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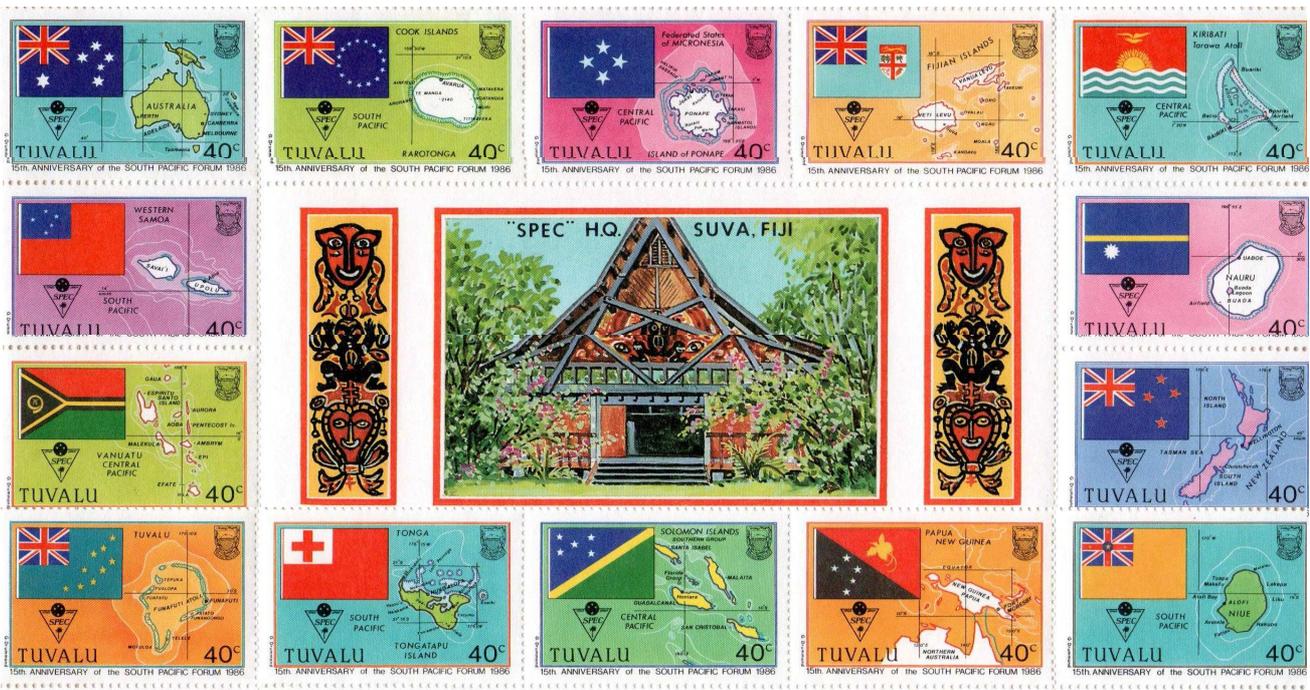
INFORMATIONENSTELLE

Pazifik-Informationsstelle, Hauptstr. 2, 91564 Neuendettelsau.

Telefon: +49 (0) 9874/91220. Info@Pazifik-Infostelle.org. www.pazifik-infostelle.org.

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Fiji's Suspension from the Pacific Islands Forum



The Suspension of Unity

Autor: Oliver Hasenkamp

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Anmerkung der Redaktion:

Das hier vorliegende Dossier enthält eine Abschlussarbeit im Studiengang Politikwissenschaften an der Freien Universität Berlin. Der Autor führt in das Dossier im folgenden Vorwort ein.

Das Dossier ist in englischer Sprache.

Zum Autor: Oliver Hasenkamp hat Politikwissenschaft an der Freien Universität Berlin, der Universität Potsdam und der University of Auckland in Neuseeland studiert. Er hat sich in seinem Studium insbesondere mit regionaler Zusammenarbeit in Ozeanien und mit den Einflussmöglichkeiten der pazifischen Inselstaaten in der internationalen Politik befasst. Derzeit arbeitet er für die Königlich Thailändische Botschaft in Deutschland. Seit 2012 ist er Mitglied im Vorstand des Pazifik-Netzwerk e.V. Außerdem ist er seit 2011 Mitglied im Vorstand der Deutschen Gesellschaft für die Vereinten Nationen, Landesverband Berlin-Brandenburg e.V.

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1 Introduction

Since 1987 Fiji was affected by several military coups. After the 2006 military take-over the major political organization in Oceania, the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), for the first time ever decided to sanctify a member by suspending Fiji from participation until democracy was restored. This is remarkable because Fiji is one of the most prominent regional actors and not least also host of the Secretariat of the Pacific Islands Forum. In 2005 Stewart Firth wrote in regard to another coup that took place in 2000 that Australia as the most powerful regional player “was unwilling to impose broad-ranging sanctions” against Fiji and that “given Fiji’s political position in the Pacific”, sanctions would suck down “countries like Kiribati, Samoa, Tuvalu and Tonga with Fiji” (Firth 2005: 93). What changed since 2000 and how does the suspension affect the system of regional cooperation in Oceania? How do the small islands states behave to avoid to be sucked down with Fiji? What role does Australia and New Zealand as major regional actors play and how do they handle ongoing accusations of neo-colonial interference in the islands states by Fiji?

Being once strong allies in the promotion of regionalism, Fiji, and Australia and New Zealand nowadays became the major opponents in the region because of Fiji’s political situation and the consequent suspension from the Pacific Islands Forum.

The suspension of Fiji is likely to have strengthened the idea of democracy in the region, while other norms of cooperation might weaken. However, the recent suspension was not effective in realizing its aims so far as it was not able to push Fiji back to democracy and thus is likely to become another example for the wide held view that sanctions are ineffective (see e.g. Drezner 1999: 11; Doxey 1987: 92). Nonetheless, the suspension has a lot of *effects* on regional cooperation. As Firth already suggested for the situation after the 2000 coup, “[t]here is good reason to believe that” sanctions would not help to “restore democracy to Fiji any faster”, but “indeed could even have the reverse effect” (Firth 2005: 93). More generally it has been argued that “[s]anctions can have serious unintended consequences” (Cortright/Lopez 2000: 4). Does the suspension of Fiji have the unintended consequence of threatening the whole system of regional cooperation? How does Fiji’s suspension affect the willingness and ability of countries in the region to work together?

This thesis will try to analyze the impacts of Fiji's suspension on regional cooperation in Oceania, a region that is often ignored in international scientific research, even though it consists of a huge number of independent states and can provide interesting insights into cooperation, as many of the states are comparably small and vulnerable and thus relying in a special way on cooperation. Fiji's suspension furthermore is interesting, because Fiji is an important historical promoter of regionalism in Oceania and the suspension is the first sanction by the Pacific Islands Forum ever.

2 Theory of Cooperation

Regional cooperation can be simply defined as *the process of interacting and working together of various nations of a regional system in the pursuit of realizing a common goal or interest*. For our purpose, we will regard cooperation not as a clear distinction between cooperation on one side and defection on the other, as often done in theory, but as a *scale* with different *degrees of cooperation* that also can be termed as the *depth of cooperation* (McGillivray/Smith 2005: 640; see also Tjosvold 1984: 746).

What makes cooperation so important in Oceania is the considerable smallness of most states. Arohia Durie writes that "[s]mall island nations carry little political clout unless they stand together on matters of common interest [...]." (Durie 2010: 66) Thus we will assume that the islands countries *need* to cooperate in several ways. But how are the patterns of cooperation and the willingness to cooperate regionally changing under the given situation of Fiji being suspended?

Already in 1985 Richard Herr stated in a paper about future scenarios for Pacific regionalism that the "dynamics of current internal pressures on intergovernmental cooperation" could "result in a reduced level of regionalism" (Herr 1985: 5). Further on, he argued that "[s]uch factors include the willingness of governments throughout the region to work together, the perceived viability of alternatives to regionalism, and the apparent success or failure of existing regional arrangements." (Herr 1985: 5) Following Herr this thesis will use the *willingness of governments to work together*, the *viability of alternatives* and the situation of *regional arrangements* as criteria to analyze the impacts on regional cooperation.

Willingness to work together

The *willingness of countries to work together* for our purpose is the most important variable. According to Robert Axelrod and Robert Keohane this factor also can be termed the *mutuality of interest* (Axelrod/Keohane 1986: 228). States cooperate because they have similar interests they want to achieve together. Axelrod and Keohane write that "the greater the conflict of interest between the players, the greater the likelihood that the players would in fact choose to defect." (Axelrod/Keohane 1986: 228)

In other words, if the *mutuality of interest* declines, also cooperation will decline. What is important to note is that "mutuality of interests is not based simply upon objective factors, but is grounded upon the actors' perceptions of their own interests." (Axelrod/Keohane 1986: 229) Perceptions can be created by others and can become your own perceptions by time. Thus important regional leaders might be able to influence the perception of interest of certain states.

It is also important for the promotion of cooperation that actors "will meet each other again" and are able "to recognize each other from the past" (Axelrod 1984: 125, 139 et seq.). It is important for cooperating countries to be able to assess each other's actions. If the continuity of cooperation and the ability to assess each other's action is interrupted, for instance through the suspension or through undemocratic governmental change in Fiji, this will lead to a lower level of cooperation in future. In other words we can say that states very basically have to trust each other for cooperation. Moreover, Dean Tjosvold argued that "[i]n cooperation, the positive value given to each other's effective behavior is generalized to a positive attitude toward each other." (Tjosvold 1984: 746)

Consequently the tone and *rhetoric of cooperation* can be analyzed to measure the *degree of cooperation*. This argument is not to say that countries cooperating in a certain issue-area generally act in a friendly manner towards each other or countries with a friendly attitude always cooperate (Axelrod 1984: 7), but the higher the *degree of cooperation*, the more likely is a general "friendliness" in states attitudes towards each other. Changes in "friendliness" are closely connected with changes in the *willingness to cooperate*.

Situation of Existing Regional Arrangements

Regional arrangements, such as regimes, institutions or organizations such as the Pacific Islands Forum are outcomes of regional cooperation. Simultaneously they can act as important promoters of cooperation (Krasner 1983: 1 et seq.; Axelrod/Keohane 1986: 249; Rittberger/Zangl 2006: 23). Axelrod and Keohane state that “[a]ny interaction takes place in the context of norms that are shared, often implicitly, by the participants.” (Axelrod/Keohane 1986: 238)

Such norms can both encourage and discourage cooperation. If such norms change in their importance, become less coherent with behaviour or are in a process of change, this deeply affect existing regional arrangements based on these norms (Krasner 1983: 5). They provide frameworks for cooperation, play an important role for the ability of countries to assess the outcomes and also determine much of the costs of cooperation. Some norms, such as democracy, are likely to be strengthened over the suspension of Fiji, while others are weakened. What is important here to clarify in regard to Herr’s assumption is that changes in existing regional arrangements not necessarily have to lead to a declining level of regionalism; they also can constitute higher, more legitimated or accountable levels of cooperation.

A suspension is a certain kind of *sanction*: a sanction that is aimed against the participation of a certain member in institutions or organizations. Based on Oran R. Youngs assumption of *imposed regimes* (Young 1983) the suspension itself can be regarded as part of the regional arrangements. International Regimes were defined by Stephen D. Krasner in 1983 “as principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given issue-area.”(Krasner 1983: 1) Imposed regimes are forced by one group upon another group of countries against their will. The norms underlying such a regime can be competing with other norms (Rittberger/Zangl 2006: 21). According to basic statements of models of economic coercion that can also be applied to our case of a suspension of participation, “[c]oercion alters the allocation of benefits by imposing costs on both the sender and target countries.” (Drezner 1999: 4) Sanctions shall “demonstrate a willingness and capacity” to act (Barber 1979: 380). Do the Pacific Islands Forum and its member states really show this willingness and capacity?

How do the regional states act in accordance to changing allocations of costs and benefits? And consequently, is the suspension only imposed upon Fiji or also upon other states not backing the suspension?

Alternatives

Like effects on *existing regional arrangements* the perceived *viability of alternatives* is in many ways a result of the *mutuality of interests*. Assuming that the states of Oceania need a certain degree of collaboration, alternatives to regional cooperation evolve when there is the likelihood – or perception – of receiving greater benefits from other forms of team play, such as cooperation with non-regional actors. This just can be the result of increasing benefits from these other forms of collaboration and indeed international cooperation can go hand in hand with regional one, as a number of international cooperation programmes of the Pacific Islands Forum show (Gieler 2010: 275), but it also can be the result of regional cooperation not satisfying the countries needs for receiving cooperation gains anymore.

2.1 Hypotheses

This thesis argues that the suspension of Fiji deeply impacts the constitution of regional cooperation in Oceania. First, it is assumed that the suspension impacts the *willingness of states to work together* as it creates pressures and conflicts inside the region by emerging new and re-emerging old issues of conflict. Further this is expected to have impacts on the *existing regional arrangements* as the suspension changes the traditional patterns and concepts of regional cooperation in Oceania. Finally it is embraced that the suspension leads to the evolution of *alternatives* to regional cooperation.

3 The Pacific Islands Forum

Table 1:
Members of the Pacific Islands Forum

Australia
Cook-Islands
Federated States of Micronesia
Fiji (<i>suspended</i>)
Kiribati
Marshall-Islands
Nauru
New Zealand
Niue
Palau
Papua New-Guinea
Samoa
Solomon-Islands
Tonga
Tuvalu
Vanuatu
Associated Members: French Polynesia, Kanaky (New Caledonia)
Observers: Wallis & Futuna, East Timor, Tokelau

The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) was founded in 1971 to address the lack of political discussion in the South Pacific Commission (SPC) that was felt by many newly independent Pacific Islands countries. The Forum is designed as an annual high-level meeting (New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1996: 3), with a representation that “is almost always at the level of Head of Government. There is no higher regional authority.” (Neemia 1986: 26)

Over the years the PIF established a number of associated Forum-organizations and additional meetings (see New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1996: 19 et seq. / Haas 1989: 103 et seq.). In 1988 an administrative Secretariat was officially established in the Fijian capital Suva as the successor of the Forum founded *Pacific Bureau for Economic Cooperation*, which acted as the organizations Secretariat between 1972 and 1988 (New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1996: 6 et seq.). The Secretariat is headed by a Secretary-General, since 2008 Tuiloma Neroni Slade from Samoa.

4 Fiji's Political Situation

● **“The Pacific is not always pacific; its hub nation, Fiji, is run by the army. Nor is it, for most of its inhabitants, the paradise the holiday posters present.”** ● (Rowan Callick, *Asia-Pacific Editor, The Australian*)¹

Fiji is affected by ethnic conflicts between indigenous Fijians (*i-taukei*) and Fijians of Indian descent, whose ancestors were brought to Fiji as labourers by the former British colonizers.

When in 1987 a moderate pro *Fiji-Indian* government was elected the country was hit by two ethno-nationalist military coups.² In 2000, when for the first time a Prime Minister of Indian descent was elected, an armed group took over power of parliament, holding politicians hostage for two months, until the military intervened.³

The 2006 military-takeover and its aftermath

Another military take-over took place in December 2006 and the military replaced Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase after his government tried to release the 2000 coup-makers from prison. In January 2007 the military leader, Voreqe (“Frank”) Bainimarama declared himself Prime Minister.⁴

In 2009 the High Court of Fiji condemned the military take-over and decided to pass the power back to the democratically elected parliament, but since there was no authority to implement this decision against the will of the military, President Ratu Josefa Iloilo – who was appointed himself by Bainimarama – dismissed all judges, abrogated the constitution and re-appointed Bainimarama to Prime Minister (Norton 2009: 65, 66).

In contrast to the earlier coups the 2006 take-over was “bloodless and remarkably slowly and publicly executed” (Moore via *Editor’s Note* in Ratuva 2007a: 2006). Even though the power was in contrary to earlier coups not passed back to

¹ Callick 2010;

² For further information about the 1987 coups and their preface please consult for example: Lal 2006: 49 et seq.; Norton 2009: 57, 58; Firth/Fraenkel 2007;

³ For further information about the 2000 coup and its preface please consult for example: Lal 2000; Lal/Pretes 2001; Robertson/Sutherland 2001; Lal 2006: 185 et seq.; Norton 2009: 58, 59; Firth/Fraenkel 2007;

⁴ For further information about the 2006 coup and its preface please consult for example Fraenkel 2007; Firth/Fraenkel 2007; Norton 2007;

democracy so far, the interim government officially has a “roadmap” back to democracy. The *Peoples Charter for Change, Peace & Progress* aims to end racism and corruption as well as to implement “good governance” (Narsey 2009: 339; National Council for Building a Better Fiji 2008). Firth and Fraenkel even termed the coup as a “good governance coup” because of these positive objectives of the army (Firth/Fraenkel 2009: 3 et seq.). However, the interim government stands clear that there will be no democratic elections before 2014, which was even questioned in 2010 (Chand, S. 2010a), and it is argued to the point by Robert Norton that “the major political reality in Fiji now is the fact of military-backed rule, whatever its proclaimed agenda” (Norton 2007: 417).

5 The Suspension: An Imposed Regime

• **“It is with considerable sorrow and disappointment that I confirm the suspension of the current military regime in the Republic of the Fiji Islands, from full participation in the Pacific Islands Forum, with immediate effect from 2 May 2009.” •**

*(Toke Talagi, Prime Minister of Niue & Chair of the 2009 Pacific Islands Forum)*⁵

Port Moresby Decisions

In January 2009 the Forum set an ultimatum for democratic elections in Fiji on a *Leaders Special Retreat on Fiji* in the Papua New Guinean capital Port Moresby and decided to impose “targeted measures” under the *Biketawa Declaration* (see below) in form of a suspension of participation on Fiji, if the interim government was not to nominate a date for an election to be held before the end of December 2009 by the 1 May 2009 (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2009a). After Fiji let the deadline pass, it was finally suspended from the PIF in May 2009, until “a democratically elected, civilian parliamentary government is restored in Fiji”. Fiji keeps being member of the PIF, but is suspended from any direct participation (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2009a; Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2009b).

⁵ Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2009b;

Biketawa Declaration

The Biketawa Declaration was agreed upon in 2000 in Kiribati and is a formal *regime* dealing with good governance, the upholding of democratic processes and the safeguarding of security in the region. It recognizes the need for “action to be taken on the basis of all members of the Forum being part of the Pacific Islands extended family” in “time of crisis or in response to members’ request for assistance” (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2000: 1).

The declaration names the creation of working groups, third party mediation and some other mechanisms as possible instruments to deal with such crisis. However, if these measures fail to solve the crisis, further options “including if necessary targeted measures” shall be considered (Pacific Islands Forum secretariat 2000: 2; see also Angelo 2008: 68). There is nothing said in particular about a *suspension of participation*, but the Declaration directs all actions to be taken with a sufficient degree of consensus and cost-effectiveness, in discussion with the country concerned and with a credible, coherent and consistent strategy (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2000: 3; see also Angelo 2008: 68).

Imposed Regime

Fiji’s suspension from the Pacific Islands Forum can be regarded as an *imposed regime* (Young 1983). According to Oran Young, Krasner writes that “[d]ominant actors may explicitly use a combination of sanctions and incentives to compel other actors to act in conformity with a particular set of principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures.” (Krasner 1983: 15, 16) Fiji violated the basic principle of democracy the Pacific Islands Forum is based on, particularly enshrined in the *Pacific Plan* (see chapter 7.2). This is of special importance for Australia and New Zealand as the most powerful regional actors, which at least are accused by Fiji of being the major drives of the suspension (The Australian 2009a; TVNZ 2009).

6 Regional Leadership

It is argued by many that leadership plays a tremendous role in cooperation and the forming and upholding of institutions and regimes (Krasner 1983: 15, 16; Young 1992: 185 et seq.; Rittberger/Zangl 2006; Hasenclever et al. 1996: 187, 194 et seq.,). Leaders supply institutions with “the collective goods that are needed” for them “to function effectively” (Krasner 1983: 15). Leadership should not be understood solely as based on material power, but includes structural or intellectual leadership in promoting ideas (Hasenclever et al. 1996: 195).

6.1 Fiji

● **“In many respects, Fiji can be viewed as a regional centre in the South Pacific.”** ● *(Sandra Tarte, Director of Politics & International Affairs, University of the South Pacific)*⁶

Compared to other countries of the region Fiji is a considerably big country with a comparable huge population and economic strength and good infrastructure. Geographically it is located in the centre of the region, at the crossroads of the three cultural sub-regions of Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia⁷ (Waibel/Wolf 2010: 44, 49; Mückler 2008: 268).

Suva: Capital of the South Pacific?

Fiji’s capital city Suva is by far the biggest city in the Pacific Islands countries, not including the much bigger Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea at the edge of the region, and is not only location of the Secretariat of the Pacific Islands Forum, but also of many UN-agencies, non-governmental organizations and embassies that are on duty for the whole region as well as the main campus of the University of the South Pacific (Aikman 1988: 42; Crocombe 2008: 577 et seq.; Barnett/Campbell 2010: 158).

⁶ Tarte 1985: 26;

⁷ For further information about the sub-regions and a regional definition see Appendix 1;

Historical Importance

Even though Fiji's former Prime Minister Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara "was hesitant about organizing" the first Pacific Islands Forums meeting in Fiji and he "did not want to be seen as pushing Suva as the venue" for the Forum and other regional and international bodies (Mara 1997: 171; see also Tarte 1985: 43, 44), there evolved some suspicion in other countries against both Suva and Fiji attaining more and more regional importance (Neemia 1986: 106; Tarte 1985: 139). This is still of some importance for the relation between Fiji and Samoa, as we will see later on. However, Fiji played a tremendous role in the development of independent regionalism that was not driven by the former colonial powers and also was an important promoter of the *Pacific Way* as a regional identity within the Pacific Islands Forum (see chapter 7.1; Tarte 1985: 46 et seq.). Acquiring independence as one of the first countries in Oceania in 1970 and being the only Pacific Islands country in the United Nations Organisation after its independence, Fiji was often regarded internationally as a "spokesman" for the whole region (Tarte 1985: 42).

Fiji's Absence

Richard Melanson writes that while the *withdrawal* – in our case a forced one - of a member of a regional system from this system might even create a completely new regional system, it definitely is a disruption of continuity in the regional system (Melanson 1974: 29). Moreover, "the elimination of a member of a regional system by other members in the system [...] can effect the pattern of relations within a regional system" (Melanson 1974: 33).

Fiji's absence has an impact on the patterns of relations and as a leader its absence has an effect on the promotion of certain values and norms (see chapter 7) and the Pacific Islands Forum itself. Indeed, the suspension is also remarkable because Fiji is the host country of the Secretariat of the PIF. Richard Herr states that "[u]sing the forum to impose sanctions on Fiji has had an impact on the Pacific Islands' regional system dysfunctionally not least because Fiji is host state to the forum secretariat." (Herr 2010)

6.2 The Willingness to cooperate with Australia and New Zealand

• **“There’s a feeling there should be more Pacific in the Pacific.”** • (*Anote Tong, President of Kiribati*)⁸

In contrast to Fiji, Australia and to a lesser extent New Zealand⁹ are leaders more in terms of financial power than on an ideological basis. What divides Australia and New Zealand from the islands states is beside their size and their prosperity especially their today mainly European cultural background.

Australia and New Zealand are both major sponsors of the Pacific Islands Forum as well as important aid donors to individual islands states (New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1996: 9; Gieler 2010: 275). While Australia and New Zealand globally cannot be described as major players, they are even “superpowers” in regional affairs and their material power is much bigger than the one of Fiji (McDougall 2007: 278; Roberts 2009: 26). However, due to Australia’s and New Zealand’s ability to act more globally than many islands countries¹⁰ and therefore not to have entirely to concentrate on the Pacific Islands region like many islands states, and due to their moderate acting in the region for a long time, the development of other important regional players, like Fiji, was possible.

Fiji’s Way from supporting Australia & New Zealand to rejecting them

Australia’s and New Zealand’s role in Oceania already was discussed at the founding of the Pacific Islands Forum. Ironically it was Fiji, now the countries’ biggest opponent, who strongly argued for the inclusion of both states in the Forum. Fiji’s Prime Minister at the time of the founding of the PIF, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, wrote in his memoirs: “[...] the points were made that Australia and New Zealand were more developed countries and did not face the same

⁸ Fiji Sun 2010a;

⁹ For a more detailed analysis of Australia’s and New Zealand’s role in the region it is necessary to deal with them individually, but as both states act closely coordinated in regional security issues and drive a comparably homogenous agenda concerning Fiji, it is feasible to deal with them together here (Seed 2005; Bhattacharya/Dalay 2010: 101; Barringhorst 2010: 33). New Zealand generally is assumed to have a more positive image in most islands countries, partly because of the different treatment of its indigenous people, and more importantly because of New Zealand’s strong stance against nuclear tests in the region (Bhattacharya/Dalay 2010: 100, 101). Anyway, New Zealand “was a much harsher critic of Fiji” during earlier coups (Firth 2005: 93);

¹⁰ Australia and New Zealand for example are members of APEC and thus much more integrated into Asian affairs than the islands states (Baringhorst 2010: 33; Dalay/Bhattacharya 2010: 95, 96; McDougall 2007: 278 et seq.; Levine 2009: 147);

problems as the islands; they would dominate the Forum and jeopardise the interests of the islands. We debated late into the night, and as first I was alone in arguing that Australia and New Zealand should join. [...] However, I argued forcibly for their inclusion [...]. Happily this view prevailed, and Australia and New Zealand became members.” (Mara 1997: 171, 172; see also Tarte 1985: 12)

Nowadays, asked about Australia and New Zealand in the Pacific Islands Forum, Fiji’s interim Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama answered: “They crept in slowly like the proverbial camel, you know, with their head in, and then the front legs, and then the back legs, and all of a sudden the owners of the tent were out and they were inside the tent. I don’t think they should be in the Forum. They’re not Pacific islanders. That’s what grand chief said.” (ABC 2010)

“Cooperative Intervention”

Since the founding of the PIF there was always some discussion about Australia’s and New Zealand’s role in regional affairs (Crocombe 2008: 560), but they evolved in a new dimension during the last years and especially after Fiji’s suspension. Sinclair Dinner writes that after being “sensitive to charges of neo-colonialism and interference with national sovereignty” and letting “the states of the Southwest Pacific [...] control their own political and economic affairs”, there was “significant change in Australia’s strategic relations with the islands Pacific” due to the “adoption of a distinctly more robust and interventionist approach”, having its starting point in 2003 with the *Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands* (Dinner 2004: 1; see also Firth 2005: 94 et seq.; McDougall 2005: 129 et seq.; see chapter 7.1).

This is mainly because of Australia’s and New Zealand’s interest in stability, security and democracy in the region (Hobbs 2005; McDougall 2005: 128, 129). As close allies of the United States of America they are often regarded as “representatives” of the United States in the region (McDougall 2005: 131) and as such it is important for them to have a region of stability in their own backyard – the only region in which they are considered as “superpowers”.¹¹ This new approach, often

¹¹ This also concerns the issue of international terrorism as there have been controversial discussions about whether islands countries are potential targets or retreat areas for terrorists (Higgie 2005; Shibuya 2005; Firth 2005: 95, 96; Molloy 2002; Citizens’ Constitutional Forum 2004);

described as “cooperative intervention” (Peebles 2005: 49 et seq.) is characterized by greater interest of Australia – and New Zealand – in its Pacific neighbours, but “inevitably include[s] an element of risk. The style and tone of the messages emanating from Canberra have already generated resentment among some leaders in the region.” (Dinner 2004: 2) These resentments obviously deepened since Fiji’s suspension.

Trust & Friendliness

Fiji itself is not only accusing both countries of intervening in Pacific affairs and dividing the region (Chand, C. 2010a; Chand/Volau 2010; Janine 2010), but also of intervening in Fiji’s internal relations: Australia was accused of being responsible for the deferring of a meeting of the *Melanesian Spearhead Group* (MSG) in 2010 (see chapter 8.1) and for intervening in Fiji’s and MSG’s internal affairs, resulting in the expulsion of the Australian High Commissioner to the country, Sarah Roberts (Fiji Sun 2010c; Fiji Times 2010b; Chand, S. 2010b).^{12, 13}

However, what is remarkable about Fiji’s rhetoric against Australia and New Zealand is that many islands states seem to follow Fiji’s accusations. The scepticism against Australia and New Zealand cannot only be seen in the attendance of many islands countries in the Fijian-organized *Engaging the Pacific Meeting* (see chapter 8.2), but also in the behaviour and statements of many islands country leaders. Kiribati’s President Anote Tong for instance criticized Australia and New Zealand and publicly supported Fiji several times, saying that “there should be more Pacific in the Pacific” (Fiji Sun 2010a) and that “Fiji was and will remain the focal point of the Pacific region” (Lal 2010; see also Chand, C. 2010c). The Papua New Guinean Prime Minister Sir Michael Somare also argued that the Pacific was not divided over the issue of Fiji as he does not “consider Australia and New Zealand as Pacific Islands people” (Chand, C. 2010d).

¹² The expulsion was prolonged by others against Australian and New Zealand representatives in Fiji since the suspension (Waibel/Wolf 2010: 49; The Australian 2009b);

¹³ The relations are likely to further degrade over the very recent publication of leaked US cables by *Wikileaks* that include information about New Zealand spying on Fiji and passing secret information about the country to the United States of America (Islands Business 2010a);

Contrasting Dependencies

What makes this even more surprising is that especially small countries like Kiribati deeply rely on Australia and New Zealand. The latter ones' are important aid donators of the islands states and many of them even use Australian or New Zealand Dollar as their official currency (e.g. Werber 2010: 57; Zinggl 2010: 158). Most of the islands states do not maintain an own army and their defence is, in many cases, also guaranteed by either Australia or New Zealand, who provide patrol boats to secure the eventually large maritime territories of the islands states and offer different kind of defence cooperation (Merchant 1989: 74, 75; Werber 2010: 57, 58; Zinggl 2010: 157; Hoadley 1992:108).

Yet in particular these small states are also heavily dependent on Fiji. Jon Barnett and John Campbell write that some Pacific Islands countries are depending on both "Fiji and metropolitan countries for higher levels of service such as tertiary education and major surgery." (Barnett/Campbell 2010: 158)

In terms of education the *University of the South Pacific (USP)*, located with its main campus in Suva, still makes Fiji the *focal point of the region*. Furthermore countries like Tuvalu only have two flights a week to



Samoa Observer, 2009

Suva and none to any other country, which creates further dependencies: Australia and New Zealand are quite far away and to get there, Fiji anyway has to be at least a connecting stop-over.

Cognitivists argue that uncertainties are born out of "the inability of politicians to assess the likely consequences of their own decisions", which will lead to a declining degree of cooperation (Hasenclever et al. 1996: 206). As most of the islands countries, especially the smallest ones, are reliable on both Fiji, and Australia and New Zealand and do have to work closely together with both, the suspension forces them to decide between two sides they both are dependent on. The states are

confused and challenged by this *contrasting dependencies* and contrary tries to influence their strategies. They are caught in uncertainties and are unable to effectively assess the consequences of their decisions regarding Fiji's suspension as they always will annoy either Fiji or Australia and New Zealand. Smaller states are unable to completely back the suspension, because the cost of doing so is too high for them. Following Youngs approach of *imposed regimes* the costs of upholding the suspension for the whole regional system will further increase, as the powerful countries driving the suspension, namely Australia and New Zealand, are not able to persuade "subordinate actors to accept the order as legitimate" (Young 1983: 105).

Changing Climate

There exists not only interdependency between actors, but also between issues (Keohane/Nye 1977: 29 et seq.). Axelrod and Keohane argue that there is a linkage between different issues of cooperation (Axelrod/Keohane 1986: 239). This is important for the evolving scepticism against Australia and New Zealand in some islands states. Most of the small islands states are among the most vulnerable states to global climate change, in particular to sea level rise (Barnett/Campbell 2010: 1 et seq.). The islands states are disappointed by Australia's and New Zealand's stance in international climate change negotiations, accusing them of not supporting their vulnerable neighbours and even "questioning Australia's right to belong in the forum given its disregard for island issues" (Barnett/Campbell 2010: 107 et seq.). Furthermore they accused the states of misusing and straining "the consensus-based decision making in the forum" on the issue of climate change (Barnett/Campbell 2010: 107), while being not very eager to uphold the principle over the issue of Fiji (see chapter 7.1).

Fiji's interim Prime Minister Bainimarama shrewdly uses this vulnerability and disappointment to try to divide the islands states from Australia and New Zealand and told the Australian TV channel ABC: "When you [Australia and New Zealand] vote in the UN, you vote for different issues altogether. When you take us to go and talk about climate change, you're fighting on a different base, you're fighting for something else, not us." (ABC 2010)

The lack of *mutuality of interest* regarding climate change now seems to be reflected in the issue of the suspension, as well. Trust in Australia and New Zealand and “friendliness” towards both countries that already declined over the issue of climate change seems to further decline over the issue of the suspension as many states, which will become obvious also in the following chapters, now take a clear stance in supporting Fiji as a leader in the region. This can be seen as a result of a declining *willingness to cooperate* with Australia and New Zealand among many states. The *perception of interests* in many states concerning the suspension seems to be differing between different regional actors, partly because of hard factors, like dependencies on Fiji, partly because of Fiji’s *rhetoric of unity* against Australia and New Zealand.

6.3 Samoa: Replacing Fiji?

• “[A] country that is ruled by dictatorship regime is quite the opposite of what the Forum stands for. And therefore [...] we should not continue to have the Forum secretariat in Fiji.” • (*Tuila’epa Sailele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister of Samoa*)¹⁴

Samoa is perhaps the only state in the region that could challenge Fiji’s role as an islands states leader. Like Fiji, Samoa is geographical comparably central to the region. Its capital city Apia is one of the few cities of the region that acquired the headquarters of a couple of regional and international programmes (Carmilla 2010: 139). Samoa’s attempts from the early times of regionalism to establish itself instead of Fiji as the regional hub, including confrontation with Fiji that was accused of acquiring regional organizations only for its own benefit (Carmilla 2010: 139, 140; Crocombe 2008: 577 et seq.), re-emerged after the suspension of Fiji. Samoa started to lobby for the headquarters of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat to be moved to Apia because of Fiji’s suspension (Radio New Zealand International 2010).

¹⁴Radio New Zealand International 2010;

The clash between Samoa and Fiji is even pushed by the fact that the current Secretary General of the PIF, Tuiloma Neroni Slade, who was personally hold responsible for the suspension by the Fiji interim government (Samoa Observer 2010), is Samoan, and by personal constraints between Bainimarama and Samoa's Prime Minister Tuila'epa Sailele Malielegaoi, highlighted by verbal exchange of highly emotional, occasionally very personal statements between the two leaders.¹⁵ This re-emerging conflict between Fiji and Samoa over regional importance is likely to impact the regional system lastingly, even if Fiji moves back to democracy and the suspension from the PIF is lifted.

7 A Move towards Sanctions: Turning away from the Pacific Way?

7.1 Cost Effectiveness & the *Pacific Way*

● **“Unity not of a few, but for all Forum countries [is] the real meaning of the Pacific Way. [...] The Forum has overcome diversity, and will overcome diversion, in the name of unity.”** ●

*(Tuiloma Neroni Slade, Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum)*¹⁶

In 2005 the Asian Development Bank (ADB) still wrote in a report about the Pacific Islands Forum that one of the reasons for the organization's success was the comparable low cost of regionalism. The report states that the Forum did not limit the sovereignty of its member states or put sanctions in place for countries not following mutual decisions taken by the Forum (Asian Development Bank 2005: 46f.). Ron Crocombe also wrote in 2008 that “[h]armony [in the Pacific Islands Forum] has often been achieved by [even] avoiding contentious issues within countries.” (Crocombe 2008: 560)

Was this true for the way the Forum dealt with the earlier coups in Fiji, this approach now seems to belong to the past since the suspension of Fiji. The “consensual approach that offers no substantive challenge to its members”, which

¹⁵ See appendix 3;

¹⁶ Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2010;

was mainly responsible for the low cost of regionalism and in which the ADB sees resting “the durability of the Forum” (Asian Development Bank: 47) is the concept of the *Pacific Way*. Since its foundation the Pacific Islands Forum – as well as the whole system of regional cooperation – was not only based on this *Pacific Way*, but was itself the most important promoter of this concept (Crocombe 1976; Tarte 1985: 47).

The *Pacific Way* was described by Michael Haas as a “norm of diplomacy” based on unity, a sense of cultural affinity, equal treatment and informal incrementalism (Haas 1989: 16, 17). This “Pan-Pacific ideology” (Gregory Fry, cited by Tarte 1985: 47) is characterized by consensus, solidarity, Pacific brotherhood, the rejection of colonialism and the upholding of traditional Pacific customs (Crocombe 1976).

There is no written agreement and it has been said that the exact content of the Pacific Way is argumentative (Crocombe 1976: 2, 3). According to Young, the concept of the *Pacific Way* and regimes, institutions or organizations based on it thus cannot be regarded as transparent, which emerges problems for the ability to assess other actor’s actions (Young 1992: 176; Balsiger et al. 2004: 153).

RAMSI: First step towards a new approach

The attitude towards dealing with *contentious issues within countries* already changed a couple of years before the 2006 Fiji coup over the late Solomon Islands conflict, when in 2003 the Pacific Islands Forum set up the *Regional Assistances Mission to the Solomon Islands* (RAMSI), compound of military, police and civil personnel. As Hegarty lines out, “the RAMSI intervention undoubtedly represents a significant policy change for the Australian government” (Hegarty 2005: 56), that was the major drive of RAMSI (Moore 2007: 175, 193).¹⁷ Admittedly there are some differences between RAMSI and Fiji’s suspension: RAMSI was not only “welcomed by all” involved groups, but the intervention was explicitly requested by the Solomon Islands government (Moore 2007: 175). RAMSI was “never intended to replace the government”, but to “strengthen the government’s ability to operate” (Moore 2007: 175) and the ADB regards RAMSI as an activity complementing “the sovereign activities of its members” (Asian Development Bank 2005: 46). Consequently Fiji’s suspension took place on a different dimension: the

¹⁷ For more information about RAMSI please consult for example: Moore 2007; Hegarty 2005: 55 et seq.;

action was by far not commonly welcomed by all forces in Fiji, it was completely rejected by the interim government and particularly aimed against this government.

The Pacific Way – A Changing Norm

The *Pacific Way* promotes the idea of a common regional identity (Tarte 1985: 48). According to Volker Rittberger and Bernhard Zangl values and norms do not only “direct the action of actors but constitute an ideational structure, which in turn constitutes actors’ interests and even identities.” (Rittberger/Zangl 2006: 21)

Stephen Krasner defines norms, which are important elements of regimes and institutionalized regional cooperation, as “standards of behavior defined in terms of right and obligations” (Krasner 1983: 2).

The new approach of interventions and sanctions is contrary to the consensus- and unity-based concept of the *Pacific Way*. It thus is partly even contrary to the identities and interests created by this *ideational structure* and change the whole concept of regional cooperation. This is closely connected with the *uncertainties* of many small islands states that were discussed in the previous chapter. This especially is true from the perspective of *Normative Idealism*, which suggests that there are “different competing values and norms”, promoted by different societies (Rittberger/Zangl 2006: 21). Because of their different cultural background Australia and New Zealand as regional leaders might not be interested in upholding all elements of the *Pacific Way* and are likely to be not encouraged in doing so, since Fiji is using the *Pacific Way* in its rhetoric exclusionary as an argument against both countries (e.g. Chand/Volau 2010; Chand, C. 2010b). Fiji tries to keep on promoting the concepts’ values in its rhetoric and, as the following chapter will show, some countries seem to support this. Nonetheless, the suspension does not only challenge the *ideational structure* of the Pacific Way, but Fiji’s absence as an leader promoting the concept inside the Pacific Islands Forum further increases the likelihood of ongoing norm change in the Pacific.

7.2 The *Pacific Plan*: Democracy and Stability

● **“Leaders believe the Pacific region can, should and will be a region of peace, harmony, security and economic prosperity, so that all of its people can lead free and worthwhile lives.”** ● (*Leaders’ Vision, Auckland Declaration*)¹⁸

In contrary to the *Pacific Way* the ideas of democracy and stability in the region were strengthened. These principles particularly are enshrined in the *Pacific Plan*, a seminal document agreed upon in 2005 envisioning future perspectives for Pacific development and regionalism as well as coordination between different regional organizations. The plan is based on the four pillars of *economic strength, sustainable development, good governance* and *security*; it explicitly recognizes the importance of democracy and political stability (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2005) and was in particular “initiated and moulded by politicians and officials in Wellington and Canberra” (Crocombe 2008: 562).

Was the plan sometimes criticized to be weakly implemented or concentrated too much on so called “western” ideas of stability (e.g. Huffer 2006a), its principles – particularly democracy – and its coherent implementation definitely got strengthened over the decision to suspend Fiji from the Pacific Islands Forum, because of the country’s violation of the aim of upholding democracy.¹⁹

However, Elise Huffer argued that the plan lacks a cultural foundation that promotes regionalism such as the *Pacific Way* does: “Pacific Island countries have traditionally sought to make cultural identity the foundation of regionalism and [...] it is in their best interest to continue to build on this approach [...]” (Huffer 2006b: 44)

While the ideas of informality and non-bindingness weakened, the ideas of democracy, accountability and compliance with the Forum’s principles were strengthened. Fiji’s reluctance to move quickly back to democracy enabled a new kind of accountability of regionalism, the Forum showed consistency, stressed the importance of democracy in the region and seems to act more like a powerful organization than a consultation forum, now. The Pacific Plan proofed firm assertion

¹⁸The Auckland Declaration initiated the Pacific Plan and the quoted vision is recalled in the introduction of the Pacific Plan (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2007: 2);

¹⁹ On the other side, the fact of the military take-over itself obviously rinsed this principle;

in the case of Fiji's suspension. This can encourage deeper regionalism in future. Simultaneously the new attitude towards sanctions dramatically increased the "cost" of regionalism, may overstrain the PIF and dilutes the traditional concept of the "Pacific Way" that was an important promoter of regional cooperation so far.

8 Alternative Pathways

● **"Fiji is a test of solidarity for the Forum as it moves between seeking to censor Fiji for cancelling democratic elections and supporting it until Fiji returns to the democratic fold."** ● *(Arohia Durie, Indigenous New Zealand Scientist)*²⁰

8.1 Sub-Regionalism: The Melanesian Spearhead Group

As a country at the crossroad of Melanesia and Polynesia benefiting as a regional hub most from region-wide cooperation, Fiji was critically against sub-regional movements in the early time of regionalism (Crocombe 2008: 558, 563), highlighted by the decision of the former Fijian Prime Minister Ratu Kamisese Mara not to join the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG), probably the most important sub-regional group at least until July 2010.

Richard Herr described sub-regionalism already in 1985 as "[p]erhaps the primary internal impediment to regional action" (Herr 1985: 5) that "might inhibit the willingness of the island nations to work together extensively on a region-wide basis" (Herr 1985: 6).

Fiji's New Focus on the MSG

Even though Fiji joined the MSG later on after the first military coup in 1987 (Crocombe 2008: 558), it was especially after the possibility of Fiji's suspension from the PIF started to become discussed in the region that Fiji put in a comparable short period of time extreme pressures on sub-regionalism. The Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) evolved as an informal sub-regional group of Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu in 1983 (Crocombe 2008: 563). While there was signed a Trade Agreement between these states in 1993,

²⁰ Durie 2010: 70;

later also joined by Fiji (Melanesian Spearhead Group 1993; Crocombe 2008: 563), the group was not established formally with a secretariat before 2007 (Melanesian Spearhead Group 2007). Even though not yet suspended from the Forum, the move to formalize the MSG already can be seen as a step pushed by Fiji to respond to increasing opposition at the PIF in the aftermath of the 2006 military take-over. In contrast to the Pacific Islands Forum, the Melanesian Spearhead Group officially supported Fiji and its interim government (ABC 2009), which deepened constraints between the Melanesian countries and other regional actors, especially Australia, New Zealand and some Polynesian states such as Samoa.

Another Victim of Fiji? – The Sudden End of End of Melanesian Sub-Regionalism

The situation totally changed when the outgoing chair of the MSG, Vanuatu's Prime Minister Edward Natapei, cancelled a meeting of the group planned in Fiji in July 2010 because of the political situation in Fiji. The reaction of Fiji was harsh, perhaps showing the high importance sub-regionalism and "Melanesian solidarity" gained for the country in the aftermath its suspension from the Forum.²¹ Fiji's interim government accused Australia of having influenced Vanuatu's decision with the payment of development aid and of undermining "Melanesian solidarity" (Chand, S. 2010b/Fiji Sun 2010c). While Fiji replaced the cancelled MSG-Meeting with an own meeting (see next chapter), Bainimarama declared that "[t]here will be no more meeting of any kind with the MSG" (Fiji Times 2010a).²²

These events show that especially the Melanesian states were not interested in Fiji's suspension and provided an alternative for Fiji to engage at least sub-regionally with some countries of Oceania, which impacted region-wide collaboration. However, the threat of sub-regionalism for region-wide cooperation seems to have collapsed at least temporarily.

²¹ Steven Ratuva, political scientist at the University of Auckland, said in an interview that the cancellation of the meeting has deep impacts on Fiji as "Fiji had been relying on the Spearhead Group as a possible ally" and the cancellation is a "huge slur on Fiji's ambition to [...] re-articulate its position within regional politics" (Fiji Sun 2010c);

²² However, at the moment there are plans underway for an official "Reconciliation Meeting" of the MSG, including an official apology by Vanuatu's Prime Minister (FijiSun 2010b);

8.2 Engaging Fiji or the Pacific: The “Friends of Fiji”-Meeting

Table 2:
Participation in the *Engaging the Pacific*-Meeting²³

Country	Participation	Participant
Australia	No	-
Cook Islands	No	-
Federated States of Micronesia	Yes	Governmental Representative
Kiribati	Yes	President
Marshall Islands	Yes	Governmental Representative
Nauru	Yes	Governmental Representative
New Zealand	No	-
Niue	No	-
Palau	No	-
Papua New Guinea	Yes	Prime Minister + Min. for Foreign Affairs
Samoa	No	-
Solomon Islands	Yes	Prime Minister
Tonga	Yes	Min. for Training, Youth, Employment & Sports
Tuvalu	Yes	Prime Minister
Vanuatu	Yes	Min. for Foreign Affairs

After the MSG-Meeting in Fiji was deferred, Fiji announced to hold the meeting anyway, even though not under the umbrella of the MSG. Fiji invited leaders from the whole region, not only from Melanesia, to attend the conference, first labelled

²³ Sources: Ministry of Information 2010b, Rasoqosoqo 2010;

as “Friends-of-Fiji”-Meeting. Later on the title was changed to “Engaging Fiji”, before the meeting finally was held as the “Engaging the Pacific”-Meeting (Radio Australia News 2010; Fiji Ministry of Information 2010a; Fiji Ministry of Information 2010b). The final name change has to be seen in context of the – probably even for Fiji itself – surprising high attendance.²⁴ While the meeting was condemned by Australia, New Zealand and Samoa, many regional leaders spontaneously announced their attendance. Even Vanuatu, which’s Prime Minister cancelled the originally planned MSG-meeting, sent its Minister for Foreign Affairs. Particularly significant is the attendance of Tuvalu’s former Prime Minister Apisai Ielemia, who did not participate in the 2010 Pacific Islands Forum only a couple of weeks later because of an upcoming election (Baselala 2010; Maclellan 2010).

The meeting showed that there is a widely held disposition to keep on talking and working together with Fiji – and consequently not completely backing the suspension. There still seems to be a *willingness to cooperate* with Fiji despite its suspension from the PIF, while Australia’s and New Zealand’s calls not to attend were ignored by the participating states. Keeping in mind the critical statements against Australia and New Zealand that were discussed earlier, many of them taken in context of the *Engaging the Pacific*-Meeting, it can even be said that Fiji was at least partly able to isolate Australia and New Zealand, while itself stepping out of the isolation for at least a couple of days. What makes the meeting a threatening alternative to the Pacific Islands Forum is the decision by the participants to hold the meeting annually in future (Chand, C. 2010b).

8.3 International Alternatives

It is not a new phenomenon that non-regional states play a very important role in Oceania. After a long period of European and American influence, especially Asia becomes increasingly important (Crocombe 2007; Crocombe 2005: 158, 159)²⁵. This thesis cannot provide an extensive analysis of this topic and it would be misleading to assume that only the suspension of Fiji leads countries to intensify

²⁴ It may also apply that the final title is an allusion to a seminal Australian document on regionalism called “A Pacific Engaged” that has been described as marking the new era of interest, but also interventionalism by Australia for the Pacific region (Dinner 2004: 2);

²⁵ In this context it also has been argued that Asian countries are encouraging sub-regionalism more than western aid donors, which always were interested in region-wide cooperation (Crocombe 2008: 563);

their non-regional cooperation and that this always has to be contrary to regional cooperation. Anyway, extra-regional cooperation provides alternatives to Fiji and other islands states that are unwilling to bear the costs of Fiji's suspension in regionalism.

Melanson writes that if "focuses of the [regional system's] members' foreign policies are shifted from intra-regional concerns to extra-regional interests [...], then we may say that the regional system has undergone a 'transformation'." (Melanson 1974: 33) Bainimarama said in an interview with ABC that Fiji have "had closer ties with the Russians and the Chinese over the last four years than we've ever done with the Australian." (ABC 2010)

However, it is more likely to see this as rhetoric against Australia than as a general argument for international cooperation to replace regional one. Islands states – and in particular Fiji, who still wants to be a *leader* – are much more recognized as unequal players internationally than regionally. Fiji's harsh reaction after the deferring of the MSG-Meeting reflected the necessity of cooperation with other islands countries and so did Bainimarama also say that "[w]e need the Pacific island countries and we need their assistance." (Sereleni 2010) A widening focus on non-regional cooperation can threaten regionalism, but this seems to be more a general threat towards Oceania than one driven by Fiji's suspension from the Pacific Islands Forum.

9 Conclusion

The suspension affects regional cooperation in Oceania. It affects the willingness of the regional actors to work together as it dilutes the traditional patterns of cooperation in Oceania, in particular the concept of the Pacific Way, and increases the costs of regionalism. It threatens regional unity as a major motivation for regionalism as it re-emerges old issues of constraints, in particular the role of Australia and New Zealand in the region, and changes the mutuality of interests. It hereby acts as a trigger for other issues and not solely as the cause of all problems. Further on the suspension divides the region into those states supporting and those – at least unofficially – opposing the suspension. It threatens both the Pacific

Islands Forum as the major political regional organization and regionalism as a whole through the evolution of alternatives.

Even though the Pacific Islands Forum and especially Australia and New Zealand still assert that there is unity regarding the suspension (e.g. Islands Business 2010b), the decision to suspend Fiji from the Pacific Islands Forum is not fully backed by all islands countries. Especially the smallest islands states are both dependent on Australia and New Zealand, and on Fiji. These states are forced into a conflict of interests that is unsolvable for them. Regionalism in its current constitution becomes more unattractive for many countries; they look for alternatives in cooperation outside the region, on sub-regional levels or under different frameworks than the Pacific Islands Forum provide.

Fiji plays an important role in regionalism in Oceania; its geographical, economical and historical importance for the region, gives Fiji considerable importance in regional organizations. So does its absence. Indeed Fiji's absence from the Pacific Islands Forum seems to have greater impact on regionalism than its presence ever could have.

Nonetheless it would be a false assumption to say that without the suspension there would be no impacts of Fiji's political situation on the PIF. As Steven Ratuva writes in a security report for the Pacific Islands Forum, "[a]ny political instability in Fiji will directly affect all the member countries of the PIF because of the location of the secretariat in Fiji" (Ratuva 2007b: 20).

There is no doubt that the political situation of Fiji affects regional cooperation and the Pacific Islands Forum has to handle this situation. This thesis was only able to provide an analysis of the effects of the suspension, but to understand the situation it is necessary to put this analysis in a broader observation of how Fiji's political situation affects regional cooperation in Oceania.

It is arguable whether the suspension was the best solution or whether it may even worsen the situation, but the Forum needed to react to the anew military-take over in Fiji. Any further ignoring of such an internal political instability would have let to a much bigger threat to regionalism on the long-term view. Like many other sanctions, the suspension might had hardly any alternative and was, even though it was not able to push Fiji back to democracy so far, necessary as an *effective signal*

(Drezner 1999: 12 et seq.). This also relates to the fact that "domestic political costs of doing nothing are substantial" for countries like Australia or New Zealand, where citizens might "feel compelled to 'do something'" and doing nothing might create "the image of a weak leader" (Drezner 1999: 11). However, for Australia - and also New Zealand - still seems to be of high importance, what David Hegarty and Peter Polomka already lined out in 1989: "to walk softly and handle its size and weight in South Pacific affairs much more sensitively and skilfully" (Hegarty/Polomka 1989: 9). It is of special importance for them to provide the small islands states suffering from Fiji's suspension and being not able to fully back it with the services and goods that so far are provided by their relations with Fiji, if the suspension shall be upheld.

This thesis focused on political cooperation between nation-states. However, it is also important to notice that the role of non-state-actors in cooperation systems is increasingly acknowledged (Balsiger et al. 2004: 156 et seq.). The Forum stated several times that the suspension is aimed against the current regime of Fiji, not against its people (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2009b). Thus it is of tremendous importance for the Forum to keep on engaging with non-governmental organizations from Fiji.

Finally the future development of Pacific regionalism will be determined a lot by whether Fiji will move back to democracy during the next years or not. Richard Herr writes that "[t]he damage will only escalate if Fiji is to remain suspended from the councils of the forum through to 2014" (Herr 2010). Nonetheless the suspension already created changes and pressures that are likely to affect regionalism durably. The mutuality of interests, trust and "friendliness" towards other regional actors will have some effect in future, the continuity of cooperation and the ability to assess the actions of regional players, especially of Fiji, are disrupted and will impact regionalism, even if the suspension is lifted. Most importantly and durably, the cost of regionalism definitely increased, but so did simultaneously the accountability of the Pacific Islands Forum.

While certain regional norms are weakened through the absence of Fiji as a regional leader, especially those other leaders are not interested in upholding, others such as democracy were strengthened over the suspension. This is especially important

on the long-term view in regard to the widely held assumption that “democracy [is] generally engendering greater cooperation” (McGillivray/Smith 2005: 640) than other forms of government and that a lack of trust against a not democratically elected and therefore not easily replaceable national leader, like Bainimarana, leads to declining collaboration (McGillivray/Smith 2005).

Thus Fiji’s suspension also is a chance for regionalism in Oceania and the Pacific Islands Forum and the *Pacific Plan* in particular. If the suspension against Fiji is lifted after the country moved back to democracy and the Forum will get managed to handle the negative impacts of the absence of such an important country, the suspension maybe will proof as a crossroad for the region, enabling a new dimension of accountable, consistent, authoritative and binding cooperation. This does not mean that there one day will be harmony in the region, but as Axelrod and Keohane lined out, “[c]ooperation is not equivalent to harmony” (Axelrod/Keohane 1986: 226) and thus some constraints do not have to hinder future cooperation.

While the search of regional actors for alternatives to regional cooperation and the Pacific Islands Forum leads to declining regionalism and importance of the Pacific Islands Forum, the collapse of some of these models and clear statements by all countries for regional cooperation show that regional cooperation is needed and will play an important role in future.

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Remarks Concerning Fijian Newspaper Articles:

It have to be taken into account that there is a certain degree of censorship regarding articles criticising the military and the military-led government in Fiji .As they often are very much based on quotations it is approvable to use them as valid sources for some statements and to analyze the rhetoric and positions of Fiji. However, the articles often only provide a one-sided view and the author of this thesis backed up their content by also consulting reports from the Samoa Observer and different Australian, New Zealand and, if available, international media. Even though in some instances there is only referenced to Fijian sources that provide more information, the coherence of the content always is backed up with other sources providing different views.

Photographs

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Graphics

Page 1: Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Suva, Fiji; © Oliver Hasenkamp, 2010

Page 2: Tuvalu Stamp Set 15th Anniversary of the South Pacific Forum, 1986; © Tuvalu Philatelic Bureau, 1986

Page 17: © Samoa Observer, 2009

Tables

Page 8: Members of the Pacific Islands Forum; © Oliver Hasenkamp, 2010

Page 26: Participation in the *Engaging the Pacific*-Meeting; © Oliver Hasenkamp, 2010

11 Appendices

Appendix 1: Map and Definition of Oceania



(© Brandon Plewe 1996; Source: <http://www.politicalresources.net/oceania-map.gif>)

There are different terms used for the region of Oceania and its countries. These include (South) *Pacific*, (South) *Pacific Islands*, (South) *Pacific Islands Region* and (South) *Pacific Islands States (PIS)*. The term *South Pacific* became less used in the last years after islands states from the North Pacific joined the Pacific Islands Forum and other organizations that consequently changed their names²⁶. Australia and New Zealand are considered part of Oceania, but not referenced to as *islands states* in this thesis.

²⁶ The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) was known as the South Pacific Forum (SPF) until 2000 and today's Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) as South Pacific Commission;

The region often is divided into the three cultural sub-regions of Melanesia (western part of Oceania including Papua New Guinea), Polynesia (eastern part of Oceania, culturally but not necessarily politically including Hawai'i and New Zealand) and Micronesia (northern part of Oceania). This system of dividing the region in cultural sub-areas has been criticized, even though it is widely used. However, Sandra Tarte argued that “[t]here is, perhaps, greater political relevance to the use of the labels” (Tarte 1985: 28²⁷), so that this thesis used the labels in regard to political division and sub-regionalism.

Appendix 2: Overview: Important Persons named in this thesis

Name	Function
Voreqe “Frank” Bainimarama	Interim Prime Minister of Fiji and Commander of the <i>Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF)</i>
Ron Crocombe	Famous scientist and publisher, who lived in different Pacific Islands countries and taught at the University of the South Pacific
Stewart Firth	Australian scientist currently working at the Australian National University (Canberra)
Jon Fraenkel	Australian scientist currently working at the Australian National University (Canberra)
Richard Herr	Scientist currently working at the University of Tasmania in Australia
Apisai Ielemia	Former Prime Minister of Tuvalu, who attended the <i>Engaging the Pacific</i>-Meeting, but not the 2010 Pacific Islands Forum because of upcoming elections, in which he was not re-elected
Tuila’epa Sailele Malielegaoi	Prime Minister of Samoa
Ratu Sir Kamisese	First Prime Minister of Fiji after independence ,

²⁷ See list of literature sources above;

Mara	“mentor” of the Pacific Islands Forum and the <i>Pacific Way</i>
Edward Natapei	Prime Minister of Vanuatu who deferred a meeting of the <i>Melanesian Spearhead Group</i> because of Fiji’s political situation
Laisenia Qarase	Fijian politician who was installed Prime Minister by the military after the 2000 civilian coup, later re-elected and in 2006 replaced by the military
Steven Ratuva	Fijian social scientist, currently working at the University of Auckland in New Zealand
Sarah Roberts	Australian High-Commissioner in Fiji until July 2010
Tuiloma Neroni Slade	Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum
Sir Michael Somare	Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea
Sandra Tarte	Fijian political scientist, currently Director of Politics & International Affairs at the University of the South Pacific
Anote Tong	President of Kiribati

Appendix 3: Verbal Exchanges between Fiji’s Interim Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama and Samoa’s Prime Minister Tuila’epa Sailele Malielegaoi

Bainimarama about Tuila’epa: *“He [Tuilaepa] made the comments [that Fiji blames others for its failure] because he is a mouthpiece for the Australian and New Zealand governments.”* (Sereleni 2010)

Bainimarama about statements made by Tuila’epa *“It seems that he made the comments while yawning.”* (Sereleni 2010)

Tuila’epa about Bainimarama’s mental accountability while making some of his statements: *“I’m curious if he was sober or perhaps there was a full moon out that night.”* (Tavita 2009)

Tuila'epa about the possibility of Bainimarama having Samoan ancestors (it is quite common in the region, historically particularly between Fiji, Samoa and Tonga, to have some family members coming from other islands): "*I'm tempted to go down to the Lands and Titles courts [important Samoan institution to administer traditional land rights and associated chiefly titles] and look up his family genealogy in Samoa. Then I'll send for his family matai [head of an extended Samoan family, who represents the family and still has considerable power in Samoa] and tell him to reprimand his long lost descendants in Fiji. To give him severe censure for being cheeky, being ill-disciplined and having no manners.*" (Tavita 2009)

Tuila'epa about Fiji's roadmap for a new constitution and its way back to democracy, the *People's Charter for Change, Peace and Progress*: "*Its utter rubbish. He's [Bainimarama is] trying to replace Fiji's constitution with that People's claptrap, or whatever it is.*" (Tavita 2009)

Tuila'epa about Bainimarama: "*Those actions are reminiscent of Stalin, Mussolini and Hitler. Well, where are they now? And how are they remembered?*" (Tavita 2009)

Tuila'epa ironically about why Fiji could need an army: "*Perhaps Bainimarama fears a combined canoe attack from Tuvalu and Kiribati, its closest neighbours. That must it be.*" (Tavita 2009)

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