

**SOLOMON ISLANDS:
THE UNTOUCHED PARADISE?**

by

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SYNOPSIS

This thesis examines the social, economic, environmental, political and cultural changes which have occurred within indigenous Solomon Islander communities. It explores the many shifts that have occurred since white colonisation and which continue today in the post-colonial era.

With new global pressures, today's local communities are faced with problems of environmental degradation and rapidly changing cultural identities. The thesis analyses how global pressures stemming from foreign economic activities impacts on local areas. In particular, logging practices, by internationally based companies are a major factor contributing to socio-environmental change within local communities in the Solomon Islands.

The thesis examines the developmental ethos of the Solomon Islands national government and how it encourages development activity by means of its social and economic policies which assist direct foreign investment by international resource companies.

The backlash for the government has not only been the environmental and socio-economic damages it has caused to local communities. Local people, assisted by local non government organisations, are pressuring the government in adopting new strategies for an alternative to the western model of economic development. NGOs like the Solomon Islands

Development Trust (SIDT) have lead the movement aimed at involving local people in a grass-roots development process. It sets out to address local communities' needs rather than global needs, in an effort to secure a level of self-determination against global forces and pressures.

The aim of the thesis was to identify the range of problems the Solomon Islands, and its local people face in the current period where economic development and growth has been the prime objective for its government. A further aim was to move beyond the mere identification of problems to that of formulating the broad parameters within which alternative environmental and economic options for the Solomon Islands can be formulated and enacted.

In undertaking this research, I have sought to highlight the developmental options as they present themselves to the inhabitants of the Solomon Islands. Where possible I have used first-hand references and publications by local Solomon Islanders. Much of this data was collected on a recent trip to the Solomon Islands in 1994. In doing this I have been able to obtain an insight into Solomon Islander social and cultural make up of their lifestyles.

This thesis seeks to respond to Solomon Islander concerns and provide the foundation for future research in the Pacific area.

RATIONALE

The global versus local binary has been a popular, yet tense, area of research of late, particularly in the western world (Harvey 1993; Turner 1994; Jameson 1991; Featherstone 1990; Camilleri 1994). Identity through traditional culture has been pushed aside for new global identities and global cultures. In developing countries, like the Solomon Islands, patterns of communications and commerce are not of the same magnitude as the first world. Nevertheless, the Solomon Islands still experience many of the problems associated with global pressures and global production. Globalisation of logging enterprises in particular, create numerous problems for the indigenous populations of the Solomon Islands. The need to critically assess these processes and evaluate their consequences is essential if the local people of the Solomon Islands are to have a say over their destiny.

Many writers from 'third' world countries, argue that the introduction of western models for achieving development have failed, and that it is necessary to search for alternative paths of 'development' which are culturally specific (Waddell 1993; Aw 1994; Pettman 1977; Crocombe 1981).

In undertaking this research, I have sought to cast light on some of the developmental options as they present themselves to the inhabitants of the Solomon Islands. Where possible I have used first-hand references and publications by local

Solomon Islanders. This data was collected on a recent trip to the Solomon Islands in 1994.

Whilst acknowledging the limitations of any cross-cultural interpretation the thesis seeks to give voice to Solomon Islander concerns and provide a basis for future research in the Pacific area.

INTRODUCTION

My first impression of the Solomon Islands in the Melanesian region of the Pacific, was that of an untouched paradise, a place where the natural environment remained untouched and pure. Such romantic illusions, are however, quickly dispelled when one begins to consider the past and present socio-economic and environmental history of the Solomon Islands. Ever since the Solomon Islands experienced first contact with white colonial expansionism, significant changes have occurred in the social, economic, environmental and cultural fabric of Islander communities.

Today many of the local communities which make up the Solomon Islands face new global pressures which threaten to destroy the local environment and further transform the social and economic identities of Solomon Islanders. The pressures exerted on localised and community based populations stem from many sources, including in particular, those created by the activities and practices of internationally based logging companies.

Government policies have encouraged such development by assisting foreign firms and subsidising models of development based upon western notions of economic growth.

Non government organisations and various local population groups have sought to respond to these changes. They have

established community networks and attempted to develop strategies aimed at securing a level of self determination over the economic and environmental processes effecting them.

This minor thesis maps some of the socio-environmental and socio-economic changes that have occurred within the Solomon Islands. It illustrates how they are, in effect, two sides of the same globalised coin. The study begins with an examination of pre-colonial social relationships within the island populations. This is followed by a brief historical review of initial white contact during the colonial period.

The first chapter outlines the arguments and assumptions underpinning various proposals and policies for economic 'development' within the Solomon Islands. I argue that these may be collectively understood as various forms of market liberalism. The chapter also surveys the objections that have been raised by critics of market based economic development and its impact on local communities.

The second chapter examines the socio-political and socio-economic cultures of local communities within the Solomon Islands during the pre-colonial and colonial periods. The purpose of this chapter is to provide historical background and conceptualise the foundations of current economic developments within the Solomon Islands.

The third chapter, both implicitly and explicitly, extends the

critique of market liberalism. The rhetorical claims of developmentalist models are assessed and evaluated in relation to the past and present history of the Solomon Islands. The primary aim of this chapter is to draw attention to the social and environmental effects of logging within the Solomon Islands and the inadequacy of the national governments's regulatory framework.

The fourth chapter draws together the problems associated with the western model of development and proposes an alternative approach. I examine the role played by the Solomon Islands Development Trust (SIDT), a non government organisation, and its attempts to provide a culturally specific model of development. I explore the practical aspects of this grass-roots development model which seeks new ways of involving villagers in development decisions.

In general terms the aim of the thesis which follows is to identify the range of problems a small 'country' of islands and its local people face in the current period. A further aim is to move beyond the mere identification of problems and to formulate broad parameters within which alternative environmental and economic options for the Solomon Islands can be formulated and enacted.

CHAPTER ONE

MARKET LIBERALISM IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS: AN OVERVIEW

The question as to whether regional, or indeed, local communities in the 'Pacific region', and elsewhere, are able to chart relatively independent forms of economic and cultural development in an era of widespread globalisation is a pressing one.

Contemporary research in the area of globalisation has drawn attention to the importance of the politics of place and space in the contemporary world. In this context, a number of writers have pointed to the importance of local resistance in maintaining and retaining cultural difference in the face of homogenising global imperatives (Harvey 1993; Turner 1994; Jameson 1991). This is of particular importance, in countries which although post colonial in composition, nevertheless retain considerable elements of tradition within the indigenous culture. The Solomon Islands is clearly one such 'country'.

And yet, drawing the boundaries, between tradition, modernity and the so called post modern in relation to processes of globalisation is not an easy task.

Globalisation is often equated with cultural imperialism in its various guises. Moreover, it is often treated as synonymous with Americanisation. However, globalisation does

not necessarily mean one unified global culture but rather the possibility of numerous internationalised cultures impacting on localities and regions (Featherstone 1990). Camilleri (1994) for example contends that globalisation does not refer only to Americanisation, but also to Europeanisation and Asianisation.

Historically the Solomon Islands have been subjected to both Europeanising and Asianising powers. One hundred years of British colonisation fundamentally changed traditional cultures. World War Two saw exposure to the American, Japanese and British Armies, all of which had a profound impact on Solomon Island lifestyle economically, politically, culturally and environmentally. Since independence the Solomon Islands have experienced Asianisation. Today Japanese and transnational logging companies are a dominant presence within the Islands. Chinese merchant capital owns much of the local food and grocery businesses.

The process of globalisation takes many forms, facilitated by the deregulation of world markets via the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and finding expression in diverse forms, such as tourism, world sport, McDonaldisation, global money markets (Turner 1994) as well as highly mobile logging and mining companies.

i) THE MARKET LIBERALS

Some writers hold a highly sanguine view of these processes, and of globalisation and its social consequences. In these accounts globalised development is simply equated with progress.

Trade liberalisation, global competitiveness and global citizens have become the ruling paradigms within current western models of development. These are readily appropriated by many newly industrialising and 'developing' countries. Often the Western model of economic development is automatically seen as the best and most appropriate one. Such arguments are commonplace whenever national or international bodies debate the issue of economic development. Much of the literature pertaining to the Solomon Islands remains wedded to such high growth models of development. Characteristic of this literature is its promotion of international trade, urban employment, telecommunications, and western education as the best path to development (Hughes, H., Ahlburg & Lee n.d.; Browne & Scott 1989; Cole & Parry 1986; Friesen 1993).

Hughes, H., Ahlburg and Lee (n.d.) focus on the labour employment situation of the Solomon Islands. They suggest that:

relatively slow economic growth and the concomitant inability to find productive full-time employment

for the majority of the population have deep-seated causes in the Pacific (Hughes, H., Ahlburg & Lee n.d. p. 92).

They suggest that lack of agricultural development results in low standards of living in the rural sector. What is needed in the development of Pacific nations is the advancement of regional programs lead by international agencies and bilateral donors (Hughes, H., Ahlburg and Lee n.d.). Overall, Hughes, H., Ahlburg and Lee (n.d.) argue that in order for a Pacific nation to have a stable environment, policies on population, health and education must not only be mutually interdependent but controlled by economic growth based development.

In a similar vein to Hughes, H., Ahlburg and Lee (n.d.), Browne and Scott (1989) maintain that the economic strategies adopted by Pacific Island countries have aimed at achieving economic growth for development concomitant with the retention of traditional cultural and national identities. Part of these national development plans have focussed on increased foreign investment, the diversification of production, the enhancement of foreign exchange earnings and an increase in opportunities for employment. Browne and Scott (1989) argue that complementing policies in these areas by the financially stable Pacific islands' governments have helped contribute to the preservation of maintaining open market economies. They claim economic development has not caused any fundamental change to traditional values in Pacific islands societies.

Browne and Scott argue:

As the size of the monetised economy has expanded relative to the subsistence sector, extended family units have continued their long-standing income-sharing functions that contribute to a more equitable distribution of income and reduced the need for governments to build expensive social welfare systems (Browne & Scott 1989, p. 29).

Browne and Scott (1989) further argue that one of the major impediments to agricultural investment and growth has been the traditional communal ownership of land. When investors wish to lease or transfer land, they are severely hampered by such traditional practices and legislation. Thus, Browne and Scott (1989) assert that adjustments to communal land ownership regulations would help induce needed agricultural investment. Part of this adjustment will require national governments, like the Solomon Islands, shifting power away from its provinces to a more central body (Browne & Scott 1989).

Cole and Parry (1986) suggest that 'free trade' is essential for development in Pacific nations. They maintain that these nations have tended to rely on aid and remittances in the past as the best way to solve their economic problems. They point to the national governments' failure to expand the agricultural sector of the economy, abroad. Accordingly, Cole and Parry argue:

The failure of agricultural production and traditional agricultural exports to take advantage of the islands' potential is a major factor in the relatively poor growth performance of the Pacific island nations (Cole and Parry 1986, p. 8).

In line with this argument, growth and macro-economic management must also be linked to tourism. They argue one of the best ways to improve local markets and increase the value of Pacific island economies is by investment in the tourism sector of these nations. Cole and Parry argue:

Tourism is likely to continue to be heavily import intensive as it is in all major successful tourist countries.

...The principle gains from tourism accrue through direct and indirect employment, and this is the component particularly needed in most Pacific countries. The islands' tourism strategy needs to be focused on the type of tourism activity most suited to local conditions. The 'high class' market is much more employment-intensive than 'mass-market' tourism, and less liable to interfere with local culture. In fact it often contributes to the preservation and development of local customs (Cole & Parry 1986, p. 13).

Moreover, improvements and investment in infrastructure,

namely in transport, telecommunications and satellite technology, are essential to complement the tourism industry, and therefore, achieve sustained economic growth and development. So too is regional cooperation (Cole & Parry 1986).

Friesen (1993) argues that logging is essential for economic development in the Solomon Islands. Firstly, he believes that since logging practices have been introduced in the Solomon Islands, employment opportunities have increased, with some 2,356 people holding jobs in 1991. He argues another benefit flowing from logging is the assistance logging companies have given governments and local communities for building new roads, schools and clinics (Friesen 1993). In fact, Friesen (1993) dismisses, what he calls the 'Melanesian perception', that logging companies receive all the benefits and take them abroad, while the local communities receive none. He cites the example of the people of the Choiseul province:

these factors were overcome by individuals who had a high level of education, considerable experience of wage employment, or both (Friesen 1993, p. 209).

Friesen (1993) contends that the major basis for the Solomon Islands achieving economic development revolves around the notion of enhancing individual and private ownership, particularly in the primary sector of the economy.

What the preceding writers have in common is a strong belief in the efficiency of markets as the basis for economic and social development. The literature as a whole may be broadly characterised as market liberalism or simply as economic liberalism. A common assumption of these writers is their explicit commitment to market forces. According to market liberals social and economic policy should follow the dictates of the market. In general, this literature supports the use of market mechanisms as the best means for allocating and distributing social resources. Emphasis is placed on trade liberalism, global competitiveness and on global citizenship. The role of governments in such views may be summarised as: protecting and sustaining the functioning of markets; using whatever policy instruments there are to attract foreign and domestic capital; and undertaking minimal expenditures to ameliorate 'problems' caused by the market 'safety net' in order to make the government socially viable.

ii) CRITICS OF MARKET LIBERALISM

It would be a mistake to believe that all the literature pertaining to development in the Solomon Islands falls within a market liberal position. Indeed a number of writers situate themselves in direct opposition to such a position. They begin by questioning a number of the assumptions of market liberalism and the economic indicators which support this doctrine.

Waddell (1993) for example, questions the use of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as the best indicator of economic development. He regards it to be not only an inadequate measure of wealth for the Solomon Islands local people, but very much unrepresentative of the local country. Brundtland (1993) further suggests that while 'World' growth has skyrocketed in the past forty years, social well being has not necessarily improved. In fact environmental despoliation, unemployment and poverty are often, Brundtland suggests, the other side of the growth coin.

In a similar vein to Brundtland (1993), Grynberg and Forsyth (1993) argue that despite the Solomon Islands' impressively high growth rate in 1992 (8.2 per cent in real GDP), its economy and environment continue to operate at an unsustainable rate, as a result of current policy on permitting log harvesting exceeding recommended sustainable yields.

Other writers such as Aw (1994) argue that international organisations like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) are constantly designing development programs for Third World countries which are detrimental to their long term interests. He argues that when problems arise as they inevitably do, these bodies seek to deny their responsibility. In fact, he suggests, they frequently place the blame on to the people at the grass-roots level, criticising their 'traditional ways of thinking'. World Bank and IMF policies increase dependence on foreign experts through so called communications for development programs. Aw (1994) believes that this process orients 'Third World' countries along a development trajectory consistent with western economic interests.

This criticism that has also been levelled by Pettman (1977) and Crocombe (1981). They, too, argue that globalisation means increased dependency. Pettman maintains that increased exposure to world markets "means more imports, more involvement with foreign technology and foreign patterns of behaviour" (1977, p. 270). This he argues increases technological dependence and limits domestic policy options. Pettman's analysis couched within a marxist structuralist paradigm, suggests that change in social formations as a result of change in imported technology fundamentally alters indigenous production systems. He analyses the Solomon Islands as an example of technological dependence. Crocombe (1981) argues that Australia, Japan and US and other smaller

Pacific countries like Fiji and Papua New Guinea are the power centres in decision making for the Solomon Islands. The economic needs of these economies it is argued, take priority over the economic and social needs of the local population groups. Similarly, Bugotu argues that the Solomon Islands state of under-development is a direct "result of historical global forces rather than traditional backwardness" (1981, p. 91).

The thesis which follows seeks to evaluate and assess the competing claims of market liberals and their critics. I examine their respective claims and 'weigh' them against empirical processes of development within the Solomon Islands, both as they have occurred in the past, and as they are being played out today.

CHAPTER TWO

MAPPING THE SOLOMON ISLANDS: FROM PRE-COLONIAL PERIOD TO DECOLONISATION

Today is a product of yesterday, just as tomorrow will be a product of today. In this there will be a moral that our people would do well not to forget (Sanga 1989, p. 30).

i) THE SOLOMON ISLANDS IN THE PRE-COLONIAL PERIOD

Obtaining literature and data on traditional Solomon Island life and structure is still in its initial phase. It was not until colonisation that archaeological and anthropological research of Solomon Islands history (pre-history) was conducted (Rukia 1989). This does not necessarily mean that pre-colonial history of the Solomon Islands cannot be traced. Most of the history and tradition is encased in the people's memories, and is preserved through oral means (Sanga 1989). Waleanisia argues: that "oral traditions can endure while written records can sometimes be lost" (1989, p. 31).

Significance of land and environment

In pre-colonial times, land and environment was very important. Being the primary resource for existence of the local people of the Solomon Islands meant that they were never alienated from it (Larmour 1984, p. 75). According to Ipo

(1989), before foreign contact, land for the Solomon Islanders was a means of sustaining life at all levels, socially, politically, culturally, and economically. This went beyond monetary values. The value of land inhered in the life it brought and its importance as means of subsistence (Crocombe 1987).

Traditional environmental knowledge and awareness played a significant part in understanding the important ecological links and flows between land and sea. People in the Solomon Islands were separated between inland settlement and coastal settlement. The bush people specialised in both gardening, gathering and hunting, while the coastal people relied mainly on fishing (Foanaota 1989, p. 69). Howard, Plange, Durutalo and Witton (1983, p. 21) break down the agricultural systems into two types: crop production and the intense irrigation on terraced mountain sides. Trading and bartering of food between the coastal communities and the bush communities, their dependence on each other, was very important for the preservation of regional political and social relationships (Hviding 1992, p. 5).

Hviding (1992) suggests that in the mode of thinking underpinning these social relations there was an integral relationship between social, productive and environmental concerns. He further argues that such a perspective was in many ways superior to established Western notions based on unlimited exploitation of natural resources.

During the pre-colonial period, ownership of land and land rights was not based upon the principle of private property. Land was communally owned (Fifi 1989). Land was either passed down from ancestors (Fifi 1989), cross-cultural marriage, allegiance, kin (Sheffler & Larmour, 1987) and at times through inter-tribal fighting between different local groups and clans. The significant difference between pre-capitalist ownership of land in the Solomon Islands and the capitalist specialisation of property rights resides in the fact that land was not seen solely as an economic resource to be privately owned. Hviding (1992) sums up the differences. Western ownership relates directly to property rights, whereas Pacific Island (Solomon Island) ownership denotes not just economic relationships but also ecological, political, social and cultural relationships and obligations.

Another significant feature of the pre-colonial Solomon Islands social relationships concerns the notion of time. The mode of recording time was based around such things as the weather, plant, animal behaviour and tides as indicators of time (Waleanisia 1989). Waleanisia (1989) suggests that the Solomon Islands concept of time was only comparable in the units of 'days', 'months', and 'years' to that of the western powers - seconds, minutes, hours, weeks didn't exist.

British historian E.P. Thompson (1967) has comprehensively demonstrated how changes in the 'inward notion of time' was of fundamental importance to the development of industrial

capitalism in Europe. The types of work discipline which developed were moulded and synchronised to 'clock time'. Clock time became central to regimes of labour discipline and the governing of the working day. In order to improve time-work discipline other means of organising time and work had to be subjugated. Thompson emphasises that any historical restructuring of work relationships - involving new disciplines and incentives necessarily involves a concomitant restructuring of the 'inward notion of time'. In many 'pre-industrial' cultures time is not necessarily measured clock time and synchronised with the rhythms of economic production. As Thompson observes:

In Madagascar time might be measured by "rice-cooking" (about half an hour) or "the frying of a locust" (a moment). The Cross River natives were reported as saying "the man died in less than the time in which maize is not yet completely roasted" (less than fifteen minutes).

It is not difficult to find examples of this nearer to us in cultural time. Thus in seventeenth-century Chile time was often measured in "credos": an earthquake was described in 1647 as lasting for the period of two credos; while the cooking time of an egg could be judged by an Ave Maria said aloud. In Burma in recent times monks rose at daybreak "when there is light enough to see the veins in the hand". The Oxford English Dictionary gives us

English examples - "pater noster whyle", "miserere whyle" (1450), and (in the New English Dictionary but not the Oxford English Dictionary) "pissing while" - a somewhat arbitrary measurement. (Thompson 1967, p. 58)

The importance of changing time arrangements was to subject the Solomon Islands population to notations of time that did not correspond to their own. As in feudal Europe, the imposition of clock measured time was an important component of colonial rule in disciplining labour and altering the rhythms of cultural life to the requirements of capital.

Diversity of languages and tribes

Prior to colonisation a plurality of languages existed with the Solomon Islands. The Solomon Islands had around one hundred unique languages, each differing from one society to another (Jones 1991). Language determined linguistic areas and land, and most importantly, it differentiated cultural identities between many local and regional societies (Alasia 1989). Connell and Lea (1994) maintain that local languages in Melanesian societies act as a resistance to guard against global forces and cultural uniformity. In fact, language was, and still remains a powerful force differentiating local cultures and clans. Particularly in the capital city, Honiara and the provincial capitals, language is a distinctive marker of cultural identity (Fitzpatrick 1992). From local languages developed 'Wantok' systems, which not only separated different

communities, but also bound the one community even closer. According to Pettman (1977) the Wantok system (that is, meaning one talk or one language) is a form of extended kin obligations. The wantok system helped ensure that cultural and traditional identities were not uniform throughout the Solomon Islands (Foanaota 1989).

Table 2.1 Distribution of Solomon Islands Languages

Language	Main Dialects	Location	Speakers (1976)
Mono-alu	Mono, Alu, Fauro	Shortland Is	1,700
Vaghua	Choiseul		1,000
Varisi	Vasenggasengga	Choiseul	1,900
N.E. Varisi	Ririo	Choiseul	18
Central-	Mbambagana, Katazi, Sengga	Choseul	5,000
East Choiseul	Lomaumbi, Avasa		
Mbilua	Ndovele, Mbilua	Vella Lavella	4,300
Ghanongga	Ghanongga	N. Ghanongga	1,900
Lungga	Lungga	S. Ghanongga	1,350
Simbo	Simbo	Simbo, Gizo	1,650
Nduke	Nduke	Kolombangara	1,200
Roviana	Roviana	New Georgia	5,300
Ughele	Ughele	Rendova	650
Mbaniata	Mbaniata, Lokuru	Rendova	900
Kusaghe	Kusaghe	New Georgia	1,000
Hoava	Hoava	New Georgia	600
*Kazukuru	Kazakuru, Doriri Guliguli	New Georgia	0
Marova	Marova, Nggatokae	New Georgia	4,500
Mbareke	Mbareke	New Gergia	300
Vangunu	Vangunu	New Georgia	300
Zabana	Kia	Santa Isabel	1,000
Laghu	Laghu	Santa Isabel	5
Kokota	Kokota	Santa Isabel	170
Zazao	Kilokaka	Santa Isabel	100
Blablanga	Gema, Goi	Santa Isabel	550
Maringe	Cheke A'ara, Cheke Holo	Santa Isabel	5,000
Nggao	Nggao	Santa Isabel	500
Mbughotu	Mbughotu	Santa Isabel	1,900
Savosavo	Savosavo	Savo	950
Lavukaleve	Lavukaleve	Russell Island	700
Nggela	Small Nggela, Big Nggela, Sandfly	Florida	5,300
Lengo	Tasimboko, Paripao, Ghaimuta	Guadalcanal	5,200
W. Guadalcanal	Nggae, Ndi, Nggeria,		

Talise	Tandai, Ghari Poleo, Koo, Tolo, Talise, Moli	Guadalcanal	5,000
Malango	Malango	Guadalcanal	4,500
Mbirao	Mbirao	Guadalcanal	1,800
Longgu	Longgu	Guadalcanal	3,200
Lau	Northern, Southern	Malaita	750
North Malaita	To'ambaita, Fatakela Embaelelea	Malaita	6,500
Kwai	Kwai	Malaita	13,500
Kwara'ae	Kwara'ae	Malaita	1,000
Langalanga	Langalanga	Malaita	12,500
Kwaio	Kwaio	Malaita	2,000
Dori'o	Dori'o	Malaita	7,000
'Are'are	Are, Aisasii, Woo, I?aii, Tarapaina, Mereho, Marau	Malaita	900
Oroha	Oroha	Malaita	100
South Malaita	Sa'a, Ulawa, Ugi Ni	Malaita	9,000
Arosi	Arosi	Malaita	6,500
Faghani	Faghani	San Cristobel	2,800
Bauro	Bauro	San Cristobel	300
Kahua	Kahua, Tawaroga, Santa Ana, Mami	San Cristobel	2,800
Santa Cruz	Santa Cruz	San Cristobel	4,000
Nanggu	Nanggu	Santa Cruz	3,000
Reefs (Aiwo)	Reefs	Santa Cruz	200
Nembao (Amba)	Nembao	Reef Island	4,000
Asumboa	Asumboa	Utupua	150
Tanimbili	Tanimbili	Utupua	40
Buma	Buma	Utubua	50
Vano	Vano	Vanikoro	150
Tanema	Tanema	Vanikoro	5
Rennellese	Rennell, Bellona	Vanikoro	5
Luangiua	Rennell, Bellona	Rennell, Bellona	1,800
Sikaiana	Luangiua, Pelau	Ontong Java	1,100
Pileni	Sikaiana	Sikaiana	220
Tkopian	Pileni	Reef Island	800
	Tikopian, Anutan	Tikopia, Anuta	1,800

* Extinct

Source: Cited in Laracy, H. (ed) 1989, PLES BLONG IUMI: Solomon Islands The Past Four Thousand Years, University of South Pacific, Suva and Honiara, pp. 161-162.

Table 2.1, above, highlights the diversity of languages and dialects that exist throughout the provinces of Solomon Islands. Today, this diversity in language and 'language cultures' are confronted with a variety of post colonial pressures.

Colonisation meant that English became the official national language of the Solomon Islands (Keesing 1990). Yet the majority of the population, in particular the local people, have no English language literacy. English is used mainly by the educated and elites. Although considered the 'lingua franca', Pidgin English - the unofficial national language - is more widely spoken throughout rural areas (Keesing 1990). This still has implications for the maintenance of local languages and cultures. Traditionally, many local languages determine local regional boundaries. Each local language is vastly different from another, and therefore, not directly translatable with others, as it can only be spoken by the Wantoks in that tribe. In this sense, language determines the make up of tribes (Alasia 1989). As rural people experience greater contact with people outside their own local communities and wantoks, they require a 'universal' language in order to be able to communicate (Keesing 1990). Globalisation, thus, places further changes on the maintenance of local languages by exerting pressures in the direction of linguistic uniformity.

Traditional knowledge

Pre-colonial Solomon Islanders had their own forms for transmitting social knowledge. Traditional education encompassed qualities such as knowledge and skill for daily living and preservation of identity. It was non-formal, continuous and free. The task of passing on traditional knowledge begins at an early age. Morals and traditions are

taught, art and craft skills are developed, and rituals and ceremonies are practiced. Part of this process is to encourage distinct gender roles between the two sexes. For example, young males follow their male adult family members to learn how to develop and harvest coconut plantations and nut-groves, yam and taro gardens, work on craft and construction sites, and go on fishing and hunting expeditions. Young girls on the other hand, are trained to be the mentor for younger family members, responsible in collecting water and firewood, cut the necessary leaves used to make the ovens, and also learn to fish for crabs, shellfish and shrimps. At this stage, the development of intellectual and physical skills requires these young children to only obey orders and correctly respond to specific situations. Mastering the sort of knowledge and skills required to survive in the immediate environment and the conservation of it, is also learnt as a child. Each local community has its own method of passing on knowledge, differing according to local needs and customs (Wasuka 1989).

White contact and colonisation was to have a significant impact on a number of social relationships in the Solomon Islands. The following section focuses upon the period of colonial rule, its legacies, and some of the problems faced by post colonial Islander society.

ii) THE SOLOMON ISLANDS FROM COLONIAL PERIOD TO DECOLONISATION

First contact

The Spanish, led by Alvaro de Mendana, were the first Europeans known to have contact with the Solomon Islands (Saunders 1977). This visit proved to be a pivotal one. It was the Solomon Islanders first contact with an outside culture. The Spanish eventually left, but named these islands after King Solomon. Hence, the name the Solomon Islands (Waleanisia 1989). The move to name this geographical place and space of many islands and cultures as the Solomon Islands represented the first attempt at imposing cultural uniformity upon the plurality of local cultures.

Following the Spanish, other explorers came. According to Howard et al. (1983) European settlement did not begin until the late 19th century. The imposition of capitalist social relationships had a significant impact on the lives of Solomon Islanders. Fifi (1989) and Ipo (1989) both highlight the nature of some of these changes. Fifi (1989) suggests that the development of capitalism entailed new global concepts of time, work and actually introduced poverty. Solomon Islanders became both labourers and in some instances, owners of plantations. Capitalism, required a fundamentally different organisation of work, labour and time. This lead to the alienation of people from the land. Capitalist markets required the production of surplus geared to the needs of a cash economy. Scarcity of any magnitude within the

subsistence form of production, previously culturally supported through the wantok system, was unheard of. The introduction of the cash economy witnessed an increase in scarcity in Solomon Islands culture (Borschmann 1993). As Crocombe (1987) contends, the shift from subsistence to cash has resulted in the desire for more land per person and also a change in values. The development of capitalist social relations had produced a new condition - poverty.

The role of the British government during its colonial period
What direct impact did the British Government have on the Solomon Islands during its colonial period?

The British government formed its first administration in 1896 (Waleanisia 1989). In appointing a protectorate on the Solomon Islands the British sought to secure their economic and geo-political interests in the Pacific region.

While Howard et al (1983) argue that the British protectorate was introduced to "maintain law and order" in the Solomon Islands, a more convincing case is argued by Munro and Firth (1990) and Fifi (1989) who maintain that the principle aim of establishing the protectorate was to prevent expansionist movements by the French and Germans. Indeed, colonial rivalry appears to have been a strong motivating factor. Keesing (1990) points out that British economic interests in the labour trade were threatened by the incursions of the French and Germans into this area. The Monarchs of England and the

British Empire were the principle beneficiaries of these arrangements, not the people of the Solomon Islands (Mamaloni 1981).

Colonial contact meant the displacement and subordination of local 'political systems' (Crocombe 1987). Potterton (1979) argues that under the first Commissioner Charles Woodford, local powers of self-determination were suppressed. British colonisation resulted in power being centralised, creating tension and instability between traditional styles and modern politics (Alasia 1989). British colonial administration enforced British legal forms onto the Solomon Islanders in opposition to traditional and customary laws (Fifi 1989). Such ethnocentrism has been criticised by a number of writers who have denounced the gross paternalism of European legal traditions (Waddell 1993).

The displacement and eventual redistribution of land was premised upon the Europocentric belief that the land was not owned because it did not conform to western legal notions of property rights (Sheffler & Larmour 1987; Ipo 1989; Solomon Islands development Trust 1987). The development of individual ownership and land sales created land disputes which then had to be dealt with through the formal European legal system, not through informal methods by elders and chiefs (Ipo 1989). As in Australia these legal forms effectively acted as mechanisms of dispossession and cultural disruption.

The development of the labour trade by the British also had a profound impact on the Solomon Islands. For the first time Solomon Islanders were forced to work on plantations (Frazer 1990). In order to overcome labour shortages the colonial government forcibly regulated the labour of the indigenous populations. This was made legally possible through compulsory acquisition procedures (Larmour 1989). The development of new forms of labour meant that young men were forced to leave their villages and social networks and work under onerous and exploitative conditions (Saunders 1977). In some cases finding themselves working abroad as indentured labourers on Queensland plantations (Moore 1990; Frazer 1990).

In the early twentieth century the colonial government entered into a series of commercial bargains with multinational companies. Logging companies such as LEVERS were principle actors in this early stage of development (Ipo 1989). The development of an import and export trade in this industry area created a number of mutual dependencies between multinational corporations and the colonial government. Multinational corporations relying on the support and protection of the government on the one hand, and the economies of the Solomon Islands becoming increasingly dependent on foreign exchange earnings generated from such trade on the other (Munro & Firth 1990).

World War Two was also a turning point for the Solomon Islands at both the local and central administrative levels. At the

local level, colonial rule support for including, in particular, the labour trade, had spawned a labour movement and inchoate resistance to the deprivations of colonial rule. Involvement in World War Two further fuelled growing resentment of colonial rule. Following World War Two local resistance manifested itself in the form of an anti-colonial revolt. This was known as the Marching Rule or Maasina Rule movement. According to Frazer (1990) the Maasina Rule movement was initially based upon resisting the exploitation of labour. Its significance, however, very rapidly spread beyond the confines of a labour movement struggle. For the first time it bonded the local population and their grievances. As the parameters of the struggle broadened to tap into anti-colonial sentiments the Maasina Rule movement assumed a new political significance. It was the first social movement which was successful against the colonial state (Frazer 1990). It shook the bureaucratic British administration at the central decision making level. It also exerted pressure on the colonial government, forcing concessions in the areas of indigenous infrastructure. For example in the areas of education, health, indigenous local government systems, roads, etc (Potterton 1979; Fifi 1989).

The colonial period changed the Solomon Islands in many ways. It redrew the boundaries of the South Pacific and placed powerful pressures on local populations which eventually resulted in forms of social and political resistance emerging. Munro and Firth argue that the

Solomon Islands were, in effect, subsidising the economic development of their islands yet receiving few of its benefits (Munro and Firth 1990, p. 13).

The issue of how certain forms of economic development create tensions between global, national regional and local forces is the object of analysis in the following chapter.

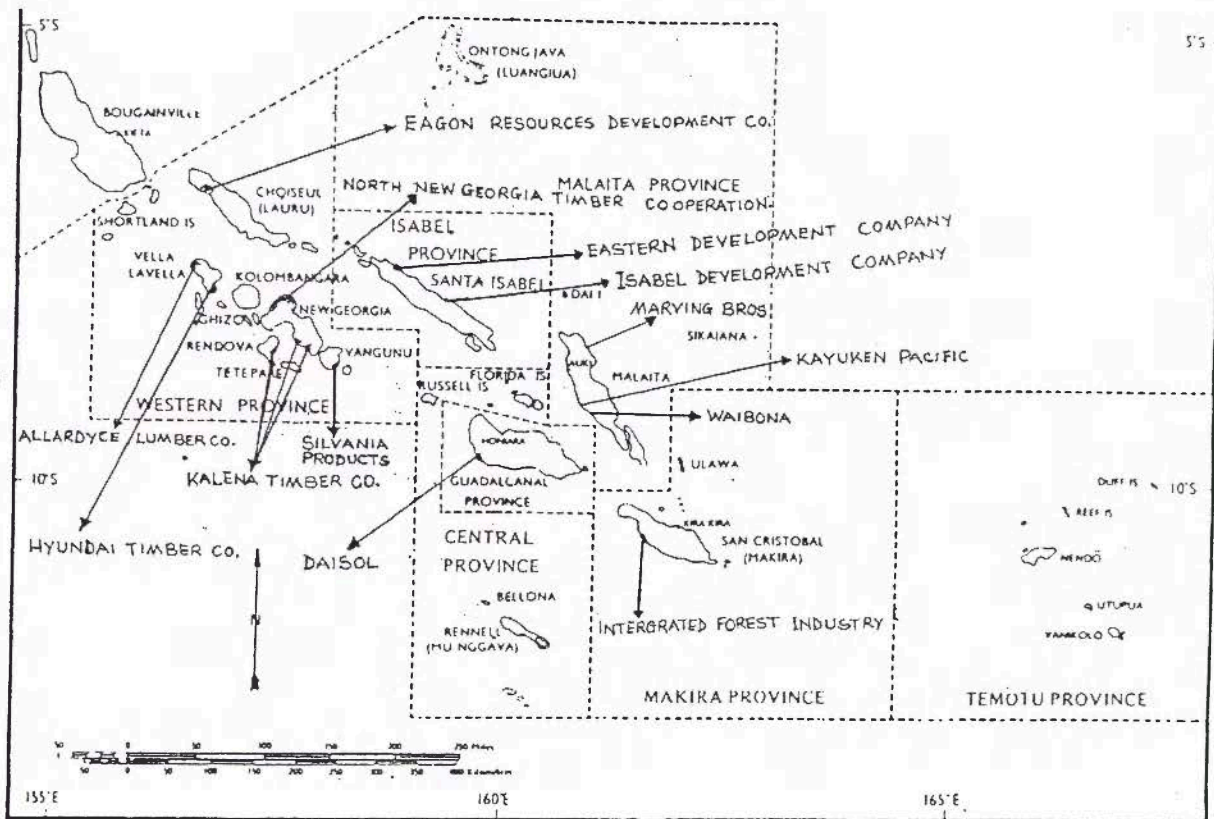
CHAPTER THREE

THE SOLOMON ISLANDS: POST INDEPENDENCE

The move to political independence for the Solomon Islands in 1978, did not result in greater autonomy from international pressures and global forces. Post-colonial national governments have been severely constrained in a number of ways. The current government of the Solomon Islands remains economically dependent on the actions of logging companies, foreign aid and foreign investment. Many of the problems associated with western economic development have then, continued into the post-colonial period.

How is economic development a global issue in relation to the Solomon Islands? With respect to economic and social policy, the 'independent' government of the Solomon Islands adopts a fairly traditional 'growth' approach modelled along Western lines. Economic development is primarily geared towards the need and benefits of the global decision makers, rather than the needs of the local people. Lechte (1983) argues that this is characteristic of many Pacific nations. He maintains that Pacific nations' development is defined by outside political needs, and as a result these small nations lose control of their own destiny. Similarly Connell and Lea (1994) argue that globalisation in Melanesia is a process of uneven development which produces negative outcomes for local populations. To what extent can these observations and claims be validated with respect to the Solomon Islands?

Figure 3.1 Locating logging companies around the Solomon Islands



Source: Solomon Islands Development Trust 1994, LINK, SIDT, no. 32, April-May, p. 18.

Figure 3.1 maps out where logging corporations, many foreign owned, operate throughout the provinces of the Solomon Islands.

i) LOGGING ITS WAY TO INEVEN DEVELOPMENT

The biggest issue of contention today in the Solomon Islands is logging. This industry is by far the largest in the Solomon islands. As stated previously, the timber industry is seen by some as the best means for achieving economic development within the Solomon Islands (Friesen 1993; Ilala 1992). However, the belief that the Solomon Islands can log their way to development is a false 'solution'. This chapter argues that such an argument is fraught with problems and maintains that logging is harmful to the long-term interests of Solomon Islanders.

A number of writers claim that the Solomon Islands derive benefits from logging (Maten 1981; Labu 1981; Friesen 1993). In these accounts attention is drawn to the income generated from exports (Labu 1981). It is asserted that this will increase employment in both private and public sectors and improve infrastructure by providing new roads, housing and schools (Friesen 1993). What is overlooked in these accounts are the many problems associated with this reliance.

Current rates of logging in the Solomon Islands are proceeding at an alarming rate and are not sustainable (SIDT 1994). Both Borschmann (1993) and SIDT (1991) fear that with current rates, the Solomon Islands forests will be completely exhausted in around 10-15 years. Placing this in perspective, the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau

(AIDAB) (1995) estimates that the Solomon Islands has about 2.4 million hectares of forests covering around 85% of land. Approximately 87% is customary land and less than 20% is suitable for commercial logging. AIDAB points out that the National Forest Resource Inventory has calculated that for yields to be sustainable they must be in the vicinity of 325,000m³ per annum. Current licences granted by the Solomon Islands government allow 3.3 million m³ of forests to be logged annually. This is 10 times above the assessed sustainable level (AIDAB 1995). Moreover, Grynberg (1994) has calculated that around 10,000 to 15,000 hectares per annum needs to be reforested in order to achieve sustainable yields. Although Solomon Islands law requires at least 20% local processing logs, most companies abuse the regulations (Borschmann 1993). The problem of unsustainable rates is further compounded by the issue of transfer pricing.

Table 3.1 Log exports in the Solomon Islands in 1990

Island	No. of companies	Log volume (cubic metres)	% of Total log export production
New Georgia & Rendova	3	187,034	49
Choiseul	1	55,952	15
Guadalcanal	2	45,277	12
Shortlands	1	39,107	10
Makira	1	31,291	8
Malaita	2	26,465	6
Total	10	385,126	

Source: Forestry Division statistics: cited in Leary, T. 1993, Solomon Islands: state of the environment report, South Pacific Regional Environment Program, Western Samoa, Apia, p.14.

In reference to table 3.1, the National Forest Resource Inventory recommended sustainable yields is calculated as 325,000m³ per annum; exports in 1990 exceeded this by 60,000m³. This is not a true indication of yields exceeding the recommended rate, because the totals provided above are derived from regulated logging practices, but give no indication of unregulated estimates of logging operations.

Although Labu (1981) has argued that logging benefits the economy because of the income it is supposed to generate, the practical experience of the Solomon Islands renders this claim highly questionable. The Solomon Islands have lost \$millions due to illegal pricing transfers and taxation evasion by many logging companies. The government has lost \$15million through undeclared exports and underpricing of logs. The bulk of the money made by timber does not remain in the Solomon Islands (Borschmann 1993). The export of unprocessed logs are the most susceptible to exploitation because value and profits are added and kept overseas (Howard et al. 1983). This situation not only places pressure on the external sector of the economy, it places further pressure on the domestic economy. The Solomon Islands in 1980 had to import some \$2million worth of timber (Howard et al. 1983)! Japan is the main supplier of imports of logs to the Solomon Islands (SIDT 1993). The question that needs to be asked is why a country like the Solomon Islands, which is not only dependent on logging for achieving 'development', and logs at an unsustainable rate, is

still unable to sustain the domestic requirements of its own people?

Logging companies promise benefits and assistance such as providing roads, bridges, schools, clinics and money (Borschmann 1993; AIDAB 1995). Empirically, however, such promises have failed to materialise in any substantial way. Studies show that logging companies have deceived local villagers when signing agreements for their land. A number of cases have been cited where logging companies have taken advantage of local landowners lack of knowledge and coaxed them into signing unclear agreements (SIDT 1992). Although timber licences may be granted by the government to companies this does not necessarily mean agreements have been made with the actual landowners or that companies stick to them (AIDAB 1995). For example, Taisol and Kayuken which are logging companies operating in the Malaita Province of the Solomon Islands have ignored the agreement initially made with the local land owners (SIDT 1987). Kayuken in particular is believed to have been exporting forbidden trees not part of the agreement. These trees have local significance. Such as the nali nut tree used for food and the arakoko used to make canoes (SIDT 1987).

The provincial governments and national governments rely on local knowledge to inform them of any transgressions. In this way they are placing a large onus of responsibility on the local people, while at the same time claiming that they are

consulting local people in the process of development (SIDT 1987). There are many problems with such a process. First, in many instances the local population lacks the necessary western legal knowledge forms to negotiate such agreements. They are, therefore, vulnerable to exploitation. Second, where local populations are aware of wrong doings and seek redress and assistance from provincial and national governments, the outcomes are frequently unsatisfactory. Difficulties in representation, lack of familiarity with procedural protocols and legal means often prove insurmountable barriers (SIDT 1987).

Such unethical corporate practices by companies in the Solomon Islands is not surprising. Many of the Malaysian, Korean and Tawanese logging companies, which were driven out by South East Asian countries because of bans on exports of logs, are given ready approval and licences to log by the Solomon Islands government (Borschmann 1993)

Table 3.2 Logging Companies by Province

<u>Province</u>	<u>Logging Companies</u>
Malaita	Maving Bros, Kayuken Pacific, Waibona
Makira	Integrated Forest Industry
Guadalcanal	Dalsol
Isabel	Eastern Development Company, Isabel Development Company
Western	Kalena Timber Company, Allardyce Lumber Company, Hyundai Timber Company, Sylvania Products, North New Georgia Timber Corporation
Choiseul	Eagon Resources Development Company

Source: Solomon Islands Development Trust 1994, LINK, SIDT, no. 32, April-May, p. 22.

ii) LOGGING: THE FAILURE OF REGULATORY GOVERNANCE

Now most people should understand that if development kills, poisons, destroys the environment, then development itself does not have to live long (SIDT 1994, p. 2).

Logging is destroying the Solomon Islands environment and its biological diversity. In many respects logging in the Solomon Islands fits Labu's (1981) description of a form of natural resource based development which he terms 'destructive development'.

The post colonial period has created a new form of economic dependence. Government policies and the lack of effective regulatory mechanisms have contributed to the problem of over-logging in the Solomon Islands. The Solomon Islands government along with other Melanesian countries has granted logging licences and accepted logging agreements far beyond annual sustainable levels (AIDAB 1995).

The major Act regulating forests in the Solomon Islands is the 'Forest Resources and Timber Utilisation Act formed in 1969 (AIDAB 1995). Although this has been subject to amendments, no **substantive** changes have been enacted. As this is the main Act governing forests and logging, it is not surprising that the Solomon Islands is logging at unsustainable rates. The 1969 Act was constructed by the British Colonial government of

the time. The current government, by not revising and reforming the legislative requirements governing the timber industry, has guaranteed an open and loose regulatory framework for foreign firms to operate within. The 1969 Act contains no legal references or requirements to notions of economic sustainability.

Where institutional frameworks have been established with respect to logging they have been demonstrably inadequate. In its monitoring of logging, in June 1993, the government set up a Timber Control Unit (TCU) at the Ministry for Forests, Environment and Conservation to make sure that logging companies comply with the Timber Forestry Act (AIDAB 1995). As stated previously, the Timber Forestry Act has many limitations. The TCU is forced to act within the confines of the 1969 Act and is therefore severely constrained. Moreover, the TCU itself has limited institutional capacity. Borschmann (1993) is very critical of the TCU, suggesting that it has not solved the crisis of over-cutting of logs. The role and focus of the TCU is primarily aimed at monitoring of pricing and shipments. The TCU's real function consists in looking at effects (that is, pricing and shipments once logs have been cut), rather than the causes (that is, monitoring the actual companies in order to ensure that they log at sustainable rates). When measured against international and environmental standards the Solomon Islands' government lacks not only information and environmental awareness, but also the institutional capabilities within its Environmental and

Conservation division (Leary 1992).

In 1993, the Solomon Islands government published a policy document, known as National Environment Management Strategies (NEMS). Ostensibly the aim of the publication was to raise awareness of major environmental issues affecting the Solomon Islands. This publication is open to a number of criticisms. The model of development proposed by the NEMS is very much along the lines previously criticised. It maintains an emphasis on seeking to procure foreign currencies and reduce foreign debt by encouraging transnational resource based enterprises (Howard et al. 1983; SIDT 1994). As Waddell argues:

Governments, too, become parties to this definition of development. They not only mistake means for ends but agree with the Taiyos and Unilevers of this world that the only way to pay for and enjoy these benefits is to invite foreigners to invest in the country on highly favourable terms (Waddell 1993, p. 43).

Most government decision makers grant these corporations their requests, mainly because they also subscribe to the developmental ethos (Waddell 1993). For the NEMS to be effective, there must be both, strong environmental legislation and the political desire to implement environmental policy. At the moment the Solomon Islands

government has neither (Hughes, P. & Sullivan 1989).

At an institutional level, the political base of the Solomon Islands lack capacity and credibility. Government corruption has emerged as a major problem (Borschmann 1993), with bribes from logging companies being accepted by government officials and key decision makers (Grynberg 1994). As Grynberg comments:

logging generates cash flow so quickly and is generally so profitable that loggers have no problem offering quite substantial bribes to ministers and public servants (Grynberg 1994, p. 12).

It is reasonable to conclude that the political framework of the institutions of representative democracy in the Solomon Islands are compromised and present an obstacle to institutional reform.

The social and cultural changes brought about by colonisation and decolonisation are many. Waddell (1993) provides a neat summary of the problems which persist in the Solomon Islands today:

low levels of self-sufficiency, self reliance and health have persisted into the post-colonial period. Decolonisation may have brought political independence but it certainly has not brought

economic independence (Waddell 1993, p. 6).

Giving existing internal political arrangements, and the external pressures exerted by global capitalist enterprises, the possibility of the Solomon islands charting a path of economic and social development which is both environmentally sustainable and integrated to the needs of the indigenous populations seem remote. The final chapter examines the viability and the possibility of alternative options emerging within the Solomon Islands.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE FUTURE FOR THE SOLOMON ISLANDS: ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Old economic doctrines that were reductionist, fragmentary and dominated by socialist-capitalist polarities are being replaced by trans-disciplinary, real-life ecological economics (Dixit 1994, p. 23).

i) SUSTAINABILITY

In recent years the notion of sustainable development has been a key term used in debates about economic development. However, at times the term 'sustainability' is used too loosely and generally. For example, *Our Common Future* defines sustainable development as:

development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs... (it is) not a fixed state of harmony, but rather a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investment, the orientation of technological development and institutional change are made consistent with the future as well as present needs (Brundtland 1987).

The imprecise use of the term sustainable development has meant that it has been construed as meaning different things to different people. Within Australia there has been a Federal Interdepartmental Working Party on sustainable development whose expressed purpose was establishing ecologically sustainable guidelines for industry within key industry sectors (Rosewarne 1993, p. 53). The notions of ecologically sustainable development and sustainable development nevertheless remain a political battle ground. For some these terms simply denote "business as usual", while others wish to see ecological sustainability taken seriously when considering the nature and form of economic processes. If sustainable development is to be more than an empty buzz word, to be used liberally by governments, corporations, individuals and groups with little commitment to environmental principles, then it must be made to address the specific environmental and economic needs of local communities.

I have argued that present types and patterns of production with respect to logging in the Solomon Islands are clearly unsustainable. It is therefore necessary to briefly address the issue of what environmentally sustainable development means in the context of the Solomon Islands and its local people. Here we can only sketch the broad parameters and general framework within which policy initiatives might be developed.

ii) THE ROLE OF NON GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS (NGOs)

Within the Solomon Islands various non-government organisations have sought to develop programs and initiatives which are relevant to regional and local populations. Various NGO's have sought to provide alternative approaches and programs to those of the central government and global corporations. In many instances, NGO frequently work with local communities, and are well positioned to understand and respond to the needs of the indigenous communities.

Although, the Solomon Islands have many NGO's the Solomon Islands Development Trust (SIDT) is the largest and most influential. The major objective of the SIDT is the active involvement of villagers in the rural development process at a grass-roots level.

The SIDT has been very successful in educating local villages concerning the process of western development and its impact. For example, in 1986, the SIDT developed a Land Use Workshop for the landowners of Dala village in the Malaita Province. These landowners, had endorsed a contractual logging agreement in the 1970's, but had little understanding of the exploitation and despoliation that was taking place. This workshop helped raise the awareness of these landowners with respect to both the environmental repercussions of the decision and the significance of the low returns they received in comparison to the logging company. Eventually they decided

to cancel the contract (Paeniu 1988).

The SIDT has many aims and functions. A 1982 Statement of Resolve, summarises the overall goals of the organisation:

The role of the SIDT will include questioning the conventional development wisdom, raising the consciousness of both development donors and recipients concerning local development issues, and creating conditions where alternative development visions and actualities can take place (Paeniu 1988, p. 3).

The village is the principle focus of SIDT activity. As the organisation itself states:

The SIDT attempts to engage villagers in the development debate, to have them review their own views of the "what" and the "how" of development, to discuss the pros and cons of development in public, and to help plan for a future dictated by these concerns. SIDT sees villagers as the basic resource, the experts on their own lives, who normally have untapped potential and are certainly interested in seeing that their plans bring about improved quality of life (Paeniu 1988, p. 3).

The self-reliance and self-determination of local people is

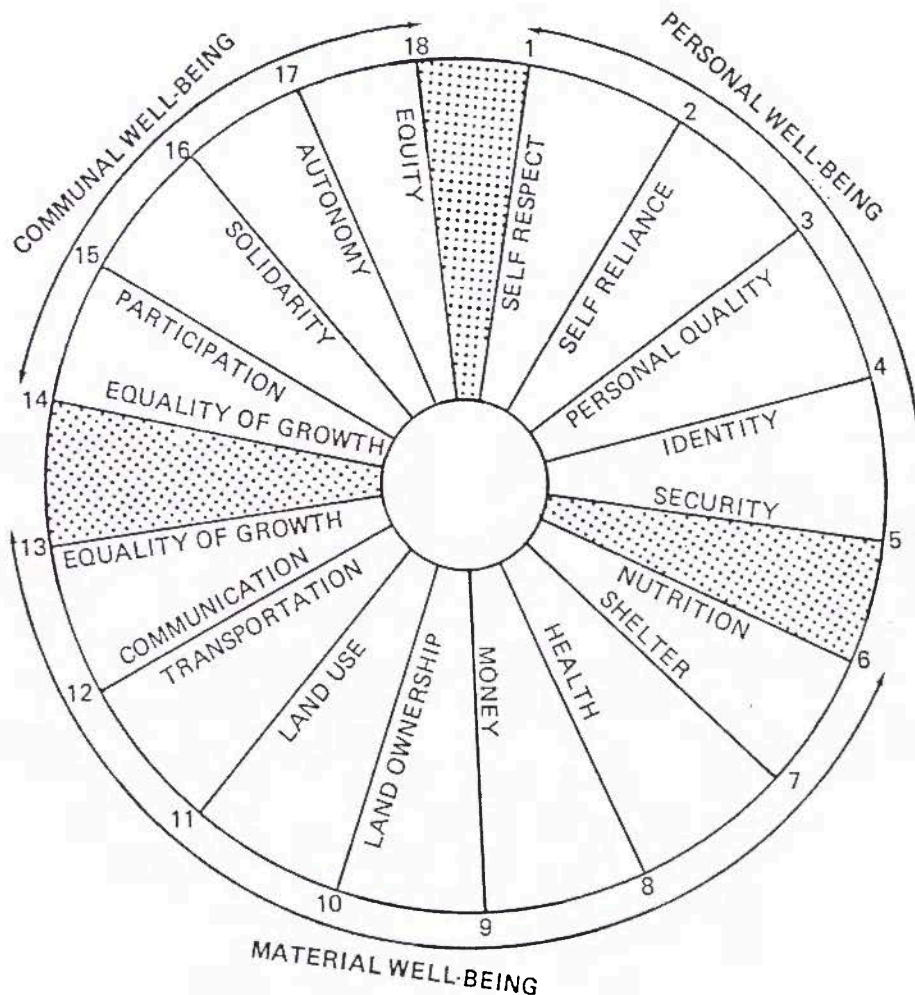
the central issue in such a model. Dr John Roughan (1981) argues, although self-reliance is a western construct referring to the individual, within the Solomon Islands the term self-reliance is more communally based and has different social connotations. The SIDT's model of development recognises and acknowledges this difference. This stands in direct contrast to the national governments' economic model of development, which Crocombe (1981) and Burt (1982) argue, represents a shift away from self-determination and self-reliance for indigenous communities.

An essential part of this approach to development involves the use of Mobile Teams to make contact with many remotely scattered villages throughout the Solomon Islands. These Mobile Teams are designed to educate, assist and encourage local people in all areas of rural development. In particular they stress that the notion that development does not simply mean money (Paeniu 1988). Such approaches encourage local people to appreciate their own cultures, technology and lifestyles, while discouraging the slavish imitation of western cultures.

The SIDT uses its own method for measuring quality of life and 'standard of living' of village life. Rather than using a narrow indicator of social well being such as GDP and economic growth, the SIDT seek to make assessments which are more culturally specific. The Quality of Life Index used by the SIDT is both culturally and village specific. It attempts to

focus on all areas which have a bearing on Solomon Islands life: examining environment, personal well-being and identity, as well as communal well-being. Its aim is to 'measure' just how much villagers are in charge of their own lives and their surroundings (Paeniu 1988). The SIDT's Quality of Life Index in many ways lies outside western systems of classification. Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2, below, illustrate the SIDT's Development Wheel and Quality of Life Index, respectively.

Figure 4.1 Development Wheel



Source: Paeniu, B. 1988, The Villager, The Basic Resource of the Development Approach of the Solomon Islands Development Trust (SIDT), South Pacific Commission, New Caledonia, Noumea, p.8

Figure 4.2 Village Quality of Life Index

VILLAGE LEVEL		FAMILY LEVEL		
		VILLAGE.....		
		DATE.....		
ADULT WELL-BEING				TOTAL
- drains	(10).....	- housing	(15).....	
- rubbish removal	(10).....	a) off ground		
- sanitation	(15).....	b) cleaned daily		
		c) no holes		
- water supply	(15).....	- kitchen	(10).....	
- bush line	(10).....	a) stove		
- animals	(05).....	b) food safe		
		c) cook pots		
		d) eating things		
		- personal goods	(10).....	
		a) clothing		
		b) bed		
		c) cleaning material		
		d) box/case	
CHILD WELL-BEING				
- Health Committee	(15).....	- mosquito net	(05).....	
- Health Education	(15).....	first aid box	(05).....	
Transportation	(15).....	- bedding	(05).....	
- Medical Box	(05).....	- clothing	(05).....	
Health Aid	(10).....	- plates	(05).....	
		- torch/lamp	(05).....
		- class/study	(10).....	
COMMUNAL WELL-BEING				
ORGANISATION		- personal tools		
- meeting place	(15).....	a) garden tools	(15).....	
- budget	(10).....	b) house tools		
		c) hunting and fishing tools	
- education	(15).....	- garden	(20).....	
- tools	(10).....	- chickens, pigs	(15).....	
		ducks		
REMARKS :				÷ 3) _____
				SCORE
				NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS.....

Source: Paeniu, B. 1988, The Villager, The Basic Resource of the Development Approach of the Solomon Islands Development Trust (SIDT), South Pacific Commission, New Caledonia, Noumea, p. 10.

Forests play an important part in the daily lives of the rural people of the Solomon Islands. As Waddell (1993) suggests there is a perception that rainforests only provide sources of timber. However, in the Solomon Islands they play a significant role in the lives of village populations at a number of levels. Forests provide food crops, wood for fuel and are a resource for handcrafts. They are used for building by traditional methods, and have medicinal purposes (Bariri unpub.). Disruption to forests also disrupts community life. The SIDT (1994) suggest that deforestation also introduces health risks and has increased the incidence of Malaria, a major health problem confronting the Solomon Islands today. Deforestation also causes population movements which fragment local cultures, frequently resulting in livelihoods being lost (SIDT 1994). Migration and population movements caused by logging eventually lead to over-crowding in urban centres. For example, Honiara, the capital city, faces problems of over-crowding, leading to unemployment problems, and loss of social identity, as traditional dependence on village lifestyles fracture (Alasia 1989).

The SIDT recognises the socio-cultural problems caused by logging in the Solomon Islands. They seek to provide information and support for local villages and notify village populations on the repercussions of logging and mining (SIDT 1987). As part of this process the SIDT have developed a Conservation In Development (CID) programme (jointly with the Maruia society in New Zealand). As the SIDT explains, this

program is:

working for the conservation of bio-diversity in the Solomon Islands by supporting customary land owners in their development and implementation of village land and resource management plans, which include both protected forest areas and cash earning sustainable development activities (SIDT 1993, p. 17).

Through such initiatives the SIDT hopes to gain some purchase over the development process (Borschmann 1993). When logging companies enter into discussion and make offers to local landowners in order to log an area, the SIDT also intervenes. The SIDT discusses with the local landowners possible alternatives. For example, the South Korean logging company, Eagon, entered the Western Province of the Solomon Islands and held discussion agreements with community leaders in Sagasaga, Leuleu, Molevaga, Sipokana and Poropro villages. Once notified, the SIDT quickly reacted and held their own discussions with the local leaders in the villagers. Following discussions with SIDT the local leaders decided to overturn their previous decision with Eagon to commercially log their land (SIDT 1987).

Women in the development process

The SIDT also seeks to address the needs of women in development process, through the SIDT Women Initiative

Programs (WIP). Part of this program focuses on issues such as better family education, increased male support, improving leadership skills for women, lessons in management, and enhancing agricultural knowledge and local food promotion (Solomon Islands Development Trust 1990, p. 8). Traditionally women have had very strong links with their environment. As the SIDT argues:

...women are usually the managers of natural resources. They possess traditional knowledge and experiences gained through living in very close interaction with nature, and learning how to conserve these natural resources (SIDT 1994, p. 13).

Women are very skilled in the maintenance of their immediate environment. As a result of the repercussions of logging, SIDT argues that it is frequently women who are "the victims of environmental degradation" (1994, p. 13). Logging has destroyed the place of gardening for local people, particularly women, forcing them to travel further for gardening (SIDT 1994).

The SIDT (1994) also argues that women have often been overlooked in policies because their concerns have been considered the same as men. In fact, SIDT (1991) argues that men are the ones who make the bad decisions and are the ones who ignore the needs of the women. As one publication states:

women should not be treated as second grade copra. We are all human beings and we should treat each other as equals (SIDT 1991, p. 11).

Moreover, the problem as SIDT (1994) views it, is that purely market based development destroys options for women. As SIDT states:

... developers who leave women in situations where their life-sustaining environments have changed, and the skills of managing these environments, developed and passed on over many generations, are no longer appropriate. (SIDT 1994, p. 13)

It is for these reasons that SIDT's director Dr John Roughan argues that it is necessary to give village women greater power in decision making processes. Not only does the SIDT help women at the village level in achieve greater self reliance, they also include them as part of their mobile teams, as employees (SIDT 1991). This is particularly important as only female to female communication is allowed in some parts of Solomon Islands.

Overall, the SIDT has raised awareness and questioned the conventional wisdom of developmental approaches based solely on market forces. As part of its bottom-up approach, it has involved villagers in decision making at the local level and sought to enhance their powers.

CONCLUSION

The aims of this study were threefold. First, to identify the formative assumptions underpinning western models of development, in particular those stemming from the doctrine of economic market liberalism. Second, to examine the rhetorical claims of these 'discourses of development' by weighing them against the lived history both past and present of the Solomon Islands. Third, to consider the general direction and forms alternative strategies and approaches might take in the current period.

In the first instance, my aim was to identify those discussions in and through which market liberalism is articulated as a development path for the Solomon Islands (Hughes, H., Ahlburg & Lee n.d.; Browne & Scott 1989; Cole & Parry 1986; Friesen 1993). My principle concern here was to identify the common assumptions which draw together quite diverse writings under the umbrella of market liberalism. In following the dictates of 'the market', government policies must be tuned to support and protect the open market, internally and externally. Part of this process, it was argued, requires encouraging direct foreign investment and aid, particularly within its primary agricultural sector. Market liberals believe such policies will achieve sustained economic development and global competitiveness (Hughes, H., Ahlburg & Lee; n.d.; Browne & Scott 1989; Cole & Parry 1986; Friesen 1993).

In the second instance, my focus was on measuring and assessing these claims and the supposed benefits of policy reliance on market forces. A major focus of the thesis therefore was on, first, the impact government policy has with respect to logging in the Solomon Islands; and second the deleterious social and environmental consequences of current logging practices for local communities in the Solomon Islands. This research empirically established that logging within the Solomon Islands forests is conducted at an unsustainable rate. Unsustainable logging practices, I have argued, are closely linked with the failure of regulatory governance. Unsustainable logging not only damages the environment and ecological systems, it also causes social dislocation within local communities. In questioning the premises upon which market models are based I demonstrated how the practical consequences of logging (environmental disruption and cultural fragmentation) undermines the claims of market liberalism with respect to maximal (optimal) outcomes and productive efficiency. Indeed, the operation of unfettered market forces in the Solomon Islands has produced precisely the opposite for the local inhabitants.

Within the Solomon Islands a number of organisations, writers, activists and groups have responded to the many problems associated with current economic practices. In developing these ideas I have sought to assemble these responses and sketch the broad parameters within which an alternative model might be thought. I have indicated some of the practices and

decentralised political strategies that are necessary within such an approach. In this context the primary focus was on the role played by the Solomon Islands Development Trust in attempting to chart a culturally specific and more appropriate form of social and economic development for the Solomon Islands. In discussing the SIDT, my purpose was to provide a specific illustration of how local non government organisations have attempted to apply alternative approaches and policies to real life situations: the villagers of the Solomon Islands. On the basis of the study presented here it is clear that an alternative path of economic development must move away from the current high dependence on logging as the major source for income and export earnings.

This study, although not setting out an elaborate or detailed policy for alternative sustainable development, has indicated the general direction such a policy needs to take. It has built the foundation for future research and policy development in this area.

In today's globalised world transnational resource industries and corporations **globally map** the world in search of 'natural resources'. In such circumstances, it is highly unlikely that there will remain societies with environmental 'pockets' which are 'untouched and pure'. Western romantic fantasies of untouched island paradises belong more to the pages of a James A Michener novel than to the practical realities of life in Pacific Islander communities. The Solomon Islands, are

unfortunately, a very much 'touched paradise'.

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