Conference participants in front of the National University of Samoa Fale with Prime Minister Hon Tuilaepa Lupesoliai Sailele Malielegaoi

CHINA AND THE PACIFIC

THE VIEW FROM OCEANIA

EDITED BY MICHAEL POWLES

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'Ava ceremony of welcome. From foreground: Letuimanu'asina Dr Emma Kruse Va'ai, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of National University of Samoa; Fui Le'apai Tu'ua 'Ilaoa Professor Asofou So'o, Vice Chancellor, NUS; Leasiolagi Professor Malama Meleisea, Director, Centre for Samoan Studies, NUS

Preface

This book is based on a conference entitled *China and the Pacific: The View from Oceania,* which was held on the campus of the National University of Samoa in Apia from 25 to 27 February 2015. The idea for the conference and its topic were conceived by the New Zealand Contemporary China Research Centre. Consultations among the Centre and Victoria University of Wellington, National University of Samoa and Sun Yat-sen University of Guangzhou led to sponsorship responsibilities being shared between the three universities. (Notes on the three universities follow at the end of this Preface.)

From the outset, an agreed priority for the conference was to give ample opportunity for both Pacific voices to be heard and for productive engagement and discussion between Pacific Island participants and those from China.

Two-and-a-half days long, the conference was divided into several sessions, and this book follows the order in which topics were discussed at the conference. Following a traditional welcoming *'Ava* ceremony, the Opening Session was chaired by Fui Le'apai Tu'ua 'Ilaoa Professor Asofou So'o. Samoa's Prime Minister, Hon Tuilaepa Lupesoliai Sailele Malielegaoi, opened the conference with a substantive address on the conference topic. He was followed by Welcome Remarks by Her Excellency Mme Li Yanduan, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Samoa, and a Keynote Address from Mr Tony Browne, Executive Chairman of the New Zealand Contemporary China Research Centre. The substantive sessions, continuing through to midday on Friday 27 February, were:

- Changing Geopolitics: China and the Pacific,
- Regional Security,
- Chinese in the Pacific,
- Development Cooperation,
- Trade and Investment,
- Final Forum.

The conference was widely regarded as successful in providing both a platform for Pacific voices to be heard and the opportunity for engagement and discussion between Pacific and other participants. Pacific participants included ministers, senior officials and academics from all around the region. Regional organisations were represented by the Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Dame Meg Taylor; her Deputy, Ms Andie Fong Toy; the Deputy Director-General of the Secretariat of the Pacific community, Ms Fekita Utoikamanu; and the Deputy Director of the Pacific Institute of Public Policy, Ms Dulciana Somare-Brash.

From China there was a strong delegation from the Sun Yat-sen University of

Guangzhou led by Associate Professor Yu Changsen, two participants from Peking University of Beijing and one from Liaocheng University of Shandong. In addition, China's ambassador to Samoa and her deputy participated in the discussions. Recognised Pacific experts from New Zealand, Hawaiian and Australian universities, several of them originally from Pacific Island countries, made major contributions.

To ensure there was ample time for participants to engage in discussion on the issues raised, the morning of the third day of the conference was devoted to a general discussion of issues that were raised earlier in the conference – or that participants thought should have been raised. This Final Forum was chaired and moderated by Jon Fraenkel, Professor of Comparative Politics at Victoria University of Wellington (and formerly of the University of the South Pacific), assisted by Leasiolagi Professor Malama Meleisea, Director of the Centre for Samoan Studies at National University of Samoa, and Associate Professor Yu Changsen, Executive Director, National Centre for Oceania Studies, Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou. This ambitious experiment was regarded as successful by the many participants who took advantage of the opportunity to seriously engage on issues. That success was largely due to Professor Jon Fraenkel's skilful organisation and moderation.

Finally, the most significant contribution to the success of the conference was provided by the National University of Samoa, through both its organisation and cheerfully efficient support for participants, and also the unique venue in the University's tremendous *Fale Samoa*.

This book aims to serve as a record of the conference. It is based on the papers presented by participants or, when there were just oral presentations, on the transcript of proceedings. We hope it will serve also as a stimulus for further discussion.

The Sponsoring Universities

The New Zealand Contemporary China Research Centre

The New Zealand Contemporary China Research Centre aims to be a global leader in knowledge acquisition and knowledge sharing on the political, economic and social life of contemporary China among tertiary institutions, the business sector and the policy community for the benefit of New Zealand. It supports research, lectures, seminars, conferences, visitor exchanges and information sharing.

The only nationwide research centre on contemporary China in the world, the New Zealand Contemporary China Research Centre is based at Victoria University of Wellington. In addition to Victoria University of Wellington, it has six other member universities – the University of Auckland, Auckland University of Technology, the University of Canterbury, the University of Otago, the University of Waikato and Lincoln University.

The Centre holds an annual international Conference on Contemporary China: 'China's development' (2009), 'China and India: the end of development models' (2010), 'China and Japan in modern economic growth' (2011), 'The Chinese model of modern economic development and social transformation' (2012), 'China's global course: the political economy of China going global' (2013) and 'China at the Crossroads: What the Third Plenum means for China, New Zealand and the World' (2014).

The Centre also holds conferences, workshops, seminars and symposiums, often in conjunction with leading Chinese and other universities. 'China and the Pacific' is one such conference.

The National University of Samoa

The National University of Samoa (NUS) is mandated to actively engage in fulfilling its critical role in national economic and social development through provision of quality academic education and training programs, and excellent research opportunities receptive to the development of Samoa.

Vision

The National University of Samoa will be recognised nationally and internationally as a vibrant and innovative centre of excellence in research, Samoan studies and quality learning, teaching and training across all disciplines.

Mission

To create the ultimate environment conducive to superior learning, quality teaching, professional training and robust research opportunities that are responsive to the economic and social development of Samoa.

Goals

- The NUS will be internationally recognised for quality of teaching and training and student's learning outcomes;
- The NUS will be the premiere research institution in Samoa and Centre of Excellence for Samoan Studies;
- The NUS will have staff of the highest calibre;
- The NUS will nurture strategic relationships with local and international partners;
- The NUS will sustain excellence in organisation and resource management.

Values

The following core values underpin all our activities and articulate ideals to which we aspire to hold ourselves accountable:

- Dedication and Commitment;
- Respect for and Preservation of the integrity of the Samoan Culture;
- Collaboration;
- Entrepreneurship;
- Innovation and Creativity;
- Responsiveness;
- Achievement and Excellence.

The Centre for Oceania Studies, Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou
Sun Yat-sen University (SYU) is currently ranked within the top 10 universities in China. It is located in Guangzhou, in Southern China, adjacent to Hong Kong and Macao. SYU is fully committed to education and internationalisation and has established extensive exchange cooperation relationships with overseas universities. SYU hosts a number of excellent research institutes on international and area studies that focus on Australia and Pacific studies. In January 2012, the Centre for Oceania Studies was chosen as an Area and Country Study Cultivation Base by the Ministry of Education of China. Professor Wei Ming Hai, Vice-President of the University, was appointed as the Director.

The main tasks of the Centre are research, personnel training and policy consulting. Research fields include: 1) Politics and legal systems; 2) Economic development and trade; 3) External relations; 4) Social, historical and cultural issues in the vast area of Australia, New Zealand and South Pacific countries and territories. The Centre offers graduate and undergraduate courses across all university levels. Recent publications include the 'Bluebook of Oceania' and the 'Dictionary of Who's Who in Oceania'. The mid to long-term goal of the Centre will be to develop it into a well-known think-tank on Oceania affairs.

'Ava ceremony of welcome: Dame Meg Taylor, Secretary-General, Pacific Islands Forum and Ms Andie Fong Toy, Deputy-Secretary-General

Introduction

Michael Powles[1]

This conference on *China and the Pacific: The View from Oceania* was conceived and organised against a background of increasing interest in China's growing role and influence in the Pacific. Over a decade ago, an article published under the alarmist title *Dragon in Paradise: China's Rising Star in Oceania*[2] began what became a heated debate. Initially the alarmists held sway and those who pointed to potential opportunities as well as challenges were in a small minority. Early in the debate, the voices most clearly heard were those of Australians, New Zealanders and Americans, usually warning loudly of the dangers for the region that a more powerful China would bring. Gradually discussion became more balanced[3] and in 2011 Dr Jian Yang, then of Auckland University, published a comprehensive study on the subject, which covered both challenges for the Pacific and opportunities that China's growing presence could bring.[4]

Surprisingly, in retrospect, these discussions paid little heed to Pacific Island views. They certainly existed: while debate continued among outside observers on the best way to deal with China in the Pacific, most Pacific Island governments were quietly developing solid bilateral relations with Beijing or, in some cases, with Taipei. But, reflecting perhaps a paternalism derived from colonial times, no-one thought to give their clear views prominence.

A main purpose of this conference was to change that and to provide a firm platform for Pacific viewpoints to be heard and discussed with participants from China.

The conference, held at *Fale Samoa* on the campus of the National University of Samoa from 25 to 27 February 2015, was the brainchild of the New Zealand Contemporary China Research Centre based at Victoria University of Wellington. A three-way partnership was formed with the National University of Samoa in Apia and Sun Yat-sen University of Guangzhou. It was agreed that the National University of Samoa would host the conference, which would be supported by all three universities.

From the outset, it was intended that the conference would break new ground in three respects:

- priority would be given to views from the Pacific Islands,
- the conference itself would be held within the Pacific Islands region (in Samoa) and
- it would provide opportunities for perspectives to be exchanged between scholars and officials from the Pacific Islands on the one hand and China on the other.

The Chinese Pacific: An Historical Overview

Dr Paul D'Arcy

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The People's Republic of China and peoples of Chinese ancestry resident in the Pacific Islands have figured prominently in Pacific Island affairs since 2000 because of their economic influence and perceived and real ties to groups and nations beyond the Pacific Islands. Ethnic Chinese populations in the Pacific Islands generally make up less than one per cent of the total population, but invariably figure prominently in business. The term 'Chinese' covers a diverse assortment of ethnic and political entities. China, Taiwan, members of Chinese minorities from Southeast Asian nations such as Malaysia, and peoples of Chinese ancestry resident in the Pacific Islands, in some cases for generations, have attracted particular attention in the Pacific Islands since 2000. Chinese and Pacific Islanders are used here as convenient umbrella terms that nevertheless mask the diversity of perspectives and lifestyle within each.[1]

The Emerging Academic Consensus on China in the Pacific since 2000

In 2007 the late Professor Ron Crocombe published *Asia in the Pacific Islands: Replacing the West*, in which he asserted that Asia was replacing Western former colonial powers as the primary source of external influences in the Pacific Islands.[2] Crocombe estimated the total Chinese population in the Pacific Islands at around 80,000 as of October 2006. The main concentrations are around 20,000 each in Papua New Guinea and Fiji, 15,000 in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, 14,000 in French Polynesia, and 4,000 in Guam.[3] More have entered the Pacific since then, but accurate figures are hard to ascertain because of gaps and flaws in data collection in many Pacific Island nations. Many members of the long-term Chinese communities express concern about post-1990 Chinese arrivals' lack of sensitivity to local ways, and are just as likely to view them as disruptive competitors than as potential business and marriage partners. These latter arrivals are known as *huayi*, a Mandarin term meaning ethnic Chinese that is particularly applied to ethnic Chinese with passports other than from China. *Huayi* are distinguished from previous migrants by their weak ties to China, and their high degree of mobility in search of opportunities in the global economy that has emerged over the last three decades. While the businesses of more established Chinese are perceived

Dr Paul D'Arcy

as benefiting locals, those of *huayi* tend towards get-rich-quick enterprises such as logging that bring little evident benefit to locals. Tensions also mounted over Chinese and Taiwanese government and business interests attempts to buy support and win favour with local politicians.[4]

Matters came to a head in 2006 with riots against Chinese businesses associated with unpopular governments in Solomon Islands and Tonga.[5,6] The 2006 disturbances in Honiara and Nuku'alofa were also linked by many commentators to rivalry between Taiwan and China for influence among Pacific Island nations, and particularly to how 'cheque-book' diplomacy was destabilising domestic and regional politics. Six Pacific Island nations recognise Taiwan – Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Palau, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Nauru. The remaining eight Pacific Islands nations – Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu all recognise China.[7] Competition for influence in the Pacific Islands escalated in 2006 and 2007, with China, Taiwan, and Japan declaring major increases in their Pacific aid budgets and the United States publically declaring its intention of reversing years of relative neglect of the Pacific.[8] Fortunately, sense prevailed, and a possible sustained and escalating competition for influence in the Pacific through aid has not taken place since 2007. The global economic downturn makes this increasingly unlikely in the immediate future.

Relations between China and Taiwan improved significantly from 2009.[9] Chinese-Taiwanese tensions have been replaced by mounting tensions between Japan and China over the disputed Senkaku/Daioyu Islands and between the United States and China over influence in the Western Pacific in general.[10] As yet, none of these new tensions has disrupted Pacific Island nations' domestic politics or international relations.

By 2007, a clear division was apparent in the outlook of Western commentators on Chinese influence in the Pacific Islands. On the one hand, commentators such as Australian journalist Graeme Dobell and academic Ben Reilly expressed concern about China's and Taiwan's use of aid to secure exclusive recognition from Pacific nations at the expense of the 'other' China. They see this aid as destabilising to Island politics. Others disagree. Scholars such as Terence Wesley-Smith, Greg Fry, and Tarcisius Kabutaulaka contrast China's lack of interference in internal affairs and refusal to comment on domestic policy in the Pacific Islands favourably with the more patronising approach perceived to come from other aid donors such as Australia. It is also seen as providing an alternative to free market philosophies underlying much aid conditionality from Western donors, especially drives to cut government expenditure and replace it with private sector providers.[11] Few of the critical assessments of China in the Pacific have sustained their analysis over lengthy time periods to follow up on the concerns they drew government attention to.[12]

A division of opinion between optimistic and more cautious conclusions was also apparent in 2007 in a second, related debate about the capacity of Pacific Island states to rectify their own problems. Many of those who express serious concerns about Chinese influence in the Pacific also publish gloomy prognoses about the ability of states within the so-called 'Arc of Instability' to Australia's immediate north to make significant economic advances and secure political stability without external assistance. Their concern about Chinese influence in Pacific nations reflects the assumption that some of these nations are failed states.[13] Those who see China as less of a threat also tend to share a more optimistic view of Pacific Island nations capacity to deal with external influences and internal problems.

The first Pacific Island focused book arguing against the threat discourse was published in 2010 by Terence Wesley Smith and Ed Porter. Their edited collection, *China in Oceania*, argued that those critical of Chinese actions in the Pacific underestimate the proactive nature and astute pursuit of self-interest of Pacific Island governments in engaging with China. Wesley-Smith had first advanced this line in 2007. Wesley-Smith and most Pacific Island specialists writing on Pacific Island–China relations argue China has allowed Pacific Islanders a greater degree of freedom of choice over aid donors than at any other time since independence by being the one significant contributor to not push for compliance with free market principles as a requirement of development aid and loans.[14]

New studies since 2010 have tended to support the broad findings of Wesley-Smith and Porter's 2010 study. These new studies have also expanded into new

fields. China expert Graeme Smith's study has produced a number of detailed ground-breaking works on the new Chinese in Papua New Guinea.[15] In 2014, the full findings of a large AusAID-funded programme on the Chinese mine at Ramu in Madang Province in 2010 were published as a large edited collection, *Pacific Asian Partnerships in Resource Development*.[16] *China in Oceania* and *Pacific Asian Partnerships in Resource Development* collectively involved over 30 academics. With the exception of Wesley-Smith's contribution to both works, there was no overlap. Yet, both independently reached broadly similar conclusions in viewing China as less of a destabilising force in the Pacific than had hitherto been asserted, and in viewing Pacific Islanders as astute and active players pursuing their own interests in dealings with outsiders.

The first comprehensive analysis of China's motivations in the Pacific Islands was only published in 2011 by Auckland University international relations expert Jian Yang.[17] Having been born and raised in China, Yang argued China did not have a calculated strategy to displace traditional Western players and Japan in the Pacific Islands. Rather, Beijing's strategy is more about maintaining a form of international peace that allows China to focus on developing the domestic economic and technological foundations at the heart of modern national power in the global world.

Historical Perspectives on Future Scenarios

Most of the authors writing since 2000 focus almost exclusively on the last ten years, and also restrict their geographical focus. The embryonic nature of much of this analysis has led to a great deal of uncertainty and speculation. Detailed fieldwork-based case studies of new Chinese communities and activities have only recently begun to be published, and are already casting doubt on much of the assertions of the last decade. Only the Chinese communities in Papua New Guinea and Fiji have been subject to substantial studies, and even then, these studies are more descriptive than analytical. They provide a valuable resource upon which to build other studies of specific aspects of these communities or for comparative studies.

Willmott has conducted brief comparative analysis using his training in sociology to highlight the variation in sex ratios and Chinese sub-culture of origin within different Chinese communities in Pacific nations, differences in their interaction with local communities, and the related aspect of degree of cultural coherence over time. In regard to assimilation and cultural/community coherence, there is much merit in conducting detailed surveys of Chinese communities that inter-married into local Pacific Islander communities in New Caledonia, Kiribati, Samoa, Tahiti, and Cook Islands to contrast the largely ethnically Chinese communities subject to detailed studies in Papua New Guinea and Fiji. Cohabitation between Chinese men and Pacific Island women before World War II in Western Samoa and Tahiti ensured that the children of such unions were raised in two cultures, because the men maintained a Chinese cultural community that influenced their children, who also

grew up interacting with their Polynesian extended families and norms. However, the small size of the Chinese communities in in New Caledonia, Kiribati and the Cook Islands made the inculcation of Chinese values and identity less feasible.[18]

One of the few studies to adopt this more wide-ranging, comparative approach is Smith's detailed study of new Chinese in Papua New Guinea. Most come from Fuqing, an impoverished area of southeast China with a long history of out-migration. As relatively recent residents of Papua New Guinea, the Fuqing Chinese have little accumulated capital and tend to set up small retail businesses supplied by predominantly longer-established 'old Chinese' wholesalers originally from Southeast Asia. This situation may change dramatically in the near future as the ever diminishing number of old Chinese creates market gaps as wholesalers for better-off Fuqing Chinese to fill, even though the majority still intend to settle in Fuqing after making their money in Papua New Guinea.[19]

If Papua New Guinea is typical, then the nature, influence and degree of integration of recent Chinese migrants into Pacific Island societies will remain fluid. But it seems likely that for the forseeable future persons of Chinese or part-Chinese ancestry will not disproportionately occupy as many important political and economic roles as did the long-established old Chinese in the first decades of independence. Reflecting on this past era, Crocombe noted how 'Sir Julius Chan was twice prime minister of PNG, Anote Tong is the current president of Kiribati, Gaston Tong Sang is president of French Polynesia, Jim Ah Koy was minister of finance in Fiji and at least two other heads of Pacific Islands' governments do not discuss their Chinese heritage.'[20]

Conclusion

The historical record of old Chinese in the Pacific reveals a fragmented record of diversity within and between communities, but united by successful adaptation to local communities, with or without intermarriage. These studies are largely empirical rather than thematic, with few comparative studies being conducted beyond brief surveys by Bill Willmott and Crocombe's large study.[21] There are a number of local histories and local or national histories of Chinese communities across the Pacific.[22] There are many studies still to be written on these older Chinese Pacific communities, especially for those with Chinese language skills. The lessons of the past suggest the pattern of successful Chinese adaptation after an initial period of adjustment in a myriad of context-specific ways will continue into the future.

Notes

1 The term China is used here for the People's Republic of China, Taiwan for the Republic of China, and Chinese as a collective term for all ethnic Chinese. This article benefitted from comments and feedback from Lewis Mayo, Pei-yi Guo, Yung-Chao Tung, Karen Kan-lan Tu, and Fei Sheng.

2 Ron Crocombe, *Asia in the Pacific Islands: Replacing the West* (Suva 2007), vii.

3 Crocombe, *Asia in the Pacific Islands*, 93–97.

4 Bill Willmott, 'Varieties of Chinese Experience in the Pacific', in Paul D'Arcy (ed.), *Chinese in the Pacific: Where are they now?*, Special Issue of *Chinese Southern Diaspora Studies*, May 2007, 35–42; 'Chinese contract labour in the Pacific Islands during the nineteenth century,' *Journal of Pacific Studies*, 27 (2–2004), 161–176; *A History of the Chinese Communities in Eastern Melanesia: Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia*, Christchuch, Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies Working Paper 12, University of Canterbury, 2005, Bessie Ng Kumlin Ali, *Chinese in Fiji*, Suva, 2002; and James Chin, 'Contemporary Chinese Community in Papua New Guinea: Old Money versus New Migrants', *Chinese South Diaspora Studies*, Canberra, The Australian National University, 2008, 117–126, available at http://csds.anu.edu.au/volume_2_2008/117ChinCSDS2008Master.pdf.

5 Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka, 'Solomon Islands', *The Contemporary Pacific*, 18 (2), Fall 2006, 424; Graeme Dobell, 'China and Taiwan in the South Pacific: Diplomatic Chess versus Pacific Political Rugby', in Paul D'Arcy (ed.), *Chinese in the Pacific: Where are they now?*, Special Issue of *Chinese Southern Diaspora Studies*, May 2007, 10–22, 10, 18–19); Clive Moore, 'No more walkabout long Chinatown: Asian Involvement in the Economic and Political Process', in Sinclair Dinnen and Stewart Firth (eds.), *Politics and State Building in the Solomon Islands*, Canberra, 2008, 64–95; and Ian Campbell, 'Tonga: The Constitution, the Riot, the Election and Reform', *New Zealand International Review*, 33 (5), Sept/Oct 2008, 2–6.

6 *People's Daily Online*, November 17, 2006.

7 Joel Atkinson, 'China-Taiwan Diplomatic Competition and the Pacific Islands,' *Pacific Review*, 23 (4), 2010, 407–427.

8 *Shanghai Daily*, 'Wen pledges to lift Island ties', 6 April 2006; Jim Hwang, 'What really counts', *Taiwan Review*, 30 November 2006, available at http://taiwanreview.nat.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=23510&CtNode=128; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *The Fourth Japan-Pacific Islands Forum Summit Meeting*, 2006, available at http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/spf/palm2006/index.html; Congressional Research Service, 'The Southwest Pacific: US Interests and China's Growing Influence', US Congress, April 2007, available at http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL34086.pdf; Wen Jiaboa, 'Speech at the opening of the first ministerial conference of the China-Pacific Island countries,' Fiji, 5 April 2006, available at http://english.gov.cn/2006-04/05/content_245681.htm; Gerald Chan, 'Taiwan as an emerging foreign aid donor: developments, problems and prospects', *Pacific Affairs*, Spring 1997, available at http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3680/is_199704/ai_n8782447/pg_1., 5; S. Tarte, *Japan's Aid Diplomacy and the Pacific Islands*, Canberra, 1998, 83, 96; Karen Nero, 'The Material World Remade', in D. Denoon (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Pacific Islanders* (Cambridge, 1997), 359–396, 368, 377–378.

9 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of China, *Progressive Partnerships and Sustainable Development*, Taipei: May 2009, 8; Jemima Garrett, 'Taiwan ends Pacific diplomatic wars with China', *Radio Australia International*, Posted 25 March 2010, available at http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/international/2010-03-25/taiwan-ends-pacific-diplomatic-wars-with-china/197200.

10 Gavan McCormack, 'Small Islands – Big Problem: Senkaku/Diaoyu and the Weight of History and Geography in China-Japan Relations', *The Asia Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, available at http://japanfocus.org/-Gavan-McCormack/3464; and 'Troubled Seas: Japan's Pacific and East China Sea Domains (and Claims)', *The Asia Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, available at http://japanfocus.org/-Gavan-McCormack/3821.

11 Terence Wesley-Smith and Edgar A. Porter (eds.), *China in Oceania: reshaping the Pacific?*, New York and Oxford: 2010; and Greg Fry and Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka (eds.), *Intervention and State-building in the Pacific: The Legitimacy of 'Cooperative Intervention'*(Manchester, 2008). This division is discussed in detail in Paul D'Arcy, 'China in the Pacific: Some Policy Considerations for Australia and New Zealand', State Society and Governance in Melanesia Programme, Discussion Paper 2007/4, October 2007, SSGM, RSPAS, ANU, http://rspas.anu.edu.au/melanesia/dplist.php?searchterm=2007.

12 Fergus Hanson, 'The Dragon in the Pacific: More Opportunity than Threat', *Lowy Institute Policy Brief*, 2008, http://www.lowyinstitute.org/Publication.asp?pid=823, and 'China Stumbling through the Pacific'.

13 Susan Windybank and Mike Manning, 'Papua New Guinea on the Brink', *Issues Analysis*, 30, Centre for Independent Studies, 2003; and Ben Reilly, 'The Africanisation of the South Pacific', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 54 (3) (2000), 261-268.

14 Wesley Smith, *China in Oceania*; and Wesley-Smith and Porter, *China in Oceania*.

15 Graeme Smith and Paul D'Arcy (eds.), 'Global Perspectives on Chinese Investment', special issue of *Pacific Affairs*, 86 (2), June 2013; Graeme Smith, 'Chinese Reactions to Anti-Asian Riots in the Pacific', *Journal of Pacific History* 47 (1) (2012), 93–109; Graeme Smith, ' Are Chinese soft loans always a bad thing?' LowyInterpreter, available at http://www.lowyinterpreter.org/post/2012/03/29/Are-Chinese-soft-loans-always-a-bad-thing.aspx, 29 March 2012; Paul D'Arcy, Patrick Matbob and Linda Crowl (eds.) *Pacific Asian Partnerships in Resource Development* (Madang, 2014); Kate Barclay and Graeme smith (eds.), The International Politics of Resources: China, Japan and Korea's Demand for Energy, Minerals and Food, special issue of *Asian Studies Review*, 37 (2), 2013, especially Graeme Smith, 'Nupela Masta? Local and Expatriate Labour in a Chinese-Run Nickel Mine in Papua New Guinea', 178–95, and Kate Barclay and Graeme Smith,'Introduction: The International Politics of Resources', 125–140.

16 Darcy, Matbob and Crowl, *Pacific Asian Partnerships*.

17 Yang, Jian, *The Pacific Islands in China's Grand Strategy: Small States, Big Games*, Basingstoke, England, New York, 2011.

18 Willmott, 2007; and Lynn Pan (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of the Chinese Overseas (Second Edition)*, Singapore, 2006, 292–296, 299–303, 300 and 303.

19 Smith, 'Chinese Reactions to Anti-Asian Riots in the Pacific', 93–95; and Smith, 'Fuqing Dreaming: "New" Chinese Communities in Papua New Guinea', in D'Arcy, Matbob and Crowl, *Pacific Asian Partnerships*, 126–140. See also Chin, 'Contemporary Chinese Community in Papua New Guinea'.

20 Crocombe, *Asia in the Pacific Islands*, 90.

21 Bill Willmott, 'Origins of the Chinese in the South Pacific', in P. Mcgregor (ed.), *Histories of the Chinese in Australasia and the South Pacific*, Melbourne, 1995, 129–140; 'A History of the Chinese Communities in Eastern Melanesia: Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia, Christchurch, Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies Working Paper 12, 2005; 'Varieties of Chinese Experience in the Pacific', in Paul D'Arcy (ed.), *Chinese in the Pacific: Where are they now?*, CSDCD Occasional Paper 1, May 2007, 35–42; and 'The Overseas Chinese Experience in the Pacific', in Terence Wesley-Smith and Edgar A. Porter(eds.), *China in Oceania: reshaping the Pacific?*, New York and Oxford, 2010, 93–103; Crocombe, 'The Fourth Wave', and *Asia in the Pacific Islands*.

22 As well as Crocombe and Willmott's general surveys, the following are the best nation-specific studies of Chinese communities in the Pacific Islands. Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Cook Islands, French Polynesia, Kiribati, FSM, Palau, Marianas, Guam, Hawai'i, for example, Sophie Vognin, 'La population chinoise de Tahiti au XIXe siècle', in *Le Peuplement du Pacifique et de la Nouvelle-Calédonie au XIXe Siècle (1788–1914), Condamnés, Colons, Convicts, Coolies*, Chân Dang & Paul de Deckker (eds.), Paris, Editions l'Harmattan (for l'Université Française du Pacifique), 1994, 236–237.

China's Engagement with the South Pacific: Past, Present, and Future

Professor Liu Shusen

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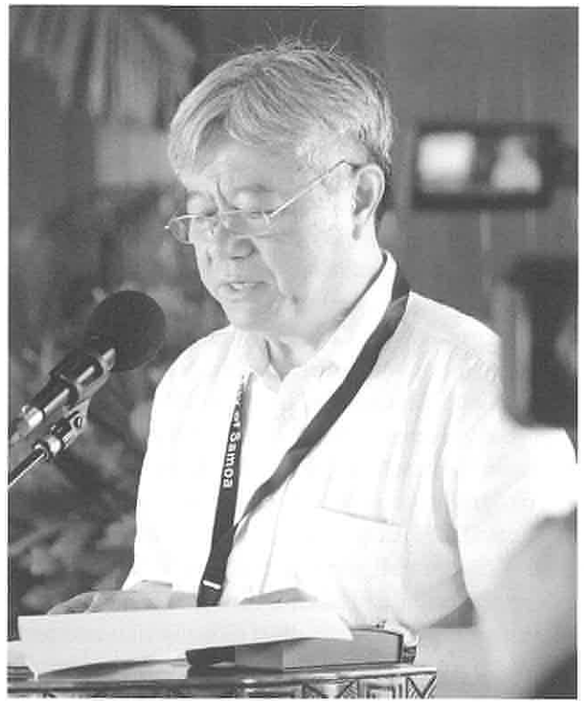

The history of the relationship between China and the South Pacific is longer than the history of China's relationship with Europe and America, although it had been scarcely noticed or of less concern until recent decades in the wake of China's rise as a world power. The gradual rise of China since the late 1970s not only results from its political and economic reforms such as the opening-up policy to survive the disastrous consequences of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), its subsequent economic development with an average ten per cent annual GDP increase for over three decades, and its continuously expanding relationship and partnership with

China and the Sea: Potential for Pacific Partnerships

Dr Paul D'Arcy
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China and the Sea: Potential for Pacific Partnerships

The open ocean fisheries of Pacific Island nations contain some of the richest fisheries in the world. These fisheries are becoming more valuable each year as other ocean areas have become increasingly overfished to the point of collapse, most noticeably in the North Atlantic. With limited maritime surveillance and policing capacity, and with domestic fishing fleets dwarfed by those of Distant Water Fishing nations (DWFN) from wealthy nations on the Pacific Rim, small Pacific Island nations are forced to rely on renting out access rights to their fisheries to DWFN in which adherence to Pacific Island nation harvesting regulations is largely based on voluntary compliance. Voluntary conservation regimes seeking to persuade fishers that it is in their best long-term interests to comply are the only mechanism able to be applied at present to Pacific pelagic fisheries. The last decade has revealed mounting scientific evidence that this regime is not working, as once prolific fisheries decline substantially. China (the People's Republic of China) is one of the DWFN. China also has the capacity to act as a circuit breaker to redefine a more mutually beneficial and sustainable partnership with Pacific Island nations instead of continuation of existing unsustainable fishery practices and relationships.

International Legal Rights and Economic Realities in Pacific Island Maritime Economies

The 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS III) forms the basis of ocean governance in Oceania. The Convention substantially extended coastal nations' sovereignty over adjacent waters. This benefited most modern Pacific nations as island archipelagos surrounded by vast expanses of ocean. The outer limit of territorial seas was set at 12 nautical miles (22 kilometers), but coastal states' sovereignty over living and non-living marine resources was extended to 200 nautical miles (370.4 kilometers) from shore in the form of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs). Coastal states were also given the right to designate what constituted a sustainable catch within their EEZ, as well as who would get access to harvesting stock in excess of this sustainable catch, and the fee they would pay to the coastal state in return for this access (Articles 55-75, especially 55-59). The new 200 mile (370.4 kilometer) EEZs dramatically increased the territory of Pacific Island

nations, particularly archipelagic ones. For example, Fiji's 18,272 square kilometers of land provided an EEZ of 1,290,000 square kilometers, Kiribati's 690 square kilometers of islands translated into an EEZ of 3,550,000 square kilometers, while Federated States of Micronesia's 701 square kilometers of land equated to an EEZ of 2,978,000 square kilometers. Kiribati derives 45% of its revenue from fishing and fishing license fees, while Federated States of Micronesia derive around a quarter of its revenue from these sources.[1]

The potential maritime benefits of political independence have been eroded by economic realities. As small or fragmented political and cultural entities that inherited limited modern infrastructure from their former colonial rulers, Pacific Island nations had limited ability to generate income domestically, and meant that much income was absorbed in providing basic facilities and services taken for granted in more developed nations. Offshore fishing fleets from larger and wealthier Pacific Rim nations regularly violated Pacific Island EEZs in the absence of local monitoring. The same lack of resources to monitor offshore waters also meant that Island nations could not develop effective fishing fleets and were forced into fishing access agreements that returned a mere fraction of the value of the catch at market. The alternatives were forgoing this income and watching the offshore fishery erode through unmonitored fishing by non-citizens, or continued over-reliance on foreign aid from former colonisers.[2] The sea out of sight of land within and beyond Pacific Island nations' EEZs remains beyond the control of the state.

Current Fishery Approaches

The big success stories of Pacific Island fisheries have been sustainable fishery initiatives in neritic (near-shore) fisheries, including Marine Protected Areas (MPA). Their most enduring and successful have been highly localised operations, where communities reliant on harvesting the sea also regulate its use.[3] The Pacific 2020 Background Paper: Fisheries recommends improving coastal fisheries management through community involvement.[4] As well as monetary benefits, local participation in inshore harvesting provides protein sources, import substitution for costly processed foods and local management of marine areas.

Beyond sight of shore, fisheries are managed by national or international legal treaties and regulations signed by largely non-resident foreign signatories from Pacific Island and Pacific Rim governments and administered by government officials and regional fisheries' officials. Such legal frameworks alone are insufficient to guarantee the survival and revival of Pacific fisheries because of the lack of monitoring and enforcement capacity of Pacific Island nations.

The Western and Central Pacific tuna fishery is the largest and most intact tuna fishery in the world, supplying around half of the world's tuna supplies. Data from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community reveals that Oceanic nations' EEZs yield 78% of the Western and Central Pacific Ocean tuna catch. The Oceanic artisanal catch represents less than 10% of the total catch in this fishery.[5]

Figure 1: Geographical extent of the Pacific tuna fishery

The wealth of the Western and Central Pacific tuna fishery relative to over-exploited and exhausted fisheries elsewhere has resulted in increased pressure on this fishery. In the last decade, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community has declared bluefin tuna critically endangered and bigeye and yellowfin tuna to be in dramatic decline.[6] The reason is not hard to determine. The total harvest has increased by an average of 5% per year over past 50 years. This average understates the escalating pressure the fishery is under given that the number of boat-days has risen about 10% per year over the period 1970–2000.[7] In addition, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing within this fishery is estimated to take between 8 and 16% of the reported annual catch in the Asia-Pacific region. IUU fishing in Oceania takes the form of unlicensed vessels fishing within EEZs, fishing in closed areas, or misreporting or under-reporting of catches.[8] IUU fishing vessels have lower costs than licensed vessels as they pay less or no fees and are not bound by national or regional fisheries requirements.

Ten DWFNs harvest 86% of the catch sold at market from the Pacific, especially Japan, Taiwan, South Korea and the United States. Despite all major stakeholders bar Japan signing a Multilateral High Level Convention (MHLC) on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean in Honolulu in 2000, DWFN continue to prefer bilateral relations to multilateral ones when dealing with Pacific Island nations.. The exception has been the United States whose multilateral agreement with Pacific Forum nations produced terms more favourable to island nations than most bilateral ones with DWFNs.[9] Bilateral agreements tend to be less restrictive on DWFN operations than

protocols Pacific Island nations collectively agreed to in the FFA. The latter are perceived as also potentially compromising bilateral aid which is seen by DWFN donors as a potential tool for access to fishery rights on terms desired by them.

China as Circuit Breaker: New Possibilities for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries

As a major Distant Water Fishing Nation, China can be viewed as both part of the problem facing Pacific Island nation maritime interests, but also as part of the solution of a sustainable fishery and future. Two propositions are central to this new relationship. The first is that the ultimate purpose of aid should be to free the weaker party from the need for aid by building sustainable economies and ecologies controlled by the host nation. The second is that long-term perspectives beyond domestic election cycles and even the lifetimes of incumbents in decision-making offices are vital for planning for sustainable futures. What is the Pacific we want for our children and our children's children? To be truly sustainable, we need to adopt a big picture framework in planning for sustainable fisheries in 30, 40, 50, 60 years and beyond

A number of reports since 2012 have suggested that while China is currently not the predominant DWFN in the globe, its rising population, their increasing purchasing power, and the overfishing to the point of exhaustion of China's own EEZ, mean that the Chinese market and China's fishing fleets will play an increasingly central role in the fortunes of the world's fisheries. These reports have criticised China for providing unfair subsidies to their vessels which means that more vessels go to sea than would otherwise be economically viable in a no-subsidy environment. Specifically, Chinese tuna boats have been accused of having an unfair advantage in getting government fuel and other effective subsidies that mean they have lower operating costs and therefore have a competitive advantage over Pacific fishing nations and other fleets. Cheaper costs means more vessels can go to sea in circumstances where there are already too many vessels for fishing to be sustainable. Chinese vessels have also been accused of participating in illegal and undeclared fishing operating under Sir Lankan flags. China has rigorously denied these accusations and the scale of these behaviours has proven hard to quantify by foreign researchers. In China's defence, it should be noted that few if any nations have the capacity to rigorously police and regulate their fishing vessels on the high seas.[10]

The influence of China has risen rapidly in the Pacific Islands since 2000. As many academic commentators and Pacific Island leaders have noted, this new and rising economic and diplomatic presence provides an alternative to the so-called Washington Consensus for Pacific Island nations frustrated by the latter's insistence on rigid rules of governance and fiscal restraint in terms of how aid is used. In contrast, the so-called Beijing Consensus is seen as more respectful of Island nation internal sovereignty in how aid is used.[11] However, as noted above, the USA has led the way in its tuna fleets' adherence to Pacific Island nations' desired fisheries policies as voiced through the Forum Fisheries Agency.

China can do the same. Working in partnership with Pacific Island nations' wishes and aspirations, China can be even more influential and beneficial to Pacific Island nations as it becomes more and more important over time as a market for and fisher of Pacific Island marine resources. China has consistently and unequivocally committed itself to respecting Pacific Island nations' rights to control their resources sine they became independent. Former New Zealand diplomat to China and Fiji, Michael Powles notes that the PRC has been a responsible and early participant in regional forums seeking to establish sustainable tuna regimes.[12] China's actions elsewhere also give cause for optimism. China has consistently adhered to observing the Law of the Sea concerning disputed resources in the South China Sea that have far greater national and strategic relevance to it than any interests it might have in the Pacific Islands region.[13] While Taiwanese fishing fleets have been less cooperative, it is unrealistic to believe Taiwan is not sensitive to regional criticism when set against its chief rival's official support of international maritime conventions. As relations between China and Taiwan continue to improve, and former Pacific colonial powers realise the new approaches of Asian aid donors are providing welcome alternatives to their own ways of operating, praising China for its adherence to international maritime conventions and Pacific Island nations' preferred fisheries management principles opens the way for all party cooperation on maritime issues.

The key short-term requirement is to restrict fishing. The main tactic used at present is to try and reduce the number of fish being taken. The only fishers that comply are not the problem – the illegal and undeclared excessive catch takes are the problem. In effect, what current policy is doing is trying to get the people who already comply to reduce their yield while the illegal fishers in poorly policed high seas' fisheries can carry on regardless. Sadly, experience demonstrates that the more people think the fishery is near to collapse, the more they increase their take so as not to miss out before the fishery collapses, especially if they feel they have no direct stake in a particular fishery as many DWFN perhaps do. Reducing the fish catch is problematic for Pacific domestic fleets as well which need minimum catch to guarantee market demands in larger, more viable markets.

How might China begin a transformation away from this self defeating regime of poor policing and enforcement, voluntary compliance and rising prices, and towards sustainable futures for Pacific fisheries? I want to propose two solutions – one for the near shore, one for the offshore fishery. They relate to things that have been consistently observed and advocated throughout this conference. The first is that we hear many groups say that what the nation state does on behalf of its Pacific citizens does not trickle down into the villages. Some Pacific nation states place control of near-shore fisheries in the hands of those with the greatest stake in their sustainability – local communities. The near shore fishery is very productive. Kiribati shows that local communities in alliance with government fisheries scientists and advisors can make a substantial amount of profit from the near shore fishery. A way to empower local communities is to give them neritic sovereignty – the sub-sovereignty to ensure

sustainable near shore fishing. China can assist in directing part of its aid towards this end. Such community-based sustainable fisheries may also be combined with marine-centered eco-tourism.[14] China can also assist in providing privileged market access for community-based sustainable harvests, and tourists, especially among its burgeoning and increasingly environmentally aware middle classes. The potential for this link is suggested by the virtual collapse of the shark fin market in wealthy parts of coastal China in response to marketing campaigns in recent years.

Further offshore, where the real crisis in Pacific fisheries occurs, the most immediate pressing need is for some form of improved surveillance and enforcement capacity to protect the offshore fishery from illegal distant water fishing fleets. The most commonly suggested means are the use of satellite monitoring to pinpoint locations, more fisheries officers on vessels to monitor catch, and giving DWFN a stake in reviving the MPAs such as exclusive access rights to them until such time as the fishery has recovered sufficiently to allow commercial fishing to be resumed. The real circuit breaker I would like to finish with is the proposal that the most effective way China can secure a sustainable fishery for its domestic market is for its fleets to work in partnership with Pacific Island domestic fleets. Pacific Island nations must set the terms.

China should not assume these terms will be poor, given that the best deal Pacific Island nations get at present involves receiving less than 10% of the sale price for fish legally taken and nothing for those illegally taken in excess of defined sustainable catches. More joint venture Chinese and Pacific vessels in an EEZ means more policing of the fishery by those setting the sustainable limit of the catch, and also benefitting the most from sustainable limits. In return for guaranteed market access to a booming market, China can ensure privileged and long-term access to a fishery it has a direct stake in. Technological transfer to boost the Pacific domestic side of the joint venture can be linked to Pacific expertise in reviving near-shore fisheries in China's depleted EEZ. Long-term market access will stabilise prices and enable better long term planning and budgeting, and means aid to boost Pacific domestic fleet returns direct benefits to China in the form of long-term supply chains.

Conclusion

Pacific Island nations face major challenges in seeking multilateral solutions to oceanic issues confronting them. Their collective thinking is reflected in the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy (PIROP) produced by a Marine Sector Working Group of the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific in response to a request from Pacific Island Forum leaders in 1999. The PIROP seeks to 'ensure the future sustainable use of our ocean and its resources by Pacific Islands' communities and external partners'.[15] The PIROP outlined five guiding principles for ensuring this objective: improving understanding of the ocean; sustainable development and management of ocean resources; maintaining the health of the ocean; promoting the peaceful use of the ocean; and creating partnerships and promoting cooperation.

Laurence Cordonnery ends her insightful commentary on the practicality of implementing the PIROP by noting its two major challenges – one within Oceania and one concerning DWFN. 'Within the region, political leadership and the willingness to commit and raise adequate resources will be essential if the foreseeable implementation difficulties outlined in this article are to be overcome. This challenge will determine whether the Policy can be used as a model in ocean governance as it promises to be. For regional powers within the Pacific Rim who were not part of the inception and endorsement phases of the PIROP process, their commitment to PIROP will be determined by Pacific Rim nations' willingness to act as partners and to cooperate with PICs in the implementation process'.[16]

Over the last decade, China has set a new agenda in how aid is delivered in the Pacific Islands. While not without its criticisms, these new approaches and alternatives have largely been welcomed by Pacific Island nations. China has the capacity, foreign policy philosophy and means to set a bold new agenda in partnership with Pacific Island nations to avoid the ecological disaster that engulfed Atlantic fisheries. This approach can provide a circuit breaker on unsustainable development and rewrite the textbooks on aid, cooperation, and developing sustainable marine economies and ecosystems. The still realisable end point will be a guaranteed fish stock; viable maritime economies, and national partnerships for our children and our children's children.

Notes

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11 Terence Wesley-Smith and Edgar A. Porter (eds), *China in Oceania: reshaping the Pacific?* (New York and Oxford 2010), 235–236. The Washington Consensus is more often portrayed as compliance with good governance requirements such as accountability and transparency, and less as adherence to free market ideas hostile to 'excessive' government control of development agendas, national expenditure, and business legal frameworks.

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