

Forced Migration and Resettlement in the Pacific:  
Development of a Model addressing the Resettlement of  
Forced Migrants in the Pacific Islands Region from  
Analysis of the Banaban and Bikinian Cases.

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by Dominic Noel Collins

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Hold me now, oh hold me now  
‘til this hour has gone around  
And I’m gone on the rising tide  
For to face Van Diemen’s Land

It’s a bitter pill I swallow here  
To be rent from one so dear  
We fought for justice and not for gain  
But the Magistrate sent me away

Now kings will rule and the poor will toil  
They tear their hands as they tear the soil  
But a day will come in this dawning age  
When an honest man sees an honest wage

Hold me now, oh hold me now  
‘til this hour has gone around  
And I’m gone on the rising tide  
For to face Van Diemen’s Land

*U2, Van Diemen’s Land*

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## Abstract

There are currently several potential threats to the long-term habitability of many atolls and islands in the Pacific Islands region, with environmental change appearing the most serious. Minimal attention has been given to the possibility that migrants forced from uninhabitable islands will require resettlement en masse, and assessing past resettlements is crucial to planning for what the future may hold.

Population resettlement is not a new phenomenon in the Pacific Islands region, yet recently it has been neglected by academics. This study builds on past work by Bedford and assesses the current literature in the fields of population resettlement and forced migration, finding that the situation threatening the Pacific Islands is not adequately addressed by any of the planning or analytical tools available. A model based predominantly on the work of Cernea and Muggah was developed by the author to account for this theoretical shortcoming.

The model is used to assess the past cases of resettlement from Banaba and Bikini Atoll, identifying variables which influence the success of resettlement. Conclusions are drawn from the case studies and recommendations for how to avoid negative outcomes in future resettlements are made. This study advances the current literature, provides an in-depth analysis of pressing yet hitherto avoided issues, and can inform both foreign and domestic policy planning in not just Pacific Island states, but receiver states and other potentially affected islands or atolls regardless of region.

# Chapter 1

“The security issues of most concern to Pacific Island governments relate not to conventional military threats, but to...maintaining control over their own resources and environment”

South Pacific Policy Review Group, 1990.

## Introduction

The issues of population resettlement, displaced people and environmental refugees have gained attention over recent years. These phenomena are associated with war, environmental change, natural disasters, development projects and pollution. Formerly the domain of anthropologists, selected scientists and human rights organisations, they have become household terms, gaining more media and academic attention. The Pacific Islands region is seriously threatened with forced migration and resettlement, yet there remains a lack of planning and study. This thesis shows that there is currently no academic framework suitable for planning or assessing cases of population resettlement in the Pacific Islands. Building on past studies and current theory, a model is developed and tested against the Banaban and Bikinian resettlement cases, enabling identification of variables that influence the success resettlement.

There are many low lying islands and atolls that could suffer dramatically from climatic or environmental change, with striking consequences in the Pacific Islands region. The social, economic, cultural and human cost of such events is largely unknown, but one likely result is mass-migration from islands rendered uninhabitable. The rest of the world has become aware of this possibility, but there is very little action undertaken other than

paying lip service to the unease of Pacific Island states and other concerned parties (Chiew 2008; Barnett 2004).

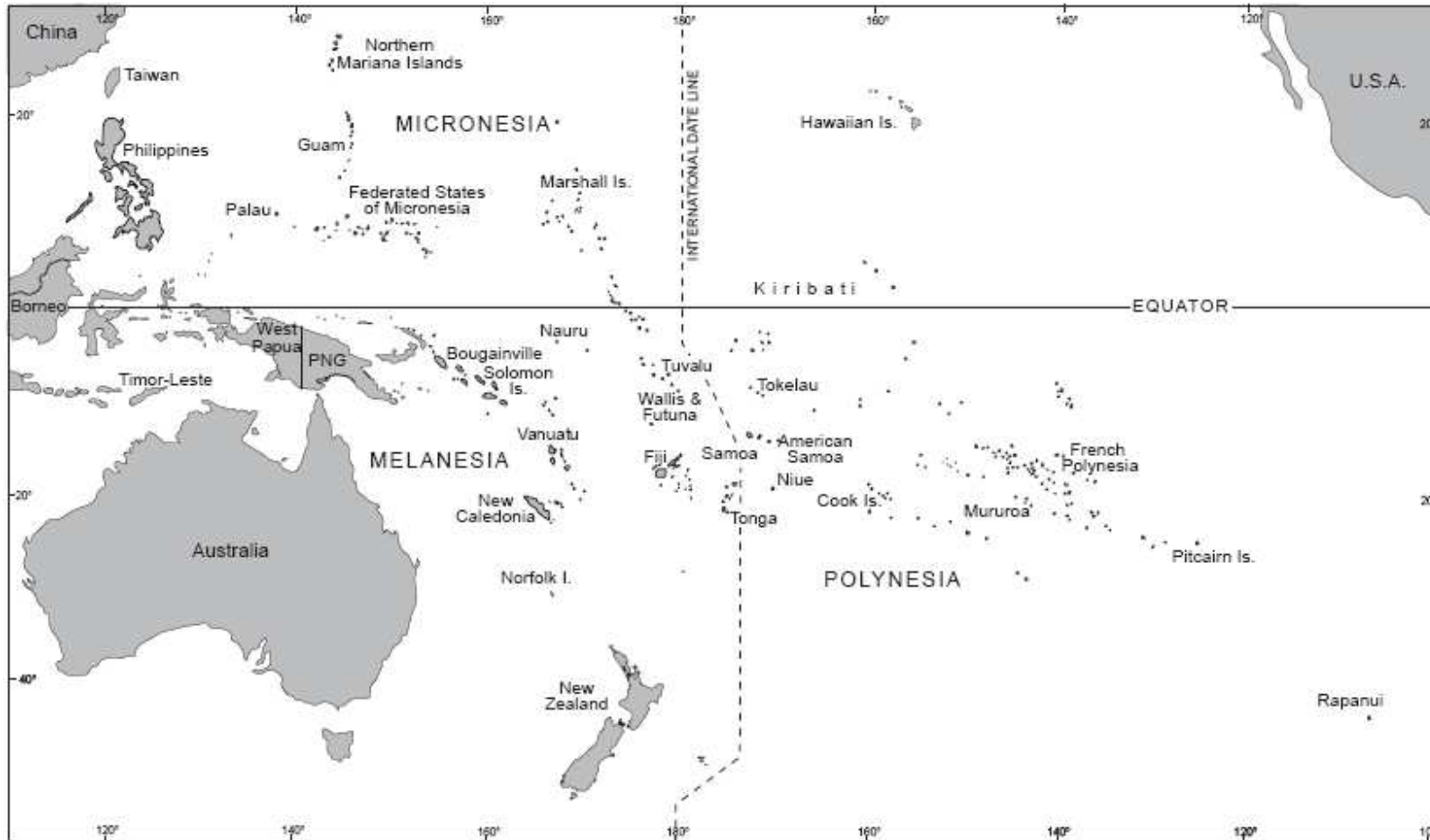
This thesis examines past cases of resettlement in the Pacific Islands using a model developed from resettlement work done in other parts of the world. By analysing earlier resettlements it is possible to identify the major factors that affect the success of resettlement, but also to help plan future cases. The Pacific Islands Forced Migration Resettlement Model (the model) used in this thesis is based on research conducted primarily in Europe, Africa and the Middle East, and it shows that there is cross-cultural applicability within the various fields this thesis straddles, including population resettlement, forced migration, and refugee studies.

It must be stressed that as a general rule, the standards of where people live and make their homes are fairly relaxed. “People are willing to tolerate a broad range of threats to health and longevity. Witness the fact that, throughout the world, densely populated cities are plagued by air and water pollution are the rule rather than the exception. ...millions have built homes in areas prone to avalanches and floods” (Jacobson 1988: 6). This illustrates a crucial point. There are many apparently sub-optimal locales inhabited by millions of people, even in the developed world. But environments do exert influence over migrations, especially in the developing world (Wood 1991: 42). Rising sea levels pose a specific and unique threat to many in the Pacific Islands, as those at risk of losing their homes have nowhere else to go. In many cases they stand to lose what little



hinterland exists as well. If only one reason was needed to justify this study, the lack of other options for threatened Pacific Island populations is it.

## Pacific Islands Region



Map: Marney Brosnan, Geography Department, University of Canterbury

## Population Resettlement

Population resettlement is a field of academic research concerned with the study of how to address the redistribution and/or assisted rebuilding of displaced communities or populations. Population resettlement covers the resettlement of refugees, evacuees and those forcibly displaced by other phenomena, such as war, environmental change and development projects (Cernea 1995; Cernea 1997; Cernea 1999; Muggah 2000).

## Population Resettlement in the Pacific Islands Region

Population resettlement is not a new phenomenon in the Pacific Islands region, yet it remains under-studied. There are many reasons for examining cases of population resettlement in the Pacific. There have been relocations on or from numerous islands since the middle of the nineteenth century, affecting many parts of the region (Lieber 1977). Population resettlement necessitated by rising sea levels, coastal erosion, economic pressures, resource exploitation or dwindling populations make the study of past cases relevant, if not a necessity, to ensure successful resettlements in future. Much of the work on resettlement and forced migration in the Pacific has had an anthropological or geographical focus, and more recent study has tended to be almost entirely promulgated by groups or persons associated with the affected population (Sigrah and King 2001; Niedenthal 2001). This does not detract from the value of the work done, but it does leave a place for independent research conducted with reference to the current theory.

## Forced Migration

Forced Migration is the term used to describe the event of being pushed or required to relocate from one's current place of residence. Forced migration is best defined as "the process of collective dislocation and/or settlement of people away from their normal habitat by a superior force" (Shami 2003: 4-5). This superior force can be anything, such as environmental change, warfare, or development projects (Bates 2002).

## Forced Migration in the Pacific Islands Region

There have been a number of cases of forced migration in the Pacific, most notably since the Second World War (WWII). The two best known and most publicised are the cases of the Banabans being moved to Rabi (pronounced "Ram-bee"), and the Bikinians being moved to Kili Island. These cases both involved the forced removal of an entire ethnic group from their homeland and resettlement elsewhere so their islands could be used for other purposes<sup>1</sup> by their respective 'colonial'<sup>2</sup> governments. There have been forced migrations in the past prompted by overcrowding, among other reasons, however these are not as well documented nor as well known as they appear to be migration for opportunity, rather than involuntary migration implemented by another party (Bedford 1967; Lieber 1977). Given the potential for forced migration in the future, particularly because of climate change and rising sea levels, it is important to examine past cases.

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<sup>1</sup> Phosphate mining and nuclear testing respectively.

<sup>2</sup> Colonial is not necessarily the correct word here, as the United States was the United Nations trustee for the Marshall Islands, not a colonising power.

## Why Study Population Resettlement and Forced Migration in the Pacific?

Reasons for studying population resettlement in the Pacific Islands are not hard to find; that many others in the field have comparatively ignored the region is justification enough. Low populations, isolation, and lack of publicity have resulted in many cases of Pacific Island resettlement going practically unreported, and therefore those cases have remained largely unexamined by theorists and academics. With the current attention being paid to the threats of water shortages, climate change and global warming it is important to assess what can be done to ameliorate the potential dangers to Pacific Island populations. It is also important to assess what can be done if efforts to avoid the catastrophic predictions about the future of low-lying Pacific Islands and atolls become a reality. Assessing past cases gives some guidance as to how this can be done and improved upon.

Most previous studies of population resettlement in the Pacific, such as Binder (1977), Lieber (1977) and Niedenthal (2001) have taken the discursive geographical or anthropological approaches. This study however, will approach the topic from a more empirical political science angle. As nearly all resettlement and forced migration literature is based on research from the Middle East, Europe and Asia, it is necessary to test its applicability to Pacific Island cases. A framework for practical and successful population resettlement based on the work of other scholars will be developed, with the goal of being Pacific Islands focused. It is then tested against the Banaban and Bikinian cases. The aim is to identify the factors that most influence the success of population resettlement by studying the current literature and applying the conclusions drawn to the

Banaban and Bikini cases. This framework can then be applied to potential or actual cases of resettlement should it become necessary.

Studying forced migration and assisted population resettlement within the Pacific region is important for a variety of reasons, particularly for those at risk of resettlement. A study of this phenomenon and its associated problems is required in order to avoid possible humanitarian crises in the future, should mass resettlements become necessary. As refugee camps and resettlement communities are “seed beds most conducive to the growth of memory and the pursuit of the myth of return” (Mallki, cited in Colson 2003: 9) it is important to minimise time spent in situations that can lead to ruminations about one’s fate. Owing to the relatively small populations of Pacific Islands little political attention has been given to this problem, and due to the nature of many past resettlements, the effect on the resettled populations has been highly damaging. From a cultural and human rights perspective many Pacific populations resettled to date have suffered dramatically.

In order to assess the phenomena of forced displacement and resettlement in a meaningful and instructive way, this study assesses past cases from the Pacific Islands region to inform future resettlements. Using a model based on current theory, the Banaban and Bikinian cases of resettlement are studied, focusing on the overall resettlement process, important variables, culture, and the avoidance of marginalisation. With the results, it is possible to make inferences and recommendations in order to avoid past problems in future resettlements. The discussion focuses on the variables that have

been shown to influence the success of resettlement, and specifically on the changed environmental conditions expected and emphasis on appropriate, culturally-specific planning.

### Importance to New Zealand

Studies of this nature are of particular importance to New Zealand socially, economically and humanitarily. New Zealand maintains a position of prominence in the Pacific as both a leader and as a stable democratic state, providing assistance and many services to the region's smaller and less developed states (McCarthy 2005; Hoadley 2005). New Zealand's place as 'big brother' or 'benevolent cousin', and the large communities of Pacific Islanders in New Zealand, particularly Auckland, mean this is unlikely to change (McCarthy 2005: 43-48).<sup>3</sup>

The position of Tokelau, the Cook Islands and Niue, being closely associated with New Zealand,<sup>4</sup> means that any threats to these are automatically an issue that New Zealand must address. The prospect of any of these three becoming uninhabitable or of a mass migration, quite probably to New Zealand, needs to be investigated. Questions surrounding New Zealand's role in the process, the status of Tokelau after such an event and related defence/security issues need to be addressed. Preliminary investigations have shown that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Ministry of Pacific Island

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<sup>3</sup> Australia may improve its position and relationship with the Pacific, but NZ will still be regarded by many states as a big brother and less of a threat than Australia.

<sup>4</sup> Tokelau is a New Zealand territory, while the Cook Islands and Niue are self-governing territories in free association with New Zealand.

Affairs, Immigration New Zealand and the New Zealand Defence Force have all so far ignored or have no interest in these issues (Personal Communications).

### Why Study the Banaban Case?

There are many cases of population resettlement in the Pacific Islands, as shown by Lieber in his 1970 anthropological survey *Exiles and Migrants in Oceania*. Of these cases, that of the Banabans stands alone in its avarice and subterfuge, but beneath the emotion, and the unfortunate situation the Banabans find themselves in today, there is a plethora of information that must be more closely assessed.

Banaba is a raised island, effectively on the equator and roughly due north of New Zealand, 300 kilometres east of Nauru. The island was once a source of phosphate, among the best in the world, and as a result of mining by outside powers only 60 hectares of 607 hectares (1500 acres) has remained un-mined. The population was resettled to the Fijian island of Rabi after WWII. Many of the issues that confront population resettlement researchers are present in the Banaban case. These include the resettlement process, problems with land rights, citizenship and identity, loss of culture and language, destruction of homeland, financial hardship, lack of support, and a continuing lack of recognition internationally.

When conducting research of this type, effectively a multi-case comparison, it is essential to select cases that are valid and provide adequate material for the study. The Banaban case certainly does this, as many aspects of it have been repeated in other cases or have



the potential to be in the future. The Banabans were resettled on Rabi by the three partner governments<sup>5</sup> that controlled the British Phosphate Commission (BPC). This was done so phosphate mining could progress without being interrupted by the local landowners, who the commissioners viewed as troublesome and an impediment to mining (Williams and Macdonald 1985:148; 257; 338; Sigrah and King: 258). Similar circumstances occurred with the Panguna Mine in Bougainville, resulting in a group of disgruntled landowners causing the mine to close. It is entirely conceivable that there could be similar issues, particularly in Papua New Guinea, West Papua, and Solomon Islands, where local people may be resettled and their lands damaged to allow for resource exploitation (May 2005: 459-461; Cozens 2005: 489; Breen 2001: 1).

The method and process used to resettle the Banabans was, even at the time, ethically dubious; by today's standards it was abhorrent, and morally bankrupt. The support and provisions given to the resettled population would have been barely enough to sustain and shelter them in fair weather and a climate they were accustomed to, but with altered climate and seasonal patterns, including Fijian cyclones and winter, it was inadequate (Binder 1977). The ongoing financial and development support given to the Banabans has also been woefully insufficient. Even today the Banabans struggle, due in no small part to their population being dispersed between Fiji and Kiribati, with each state absolving itself of responsibility (King 2007, personal communications).

The cultural cost to the Banaban people of their experiences with resettlement has been high. Although they have maintained much of their heritage, such as village names and

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<sup>5</sup> The British Phosphate Commission was controlled by the Britain, Australia, and New Zealand.

genealogy, their language and other important cultural practices have been lost. Another complication for the Banabans is citizenship. Although the Banabans own the land on Banaba, the vast majority of the population live on Rabi. Fiji recently granted many Banabans citizenship, greatly improving their situation, but the Kiribati government in Tarawa does little to assist its overseas citizens; Banabans do not even receive the minimal Kiribati pension unless they return to Kiribati, a journey few on Rabi can afford (King 2007, personal communications; King and Sigrah 2001, [www.banaban.com](http://www.banaban.com); Fiji Times 2005).

### Why Study the Bikinian Case?

There are many similarities between the Banaba and Bikini cases, making them ideal for concurrent study. As an example of forced migration and resettlement in the Pacific Islands region, Bikini is invaluable as a source of how not to conduct resettlement operations. Robert Kiste (1974: 3-4) summarises the situation economically;

“In early 1946 the islanders who inhabited Bikini Atoll in northern Marshall Islands were relocated from their ancestral homeland because it had been selected as a nuclear test site by the United States. The Bikinians did not desire relocation, but had no real alternative to the plans of the Americans.”

Kiste continues:

“Relocation altered almost every facet of the Bikinian’s social and physical environments. Their relative isolation... abruptly ended with their initial resettlement on Rongerik, another northern atoll. Rongerik is much smaller than Bikini, and in less than two years, its resources proved insufficient to

support the community. When the islanders suffered from near starvation, they were evacuated and given refuge at a United States military base on Kwajalein Atoll. After several months, they were again resettled, this time on Kili Island in the southern Marshalls. Once on Kili, the Bikinians were faced with the challenge of adapting to an environment quite different from that of Bikini.”

An alternately focused analysis from Eugene Ogan (Foreword in Kiste, 1974) reveals the true circumstances, and more similarities to the Banaba case: “The Bikinians provide an example of an essentially defenceless people who have been callously shoved from one island to another in order to meet the political and military goals of aliens to whom a tiny but originally vital community is simply irrelevant.”

Bikini Atoll is located in the northern Marshall Islands, and has a total land area of 2.32 square miles (six square kilometres), the largest of which, Bikini Island, has an area of 0.66 square miles (1.71 square kilometres). The atoll’s 26 islands enclose a roughly oval lagoon of approximately 243 square miles (630 square kilometres) (Kiste 1974: 16; 1985: 117). The population is thought to have descended from islanders who fled Wotje Atoll, some 600 kilometres to the south-east, sometime in the “not too distant past” (Kiste 1974: 16). Due to their isolation, the Bikinians had little contact with other Marshallese, developing unique variations in their speech, and it was not until after the First World War (WWI) that many Bikinians travelled to any great extent even within the Marshalls, which was not always a pleasant experience. Given their isolation and dialect, many

Marshallese considered the Bikinians to be a backward people, resulting in the Bikinians seeing themselves as distinct from other Marshallese (Mason and Richard, cited in Kiste 1974: 19). Discrimination and prejudice were common.

The Bikinian case appears to be compatible and remarkably similar to that of the Banabans. Both populations were resettled to serve the needs of duplicitous, self-interested colonial powers, both had their homeland rendered uninhabitable, both received little on-going assistance, both had their good nature abused and both suffered culturally, physically, economically and politically. The effects of resettlement are still very evident (Kiste 1977; Niedenthal 2001). Without labouring the point or diverting too far from the focus of this thesis, both the Banabans and Bikinians have been treated unfairly, unjustly, and in a morally questionable manner, yet as their treatment was not deemed illegal, neither have been awarded any recognition or compensation. Although the impetus for resettlement may no longer be colonial self-interest, the avoidance of future resettlements being conducted in such an unplanned and unconcerned fashion is essential if satisfactory results are to be achieved.

Both the Banaba and Bikini cases present good opportunities for testing and furthering the current literature in the fields of population resettlement and forced migration. There has been very little recent work focused on the Pacific Islands in either of these areas of academia, making this thesis valuable not only as a means of expanding the fields, but also for testing the cross-cultural applicability of the current theories, based predominantly on research from Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe, where

conflict and/or poverty have been commonplace in recent decades (Colson 2003; Cernea 1995; Black 1994; Castles 2003).

### What about the Rest of the Pacific Islands?

A convincing argument can be made for including other cases of resettlement in the Pacific Islands region in this study, especially, Tuvalu, Tokelau and the Carteret Islands. Determining factors for not including more cases were time, the need to limit the length of this thesis, and a desire to use the most similar cases available in the case studies. Reasons why various other cases were not chosen are given below as a compliment to the rationale for using the Banaba and Bikini cases.

The Carteret Islanders of Papua New Guinea are another population who could be added to this study. Their imminent and long-expected resettlement (Connell 1990; Philip 2008; Kinna 2008) makes them an obvious choice for inclusion; however, they were in all likelihood to be resettled during the course of or soon after the completion of this thesis, and their case could not be easily researched without a large budget and more time. The Carteret Islanders case is valuable to this field, and in a larger, more comprehensive study it would be a necessity.

Tokelau provides an interesting case, as the territory's viability would be seriously threatened by climate change, but it has also experienced resettlement before. The New Zealand government resettled a number of families from Tokelau in the late 1960s and early 1970s, establishing Tokelauan community in various locations of the Wellington

region and central North Island. Moreover, as Tokelau is a New Zealand territory, the intricacies of any future resettlement would be different to most other potential cases. Attempts were made to include Tokelau and the Tokelau Resettlement Scheme in this thesis, but multiple fruitless attempts to access government files and the limited sources available made this unfeasible.

Of all Pacific Island states, Tuvalu is the one that currently appears to be the most at risk of needing to resettle its entire population. The coral atolls that make up the tiny nation are being eroded and flooded by encroaching seas. In many areas, sea walls that were erected to protect the islands are regularly breached and act as retaining walls for the salt water. Predictions of increased storm activity and rising sea levels do not bode well for the people of Tuvalu, and the state is a world leader in drawing attention to the risks faced by low-lying islands and coastal areas from global warming. Many Tuvaluans have already resettled on the Fijian island of Kioa, and many others have plans to relocate if need be ([www.tuvaluislands.com](http://www.tuvaluislands.com)). It is as yet uncertain what the official stance of the Tokelau administration and New Zealand government will be, but mass emigration to Kioa or New Zealand is likely. Resettlement from Tuvalu is less imminent than resettlement from the Carteret Islands, but it is already happening on a household level.

Kiribati is one of the states which stands to suffer most seriously in the event of severe changes in climate and/or sea level. Consisting of three isolated island chains spread throughout an exclusive economic zone of over 3.55 million square kilometres, roughly the size of India, Kiribati's total land area is only 811 square kilometres

([www.mfat.govt.nz](http://www.mfat.govt.nz)). Much of this would be seriously threatened by an increase in sea level as only the island of Banaba is raised to any substantial height. Including Kiribati as a major part of this analysis was considered as it is definitely at risk, however there were factors that meant it was excluded. Kiribati's population is much larger than that of Tokelau, meaning any resettlement would be a much greater exercise. Kiribati is also an independent state, therefore not being as pressing a matter for New Zealand and Australia as some other Pacific Island nations. The final, and arguably best reason for not focusing more on Kiribati, is the length constraint of this thesis. Obtaining information on Kiribati was difficult, and attempts to gain comment from the Kiribati government proved futile.

Nauru is another Pacific Island state that faces the prospect of population resettlement, but not because of its low-lying geography. Nauru shares a history very similar to its unfortunate neighbour Banaba; once a lush equatorial island, phosphate was discovered on Nauru leading to the eventual destruction and export of nearly all of the island's natural resources. The amount of remaining phosphate is negligible. Owing to poor financial management, corruption, and extravagance, Nauru is effectively a bankrupt Australian dependency.<sup>6</sup> A combination of unemployment, poor diet, under-development, limited education facilities and no foreseeable income-generating prospects mean Nauru is faced with the possibility of becoming not just unsustainable, but uninhabitable, as it struggles to maintain its ever-growing population. Resettlement in or integration into

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<sup>6</sup> This view is contested by some, particularly Peter Crowley, who is very critical of Helen Hughes views on Nauru's financial situation and future.

another state, particularly Australia, and allowing the island to regenerate has been put forward, among other options (Hughes 2004; Connell 2006).<sup>7</sup>

The Nauru case would be useful to study in a comparison with Banaba, and there are people more qualified than this author currently assessing Nauru's problems. Indeed, the current Australian Labor government<sup>8</sup> appears committed to addressing many of the issues that face Nauru. It must also be noted that Nauru still supports its population, and as this thesis is focused on forced migration, the comparative amount of choice available to Nauruans in the decision to leave makes it beyond the scope of this thesis. The Nauruans do have some history with regard to forced migration and resettlement, including blackbirding<sup>9</sup> and transportation by the Japanese during World War II.

Economic unsustainability and population pressure are factors confronting Niue, but in a different way to Nauru. Like Nauru and Banaba, Niue is a raised island and not seemingly at risk from rising sea levels, and like Tokelauans, Niueans have free entry and working rights in New Zealand. The problem is that it has practically no form of income generating economy and a dwindling population.<sup>10</sup> Roughly 90 percent of Niueans live in Auckland, leaving Niue with a stable population around 1,500 ([www.niueisland.com](http://www.niueisland.com)). Economic pressures aside, Niue is very liveable and can support its population, making talk of resettlement more academic than probable. For this reason it was decided not to

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<sup>7</sup> It is easy to be sceptical about this plan as Banaba is still in a state of environmental ruin after many years of minimal habitation, and whether the population want to return to the Island after life in Australia is questionable.

<sup>8</sup> Elected November 24, 2007, with Kevin Rudd as Prime Minister.

<sup>9</sup> Poaching Pacific Islanders for the purposes of slavery or indentured labour.

<sup>10</sup> Christmas Island, the third island mined by the BPC (and subsequent entities) is now faced with a similar situation as the population falls and extending mining gains opposition. The detention centre on Christmas Island may provide some relief from the pressure felt if mining does cease.



use Niue in this study, and unlike the above cases, Niue could probably also be safely left out of a more comprehensive study.

## Conclusion

There are many issues that need to be resolved regarding population resettlement in the Pacific, yet the region's more powerful states remain hesitant and inactive. Furthermore, those Pacific Island states that have been or could be affected by population resettlement often feel unable to influence larger states to help address the issues (Tito 2000). As this thesis was being written, resettlement from the Carteret Islands still has not begun, although it was scheduled to be completed already. It remains unpublicised and appears to be grossly-under funded and ill-prepared (Kinna 2008; PNG Post-Courier 2007; PNG Post-Courier 2009; Pacnews 2009a). By examining the chosen cases, it will be possible to establish variables that affect the success of resettlement. This has not yet been done in relation to the Pacific Islands.

Population resettlement in the Pacific will continue to be a feature of the region. Continued and expanded resource exploration will put pressure on populations, and in West Papua and Bougainville there have been resettlements because of this (PNG Post Courier, 2006). Rising sea levels, extreme weather events and coastal erosion may well make many low-lying atolls and islands uninhabitable (O'Neil, MacKellar & Lutz 2001: 27). This includes much of the Federated States of Micronesia and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, all Kiribati except Banaba and numerous other small islands and atolls. The situation is similar in the Caribbean Islands and the Indian Ocean, where the

Maldives, Chagos Archipelago, and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands are all very low lying (Leatherman 1997).<sup>11</sup>

Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature on forced migration and resettlement, summarises past studies of resettlement in the Pacific Islands region, and identifies gaps in the field that are addressed in the thesis. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology, justification and scope of this thesis, while Chapter 4 develops a model of resettlement applicable to the Pacific Islands region which is then tested in Chapters 5 and 6. Chapter 7 discusses the model's validity and application, implications for theory and policy, and concludes with suggestions for future research.

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<sup>11</sup> The Australian Government is currently assessing the impact of climate change on the Indian Ocean Territories

## Chapter 2

“Forced displacement is the cultural-economic equivalent of a major earthquake that shatters production systems and social networks, undermines identity, and plunges these affected on a downward poverty spiral.”

Michael Cernea, 2003

### Literature Review

There is an established literature on the topics of population resettlement and forced migration, yet the research has largely ignored the Pacific Islands region. Both fields have grown rapidly over the last twenty years, and there is sufficient published research to identify variables involved with successful resettlement. Examples of other population resettlements can be found throughout history, and more recently within the former Soviet Union, the British resettlement of the Chagossians to make way for the Diego Garcia military base (MERIP 1975: 19), and cases from the Middle East. The largest state in the region, Australia, was essentially founded on forced migration.<sup>12</sup> Hydroelectric power schemes and dam construction, on which the majority of development-induced displacement literature has focussed, have flooded vast regions, requiring resettlement of the residents (Cernea 1993: 4). Globally and regionally there have been cases where whole communities have been uprooted. These displacements and resettlements can, unsurprisingly, have an immense impact on those forced to move, from loss of material possessions to significant cultural and social dislocation (Benmayor and Skotnes 1994; Westwood and Phizacklea 2000).

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<sup>12</sup> The Colony of New South Wales could not have developed as it did without the forced migration of Convicts and the labour they provided.

Like other populations, people in the Pacific from different islands and atolls have their own unique cultures. Many have their own language, and strong links to the land and surrounding oceans (Sigrah and King 2001; King 2007, personal communication; Agence France-Presse 1996; Weeramantry 1992). What makes the Pacific unique is the sheer number of different cultures; Papua New Guinea alone has roughly 900 language groups, making it the most ethnically diverse society in the world (Watson 2005: 453). This diversity makes resettlement in the Pacific a very intricate problem, and cultural preservation and reduction of social dislocation must be a priority when whole communities or the entire population of one ethnic group have to be relocated. Any method of resettlement must take account of this.

There is a need for an independent party to conduct research on the multi-faceted and complex problem of how to prepare for cases of displacement and resettlement in the Pacific. The field of population resettlement and forced migration in the Pacific Islands is certainly not devoid of independent or academic study, but there has been a dearth of recent research into most cases. Revisionist history has shown much of the early writing (such as that by Grimble and Ellis) to be inaccurate (Sigrah and King 2006), and much of the recent research has been produced by people and/or groups closely associated with or part of the researched community or case. Niedenthal (2001) and Kiste (1974) with regard to the Bikinians, and Sigrah and King (2006) similarly with the Banabans are just a few examples. This does not detract from the quality or relevance of their research, nor its invaluable place in filling some of the many knowledge gaps about Pacific Island populations.

## Climate Change and Sea Level Rise

The threat of sea level rises is one that many states and scientists are taking seriously. Large countries such as Bangladesh, Egypt, and Vietnam, as well as much of Southeast Asia, have been well publicised as standing to potentially lose substantial amounts of land, as well as needing to relocate hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people (Parry, Canziani & Palutikof 2007: 41; Ravindranath & Sathaye 2002: 82-83; Jacobson 1988: 7). Many smaller states, particularly island states, are similarly or more seriously threatened, adding another problem for environments already in serious jeopardy, especially within the Pacific (Nunn 2001; Henderson 1990: 191). Bodies such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), university courses, and news reports have served to highlight global warming, climate change and rising sea levels as problems, especially in the developed world and island nations.

The scientific basis for climate change, global warming and many other associated phenomena will not receive excessive attention here even though it is rising sea levels that are thought to pose the greatest threat to populations in the Pacific. The focus is on the literature surrounding sea level fluctuation and its causes. To the question “Is sea level rising?” the IPCC gives the answer “Yes, there is strong evidence that global sea level gradually rose in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and is currently rising at an increased rate, after a period of little change between AD 0 and AD 1900” (IPCC 2007: 111). The two major causes given are thermal expansion of the oceans and increased melting of land-based

ice. This is accompanied by the caveat that there is some uncertainty, as well as a lack of confidence in the data (Valiela 2006: 56, 60).

On the amount of sea level fluctuation, there is more concrete data. Solomon *et al* claim that the average rise in sea level during the 20<sup>th</sup> century was about 1.7mm per year, yet this rate has accelerated to about 3mm per year since 1993 (2007: 111). There is some agreement within the literature that by 2100, a sea level rise of 400-600mm should be expected, but this will not be uniformly spread across the world's seas and oceans (IPCC 2007: 111; Parry, Canziani & Palutikof 2007: 41; Ravindranath & Sathaye 2002: 83; Valiela 2006: 56). Reasons for the uneven spread of any sea level rise include tectonic activity, astronomic variables, pressure systems, and storms.

### Definitional and Classification Issues

A brief scan of the literature related to population resettlement reveals that there is no formal taxonomy of terms that enables clear writing on similar cases that have their own specific nuances. Common terms include 'population resettlement', 'population relocation', 'forced migration', 'population redistribution', 'transplanted population', 'displaced people', 'evacuees' and 'refugees'. There is also little agreement between many authors, an issue highlighted by both Ramlogan (1996) and Westing (1992). This does not pose a great problem, but it does sometimes become tedious as one term could be applied to many different cases, while some cases could be described in many different ways. For instance, Martin (2004) has used "refugees" and "displaced peoples" without properly distinguishing between the two, or even stating whether the two are

mutually exclusive. Similar situations arise in other works (Wood 1994; Shami & McCann 1993). Add to this the contention surrounding the use of the term 'environmental refugees', and there are certainly areas of the field that need clarifying (Adelman 2001).

One author who attempted to clarify the use of terms is Adelman (2001: 7), who has discussed the progression and development of "human security" as moving from refugees to displaced persons. In this discussion it becomes clear that refugees are displaced, but not all displaced people are refugees. The Banabans could be described as forced migrants or displaced people, while they are not necessarily refugees. If the Tokelauans were required to resettle elsewhere due to rising sea levels they could be considered environmental refugees, displaced peoples and forced migrants.

Hansen and Oliver (1982) were among the first to focus on the problems of multiple, poorly-defined classifications (Shami 1993). Shami (1993) further developed the literature, proposing a framework for use when studying displaced populations. Shami describes population displacement as "the process of collective dislocation and/or settlement of people away from their normal habitat by a superior force" (2003: 4-5). This definition accounts for displacement and resettlement caused by war, natural disaster, development and resource extraction and expropriation. This study intends to examine various causes of forced migration and resettlement, but is focused on wholesale resettlement of entire populations. There is an established literature addressing small numbers of refugees and their resettlement; however, there is only limited literature

relating to resettlement of whole populations of non-refugees, especially in the Pacific Islands. Shami and McCann (1993) summarised the resettlement of many cases of displaced peoples in the Middle East, providing something of a framework for future studies.

### Environmental Refugees

The term “environmental refugees” has become increasingly widespread since the early 1980s, but for much of this time it has been poorly defined. El-Hinnawi (1985) first defined environmental refugees as “those people who have been forced to leave their natural habitat, temporarily or permanently, due to a marked environmental disruption (natural and/or triggered by people) that seriously jeopardizes their existence and/or seriously affected the quality of their life [sic]...” (El-Hinnawi 1985). This definition has come under fire for not differentiating between types of environmental refugees and for not distinguishing between environmental refugees and other types of migrants (Bates 2002), and because the term ‘refugee’ implies flight from a well founded fear of persecution (Jacobson 1988: 5; Ramlogan 1996: 81; Bates 2002: 465). The discrepancy between the United Nations Convention on Refugees’ definition of a refugee and the fact that environmental refugees are not fleeing persecution causes problems for some scholars (Westing 1992; Ramlogan 1996). Although some environmental refugees do not have control over their choice to leave, they are considered migrants as they were not fleeing persecution in their homeland (Bates 2002).



There has been much debate on how to best rectify the problems posed by the use of the term environmental refugees (Westing 1992: 201-205; Ramlogan 1996: 82; Bates 2002), with possible solutions being the coining of a new term and definition, an amendment to the UN Charter, and acceptance of the term regardless of its semantic problems. One issue is defining exactly who is and who is not an environmental refugee. Another is that there are far more development-induced displaced people (DIDs) than actual refugees (Cernea 1995: 249), and to further complicate the matter, depending on definition, DIDs could be environmental refugees (Bates 2002). Questions over 'recognised' and 'unrecognised' refugees, control over decisions, and how to classify different types of environmental refugees have come some way towards being addressed, at least theoretically (Jacobson 1988; Westing 1992; Ramlogan 1996; Bates 2002).

El-Hinnawi (1985) identified three categories of environmental refugees: 1) temporary displacement because of a temporary environmental stress, 2) permanent displacement because of permanent changes to the environment, and 3) temporary or permanent displacement because of deterioration of the environment. Jacobson (1988: 7) highlighted the risk posed by rising sea levels as a threat to habitability, signalling a shift in focus to more closely examine environmental security and the role it can play in the reduction of the numbers of refugees (Westing 1992; Black 1994). Another issue is that recognised refugees usually cross an international border, while those displaced domestically (internally displaced person-IDP) are not deemed to be refugees, and those displaced internationally due to environmental reasons, although rare, are merely considered

displaced, or possibly immigrants. This raises the question of choice, and whether one who must move to survive is a refugee (Bates 2002).

Bates addressed many of the above issues in her 2002 article on environmental refugees, claiming that the regional bias of research towards Africa and Asia, a lack of research into the conditions that produce environmental refugees, and confusion around the use of the term refugees results from the uncritical acceptance of El-Hinnawi's initial conceptualisation. Bates argues that the degree of choice one has in their migration should determine whether they are considered a refugee, and makes the point that:

“The distinction between voluntary migrants and refugees offers some theoretical power to differentiate between migrants. However, many important migratory flows are not easy to categorise as one or the other. Conceptually sandwiched between voluntary migrants and refugees are those compelled by deficiencies in the local social, economic, or environmental context.”

Bates continues:

“Many migrants... make decisions based on a curtailed set of options. The term “Refugee” may be thus applied to migrants simply compelled by external constraints.”

Using this continuum, it is possible to place environmental refugees contiguous to conventional refugees, or even together with them, depending on the degree of choice. In cases where, due to the environmental change, continued habitation would result in death,

it would be fair to afford environmental refugees similar assistance to that afforded conventional refugees. The Bates model for classifying environmental refugees by reason for emigration divides environmental refugees into nine categories. These are disasters: natural, unnatural, and anthropogenic; environmental expropriation: development and warfare; deterioration of the environment: both anthropogenic and societal, pollution and depletion.

The literature on an international approach to forced migration and resettlement, as it has for refugees in general, has changed in recent years. Since the signing of the United Nations Refugee Convention in 1951, refugee policy in much of the world has tightened to restrict the flow of refugees and the use of detention has increased dramatically (Wilde 2001: 137). The Banabans are not refugees in the traditional sense of the term, but nor are they evacuees, as this description is more suited to Saigon-style departures, volcanic eruptions, or weather-related disasters such as Cyclone Tracy, or Hurricane Katrina. There is a case to be made that the Banabans could now be considered environmental refugees as their homeland is now unable to support their population, even if it could have at the time of their resettlement. Under the classification system provided by Bates (2002), the Banabans would be environmental refugees.

### Resettlement Models

Various models for analysing and planning have been developed over the last 50 years, but most have been superseded by more recent work. The work of Michel Cernea, in particular his Risks and Reconstruction Model, is among the most widely used and best

known in the field today, but it is not without fault. This model has its background in work conducted by Cernea on development induced displacement (DID) in the 1980s (Cernea 1991: 188-215), and has been refined and adjusted in the past two decades. The main dimensions of the model appear in work by Cernea in 1991, but are not presented specifically as a model, rather as a list of seven factors contributing to impoverishment among forcibly displaced peoples. These were landlessness, homelessness, joblessness, marginalisation, food insecurity, increased morbidity and mortality, and social disarticulation (Cernea 1991: 196). An eighth factor, loss of access to common property, was added later (Cernea 1995: 245; 1997: 1575; 2000: 3662; 2003: 40). Unlike many previous models, it is not contingent on those displaced or resettled passing through set stages, nor does it follow a timeline (Muggah 2000: 200; Cernea 1997). This model is widely used in the field, and often cited by other academics, yet it is not without its critics (Muggah, 2000; Castles 2008 personal communication).

The criticisms of the Risks and Reconstruction Model were summarised by Muggah (2000), who was among the first to test it. Using cases from Colombia, the model was tested to assess its value as a framework and tool for policy and planning with regards to conflict-induced displacement (CID). As the model was not specifically designed to be used with CID, Muggah added extra factors pertaining to education, political participation and increased risk of violence (2003: 200); this is in accordance with Cernea's own acknowledgement that extra variables may be needed in some cases in order to contextualise the model (Cernea 1997). The major criticisms include a focus on risk avoidance, ignoring the events leading up to and the reasons for displacement, and

“an over-emphasis on economics at the expense of human rights” (Muggah 2000: 200). The highly generalised framework has probably been the most criticised aspect of the model, yet Muggah concedes that this can be an advantage as the model is adaptable to local conditions (Muggah 2000: 201). This thesis addresses these and other issues.

Muggah highlights that in most cases of forced migration there are those who will benefit from the migration and migrants generally come out worse off (2000). This can be seen in cases of dam development, urban renewal and civil war. Cernea’s model was originally developed to minimise the impoverishment risks encountered during development, specifically in dam building or urban renewal projects. The study of climate change and Pacific Island cases is interesting, as there would not usually be, particularly on isolated islands and atolls, a party standing to gain from the displacement of these people. In certain circumstances, environmental refugees appear to mitigate Muggah’s criticism that Cernea does not take into account that someone stands to benefit from the displacement, as this is not the case. In some cases, such as the situation that faces many Pacific Island states, it is simply a matter of survival that forced the displacement.

Muggah can be critiqued; the inclusion of education in his analysis, but not insisting that it should be added permanently to the model is somewhat short-sighted. Educating those who are at risk of impoverishment must surely be a priority. Another contention is that special account must be taken of the reasons for displacement. This is needed to develop

a resettlement plan addressing the specifics of a particular case, such as any cultural or psychological issues that may be present.

Impoverishment and marginalisation are not mutually exclusive. The impoverished are generally marginalised, but the marginalised are not necessarily impoverished. This issue exists with all Cernea's components to some extent; however, once marginalised, a person or population has reached the lowest point, and once there, it is the most difficult to recover. Marginalisation is, perhaps more than any other, the greatest challenge to recover from. The affect of being marginalised and the impact this can have, particularly psychologically, can greatly affect the displaced. For this reason, the focus should not be simply on avoiding impoverishment, but more specifically to avoid impoverishment by avoiding marginalisation. This can be achieved by addressing the other components or of resettlement, detailed as elements in the proposed model. Expanding the number of factors given by Cernea is one way of doing this.

### How have Similar Studies Been Conducted?

Previous studies of population resettlement have tended to look at the anthropological outcomes and consequences for the resettled population. For decades, the work of Colson and other pioneers examined the effects of and problems caused by relocation and resettlement, but they did not focus on the Pacific Islands, choosing to examine various African tribes or regions, such as the Tonga people of the Gwembe District, and the social impact of resettlement (Clark, Colson, Lee & Scudder 1995; Loizos 1999: 237; Muggah 2000: 199; Shami 1993). These studies did not look at populations forced to

move from an island habitat to either another island or the mainland of another state. Indeed, there is a relatively limited number of cases of this nature. Lieber (1977) highlights some exceptions to this.

In the Pacific Islands there have been few studies conducted on population resettlement, and very few or none have been in political science. Most have been conducted in the fields of anthropology or geography, and very few have analysed the process, the majority tending to focus on the outcomes and consequences for the resettled population (Lieber 1977; Kiste 1974). One early study was a 1967 thesis by Bedford; an assessment of whether resettlement was a viable solution to the perceived problems of over-population and economic stagnation in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony. This study did not assess the process of resettlement in depth, and was mainly concerned with whether or not resettlement was feasible on a scale that would have significant impact on the population pressures felt by the Colony. Bedford (1967) makes little mention of the intricacies of the resettlement process, but does highlight food, land and transport issues as major considerations. This thesis builds on the work of Bedford by further investigating the major considerations and variables that influence the success of resettlement, and the resettlement process.<sup>13</sup>

During the 1970s there were a number of works that branched away from studying immigration and labour migration and began ethnographically examining populations who had been forced to migrate in order for their homelands to be used for “one scheme

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<sup>13</sup> Bedford (1974: 129) noted that the theoretical statements within the geography literature failed to provide a general framework for comprehensive analysis of mobility. The current situation is similar with resettlement of forced migrants, particularly within the Pacific Islands region.

or another sponsored by government” (Colson 2003). *Exiles and Migrants in Oceania* (Lieber 1977) is an edited volume with accounts of many of these cases, with none of those “forcibly uprooted” being ‘refugees’ in the legal or commonly understood sense of the term. Due to the size of the populations involved, the problems associated with most of the resettlements were not large in scale, but still of great importance to those concerned. Many of the findings were found to apply to resettlements with larger populations in other parts of the world (Colson 2003). This is important, as it justifies the methodology used in this study, where theories from other scholars focusing on different regions are combined and used to analyse Pacific Island cases.

Lieber (1977) provides a good anthropological record for many of the groups studied, but does not assess the resettlement process as such. There is a focus on how the groups dealt with the issues they faced after resettlement. Silverman, who contributed to the volume edited by Lieber, did in-depth work with the Banaban community on Rabi in the 1960s. His accounts (Silverman 1962; 1977) were mainly concerned with how the Banabans were creating new communities on their new island. Kempf and Hermann (2005) continued this line of research with their article on how the Banabans had changed their identities and positioned themselves differently over the last 60 years.

There have been cases outside the Pacific Islands region where an entire population has been removed from their homeland, and similar to the Pacific cases, most of these have received relatively little attention within the states concerned and internationally. One case is that of the Ilios (or Chagossians) from the Chagos Archipelago who were moved



from their homeland prior to construction of the US Military Base on the central Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia (MacIntyre 2007; Vine 2004). There has been some investigation into the effect of the resettlement on the Ilios population by anthropologists, but there has been limited other inquiry, including by political scientists. Even Vine, who has investigated the role played by the US in leveraging Britain into executing the resettlement, is an anthropologist.

### What is Success?

Success is more than simply achieving a desired end. This is a vital point that must be stressed. With regard to this study, success basically involves the resettlement of a population to another locale; however, there are numerous other crucial factors that accompany this, including humanitarian, political and theoretical considerations. In the fields of forced migration and population resettlement there is a lack of clarity regarding what success actually is, though many scholars give an indication of what they consider important. In the field of development-induced displacement, and especially dam construction, there is a move towards “resettlement with development”, i.e. improving the livelihoods of those resettled beyond their pre-resettlement levels by conducting resettlement as an opportunity for development (McDonald, Webber & Yuefang 2008: 82-84). This goes beyond simply mitigating the effects of resettlement, as has happened in some past cases, with varying effectiveness (Brieger & Sauer 2000). Other measures of success pertaining to resettlement include economic and social integration (Zucker 1983: 172) and school performance (Gibson 1997). One factor known to influence this is the existence of a cultural enclave for the resettled population to blend with. Given the

humanitarian element of resettlements, there must be a focus on these and other issues so that negative outcomes such as unemployment and psychological problems can be minimised.

## Conclusion

The existing literature concerning this thesis has provides a good base from which to study cases of resettlement in the Pacific Islands region. The literature and established theory in the fields of forced migration, population resettlement and environmental refugees, although somewhat problematic owing to definitional and operational shortcomings, allows a comprehensive study to be conducted. Previous studies of resettlement in the region provide a wealth valuable information and analysis, but many are either rout of date or focussed on a specific aspect of the population examined. Many case studies exist, but there is no available model generally applicable to Pacific Island cases as either a planning or analytical tool.

The literature allows for the development and refinement of resettlement models. Indeed, these have been used for many years. The model currently receiving the most attention is Cernea's risks and reconstruction model, focussed on the resettlement of those displaced by development. As the focus of this thesis is on resettlement in the Pacific Islands region and there is a lack of both theoretical attention and an applicable model, the basic principles of Cernea's model have been adopted for the model developed in Chapter 4. Criticisms of Cernea's model are addressed and the problematic term environmental refugees is adopted to describe the resettlement assessed. The fact is, environmental

refugees, for want of a better term, generally receive relatively limited attention as there is so little agreement on the meaning of the term, but this is not addressed here.

There is a gap in the literature examining resettlement in the Pacific Islands region from the theoretical and planning perspectives, with the vast majority of past studies being geographical or anthropological in nature. This thesis can focus on filling these gaps. Building on the work of Bedford, and analysing well documented cases through the standardised lens of a resettlement model, resettlement can be assessed in a manner that allows past resettlements to inform future cases. Although Bedford concluded that resettlement was not a viable option during his study, there may be no choice but to resettlement for many Pacific Islanders in the future, making analysing and planning the process a necessity.

By studying the Pacific Island cases, it will be possible to gain insight into the factors that determine the success or otherwise of population resettlement. Although cases are driven by different circumstances, it is the resettlement process being assessed, not the reasons for resettlement. When the relevant variables are identified it will be possible to make future cases of resettlement more successful. It should be noted that Weeramantry (1992) wrote that the experiences of the Banabans was a major factor in the decision by the Nauruans to reject the offer of resettlement put to them by Australia in the 1960s.

## Chapter 3

“What we have to learn, we learn by doing.”

Aristotle

### Methodology

It is crucial to have a clear understanding of what is to be achieved before settling on a method. For this study, the broad objectives and scope are determined as how to prevent or reduce the negative effects of forced migration and population resettlement, with a focus on the Pacific Islands region. To achieve this objective it has been decided that the most appropriate method is a multi-case analysis with historical cases. The chosen cases are Banaba and Bikini. They are analysed using a model developed during this study in order to fill a void in the literature. This is a substantially exploratory work.

### Objectives

The main objective of this study is to ultimately reduce the negative impacts of population resettlement after forced migration for Pacific Island communities. Other objectives include furthering the current literature on population resettlement and forced migration, and forming a framework for how to study cases of population resettlement where an entire island's or island group's population is resettled.

An examination of why some Pacific Island states have maintained a stable population and others have not will be conducted. It is interesting that although the Tokelauans have

the right of entry into New Zealand, many have not taken advantage of it. This is in stark contrast with Niue and the Cook Islands. Implications of this with regards to resettlement will be examined.

## Scope

This thesis provides a critique of forced migration and resettlement literature, identifies the variables associated with successful population resettlement within the Pacific Islands region, develops a model for assessing, planning and conducting resettlement, and tests the model with two past cases.

This study is not aimed at solving the problems caused by previous population resettlements, but enabling them to be avoided or minimised in future. Propositions for returning resettled populations to their original homelands will not be raised as a primary concern. This can be conducted elsewhere. This study does not set out to criticise the merits and methods of past population resettlements, nor does it aim to be a cultural history or tell the stories of resettled populations beyond the relevant history for understanding the case. There are multiple reasons for this, and although most resettled populations have been disregarded and otherwise poorly treated over the years, leading to an understandable feeling of abandonment and resentment (Binder, 1977), their stories have been told elsewhere by people with far greater insight and understanding. Their under-publicised and little-known cases are important to examine, but in the interests of completing an independent and unbiased study it is important to remain removed from

the emotional and often personal nature of the issues surrounding population resettlement.

This study is not intended to compare nor critique the actions of states, governments, commercial interests or individuals; apportioning blame and re-hashing what has already been written would be of no academic value. The focus is on detailed case studies so that future resettlements in the Pacific region may be more successful with less social and cultural dislocation than in the past.

This thesis is not a study of climate change, rising sea levels or global warming, nor of their effects. For the purposes of studying resettlement in the Pacific Islands, whether or not climate change is the cause is unimportant: soil salinity, coastal erosion, lack of food, economic pressures and government policies could all result in population resettlement. There are many (Barker 2008; Barnett 2004; Connell 1990) who support the theory that rising sea levels and climate change attributed to global warming may well cause mass devastation in the Pacific and other low-lying areas. Theorising about these events and how to avoid them is not within the scope of this thesis. The purpose of this thesis is to examine how to reduce the effects on those populations who may have to be relocated, no matter what the cause.

It is important to note that this study is not focused on emergency evacuation, such as could be expected in the event of a tsunami or cyclone or volcanic eruption. This study would be useful if, after an evacuation, it were found that evacuees could not return to

their homeland, as could be the case after an earthquake, storm surge or other disaster, and as was suspected after the 1961 eruption on Tristan da Cunha ([www.tristandc.com](http://www.tristandc.com)). Although this study proposes to study only two cases, the findings could be applied to resettlement with various causes. The key difference with this study from any other on refugees or forced migration is that it is concerned with cases where entire populations of displaced peoples are forced from and unable to return to their homeland, with a focus on Pacific Island cases.

## Sources

A range of sources were used, including news stories, personal communications, journal articles, text books, academic publications, reports, conference material and other theses. This range of sources provided balance and allowed for triangulation of references and ideas.

## Research Ethics

With any research there are ethical considerations, and research such as this raises some exceptional concerns because of the nature of the topic. Population resettlement has almost never been popular with or advantageous to those who have been resettled. Resettlement has traditionally been initiated by a self-interested superior power. The difference with this research is that it is not being conducted to enable easier exploitation of resources, or provide a solution to a convict problem, or weapons testing. This research is being done with the best interests of those who may be affected by resettlement as a primary consideration. Knowing what the issues are surrounding

population resettlement is very different to actually resettling a population. When compared with the economic damage potentially done by current media coverage of the potential effects of climate change, a study such as this has the absolute minimum risk for adverse impacts upon Pacific Island nations.

### Validity and Reliability in Qualitative Research

Qualitative research has often been criticised as lacking in the areas of validity and reliability. It is well accepted that quantitative research is often more respected by readers and editors alike, even though qualitative research is not necessarily inferior (Berg 2007: 5). Empirical research involving politics is often unable to control independent variables (Carlson & Hyde 2003, 283), but conducting empirical, quantitative research is still possible. Qualitative research methods are vastly different from those used by quantitative researchers, and so are the means of ensuring validity and reliability. Ensuring that qualitative research is 'good' research can be done easily, but there are certain procedures that must be strictly followed. King, Keohane and Verba (2004) outline three important ways in which validity can be achieved: Transparency of research procedures, collect data from as many contexts as possible, and allow for replicable analysis.

Research procedures must be transparent: Recording and reporting the processes by which data was obtained, cases selected or omitted, and conclusions drawn provides the best method for enabling readers to decide whether the study has been conducted to a high standard with good validity and justification. This means providing evidence and



justification for decisions made and how information was interpreted. It also allows others to conclude whether ethical procedures were followed, or if any mistakes or omissions were made. This evidence and justification is provided throughout.

Data must be collected from as many contexts as possible: Data must be gathered from a range of sources various methods used. This allows for triangulation of data, where different sources of data on the same problem or subject are analysed together, such as interviews, observation and document analysis (Corbin & Strauss 2008: 27). This method allows the researcher to “gain a broader and more secure understanding of the issues” (Maxwell 2005: 93). In this thesis, many methods and sources have been used, including semi-structured interviews with groups and individuals, observation, personal communication, historical documents, academic papers, credible Internet based sources and various media reports. Variables identified in other literature on population resettlement were included as a basis for the interviews and conclusions drawn, but also to test cross-cultural applicability of the current literature and findings.

All analysis must be replicable: Replication of data is highly unlikely in qualitative research, yet when researchers make the raw data available and intelligible to readers, they can decide for themselves if the analysis matches the data. Quotations and appendices have been used extensively, allowing the reader to see for themselves how the conclusions were reached.

Another helpful heuristic for analysing research can be derived from Greenfield, who states that research “must be viewed from the three critical dimensions: first, methodological (are the design, sampling and data reliable, valid and meaningful); second, interpretive (does the data support the conclusions); and third, the implications for policy” (2003; 324). Greenfield states that research recommending a policy change or continuation must satisfy analysis of these three dimensions. This brief outline provides checks and balances for the three strategies outlined above.

## Method

This study was conducted using a two-case comparison, of Banaba and Bikini. The true value of the study comes from the variables identified as having an effect on the success of population resettlement, and applying this knowledge to potential and future cases. Some comparisons are made between the two cases. This two-case comparison uses a matched cases design, similar to a most-similar-system design. The application of contemporary theory to past cases with different causes can be problematic, yet it does reveal important variables that will need consideration in future. Knowing the benefits and dangers of certain variables provides guidance for planning future resettlements. The methodology is discussed more deeply in Chapter 4.

## Use of Models and Theory in Political Science

In any social science, the development, testing, application and revision of theory is central. An additional aspect of this is the use and refinement of models. Theories are tentative sets of generalisations that serve to explain and predict behaviour or events

(Carlson & Hyde 2003: 29). Theories presented as hypotheses can then be empirically tested. Models are, in essence, a simplified representation of a situation or a process showing the relationships and effects between major variables (Manheim & Rich 1995: 445; Geddes 2006: 32). Models can be used for planning and as predictive aids or analytical tools. Models are important in political science as they allow a hypothesis to be applied and provide a simple, tangible method for representing phenomena. Many models are too complex to be explained clearly by words alone (Geddes 2006: 34). This is due to the systematic and logical deduction involved in the formation of the model, whereas the same information or ideas delivered in natural language is invariably far longer and requires close reading (Manheim & Rich 1995: 353). Models can be mathematical, where an equation represents the relationship to be tested, or simple, where a diagram represents a simplified version of the relationships qualitatively. The model developed and used in this thesis is a simple model that attempts to identify variables important to the success with regard to resettlement of Pacific Island populations.

## Model Development

As this study progressed, it was decided that none of the models or theories currently available in the literature was suitable for use as the primary analytic tool. This was because the focus of this study is the process of resettlement, not the effects of past resettlement on the resettled population. The best available model was Cernea's (1997) Risks and Reconstruction Model, which was considered to be somewhat lacking in detail, as well as loosely defined, as discussed in Chapter 2. It was decided that this model was not appropriate for use in this thesis. Consequently, the goal became developing a model

that had more explanatory potential, could be used as a planning tool, and as an analytic tool for assessing cases of resettlement. The model was designed with a focus on Pacific Island cases, but it became apparent that the model may well be applicable to cases of resettlement in other places. This is promising, as too often studies within this broad field are over-specific to the cases in question (Black, cited in Black 1994: 108). The development of the model is covered more thoroughly in Chapter 4.

## Chapter 4

“Those who can not remember the past, are condemned to repeat it”

George Santayana

### Model

After extensive research, it was found that there was no appropriate model or theory with which to analyse or study the cases of resettlement being examined as discussed in Chapter 3. It was decided that developing a new model, the Pacific Islands Forced Migration Resettlement Model, would be beneficial to both this thesis and the field. The model draws on the works of various scholars (Cernea 1997; Castles 2003; Shami; Colson 2003; Loizos 1999; Muggah 2003), but particularly the work of Cernea and Muggah. Muggah (2000) contextualised Cernea’s model to suit the case being assessed, but for this study it was decided that too much contextualising would be required. The model is based primarily on the work of Cernea, but is heavily influenced by Muggah. One major change is the inclusion of a process system and the rearranging of some elements, such as marginalisation, which is considered here to be an avoidable outcome rather than an impoverishment risk.

As this model draws on multiple theories and research works, it covers many fields. Hopefully it may aid action on the call for donors, policy makers and researchers to become involved in a “...robust exchange of ideas, lessons learned, and appropriate analytical tools to strengthen our awareness of the social and economic costs of internal displacement and involuntary resettlement” (Muggah 2003: 18). The model is intended to

provide a method for analysing the resettlement of isolated cases and entire nations, as has been the case with some resettled island populations and may well be the case in the future. This chapter examines the development, operation and definitions of the model.

## Development

The development of the model can be divided into four stages. The first stage was the research which led to the conclusion that previous work on this topic did not provide an adequately comprehensive framework for studying the cases. The second stage consisted of collating and analysing the specific models, theories and frameworks that existed in the fields that this study straddles, particularly the study of internally displaced people and resettlement. The third stage was devoted to putting together a model that achieved the aims of the author and would enable the study of the resettlement process through a standardised lens. As the model progressed it became apparent that it would need to be able to not only provide for analysis but also aid with planning for future resettlements. This approach changed the direction of development from being on a purely analytical path to a more comprehensive and useful one. The model developed as a tool that could be used for analysis retrospectively, or as a tool to assist in planning future resettlement; it could now inform analysis of past cases and future planning. The fourth stage of the development was reviewing the model after applying it to the cases assessed in this thesis.

While developing the model it became obvious there were innumerable articles by a wide range of academics, researchers and agencies written about similar aspects of the

resettlement and relocation process. It became apparent there were many articles using different nomenclature to describe the same or similar phenomena, as discussed in the literature review. The decision was made to focus on the material overall rather than the work of any one individual scholar. A deliberate attempt was made to use sources with complementary ideas. To include all the scholars who had written on resettlement would not only have been laborious, but also inhibitive. Similarly, excluding certain scholars or limiting the amount of other work drawn on would have been negligent. The prominence of Cernea's model shows how influential it is.

A crucial aspect of the model was the considered decision not to use the same terms for certain elements of the model as those from whom the ideas were taken. There are two reasons for this. The first is there were in some cases multiple scholars who contributed to elements of the model. The element "land" is an example of this; Loizos (1999: 237) highlighted "provision of land", while Cernea (1997: 1572) highlighted "landlessness". The second is that although the essence of the ideas were proposed by another scholar, including them as an element in the model often required an alteration or shortening of title. This was done to make the element's title more inclusive and less specific. Food is an example of this; although the element is taken predominantly from Cernea's (1997: 1575) "food security" risk, it includes the provision of food for the resettled population for the interim between resettlement and self-sufficiency as well as making sure there will be food in the future.

## Model Operation

The model is designed to be used as both an analytic tool and as an aid to planning future resettlements, but it also has predictive and problem resolution abilities. The multiple uses for the model are a result of it being closely linked to Cernea's work. The model is divided into five main sections, and within three of these sections are a number of smaller components, termed 'elements'. The elements constitute the variables and are the major focus of the model. The main sections are the 'resettlement process', 'adjustment issues', 'secondary issues', and 'marginalisation'. Three of these sections are further divided into elements, while the other two sections are unitary. Page 52 shows a schematic of the model. It is intended to be used in two steps, both of which are based around the central adjustment issues.

The first step is to examine the pre-resettlement planning, shown in the model as the resettlement process, in relation to the adjustment issues. The model suggests the elements constituting adjustment issues and the elements in the resettlement process influence each other. Put simply, to ensure that the process is done correctly and planned thoroughly there must be careful consideration given to each of the elements in the adjustment issues. If this is done, and potential problems addressed before resettlement, there will be a higher chance of what has previously been called "success" (Muggah 2003: 5). The adjustment issues therefore dictate how the resettlement will happen, where the resettlement will be, and what resources will be needed to achieve the resettlement.



The second phase of the model is intended to be applied post-resettlement. The model maintains that if the adjustment issues have been addressed and maintained appropriately there will be a lesser chance of negative outcomes. If the elements in the adjustment issues are either minimised or maximised, depending on their negative or positive effects, the chances of the resettled population experiencing the negative elements of the secondary issues are greatly reduced. The ultimate success of resettlement is not wholly determined by the results of how well the elements constituting the adjustment issues are addressed, but this does have a large impact.

Similarly, the adjustment issues impact on how the resettled nation maintains its culture; this is accounted for by the inclusion of a cultural maintenance element. Maintaining one's native culture, even over many generations, is often a high priority for migrants, irrespective of whether migration is forced or otherwise (Viikberg 1999; Zhou 2004; Čašule 1998). As with the secondary issues, it is theorised that the manner in which the adjustment issues are managed and maintained influence how the resettled population maintains aspects of its culture. The basic premise is that if the adjustment issues do not cause the resettled population much stress and difficulty, there will be more time to focus on the various aspects of their native culture. This is particularly important for subsequent generations, as those who are resettled will have an innate and ingrained knowledge of their native culture and its associated practices and customs. It is theorised that subsequent generations of resettled populations that dedicate large amounts of time to secondary issues or adjustment issues in the years after resettlement and will not gain the

same knowledge of their culture as subsequent generations of resettled populations that did not have to dedicate their resources to the secondary issues or adjustment issues.

The final section of the model is marginalisation. This is taken directly from Cernea's (1997) Risks and Reconstruction Model/Impoverishment Risks and Livelihood Reconstruction Model, and refers to virtually the same problems here as in Cernea's original context. The model suggests that the negative influences of secondary issues and poor cultural maintenance lead to marginalisation, and once marginalised, this marginalisation reinforces the slip in cultural maintenance and secondary issues. Avoidance of problems with the elements from the start of the model reduces the chance of marginalisation. Marginalisation is seen as an avoidable climax to inadequate resettlement. Innes (1975) showed how easily forced migration even domestically can result in marginalisation and reinforce other social problems.

## Schematic of the Pacific Islands Forced Migration Resettlement Model

### Relocation Process

- Where
- How
- Resources

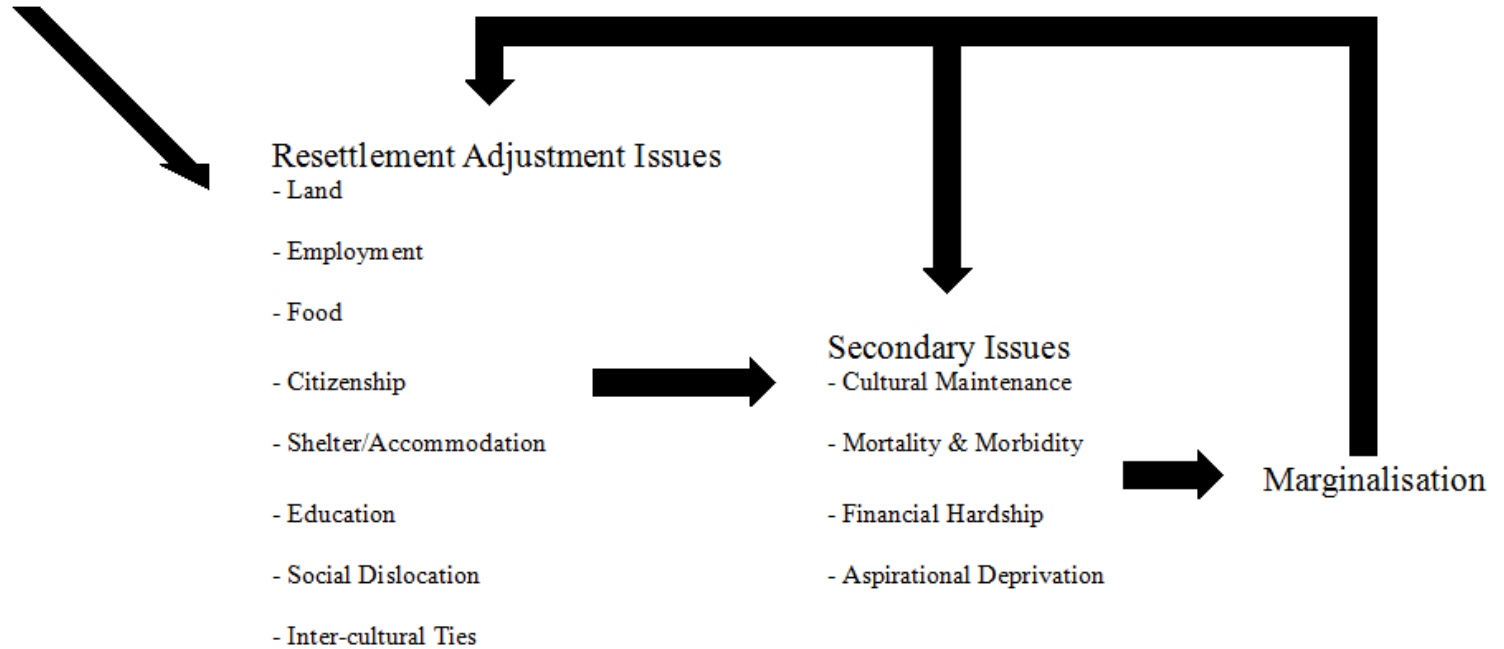
### Resettlement Adjustment Issues

- Land
- Employment
- Food
- Citizenship
- Shelter/Accommodation
- Education
- Social Dislocation
- Inter-cultural Ties

### Secondary Issues

- Cultural Maintenance
- Mortality & Morbidity
- Financial Hardship
- Aspirational Deprivation

### Marginalisation



## Elements of the Model

The elements of the model are detailed in the order they are used; the resettlement process, adjustment issues, secondary issues, and marginalisation.

The elements of the resettlement process are “where”, “how” and “resources”.

Where refers to both the location where the resettled population lived in traditionally and to the location where they have resettled.

How refers to the method of moving the population, the amount of time that is needed to complete the resettlement, when the resettlement should happen and whether the population should be moved gradually or *en masse*.

Resources refers to the funds, food, transportation, assistance and other miscellaneous items needed to complete the resettlement and ensure the adjustment issues are properly addressed. This includes provisions for the resettled population to survive and settle after their arrival in their new location, temporary accommodation and funding if needed, assistance with settling in their new location, and finances for the establishment of any services that may be required. The resources that are needed and provided by the state that accepts the resettled population are also included here.

The elements of the adjustment issues are “land”, “employment”, “food”, “citizenship”, “shelter/accommodation”, “education”, “social dislocation”, and “inter-cultural ties”.

Land refers to all issues relating to land involved in the resettlement. That is, land in the place of original residence, land in the new location and issues such as land rights. Cernea (1999: 1572) uses the term “landlessness” to describe the “principal form of decapitalisation and pauperisation of displaced people, as they lose both natural and man-made capital”. The importance of common property,<sup>14</sup> that is property or land used “under non-private conditions” (Bromley & Cernea 1989: 9) can not be overstated for many people in the Pacific. Cernea notes that the “loss of access to common property”, such as water, forests, crops and pasture, especially for those without land and or other assets, results in “significant deterioration in income and livelihood” (1997: 1575). Bedford (1967) highlighted enough adequate land as a primary concern for resettlement to be successful. Loizos (1999: 137) also notes the importance of land for forced migrants, stating that the provision of land in their new location can usually be of benefit; however, somewhat concurringly, the modern state does not necessarily hold common property in high esteem (Bromley & Cernea 1989: 18-19).

Employment refers to the ability of the resettled population to gain work, either in the employ of a third party, or in public projects that will aid the collective, such as with some form of agriculture. The proximity and ability of the resettled population to work has a great impact upon their ability to prosper in their new location. Employment, or the lack of it, is a vital part of any community. High levels of unemployment or idle people appear to result in problems such increased crime (Newbold 2000: 11; 143), and among a recently resettled population the chances for creating new jobs are probably limited.

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<sup>14</sup> Cernea (1989: 15) makes the point that common property is similar to private property in that non-owners are excluded, and that common property is in effect private property for the collective or group.

Cernea (1997: 1573) notes that "...creating new jobs is difficult and requires substantial investments. Unemployment or underemployment among resettlers often endures long after physical relocation has been completed." To describe this phenomenon Cernea used the term "joblessness". Loizos (1999: 237) also noted that granting jobs or employment rights is one strategy to minimise the impacts of forced migration.

Food refers to ensuring there is not just ample food for resettling the population, but also for the continued survival of the resettled population, and that food is accessible and affordable. Cernea states that "undernourishment is both a symptom and result of inadequate resettlement", and forced migration increases the risks of chronic undernourishment (1997: 1575). Cernea uses the term "food security" to define this. Another consideration is the availability of traditional foods and whether the resettled population will be able to utilise the available food resources without difficulty. The importance of this has long been recognised; while examining the prospect of resettlement being a solution to economic and overpopulation problems in the Gilbert & Ellice Islands Colony (today known as Kiribati and Tuvalu), Bedford (1967) used a formula to calculate the harvest of coconuts and other foods from various islands to calculate the viability of resettling people there, ruling out many proposed islands.

Citizenship refers to the ability of the resettled population to acquire citizenship in the new location should it be in a different state from their previous home. Issues such as whether or not the resettled population will be allowed recourse to public funds, public healthcare, citizenship eligibility, and the citizenship status of subsequent generations

need to be examined and resolved preferably before the first people are resettled. Hein (1993: 53) touches on these issues. This avoids problems in the future, and can contribute greatly to the amount of representation granted to the resettled population. Even if the resettled population is not granted full citizenship, the exploration of full citizenship rights or permanent resident status must be a priority. Loizos (1999: 237) highlights the granting of citizenship rights as a way to assist forced migrants once they are resettled.

Shelter/accommodation pertains to the provision of suitable housing for the resettled population upon their arrival in the new location. Shelter is among the most basic of human needs and as such must be provided or acquired before the resettlement begins. The importance of housing can not be overestimated, particularly in a different climate to the one that the resettled population is accustomed to. The risk of health problems from inadequate housing (Pond 1961; Breyse, Farr, Galke, Lanphear, Morley & Bergofsky 2004) is one factor that illustrates the need for adequate housing. Loizos lists housing aid as one method among many for benefiting forced migrants (1999: 237), while Cernea claims mass “homelessness” can lead to alienation and deprivation (1997: 1573). Brown went even further, stating “Deficient housing can compromise the most basic needs of water, sanitation, and safe food preparation and storage, allowing the rapid spread of communicable and foodborne [sic] diseases. Other problems, such as poor temperature and humidity regulation, can lead to respiratory disease. Overcrowding brings both physical and psychological dangers” (2003: 3). A lack of adequate housing is one problem that a resettled population should not encounter, and therefore must be addressed before resettlement, even if mass homelessness is not likely.

Education refers to the quality and availability of education, including the facilities, curriculum and accessibility. Muggah (2000: 200) added limited access to education as an element while analysing conflict induced displacement in Columbia. Education is important as it provides subsequent generations with greater skill, and it is now, even if only at a rudimentary level when compared to the West, widespread and commonplace in the Pacific. The public and many organisations place a high priority on education.

Social dislocation refers to the damage done to the social fabric of the resettled population. There can be great damage to the social structure and functioning of the resettled people, especially with regards to traditional ceremonies and social groups. The dispersal of extended familial groups and neighbours effectively destroys parts of communities (Cernea 1997). The resulting situation can be compared to what sociologists call 'anomie', as the social networks that formerly held people together disappear (McLeennan, Ryan & Spoonley 2004: 40; Jary & Jary 2005: 20). The loss of support networks make the already difficult and stressful experience of relocation and resettlement more troubling and daunting. Social dislocation can have a great effect on the maintenance of traditional cultural practices, and mental health.

Inter-cultural ties refers to developing associations and relationships with the wider community and state in the location where the resettled population settles. It is hypothesised that the establishment of inter-cultural ties can reduce social dislocation and isolation (marginalisation) of the resettled community within the state of their



resettlement. This includes the effect of the native or incumbent population on the resettled population as well as any effects the resettled population has on the incumbent population. These ideas are drawn mainly from the work of Colson (2003), and are supported by Ramlogan (1996: 81). Other factors to consider include how the incumbent and proximal populations may interact with, accept, and recognise the resettled population. Hein (1993: 51-2) emphasises the importance of social networks and conditions in the host society during the adaptation process. There is a far greater chance that the native and/or incumbent population of an area used to resettle a large number of culturally disparate people would accept and support the resettlement, if there was some or much interconnectedness. It must be noted this does not imply that neither the resettled population nor the incumbent population need to assimilate or adapt to a large extent, especially not rapidly.

The elements of the secondary issues are “cultural maintenance”, “financial hardship”, “mortality and morbidity”, and “aspirational deprivation”.

Cultural maintenance consists of three main aspects; language, culture, and identity. Language pertains to the maintenance of the native language of the resettled population. Language is an integral part of culture and identity. The maintenance of one’s native language and the continued use of it is thought to maintain and strengthen cultural ties within the resettled community, helping to avoid negative outcomes such as marginalisation and degradation of the adjustment issues.

Culture is the maintenance of the native cultural practices of the resettled population in their new location. This helps to preserve the culture for the future and maintain a sense of community and nationhood among people who could otherwise feel somewhat lost. There is no reason for the traditional practices of the resettled population to be discontinued, just as almost all other populations of any ethnic group, wherever they are located, maintain and practice their culturally specific rites, ceremonies and festivals. The preservation of the culture for future generations will help them develop their own identity, which they will be able to fuse with that of their land of residence. Maintaining a strong cultural presence makes the resettled population more likely to maintain their language and extended social networks. This model assumes the resettled population desires to maintain its native language and culture.

Identity is the sense of self and belonging held by the individuals of the resettled population. Their identity, closely linked to how their own native culture has been maintained and the ties they have with the rest of the population in their new place of residence. If the population experiences prolonged hardship with the adjustment and secondary issues, it is possible that this may begin to influence their efficacy, their ability to work and contribute to the community.

Financial hardship, inextricably linked to employment, refers to the struggle for individuals, families and communities to stay solvent and maintain any cooperative enterprises they may have established. Many migrants find securing employment and improving their financial situation difficult, especially the unskilled and those with

limited language skills (Von Bethlenfalvy 1987; Waxman 2001; Beiser and Hou 2001). Financial problems can cause difficulties with many of the elements of the model that are dealt with in the adjustment issues. Financial stress has a dramatic effect on families and when widespread in a concentrated area it can lead to a raft of social problems as well as eventual alienation or marginalisation of many or all of the community. Once in such a position, a downwardly mobile cycle, it is difficult to recover.

Mortality and morbidity refers to the “serious declines in health that result from displacement-caused social stress, insecurity, psychological trauma, and the outbreak of relocation-related illness... The weakest segments of the demographic spectrum—infants, children and the elderly—are affected most strongly” (Cernea 1997: 1574). Psychological disorders can also be a major problem in the high stress environments of forced migration resettlement (Porter and Haslam 2005; Palmer and Ward 2007). Mortality and morbidity levels far above that of the general population would indicate that all is not well among the resettled population. High levels of mortality and morbidity are predicted to hurt the social structure of the resettled population, contributing to marginalisation.

Aspirational deprivation refers to the gap between ones’ aspirations or desires and their actual situation, resulting in general unhappiness (Gurr 1970: 50). It can be applied to any aspect of life. Aspirational deprivation is predicted to be more important for each subsequent generation, and if the gap between aspirations and the actual situation for subsequent generations are not met and are greatly disparate it is predicted that social and psychological problems will increase among the relocated population. Castles highlighted

the need to examine the “socio-economic and cultural experiences of the second and subsequent generations” (Castles 2003: 28). High disparity between aspirations and actual situation are predicted to negatively influence the elements of the model outlined as adjustment issues.

Marginalisation, the last section of the model, refers to processes that reduce the power and/or importance of the resettled population. This is caused by negative impacts of the decline in cultural maintenance and the negative impacts of the elements under secondary issues. Once marginalised, the resettled population will have difficulty with the adjustment issues, and may well find many of its members in a position of “downward mobility” (Cernea 1997: 1574). A marginalised population can experience difficulty in many areas; drop in social status, feelings of injustice, and anomic behaviour. The model posits that once marginalised, the resettled population will have difficulty improving their situation to a point of parity with the rest of the population with regards to finances, education, health, employment and personal efficacy. While discussing development-induced involuntary resettlement, Muggah (2003: 18), noted that many involuntary resettlement schemes, generally the responsibility of the state, often “do not adequately redress impoverishment”. In this model, if a population finds itself in a position of marginalisation, there is every chance there has been great impoverishment. This may take generations to reverse. Cernea (1993: 3) and Innes (1975) give impoverishment as a risk of displacement.

## Conclusion

Like all theories or models, the proposed model is open to criticism. There are valid defences for many of the obvious criticisms, such as the lack of an overarching ‘psychological’ or ‘efficacy’ variable and the relatively high number of elements. The key reason for many of the above and other critiques is the need to maintain a degree of parsimony in the model. Another rationale for not including a variable or section dedicated specifically to efficacy is identity, within the cultural maintenance element, especially when combined with aspirational deprivation, accounts for much of what could be covered by efficacy. The aim was always to keep the model as simple as possible, applying the principle of *Occam’s razor*.<sup>15</sup>

Although there appears to be many elements to the model, this thesis contends that the combination of cited works by various scholars provides a more thorough and solidly based model than any previously developed. Moreover, this model is the only one specifically designed to account for the resettlement of an entire island or national population. What this model surrenders to other theories or models in simplicity it makes up for in depth and detail and by being a multi-stage application.

Being a multi-stage application helps reduce the influence of any ‘time warp’ effect that may occur. Time warp refers to the incompatibility of models and cases that occurs when assessing past or potential cases with ideas and standards of a different time. This is a problem as it can distort the actual events or result in misinformed conclusions. It must be kept in mind that elements of this model, when used with cases not from the recent past,

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<sup>15</sup> Commonly defined as “the simplest solution is usually the best”.

could be misleading, however; as this model is based on current models derived from studies of other regions and cultures there is a chance that it may not be infallible. That conceded, it must be stressed that a starting point is better than nothing, and that it is being tested on cases most similar to those that are predicted for the future.

No single model could account for all the issues that need to be accounted for, but the model proposed here attempts to account for the most important, as well as offering possible outcomes and methods to avoid negative outcomes. On a basic level it could be argued that as the problem itself is complex and multi-faceted, so must be any model or proposed solution to it be. This may not be the most simplistic model, yet what it offers in explanatory power, planning assistance, and outcome prediction, may well prove that the extra detail is an acceptable and necessary improvement to Cernea and Muggah's work.

## Chapter 5

White man came across the seas  
He brought us pain and misery  
He killed our tribes, he killed our creed  
He took our game for his own need  
Iron Maiden, *Run to the Hills*

### Banaban Case

The inhabitants of the island of Banaba (formerly Ocean Island) were relocated to the Fijian island of Rabi after WWII. This was done to enable easier and effectively unrestricted mining of phosphate on the island, although at the time, the Banabans were told the island was no longer habitable owing to damage caused during the war (Binder 1977). The relocation of the Banabans, although relatively unknown, has been reasonably well documented; however, when compared to other cases it is lacking recent independent analysis. One of the best accounts of the relocation process and its effects (Binder 1977) is out of date, and many of the more recent accounts have been promulgated by groups closely associated with the Banabans, such as King and Sigrah, and [www.banaban.com](http://www.banaban.com). This is not to detract from the value or content quality of the work, but it does leave a niche for independent research. Probably the best account of the Banaban situation is Sigrah and King (2001), *Te Rii ni Banaba*. This book details Banaban anthropology, archaeology and culture, correcting many past myths and misleading information. For any study of Banaba or the Banaban people it is an essential and invaluable resource.

One very informative work on the subject is Williams and Macdonald (1985). It contains an account of the resettlement, and it is couched in language far less critical than the more passionate writing of the aforementioned works. The reason for this is that Williams and Macdonald (1985) is a history of the British Phosphate Commission (BPC), the mining commission that worked the deposits on Banaba and other phosphate islands.

The major documented effects of the relocation of the Banabans has been the loss of their culture and language, destruction of their homeland, citizenship and identity problems, financial hardship, and a continuing lack of recognition internationally (Binder 1977; King and Sigrah 2004a; 2006). The three partner governments (Australia, New Zealand and Britain) of the BPC have all renounced any responsibility with respect to further compensation for the Banabans ([www.banaban.com](http://www.banaban.com)).<sup>16</sup> One interesting aspect of the Banaban resettlement on Rabi was that the original inhabitants of Rabi, the Rabians, had themselves been relocated to another island (Taveuni) in the mid-1800s (Binder 1977; King 2007, personal communication). A clan claiming to be their descendents are now looking to return to their homeland and reclaim their island, and the Banabans are again threatened with the prospect of resettlement ([www.fijitimes.com](http://www.fijitimes.com) 2007).

## Background

It is not known exactly when Banaba was originally settled, or by whom, but it is accepted that settlement occurred some time before the year 1500, possibly by

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<sup>16</sup> The Banabans did receive some compensation. For a fuller explanation see Sigrah & King (2001) or Binder (1977).



Melanesians from Vanuatu<sup>17</sup> (King & Sigrah 2004a: 892; Sigrah & King 2001: 27). Writings about the history of Banaba from the period of exploration and mining tended to attribute the Banabans existence to immigration from the Gilbert Islands (Grimble 1954; Ellis 1936), although Burton saw them to be different, describing them as “more genteel than the Gilbertese” (1912: 133). Until about 1900 the Banabans had lived a relatively uninterrupted life, their unique culture had developed with the arrival of various waves of Pacific immigrants, but contact with the *i-mitang* (white man) had been very limited. This all changed dramatically with the arrival of a young Albert Fuller Ellis.

Ellis, a dogsbody for the struggling Pacific Islands Company, ran tests on a sample taken from an uninspiring rock being used as a doorstep in his office, finding it contained “phosphate rock of the highest quality” (Ellis 1936: 53). This discovery effectively sealed the future of Banaba (and Nauru) at the hands of the British colonial administration and the various mining entities that exported the island’s valuable resource. Without digressing too far from the aims of this thesis, it must be stressed that the great tragedy of phosphate mining in the Pacific is that the native cultures and natural history of two entire island nations was slowly excavated and exported with scant regard for the consequences, resulting in financial, social, and cultural impoverishment, both absolute and relative to neighbouring states. It can not be stressed enough how much the people of Australia and New Zealand benefited financially and agriculturally from the losses suffered by the inhabitants of the phosphate islands (Cumberland 1954: 42, 202).

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<sup>17</sup> This is based on linguistic evidence and a computer simulation of ten canoes leaving the Reef Islands of the Banks Group, of which one reached Banaba (Sigrah & King 2001: 27).

Even early in the mining enterprises it was known what effect the mining would have on the island, and there was no real concern for the environment shown by the mining companies. Hambruch (cited in Connell 2006: 49) noted in 1941 that “Nauru had become an industrial area and sacrificed its phosphate, its environment, its people, animals and plants on the alter of industrialisation.” This was written in the same year the BPC purchased Rabi for the purpose of relocating the Banabans. There were some who foresaw the major problems in the distance even earlier. This extract from Ellis (1936: 124) is a reflection on an event on Nauru in 1901, showing that the mining companies knew full well their own destructive force by the mid-1930s and is worth quoting at length:

“...a meeting with the chiefs of each tribe was held, in order to acquaint them with recent developments. They were told that it had been found that the rocks and soil on the high point of the island were of great use to the white men, and that the company whom we represented would pay them for the phosphate at a stated rate. The chiefs were gravely interested; one of them thought it was hardly the thing for the white men to have to pay for rocks, and another suggested that when they were being removed, we might leave behind sufficient for them to make the special stone sinkers they use for their fishing-lines. He must have had some prophetic insight into the white man’s thoroughness.”

Similarly worthwhile is this extract from a report submitted to the British Parliament in 1909 (Mahaffey, cited in Binder 1977: 57-58).

“The Banabans had had no idea that mining was going to destroy their whole island. They had no idea what mining was. Were all the phosphate removed it would be no exaggeration to say the island would become perfectly uninhabitable for men and a mere desert of pointed coral rocks.”

Both of these extracts show not only that there was a good understanding of the consequences of the mining for both islands, but also that the native populations did not know what was about to happen to their homelands. They did not take long to realise. By 1903 the Banabans were acutely aware that they were no longer masters of their own islands as they watched their landholdings, their very way of life, being dug up and shipped away (Binder 1977: 55).

By the start of World War II, concern was growing that the Banabans may need to be removed from Banaba. Environmental damage and destroyed housing were given as reasons, yet in reality it was more about allowing practically unrestricted mining, the idea of resettlement had first been raised in 1914 (Maude, cited in King & Sigrah 2004) and again in 1927 (Sigrah & King 2001: 239, 323). During the war, Banaba was captured by the Japanese Imperial Forces and the majority of the population were deported to internment camps throughout the Pacific Islands region, where many subsequently died. Of those left on Banaba, only one male survived as the Japanese garrisoned on the island

executed the remaining population after the war had officially ended (Sigrah and King 2001: 257; Williams and Macdonald 1985: 340-341).<sup>18</sup>

The end of the war brought a substantial change for the Banabans. Rabi, which had been purchased for them in 1941 by their colonial masters (Binder 1977: 93), provided a haven, but it came with a new set of problems. The resettlement of the Banabans was unfortunate in that they did not have any realistic chance of remaining on their island due to the unbridled powers of the BPC and colonial administration; however, when they were moved, Rabi did appear to be a good choice. It is larger than Banaba, and more fertile, with neighbouring islands nearby. The problem with resettlement on Rabi was, and still is, that the Banabans were so dramatically removed from their land, and were placed with nothing more than some canvas military tents and two months' rations on an island they knew very little about (Binder 1977: 98; King & Sigrah 2004: 948). It is one of history's cruel ironies that on 14 March 1900, Albert Ellis wrote in his diary "If Ocean [Island] is what I think it is, there is a fortune in it, if not several", yet Banabans find themselves in their present situation while every other party they have come into contact with has benefited so greatly from their loss.

Since 1945 the population on Rabi has grown from 1003 to over 5000, and a community of roughly 200 now resides on Banaba ([www.banaban.com](http://www.banaban.com)).

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<sup>18</sup> One survivor from of a group of seven who escaped earlier was discovered after seven months at sea (King 2009a, personal communication).

When assessing the resettlement of the Banaban population to Rabi the planning and preparation that preceded the event must be examined. To this end, there is certainly not an excess of data available on the planning, but enough is available. Others (Williams and Macdonald 1985; Binder 1977; Sigrah and King 2001; Silverman 1962) have given accounts of the resettlement in works that have focused on other aspects of the Banabans' story or the history of the phosphate industry. These have tended to be based on personal involvement, the accounts of others and documents from the time. This study is primarily concerned with the resettlement, particularly the planning and on-going support associated with it.

The resettlement of the Banabans to Rabi was primarily motivated by the continuation of mining, but other factors did have an influence. The situation was well summarised by Barry Macdonald; "the Banaban resettlement was as much about a paternalistic view of what was good for the Banabans and the desire to have a population perceived as "difficult" removed from the ambit of mining, it was about "necessity" however that is defined" (Macdonald 2008: personal communications). The reasons for the resettlement are, however, not as important as the process, and resettlement was in the minds of the Banabans' colonial rulers long before WWII (Spivey 1950; Binder 1977; Williams and Macdonald 1985). The war and subsequent removal of most of the population from Banaba by the Japanese (Binder 1977; Sigrah and King 2001) granted the BPC an opportunity they could not let pass.

It is evident that as early as 1909 there were thoughts about resettling the Banabans, however they were not greeted warmly. Arthur Mahaffey, then assistant to the Western Pacific High Commissioner in Suva, was sent to the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Protectorate. Within the report he produced for the High Commission, Mahaffey suggested that perhaps a fund should be established with a view to eventually financing eventual resettlement of the Banabans. The mining company objected to the suggestion that it contribute funding. In 1914 the issue of resettlement appears to have been raised by colonial authorities (Maude 1946: 10). The island of Kuria was suggested (Binder 1977: 50, 88). In 1928 Arthur Grimble ordered the Banabans to inspect Kuria; they refused, “doubting his motives” (Binder 1977: 89). The Banabans, knowing of the fund and believing that their culture could only be preserved if continued on another island away from the Europeanisation that was occurring on Banaba, were giving thought to purchasing Wakaya, in the Fiji group (Maude 1946: 11). The Banabans made it clear that Wakaya was not a replacement for their homeland, they desired it be “regarded as a second home” (Maude 1946: 11). Wakaya was offered to the Banabans in 1940, but a survey found it to be unable to support a large population (Binder 1977: 90; Sigrah and King 2001: 240; Maude 1946: 11). The search began for a more suitable island.

Investigations for other available islands in the Fiji group revealed that Levers Pacific Plantations Proprietary Limited were willing to sell Rabi for £A25, 000. The island was purchased for the Banabans in March 1942 after the Banabans found the government report and price very favourable.<sup>19</sup> The point at which the Banabans would actually move

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<sup>19</sup> The Banabans had desired Wakaya but thought it overpriced.

to Rabi was still unknown, but that very quickly changed as the outside world once again conspired to disturb them.

The purchase of Rabi effectively sealed the fate of the Banabans to become exiles from their homeland, as less than four months earlier Japan had entered the war in the Pacific; they were soon to take both Nauru and Banaba as sources of phosphate. In time, the Japanese removed most of the population to other islands in Micronesia, forcing the prisoners of war to grow food for the war effort. Many Banabans and Nauruans perished in the difficult conditions (Sigrah and King 2001: 16; Williams and Macdonald 1985: 338; Binder 1977: 92-92). At the conclusion of WWII, Banaba was surrendered to Australian forces, and an investigation made by Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony representatives deemed that the Banabans would not be able to return for at least two years. This population displacement by the Japanese provided an excuse the BPC and colonial administration could use to force the resettlement to Rabi. The Reverend J. H. Spivey summarised the situation:

“...it had long been known that eventually they [the Banabans] would have to find a new home when the phosphates from the island would be quite worked out. Hence, the accident of war, which had already made the Banabans a displaced people, was used as a favourable opportunity to settle them in a new place...” (Spivey 1950)

Once the resettlement to Rabi was decided upon by the BPC and colonial administration, the Banabans needed to be convinced of its intricacies. The Banabans were presented with the following conditions of transfer to Rabi;<sup>20</sup>

- a) “the removal was to be for a period of 2 years, with the option of permanently settling there;
- b) their transportation, cost of establishing their temporary camp at Rabi and their rationing for one month after their arrival there would be a charge on Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony Rehabilitation, and not on Banaban Funds; and
- c) if, at the end of 2 years, any or all of them should wish to return to Ocean Island, suitable transport would be arranged at the expense of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony Government.

They were assured that the resettlement would have no effect regarding their lands on Ocean Island or their privileges with respect to any of the Banaban Funds” (Maude 1946: 13).

It was with this arrangement that the Banabans agreed to trial Rabi for a period of two years. Upon their arrival at Rabi, the Banabans were issued with their rations and canvas military tents for shelter. Some were housed in the workers quarters of the former copra plantation, but they were in the minority. There were problems with the canvas tents almost immediately due to the persistent tropical rain and wind. The tents that did not

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<sup>20</sup> Stacey King sates that Maude actually gave the Banabans two further options as well as resettlement on Rabi. “1. To return to Banaba under their own resources and at their own expensive and with no further support from the government and the BPC (they had no money and had no ways of trying to get back there) 2. To live permanently on Tarawa if they had Kiribati relatives. No financial help again or government support would be forthcoming.”



blow away were perpetually saturated. This was one of the many problems faced by the Banabans during their first year on Rabi.

The change of environment proved to be a deadly challenge for the Banabans. Rabi is much larger, more fertile and wetter than Banaba, but it is also colder, stormier and requires a different set of survival skills (Binder 1977). The fishing around Rabi is substantially different in terms of fish stocks, oceanography and required fishing approach. The comparative cold and wet environment was a health issue, particularly for the older generation, many of whom did not survive the first winter. The underdevelopment of Rabi has remained an issue, with capital works being nonexistent when the Banabans arrived, and limited at best today (Binder 1977: 96-105). Inadequate housing and transport remain a community issue, and the absence of ready to eat crops made subsisting difficult once the initial rations were depleted. Even the bonuses the Banabans inherited from Lever Brothers were of little immediate use; they were not able to ride horses, were unsure of cow milking procedures, did not have experience of hunting, let alone slaughtering, wild pigs. The vast majority probably did not even know what a pig was (Binder 1977: 106).

### Analysis of Initial Resettlement

When analysing the resettlement of the Banaban population it becomes clear that many of the resettlement risk minimisation model's elements are involved. The resettlement process elements of the model are all important, as are many of the adjustment issues. It must be noted that this resettlement was undertaken by the Banabans as a temporary

measure, and this could well have some bearing on the actions of the Banabans, BPC and colonial governments that were involved. It is probably fair to say, given past actions, there may well have been no difference to the resettlement even if it was planned and openly delivered as a permanent solution to avoiding many future “headaches” and the enabling expedient renewal of mining (Williams and Macdonald 1985: 338; Binder 1977: 96).

### Resettlement Process

Where: The solution as to where the Banabans should be resettled in the event that resettlement became necessary had been considered for many years before the end of WWII, and even before the end of the war a replacement island (Rabi) had been purchased for them. There is sufficient evidence that the planning of this element of the Banaban resettlement was thorough and well considered. The decision of the Banabans themselves to purchase Rabi certainly indicates that the location for resettlement was one they were satisfied with, even if they were not entirely satisfied with the larger set of circumstances (Binder 1977).

How: Given the period in which the Banabans were resettled and the relative chaos world shipping and industry were in at the conclusion of WWII, it is not surprising that the planning for the relocation them to Rabi was *ad hoc* and somewhat rushed. The resettlement of the Banabans had been in the pipeline for many years, however the deportation from Banaba by the Japanese and the end of WWII provided an opportunity the BPC and colonial administration could not pass up. Collecting the Banabans from

throughout the Pacific, subsequent assembling at Tarawa and eventual resettlement by the BPC ship *Trienza* (Binder 1977: 102) was, in reality, a viable solution to a problem the BPC wanted to resolve forthwith, but it was certainly not thoroughly planned (Williams and Macdonald 1985:148; 257; 338; Sigrah and King: 258).

Resources: The harsh reality is there were very few resources available, and even less consideration of what would seriously be needed by the Banabans to smooth the transition to life on Rabi. Even if the resettlement had been planned for two years, the 1003 people would have benefited greatly by having more aid and resources at their disposal, as evidenced by the very limited rations and inadequate shelter. Reasons for this could include the recent ending of WWII, the Banabans not knowing to press for better conditions, and a lack of care by the BPC and colonial powers.

### Adjustment Issues

Land: There is no doubt that there are many advantages for the Banabans on Rabi with regards to land. Rabi is substantially larger, much more fertile, thickly forested, less isolated, has abundant fresh water and there is much land that can be used for communal purposes. Better land for growing produce could be used for cash-cropping or specialised produce such as cocoa or coffee. Given that “landlessness is the principal form of decapitalisation and pauperisation” (Cernea 1999: 1572), the importance of having not only enough land, but also land of good quality, can not be ignored. This was a consideration of the Banabans’ when they were considering Wakaya Island instead of Rabi, as they believed Wakaya to be the better of the two islands for their needs (Maude

1946: 11; Sigrah and King 2001: 241). A survey made on their behalf disagreed with this. Land was obviously a large consideration.

The other consideration regarding land was the land of original habitation, in this case Banaba. The Banabans considered Banaba to be their home and they were not desirous of moving to Rabi permanently. This was an issue spiritually, culturally and emotionally, and has remained so (Binder 1977; Sigrah and King 2001). The loss of their traditional villages, land titles and access to ancestors' graves were all major problems for the Banabans. All land on Banaba was held in strict individual holdings governed by traditional custom so as to protect the rights and interests of the owner's descendants (Maude 1946: 10). There was no real concept of communal land, but with the larger size of Rabi, relative underdevelopment and maintenance work that was needed; the decision was made to divide some of the land into private holdings, while maintaining the rest as communal (Maude 1946: 19). This is an interesting diversion from the traditional form of land division.

Employment: Employment was, at best, ignored by most, if not all parties in relation to the Banaban resettlement. The Banabans had traditionally survived on a subsistence basis; therefore the concept of paid work had been alien to them until the beginning of the 1900s when the phosphateers arrived. Once mining began, the various entities that mined the island tended to favour employing indentured labour from Asia and the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony (Williams and Macdonald 1985: 73-76). Opportunities for paid employment were effectively nil on Rabi yet this shortage of employment did not mean

that joblessness became a problem (Kumar, Terubea, Noame and Manepora'a 2006). There was much to be done by way of improving the island and establishing the new community. However, there is little evidence to suggest that employment prospects were a consideration at all.

Food: There was obviously some consideration given to the requirement of ample food for the resettled population, as evidenced by the provision of rations. The knowledge that the waters around Rabi were good for fishing, that Rabi was fertile and that there were established coconut groves all aided in making the Banabans and other parties think there would be ample food. Whether the authorities actually thought there would be enough food for the Banabans to sustain themselves after only limited rations is debatable, but history shows more assistance with food would have been highly beneficial. Maude (1946: 16) stated there was a lack of food, but that this could best be resolved by the Banabans themselves. It appears that in this case, undernourishment is both a symptom and result of inadequate resettlement; lack of access to many traditional foods, lost skills and a developed reliance on imported foods meant the Banabans were never realistically going to be sustained comfortably on the food available to them. There were problems with starvation and some of the men went fishing on the reef, which was very different to the reef surrounding Banaba. A red-scaled fish, similar to an edible one on Banaba, proved poisonous, even killing some who ate it (Binder 1977: 105).

Shelter: When the Banabans first arrived on Rabi there was a severe shortage of adequate shelter. Some were able to be accommodated in the buildings remaining from the Lever

Brothers plantation, but, the vast majority were required to live in canvas tents (Williams and Macdonald 1985: 345), contributing to high levels of sickness. There had been some consideration of the housing issues that would arise from the resettlement; Binder (1977: 98) cites a report from the Western Pacific High Commission that states:

“It will be necessary to provide temporary huts or tents for the settlers...

“Consideration has been given to the disadvantages of canvas housing during the hurricane season... it can be expected that a considerable number of tents would be lost during a strong gale. For this reason the number of tents advocated in paragraph 10 above has been fixed at about thirty percent more than would actually be erected in the first instance.”

Citizenship: The Banabans were, for many years, effectively a stateless nation. Relations with Kiribati have been strained since independence and as they were relocated to Fiji, they were not Fijian. This was further complicated by the fact that the Banabans were spread between Banaba and Rabi. This lack of citizenship caused problems with rights in Fiji, where Banabans were on something of a par with Fijian Indians in political and constitutional terms (www.banaban.com; King 2007, personal communications). In Kiribati there is a seat reserved in the parliament specifically for a Banaban representative, allowing them a voice and recognising their place as part of the state. In recent years there has been tension over the prospect of re-mining Banaba and the possibility that the Banabans may grant this right to Fiji, and over Kiribati's refusal to pay elderly Banabans on Rabi the pension they would be entitled to if they resided in

Kiribati ([www.banaban.com](http://www.banaban.com); King 2007, personal communications). In 2005 Fiji announced a three month grace period where it would waive the usual conditions and fees for gaining citizenship by naturalisation for the Banabans in Fiji. This allowed many stateless and permanent residents to become full Fijian citizens, entitling them to all the benefits of citizenship.

Education: There was some education offered on Rabi soon after the resettlement, although it appears to have been only a temporary measure. Former teachers from the Banaban School on Banaba established a schoolroom in a marquee tent, which although austere, was unsurprising considering the resourcefulness required to combat Rabi's underdevelopment; the medical centre, for example, was made from a converted labour building (Maude 1946: 14). Educational facilities On Rabi today are more developed, with dedicated school buildings and set curricula; the provision of education is recognised as a necessity.

Social Dislocation: The social dislocation experienced by the Banabans was undeniably extreme, and the experiences of WWII contributed to this. Like many traditional societies, the Banabans were strongly connected to their land and surrounding ocean (Sigrah and King 2001; Binder 1977). Removal from these was dramatic enough, but the established cultural and social norms of everyday life linked to the land and traditional buildings were similarly affected. The maintenance of a community on each island has resulted in ongoing and changing social dislocation with movements of family members between Rabi and Banaba. This is a double-edged-sword, as it allows a connection with

the Banaban cultural and spiritual homeland, but at the same time is financially, emotionally and socially taxing.

Inter-Cultural Ties: When the Banabans first settled on Rabi, there was some thought given to interactions and influences they and the Fijians would have on each other. Indeed, at the Banabans' request, "visits between them and neighbouring Fijian communities were prohibited" (Maude 1946: 16). This legislation was repealed soon after their arrival. There was no real conscious effort to establish any ties or integration between the Banabans and the established population of Fiji. The appointment of a Fijian medical practitioner and the implementation of the Fiji school system did help to build some ties. These were enhanced by the training of two Banaban school teachers. The issues of policing and administration were still under debate some months after arrival on Rabi, with the language barrier being the chief difficulty. The Banabans would be responsible for their own public works. It is clear some ties were being established soon after the resettlement on Rabi, however, they were not extensive or strong. It must be noted that there was not a push to assimilate the Banabans into Fiji.

There are still some problems for the Banabans with regard to their Fijian neighbours, and low level conflicts do occur over fishing rights or other minor matters (King 2008, personal communications). The granting of citizenship to the Banabans may well go some way to alleviating these issues, but scepticism is understandable given the current political climate in Fiji and difficulties experienced by the Fijian-Indian community.



## Secondary Issues

Cultural maintenance was a problem for the Banaban population long before resettlement on Rabi. Isolation and various waves of immigration to Banaba had altered and developed the unique culture of the island, which was then exposed to Western influences in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Following the discovery of phosphate and the influx of *I-Mitang*<sup>21</sup> and labourers, Banaban culture became seriously threatened. The Gilbertese labourers eventually resulted in the loss of the Banaban language, mining destroyed villages and sacred sites, imported food substituted the traditional diet and survival techniques, and exotic games replaced traditional pastimes (Binder 1977; Sigrah and King 2001; King and Sigrah 2004b). A reliance on the mining company for money led to a drastic change in lifestyle. The damage done to traditional Banaban culture on Banaba is still evident on Rabi, yet cultural solidarity is one aspect that lightened the burden of resettlement.

The use of Banaban culture has helped to maintain unity within the Banaban community on Rabi. Naming the settlements on Rabi after the four original settlements on Banaba is possibly the most obvious example of this. Traditional Banaban crafts and stories have also been retained, or more accurately, revived. After the resettlement there was interest in maintaining their culture even though they could not be on Banaba, and this sentiment has resulted in the recording and teaching of traditional Banaban practices. The cultural loss of most of those born and raised on Banaba can not be underestimated.

Financial Hardship: The Banaban population, since contact with the Western conceptions of currency and trade, has been relatively poor. Even when being paid phosphate

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<sup>21</sup> Gilbertese word for 'European' (Sigrah and King 2001: 307)

royalties, the Banabans were charged inflated prices at the company store for goods on which they came to depend after the destruction of their food sources.<sup>22</sup> The communal Banaban funds were used to purchase Rabi, and of the royalties that went to the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony, very little ever benefited the Banabans. Even today, Kiribati uses these funds and provides very little for the Banabans. Compensation claims by the Banabans based on the destruction to their island, manipulation by the colonial governments, and unfair royalties were for the most part unsuccessful. After what was at the time the longest case in British history, an award of A\$10 million was made with the condition that the Banabans did not pursue further legal action (King and Sigrah 2004b: 951).<sup>23</sup> This money is held in trust under the condition that the principal is not touched. The interest is used to fund projects on Rabi and Banaba, as well as funding both communities. A lack of development on both islands has meant that sources of income other than remittances are very limited, compounding financial pressures. The financial situation for the Banabans is rather dire, with a large spread in income within the population and relatively low incomes overall (Kumar, Terubea, Noame and Manepora'a 2006).

**Mortality & Morbidity:** The resettlement on Rabi had a grave impact on the health of the Banaban population, with much illness and many deaths in the first years from the different conditions, particularly disease, climate and diet (Binder 1977; Williams and Macdonald 1985: 345). Mental health issues were not a concern at the time of resettlement, however the (dis)stress of the experience was very apparent. Compounding

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<sup>22</sup> This is similar to the situation on Nauru that has developed into a healthcare disaster.

<sup>23</sup> For an account of Justice Megarry's summary see Binder (1977: 166-7).

the experiences of WWII was the knowledge that their ancestors' remains were being mined and exported around the world, along with the destruction of the remaining Banaban property (Sigrah and King 2001: 264).

**Aspirational Deprivation:** Aspirational deprivation among the Banaban community was not a problem at the time of resettlement; however, as the Banabans have been exposed to more of the world and experienced the issues that come with being a minority in Fiji, this has become a problem. Seeing progress around them and knowing that life for many in other parts of Fiji and Kiribati is in many ways easier, as well as the advancement of the West, makes aspirational deprivation something of a problem.

### **Marginalisation**

Marginalisation is more an end-point, rather than an element that can be addressed. There are degrees of marginalisation, and the Banabans have been at various places in the continuum of marginalisation over the last 60 years. Being forced to resettle on Rabi by the colonial administration would certainly be a contender for the point at which they were at their most marginalised, however, problems with Fiji and Kiribati later made the Banabans effectively stateless and more isolated. Even during the years after resettlement but before the cessation of mining the Banabans were still needed by the colonial administration and mining commission so that new lands could be accessed, a point emphasised by Albert Ellis (Ellis 1950: 1). There could be a case made that during the early 2000s was the most marginalised the Banabans became, but this was somewhat ameliorated by the granting of citizenship by naturalisation. Although Banaban relations

with Kiribati remain strained and there are many problems that need addressing, the Banabans are possibly less marginalised at the time of writing than a decade previously.

## Conclusion

Overall, the model shows promise as an analytical tool when used to assess the Banaban case, but there are some reservations. There is support for the model's structure and the elements used, although it appears that some of them may be of limited value. The elements of the resettlement process, where, how and resources, all give useful insight and grounding into the circumstances of the resettlement.

As a general rule, the adjustment issues are shown to be important in the analysis of the Banaban case. Land is an essential consideration in any resettlement, and is naturally at the centre of the process. The effect on the Banabans of not having access to their native island and needing to become accustomed to Rabi can not be ignored. Employment, in the Banaban case may be unnecessary at the time of resettlement, quite likely due to the time warp problem; however, it is now a consideration. This is slightly problematic as it throws some doubt on the relevance of employment as an element in the model. Food is a crucial consideration, and the Banaban case supports this stance. The Banaban population experienced and continue to suffer from hardship due to problems with food supply and malnutrition. With shelter, food accounted for much of the mortality and morbidity suffered by the Banabans, especially in the years following resettlement. Shelter is of critical importance to the resettled population. For the Banaban case, there is limited evidence supporting the value and place of citizenship and education as elements in the

model. Citizenship, in the sense it is used here, is a large part of Banaban history, yet gaining Fijian citizenship has arguably been of limited value. Conflicts with the Kiribati government were not as a result of citizenship problems, but stem mainly from the Banabans' location in Fiji. Social dislocation was, and remains, a major issue for the Banaban population, showing indisputably the negative effects of resettlement. This is a very crucial element of the model as it is a result of and remains an intractable problem from the resettlement and maintenance of two communities. Inter-cultural ties is another section of the model that proved to be less robust and important than initially thought. Although important concepts and problems are addressed here, it may prove beneficial and parsimonious to combine the citizenship and inter-cultural ties sections.

Cultural maintenance proved to be difficult but crucial for the Banabans. The impact of mining on Banaban culture, language and beliefs was more damaging than the resettlement itself in many ways. The damage done before World War II and the Japanese occupation of Banaba were disastrous, and in some ways resettlement spurred revival. Maintaining the culture of the resettled population is still believed to be important, but events before resettlement make the Banaban case more complex to analyse.

The secondary issues all appear to be valuable and worth retaining in the model, to varying degrees. Financial hardship is a crucial and irrefutable part of the resettlement process, and all efforts must be made to prevent it. Linked to employment, financial hardship appears to have been difficult for the Banabans to avoid. Events preceding and

following resettlement contributed to the Banabans' fiscal difficulties, but although these were indirectly related to resettlement, the element remains important. Mortality and morbidity were problems for the Banabans, and this is directly attributable to inadequate resettlement, warranting the retention of this element in the model. Aspirational deprivation is less obviously important, and it is difficult to attribute to resettlement. The case could be made quite easily that the Banabans would have suffered from aspirational deprivation regardless of the resettlement.

Marginalisation is considered an end point, and therefore needs to be kept in the model. The Banaban population has experienced political, cultural, economic and social marginalisation from both the Fiji and Kiribati governments, as well as financial hardship. There is sufficient evidence from this case to warrant the presence of marginalisation in the model; it is difficult to find a more concrete case of marginalisation than being forced from one's homeland.

## Chapter 6

“If our land is gone then so is the basis of our culture and our everyday lives. I wouldn’t know who I am in this world if I did not connect myself to my family’s land in the Marshall Islands.”

Jiji Jally, Seattle, April 14, 2007

### Bikinian Case

Bikini Atoll is located in the Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI), which gained independence from the United States on October 21, 1986, but remains in free association with the United States. The population of Bikini Atoll (the Bikinians) was resettled in March 1946 on Rongerik Atoll to facilitate the United States’ use of Bikini as a nuclear weapons testing site. In similar circumstances to the Banaban resettlement, the Bikinians received limited ongoing support after their unplanned resettlement. Bikini remains uninhabitable.

There are many good accounts of the resettlement from, and testing at, Bikini Atoll. That said, the Bikini tests have never received much academic attention other than from anthropologists, the results remain military secrets, and like Maralinga and Christmas Island, the actual effects of the testing remain contested, with many claiming them to have been censored or ignored (Cross 2001). The work on Bikini comes mainly from anthropological, military-historical, and anti-nuclear sources. Some of the best accounts of the Bikini resettlement and its consequences are from Robert Kiste (1968; 1974; 1977; 1985), an anthropologist who has studied the Bikinians since the 1960s; Jack Tobin (1953), who was District Anthropologist in the Marshall Islands in the 1950s; and Jack

Niedenthal (2001), who has lived and worked with the Bikinians since 1984. Niedenthal married into the Bikinian community in 1988.

## Background

Bikini Atoll has always been isolated, even within the relatively small size of the Marshall Islands, and it remains so today. Isolation and unfavourable conditions limited the population, creating a society bound by extended families and tradition. Land became the measure of wealth. Germany effectively gained colonial control of Bikini under a 'sphere of influence' agreement with Great Britain in 1886. Japan took over administration of the Marshall Islands from Germany after seizing them during WWI, and began fortifying the region in the lead-up to WWII (Niedenthal 2001: 1; Kiste 1974: 13-19). The wartime erection of a watchtower on Bikini suddenly closed the peaceful chapter of Bikini's history. In early 1944, after one of the most brutal battles of WWII, America captured the Japanese base at Kwajalein, ending Japan's presence in the region.<sup>24</sup> In the aftermath of WWII, particularly the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, President Truman issued a directive that the potential effects of atomic bombs on United States warships be determined (Niedenthal 2001: 2).

Bikini was chosen as the proving ground to conduct the tests owing to its isolation, low population, natural shelter and large atoll anchorage and proximity to established naval facilities. After church on February 10 1946, Commodore Ben H. Wyatt, military governor of the Marshall Islands, told the Bikinians of nuclear weapons, the United

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<sup>24</sup> The five Japanese stationed on Bikini committed suicide with a grenade while hiding in a foxhole rather than be defeated by the Americans. (Niedenthal 2001: 2).



States' 'need' to test them, and asked the Bikinians to consider resettling on another atoll, "for the good of mankind and to end all world wars" (Kiste 1968: 2; 1974: 27-28; 1985: 120; Niedenthal 2001: 2).<sup>25</sup> In less than a month the Bikinians were packing their possessions into the transport craft, bound for Rongerik. Traditionally uninhabited because of its small size, low rainfall, poor food resources and the presence of evil spirits,<sup>26</sup> the Bikinians soon realised that the limited rations and inadequate food supplies would not support them. It appeared that "for the good of mankind" did not apply to them. In March 1948, in a state of constant starvation, the Bikinians were evacuated to Kwajalein Atoll and accommodated in tents beside the military airstrip for over seven months (Kiste 1977; Niedenthal 2001: 5). After much deliberation the Bikinians chose to resettle on uninhabited Kili Island in the southern Marshalls, ultimately dooming their traditional lagoon-based diet and culture (Tobin 1958; Kiste 1968: 3-14; 1977; Niedenthal 2001: 5).

### Analysis of Initial Resettlement

When analysing the resettlement of the Bikinian population, it becomes clear that many of the resettlement risk minimisation model's elements are involved. The resettlement process elements of the model are all important, as are many of the adjustment issues. It must be noted that this resettlement was undertaken by the Bikinians under the impression that they would be able to return home (Kiste 1974: 34), making it to them, a

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<sup>25</sup> The irony of this can not be missed, as America was to be directly involved in conflicts in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq (twice) Afghanistan, and numerous other Cold War proxy-wars over the subsequent decades.

<sup>26</sup> See Kiste (1974) for a full explanation.

temporary measure. The damage done to the Bikinians' culture, homeland and trust of outsiders is remarkably similar to that of the Banabans, and many parallels emerge.

### Resettlement Process

Where: The decision to resettle the Bikinians was certainly not one that received patient consideration and meticulous planning. The choice of where to resettle is a clear indication of this. In less than one month from the date when the Bikinians agreed to relocate, the US navy had landed them on Rongerik. Although there were some positives to the resettlement, such as an uninhabited atoll that the population was familiar with, and its close proximity to Bikini, the problems with the destination became apparent almost immediately. The shortage of sustainable food and water were major problems within months. It must be noted that the Bikinians themselves chose to settle on Rongerik, knowing it was uninhabited and that the nearby Rongolabese posed no threat. The chance to continue their existence on an atoll, free from outside interference, would have appealed (Kiste 1985: 120). Due to the inadequate resources of Rongerik, the Bikinians were evacuated in a state of starvation on March 14 and 15, 1948 (Kiste 1968: 10).<sup>27</sup>

From Rongerik, the Bikinians were moved to Kwajalein Atoll and housed in tents at the US military base there. Here they were exposed to the awesome "wealth and technical prowess" of the Americans, mixed with other Marshallese and recovered from their emaciation. Efforts to maintain the "collective integrity" of the Bikinians were made, but these proved less effective as the population recovered and some began paid

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<sup>27</sup> Kiste (1985) gives the date as February; however, the specific dates in March given by Kiste (1968) indicate that this is more accurate.

employment, further exposing the Bikinians to Western technology and lifestyle, reinforcing the negative perception the Bikinians had of themselves (Kiste 1985: 123-124).<sup>28</sup> Exposure to American culture and other Marshallese spurred great changes in Bikinian culture after re-evaluation of customary practices (discussed below). After some consideration, Kili Island was chosen as the place where the Bikinians decided to again re-establish themselves.

Kili Island, located at the southern end of the Ralik Chain, is a vastly different place from the atolls the Bikinians had lived on previously. In November 1948, the population of 208 settled on Kili and set about establishing a village. There was initial optimism at the abundant food from the former copra plantation that had not been exploited since before WWII, yet this soon disappeared. The reality was that Kili demanded an alien skill set and dictated a different lifestyle to what the Bikinians knew; coconuts were the only reliable similarity. Kili is only 0.93 square kilometres (0.36 square miles), about half the size of Bikini Island alone, there is no lagoon, the fish are different, in winter the swell often makes landing impossible, and the Bikinians needed to devote long hours to agriculture (Kiste 1985: 125-127). The adjustments that were needed to successfully resettle on Kili were not understood or appreciated (Kiste 1977: 88).

In the decades following resettlement, the Bikinians desired a return to their homeland, which they came to remember as an idyllic paradise (Kiste 1985: 126). In 1956 the Bikinians gained use of part of Jailut Atoll, however, due to early cyclone damage, this

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<sup>28</sup> The military base, airstrip, docking areas, jeeps, telephones, radio, movies and shops were all alien to the Bikinians previously (Kiste 1985: 123).

proved an unsuccessful venture. In return for this, the Bikinians signed over full use rights for Bikini to the US and relinquished the right to file claims against the US government in future. They received an additional US\$325,000 in cash and trust fund. All this was done without the aid of legal representation. In 1968, US President Lyndon Johnson declared that the Bikinians be repatriated to their atoll, and an ultimately unsuccessful plan to decontaminate the land was put in place (Niedenthal 2001: 8-10).

By 1975, the population on Bikini had grown substantially, even in the face of conflicting evidence about the safety of residing on the atoll. After announcing the atoll safe in 1969, the local produce was deemed too radioactive for human consumption in 1975. This was followed by the discovery that levels of radiation were well above US guidelines. The decision to remove the 139 people who had resettled Bikini was taken in September 1978 (Niedenthal 2001: 11-13).

How: The use of US navy landing craft *LST 1108* the initial resettlement of the Bikinians is not surprising, given the lack of air strips on Bikini and Rongerik it was really the only viable option. The desire of the US to gain speedy access to the atoll for testing, the low population (about 170) (Kiste 1974: 39; 1985: 116), and readily available naval assets meant that there could be a swift and easily launched resettlement to Rongerik. An advance party was sent to erect tents. The evacuation to Kwajalein and subsequent settlement on Kili were similarly conducted, with the aid of the naval administration and the use of an advanced party to establish some semblance of order and a village (Kiste 1977; Niedenthal 2001).

Resources: There was no cornucopia of resources available given the recent end of WWII, and the small number of Bikinians, who had minimal material wants, probably resulted in little consideration being given to what they may have needed to smooth the transition of life on Rongerik. The population would have benefited from more resources being put at their disposal and time spent planning, as evidenced by the very limited rations and inadequate shelter. Reasons this did not happen include the desire to move the population quickly, minimal planning, and a lack of understanding on the part of the US navy. The Bikinians, in their naivety, not knowing to negotiate for better conditions, may also have been a factor. The situation was similar on Kili, but it was exaggerated by the fact that while on Kwajalein, the Bikinians became the most materially wealthy that they had ever been. This was due to the opportunity for paid work, and exposure to American technology, resources and diet.

### Adjustment issues

Land: There is no doubt the Bikinians have emerged territorially poorer from their experiences with resettlement. This is an indisputable fact. In the Bikinian case there is clear evidence that landlessness and change of land type have contributed to the Bikinians becoming personally landless, but as a whole they are now very much decapitalised, in keeping with Cernea's (1995: 1572) assessment that landlessness is the "principal form of decapitalisation and pauperisation of displaced people". For the Bikinians this occurred on both Rongerik and Kili. While on Kwajalein they were effectively landless, yet they had support from the US naval administration. On Bikini,

individual landholdings were of great importance, usufruct<sup>29</sup> was commonplace, and land could only be transferred by a complicated system of property rights or conflict. Conflict abated as a means of gaining land after arrival of missionaries and the establishment of the German protectorate over the Marshalls (Kiste 1974: 53-57). Competition for land was intense as land was a measure of power and prestige (Niedenthal 2001: 75), and the competitive nature of the Bikinians for land made relocation “tantamount to opening Pandora’s Box” (Kiste 1974: 75).

Relocation to Rongerik raised problems for the Bikinian system of property rights as there was nothing to guide the allotment of land and no time to devise a more appropriate or equitable solution. The small size of the island put pressure on the food sources, and spurred a change towards more communal living, including food rationing and shared labour (Kiste 1977: 86). It is interesting that adopting the concept of common property rather than losing common property was a major and notable effect of resettlement on Rongerik. This continued with the resettlement on Kili.

The resettlement on Kili confronted the Bikinians with many issues regarding land, not least of which was the small size of the island. Kili is a mere 0.93 square kilometres, smaller than Rongerik, half the size of Bikini Island, and only one sixth the size of Bikini Atoll’s total land area (Kiste 1977: 87; 1974: 92). The established food sources were a positive, but the work needed meant that the community had to work together, as on Rongerik. In 1955, starvation threatened on Kili, spurring the US into granting the

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<sup>29</sup> The right to use and derive profit from a piece of property belonging to another, provided the property itself remains undiminished and uninjured in any way (Gordon 1982: 1293).

Bikinians a satellite community on Jaluit Atoll. A small number of families moved to Jaluit, to which the Bikinians gained full use rights, along with Kili, in 1956 (Niedenthal 2001: 8-9; Kiste 1968: 76).

While the Bikinians were struggling to subsist in their new locales, their homeland of Bikini Atoll was being rendered uninhabitable. In 1969, a plan was implemented for the clean-up and resettlement of Bikini Atoll. Over time, people returned, and various studies were conducted into how irradiated the atoll actually was. 193 people resided on Bikini by mid-1978, and by September they were being evacuated after tests showed dangerous levels of radiation in food and the population (Niedenthal 2001: 10-13). Bikini remains uninhabitable.

Another concern for the Bikinians was the territorial control of their new settlement by another paramount chief (Kiste 1985: 125). This later proved a decisive factor in altering their approach to their traditional hierarchy. Rongerik came under the control of the chief of Rongelab, and as such, the Bikinian chief, Juda, did not have the same traditional powers over his people as on Bikini. This was not such a concern on Kili and Jaluit as these areas had been 'colonial' land, meaning the Americans were free to allow the Bikinians to settle there (Kiste 1974, Niedenthal 2001).

Employment: There was no real provision or opportunity for employment beyond the copra trade for the Bikinians, with the exception of a few months on Kwajalein. The Bikinians were expected to continue their subsistence lifestyle on their new islands, with

some effort dedicated to copra; this proved difficult with limited food and unreliable shipping. Some Bikinians gained employment away from the majority of the population, especially in Kwajalein, and this trend increased with population growth (Niedenthal 2001; Kiste 1985).

Food: It is clear that there was some consideration given to food in all the resettlements the Bikinians faced; it was even the catalyst for the evacuation from Rongerik. The quality and availability of food is critical to any resettlement, and upon arrival at Rongerik, it appeared there would be no problems with food. The available natural food sources were heavily laden due to a lack of regular exploitation and rations supplied by the US navy ensured food was readily available during the initial weeks while the community re-established itself. The reality of the food situation soon became apparent as some fish were inedible at Rongerik and the trees less productive than hoped. The situation was worsened by a fire that destroyed 30 percent of the trees. Although supplementing the Bikinian diet with food drops, the situation was discovered to be critical in 1947. Following mounting pressure on the navy and the discovery by anthropologists of starving Bikinians, the decision to evacuate to Kwajalein was taken (Kiste 1974; 1977; 1985).

While encamped on Kwajalein, the Bikinians were exposed to an alien environment, and more exotic food. The naval governor agreed to subsidise the community, and although they were off-limits to the majority of Kwajalein's population, meals were taken in a mess hall with the island's Marshallese labourers. This was by far the most extravagant



food the Bikinians had ever encountered (Kiste 1974: 89). After this exposure, many gained a taste for a more western diet, and after resettlement on Kili, their traditional food sources were dull.

Kili provided the Bikinians with more food problems than just a return to a now passé diet. The lack of an atoll and the different fishing skills required for the fringing reef were immediate quandaries for the Bikinians; their traditional fishing style and knowledge were now effectively useless. Kili initially had an abundant supply of coconuts, however the island's true productivity was not known until the excess from years without harvest was removed. It was once again realised that their new home would not produce a sufficient supply of coconuts, but there was hope with other crops available. Surviving from the days of Kili being a copra plantation were bananas, breadfruit, papaya, sweet potato, and a taro swamp (Kiste 1977: 86). The Bikinians did little for the upkeep of many food sources, partially because of their relaxed attitude to agriculture, but mainly because of a poor attitude towards Kili in general; "The Bikinians had no desire to make a commitment to Kili or to adopt the agricultural techniques which would have enhanced their chances of achieving an adequate subsistence" (Kiste 1974: 111). Cyclones, food shortages, inadequate shipping and a growing population hindered the Bikinians for decades (Niedenthal 2001). They began to feel they were the victims of a great injustice (Kiste 1985: 127).

Citizenship: Citizenship has not been a significant problem for the Bikinians as they have not crossed any international borders. There have been issues with self-image and being

something of a laughing stock among other Marshallese, but these do not affect the rights of the Bikinians in any way. One consideration for the Bikinians was the traditional control of the lands they were to be resettled on. To be resettled on lands of a hostile or unfamiliar chief was not an option for them. Another related issue with the Bikinian resettlement has been the Marshall Islands gaining independence from the United States administration, which has complicated compensation claims.

Shelter/accommodation: the Bikinians encountered some problems with their shelter and the allotment of housing during their various resettlements. As a general rule, the accommodation they encountered was of reasonable standard, yet the rushed nature of resettlements meant it was not well considered. Upon arrival at Rongerik, the Bikinians were met with an incomplete village, but it had the same number of structures as had been on Bikini, being tents with canvas covers. The only initial issue appeared to be the regimented layout of the village, and that some families' neighbours changed. Concrete cisterns were constructed and the Bikinians were left to thatch their new buildings, which proved difficult with the limited resources on offer (Kiste 1974: 77-79). The poor quality and scarcity of resources, particularly food, soon proved the end of the Rongerik settlement. On Kwajalein, the Bikinians housing was of a very basic standard, but it served its purpose and did include some modern conveniences. The Bikinians were accommodated there for just over seven months and did not experience any of the usual consequences that stem from poor housing.<sup>30</sup> The housing situation at Kili was not as welcoming. The Bikinians arrived to find they were required to build their own

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<sup>30</sup> For a fuller explanation see shelter/accommodation on page 55.

dwellings; however, they did receive materials, food and assistance from the navy (Kiste 1974: 103-104).

Education: For the Bikinians, formal, standardised education in the form of schooling was not part of their traditional lifestyle. During the Japanese period, the Pastor provided education, based on his own limited schooling, and the naval military government established a school for the short time the Bikinians remained on their homeland (Kiste 1968: 375). There was a school house provided on Rongerik, and two teachers from other atolls, one of whom married into the community (Kiste 1968: 176). On Kili, the educational facilities remained comparatively underdeveloped with the council house doubling as a school, but this was sufficient for the small population at the time of resettlement (Kiste 1985: 105). Kiste (1968: 336-337) states that students began school between six and eight years old, spending anything up to three years in any one grade before being promoted arbitrarily to the next grade. The low population meant that grades were often taught together, with all classes occurring concurrently in a form of “organized chaos”. The school was short of supplies, few girls received any great education, and very few boys ever left for more education in Majuro or Hawaii. The curriculum was based on reading and writing Marshallese, some English, arithmetic, and singing. Although it was apparently based on the United States system, the education was very much specific to Marshall Islands environment. For their part, the Bikinians placed a high value on education, especially the learning of English. Education provided a great opportunity to improve their self-image (Kiste 1968: 379). Today, the Bikinians spend over US\$1.5 million on education, including university trained teachers, a volunteer

programme with Dartmouth College graduates, and education for Bikinians overseas ([www.bikiniatoll.com](http://www.bikiniatoll.com)).

**Social Dislocation:** Inevitably, the Bikinians experienced some social dislocation as a result of their resettlements, but the small size of their population did help maintain community cohesion. Initial problems were associated with the closeness of dwellings, separation of neighbours, and a change from looking to their chief to looking to the Americans for leadership and problem resolution. Scarcity of resources on Rongerik actually brought the community together as they adopted a more communal approach to everyday life and task completion. There has been fragmentation of the community as the Bikinian population has grown and disbursed throughout the Marshall Islands and the United States. It must be noted that the current population could not possibly have been reached had the Bikinians not been removed from their atoll, and nor could Bikini Atoll support today's Bikinian population.

**Inter-cultural Ties:** Cross-cultural contact was a big consideration for the Bikinians with regard to their resettlements. The reasons for this stem from the traditional control of land in Marshallese society and from the Bikinians' diminished sense of self-worth. They were all too aware that settling on land controlled by another, particularly an unknown or hostile chief, could have dire ramifications. When considering the resettlement from Bikini, the Bikinians were cautious not to settle somewhere that was unknown to them. The move to Rongerik was favoured as the Bikinians knew the atoll to be uninhabited, and they were on good terms with the Rongolabese chief in charge. They had long been

in contact with the population on Rongelab. The Bikinians would be able to keep to themselves uninterrupted on Rongerik, and already had connections with the chief on whose land they were being resettled.

The biggest cultural shock for the Bikinians came after their evacuation from Rongerik and encampment at Kwajalein. In the months that the Bikinians were on Kwajalein, they were introduced to the full extent of Western technology, diet, and culture, while for the first time being exposed *en masse* to other Marshallese. Although there were efforts to keep others away from the Bikinians' camp, they were able to move about Kwajalein freely. The Bikinians already had some ties with the United States,<sup>31</sup> but the time spent on Kwajalein strongly cemented these. The Bikinians' experiences with the other Marshallese were not so positive; given their condition and treatment, the image of the Bikinians held by other Marshall islanders was galvanised. One major development out of the contact the Bikinians had with other Marshallese was that they began to seriously question their traditional organisational structure, particularly the role of the chief (Kiste 1974: 90).

The move to Kili meant the Bikinians were once again living in relative isolation, the sole occupants of their own island. Kili provided the Bikinians with land that was not under the control of any other chief, although it was close to other atolls; within 65 miles (approx 100 km) of Kili are the three southernmost atolls of the Ralik Chain, precipitating increased contact with the most acculturated of the Marshallese, as well as

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<sup>31</sup> These ties stemmed from the United States involvement in defeating the Japanese, relocating the Bikinians, evacuating them and employing them.

increased dependence on shipping and trade for survival. The role of the US in evacuating and assisting in the resettlement to Kili further enhanced the ties that had been established at the conclusion of WWII.

### Secondary Issues

Cultural maintenance had been a problem for the Bikinians for many years before they were resettled on Rongerik. During the period of German control, missionaries arrived on Bikini and began converting the population; however, this was relatively late on Bikini as the first missionary did not arrive until 1908 (Kiste 1974: 18). Even then, the influence of the outside world was limited. It was not until the Japanese period, after WWI, that the Bikinians were truly exposed to outsiders. Japanese officials and copra traders began calling at Bikini, and many Bikinians began to travel throughout the Marshalls. With the advent of WWII, Japanese soldiers were garrisoned on Bikini, radically altering the Bikinians' lives. The Japanese established a strict regime, including conscripted labour, curfews, and a ban on Christian services (Kiste 1974: 19). When the Americans took Bikini on March 29, 1944, they turned over all Japanese supplies to the Bikinians, who immediately formed a positive opinion of the liberators. In less than 40 years, the Bikinians' world had gone from one of isolation to one of rapid change, completely beyond their control.

With regards to language, the Bikinian dialect of Marshallese was not different enough to make communications between the Bikinians and other Marshall Islanders impossible, yet it was very distinctive. This dialect has survived.

The culture aspect of the cultural maintenance element is a different story. Since contact with foreigners, the Bikinians culture has been changing rapidly and regularly, particularly the social hierarchy. From the introduction of Christianity, copra trading, and steel, to the more recent resettlements, exposure to advanced technology, varied diet and foreign culture, the Bikinian society has changed markedly. Even before the resettlement on Rongerik, there were signs of change among the Bikinian populations with regard to their attitude towards the chief and his role. It must be noted that not all these changes are attributable to resettlement, but resettlement has had a large influence.

The role of the Bikinian chief changed greatly over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in step with the changes to the Bikinians' situation and attitudes. These changes have been particularly swift and dramatic since the relocation from Bikini. Traditionally, the chief held absolute authority over the community. This was changing slowly with exposure to colonial influences, as were most aspects of Bikinian society, but not at the same rate of change as occurred post resettlement (Kiste 1974: 74).<sup>32</sup> Colonialism delivered a raft of problems for the Bikinians, and a challenge to their traditional social order was simply one of them. Chief Juda had only recently assumed his role, but it had been contested. He was inexperienced and likely intimidated by the naval officers with whom he dealt. The result was that he struggled to address the issues his people were encountering, and made a poor impression on both the Americans and many of his own people. The Americans saw him as incapable and his own people questioned whether he or the Americans held

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<sup>32</sup> For a complete analysis of the changes in Bikinian society, see Ogan (1968), Kiste (1974), and Niedenthal (2001).

sway over their lives; the Americans did possess apparently immeasurable wealth, power and materials, while Juda had provided only deprivation (Kiste 1974: 80-87). This situation became more acute with subsequent relocations and the introduction of a more Westernised council system.

Financial hardship: the Bikinians have a very mixed financial history, rivalled possibly only by the Nauruans for the title of most tumultuous since WWII.<sup>33</sup> Before contact with Westerners, and even until the end of WWII, the Bikinians had no great concept of money or finances in the modern context. Little copra was ever traded, their needs were met through subsistence, and trade was negligible, practically a non-event; as a consequence they had not experienced financial hardship per se. American servicemen encouraged the Bikinians to produce handicrafts and copra, both of which had a ready market in Kwajalein (Kiste 1974: 22). This gave the Bikinians some income, but it was in reality, an unneeded luxury. It was after the evacuation to Kwajalein that the Bikinians really began to benefit from the Western economics that had infiltrated their lives.

On Kwajalein, the Bikinians became the wealthiest they had been in material terms (land excluded) and gained access to many American goods, but this changed rapidly after settling on Kili. With many of the men working, the Bikinians were able to purchase goods, and soon developed a taste for what the postal exchange had to offer (Kiste 1974: 90). Once the Bikinians were moved to Kili, they encountered financial troubles with their store as there was not enough money flowing into the community owing to the lack of copra being exported. The Bikinians' problems with food and fiscal shortages were

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<sup>33</sup> For a brief outline of Nauru's fiscal difficulties, see Hughes (2004).



interlinked from because of the lack of resources and barriers to trade. The intervention of the US was needed to resolve them. This situation today is dramatically different; the Bikinians settled their claims for compensation with the US, making being Bikinian a rather lucrative business (Kiste 1985: 134).

**Mortality and morbidity:** Mortality and morbidity were issues for the Bikinians, yet they did manage, somehow, to avoid mass deaths from starvation and/or disease on Rongerik. This is mainly attributable to emergency food drops and evacuation. The small size of the population probably helped ensure their survival. On Kwajalein, the Bikinians regained their condition and actually increased their population, through a mixture of reduced mortality, especially in childbirth, and people returning to the community. On Kili the situation was, for a time, similar to that which had confronted the Bikinians on Rongerik, where the initial abundance of food was found to be lacking soon after resettlement; again emergency food drops were necessary (Kiste 1974: 108). Larger problems emerged on Kili with the attitudes of the Bikinians towards what the majority came to view as an island jail (Kiste 1985: 126). There was little progress with achieving adequate subsistence and many shirked their share of work. Reminiscences about the past and a memory of Bikini as a land of plenty developed. Isolation, crowding, and malaise produced a negative atmosphere in which even the children would parrot how bad life was on Kili.

**Aspirational deprivation:** Aspirational deprivation was not initially an issue for the Bikinians. Owing to their low self-image and constant reinforcement of this 'fact', the

Bikinians were less inclined to aspire for higher things than they were to retreat into themselves. This has since changed. Collectively, the Bikinians realised they were able to perform the same tasks as anyone else and that the difference was simply exposure to the 'modern' world. They began to seek out an improved lifestyle for themselves and pushed hard for their rights and compensation (Kiste 1974; Niedenthal 2001).

The Bikinians have always wanted to return to Bikini, and even now this is their greatest aspiration. Being deprived of and unable to live on their homeland, especially for the older generations, is still a major issue. Materially, like other people in developing states, the Bikinians have desires for things that are unavailable or beyond their means, yet this situation is repeated throughout the world. The financial situation of the Bikinians resulting from their compensation settlements means that there is now a great deal of money available to aid communal causes.

### Marginalisation

The Bikinians were not so much marginalised by their resettlement as they were disrupted, however they did experience some problems. For the Bikinians, like other forced migrants, the loss of control over their future was marginalising, and they were exposed to and suffered from the belief that they were backward. On Kili, the Bikinians were not marginalised from any other group, they were closer to other Marshallese than before, but the inaccessibility of Kili made them isolated and marginalised in some ways. In more recent years, with compensation for the damage done to Bikini and disruption to Bikinian culture, the Bikinians have become somewhat marginalised among the

Marshallese. There is some resentment expressed at the Bikinians financial wealth and greater material wealth, especially in Majuro.

## Conclusion

The Bikinian case of resettlement supports and reinforces the conclusions drawn from the Banaban case study with regard to the usefulness and value of the model. There are some elements that appear unnecessary or influenced by issues beyond the resettlement, but overall the evidence suggests the model is viable and valuable to the assessment of population resettlement. The elements of the resettlement process all give insight into the circumstances and setting of the resettlement, which enables better analysis and would make planning potential resettlements easier.

The adjustment issues provided support for the model, in much the same way as the Banaban case. The effects of changes in land can be seen very clearly in the Bikinian case, with many of the other problems experienced by the population post-resettlement being directly or indirectly attributable to the changed land size, access and resources. Employment opportunities for the Bikinians were limited, and after their experiences on Kwajalein, inadequate. Problems with copra production and export further limited employment opportunities. The impact limited employment had on the Bikinians supports the place of employment as an element in the model. Food was a problem for the Bikinians from their first resettlement, and remained so for a long time. Food shortages plagued the Bikinians, even prompting them to be evacuated from Rongerik; poor planning and a lack of food was again a problem on Kili. The importance and

prominence of food in the resettlements of this case appear to make it a necessity in the model. Citizenship was not a factor of any importance for the Bikinians as they did not cross any international borders, and therefore appears to be superfluous to the model in this case. This further suggests that citizenship and inter-cultural ties could be combined into a single element. Given the problems the Bikinians encountered with regard to shelter, although not as serious as the Banabans' problems, it appears necessary to keep shelter as an element in the model. The provision of adequate shelter is well supported by the literature, and this case appears to support this position. It may be worthwhile to include the manner in which housing is allotted to the description of the shelter element, as the Bikinian experience indicates that this is important on both Rongerik and Kili.

For the Bikinians, as with the Banabans, cultural maintenance was something of a challenge before resettlement, but for the Bikinians, this problem became much more serious as the population developed cultural norms by supplementing modern substitutes for traditional ideas and practices, such as the role of the chief. This could be viewed as development by some. This case does not seem to show that cultural maintenance is a crucial factor in the success of resettlement, but it does appear to be vulnerable to change, as it would be anywhere.

The secondary issues section is supported by the Bikinian case, with all three elements appearing to be important in the resettlement. Morbidity and mortality were problems on both Rongerik and Kili, with emergency rations being required. The model may need some refinement in this respect, as in this situation, food shortages are covered by two

elements. Financial hardship was a problem for the Bikinians for many years. Limited opportunities for wealth generation and a forced change in lifestyle meant that financial difficulties were inevitable. This has been somewhat alleviated today as a result of compensation for damages. Aspirational deprivation was an issue for the Bikinians, and remains so in some ways; compensation payments have gone some way toward fixing this problem. The greatest aspirational deprivation for the Bikinians is not being able to live on and extensively use Bikini Atoll.

The Bikinian population was marginalised in very similar ways to the Banabans, such as being forced from their land, financial difficulties and unsympathetic treatment. Compensation and other measures have reduced the marginalisation experienced by the Bikinians, but not being able to fully use their atoll homeland is still a major problem. The recent financial success of the Bikinians has been something of a double-edged sword, with envy of their wealth and assets growing among other Marshallese, especially on Majuro.

## Chapter 7

“There seems little reason to expect the twenty-first century to be any kinder than the twentieth....violence, counter violence and displacement are all too apparent. They may well worsen over the twenty-first century...”

Elizabeth Colson, 2003

### Discussion and Recommendations

This thesis set out to examine what would be necessary to prepare for and execute a mass resettlement within or from a Pacific Island state. The justification was that if the current predictions of Pacific islands and atolls becoming uninhabitable come to fruition, action will need to be taken to resettle the affected populations. It was found that the models and theories available from the literature, produced mainly from research on internally displaced people in regions other than the Pacific, were unsuitable and/or did not fit well with the study. The decision was made to create a model of population resettlement that was specifically designed to address resettlement from islands and atolls. This allowed the study to use work developed by others as the basis for a new model, but provided the flexibility to refine and tailor the model to the specifics of resettlement of island populations. After the model was developed, it was applied to two resettlement case studies, Banaba and Bikini.

The research shows three major considerations for any resettlement. Planning, addressing legal issues, and honest, transparent communication between all parties. These are essential to the success of a resettlement process. Although it appears obvious, there

is overwhelming evidence that planning is overlooked and underestimated as a vital factor in resettlement schemes, previously and currently. The rushed and unplanned resettlements in the cases examined here and the tedious progress made in resettling the Carteret Islanders reflect this. With proper planning, the impact of settling legal issues and land rights questions can be alleviated.

Mass resettlement, especially if it is forced upon those being resettled, is bound to raise legal and human rights issues which may become protracted and intractable if not appropriately addressed. Claims for access to land, aid, compensation and public acknowledgement of past experiences are all probable in any future mass resettlement, as seen in the Banaban and Bikinian cases.

Honest communication, with realistic timeframes, outcomes and issues made fully known and freely available appears essential to the success of resettlement. All parties must be aware of the situation regarding resettlement planning, implementation and progress. Deception and false hope have no place in the resettlement process, and serve only to inhibit or detract from its success and the satisfaction of involved parties.

### Review of Model

In general, the model showed strength and utility, but there may be problems with it being a self-fulfilling prophecy and fitting the cases used as they influenced its design. The model did serve its purpose, inasmuch as it allowed the analysis of past cases of

resettlement in the Pacific, showing certain elements to be of great importance and others to more trivial.

The model takes account of some problems present when using Cernea's model, but it needs to be tested further. The model could be expanded to become a blueprint or checklist of resettlements with the inclusion of other elements, such as legal issues or compensation. Refinement of current elements could make application simpler to both past cases and planning for future events. From the cases analysed here, it would appear that citizenship may not be as important as first thought, but caution is needed before removing this element. As the Bikini case had no real need for analysis with this element, it appeared superfluous, but in future cases it is unlikely that the resettled population would be resettled domestically. One option for overcoming this and simplifying the model at the same time could be to combine citizenship and inter-cultural ties as one element. Similar problems were presented by the Bikinian case with regard to cultural maintenance. Education appeared to be of limited value to the model in the analysis, but prudence is needed here too before deciding <sup>34</sup>to remove it. Although education may not have been so important in the historical cases, it would be today. This is an example of the time warp problem. In both cases, the value of aspirational deprivation is questionable, as it is so narrowly defined, yet it is valuable in accounting for the psychological process it represents. One solution to this could be to replace it with the broader concept of relative deprivation, as discussed by Gurr (1970).

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<sup>34</sup> Relative deprivation covers various types of deprivation, including aspirational (where capabilities remain stable but expectations increase), decremental (where expectations remain stable but capabilities decline), and progressive (where expectations and capabilities increase together, but capabilities can not keep pace with expectations) (Gurr 1970:46-56).



A question remains over the structure of the model, specifically over how and why marginalisation occurs, and whether the flow of the model is appropriate. These are issues that need further investigation and may not become obvious until the model has been applied to more cases, past, present or potentially in the future. The idea that by addressing the elements from the adjustment issues properly will reduce the chances of problem with the secondary issues and marginalisation appears sound, but it needs further testing. It may be the case that only finding cases that truly challenge the model's assumptions and flow will result in refinement, but without review and refinement its validity and value will remain questionable. The model appears to account for major variables and provide a solid base for assessing, planning, and reviewing resettlements, but whether the specifics of each case can be accounted for adequately will not be known until it is tested on more case studies.

### Limitations of this Thesis

As with any study, the limitations and possible improvements become more obvious the further the study progresses. The limitations to this study are, most obviously, the untested and un-reviewed model that was used, the limited number of cases, regional specificity, the predictive assumption that the research is necessary, 'time warp' issues, limited access to resources and field work, and arguably the qualitative nature of the research.

The use of an untested and un-reviewed model is a major limitation to this study's power and validity; however, it must be stressed that the author did not find any of the models or theories currently available in the literature suitable. The model used here is based on others, and could be viewed as an extreme contextualisation of Cernea's model. This is not the case, as the model used in this research is substantially different from Cernea's. The fact it was previously untested is not a significant problem as all models must be tested at some stage, but it is of concern. Being un-reviewed leaves the model open to criticism, yet the basis and justification of the model is rooted in solid theory and in what is the most accepted model currently available in the fields of displacement and resettlement. Rather than dismiss the model presented here out-of-hand for being un-reviewed, it should be challenged and refined. It is not entirely unforeseeable that a model of some kind, even if dissimilar to the one presented here, will need to be developed to cater to the specifics of resettling island populations.

The limited number of cases used in this study was a result of length constraints and a lack of available cases and information. It would be possible to conduct a larger study with more cases, but a lack of resources and time made that impractical here. Another method of overcoming the limited number of cases could be to include cases from other regions, such as the Chagos Archipelago, or for a case of resettlement after an evacuation, Tristan de Cunha. Other cases were considered for inclusion, especially the Tokelau resettlement scheme and the current resettlement from the Carteret Islands, but it was decided to proceed with the two most similar cases, Banaba and Bikini. The Tokelau

and Carteret Islands cases are examined briefly as appendices, and should be studied in-depth at a later date.

The 'time warp' problem is not of great significance to the field of political science in many ways. If it were, the use of new theories and grand theories would regularly encounter serious problems when assessing events from outside the time they were developed. It would be absurd to claim that the realist perspective or prisoners dilemma can not be used to assess World War One, arms races, or policy decisions made during times of economic crisis, simply as the time scale does not fit. While not claiming to present an all-encompassing model of resettlement here, the point is valid; 'good' models should not be so specific as to preclude use in different situations and times. Rather, good models should be applicable to a variety of cases. The problem with the 'time warp' in this study is that the cases used to test and refine the model are similar, and very different to the resettlements that may need to be carried out in the Pacific region in future.

Limited access to resources and field work was a problem. There were difficulties obtaining information from various sources, such as government departments, and especially from Pacific Island states. The limited amount of recent information easily available, especially on the Bikini case, proved to be a severe limitation, and the case study was completed in a somewhat ad hoc manner because of this. Access to funding for field work could have helped offset some of the problems encountered with regards to information, and future research, especially on Bikini, should aim to ensure some discussion with members of the Bikinian community. Multiple efforts to contact

representatives from the Bikinian community proved futile in this study. In contrast, the Banaban organisation *Abara Banaba* proved to be most accessible and helpful. No funding to conduct field work could be acquired, but with the advent of electronic communication it is questionable how much it would have aided this particular study. Cases such as the Carteret Islands would be very interesting and worthwhile to examine if possible, as studying all aspects of the resettlement process while it occurs is a luxury not often available.

There are some who would consider the qualitative nature of this study to be a flaw; however, this criticism is easily countered. Given the exploratory nature of this thesis, a full-blown quantitative study would have been not only difficult, but probably excessively time consuming. This study has shown that further exploration into the variables and associated problems of resettlement are needed; there is room and justification for a more quantitative enquiry, using this study's findings as justification. A quantitative study would be highly beneficial if many variables and cases were included, as many comparisons and investigations could be made without difficulty.

### Implications for Theory

The implications for theory are not immediately clear, but there does appear to be a need to closely examine the issues surrounding forced migration and resettlement within the Pacific Islands region. The model, being based on work by other scholars with data collected from various parts of the world, almost exclusively unrelated to Pacific Island cases, did show there is definitely cross-cultural applicability within the fields concerned.

The extent of this cross-cultural applicability can not be deduced from this study, but to conclude that there is some is fair. Other issues for theory and practitioners in the field should be the perusal of theory that can be applied to many cases, without wanting to produce one-size-fits-all models. There are too many variables and people at risk for a single model that meets the specifics of all cases to be developed and maintain a degree of parsimony, but on the surface, it appears that the model presented here may well have the theoretical fortitude to be applicable to cases such as the Carteret Islands, or even from outside the Pacific Islands region.

### Implications for Policy

This research provides some clear implications for both domestic and foreign policy in associated states. The most important implication for policy shown by this thesis is the need to plan and revise in a consultative process in order to avoid many of the issues that have plagued the resettlements of the Banabans and Bikinians. Duplicity, subterfuge and other political tricks have no place in the arrangement of resettlements if positive outcomes are to be achieved. It is obvious that planning is going to be a major, if not the most important factor, in any future resettlement. Evidence from the cases assessed here support this position, but the calamitous resettlement from the Carteret Islands shows that even today the lessons have not been learnt. Future resettlement efforts can not afford to have the same *laissez faire* approach or temerity towards planning and execution. From a planning and policy perspective, this should be of great concern. If domestic resettlement of a relatively small number of people is as fraught with challenges as the Carteret Islands case indicates, the planning and consultation for a potentially (or inevitably)

comprehensive and prolonged international resettlement project needs to begin with haste.

It may well be that without further serious academic consideration of resettlement there will be no investigation from a policy perspective. The issues outlined below could be good starting points.

### Unanswered Questions and Suggested Future Research Options

There are many issues that remain unaddressed by this thesis, some of which are, or will be, of great importance. These may well prove more interesting academically than the matters addressed in this thesis. These include legal and rights issues surrounding uninhabitable islands, statehood and sovereignty issues for states such which could become threatened, the planning of island states with regard to resettlement, Australia, New Zealand and other possible receiver states' planning and attitudes, possible conflicts from resettlement and expansionist states, and the role of international organisations, particularly the Pacific Islands Forum and the United Nations. Examining the Tokelau resettlement scheme and the Carteret Islands resettlement with the model and also from a planning perspective alone show how difficult it can be even domestically. A cynic could easily hold the view that the Banaba and Bikini cases do not bode well for the future of the Carteret Islanders. The Tokelau resettlement scheme should be of great interest to planners and academics as it provides an example of resettlement to a developed, Western urban environment. It is likely that future resettlements will be similar, rather than between Pacific Islands.

Many points of interest come from similarities between the Bikinian and Banaban cases, including the forced migration, destruction of homeland, financial difficulties, litigation for compensation, aspirations to return to an uninhabitable homeland, and a homeland that could not support the entire population of its people. This final point, especially true of the Bikinians, raises many issues for any possible resettlement of the atoll.

Points for further research include the potential for emigration to Australia, New Zealand and even the larger Pacific Island states, such as Fiji. Any arrangements for immigration and the acceptance of environmental refugees, particularly if displaced by rising sea levels, would need exceptional planning. Deciding who was to go where and who was eligible for what assistance will prove to be a major problem if mass resettlements are required. Who would pay the expenses for any resettlement needs urgent consideration; it is easily foreseeable that once resettlement has become the only option for a population, they may not have substantial material wealth to offer.

When to begin resettling a threatened population is probably the most pressing issue. Even the decision to consider resettlement is fraught with problems, as foreign investment, aid, and policy all suddenly become undermined by the fact that the state may soon no longer exist in any real capacity owing to the potential scale of resettlement required. Once a decision to resettle a population is taken, the issue of where and when to resettle them becomes pressing, and will be undoubtedly politicised at a domestic, regional and global level. If sea levels cause displacement in island states, the same will

be occurring at various places in the western world, further complicating the resettlement process. One solution to this could be the early allotment or purchase of land for resettlement, a less likely solution is the possible ceding of sovereignty by potentially effected states to a larger state in agreement for a guaranteed refuge. A third, unlikely solution could be a federation or confederation of Pacific Island states with an agreement on resettlement. The current political climate in the Pacific and policy capacity of many Pacific Island states makes this highly unrealistic, especially considering the role likely needed to be played by Fiji for such a scheme.

The policy implementation and planning of many Pacific Island states is, when compared to the west, inadequate and poor. Serious question need to be asked, particularly of Tuvalu and Kiribati, the two Pacific Island states most threatened by resettlement, as to their plans and abilities for facing resettlement.

Some attention has been given to seasonal work schemes as a method for addressing the threat of resettlement. This is highly questionable. There are three major flaws with such ideas, including a short term fix, possible 'brain drain' from island states, and the amount of remittance money returning to the islands. Working visas are not a valid method of establishing a community in a new location as they are usually seasonal or short-term, while permanent residency or citizenship for those eligible could create a 'brain drain' on states that can least afford it. Also, if a large amount of money is being returned as remittance, there is less to be used in establishing a base and for the eventual resettlement should it need to be privately funded. In all likelihood, states, inter-governmental



organisations and non-governmental organisations would need to absorb most of the cost for any resettlement. The reaction of larger states and international organisations will be observed with great interest, as they may well not act until the opportunity for adequate planning has passed.

### Recent Developments

On June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009, it was announced that the Banaban community had been investigating the possibility of rehabilitating Banaba, with a view to many more of the population being able to live on their ancestral and cultural homeland. Plans for rehabilitation include removal of old machinery, tanks and scrap metal, removal of limestone pinnacles, export of crushed limestone, secondary mining of remaining phosphate, securing a fresh water supply, and environmental restoration enabling crops and trees to grow again (Pacnews 2009b; King 2009b personal communication). The exercise is expected to cost roughly AU\$50 million and take 20 years to complete.

It is unclear at this stage of an exact timeline for this rehabilitation, but it will hopefully provide, at some stage, a chance to utilise, or at least test, the model developed in this thesis.

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