South Pacific fisheries. For example, an understanding of the networks used for fish sales and market access is often critical to understand the functioning and health of small-scale fisheries – and it has yet to be defined how we can integrate these aspects best into our research set-up. Therefore, one of our priorities is to strengthen and extend our partnerships and exchanges with ground-based institutions, scholars and students to create a research environment in which the planned outputs echo and serve local priorities.

Acknowledgements

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We would like to thank the other members and partners of the SOCPacific team in Europe and in the Pacific for their contributions to the definition and the advancement of this project.

Endnotes

[1] For instance, the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission or WCPFC, the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency or FFA, the Parties to the Nauru Agreement or PNA, the Pacific Community or SPC, the Melanesian Spearhead Group or MSG, etc.

[2] Such as the Aichi Biodiversity Target 11: "By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes" (https://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/).

[3] While the process of granting permits to foreign fishing vessels is critical regarding this issue, in the frame of SOCPacific this and related aspects will not be addressed head-on, but might be touched upon through the question of the connections and tensions between fishing and conservation interests and practices.

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Soruce: Elodie Fache.

Figure 4: Sharing of the catch in the frame of the temporary opening of a reef reserve (*tabu* area), Gau island, Fiji

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CONFERENCE REPORT
12th European Society for Oceanists Conference (ESfO)
7-10 December 2018, Cambridge

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The 2018 ESfO conference was held 18 months after the last one in Munich, at the University of Cambridge. It coincided with the biannual conference of the Pacific History Association. The Pacific History event has always taken place at Pacific island universities or in Australia, and this was its first time in the UK, in the days before ESfO. Pacific Island scholars could participate in both conferences on a single trip, although not all of them stayed for the ESfO conference. Another benefit was the chance to see the excellent Oceania exhibition held at the Royal Academy of Arts in London. For that reason, the opening of the ESfO conference was in the Brian West Lecture Theater of the Royal Academy in Piccadilly (London), accompanied by a welcome reception and entry to the exhibition. The inspiring and enriching first keynote, 'Thinking Through Intersectionality and Gender Inequality in Papua New Guinea', was given by Holly Wardlow (Anthropology, University of Toronto) and addressed the general theme of the conference, 'Dealing with Inequality: Pacific perspectives, Pacific futures'. The podium discussion that followed focused on archival and museum collections and the difficulties of including Pacific perspectives. The exhibition itself featured rich displays (see background picture of this article) and thoughtful arrangements but lacked an explicit Pacific input, some felt.

After the opening and the welcome drinks, the participants, in other words "the whole conference", were transferred to Cambridge by coach, organized and managed by the conference team, under the guidance of Prof. Nicolas Thomas. Sean Mallon (Museum of New Zealand/ Te Papa Tongarewa) gave a keynote on museum work at Te Papa Tongarewa with all its challenges, limits and rewards. The conference sessions followed, some with more participants than others. While it was great to have many different topics covered, there was a constant complaint – as at previous ESfO conferences – that it was impossible to listen to all the great papers happening simultaneously.

Unfortunately, even the lunch breaks were filled with extra sessions, shortening the time for informal meetings and exchange. At the same time, it was sad for the presenters of the lunchtime events to lose some of their audience. Informal communication was possible during the wine reception at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA) at the University of Cambridge, and the conference dinner at the Doubletree Hilton. Some of the conference sessions were in relatively small but modern rooms at the hotel, while others took place in a nearby University building in Mill Lane.

Due to the high number of parallel sessions and the wide range of topics presented and questions raised, it is quite difficult to summarize the conference. All in all, we had 32 Sessions, of different length and intensity, on topics including racial mobility, current perspectives in archaeology, socio-linguistics, and resource extraction. There were sessions on contemporary repatriation practices and on the second day, new forms of political participation, economic dependency, landscapes of power, and decolonizing or closing maritime frontiers. Other topics included fashion, gendering the city, refugees, fighting climate change, new capitalism in the Pacific, transnational rituals, traffic, and indigenous responses to invasive species.

The corresponding author was lucky to participate in several sessions, and all of them were of a high standard and led to intense and profound discussions. Young scholars and students indicated new and creative directions for Pacific scholarship. The conference faded out on Monday afternoon and did not have a closing session. Many participants had already made their way back home or were heading on to visit friends and relatives. We look forward to the next ESfO conference to be held in Ajaccio, Corsica, in 2021.

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CONFERENCE REPORT "Dealing with Climate Change on Small Islands – Towards Effective and Sustainable Adaptation?"

25–27 July 2018, Hannover

Carola Klöck[1], Hellena Debelts[2] & Michael Fink[3]

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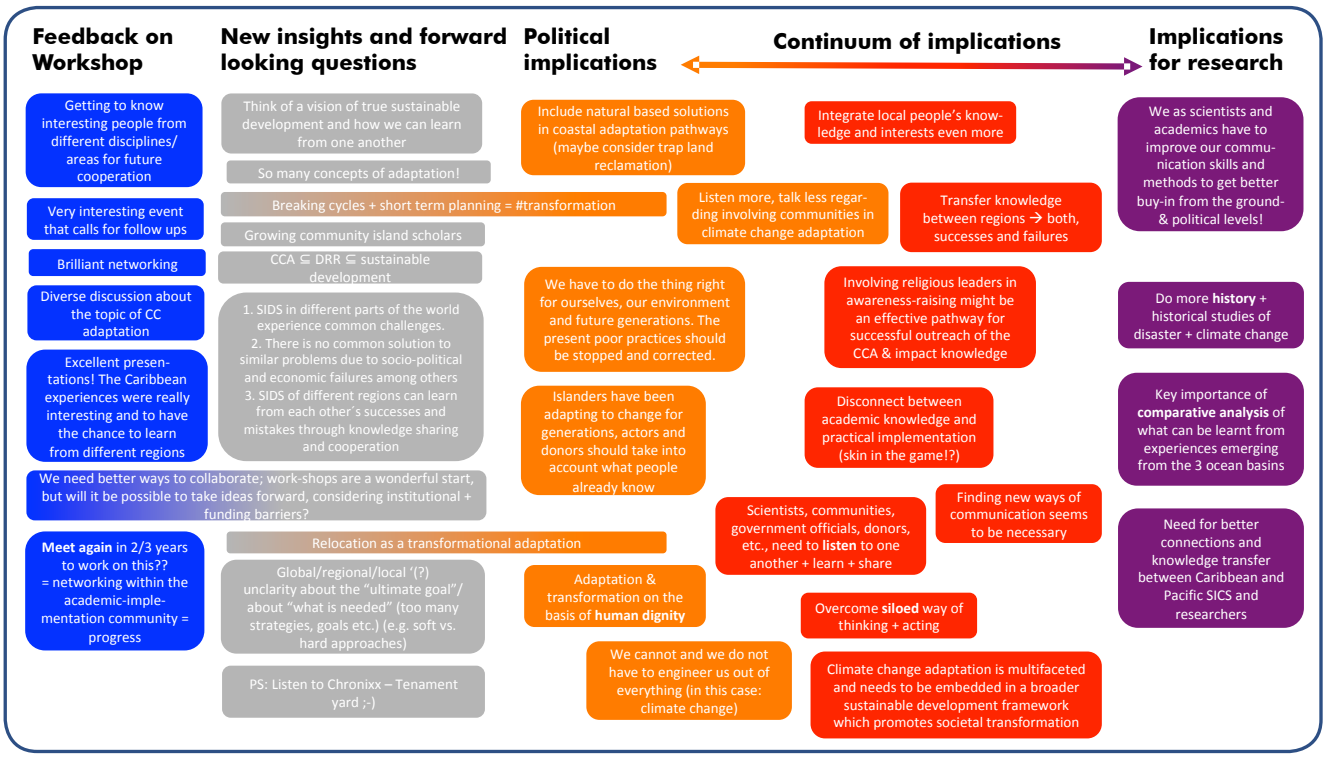
Small Islands are often seen as "canaries in the coalmine" in the context of climate change. Fragile ecosystems are sensitive to changes in temperature, rainfall patterns and sea-level rise, while island societies might have insufficient means to cope with climate change impacts. While science provides a robust global "big" picture on climate change and adaptation in general, data at the local scale is still lacking. Furthermore, knowledge on successful (as well as failed) adaptation from one island rarely reaches other islands or island regions. Therefore, Michael Fink and Carola Klöck organised a workshop covering the three Island Regions Pacific, Caribbean, and Indian Ocean titled "Dealing with Climate Change on Small Islands – Towards Effective and Sustainable Adaptation?". The workshop took place from 25–27 July 2018 at Herrenhausen Palace, Hannover, Germany and received financial support from the Volkswagen Foundation and organizational assistance from Hellena Debelts. Almost 40 scientists and practitioners attended. A small selection of the rich discussions and diverse presentations from the workshop are presented in this brief report.

While small island developing states (SIDS) everywhere struggle with climate change and urgently need to adapt to the challenges brought about by the effects of a changing climate, research on adaptation in SIDS is fragmentary and often divided along disciplinary and geographic lines. Those researchers working on the Pacific islands are not necessarily familiar with similar research carried out in the Caribbean or Indian Ocean, or anthropologists may not be familiar with work in urban planning or coastal engineering. To curtail these shortcomings, the workshop traversed regional and disciplinary divides by bringing together, from across the world's oceans, SIDS researchers and practitioners from a variety of backgrounds including geography, anthropology, political science and also urban planning, philosophy, as well as adaptation practice.

The workshop highlighted both the common challenges of SIDS and the specific circumstances of individual regions, island states, islands and communities. Clearly, there are no one-size-fits-all solutions to climate change, as the impacts of a changing climate are always embedded in and intertwined with complex social, economic and cultural conditions. Nonetheless, there are experiences to be shared and lessons to be learnt from each other. Participants thus appreciated the opportunity to

Source: Hellena Debelts.

Figure 1: Group photo of participants at Herrenhausen Palace, Hannover



Compilation & Design: Mihcael Fink.

Figure 2: Participatively collected "lessons learnt"

meet with colleagues from "the other" island region. While scholars and practitioners that work, for example, on the Pacific typically know each other, they are less familiar with their counterparts from the Caribbean or from the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, and have fewer opportunities to meet.

Thematically, the workshop focused on four specific topics, with a panel dedicated to each of these topics: migration and (im)mobility, livelihood security, extreme weather events and coastal management. Additionally, the workshop included three keynote addresses, a roundtable discussion with practitioners, and a poster session. This report is unfortunately too short to do justice to the rich discussions and diverse presentations of the workshop; the following can thus only present a small selection of contributions. Note that some of the workshop contributions will be published in an edited volume with Göttingen University Press and will be available in open access.

Migration, governance and local participation

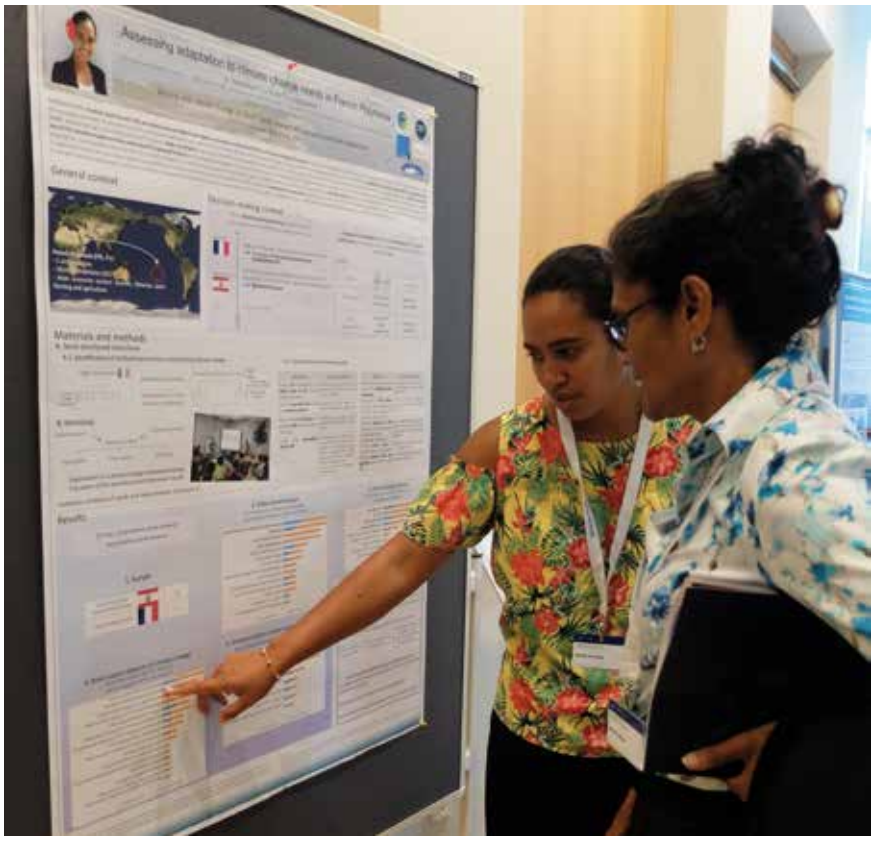
Relocation, displacement or migration are of course central concepts that figure prominently in the debate on adaptation in island contexts. Workshop participants highlighted different approaches to questions of migration and (im)mobility. The work of Virginie Duvat and Alexandre Magnan, for example, shows that atolls – arguably the most exposed and threatened places – are not "sinking" as the media and public discourses often misreport. In fact, the land area of the vast majority of atoll islands is fairly stable and may even be increasing due to land reclamation. In their presentation, Duvat and Magnan highlighted the potential of nature-based solutions that can, under certain conditions, effectively protect settlements and infrastructure. Endorsing this position, Carol Farbotko focused on how communities may be supported in-situ and how communities can maintain links to their ancestral lands. Others were more pessimistic. Patrick D. Nunn and Elizabeth McNamara argued that relocation will become inevitable at some point. Their position was that island communities had better plan for relocation as of today to make the process as smooth as possible. Discourses on migration as necessity in the future, an option of last resort, are also very present in Kiribati, as Elfriede Herrmann and Wolfgang Kempf explored. The new Kiribati government won precisely because their new official policy takes up hopes to stay in the homeland, rather than "migrate with dignity".

Indeed, how government and other stakeholders plan for and manage adaptation was conferred as another important aspect for the effectiveness and long-term sustainability of adaptation. Here, contributions highlighted that governance is often short-sighted and not aligned such as the examples presented about the Caribbean where there are a wide range of policies, guidelines and tools to help adaptation planners, yet vulnerability and risk assessments are almost completely absent from adaptation planning and implementation. Different adaptation options are not properly identified and appraised, as Adelle Thomas found out in a review of policy documents from across the Caribbean. Similarly, Michelle Scobie emphasised that silo thinking dominates planning and implementation. Even where synergies could be realised across issues, there are not necessarily links between climate change and for example sustainable development or biodiversity. This is all the more pertinent for small islands where administrative and human resources are limited and silo mentality can hardly be afforded. These shortcomings were also discussed in the roundtable discussion with practitioners. Participants noted the very real constraints imposed by the institutional setting, such as yearly accounting that makes it impossible to adapt projects to the often slow-moving discussions with local stakeholders. Implementing long-term adaptation solutions and participatory approaches is difficult in such a context.

Yet, local participation is key to success, particularly in archipelagic coun-

tries, where the local level is far removed from national, let alone, regional planning and policy making. Several workshop participants therefore examined experiences with adaptation at the community level. Stefano Moncada and Hilary Bambrick identified different responses to climate change impacts that the local population on Rabi Island (Fiji) had developed, but classified these responses often as short-term coping rather than long-term transformational adaptation. Arno Pascht and Desirée Hetzel found that the local population at two sites in Vanuatu (Siviri on Efate, and Dixon Reef on Malekula) is eager to experiment with different gardening techniques. Residents tried out and appropriated (or dismissed) new practices introduced by an NGO in order to diversify and expanded their livelihood options. Learning and tayloring adaptation opportunities is key for success, yet learning often takes place over the short term, while the longue durée is often forgotten. Yet, as Rory Walshe showed, long-term historical accounts of extreme weather events may be helpful in identifying best practices and learning from mistakes. Mauritius is here an interesting case in point as there a variety of written archival material begun during their colonization that can be researched and analyzed.

The workshop discussed many more aspects of climate change adaptation in the specific context of islands. Yet, regardless of what measures are taken at the local level, they are not enough. To address climate change in SIDS and beyond, the international community needs to act and drastically reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. In this context, H.E. Mr. Deo Saran, the Ambassador of the Republic of Fiji in Brussels, shared his insights from the Fijian presidency of COP23 under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) that took place in Bonn in 2017. He showed how Fiji is very active on climate change domestically – the relocation of Vunidogoloa village for example is well-known. Further, Fiji is increasingly becoming a climate leader internationally. Even small states can influence international politics; in the words of Deo Saran, "If this presidency has taught us one thing, it is that small island states can make a real difference in climate action."



Source: Hellena Debelts.

Figure 3: Interregional exchange at poster session: Heitea Terorotua explains results from French Polynesia to Michelle Mycoo from the University of the West Indies

Workshop Conclusion

In a concluding session, impressions, comments and implications from the workshop were collected (see Figure 2). Apparent from the feedback received, participants appreciated the network opportunities and in particular meeting colleagues from different regions and disciplines. The workshop concluded that more such inter-regional and inter-disciplinary meetings were needed, both in research and in practice. SIDS can learn from one another, and from their histories. To facilitate exchange, communication and learning, the workshop reiterated the need for local participation, for listening and acknowledging the role that local populations can and should play in adaptation. Regarding research, participants called for more attention to local knowledge, to history, and again to inter-regional exchange. Closer collaboration with policy and practice can be mutually beneficial.

Sadly, climate mitigation, notably in the industrialized world, is too slow and insufficient to prevent climate change, whose impacts are already acutely felt in SIDS across the world's oceans. SIDS are already coping with and adapting to the adverse effects of climate change. While adaptation in island contexts is increasingly receiving attention from academics and key political figures, research and policy remains fragmentary. More exchange and dialogue across research and practice, across academic disciplines, across geographic regions and across levels of government are thus urgently needed. The Hannover workshop was a first step in this direction, and hopefully will be followed by similar events.

Acknowledgements

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ESSAY
Hanoi: La Folie des Grandeurs

George Burchett

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Around the time Admiral Charles Rigault de Genouilly, under the orders of Emperor Napoléon III, fired the first canon shots to lay claim to what would become France's colony of Indochina, Paris embarked on an epic renovation project directed by Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann, also under the Emperor's orders. The plan was to modernise Paris and get rid of insalubrious slums – breeding ground for diseases as well as popular discontent. No doubt rich plunder from the colonies helped fund this – largely successful – imperial enterprise.

Today's Paris – with its elegant buildings, wide leafy avenues, graceful bridges over the Seine river – is mostly a 19th century city, built between 1853 and 1870. Only two high rise structures dominate the otherwise height-restrained Paris skyline: the Eifel Tower and the Tour Montparnasse. Futuristic office blocks and other modernist and post-modernist edifices are confined to the business district of La Défense on the city's periphery. Thus Paris retains a certain architectural homogeneity and harmony, making it arguably the most beautiful and pleasant city in the world

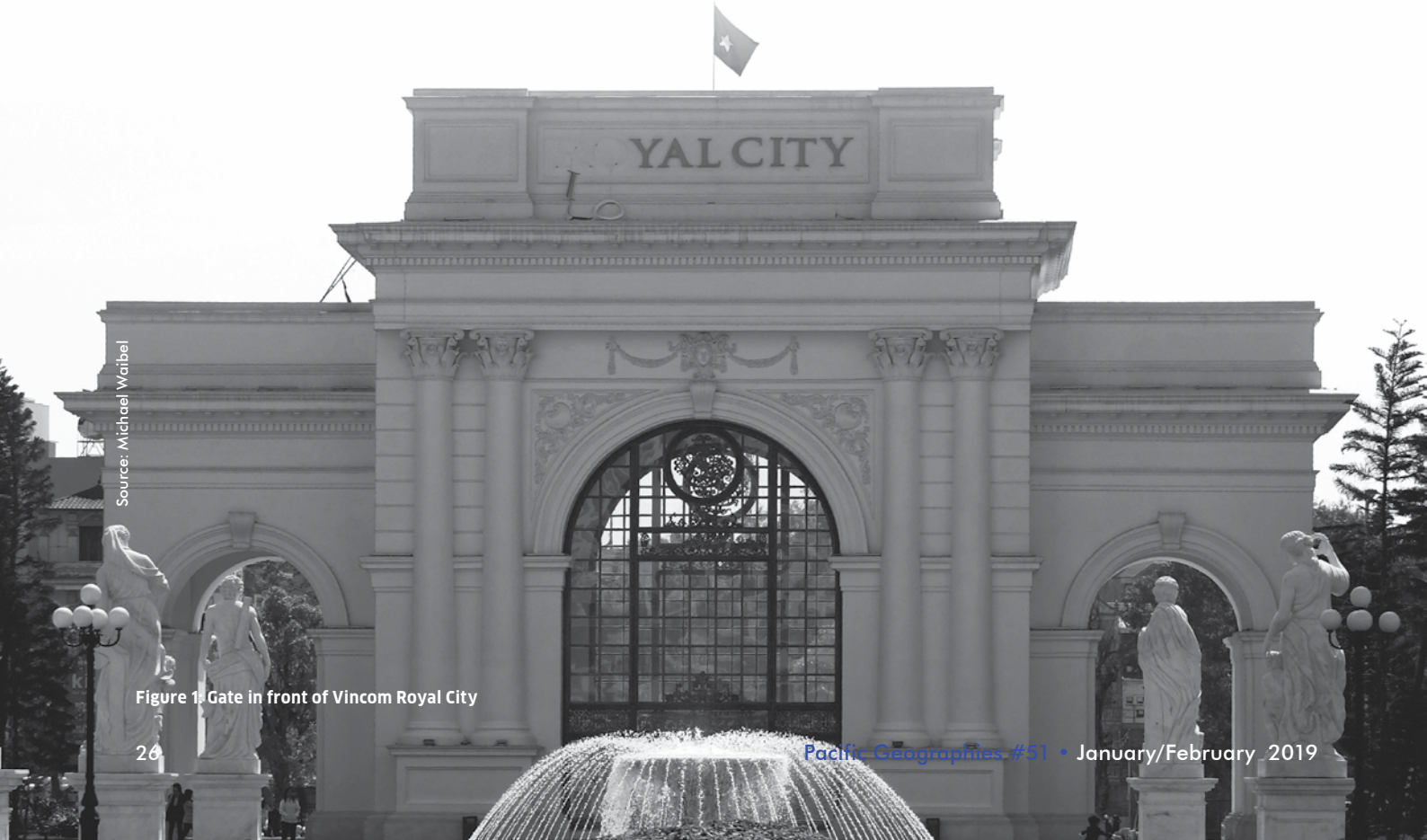
Hanoi was developed by the French colonialists as the administrative centre of Indochina along the same lines as Haussmann's Paris. The result is the beautiful city we so much love, with the hustle-and-bustle of the Old Quarter and the French Beaux-Arts architecture, with tree-lined avenues, elegant villas and government buildings. A happy mix of native vernacular and French metric logic.

Today Hanoi is undergoing its own Haussmannian transformation, as the old makes way to the new, and the small and moderate to the big and ostentatious.

And much of the "new and big" seems inspired by French "grandeur" with strong references to French Kings and their magnificent palaces.

The French colonial developers were more modest in their ambitions than Hanoi's contemporary Barons Haussmanns. They built themselves a pleasant colonial capital, with plenty of shade provided by native trees, where they could work and relax while keeping relatively cool. They built an Opera to provide cultural entertainment, schools, hospitals, a History Museum, a Fine Arts Institute and various administrative buildings, still in use today. Of course, they did all this for themselves and to project French "grandeur" in distant corners of their colonial empire. But they did it well, even integrating into the colonial Beaux Arts building elements of traditional indigenous architecture. Hanoi's History Museum and Fine Arts Museum are good examples of that.

But today's Haussmanns seem to



Source: Michael Waibel

Figure 1: Gate in front of Vincom Royal City

show little interest in local traditions. Their grandiose developments are inspired not only by French "grandeur" – Versailles and assorted châteaux and palaces – but by imperial Rome, with its Coliseums lined with statues of gods and goddesses.

There is a fundamental difference, though, between Roman Coliseums and Circuses and their modern reincarnations in Hanoi. The Roman Coliseums were dedicated to gladiatorial combat and other forms of bloody and gory entertainment, like chariot races, fights between wild animals or Christians being fed to lions. While the citizen of Rome and other cities of the vast Roman Empire were sitting in the shade and enjoying the "circus", gladiators were hacking each other in the sweat-soaked and blood-splattered dust, under the blistering sun.

But what justifies Hanoi's "Coliseums", with their shade-less open spaces, entered through Triumphant Arches and lined with grandiose, generic statues of pseudo Greco-Roman gods? There is no shade, no protection from the elements. Even the trees are imported species, secured with metal cables so they don't get blown away by the wind. How do they relate to Hanoi or to the rest of Vietnam? Or are they designed to project some new form of imperial power with its neo-Olympian pseudo-gods?

One of the most laudable contributions of French colonialism to Vietnamese culture was the opening of the École des Beaux Arts de l'Indochine, today's Vietnam University of Fine Arts. It produced several generations of talented Vietnamese artists. Copying plaster casts of classical Greco-Roman sculptures was part of the academic course in most traditional art institutions, usually in the first year of training. Then students moved on to live models and working from nature until they developed their own style and found their own unique artistic expression. The French art teachers at the École encouraged their students to find inspiration in their natural surroundings, their culture and traditions.

So what lessons can young – and perhaps not so young – Vietnamese artists draw from Hanoi's new Colisseums and their gigantic pseudo-Greco-Roman statuary? Forget about your own culture and traditions, forget about the great art of previous centuries, just reinterpret antique imperial models, favoured by tycoons, megalomaniacs and Las Vegas casino developers?

Is this what "new" Hanoi is supposed to look like? The new Rome of Southeast Asia?

One of the great attractions of Vietnamese culture is its taste for understatement and its harmonious relationship to nature. It is beautifully expressed in the sculptures that adorn pagodas, temples, dinhs (communal houses) and other traditional public buildings.

Even the French colonialists showed respect for the indigenous culture and nature.

But not so the new Barons. Their model seems to be imperial Rome or the Versailles of French Sun Kings. Both proved unsustainable and their glory has long faded.

Hopefully Hanoi will survive the current "folie des grandeurs". And hopefully, Hanoi artists, architects, urban planners and the community in general will demand that Hanoi's – and Vietnam's – culture, traditions and nature be respected when planning the future and building the present.

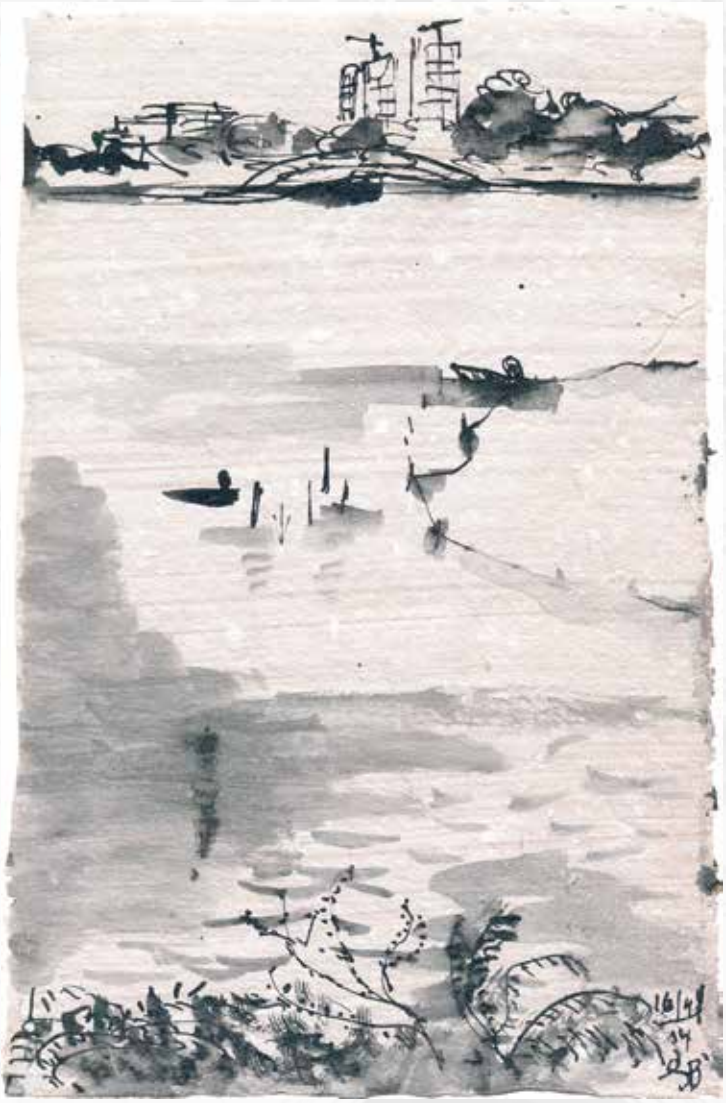


Figure 2: George Burchett, Ho Tay (West Lake), ink on Dò (Zo) paper, 16.4.14

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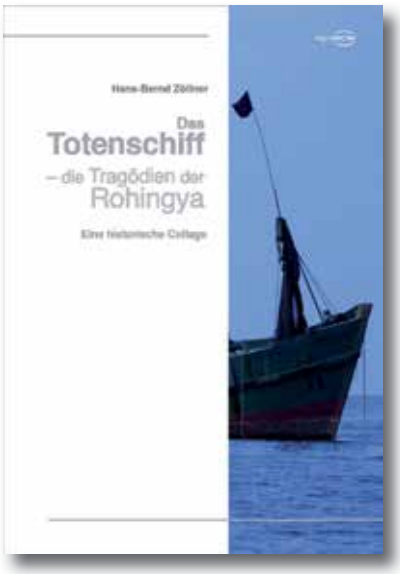

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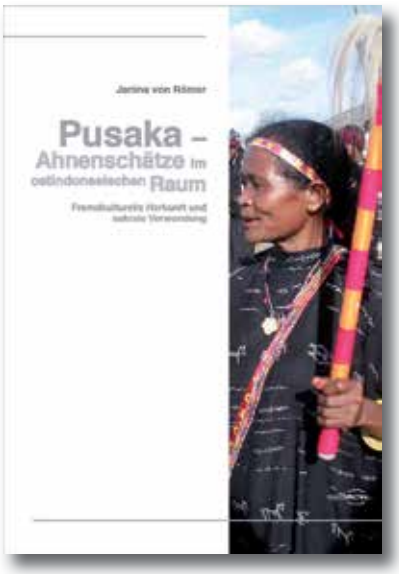

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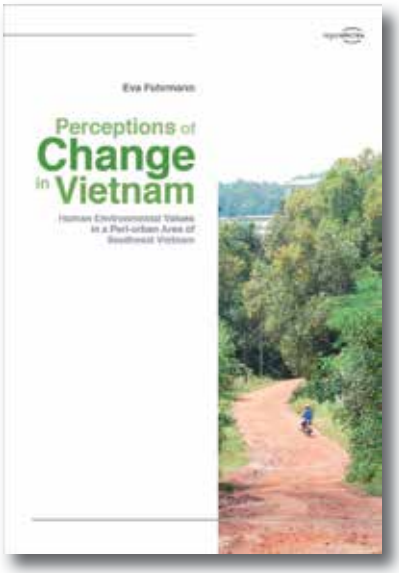

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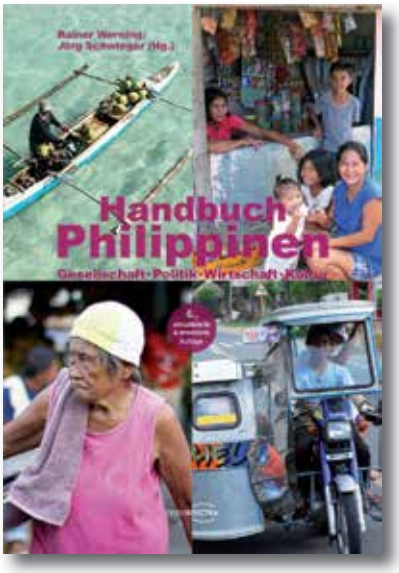

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