Pacific Migration Futures: A scenario approach

Ayla Bonfiglio
Research Associate
International Migration Institute, University of Oxford

Doctoral Fellow
UNU-MERIT, Maastricht Graduate School of Governance
When to use scenarios

Degree of (un)certainty

Forecasting

Scenarios

Uncertainties

Hope/fear

Certainties

Time into the future

Modified from Van der Heijden 2005
I. Project Overview and IMI’s Migration Scenario Methodology

II. Pacific in 2030: Pacific Buffet

III. What we can learn about migration drivers from scenarios? Analysing ‘relative uncertainties’ for the Pacific in 2030

IV. Key insights about future migration in the region for researchers and policy makers

Final report available on IMI’s website:
Scenarios are stories about possible future drivers and patterns of migration. They explore potential changes in the broader context within which migration takes shape to understand possible migration outcomes.

- Focus on possibility, not probability; **scenarios are not predictions**
- Effective scenarios must challenge the *status quo*
- Tools to prompt innovative thinking about future migration, its opportunities, its challenges, and potential policy responses
- No single scenario attempts to get the future ‘right’, rather a set of scenarios may offer a range of valuable insights
**Relative certainties** are *long-term trends or forces* that

- we understand relatively well
- we know influence almost all aspects of society at all levels

The analysis of relative certainties help us to

- identify *continuities* and *discontinuities*
- assess what is *plausible* to occur within the time horizon (2030)
- explain the *impact* of these factors *on migration*

* Strategic Futures Studies, Copenhagen Institute for Futures Studies, 2008
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political</th>
<th>Economic</th>
<th>Social</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXTERNAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>REGIONAL ECONOMY</strong></td>
<td><strong>EDUCATION</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Increasing geo-political importance of Pacific</td>
<td>✤ Persisting Australia and New Zealand (ANZ) economies of scale relative to Pacific Islands</td>
<td>✤ Increasing education aspirations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Increasing influence of China in Pacific Islands</td>
<td>✤ Closer ANZ economic relations</td>
<td>✤ Improving education access</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FOREIGN ECONOMIC INTERESTS</strong></td>
<td>✤ Increasing net FDI in Pacific</td>
<td>✤ Increasing literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Increasing foreign aid dependency</td>
<td>✤ Increasing interest in Pacific natural resources by foreign companies</td>
<td><strong>HEALTH</strong></td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>CULTURE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demographic</strong></td>
<td><strong>ENVIRONMENTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>TECHNOLOGICAL</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>URBAN</strong></td>
<td><strong>SLOW ONSET CLIMATE CHANGE</strong></td>
<td><strong>INFORMATION AND NETWORKS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Urbanisation</td>
<td>✤ Rising sea levels</td>
<td>✤ Advancing ICT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>POPULATION</strong></td>
<td>✤ Persisting importance of customary land tenure</td>
<td>✤ Increasing ICT usage and connectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Youth bulge in Melanesia</td>
<td>✤ Persisting importance of</td>
<td>✤ <strong>LAND</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Declining fertility</td>
<td>customary land tenure</td>
<td>✤ Declining maternal mortality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Population growth in absolute terms</td>
<td><strong>MIGRATION</strong></td>
<td>✤ Persisting Pacific norms and cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ Ageing population ANZ, EU, North America</td>
<td>✤ Growing Pacific diaspora</td>
<td>✤ Persisting importance of kinship ties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✤ High youth population in Pacific Islands relative to ANZ</td>
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Factors that *have two (or more) possible outcomes*, which are *relevant to migration* in the *time frame* for which you are to make scenarios

- Identifying and analysing key uncertainties is the *most important component* of the scenario methodology, for it is the evolution of various uncertainties that determine the different, yet plausible, future migration scenarios

- Often it is the more uncertain factors for which we are the *least prepared*
## IMI’s Migration Scenario Methodology: Key Uncertainties

### Political
- **NATIONAL**
  - Immigration/emigration policies
  - Political restructuring and reform, especially Melanesia
  - Political instability and conflict
- **PACIFIC REGION**
  - Shifting geopolitics in Pacific
  - Regional integration and cooperation
  - Strengthening of sub-regions
  - Territorialisation of Pacific waters
- **INTERNATIONAL**
  - Influence of China and Asia in Pacific
  - US/China relations in Pacific

### Economic
- **NATIONAL**
  - Relative economic growth
  - Supply of and demand for skilled labour
  - Economic development agendas
- **REGIONAL**
  - Regional economic integration
- **INTERNATIONAL**
  - Global economic volatility
  - Global financial recovery
  - Foreign investment in Pacific
  - Diversification and expansion of remittances

### Social
- **MIGRATION**
  - Social polarisation between migrants and non-migrants
  - Erosion of traditions and cultures
  - PICTs’ attitudes towards migration
  - Media & public portrayal of migrants and asylum seekers in ANZ
  - PICTs and NZ as attractive destinations to settle
  - Extent of diaspora engagement in Pacific
- **EDUCATION**
  - Education access and quality
  - Education outsourcing
  - Technical & professional skill levels
  - English language proficiency
- **HEALTH**
  - Healthcare access and quality
- **GENDER**
  - Changing gender roles
A future of increased privatisation and economic growth driven by a natural resource boom in many Pacific countries.
**Pacific Buffet**

**Headlines in ‘Pacific Buffet’**

- **Mallion Oil & Gas secure majority stake in Papua New Guinea’s exploration licences** (2014)
- **Pacific Islands make strides to convert urbanisation challenges to opportunities** (2020)
- **2 Chinese nationals killed in renewed violence in Honiara** (2024)
- **Pacific region becomes a hub for off-shore banking** (2028)

- **Port Moresby’s slums on the rise as population doubles in less than a decade** (2019)
- **Samoa voted world’s best eco-tourism destination** (2023)
- **Solomon Islands: new gold deposits to benefit locals, officials say** (2026)
### Analyzing uncertain future drivers of migration using scenarios: Customary land tenure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mana Pasifika – Eco growth and regional integration</th>
<th>Pacific Buffet – Ego growth driven by natural resources and pol stability</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Maori experience of slowly reclaiming sovereignty and the right to self-determination</td>
<td>• Customary land tenure replaced by private and commercial ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The cultural differences among PICTs have been revived and strengthened</td>
<td>• Increase in the exploration for oil gas and mineral deposits, esp. by foreign companies (oil in PNG, nickel and gold on Fiji, gold in Sol Is.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Development of both communal and Pasifika identities. These identities are particularly strong within younger generations.</td>
<td>• Higher rates of urbanisation than anticipated; displacement to cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Customary land a source of increased equality; responsible management</td>
<td>• Corruption has remained a significant challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Updated system</td>
<td>• Land disputes, inter-communal tensions + violence → internal displacement</td>
</tr>
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</table>
## Analyzing uncertain future drivers of migration using scenarios: Shifting geopolitics

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<td>• PICTs more active in regional and global politics</td>
<td>• Strengthening of international trade between PICTs and countries outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Formation of ‘Mana Pasifika’</td>
<td>• In PNG, foreign companies have nearly exclusive exploration rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Union is eager to engage China, which continues to have a strong presence in region</td>
<td>• In Sol Is, a Chinese state-owned enterprise has largest stake in exploration rights. Chinese companies developed much of infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rise in influence of Diaspora on region</td>
<td>• Rise of humanitarian and development assistance structures.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Global distribution of power largely unchanged; US slightly weaker</td>
<td>• ANZ economies continue to expand</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Re-energized relations between ANZ and PICTs</td>
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Insights about future patterns of mobility in the Pacific

**Mana Pasifika**
- Free movement in the region
- Increase in migration flows to/from China
- Increase in high skilled immigration and student migration at the tertiary level
- Increase in intra-regional mobility, which is more circular and temporary
- Increase in tourism
- Migration has become a key engine for human development
- Migrant remittances are more targeted and more effectively harnessed
- Diasporas are more active in Pacific affairs

**Pacific Buffet**
- Privatization of land leading to higher-than-anticipated rates of urbanisation
- Development-induced displacement
- Increased socio-economic inequalities contributing to increased intra-regional mobility, esp. to A+NZ, Fiji, PNG
- Some internal displacement and irregular migration to A+NZ, caused by land disputes and conflict
- Rise in overseas higher skilled workers
- Emigration of the skilled (middle)
Other insights and key questions

- Technological change
- Movement to cities
- New emigration destination
- Pacific diasporas
I thought the workshop was an interesting exercise that highlighted the diversity of views across the Pacific. I was regularly surprised that each individual in my group had comments that seemed to reflect their own national circumstances. So even though everyone was very knowledgeable about factors affecting migration from their country’s perspective we all had a lot to learn about migration in the region (myself included). I think it really demonstrates that people-to-people links in the Pacific region are fairly weak and that the region is quite fragmented – hence the workshop was useful to promote this awareness. In terms of policy I think this means we need to tread carefully and try to promote information-sharing as much as possible.

I learnt so much from the Scenarios planning, and have certainly applied some of the techniques … in some of my practical problem-solving with Pacific counterparts and New Zealand employers over the last few months here in the RSE (Recognised Seasonal Employer) space at the New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment.

RSE; SETTLEMENT, PROTECTION & ATTRACTION DIVISION; IMMIGRATION NEW ZEALAND; MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT

LABOUR MOBILITY & TRADE, PACIFIC DIVISION, AUSAID