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**Pacific Island Labour Programmes in New Zealand: an
aid to Pacific Island Development?**

A Critical Lens on the Recognised Seasonal Employer Policy.

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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Abstract

The New Zealand Recognised Employer (RSE) Policy was designed to remedy labour shortages in the horticulture/viticulture industry early in the twenty-first century. It was the first New Zealand contract labour migration programme to be designed with the explicit intent of the development of the source countries, consisting mainly of small Pacific Island States. This research sought to examine within a historical context whether the programme was beneficial to the source countries and communities, and whether the programme met the expectations of international labour conventions which New Zealand has signed. An attempt was made to discover whether, when compared with antecedent programmes in New Zealand and North America, the RSE represented a new paradigm in the design and implementation of a contract migrant labour programme.

The field work was carried out for twenty months between December 2011 and August 2013, involved a grower survey and over 100 semi-structured interviews with Government officials, horticulturalists, migrant workers, pastoral care workers, and other interested parties. Time in southern Vanuatu was divided between interviewing migrant RSE workers in Port Vila and visiting 100 village communities on Tanna Island. Assessments were made of access to the programme for the rural and urban poor and of the positive and negative impacts of the programme.

Positive features observed included the benefits of close government monitoring of worker accommodation, the transparency of the remuneration, the interest of many employers in assisting workers to remit funds to source communities, house building and infrastructural benefits gained by many workers, and the transfer of useful skills. Negative features included the powerlessness of the workers to negotiate their work conditions, the failure of some employers to address workers' specific needs, the social dislocation of some workers leading to alcohol abuse, the frequency of work interruptions due particularly to weather conditions, the excessive work hours on some nightshifts at minimum wage, and a lack of connection between recruitment patterns and areas of greatest need.

The RSE policy has come about in an era of migration optimism. Since the mid-1990s the total global flow of remittances has exceeded the level of official development assistance. However most literature regarding remittance flows and transnational communities is set within a context of diaspora. The RSE was carefully designed to prevent overstaying of visa entitlements, in order to prevent any growth of diaspora. Consequently the overall financial flows in the case of Vanuatu are small compared to such sectors as tourism, and the position of the RSE in the migration-development nexus is somewhat contradictory.

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List of Abbreviations

ACC	Accident Compensation Commission
ATR	Agreement to Recruit
AOG	Assembly of God
BOT	Board of Trustees
CPI	Cost Price Index
CSS	Critical Social Science
DOL	Department of Labour
ECLA	Economic Commission for Latin America
ESU	Employment Servicing Unit
EPZ	Economic Protection Zone
FOL	Federation of Labour
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
HDI	Human Development Index
IRBD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (part of World Bank complex)
ILO	International Labour Organisation
MWC	Migrant Workers' Convention, shortened form of
MBIE	Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment
MIRAB	Migration, Remittances, Aid, and Bureaucracy
NBV	National Bank of Vanuatu
NZCTU	New Zealand Council of Trade Unions
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PSS	Positivist Social Science
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
RSE	Recognised Seasonal Employer

SAWP	Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Programme (Canada)
SITE	Small Island Tourist Economy
SDA	Seventh Day Adventist, Seventh Day Adventism
TMWP	Temporary Migrant Worker Programme
UNHDR	United Nations Declaration on Human Rights
VCC	Vanuatu Cultural Council
VSA	Volunteer Service Abroad
WINZ	Work and Income New Zealand

List of Terms

<i>Abu</i>	Elders in Vanuatu, similar in meaning to <i>kaumatua</i> in Aotearoa/New Zealand
<i>Bracero</i>	Refers to a migrant worker from Mexico in the United States
<i>Dagongmei</i>	Coastal migrant labourers from inland China lacking urban status, usually women under 30.
<i>Gongren</i>	Higher status workers in Chinese cities.
<i>Hukou</i>	Chinese registration system which classifies people according to principally urban and rural status and defines their citizenship entitlements.
<i>Kastom</i>	Translates literally to custom or customary, but in a reified sense which places a set of traditional belief and practice on a quasi-religious footing
<i>Manuka</i>	Native shrub known to New Zealand farmers as scrub, often the first plant to reappear in regenerating bush
<i>Nabanga</i>	Variety of banyan tree integral to community life on Tanna Island
<i>Nakaamal</i>	Historically named communal space shaded by <i>Nabanga</i> tree, also known as dancing ground, where meetings and major social events take place and kava is drunk. Village centre.
<i>Stumpa</i>	Literally a stump, used in horticultural context to refer to a single plant being pruned or harvested
<i>Swaggers</i>	Casual labourers who carried a small “sugar bag” with their belongings and walked rural roads in search of short term employment and meals
<i>Tan</i>	Territorial space on Tanna Island normally bounded by ravines
<i>Vakameasina</i>	The name given to the New Zealand Aid Programme’s contribution to the RSE through after work training in computer literacy and related skills
<i>Whare</i>	Small dwelling which in farming parlance refers to a hut used by labourers for accommodation
<i>Yeni</i>	Spokesman for Tannese community

Chapter One. Introduction

1.1. Motivation for this Research

My father was a returned soldier from World War II and his steep hill country farm near Mangaweka in the lower North Island of New Zealand was typical of those used for soldier rehabilitation. In the 1960s, a battle was waged between regenerating forest and grasslands fertilised by phosphates extracted from Nauru Island. I was still a small boy when the “Hindus” arrived from Fiji to cut the *manuka* scrub. The *manuka*, left alone, would have provided cover for regenerating ferns, and eventually forest. Half a day would be spent cleaning out the disused shearers’ quarters which were used to accommodate them. I still remember the smell of the rat infested hut which went by this name. Fijian Indians would live for months in these quarters and cut scrub for fourteen hours a day, seven days a week, as I remember it. If their parents were not indentured labourers in Fiji’s sugar industry, their grandparents most surely would have been. My father was not the only one to take advantage of this Fijian labour and I remember snatches of conversation between the farmers of the day, which seemed to focus in somewhat patronising tones on the speed of the scrub cutters. Time passed, and the Hindus were replaced by large gangs of “native Fijians”. We rode the farm on horseback and my father would call out “Bula” in a loud voice and I would hear the echo of the return greeting. The battle for grassland was won, eventually, and my father lived to his ninetieth year proud that the land did not revert to bush.

Many years later, from 2002, I was teaching on Tanna Island, Vanuatu, under the auspices of Volunteer Service Abroad (VSA). In the two years that I was stationed there my thoughts on the meaning of poverty changed to something closer to post-developmentalism. I developed a profound respect for the Tannese way of life, even though I was often invoking Western attitudes to timekeeping. I gradually became better at waiting patiently in the certain knowledge that transport would eventually arrive, wherever I may be going. There was a manifest shortage of certain skills on the island, the presence of which would have resulted in a broken down electricity generator lighting the lives of three hundred teenagers, and a broken down water pump keeping the school open instead of closing for lack of water from time to time. However these minor inconveniences did not prevent the world’s most active volcano (*Yasur*) from fertilising the gardens of the island and sustaining a vibrant people. These people were aware that one day’s boat trip away was the city of Noumea, where roads were sealed, shops were full of consumables, and the indigenous people lived subservient lives in one of the world’s few remaining colonies.

Back in New Zealand, sometime late in 2008, my wife and I received a phone call from Cromwell, Otago. The Kaio brothers were from one of Tanna's Seventh Day Adventist villages which tended to be more modern than most other villages, but which accommodated the patterns of reciprocity which were fundamental to Tannese livelihoods. They were also talented artists and one was a university educated teacher of biology. To our surprise, Tanna's most talented artist was picking grapes in central Otago. The following year we decided to pay them a visit and drove our small twin boys, who have Tannese names as well as English ones, to Cromwell. We had an enjoyable time in the evening at their living quarters, and our two boys loved the attention, somewhat ironically getting their first play on a computer which had been supplied to the migrant workers to ease the boredom. I refrained from asking what they were paid, but was disconcerted when I was told "some of us were sent home for being naughty".

I had been toying for some time with the idea of attempting a PhD in development studies, having completed my Masters in 2006, the field work for which was mainly carried out on Tanna Island. The Recognised Seasonal Employment programme seemed to provide an ideal focus for an examination of the exploitation/use of Pacific Island labour. I was unaware that several others had already had similar ideas, and surprised to discover the enthusiasm with which the RSE programme was received within the academic community. I felt that a more critical examination was needed, and I wondered how much things had really changed since a "Hindu" named Amika Prasad made friends with a small boy near Mangaweka all those years ago.

1.2. Introduction to the RSE Programme

Labour shortages in the growing horticultural and viticultural industries in New Zealand, brought about in part by long term rural depopulation, and in part by rapid growth in these industries in the 1990s, led to increasingly precarious forms of employment at the beginning of the twenty-first century. It has been estimated that early in the new millennium 80% of New Zealand growers were engaged in the employment of undocumented seasonal labour from off shore (Lovelock & Leopold, 2008). Concern was growing in particular about the role of labour contractors (see Courtney, 2008) in the exploitation of migrants. The Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) programme was designed, in part, to rectify this situation. The programme is the most refined in a series of programmes since the 1960s aimed at shoring up labour shortages in the primary sector. There are two immediately observable differences between the RSE and previous temporary migrant worker programmes (TMWPs) involving Pacific labour. The first is that the RSE has the explicit intent of being beneficial to all parties (Ramasamy, Krishnan, Bedford, & Bedford, 2008) and several government departments were involved in the design and implementation of the programme, including NZAID (now New

Zealand Aid Programme). This feature has contributed to the RSE programme being highlighted as an example of best practice in government migrant labour programmes (Hugo, 2009; McKenzie & Gibson, 2010). New Zealand's Foreign Minister Winston Peters went so far as to say "First and foremost it will alleviate poverty directly by providing jobs for rural and outer island workers who often lack income-generating work." (quoted in Bedford 2013, p. 83)." The second difference is that the considerable growth in the horticulture/viticulture industries accentuated the need for an instantly available and reliable labour supply for harvest. So a shortage of labour in the rural sector combined with quality issues in a highly competitive export industry set the scene for pressure on government to devise a new programme.

Against a background of mounting pressure from both New Zealand growers seeking labour and Pacific Island governments seeking access to the New Zealand labour market, and a growing worldwide interest in the migration/development nexus (Nyberg-Sorenson, Van Hear, & Edgberg-Pederson, 2002; Van Hear & Nyberg-Sorenson, 2003), the RSE programme was agreed by Cabinet on 16 October 2006, initially to involve workers from Vanuatu, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Tuvalu, and Kiribati. Five of these countries became known as the "kick start states"¹. The World Bank was actively interested in the programme's development potential from the outset, sponsoring a pilot project involving 45 Ni-Vanuatu organised by the Seasonal Solutions Grower Co-operative in Central Otago in 2006/2007 season modelled on RSE lines (see Bailey, 2009), and developing a quantitative research programme in association with Waikato University focused on Vanuatu and Tonga. The full RSE programme was announced at the Pacific Island Forum in October of 2006 and launched April 30th 2007.

Detailed descriptions of the programme² can be found in Bedford (2013), Bailey (2009), Ramasamy et al. (2008). The mechanics are uncomplicated. A bilateral agreement was entered into with each of the participating countries in 2007, which required the signing of Inter Agency Understandings (IAUs) between New Zealand and source country government departments. Enterprises wishing to employ migrant contract labour under this programme must first gain RSE employer status, renewable after two years. To do this, they must meet several criteria for good employer practice including the ability to organise suitable accommodation and pay at least the minimum hourly wage. They are also required to pay half of the workers' air fare to New Zealand. Having gained RSE status, they need to apply for an "agreement to recruit" (ATR) which details the workers and tasks they require for a

¹ Fiji was excluded following the 2006 political coup led by Commodore Bainamarama. In Chapter 5 it will be seen that this was not the first time that migrant labour programmes entered into the political arena in this way.

² The official designation is the RSE policy, however as it will be compared with a number of similar programmes in this document this description will be used throughout.

particular season. At this point they must show that suitable labour could not be found from the New Zealand work force for that season, under the “New Zealand first” element of the RSE policy. Evidence from WINZ that the employer has attempted to source labour through New Zealand’s pool of unemployed is the usual form of evidence. The third stage involves the active recruitment of migrant workers. Those offered employment must apply for a seasonal work visa linked to the ATR. Visa requirements include chest X-ray certificates, medical certificates, police clearances, and a return air ticket. There is also a requirement to attend pre-departure orientation workshops.

Restrictions in place include a maximum of 8,000 workers in any season³ and a maximum of seven months in one contract (nine months in the case of Tuvalu and Kiribati to compensate for the more expensive air fares). Monitoring of the scheme is carried out by the Department of Labour by a national manager, four compliance officers and six labour inspectors.⁴ The pastoral care requirements diverge from previous programmes, insofar as the employer has full responsibility for the welfare of the labourers. In the departmental planning stages, officials sought to minimise risks. Briefing papers show three primary concerns, being overstaying of visas, exploitation of workers, and avoidance of employing New Zealanders (New Zealand Government, 2006). Emphasis was placed on mechanisms to prevent workers from overstaying their visas, for example employers were required to pay a bond for each worker and faced severe financial penalties in the event of a violation of visa conditions.

The programme became fully operational in late 2007. Workers were recruited initially from the kick start states, followed by the Solomon Islands in 2008. Allowances were made for existing employment arrangements involving seasonal workers from other countries, and approximately 20% of RSE workers have continued to be sourced from Malaysia, the Phillipines, and other non-Pacific Island countries. By mid-2009 there were 138 recognised seasonal employers (RSEs). By 2011, the leading source countries were Vanuatu (33% of total annual visas), Tonga (20%) and Samoa (17%). From 2009 the New Zealand Aid Programme began funding the *Vakameasina* programme, initially as a pilot, and contracted private education providers to deliver ‘after work’ courses in such things as computer literacy and English language skills. This programme is operational until 2015.

1.3. Research Questions and Objectives

The overarching research question with which I began this study was to examine whether the RSE programme contributes to development in the Pacific Islands in a non-exploitative, sustainable way.

³ Initially this figure was 5,000, and in 2014 has increased again to 9,000 in response to Fiji’s return to an elected legislature.

⁴ The precise numbers indicated here were used at the beginning stages and are subject to alteration.

Within the first six months of this project I developed four central research questions, which are presented here in final form⁵:

1. Does the Recognised Seasonal Employer Scheme (RSE) demonstrate a paradigm shift in the employment of contract migrant labour in the twenty-first century?
2. Does the RSE experience meet meaningful development goals within the Pacific sending communities?
3. Does the labouring experience of RSE migrant workers in New Zealand meet international standards pertaining to the rights of migrant workers?
4. What sustainable improvements could be made to the RSE programme to enhance the aspiration of best practice?

Each of these questions led to research objectives which required particular methods of investigation. The remainder of this section enlarges on each of the questions and shows how they led to particular research threads.

1.3.1. To investigate whether there has been a paradigm shift in the employment of temporary contract migrant labour in the 21st century.

The term “paradigm” has been used widely in the social sciences since Kuhn (1962) used it in a particular way to demonstrate the historic development of the natural sciences. The following paragraph outlines what such a paradigm shift might imply.

Under the twentieth century paradigm the employment of contract migrant labour would maintain continuity with centuries of exploitation of various forms of unfree labour in harvest industries. The needs of the migrant workers would be subjugated to the needs of industry employers for a stable, inexpensive labour supply. The role and disposition of government would be insufficient to make real change. A new paradigm, by contrast, would give equal weight to the development needs of the source countries/communities while seeking ways to maintain non-exploitative relationships at the worksites. These aspects will be explored in greater depth particularly in chapters 2 and 3.

⁵ Questions 1,3, and 4 have remained in their original wording, while question 3 has been adjusted to place more emphasis on international covenants as points of reference.

Particular objectives flow from question one:

- To examine whether those participating in the RSE programme share an understanding that this is a development scheme, not merely a supply mechanism for inexpensive labour (1a).
- To examine the degree of consensus on the work programme's objectives from the various stakeholders (1b).

1.3.2. To establish whether the RSE experience meets meaningful development goals within the Pacific sending communities.

Time and financial constraints led to a decision to explore this question only in Vanuatu in terms of primary research. The question as to what constitutes meaningful development goals is further explored in Chapter 3. The question led to the following objectives.

- To investigate and reflect on the relevant development goals of the sending communities and to examine how remittances⁶ and other impacts such as skills transfer help meet these goals or otherwise (2a).
- To investigate the impacts of the RSE programme within sending communities, with reference to the first objective (2b).
- To observe any effects on land tenure and subsistence economy (2c).

A further objective, requiring a close examination of the access of both urban and rural ni-Vanuatu to the RSE programme from a pro-poor perspective, was added at the beginning of the field work.

1.3.3. To establish whether the labouring experience of RSE migrant workers in New Zealand meets international standards pertaining to the rights of migrant workers.

This question pointed to quantitative and qualitative issues, with matters such as pay rates and accommodation quality being seen as of equal importance with power relationships between employer and employee. Although this aim refers to the host country, the recruitment process in the island environment forms part of the investigation. Although the question is expressed somewhat bluntly, almost inviting a yes or no answer, it was expected to generate at least as many conceptual/theoretical challenges as the previous ones. These conceptual issues are addressed in Chapter 2. The following objectives resulted.

⁶ The term 'remittances' is used freely throughout this text. For an examination of the many shades of meaning around remittances see Carling (Carling, 2008; cf Gammeltoft, 2003). The term "compensation of employees" would be accurate for many situations explored here, but not all.

- Establish frameworks within which labour conditions/rights might be assessed (3a).
- Examine the remuneration and conditions of the scheme workers with reference to the first objective (3b).
- Examine the power relationships between different stakeholders, particularly employers and employees (3c).

A further objective, the investigation of the parameters within which the (particularly horticultural) labour market operates as it relates to the viability of the industry, was considered. This aspect of the research, which would have explored profitability issues, was abandoned solely for reasons of time and resources. Questions such as growers' ability to pay higher wages were therefore left hanging.

1.3.4. What sustainable improvements could be made to the RSE to enhance the aspiration of best practice?

This question was not intended to form part of the primary research, but to allow for some recommendations to stakeholders to flow from the research conclusions. As I delved further into the RSE programme I became aware of eight critical balances which are outlined in the final chapter and provide much of the framework for suggested improvements.

1.4. Starting Perspectives

Although key events of 1989/90 such as the government massacre of students in Beijing, the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and the relatively peaceful transition from apartheid in South Africa led to widespread questioning of Marxist dogma, I have maintained a Marxian perspective for most of my adult life. My ideas were grounded in a thorough reading of Marx and Engels, not Lenin and Stalin, and I had always been sceptical about the "socialist" experiments of the twentieth century, so Marxian and neo-Marxian texts remained on the shelves. It is not possible to indicate every influential treatise, but works which were closely scrutinised included, among others, Engels' "Origin of the Family", Marx's "Capital" (the three volumes, not including "Theories of Surplus Value", sometimes referred to as volume 4), Paul Baran's "The Political Economy of Growth" (Baran, 1973/1957) and later writings from within the dependency school.

My introduction to Marxian ideas co-incided with the wave of Althusserian influence in the English speaking world. A number of threads which did not necessarily depend on Althusser were discarded rather than discredited within mainstream academia when the full extent of his mental illness was realised in tragic circumstances, with the result that post-Marxists continued to sift through the debris of Althusserian discourse (see, for example Kaplan & Sprinker, 1993) to help understand

which of his theoretical contributions remained relevant in the social sciences. Two points have a direct bearing on this research. Firstly, Gibson-Graham (2006) claim that the concept of over-determination (Althusser & Balibar, 1977) assisted in understanding agency, enabling a retreat from crude economic determinism within the Marxist paradigm. Secondly, the discourse around modes of production faltered before its potential could be fully explored, although Eric Wolf's "Europe and the People without History" (1982) provided a resolution of some issues.

I absorbed much of the underdevelopment literature of the time in an unconscious way; that is I was largely unaware of the distinction to be made between dependency theory and the more classical Marxian ideas it drew upon. Clarity on these matters did not really arrive until I began post-graduate studies in development in the twenty-first century. I do not fully accept mainstream thinking around the "impasse" in development studies (see Booth, 1985) which tends to see the impasse as the beginning of a people centred rethink, and hold that there remains a role for the dependency school, which is enlarged upon in Chapter 3.

There was one further late change in my thinking. I had never been satisfied that Marxist ideas met the claims that were made to scientificity, and the concepts relating to surplus value were particularly problematic in this regard. I absorbed some of the post-modern lexicon from this time onwards, and came to see alternative ways of modelling reality as just that, and what may have been a realist epistemology gave way to a realist ontology combined with a relativist epistemology. This view is shared by the school of critical realists associated with the philosophy of Roy Bhaskar (Bhaskar, 1975, 1989), but rejected by many social constructivists.⁷

Any acceptance of capitalism as the "end of history" (Fukuyama, 1992, 2013) implied by the events of 1989/90 (above) was countered by the unfolding of an aggressive neo-liberal agenda built largely upon the ideas of Milton Friedman⁸ in an increasingly globalised world. The history of recent crises within global capitalism suggests that there is still a role for a body of ideas which acknowledge that capitalism is a system which moves from crisis to crisis⁹, produces wealth in a manner never before

⁷ Smith and Deemer (2003) refer to the "quasi-foundationalist" attempt to split "ontological realism and epistemological relativism" which they reject. I can agree with Smith and Deemer when they say that "knowledge is a human social production" (2003, p. 450) but not when they reach the point of stating that "our inquiries do not discover reality, but rather construct reality." The key issue of whether there is an external, objective reality is ultimately one of belief. I have a simple belief that the planet exists, independent of human discovery. That seems the point from which ontological realism can be pursued. I also acknowledge that this ontological position is not necessarily present in many indigenous approaches to knowledge. Denzin (cited in Schwandt, 2003), argues that social constructivism is ontologically agnostic, neither confirming nor denying reality.

⁸A useful summary of the neo-liberal experiment is given by Klein (2007) which summarises the patterns worldwide.

⁹ Most writings on neo-liberalism tend to overlook the state of crisis reached within Keynesian economic management which created a fertile environment for neo-liberal ideas to flourish.

encountered in history but also in a way which creates extreme inequalities, and depends on unsustainable growth. A vital cog in this world wide system in the twenty-first century has been the role of precarious migrant labour, which is explored in Chapter 2. Within this body of ideas, I do not accept that it is necessary to choose between Marx, Wallerstein, or Weber¹⁰. Their ideas are not mutually exclusive.

As I delved into the RSE programme, my initial approach was therefore influenced by meta-theoretical ideas. The challenge became to engage with a majority discourse dominated by agency based ideas consistent with the postmodern turn in the social sciences. A necessary further development in my thinking was to engage with and clarify the meaning of critical research in the twenty-first century, in terms both of general methodology and more specifically in studies of development.

1.5. Preview of the Chapters

Chapter 2 examines several discourses in the exploitation of labour. It is not an attempt to provide the definitive work on the meaning of exploitation (which could be seen as a blind alley) but rather an examination of how discourses on unfree labour, precarious labour, migrant labour and in particular, temporary migrant work programmes, interact within a globalised economy. What are the interfaces between these ideas? This discourse is then applied to that body of migrant labour variously referred to as temporary migrant worker programmes¹¹ (TMWPs), or simply contract migrant labour. For reasons explored in this chapter, the research is located within the study of migrant labour or economic migration in the globalised workplace rather than the more general study of international migration.

Chapter 3 examines development discourse in the Pacific context. It does not seek to limit discussion of the benefits and costs of the RSE programme to a single recognised development framework, but does show how a limited perspective on the meaning of development already impacts on how the benefits are understood. It examines the role of remittances as being pivotal to the World Bank's development strategies in a time of migration optimism, with policy implications. Competing views on the meaning of culture are seen to colour the way the impact of migration on kinship is

¹⁰ The key difference between Marx and Wallerstein is in the definition of capitalism as a mode of production rather than a system of exchange. This in turn influences the way migrant labour is theorised.

¹¹ There is no one agreed term, and the range of terms such as TMWPs, TMPs, "managed circular migration" tend to reflect the diverse viewpoints on the nature of the programmes. Throughout this thesis I refer to TMWPs.

understood. Finally an attempt is made to develop a new way of looking at development based on the notion of functionality¹².

Chapter 4 reviews the research methodology including the methods used in the primary research in Vanuatu and New Zealand. The placement of this research within the broad ambit of critical social science with an emphasis on comparative-historical techniques is explained and justified. I attempt to resolve some outstanding issues which create boundaries between methods which are viewed as positivistic and quantitative and those which are seen as qualitative/interpretive. The chapter includes a detailed explanation of how objectives of the study shaped core interview questions, and how and why interview respondents were chosen.

Chapter 5 places the RSE programme in the context of New Zealand migrant labour history. I examine briefly the origins of earlier Pacific work schemes in New Zealand, particularly from Fiji. Some primary research was involved along with an examination of literature which relates to rural labour and how migrant labour was used to develop the rural sector. A distinct thread which links the RSE programme of today with the role of migrants in rural New Zealand in the early twentieth century is uncovered.

Chapters 6 and 7 report the primary research into the conditions under which migrant workers are employed, their experiences of the work and benefits as evidenced from interviewing stakeholders. These chapters summarise the results of nearly 100 interviews concerned with RSE labour. Chapter 6 focuses on New Zealand based research, which included a survey of RSE employers, and Chapter 7 focuses on research in and around Port Vila in Vanuatu. Interviews were not solely concerned with labouring experiences and conditions and a part of Chapter 6 and a substantial part of Chapter 7 deals with development issues.

Chapter 8, which examines the results of field work in Southern Vanuatu in 2012, involves a change of scale. Whereas Chapters 6 and 7 focus on individuals and their families and businesses, this chapter is framed at community level. The more general cultural focus of Chapter 3 is now made explicit in an examination of the culture of rural Tanna. Some detailed explanation is given of the culture and history of Tanna Island. In particular I examine the findings of visits to 97 hamlets on the West side of Tanna Island and their varying degrees of involvement in the RSE programme.

¹² Any connection with the functionalism of Durkheim is unintended.

Chapter 9 provides a bridge between the primary research analysis and the conclusions in Chapter 10. Material from the primary research, principally found in Chapters 6-8, is related to themes which emerge from the historical and theoretical positions outlined in Chapters 2 and 3.

Chapter 10 systematically addresses the central research questions and presents a framework of critical balances within which the RSE policy could be improved. Final reflections are then made on how this thesis contributes to current discourses around migrant labour and development along with suggestions for further research.

Chapter Two. The RSE in Global/Historical Context

2.1. Introduction

This chapter has several purposes. Firstly, it will locate within the literature on migration and labour the terrain within which temporary migrant worker programmes (TMWPs) may be usefully studied, with particular reference to seasonal agriculture. Secondly, the chapter will examine issues around exploitation in a migrant labour context to assist with an informed examination of the RSE programme. Attention is paid to the literature on free and unfree labour, labour market segmentation and the precarisation of labour, citizenship in a formal and substantive sense, the place of migrant labour in global capitalism, rights based discourse, and the history of seasonal agricultural employment. Thirdly, it aims to clarify which aspects of the RSE programme are worth closer examination in the light of extant literature.

Until the end of the twentieth century, migration studies and development studies followed mainly separate pathways, whereas labour and migration studies were more entwined, but the emergence of the migration/development nexus (see Chapter 3) has implications for the way migrant labour is viewed. The focus of this nexus has been almost exclusively upon international migration, with some benefit found in moving away from the notions of emigration and immigration to that of transmigration (Nyberg-Sorenson, Van Hear, & Engberg-Pederson, 2003) with an emphasis on multiple relations that span country borders. However a focus on international migration involving border crossings may detract from a full understanding of labour movements.

Following various attempts made from the 1990s onwards to connect diverse theories of migration (see Massey et al., 1998; 1996), Castles (2010) laments the lack of agreed theory and calls for mid-level theories based on Polanyi's (1957/1944) concept of transformation. Historically there were two opposing migration perspectives, focused mainly on economic migration, sometimes known as "historical-structural" and "equilibrium" approaches (K. Gibson & Graham, 1986; Oncu, 1990). Several different phenomena are under study, and the tools needed to study the movement of refugees may not be the same tools which are needed to study labour movements. If migrant labour, which is really a subset of economic migration, is chosen as the object of investigation, we have moved closer to a single identifiable phenomenon, but it is questionable whether the crossing of international borders provides the most useful reference point. To take an obvious example, there are approximately 200 million migrants living outside their country of birth while in China alone there are at least 100 million workers working in eastern provinces and only occasionally returning to

their inland families (Ngai. Pun, 2007, p. 241). It has been suggested the Chinese example does show all the features of international migration (Roberts, 1997). To retain some boundedness to the field of study there is an alternative to state borders, allowing for insights from the Chinese seaboard and economic protection zones (EPZs) within the study of migrant labour without having to examine every single human movement. This approach requires a critical understanding of citizenship.

Bauder (2006, p. 26) points to citizenship as “strategy of inclusion and exclusion” and migration as the “decitizenization of people”. He cites Sharma (2001) to suggest that foreign citizenship produces a flexible and relatively powerless labour force and ultimately “cheapens labour power.” He goes on to describe “substantive citizenship” (2006, p. 50) as a “no less powerful” mechanism of distinction than formal citizenship in marginalising workers. McNevin (2006) uses Engine Isin’s concept of citizenship as a practice which constructs relations between insiders and outsiders:

I contend that multiple dimensions of belonging, including but exceeding the territorial state, are strategically mobilised for different political purposes. As a consequence, insiders and outsiders to political communities are being constructed in new ways ... and ... this trend towards deterritorialisation does not suggest the decline of the state, since such a view ignores the state’s active role in this process and relies on an essentialist conception of the state as necessarily territorial (McNevin, 2006, p. 136).

Invoking the notion of substantive citizenship, the phenomena of Chinese inland (particularly Hunan province) workers in coastal Guangdong dormitories (Chan, 2001; Ngai Pun, 2004; Ngai. Pun, 2007) involves the same decitizenization as experienced by Mexican labourers in California (Ness, 2007), Mozambican labourers in South Africa (Mather, 2000), or Palestinian labourers in Israel (Kadri & Macmillen, 1998). Two further historical examples may be given of denial of substantive citizenship, being the workers from South Africa’s Bantustans, to which Chan makes close comparisons with present day China (Chan, 2001, p. 9) and the Oklahoma dustbowl migrants in California depicted in John Steinbeck’s novel “The Grapes of Wrath”. Although a work of fiction, Rothenberg (1998, pp. 247-258) argues that Steinbeck’s bestseller played a profound role in union struggles to improve conditions for migrants at the time.

Two categories of substantive citizenship may be inferred, the first where there is a formal citizenship distinction; in the case of the Bantustans the apartheid regime attempted to extend the substantive citizenship to fully formalised citizenship by the granting of “independence” to the Bantustans; hence the carrying of a pass had the same role as the possession of a passport, and China’s household registration (*hukou*) system creates a formal distinction between *dagongmei* and *gongren* status (Chan, 2001; Ngai. Pun, 2007, p. 242).¹³ In the case of dustbowl migrants, the loss of

citizenship is informal but highly effective. This latter case could be studied in the context of ethnic migration, such as that of the Roma in Europe.

The above discussion is illustrated in Figure 2.1, which places contract migrant labour within the intersection of labour migration and international migration contexts. Most recent scholarship on the RSE and on TMWPs in general uses the international migration context. This chapter uses a labour migration context and examples used in this review often involve the loss of substantive citizenship.

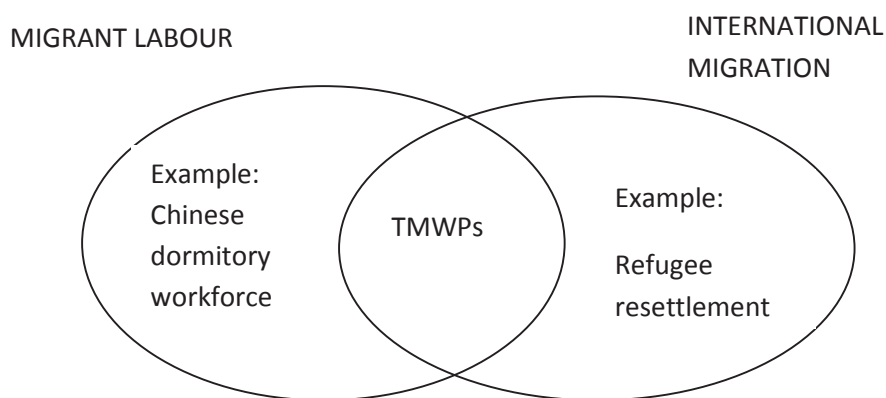


Figure 2-1 The Intersection of Migration and Labour Discourses

The literature also divides migrant labour programmes into “skilled” and “unskilled” categories, the latter often simply referred to as labour migration. The dichotomy is constructed so sharply that countries such as the USA issue separate visas. However, the lack of substantive citizenship can affect even migrants such as Indian IT workers in the USA (Chakravartty, 2006).

The way contracted migrant labour is described is liable to influence conclusions drawn. A description of this form of tied labour as “managed migration” dates back to the 1960s (see Galarza, 1964, p. 56) and pre-dates a discourse on circular migration which developed from the 1970s. Earlier discourse on circular migration references a fluid concept focused on a fluid movement of people (see Chapman & Prothero, 1985a, 1985b) in a free migration context (see, for example Nair, 1985; Ryan, 1985). The inclusion of unfree labour movements within the notion of circularity (see, for example Bedford, 1973) was the exception rather than the rule. More recently a literal focus has developed on the repeat movements of individual migrants to the point where a recent ILO study,

¹³ The terms *dagong* and *gongren* both refer to workers, but *dagong* means ‘working for the boss’ whereas *gongren* carries higher status. The terms are gender neutral, but the term *mei* for younger sister adds a loading, so *dagongmei* describes young, female, compliant labour in the coastal labour dormitories.

adopting recent categorization, divided contract migrant labour into “temporary” and “circular” programmes, making a somewhat arbitrary distinction between those workers who have travelled once and those who have travelled twice or more (see Skeldon, 2010, 2012; Wickramasekara, 2011). The term “managed circular migration”(Bedford 2013) to describe programmes such as the RSE therefore appears to avoid engagement with the issue of unfree labour, which is addressed in the forthcoming section.

Issues around the exploitation of contract migrant labour can be located within several related discourses, including free/unfree, precarised labour and the segmented labour market, and the division of labour within global capitalism. The way these discourses relate is examined in the next section. Then section 2.3 reviews historically significant work programmes in seasonal agriculture prior to the establishment of the RSE programme in such a way as to highlight key questions which relate to the objectives outlined in Chapter 1.

2.2. Discourses on Migrant Labour Exploitation

The diversity of views as to what constitutes exploitation reflects contrasting philosophical and political views. Attempting to “prove” that one view is the correct one is a well grooved blind alley, so in this section I explore how certain discourses relate one to the other.

2.2.1. Free and Unfree Labour.

Free labour can be conceptualised through two interwoven and sometimes conflated paradigms. The first is political economy and the second is human rights (rights-based). The notion of free labour can be traced to Marx’s (1972, p. 791) discussion which relates to the freedom of the worker to sell labour power as a commodity. It is a dual notion of freedom, meaning that the worker is free to sell their labour power, unencumbered by their role in other modes of production than capitalism, but as well as that the worker is not treated as a human commodity (chattel slavery) or co-erced into work by any reason other than the need to sell labour power. In Volume II of *Capital* (Marx, 1977), Marx develops his circuit model which aims to show capitalism as a self-contained system independent of other modes of production. This was first questioned by Luxemburg (2003/1913), and the issue of whether capitalism can exist by itself remains unresolved. One of the grounds for challenging independence is the possible dependence on unfree labour. Cohen addressed the issue as follows:

what is ... uncertain is whether it is part of the intrinsic and necessary definition of a capitalist mode of production that it relies exclusively on free wage labourers (in the senses Marx indicated). In general, Marx does hold this view and it is one that I shall contest- advancing indeed a contrary thesis that capitalism has always survived, and

even thrived, by deploying substantial numbers of unfree or semi-free labourers (R. Cohen, 1987, p. 2; 2006, p. 14).

Miles (1987) identified six forms of unfree labour (slavery, indenture, labour tenancy, convict labour, contract labour, and contracted servitude) which he regarded as an “anomalous necessity” for the development of capitalism. The ‘anomaly’ arises because Miles holds tightly to Marx’s analysis of capitalism as a mode of production requiring free labour. Cohen adds prison camp labour in Germany, the Soviet Union and China, and child labour to Miles’ list (R. Cohen, 2006, pp. 30-38).

Miles’ six forms are categorised by their politico-legal status, but significant differences are acknowledged between, for example, seventeenth and nineteenth century indenture, the latter involving the payment of a wage. Cohen’s treatment of indentured labour makes no distinction between the various forms of indenture and contract labour. Some forms of unfreeness, such as convict labour, come closer to a description of slavery, whereas labour tenancy is closer to the European serfdom which immediately preceded Marx’s capitalism, and later forms of indentured labour and contract labour begin to take on the appearance of free labour.

I therefore move...to the analysis of a situation where the capitalist mode of production is dominant. In such circumstances, by definition, the wage labour/capital relation of production is the primary relation of production and labour power is allocated by means of the market mechanism...under certain historical circumstances the operation of this market mechanism can partially break down and politico-legal means of labour recruitment will be utilised, temporarily but necessarily, to recruit and retain labour power (Miles, 1987, p. 210).

The difficulties that have been claimed by growers in the recruitment of seasonal harvest workers (see Chapter 6) can be seen as an example of this partial breakdown.

Debates have continued into the present in what could be seen as theological fashion over the precise nature of unfree labour and its relationship to capitalism, particularly in relation to debt bonded labour in Asia. Brass (2003, 2011) argues that unfree labour is an essential part of modern capitalism, but contrary to Cohen, claims support for this view in Marx’s writings. Banaji (2003) also cites Marx to claim that free labour is only free in a formal sense and argues against a generalised free/unfree polarity. Lerche (2007), supported by Rogaly (2008, p. 1438), calls for greater nuancing of the arguments and points to a continuum between more-or-less free to fully unfree labour relations.

The various forms of unfree labour since the advent of transatlantic slavery are set out schematically in Figure 2.2. This is not a comprehensive depiction of all unfree labour but shows the forms that

have co-existed with capitalism from its mercantile beginnings around 1500, with some unavoidable Anglophone bias. While Figure 2.2 cannot claim to be an exhaustive summary, several points do emerge.

Firstly, there is a strong historical link between unfree labour and the harvesting of crops. Very often this has been a context in which unfree labour has featured strongly and in Miles' (1987) terms is a partial break down of the market.

Secondly, there is no simple historical trend in labour conditions which would justify a teleological view that the world moves in inexorable fashion from slavery in the direction of free labour. In human rights terms, today's consensus sees the exploitation of precarized free labour as more significant than the exploitation of some kinds of unfree labour (see section 2.32).

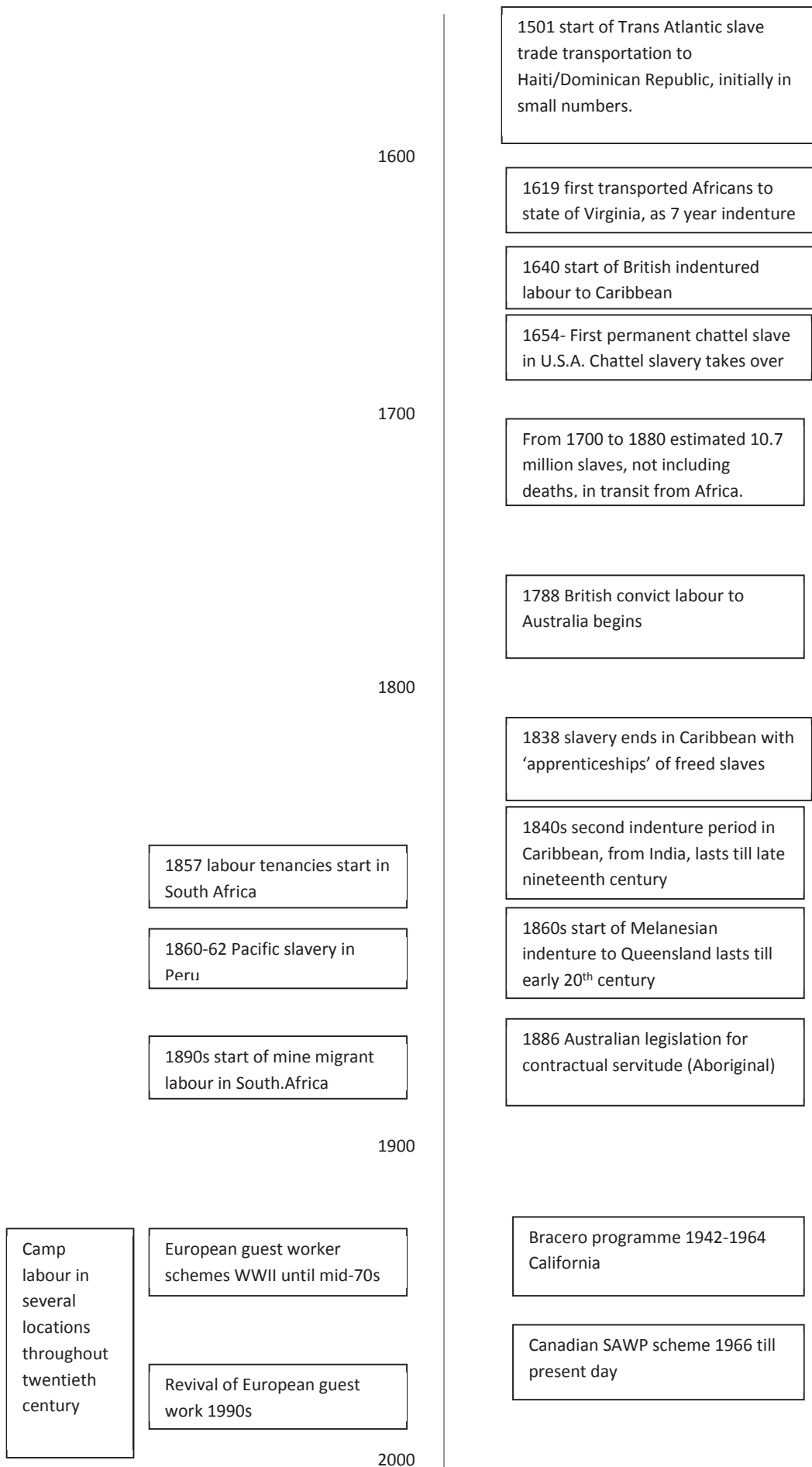
Thirdly, the categories used are ideal types representing a variety of experiences. For example, the Peruvian "slave" trade of Polynesians in the early 1860s was a particularly oppressive case of Pacific labour recruitment largely indistinguishable from the blackbirding which serviced the Queensland sugar industry. Although it was never officially slavery the majority of "recruits" died in Peru (Maude, 1981). Conversely it has been suggested by Bedford (1973) that the recruitment for Queensland indenture became less subject to force and deception by the late 1870s.

Given this qualification, some features of these ideal labour types are as follows:

Chattel slavery: The worker is the commodity. Usually the labourer is obtained through a combination of forced abduction or sale, although various forms of deception can take the place of outright violence. The worker is a commodity for life.

Indenture: Two key forms of indenture have been identified; one taking the appearance of the free wage labourer, although the wage will be tokenistic, and the other taking the appearance of slavery, no wage being paid but the worker being supplied with accommodation and food. The form is distinguishable from slavery by the limited time period. Recruitment covers the full range of possibilities from outright force (e.g. blackbirding) to economic incentives. It has been debated whether indenture is closer to slavery or convict labour (C. Anderson, 2009; Tinker, 1974).

Labour Tenancy: Some resemblance to feudal conditions, usually no wage, but some land supplied to the labourer for subsistence production



Source: author

Figure 2-2 Unfree Labour Context (Historical)

Principal references used: Miles (1987), Castles (1995), Cohen (1987, 2006, 1995), Tinker (1974), Maude (1981), Davis (2008), (Docker, 1970; Graves, 1984; Munro, 1995).

Convict labour/camp labour/prison labour: This refers to a spectrum of forced labour in which the state has criminalised people for diverse reasons and used their productive capacity for economic ends. Two main cases are the convict deportations of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and forced labour camps of the twentieth century onwards.

Contractual servitude: This was legally enshrined in Australia after chattel slavery had been outlawed in the Western world. Subsistence is provided but no wage.

Contract migrant labour: The closest to free labour of the various forms. Wages provided, often at exploitative levels, the labourers make a temporary transition from usual residence and often cross international borders. Usually there is no option to change employer during the contract period.

Debt bondage/peonage: Nearly half of the ILO's estimated 12 million cases of forced labour (International Labour Office, 2005) in the early twenty-first century refer to debt bonded labour in Asia.¹⁴ The labourer is in debt and works to pay off the debt, often established at the beginning of the interaction through deception.

Within this wider context, contract migrant labour can be seen as that form of unfree labour which comes closest to free waged labour. However, a description of contract migrant workers as free waged labourers would be inaccurate because of their inability to change jobs, lack of citizenship, and in many cases their commitments as worker-peasants. Contract migrant labour of the twentieth century does have features in common with nineteenth century indenture and could be regarded as a more modern form of indenture which progresses the human rights of the labourer.

Within this form of analysis free labour can appear as universally less oppressive to the worker, but this is not necessarily so. Indeed, Marx's own treatment of labour exploitation was principally in the context of free labour (see, for example Marx, 1972, 1977). If we accept Lerche's (2007) argument that free and unfree labour is described on a spectrum from the worst forms of forced labour through to bonded forms of labour which receive a wage and take on many aspects of free labour,

¹⁴ It is this aspect of the ILO's report which has sparked much current debate about what constitutes unfree labour.

and add to that the understanding that the free/unfree binary was not a human rights indicator but a way of understanding the workings of capitalism, it is therefore necessary to treat with caution any human rights conclusions which may be reached near the boundaries of unfree labour. For example, undocumented workers who may appear as free labourers, having no ties to another mode of production and being free to change employer but lacking citizenship, but may suffer demonstrably worse conditions than some unfree labourers.¹⁵

Before focusing on the human rights discourse, I therefore move to the insights provided from a precarised labour perspective. Work done on a segmented labour market predates the discourse on precarious labour but the concept of a secondary labour market exhibits a high level of congruence with that of precarised labour.

2.2.2. Labour Market Segmentation in Global Context.

Piore (1979) proposed the concept of a dual labour market as essential to the understanding of migration. Piore's "secondary sector" correlates insecurity of employment with low skill levels, although he points to some cases where the effect of labour organisation has been to bring "unskilled" jobs into the primary sector, which he defined as places where labour has acquired the same fixedness as capital. Piore did not anticipate the work of Fröbel et al. (Fröbel, Heinrichs, & Kreye, 1980) on the rise of transnational capital, better read as an early work on globalisation¹⁶. Piore's discussion of the production operation being broken into routinised tasks co-incides exactly with one aspect of the phenomenon then referred to as the "new international division of labour" (NIDL). A balder but only marginally different description of the primary and secondary labour markets is provided by Hann and Hart (2011) who point to a "pervasive dualism" which they date from a migratory movement of approximately equal numbers of Europeans to settler colonies and Asian "coolies" to tropical colonies, and has not essentially changed since (Hann & Hart, 2011, p. 118). Keeping high and low wage labour streams apart is seen as requiring systematic racial discrimination.

The creation of border industries, first in South Africa (Wolpe, 1980/1972) then in Mexico (Delgado Wise & Covarrubias, 2008) from 1965 leading to a proliferation of export processing zones (EPZs) and

¹⁵ The worst cases anecdotally described by Shelley (2007) are of undocumented migrants, not necessarily unfree labourers.

¹⁶ It is beyond the scope of this chapter to give a full definition of globalisation, and the concept is fluid. Stiglitz (2002) lays emphasis on "the removal of barriers to free trade and the closer integration of national economies" whereas Mittelman (1994, p. 428) sees it as "the compression of time and space aspects of social relations." Murray (2006) following Held, points to three main schools of thought on globalisation within his field of geography, being hyperglobalist, sceptics, and transformationalist.

the associated transnational movement of capital removed a sizeable section of Piore's secondary sector from the margins of the OECD workforce to the EPZs and global factories. The secondary sector which remains in the north can therefore be viewed as belonging to those sectors of industry which "by their very nature cannot be relocated to areas of abundant, inexpensive labour" (1990, p. 187). Castles (2006, p. 745) puts it thus: "The manufacture of cars, computers, and clothing could be shifted to China, Brazil, or Malaysia, but the construction industry, hotels, restaurants, and hospitals has to be where their customers lived." Shelley (2007) summarizes the majority of migrant exploiting sectors under the headings of food, cleaning, construction, transport, hospitality, domestic, and sex work. Agriculture, central to this thesis, appears as a glaring omission from these lists, perhaps because it can, to a limited extent, be relocated. For example, following over a century of well documented exploitation of Mexican migrant labour in California, over half of tomatoes eaten in the United States are now grown in Mexico where camp conditions are unsanitary and pay is meagre (Marosi & Bartletti, 2014).

A magnetic attraction between capital and cheap labour is treated as axiomatic in the above statements. The phrase "race to the bottom" (Chan & Ross, 2003; Wells, 2009, p. 568) is sometimes used to portray a model of global capital which sees minimal countervailing influences in the competitive process for the cheapest labour¹⁷, with consequences in aggregate demand, in contrast to a more complex process in which the state plays a significant role. Murray (2006, p. 112) suggests that the NIDL is being supplanted by "flexible accumulation", sometimes called post-Fordism, with the following characteristics: more versatile computer programmable machines, labour more flexibly deployed, vertical disintegration of large firms, greater use of contracting, just in time production, closer integration of product development, more flexible labour training. The end result is that proximity to markets is more important than lowering the cost of labour with resulting industrial districts in advanced capitalist countries, e.g. Motorsport Valley in the UK. However, he also notes (p.114) that Nike along with many other corporations display elements of both regimes of accumulation (NIDL and Post-Fordism). He could add that the use of contractors in the post-Fordist model strongly suggests a resurgence of low cost migrant labour.

Gibson and Graham (1986, p. 145) may have been the first to ask the obvious question: "Does this mean that any theoretical specificity attached to the concept migrant labour has disintegrated upon the emergence of truly global capital?" They go on to suggest that while migrant contract workers, EPZ workers, or peripheralised workers are subject to the same "intense downward pressure" on

¹⁷ The phrase is not only used also used to refer to low pay, but also cost savings from poor environmental standards and low tax regimes.

wages and bargaining power, nonetheless in the political dimension migrant workers need to be treated separately. They argue that Philippine migrants contracted overseas are powerless to change conditions whereas, in some cases, EPZ workers have organised themselves into effective unions. Their argument anticipates the theme of substantive citizenship.

Two overlapping descriptions are used to portray today's secondary sector; the first using the term '3-D' for dirty, difficult, and dangerous work (Asis, 2008, p. 181; Ellerman, 2005; Maclellan & Mares, 2006, p. 2; Taran, 2000, p. 13), and the second as 'precarized' (Appay, 2010; Standing, 2011) or 'precarious'. Tucker (2002, p. 26) proposes ten potential indicators of precariousness, including termination without notice, uncertain hours changed at will by employer, irregular earnings, changing job functions at will, no contract for ongoing employment, no meaningful protection against discrimination, low pay, no access to standard benefits such as sick leave, no access to training, and dangerous or unhealthy conditions. Not all these conditions have to be present to describe precarious employment. Although the concepts overlap, a growing discourse on precarization emphasises insecurity and powerlessness, while 3-D work may be simply unpleasant¹⁸. Mining work, for example, provides an example of career employment which is often dirty, dangerous, and difficult without the insecurity associated with precarised employment. In the above formulation, all the 'D' words refer to the nature of the work, whereas alternative formulations (such as dirty, dangerous and demeaning) embody the workplace relationship. Further, 3-D work is not clearly defined as work which local workers refuse, even though the term is normally used in this context. Standing (2011, 2012) places migrant labourers at the forefront of what he terms the precariat.

The question of whether precarious employment or migration comes first is addressed by Bauder (2006) and Taylor (2009, p. 156) who gives migrant labour the primary role (explanatory variable) in the creation of precarized employment¹⁹. Ness argues that the "formation of an international migrant labour force is the latest phase in the evolution of capital's efforts to reduce wages in all sectors of the global economy" (Ness, 2007, p. 447). From this perspective migrant workers are tools in the hands of global capital to raise the level of exploitation of other workers as well. The likelihood that low pay and poor conditions for migrants are used to drive down the pay and conditions of local workers in a "race to the bottom" creates a dilemma for unions and other worker organisations. Taylor and Bain (2008), focusing on the off shoring of call centre workers in the UK, outline the contrast in union responses between those unions which attempt to protect the conditions of local

¹⁸ Following Anderson (2000), the expression "dirty work" has tended to refer to domestic labour specifically.

¹⁹ This is clearly not the view of the New Zealand government which has hopes that the RSE scheme will have a de-precarising effect on the New Zealand horticultural industry.

workers by treating migrant workers as a threat and those unions which attempt to include migrants or offshore workers in the same struggles. Munck (2010) notes that across the world trade unions are organising with and on behalf of migrant workers and rediscovering the basic principles of the labour movement, although he also suggests that in many cases the organising is being done by “a plethora of hybrid community organisations, workers centres, faith-based groups and nationality based organizations” (Munck, 2010, p. 170). Wills (2004) writes of the re-scaling of the union movement to take account of the new globalised workplace, but is obliged to note that the majority of unions at the beginning of the twenty-first century continue to be scaled at the national level.

2.2.3. Rights-Based Discourse on Labour Migration.

Rights based discourse closely accompanies the formation of the United Nations following World War II. Waltz (2002) demonstrates that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR), while calling on recognisable Western philosophies, was dependent in its drafting on the leadership of newly independent countries and reflects a significantly wider cultural grouping. An unavoidable corollary is that rights are politically/culturally defined rather than absolute. Human rights “can be regarded as a unique political project of the twentieth century” (Waltz, 2002, p. 438).

Three international conventions are of particular importance for migrant worker programmes and migration generally. Two are International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions²⁰. The Migration for Employment Convention (revised) 1949, #97) and the Migrant Workers (supplementary provisions) Convention (1975, #143) are focused on the rights of migrant workers. There are also ILO conventions which are noted by the ILO (International Labour Office, 2010, p. 124) as having particular relevance for migrant workers such as the Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention (2001, #184).

The third is the United Nations International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (1990), hereinafter referred to as the Migrant Workers’ Convention (MWC). First drafted in 1981, this convention has experienced a long gestation and an even longer path to ratification. It was not until 2003 that the required number of signatories was achieved to allow the convention to come into force. Nafziger and Bartel (1991) suggest that the manner in which the convention overlaps existing instruments such as ILO conventions and the way it establishes two classes of migrants (documented and undocumented) with different rights may

²⁰ Four fundamental principles, found in eight of the ILO’s conventions, are freedom of association, elimination of all forms of forced labour, effective abolition of child labour, and the elimination of discrimination (ILO, 2010). In its Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the ILO “should give special attention to the problems of persons with special social needs particularly the unemployed and migrant workers”.

cast doubt on its effectiveness. Credence is therefore given to the reluctance of some developed countries to sign, with Sweden and Finland encouraging the ratification of existing ILO conventions as an alternative protection (Nafziger & Bartel, 1991, p. 780). However, Taran (2000, p. 11) states:

a general counter-offensive has taken shape against human rights as being universal, indivisible and inalienable. In part, this challenge focuses on distinguishing between 'realizable' political and civil rights versus economic social and cultural rights characterised as costly, unsustainable and secondary. Explicit resistance to extension of human rights protection to migrants appears to be a feature of this counter-offensive. Ratification and entry into force of the 1990 Convention has been explicitly discouraged by some governments.

Article 6 of ILO convention 97 requires ratifying countries to accord immigrants "lawfully" within borders treatment "no less favourable" than that which it applies to its own nationals in respect of such matters as remuneration (including family allowances, overtime arrangements, paid holidays, training), membership of trade unions, and accommodation. New Zealand is one of the few developed countries to have signed this protocol. Articles 25-27 of the Migrant Workers Convention are nearly identical in meaning to the provisions of article 6.

The following table indicates the levels of support for the abovementioned conventions:

Table 2-1: Signatories to Major Conventions on the Rights of Migrants

	Nos. of South signatories	Nos. of North signatories	NZ signed	Notes
UNDHR (International Covenant Civil Political Rights only)	136	24	yes	Based on ratifications
MWC (migrant workers' convention)	47*	0	no	In force from July 2003 (20 ratifications)
ILO #97 migration for employment	40	9	yes	
ILO #143 migrant workers (supplementary)	20	3	no	
ILO #129 labour inspection (agriculture)	41	10	no	
ILO #87 protection of right to organise	150	18	no	NZ has signed #98 with 160 others

Source: author.

Principal sources used:

ILO, UNdatabases; <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12000:0::NO::>,
https://treaties.un.org/pages/viewdetails.aspx?src=treaty&mtdsg_no=iv-13&chapter=4&lang=en

*In the case of UN treaties this number refers to parties fully bound by the convention.

Although the above table indicates a great reluctance on the part of OECD member countries to sign conventions protecting the rights of migrant workers, some credence may be given to the argument that some northern countries wish to sign a smaller number of conventions and provide the resources to honour those conventions they do sign, so the reason for the lack of signing is likely to be a synthesis of positive and negative reasons.

It is not possible to say that the vulnerability of temporary migrant workers is more the result of their lack of citizenship, the unfree nature of the labour, or the precarised nature of the industries in which they work, because all these elements intersect in diverse ways. In the case of undocumented workers, for instance, there may not be any form of coercion and they may be free labourers in the sense used in political economy, yet the precarised nature of their employment feeds and is fed by the lack of citizenship. In the case of TMWPs, the unfree nature of their employment is underlined by the lack of substantive citizenship because given their inability to find alternative employment, deportation is the natural consequence of an employment dispute.

We now have some conceptual tools with which to examine TMWPs. Those programmes of particular interest to this study and which do contribute in large measure to the history of TMWPs are the seasonal agricultural worker programmes. In stark contrast to the paucity of research surrounding New Zealand's late twentieth century schemes, at least two programmes internationally have received considerable scholarly attention. Just as the northern cities of England provided the geographic space for key industrial development, and the staging for the contradictions between labour and capital to be played out in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries²¹, there are certain key agricultural regions which have become the staging posts for large scale labour intensive horticultural development. Two of these regions are the San Joaquin valley in California, USA, and southern Ontario, Canada, scenes of engagement for two contract work programmes addressed in section 2.4.

2.2.4. Meanings of Exploitation.

New Zealand Government officials interviewed for this project (see Chapter 6) see the RSE as a significant means of combating exploitation in the horticultural sector. Exploitation in this sense is closely linked with the employment of undocumented migrants at rates of pay lower than those otherwise prevailing in the sector. The implication is that undocumented migrants are more at risk of exploitation than unfree labourers on officially sanctioned contracts, and much of the literature supports this notion. This notion of exploitation revolves around legal definitions and the domestic labour market. From this prevailing perspective, workers who are paid at market rates (the same as their domestic counterparts) and at or above the minimum wage, are free from exploitation.

An alternative perspective is the Marxian value approach which sees exploitation as fundamental to the employment relationship. This approach has particular relevance when migrant contract workers are not only moving between economic regions but also between economic formations. Twentieth

²¹ Of numerous historical accounts, E.P. Thompson's (1991/1963) remains possibly the most comprehensive.

century theorists of political economy studied a delicate balance whereby the capitalist sector needs the subsistence sector to be maintained rather than exhausted, in order to have an inexhaustible supply of supplementary labour. Burawoy 's (1976) presentation simply asserted that a temporary migrant labour system differentiates the processes of maintenance and renewal of the labour force so the costs of renewal are borne by the sending economy. In attempting to theorise the economic relationship between migrant workers moving not just between regions but between modes of production, Wolpe built on the work of Meillassoux²² (1972, 1981) to offer a particular theoretization of the migrant contract worker. Wolpe's (1980/1972) model is as follows:

S is the surplus labour time in the developed capitalist sector; N is the labour time necessary to produce labour power (in other words subsistence level), however worker-peasants receive a portion of their own means of reproduction from the reserve economy thus reducing N. The portion N^1 is less and S^1 is correspondingly greater. Diagrammatically, then the product is apportioned thus:

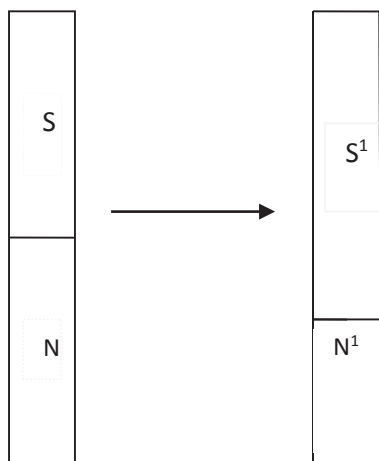


Figure 2-3 Wolpe's Model

Source: Wolpe (1980/1972, p. 299)

In the South African labour reserves of Wolpe's time, such a model would have reflected an observable reality, but what happens when conditions in the receiving country are such that wages are paid at a level somewhere between those received by local workers and the bare subsistence suggested by Wolpe's model?

²² Meillassoux's argument attempted to apportion the exploitation of the migrant worker in the forms of labour rent and surplus value.

In the following formulation, which simply combines Wolpe's diagrams, a zone of exploitation (a-b) reflects a range of possible remuneration levels, the lowest at bare subsistence of the workers and the highest is "non-exploitative" in the sense that the pay is equal that of the local labour force.

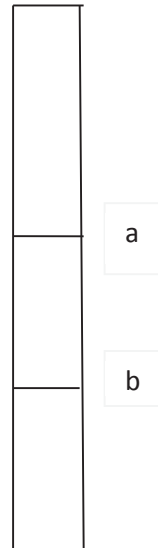


Figure 2-4a Wolpe's Model Adjusted

Expressed this simply, however, the model does not deal with the precarised nature of the workforce in which the migrants are engaged and we need the following:

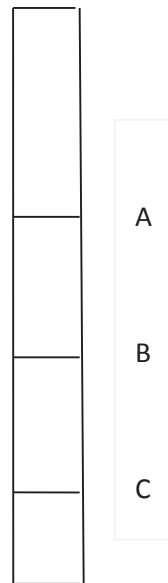


Figure 2-4b Value Based Migrant Exploitation Model

In this version, wages paid at or above level A will be non-exploitative in the migration context, equal to those paid for work of equal value in the non-precarised sector. Wages paid at or above level B will be non-exploitative in the sense that they are paid at the precarised rate in the receiving region, the same as the local workers, and wages paid at level C will be at the maximum possible rate of exploitation, such that bare subsistence is achieved. The zone A-C is the zone of exploitation. If RSE workers are being paid the minimum wage they will be at or around level B. If undocumented workers are working in New Zealand horticulture they will be somewhere in the zone B-C. Although this is a greatly simplified model the power of it is in the abstraction. For example it goes a long way to explaining the paradox which occurs at border crossings; places where migrant workers are willing to risk their lives to cross into a place where they will carry out 3-D work or precarised work at exploitative pay rates.

2.3. Seasonal Agricultural Employment Programmes

In contrast to the balance of literature written to date on the RSE, much of the literature on preceding seasonal agricultural work programmes has been more critical, both in a methodological and a descriptive sense. It makes sense to review the literature on the Canadian Seasonal Agricultural Work Programme (SAWP) because this programme was highly influential in shaping the RSE. In addition I review the iconic *bracero* programme which brought millions of Mexicans to California. The choice of these two programmes for comparison is not an arbitrary one. The *bracero* programme was possibly the largest of its kind in the mid twentieth century and the SAWP has acted

almost as a sister programme to the RSE. Before beginning a more detailed review of each programme, some obvious similarities and differences can be observed. The SAWP recruits from two very different localities, Mexico and the Caribbean. Most literature on the SAWP has to do with the experience of Mexicans, so in this section this study effectively cases the experience of Mexicans working in North America on seasonal work programmes. In so doing the antecedents of the RSE are examined in a global context.

2.3.1. The US/Mexican Bracero Programme.

A vast literature exists, and is still being added to (see Mitchell, 2012) on a series of labour supply programmes which came to be known as the *bracero* programme. The “impressive range of research and writing” (Driscoll, 1999, p. xi) refers to the period 1942-1964, during which time over 5 million *braceros* (see Galarza, 1964; Grove, 1996; Verdugo, 1981) were recruited from Mexico to work in 30 states of the USA, but particularly California and Texas. An earlier “informal” programme had operated from 1917-21, under pressure from the sugar beet industry (Gilmore & Gladys, 1963), and it was in this context that the ‘win-win’ notion probably first appeared in migrant labour context.²³ The programme, which was closely followed by a range of European guest worker programmes post World War II²⁴, began as a wartime labour supply programme under the control of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (Scruggs, 1963) and growers were resentful that operations were not left under the control of farmers as they had been in 1917-21. Initially Texas was excluded from the programme, as the Mexican State imposed some authority against discriminatory practices (D. Cohen, 2001; Scruggs, 1963), but by the time P.L. 78 was passed by Congress in 1951, this authority had been undermined by a flood of “wetbacks”. The programme remained controversial and was finally discontinued when Congress failed to renew P.L.78 in 1963. One factor in this decision was progress made in the mechanisation of cotton harvesting (Grove, 1996), but there were two major threads of criticism concerning human rights and overstaying which intersected in diverse and complex ways. Calavita (1992) points to the contradictions between the different agencies of state, particularly the Immigration Service and the Department of Labour, as being definitive in shaping the programme’s history.

Early research by Galarza (1964) focused on abuses and power asymmetries. From a human rights perspective it is important to question whether the *bracero* programme represented a significant step forward from the indenture programmes of the previous century. Gonzalez says no:

²³ Mexican Consul Santibanez argued in this manner when advocating for a guest worker programme in 1930 (Gonzalez, 2006, p. 145).

²⁴ These are the programmes to which Castles wrote his “obituary” (Castles, 1986).

Ample evidence demonstrates conclusively that under the terms of the *bracero* agreements, *bracero* labour was identical in many respects to traditional forms of colonial labour exploitation, in that the *braceros* were systematically controlled and denied the right to organise, to bargain over wages individually or collectively to protest and to change residence or employer (Gonzalez, 2006, p. 35).

Ness takes this unfavourable comparison a step further to say “the difference between nineteenth century indentured labour and guest workers is that today’s migrant labourers - with few exceptions - are unable to buy their freedom and legal status in the North”(Ness, 2007, p. 439).

For the first seven years of the programme, while it was government administered, 10% of workers’ wages were deducted, and placed in a special savings account to be collected at the end of the contract, but many workers never saw this money again (Gonzalez, 2006, p. 35; Ruhs, 2006, p. 30). In the North-Western states of Idaho, Oregon, and Washington, officials expected the workers to live in mobile tent camps in spartan conditions, and nutritional disorders were common (Gamboa, 1987).

At the height of the programme in the 1950s, nearly half a million *braceros* were recruited each year. It has been claimed that any *braceros* who showed ‘rebellious tendencies’ were returned to Mexico and blacklisted (Gonzalez, 2006, p. 2), however detailed evidence provided by Galarza (1964, p. 224) suggests that entire work gangs were sometimes disbanded and relocated to quash any work disputes. The lack of labour rights which Gonzalez emphasises began with the process of recruitment which required at least some of the applicants to line up for physical inspection as to their suitability for ‘stoop’²⁵ labour. A photograph published in Gamboa (1990 following page 47) shows a line-up of *braceros* moving single file past an inspector who is examining the hands of a worker for evidence of physical labour. Transportation to the Mexican border typically involved men standing in crowded trucks or trains (Rothenberg, 1998). Rothenberg (1998, p. 38) relates a vivid eyewitness account of men herded into trains “without seats” to arrive in their thousands at a recruitment centre where they were shouted at by aggressive *mayordomos* (gang masters).

A second main body of criticism concerns unintended consequences, particularly overstaying and the onrush of undocumented workers (see Ruhs, 2006). A rhetoric around this concern has impacted on the design of future programmes. For example, Martin and Teitelbaum (2001) suggest that “virtually no low-wage ‘temporary’ work program in a high wage democracy has ever turned out to be temporary”. These views are not without foundation, but need historical context in the case of the *braceros*. At the time of the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe in 1848, some 100,000 Mexicans were living in the ceded territories (Nevins, 2008). Southern Texas, in particular, was the stage for

²⁵ The term in widespread use referred to the crouched position required to be sustained for long hours in the act of harvesting at ground level.

bitter clashes between encroaching Anglo-settlers and the Mexican inhabitants. Daniel (1981) recounts how between the passing of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the 1930s a large pool of Chinese harvest labour in California was replaced by a large pool of Mexican labour. The border control was not established until the 1920s, prior to which time people travelled freely (Nevins, 2002). Texan farmers who were excluded from the *bracero* programme nonetheless managed to acquire “wetbacks” to harvest their cotton until they were included in the *bracero* programme. The *bracero* programme was linked with, but hardly the sole cause of a series of repatriations culminating in “Operation Wetback” in the 1950s (see Garcia, 1980). The *bracero* programme was simply a part of a much bigger issue. Further, there was a mixture of negative and positive effects from the overstay, given that migrant labour is more effect than cause of a dependent economy. Hometown associations in the United States now work with their Mexican communities in a three way partnership which involves provincial government (Fox & Bada, 2008; Orozco & Lapointe, 2004). This historical perspective does not negate the reality of overstay; for example in Germany 25% stayed over from the Gastarbeiter programme (P. Martin, Abella, & Kuptsch, 2006). It merely suggests that a more nuanced view is required than a simple equation of overstay with failure.

There is no evidence in the literature that the controversial aspects of the *bracero* programme directly influenced the crafting of the Canadian Seasonal Agricultural Work Programme. One dimension which represents a departure is found in the measures taken to prevent overstay and the accompanying strict limits on total numbers of participants.

2.3.2. The Canadian SAWP.

In both the United States and Canada, particularly in California and Ontario, growers lobbied strongly for migrant labour.²⁶ This lobbying bore fruit in Canada, under the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Programme (SAWP), first using Caribbean workers from 1966, then Mexican workers from 1974. The SAWP could be regarded as a forerunner to twenty-first century seasonal work programmes.

The demand for offshore labour

The structural question of why Ontario growers ²⁷ find it necessary to hire offshore labour is addressed by Basok (2002) and Parr (1985) who identifies three key factors which historically cause agricultural labourers to stay on the land longer than economic rationality would suggest, then leave:

²⁶ To gain some measure of just how strong this lobby was, the case of Henry Anderson, who began a research programme on the *bracero* programme only to have it shut down by the University of California which was reliant on agri-business for funding (see Gonzalez) after he made some critical comments.

²⁷ Basok’s own field work was mainly with greenhouse growers.

the seasonality of the work, the desire to achieve proprietorship, and the presence of unpaid family labour. On the first point, Basok extends Miles' description of unfree labour to include the "inability to refuse employers' demands" (Basok, 2002, pp. 4,14). This is stated in the context that the workers are not only unable to seek alternative employment should the need arise, but they are effectively on call at all times, their lives dictated by the ripening of fruit. The attraction of unfree labour is structural:

Men continued to participate in the rural wage labour market because they aspired to become economically independent commodity producers in agriculture. Most were not landless wage labourers, but engaged in wage labour because they owned land (or their parents owned land) and they were captivated by the agricultural dream (Parr, 1985, p. 96).

Parr's observations on the make-up of the rural workforce provide a clue as to why a simple comparison of rural wage remuneration with urban remuneration to explain labour shortages may suffer from the same inadequacies as neoclassical push/pull theories to explain migration generally. When free labour supply of the type Parr described is exhausted, growers faced with ripening fruit may find the prospect of reliable unfree labour from offshore irresistible.

Criticisms of the SAWP

A number of scholars have documented what are seen as the exploitative practices and abuses of the SAWP (Basok, 2002, 2007; Binford, 2009; Grez, 2005; Preibisch, 2010; Walia, 2010), and a growing support network for migrant workers in rural Canada is documented by Hanley and Shragge (2010). The majority of exploitative practices can be traced to asymmetries of power, which in turn result from the unfree or bonded nature of the labour coupled with the lack of substantive citizenship of the workers.

One might expect on a priori grounds that there are three levels at which work schemes can be exploitative/abusive. Firstly, the policies used in the design of the work scheme, secondly, abusive practices used by growers in contravention of the intended practices, and thirdly those aspects which are inherent and perhaps unavoidable. As will be seen from the examples to follow, it is difficult to demarcate clearly between the first two in practice.

Grez notes that the requirement for employers to provide housing leads in many cases to "deplorable housing that allows employers to cut costs" (Grez, 2005, p. 17). Further, because the employer is required to provide housing at no cost, such arrangements extend the reach of employers' control over farm workers' behaviour beyond the sphere of work, including restrictions on workers' mobility off the farm (Preibisch, 2010, p. 415). The requirement to provide

accommodation is an example of a policy that could be seen as positive, and the outcomes referred to above could be seen as examples of growers contravening the intended practices. However without effective ongoing monitoring such outcomes might be expected. One example of a clear and common breach of the rules is the practice of one employer loaning workers to another (Basok, 2002, p. 123). However, a higher than usual degree of monitoring is regarded as one of the strengths of the SAWP. In Canada, an alternative scheme, the Low Skill Pilot Project (LSPP) has been in operation since 2002 with far less regulation (Preibisch, 2010).

Li Wai Suen (2000) examined the SAWP through the lens of the Migrant Workers' Convention and other rights based treaties and notes in particular the lack of overtime provision. Although the Mexican agreement specifies a minimum wage and the requirement for an eight hour day, provision is also made for withholding a rest day and asking for longer hours. She provides anecdotal evidence of workers averaging between twelve and fifteen hours a day in order to complete harvest (Li Wai Suen, 2000, p. 203).

As with the *bracero* programme, the power asymmetry in SAWP begins with the recruitment process. Employers are able to specify the sex and nationality of their employees (Preibisch, 2010), and at the end of each season, are expected to write an evaluation of each worker, and to name the workers they want to re-employ the following year. A negative evaluation can lead to non-renewal of contract. Contracts may also be terminated by growers at short notice. Li Wai Suen notes that the grounds for termination, such as "non-compliance" are vague and leave "broad discretion for the employing farmer". Consequently, workers live in constant fear of being deported and blacklisted (Basok, 2002, p. 15; Li Wai Suen, 2000, p. 204; Satzewich, 1991, p. 114). The Canadian system of reports appears to be as intimidating as the type of reporting described by First (1983) used in the South African gold mines under apartheid for Mozambican migrants, which offered automatic re-entry for some workers.²⁸

The reporting procedures are not mere formalities. Basok (2002 p. 121-124, citing Barron,1999) recounts examples of workers who continued to work with conditions ranging from severe back pain, high blood pressure, broken ribs and eyes damaged by pesticide spray, through fear of either termination or poor evaluations. Protection of workers' rights could come from the right to organise

²⁸ I leave to Chapter 7 the issue of the dependency of the workers on the work scheme, which is dealt with in both a Mozambique and Mexican context by First (1980) and Basok (2002): obviously the more dependent the workers become on the scheme the more this dependency adds to the asymmetry of power. There is an important distinction between a worker-peasant who uses the scheme as a resource and a landless repeat migrant wholly dependent on the scheme whose entire livelihood can be destroyed by an unsympathetic grower or administrator.

collectively, but in Ontario farm worker organisation is effectively illegal for all rural labourers (Li Wai Suen, 2000, p. 209).

The foregoing may suggest that the SAWP is an example of a badly thought out scheme in the mould of the *bracero* programme which should in turn be closed. It is in fact widely regarded as a model programme (Basok, 2007; P. Martin et al., 2006), and critics tend to seek improvement rather than closure. Binford (2009, p. 505) points to the effect of neo-liberal policies in Mexico presenting migrant SAWP workers with one of the few opportunities to acquire the income necessary for a minimally dignified life. Basok (2007) has come to similar conclusions. A key difference between the SAWP and the *bracero* programme is that at its peak, almost half a million *bracero* workers would take part each year, whereas the SAWP is restricted to a maximum of 25,000, with a high level of circularity.

In contrast to these programmes, Lovelock and Leopold (2008) note the relative paucity of research into New Zealand seasonal agricultural work programmes preceding the RSE. The most significant of these were the Fijian Rural Work Permit scheme and the South Pacific Work Permit Scheme of the 1960s to the 1980s (see Chapter 5).

The SAWP could be regarded as a bridge between the twentieth century guest worker schemes which began during or after World War II and concluded in most cases by the 1980s, and the TMWPs which began in the 1990s. Germany re-introduced a seasonal worker programme in 1991, and Castles (1995, p. 514) then noted that the range and scope of contract labour in many parts of the world was increasing.

2.3.3. Twenty-first Century Contract Migrant Labour.

Castles (2006, p. 741) notes that the guest worker schemes which were re-introduced in Europe from the 1990s differed from those of the post-World War II era²⁹, “particularly with regard to the extent and duration of TMWPs and the claimed intention of linking migration to the development of the countries of origin.” The heightened interest in development and remittances will be explored in Chapter 3. Two questions are raised; firstly how widely shared within the community of growers is the altruistic intent, and secondly, whether such development claims are accompanied by an improvement in labour conditions or whether this is another instance of the contradiction between

²⁹ Plewa (2007) conceptualises the two main eras of contract migrant labour as “post-World War II” and “post-cold War”.

development and human rights which takes its extreme form in the use of forced labour for development purposes, as illustrated by Maul (2007, p. 491).

Whereas the guest worker schemes post World War II co-incided with the long boom, the schemes which ushered in the twenty-first century related more directly to the immobility of some forms of capital in a world of precarious employment, or the asymmetry of the globalization process (Ruhs, 2006, p. 21). So far only limited debate has been entered into within academia on ways in which labour rights in TMWPs can be improved.

Ruhs proposes a number of measures to make TMWPs work more justly in the twenty-first century. Having acknowledged that the requirement to recruit local workers first is easily circumvented, employers could be required to advertise vacancies at “a wage set by the government” (Ruhs, 2006, p. 19). Secondly, in order to safeguard migrants’ rights, the requirement to work for only one employer named on the permit must be replaced by a more portable option. While Ruhs accepts that unlimited portability would undermine the sector-specific demand for labour, “a more realistic policy objective would be to facilitate the portability of temporary work permits within a defined job category and after a certain period of time” (Ruhs, 2006, p. 24). However Castles (2006) questions whether it is possible to achieve the high level of state control of temporary migration that would be required in order to mitigate exploitation.

In Australia, there is evidence of a change of attitude indicated by the great caution that has been exercised in developing a labour scheme for the Pacific in this century. MacDermott and Opeskin (2010) note the need to meet public expectations by avoiding a “repetition both of Australia’s nineteenth century history of exploitation of Pacific labour and of the much more recent history of abuse and discrimination against temporary skilled migrants under what is commonly referred to as the 457 visa scheme”.³⁰

Research on TMWPs in New Zealand has been minimal until the advent of the RSE programme. The next section will show that a body of research has developed which to date lacks the critical edge found in literature on the programmes considered in this section.

³⁰ The Australian programmes are outside the scope of this thesis; briefly the 457 scheme is a widely used programme which allows Australian businesses to sponsor temporary immigrants under various skill headings.

2.4. RSE Research to Date

In contrast to previous New Zealand migrant work programmes, the RSE programme has been the focus of considerable research interest. In contrast to the *bracero* and SAWP programmes, the RSE research agenda has to date been dominated by two interested parties, the World Bank and the New Zealand government. From its inception the programme was of interest to the World Bank which commissioned a major three year quantitative study focused on households in cooperation with Waikato University's Department of Economics. This study (McKenzie & Gibson, 2010; McKenzie, Martinez, & Winters, 2008) used difference-in-differences equations to indicate a 35-40% increase in household income for those families engaged with the RSE during the period of their involvement. The same data set was used to gain insight into whether the programme was pro-poor in Vanuatu and Tonga (J. Gibson, MacKenzie, & Rohorua, 2008; McKenzie et al., 2008). In the case of Tonga, the study showed that poorer families were benefitting from participation in the RSE. In the case of Vanuatu, as the population sample was taken from Port Vila, Tanna, and Ambrym islands, the impression could have been created that workers were being recruited in proportionate numbers from rural and urban locations. Information provided in Chapter 8 will show that this was not necessarily the case.

The New Zealand government's own research has also been extensive. An evaluation commissioned to Evaluate Research (Roorda & Nunns, 2010) was carried out in the period 2007-2009. The findings were overall favourable, although some concern was noted at the continued involvement of Labour contractors as employers, given that employment of undocumented workers by labour contractors was one of the factors considered in establishing the RSE. The same research consultants subsequently carried out an evaluation on the training/literacy (*Vakameasina*) programme which was implemented by the New Zealand Aid programme of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade via contracted providers (Roorda, 2011). Additionally the research group within the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment has carried out ongoing studies of gross earnings (Merwood, 2012). Key findings have included average gross seasonal earnings of over \$12,000 in the early years of the programme and a worker retention rate of approximately 50% (cf Appendix 2).

The programme has also attracted a number of research programmes within the academic environment. The "triple win"³¹ was cautiously invoked in an influential article in 2009 (Ramasamy et

³¹ The framing of migrant worker programmes as beneficial to migrants, their source countries, and destination countries is associated with the United Nations High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (2006) but the more general "win-win" notion has a longer history.

al., 2008) and this positive view has permeated employer discourse. Charlotte Bedford submitted her doctoral research findings in 2013, which provide the most comprehensive account of the formation of the RSE policy in the wider Pacific setting to date (Bedford 2013). From an anthropological perspective, Rochelle Bailey recently presented doctoral research findings (Bailey, 2014) from detailed fieldwork in Ambrym in the Vanuatu islands. Other doctoral research programmes are at various stages of completion, including Rachel Smith's anthropological studies in Lamén Bay and more recently Angie Enoka's examination of NZ media portrayal of Samoan RSE workers. There have also been several Masters dissertations and theses including Cameron (2010), Bailey (2009), Ericsson (2009) and Kumar (2012). Despite time constraints that go with Masters projects, these independent studies have offered critical insights. Bailey came to the research without any preconceptions about unfree labour but was drawn to make this the central point of her dissertation, noting in particular that Basok's "extension" of Miles' summary (see section 2.43 above) could be further extended to the contention that every aspect of the RSE workers' life was tightly controlled. Both of these "extensions" depart from the purpose of Miles' earlier enquiry³² but invite further investigation into the unfree nature of these programmes. Cameron's study of South Island workers, which included a brief visit to some of their homes on Tanna Island, reported on some aggressive briefing procedures. Workers were singled out and told not to repeat any of the trouble from the previous year (Cameron, 2010, p. 108) while a briefing note threatened that workers who made "stupid complaints" would not be welcome. The Ericsson study requires a back story. Connell and Hammond (2009) reported favourably on the recruitment in 2008 of large numbers of Tannese workers for the Bay of Plenty kiwifruit industry, in contrast to their experiences of Australian indenture a century earlier. A number of these same workers were interviewed by Ericsson in the Bay of Plenty in late 2008. The workers had been employed by a labour co-operative called Big Toe, since disbanded, which operated along the same lines as Seasonal Solutions in the South Island and more recently Pick Hawkes Bay. These are not labour contractors but grower controlled labour pools. The season was described as disastrous and the workers, who complained of numerous unexpected deductions from pay, were sent home early en masse with little reward. During my own primary research on Tanna Island I viewed payslips from this period which validated Ericsson's claims. A later article from Connell (2010) suggests the difference between earlier indenture and current programmes may not be as stark as the 2009 report suggested.

There are difficulties with drawing too much from the research findings to date. The quantitative information from World Bank/Waikato University/Government sources does establish some useful

³² Miles was examining the relationship between capitalism and unfree labour and sought to demonstrate that unfree labour was an "anomalous necessity" for the functioning of a capitalist system.

starting points for further research. It leaves open the issue of variability, both of earnings and experiences, and in one instance (Rohorua, Gibson, McKenzie, & Martinez, 2009) may over extend the quantitative methodology, where mixed methods would better determine how families cope when seasonal workers are absent. Conversely, it should not be assumed that controlling practices by one employer are followed by others, or that one bad season represents the entire experience of working in the kiwifruit industry.

2.5. Summary

This chapter set out to achieve three aims. The first was to locate within the literature on migration and labour the terrain within which temporary migrant worker programmes (TMWPs) are most usefully studied, particularly with reference to seasonal agriculture. The chapter provided a theoretical and historical framework within which the RSE may be examined in its labour dimension. I have suggested that there is a distinct body of economic migration which is not necessarily defined by the crossing of international borders but by the temporary loss of substantive citizenship and the associated risk of exploitation. The short term and often seasonal nature of the migration means that the social security functions remain in the sending region. Contract migrant worker programmes such as the RSE fall within this description, and a sharper focus is provided than the somewhat vague context of circular migration. Secondly, the RSE scheme has arrived in the era of ‘post-Cold War’ contract labour schemes. There are close similarities between the RSE and the Canadian SAWP scheme, which may be regarded as a forerunner to twenty-first century schemes. However there is a considerable body of literature highlighting the exploitative nature and abusive practices within this widely respected work scheme. Thirdly, the source region for this labour may be of two kinds. The first has been described as the “peasant-worker” and examples are found in such places as Mozambique, interior China, and the Pacific Islands. The second source is generally found in the “slums” of southern cities. This labour may or may not be fully dislocated from the agrarian sector.

The second aim was to examine the issue of exploitation in the context of migrant labour to enable a critical examination of the RSE scheme. There are several overlapping discourses which inform the issue of exploitation. Firstly, the loss of substantive citizenship, the growth of a secondary labour market which offers precarised employment, the unfree labour relationship, and the ‘race to the bottom’ under global capitalism, are phenomena which intersect in complex ways. Within these general approaches each situation must be studied in a nuanced way. Secondly, agricultural work is noted as having a high rate of precarisation. All workers, including

both migrant and domestic workers, have remained within the sector at low rates of pay, and in some cases deprived of the rights which workers enjoy under most rights-based treaties, for culturally specific reasons. The seasonal demand for extra labour for harvest cannot be met at these rural pay rates using free labour in current conditions. Unfree migrant labour provides not only a guaranteed compliant work force at modest pay but also a work force which is effectively on call seven days a week. Thirdly, the studies of the ILO on forced labour in the twenty-first century suggest that a simple linear progression in human rights cannot be assumed. A common thread throughout all the literature is the notion that migrant workers whose pay and conditions and entitlements are less than those of nationals are being exploited. This definition of exploitation is explicit in a number of rights-based treaties, to which there is resistance from northern countries to sign. However, when an entire sector is low paid and under entitled in relation to other sectors, it cannot necessarily be claimed that there is no exploitation.

The third aim was to clarify which aspects of the RSE programme are worth closer examination in the light of the above discussion. Particular emphasis in primary research was placed on the following questions:

1. What does a detailed examination of the recruitment process tell us about levels of empowerment/disempowerment within the RSE and between the RSE and other schemes?
2. What are the relative negotiating positions between employer and employee in relation to such matters as the rights of an employer to summary dismissal?
3. How does the “indentured” aspect which ties the employee to one employer during a season impact on the worker’s experience, and is this aspect used?
4. Does the lack of citizenship have real impacts on the lives of the workers?
5. Is the practice of the RSE in accordance with the covenant New Zealand has signed?
6. Does the RSE lead to more or less precarised conditions in the horticultural/viticultural sector?
7. Do the workers become dependent on the programme for basic livelihoods or are they using it strategically?

These questions are addressed further in Chapter 9, in the light of primary research findings.

Chapter Three. The RSE, The Pacific, and the Migration/Development Nexus

3.1. Introduction

Just as the previous chapter sought to provide theoretical and historical context in which the RSE could be examined in its labour dimension, this chapter seeks to provide theoretical context in which the RSE may be examined in its development dimension. It is in part a search for what is 'meaningful development' in a Pacific context³³, and consequently for indicators which might be used to define and measure development processes resulting from temporary migrant worker programmes (TMWPs) in the Pacific. The temptation to rely on a single recognised development framework to gauge the 'success' of the RSE programme³⁴ could invite tautology and has been resisted, but the meaning of a critical approach will be examined. Firstly, however, a brief overview is presented on the source countries for the RSE.

The majority of source countries are small Pacific Island nations. At the beginning of 2009, the kick start states (Tonga, Samoa, Vanuatu, Kiribati, and Tuvalu) provided three quarters of all RSE workers, a figure only marginally altered with the entry of the Solomon Islands (MBIE statistics, see table 3.1). An analysis of how the RSE impacts on development therefore requires an understanding of small islands. Malaysia and Thailand do continue to contribute around 15% of the RSE workforce and Malaysia in particular has a higher position on most commonly used development indices.

Although the Pacific Islands exhibit some unique features which do not comfortably fit with much of mainstream development discourse, not all would see the need for a nissology (Christensen & Mertz, 2010). Pacific Island realities documented by Connell (2011) are not substantially different from the realities for most developing countries: permanent urban migration, growing slums, underemployment, attendant violence, and disproportionate numbers of youth. Armstrong and Read (2006) claim, using regression analysis, that smallness is not, of itself, the likely cause of a slowly growing economy, although remoteness could be. However, most studies of Pacific development have found an awkward fit between Pacific realities and major paradigms (see Hayes,

³³ It could be suggested that the choice of development alternatives belongs to the island communities themselves, not the researcher, but this is simplistic. At first there is the choice of the unit of analysis, and depending whether this is set at the level of the nation, the island, or the village community, the household, or individual, the same development perspectives will not necessarily be preferred. A responsible researcher will be receptive to the perspective of the researched but will not be morally vacuous.

³⁴ The sustainable livelihoods framework has been used in this way by PhD researchers in development studies (see, for example Cahn, 2006).

1991). A growing volume of literature specific to the needs of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), has been particularly evident in the climate change (Barnett & Campbell, 2010; Wong, 2011), and tourism (de-Miguel-Molina, de-Miguel-Molina, & Rumiche-Sosa, 2014; D. Lee, Hampton, & Jeyacheya, 2015) contexts. Within a United Nations framework, the third international conference of SIDS took place in Samoa from 1-4 September 2014. The conference report (*SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway*, 2014) is eclectic in its approach to development, but emphasises green sustainable development against a background of climate change in aspirational terms.

Table 3.1 shows the positions occupied on commonly cited development indices by countries providing the majority of workers for the RSE programme. An additional column gives an indication of the impact of remittances on each of the island economies.

Table 3-1: Development Indices for Source Countries

COUNTRY	% of RSE workers (2011/12)	HDI RANKING (2014)	HDI INDEX (UNDP 2014)	GNI \$US / capita (WB, 2013)	% of GDP from all remittances (WB,2012)**
Tonga	20	100	0.705	4490	24
Malaysia	5	62	0.773	10430	0.5
Thailand	9	89	0.722	5340	1
Samoa	17	106	0.694	3970	20
Indonesia	4	108	0.684	3580	1
Vanuatu	34	131	0.616	3130	2.5
Solomon Islands	6	157	0.491	1600	2
Other, e.g. PNG	2				
Kiribati	2	133	0.607	2620	7
Tuvalu	1	*	*	5840	9

Source: author (using MBIE, World Bank, UN databases)

<https://data.undp.org/dataset/HDI-Indicators-By-Country-2014/5tuc-d2a9>

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GNP.PCAP.CD>

*not HDI listed. The micro state of Tuvalu was examined by Gani (2010) across a range of measures such as child mortality rates which showed only minimal improvement over time.

** It is acknowledged that unofficial flows may give a different perspective. Such figures must be treated with caution, as for some countries estimates fluctuate widely.

An awareness of “smallness” does not avoid engagement with the major discourses of development. This project looks at development through a critical lens, and the remaining part of this chapter seeks to understand what a critical lens might look like in a small Pacific Island context. Section 3.2 explores the meaning of critical development from several perspectives to set a broad platform from which to build the search for development indicators. Section 3.3 then examines the meaning and significance of culture, and shows how different understandings of culture lead to very different notions of what constitutes progress. Section 3.4 examines how migration discourses have overlapped with development discourse in the Pacific context, and how this synthesis has fed into a dominant rhetoric which has placed Pacific migration in a positive light. The purpose of highlighting this rhetoric is not necessarily to discredit it but to place it in the frame as an object of study rather than a presumed framework of study. In summary, whereas section 3.3 is about the confluence between anthropological discourse and development, section 3.4 is about the confluence between migration studies and development. Section 3.5 is more ambitious, and may contain an original element. It argues for the continued relevance of dependency theory and underdevelopment literature, by suggesting that development initiatives can be audited in terms of functionality. From each of these sections (3.3-3.5) development indicators are produced which are referred to as cultural protection, material benefits, sustainability, and congruence.

3.2. Critical Approaches to Development

There is not so much one critical approach to development as there are many, falling mainly within alternative/post development discourses. McMichael (2004), Neverdeen Pieterse (2010), Gibson-Graham (2006), and Schuurman (2009) use different language to show how mainstream development discourse creates a critical challenge. For McMichael the development project, and later the globalization project, is challenged by the struggles of the “development misfits” (McMichael, 2010, p. xiii), which may include both peasant subsistence producers and the

inhabitants of global slums. McMichael's misfits are Gibson-Graham's mainstream in their attempt to reverse the hegemonic language attached to global capitalism (Gibson-Graham, 2006)³⁵.

Schuurman (2009) suggests that the effect of the neo-liberal agenda on the development studies field has been to push development studies away from critical research since the beginning of the 1990s. He argues that development approaches fall into two separate "twilight zones" of neo-liberal/mainstream and critical approaches to development, without meaningful dialogue. This resonates with Brohman's (1995) argument that positivist modes of enquiry, particularly within the field of neo-classical economic studies, have dominated development discourse, with a consequently narrow focus on economic growth neglecting issues such as "redistributive justice and egalitarian ethics, human capital development, protection of the environment and species survival and the diverse interests and desires of traditionally excluded groups such as minorities and indigenous people." (1995, p. 313). The neo-liberal influence was mitigated by the questioning of the Washington consensus and well documented conflict between the largest development organisations (Stiglitz, 2002). However, Murray and Overton (2011) view recent moves towards neo-structuralism in Latin America, an attempt to "forge a post-neoliberal paradigm" (p.309), as an extension of neoliberal orthodoxy (p.316). Within this same time frame (1990s onwards) mainstream adoption of the language of alternative development is highlighted by Nederveen Pieterse (1998), Kothari (1993), Murray and Overton (2011), and Schuurman (2009).³⁶ Shared rhetoric around sustainable development, poverty, and participation between mainstream and alternative approaches to development may seem to contradict the notion of twilight zones, but only at a superficial level. All critical approaches share in common a rejection of the teleology associated with development as modernisation or globalisation.³⁷

Neverdeen Pieterse (2010, p. 116) suggests that the line between alternative development and post-development is thin, and given the multiple discourses contained in both approaches, it is not always a useful dichotomy to work from. Development frameworks exist as ideal types and within these weave threads which are usually attached to one or another paradigm yet have commonalities. Sustainable livelihoods and the related cultural capitals framework (Emery, Gutierrez-Montes, & Fernandez-Baca, 2013), and diverse economies all have relevance. Although Corbridge (1998)

³⁵ However much we may wish to de-essentialise capitalism it is hard to deny its palpable hegemonic influences.

³⁶ There is however a spectrum of perspectives from those who see only a borrowing of terms without any change in substance to those who see a convergence of approaches between mainstream and alternative development.

³⁷ It needs to be acknowledged that classical (Hegelian influenced) Marxist approaches (see for example Warren, 1980), suffer from the same teleology which holds no future for the "traditional."

reduced post-development to its anti-development rhetoric (see Esteva, 1992; Rist, 1997), McKinnon (2008, p. 281) notes that there are several different post-development approaches including to “direct thought as to how development might yet be a conduit for social justice”. McGregor (2009) makes a larger claim, that the “metamorphosis” in post-development thought allows for practical alternative development opportunities. The possibility of non-capitalist development is invoked by Gibson-Graham (2006) using the ‘diverse economies’ approach. Depending upon definitions used³⁸, the possibilities for non-capitalist development range from local experiences such as the home gardening reported by East and Dawes (2009) in Kiribati to the de-linking advocated by Amin (1990) at the national level. Delinking is difficult to reconcile with migration and is regarded as an unrealistic dead end by Neverdeen Pieterse (2010) among others. In section 3.5 I attempt to show how the findings of earlier dependency theory can be used in ways other than delinking.

The shift from macro to meso to micro analyses (Schuurman, 2009), as poverty moves from difference between rich and poor countries to individual characteristics with individual solutions, is in part attributable to the failure of macro-theories which dominated the literature for much of the late twentieth century to connect with everyday lives. The local livelihoods material in some respects filled a void by offering simplicity (see Chambers, 1997 on “good change”). However an approach taken to development which is purely local overlooks the realities of global capitalism in much the same way that a purely meta-theoretical approach evades realities “on the ground”. Scoones (2009, p. 186) points to an “unhelpful divide between micro-level locale specific perspectives emphasising agency and action, and broader macro-level structural analysis” and calls for a re-engagement with politics and power.

An approach to development which respects the “traditional” and does not seek to threaten the continued existence of existing cultural formations, should inform any critical approach. I now address two major areas of articulation between development studies and other disciplines. Until recently, migration studies and anthropology have had a tenuous connection with studies of development, but both cultural and migration issues bear heavily on this project and will be addressed separately in this chapter.

³⁸ Within political economy there are essentially two definitions of capitalism; that used by Marx as a mode of production and that used by Wallerstein and others as a world system of exchange.

3.3. The Cultural Dimension

The manner in which culture is conceptualised profoundly affects any assessment of ‘success’ when development is catalysed by engagement between the global economy and a cultural form which is liable to be transformed by the engagement. The discipline of development studies has tended to engage only sporadically with cultural anthropology (see, for example Macpherson, 1999; Scheyvens, 1999) leaving these issues largely unresolved. Connell (2007) notes the manner in which island culture(s) has been treated as an obstacle to development, particularly by neo-liberal theorists. The following passages will suggest that less critical examinations treat culture as a dimension of society whereas more critical studies treat culture as the definition of a society.

Majority literature on migration and development is grounded, if not in the narrower aspects of neo-classical theory, then certainly within assumptions of rational economic behaviour³⁹, and the debate between formalist and substantivist schools within anthropology is overlooked or forgotten.

Recently there has been a fresh wave of interest in substantivism (see Curry, 2003; Gregory, 2009; Hann & Hart, 2011, 2009) which has origins in the writings of Karl Polanyi. The formalist school claims that the tools can be found within the discipline of neo-classical economics to deal with non-capitalised economies. The anthropologist Keesing (1981), departing only marginally from Polanyi (1957/1944), noted three ways in which humans interact to meet the needs of subsistence, including price mechanisms, barter, and generalised reciprocity⁴⁰. Tongan sociologist Hau’ofa pointed out that economists do not take account of “the social centrality of the ancient practice of reciprocity, the core of all Oceanic cultures” (Hau’ofa, 1993, p. 12) and that transnational communities can be better understood through the lens of reciprocity.⁴¹

This reciprocity is evident in the ceremonial aspects of much island life but needs to be understood as having a deeper economic significance than mere ceremony. The community of Tanna Island, Vanuatu, which is examined in Chapter 8, provides an example. The culture of the island is based upon reciprocation, and it is not possible to dichotomise cultural forms and economic forms; every cultural event⁴² is simultaneously an act of reciprocation. The sustainability of this culture is at least partly the consequence of minimal land alienation (Bonnemaïson, 1984; Rockell, 2007; Van Trease,

³⁹ The “new economics” of migration departs from individual economic behaviour but families are still presumed to act in an economically rational way.

⁴⁰ Polanyi’s ‘householding’ is missing from this approach.

⁴¹ From this perspective the work of Hau’ofa is unusual, insofar as discourse which takes cultural foundations away from a sense of place often belongs with a neo-liberal perspective. However there remains a sense of place, albeit a wide sea, which risks being lost in an extended discourse.

⁴² Examples of such cultural events include yam harvest ceremonies, circumcision ceremonies, the *nekowiar* (“toka”) ritual, and ceremonies around betrothal and marriage.

1983). As the effects of cash economy become prevalent, in this case as a result of the growth in secondary education and accompanying school fees combined with the possibility of culturally generated tourist revenues, there is at least a possibility that this dichotomy could arise, with the accompanying risk of cultural reification (Clark, 2002). However a number of scholars strongly dispute the notion that capitalism is a machine which devours local cultural forms as though they were devoid of agency (see Curry, 2003).

Connell's Pacific observations (above) are echoed in a global context by McMichael and Morarji:

When peasants mobilise to protect their life-world, they are not just claiming rights but also questioning the epistemic assumption that in a modern world they are supposed to disappear. The co-occurrence of the mass production of slums with an epistemic assumption of peasant obsolescence underscores the limits of "modern solutions". And yet a recent World Bank World Development Report argues for more of the same, on the assumption that absorbing peasants into agro-industrial 'value chains' will increase their productivity - producing food mostly for export... (McMichael & Morarji, 2010, p. 237)

The same neo-liberal approach to development applied to the Pacific context, advocated by Hughes (2004) and intermittently adopted by the New Zealand government, can be illustrated by an example from PNG. Curtin (2003) argues the case for "individual" land ownership in PNG on the basis of production levels, noting, for example, that pig production in 1996 was 60,000 tonnes from 2.6 million animals. The implication is that the production levels under "customary ownership" should be the same as under advanced capitalism before customary tenure is justifiable. In the same article (p.7) he notes that the value of land to the Papuan consisting of "psychic and cultural benefits" is far outweighed by the loss of potential income. On similar lines Gosarevski, Hughes and Windybank (2004, p. 137) argue that "communal land ownership has not permitted any country to develop" and that it is the "principal source of poverty". From this perspective development is reduced to increases in measurable economic wealth, and the relationship between human and environment built up over thousands of years is considered irrelevant. Implicit in the approach which sees customary tenure as an obstacle is a high level of urbanisation, as land which is in customary tenure is commodified. Fingleton (2004) countered that PNG could not survive without customary land tenure.

It is possible for scholars to exhibit cultural sensitivity without realising the fundamental nature of change which western development can bring to regions which retain, to varying degrees, kinship based economy. In the "Origin of the Family", Engels describes human history in terms of kinship-based society giving way to the state, property and classes (Engels, 1968, pp. 566-583). A feature held in common between both neo-liberal and modernising perspectives is the assumption that this

profound change is of only marginal interest in the pursuit of modernity. Teleological views of development necessarily see the “traditional” as being non-enduring. At its most simplistic, the traditional is defined by what it isn’t (according to Rostow (1990), “pre-Newtonian”).

Contrary to the simple binary implied by Parsonian sociology, the traditional covers diverse forms of society, yet meta theoretical frameworks for this diversity have remained elusive and contestable.⁴³ For example cultural anthropology has never completely abandoned the three stages of classical anthropology. Gellner’s (1983, p. 114) three great ages of history as pre-agrarian, agrarian, and industrial translate easily to Keesing’s (1981) hunting and gathering, agrarian and urban. There is a difficulty however insofar as a detailed examination of certain nomadic societies reveal some clearly defined land tenure relationships including individual tenure⁴⁴ and transhumance. Neo-Marxist approaches, under the influence of Althusser, sought to define the traditional within the modes of production paradigm. Attempts to define individual social formations in terms of the articulation of various modes of production were found to struggle with the complexities, and difficulties with the “lineage mode” or the “primitive communist mode” provoked Hindess and Hirst (1977) to effectively recant on the concept. Classical Marxism, particularly in the writings of Engels, had warned against attempting to explain the entire human story in terms of modes of production defined by classes, base and superstructure, expropriation of surplus.⁴⁵

Wolf (1982) made a less ambitious claim in his treatment of tributary modes of production. His central assertion that the “people without history” have retained their indigenous cultures but in ways which have been transformed by their engagement with European capitalism resonates with Gegeo’s (1998) position on indigenous knowledge, and suggests that it is not necessary to abandon the modes of production discourse completely. The categories of tributary modes and kin-based society may not cover every possible form of the traditional, but labour sending regions of interest to this project can be described within the categories of kin-based society, peasantries, and landless proletarians. The strength of Wolf’s approach is that it is acknowledged that “custom” societies have metamorphasised without being assimilated. This approach allows us to distinguish between migrant workers from a subsistence peasant environment and those in such places as northern Mexico who lost their land approximately one hundred years ago.⁴⁶

⁴³ A growing acceptance of local explanations of traditional society is consistent with the post-modernist turn in the social sciences, however if meta theory is not made explicit it remains implied but unstated.

⁴⁴ This was the case with Nancy Williams’ (1986) study of the *Yolgnu* people in northern Australia.

⁴⁵ Of particular relevance is a footnote written by Engels to the Communist manifesto, which makes it clear that the oft-cited “history of class struggles” refers only to the written history of state polity.

⁴⁶ A full explanation of Mexican land issues is beyond the scope of this chapter. The relevant period in Mexican history is well covered in Nevins (2002).

Most writings on the “traditional” in a Pacific context are in fact referring to kin-based society and it is in this context that it makes sense to privilege indigenous explanation, but also to recognise that detailed local explanation can be combined with general characteristics. For example there is no reason for Hau’ofa’s comments on reciprocity in Oceania not to be linked to similar comments from other parts of the world. Central to these general characteristics is the issue of land tenure. It is the relationship between humans and the natural environment (*whenua, vanua*⁴⁷, *tanna...*) which holds the promise of sustainability for some communities. Smith (1999), writing from an indigenous perspective, acknowledges a material basis for culture. The risk in treating culture in a purely metaphysical way is that profound changes in cultural forms resulting from shifts in this material base will be overlooked. Therefore when considering transnational communities, it must be acknowledged that changes in the material basis for cultural forms have the potential to undermine the same embedded frameworks to which Hau’ofa alluded. Reasonably detailed coverage of the Samoan case is given by Macpherson (2009). “Those modifications that seem to meet new needs can find their way back into Samoan ‘traditional’ forms, and in the social space between these two settlements a meta–culture emerges which is neither a ‘migrant’ nor a ‘traditional’ culture” (Macpherson & Macpherson, 2009, p. 87).

The desirability of customary tenure, cultural survival and a direct approach to rural poverty is compatible with the development perspective from which this thesis is being written. Consequently a key developmental goal not necessarily suggested by the current migration discourse in the section to follow is the protection of customary land tenure and the sovereignty associated with kinship.

3.4. Development and Migration

Eras of migration pessimism and optimism described by De Haas (2010) were anticipated in the Pacific context by two major studies carried out in the 1980s. The first of these studies was carried out under the auspices of the South Pacific Commission (SPC) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and is associated with migration pessimism and the dependency school (see Hayes, 1991, p. for a useful summary), producing a series of detailed country reports (for example Connell, 1983). The second, by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) at Victoria University, optimistically adopted the acronym MIRAB, and resonates to some extent with Hau’ofa’s (1993) “sea of islands” and more recently the “new Polynesian triangle” (Barcham, Scheyvens, & Overton, 2009). These approaches invoke varying degrees of transnationalism and question the very notion of

⁴⁷ A slightly enriched concept of land in the sense of total natural environment is explored in (Batibasaga, Overton, & Horsley, 1999)

development as a state centred project, but still require the maintenance of a Pacific culture to retain meaning.

Other scholarship of the late twentieth century (Connell, 1980, 1990; Connell & Brown, 1995; Macpherson, 1990) takes a more cautious view of migration. Inequalities were seen as exacerbated in diverse ways. Within the Pacific context, Macpherson (1990) noted that the expansion/contraction effects of migration according to the vicissitudes of the metropolitan economies had devastating effect on the dreams of young Samoans, and in similar vein Connell (1990, p.3) noted the loss of prestige in agricultural employment in Tonga due to unrealisable expectations from migration. He further noted that migration has slowly shifted from circularity to permanence with considerable restructuring of Pacific societies.

Not all the shared optimism for Pacific growth and development is centred solely on migration. Baldaccino (1998) suggests that small island territories cannot follow the “paradigmatic logic” mapped out for them by larger economies and delineates four general possibilities for growth: in addition to ‘occupational mobility’ (i.e. migration) he sees potential in rent-based economic activity, niche markets, and knowledge-based industry. A growing literature on tourism fits within these categories but could be argued as a separate case. The following sections now examine firstly, the migration development nexus in its global sense as a current wave of migration optimism, and secondly, the MIRAB discourse which has been the most unreservedly optimistic in its Pacific application.

3.4.1. The migration development nexus.

Castles (2009) notes that until recently scholarship on migration and scholarship on development followed separate lines and refers to a “major conceptual shift”(p. 3) in the twenty-first century. Prior to the mid-1990s the consensus on migration as it related to the development of the sending country was predominantly negative. Following an exhaustive literature search, Massey et al. (1998) referred to “very pessimistic conclusions about migration’s role in promoting productive investment” (p.239). Where remittances could be linked to increasing prosperity, this was seen as ‘dependency modernisation’ and not development (Connell, 1990, p. 9 citing Schneider et al.).

A global upsurge of interest in migration and remittances dates from the mid-1990s. From 1996 the estimated world-wide volume of remittances overtook official development assistance (P. Martin et al., 2006, p. 155), and econometricians in particular began to take special interest in remittances. De Haas (2005, p. 1277) notes that “the surge in remittances has given rise to a kind of euphoria”.

Accumulated over the 1990s as a whole, remittance volumes were about 20% higher than aid to developing countries (Nyberg-Sorenson et al., 2002, p. 69) and this trend has accelerated since then. Kunz (2008) identifies a “global remittance trend” referring to the growing interest by governments, NGOs and firms in this development potential. Kapur (2004) refers to remittances as the “new development mantra” and there has been an explosion of academic writing on the links between migration and development in the twenty-first century.

A high level of interest has been shown by World Bank economists among others in using regression analysis to establish correlation between remittances and economic growth and/or poverty reduction (Adams, 1991; Adams & Page, 2005; Baldé, 2011; S. S. Brown, 2006; Glytsos, 2002; Jayaraman, Choong, & Kumar, 2009; Maimbo & Ratha, 2005; Ratha, 2003, 2004; Zaman & Akbar, 2013) but this type of aggregate analysis has limitations. According to Bakewell (2008, p. 1342; cf Castles, 2008) what is missing from this analysis is “any critique of the concept of development under consideration.” Brown (2006, p. 65) offers a definition of development as “loosely defined as poverty and inequality reduction and improved average living standards”: there is a broad emphasis within such studies on these issues. There is some acknowledgement that remittances are not always pro-poor (Adams & Page, 2005; S. S. Brown, 2006), but the majority of studies cannot actually show this because they deal with aggregate data at country level, focused on gross returns which also may not detect remittance decay.

The remittance mantra has not been without challenge. A development mantra based on migration is distinguishable from the advocacy of Nyberg-Sorenson et al.(2002) who call for greater co-ordination between migration and development policies; an approach which sees the potential of remittances to work with aid, not as a kind of replacement. In this vein, Connell and Conway (2000, p. 63) note seven potential developmental strategies of migration, including family basic needs, savings strategies, human capital resource investments, location-specific capital ventures, diversified micro-economic investments, community support and ‘social capital’. “Unfortunately” commented Massey et al. (1998, p. 223) “policy-makers often view foreign labour as a panacea rather than a complement to good policy”. Delgado Wise and Covarrubias (2009, p. 96) point to a level of cynicism which sees migrants as “heroes of development” (see also Asis, 2008) thus excusing the state from accountability. Ellerman (2005, p. 620) describes migration/remittances as a safety valve: “Many governments in developing countries have now discovered the ‘oil well of remittances’ that might help them paper over problems and pay the costs of not changing”.

There is no established consensus yet on the following key points:

- 1) Whether remittances decay over time. Lee (2004, p. 239) notes contradictory results from different studies. Qualifying the 'transnational corporations of kin' concept, Lee suggests that remittances become more individualistic over time. A focus on aggregate data can overlook remittance decay at the individual scale in circumstances of diasporic growth.
- 2) Whether a more open approach to borders will encourage circular migration with development benefits. There has been considerable advocacy for the removal of barriers to immigration in developed countries, with the paradoxical effects noted (De Haas, 2005; Hayter, 2004).
- 3) Whether temporary labour migration schemes with fixed terms on the schemes, are the best way to ensure that working abroad is seen "as a path to local development rather than an escape from local underdevelopment" (Ellerman, 2005).
- 4) More fundamentally, whether development requires a geographic locality. Highly nuanced debates fall between the tight geographic definition that went with the development project and the hyper-globalist position (see W. E. Murray, 2006 for clarification on differing perceptions of globalisation). Barcham et al. (2009), and Bakewell (2008) take a transnational perspective without necessarily embracing globalisation.

Whereas the dominant approach to the nexus of migration and development emphasises the activities of transnational communities, another approach emphasises short term temporary contracts for immediate local benefit. If this latter path is taken, then the corresponding restriction on network activity which accompanies the seasonal projects requires a conception of development which is territorially meaningful and which offers more than short term remittance benefit.

Only a few studies have looked specifically at the developmental effects of seasonal contract labour distinct from migration and remittances in general. Basok (2000) studied a sample of Mexican migrant workers in the Canadian Seasonal Agricultural Workers Programme (SAWP) and concluded that there were improvements in the standard of living of seasonal labour migrants but minimal productive investment and there was an ongoing dependence on external income sources. A follow up study in eleven Mexican communities (Basok, 2003) found that there were different patterns of remittance use in communities which were grouped according to their endowments. De Vletter

(2007) studied the development effects of South African contract mine workers from southern rural Mozambique and found that in spite of the highly exploitative conditions in the mines, southern households, particularly those with several generations of miners, were likely to have built up economic assets far in excess of the more agriculturally fertile regions in the north. The high level of interest in the RSE programme is therefore timely. Portes (2009) attempts to delineate between migration which has developmental effects and that which does not, and concludes that low-skilled labour flows need to be cyclical whereas professional labour flows may be permanent as well as developmental in some circumstances.

The next section addresses the late twentieth century MIRAB discourse, not strictly part of the migration/development nexus insofar as the development claims are more limited, yet it acts as a microcosm for the global picture. Although there had been earlier debate within the Pacific on migration which was in some respects world leading, MIRAB pre-empted or foreshadowed the migration development nexus through its legitimisation of migration as a development pathway.

3.4.2. MIRAB and small islands discourse.

Literature which links migration and development in the Pacific context has been pre-empted by an acronym coined in the mid-1980s. MIRAB stands for that combination of migration, remittances, aid, and bureaucracy which was claimed to describe the economic reality of many small islands. The descriptive acronym was invented by Geoff Bertram and Ray Watters following Pacific fieldwork in 1984 commissioned by Victoria University's Institute of Policy Studies, and was seen as a more positive way of viewing Pacific realities than the dependency school.

Watters (2008) writes positively of MIRAB as a development pathway for the Pacific Islands. In the original (1985) article, Bertram and Watters introduced the concept in a way which has been lost sight of in much subsequent literature which has excessively focused on the acronym.

The Cook Islands, Niuean and Tokelauan ethnic communities therefore now span two geographically separate entities; the home islands and the New Zealand metropole. The New Zealand industrial labour market constitutes the modern sector of the Island economies while the island resident portion of each community operates the non-capitalist or traditional sector, together with the local government apparatus. (Bertram & Watters, 1985, p. 504).

Their point then becomes that it is inappropriate to analyse development prospects for either half of the islander population in isolation. A dual economy operates but in a transnational way. The continued existence of subsistence economy was part and parcel of MIRAB. It was not suggested that the entire economy of these small islands were based on migration aid and bureaucracy. The

approach is descriptive and is not suggestive of MIRAB as a pathway to national development, as understood at the time⁴⁸.

MIRAB as a development pathway is hinted at in a follow up article (Bertram & Watters, 1986) in which it is noted that Ron Crocombe had previously identified in the case of the Cook Islands most of the MIRAB features, but

By treating the Cook Islands as though they were (or should be) an autonomous economic unit, rather than an increasingly integrated annex to the New Zealand mainland economy, Crocombe was naturally led to emphasise the negative side of the MIRAB process (especially the decline of local productive activity), and hence to present as “economic regression” a process which was in fact more of a restructuring of the village economy as households diversified their activities in order to benefit from aid and remittances.⁴⁹

At this point it is becoming clear that Bertram and Watters see MIRAB as a kind of development pathway, but one that is closer in meaning (in very broad concept) to Cardoso and Faletto’s (1979) “development in dependency”. It is a pathway which presumes that the people of the islands have full substantive citizenship of the host country, and that migrant remittances and local production continue to hold a symbiotic relationship. Twelve years later, the caution shown in early MIRAB writings was gone. MIRAB factors (from the acronym only) were now proclaimed as “the leading sectors in economic development”(Bertram, 1999, p. 105).

A level of ambiguity shown by most contributors to the relationship between MIRAB and development may be seen in Marsters, Lewis and Friesen (2006) who contend that MIRAB retains “policy and analytical relevance, even if this is more as a heuristic device rather than as a plausible development model”(p.31); but in reference to remittance flows “they are what make MIRAB a novel model of development at the macroeconomic level” (p.33). Marsters et al. can be excused their ambiguity, because as they point out in the same article, under the Washington Consensus, none of the three central elements of the development project (McMichael, 2004, 2010), nation, state, and development “remains as central to the imaginaries of the present and possible futures, and their tight inter-relations have been ripped apart.”(p.35)

Bertram and Watters contend that the rent-based economic formation is highly sustainable due to two key ingredients, being transnational kinship networks and a political analysis which suggests that

⁴⁸ Although McMichael dates the end of the development project in the 1970s, most work on migration through to the 1990s was framed within the independent development of nation states.

⁴⁹ The contention that aid and remittances “crowd out” export production as a general rule is contested by Fraenkel (2006).

the aid component will not change⁵⁰. However there has always been a lobby against aid to the islands (see, for example Hughes, 2004) and there have been signs recently that the aid consensus has shifted. The sustainability of remittances has been addressed by Connell and Brown (1995), Brown (1998), Lee (2004) and others and most of their conclusions are optimistic if inconclusive. The way in which the transnational communities are conceived has been debated by Poirine (2004), Marsters et al. (2006) and Hau'ofa (1993). Poirine seeks to retain the household as the unit of analysis and to reconstruct the MIRAB discourse based on rational economic behaviour at the micro-economic level, whereas Masters et al. suggest that remittance flows will not follow this kind of rational economic analysis at all, and a better fundamental concept to use is the network, founded on cultural as much as economic assumptions.

During the 1990s more island states, many of which do not have automatic citizenship of the host country, were added to the MIRAB list. Writing in 2006, Bertram draws on these sources to identify 23 MIRAB countries. The issue of citizenship is glossed over. New acronyms were coined to describe PROFIT (Baldacchino, 2006) and SITE (McElroy, 2006) economies, referring respectively to small states which rely on a combination of financial niche activities and tourist revenues to maintain financial solvency. There is at least an implication of equilibrium, and Bertram (2006) uses the kaleidoscope as a metaphor for the unpredictable way in which one steady state may metamorphosise into another. An analysis of Norfolk Island by Treadgold (1999) shows one obvious pathway from MIRAB to an alternative state of being is found through tourism.

There is complacency about the MIRAB discourse which assumes a steady state and high living standards rather than the reality of urban migration and attendant squalor. Growing urban slums described by Connell (2011) do not meet any understood definitions of equilibrium, and Bertram's assumption that one state of (loosely defined) equilibrium will metamorphose into another is pure speculation. Tonga with its very large transnational community would be well placed to provide some evidence of equilibrium, yet Lee (2007) notes that while the level of remittances remains high, the economy is declining. I cannot improve on the following statement from Fraenkel:

The primary insight arising out of the MIRAB literature is the historical account of the way post-colonial living standards have been driven up by remittances, aid, overseas property income or other forms of royalties or resource rents. The analytical claims to have established what 'determines the evolution' of the island economies and the view that these economies have reached some kind of a 'steady state' are much more tenuous (Fraenkel, 2006, p. 26).

⁵⁰ This point is a significant weakness in the argument because a careful political analysis is missing, and the expectation has proved inaccurate.

The acronym taxonomy used by Bertram (2006) and Watters (2008) may in fact act as a diversion from an analysis which takes account of the same elements – migration, remittances, tourism, aid, bureaucracy, financial services, and subsistence agriculture - all of which are present to varying degrees in almost all of the countries concerned. In only some cases, such as the Bahamas, the SITE economies will be demonstrably wealthier. The discourse may therefore have an unrealised potential. In later chapters I will use the term “extended MIRAB” to refer to any combination of these income generating factors as a pattern of development in dependency. This approach does not pretend to be part of the MIRAB discourse, partly because of the ambivalence of MIRAB on development and partly because the claims of the acronym states metamorphosing removes rather than adds explanatory power. Within such an extended notion, studies of remittance sources have diversified, for example the growing awareness of professional sport for development (Stewart-Withers & Brook, 2009), and growth in seafaring (Borovnik, 2006, 2007).

MIRAB’s blind spot?

A related issue is glossed over in MIRAB discussions. In the 1985 presentation, the percentage of Pacific Islanders living in New Zealand varied from 44% for the Cooks to 61% for Niue to much lower figures from Kiribati and Tuvalu. There may come a point at which so few are left on the home island that the dualism described by Bertram and Watters no longer applies. Table 3.2 both summarises and extends Bertram’s “figure 1” from 1985, which took this information as far as the 1981 census, up to the 2006 census. In the final row, the figure for island-born New Zealanders living in New Zealand are replaced with those identifying ethnically, allowing for the growth in diaspora, and it can be seen that the figures change dramatically. For example, in the case of Niue, 1% of Niue Islanders were living in New Zealand in 1936. By 1981, 61% of Island born Niueans were living in New Zealand, and this figure had grown to 80% by 2006. But of all (self) identified Niueans, 93% were living in New Zealand by 2006, and 80% of all Cook Islanders (this figure is slightly understated given the number of Cook Island nationals who self-identify by island group as e.g. Mangaian). How extreme must these figures become before the MIRAB “analysis” gives way to a simpler case of mass population removal? Portes (2009) draws a clear distinction between cyclical migration flows which are claimed to produce positive developmental outcomes attributed to the ‘new’ economics of labour migration and permanent out-migrations which have the opposite effect.

Table 3-2: Island Born Population by Place of Residence

Year	Cook Islands	In NZ (%)	Total Cooks	Niue	In NZ (%)	Niue total	Tokelau	In NZ (%)	Total Tokelau
1936	11,943	157 (1)	12,100	4,105	54 (1)	4,159	1,170	0 (0)	1,170
1951	14,757	999 (6)	15,756	4,553	330 (7)	4,883	1,571	10 (0.6)	1,581
1961	18,378	3,374 (16)	21,752	4,868	1,414(23)	6,282	1,860	23 (1)	1,883
1971	21,317	7,389 (26)	28,706	4,990	2,912(37)	7,902	1,655	950 (36)	2,605
1981	17,695	13,848 (44)	31,543	3,278	5,091(61)	8,369	1,572	1,281 (45)	2,853
2006	14,200	14,697 (51)	28,897	1,625	4,851(80)	6,476	1,466	1,587 (52)	3,053
2006 *	14,200	56,895 (80)	71,095	1,625	22,476(93)	24,101	1,466	6,819 (82)	8,285

Source: Bertram and Watters, 1985, updated by author from NZ census data.

*In this row island born figures replaced with those identifying ethnically showing growth in diaspora. Remittance levels should be affected in paradoxical ways.

The MIRAB argument was put forward as an alternative to a dependency perspective which held currency at the time Bertram and Watters began their studies. As argued by Obregon, (1980) there were two forms of dependency, national subordination and structural dependence. What MIRAB demonstrates is really a form of structural dependence with some unusual features. In the following section I argue that there remains a place for dependency theory in broad perspective.

3.5. The (Dys) functionality of Development

The theme taken up in this section draws from dependency theory with a particular focus on the effects of colonisation, and may be considered as a plea not to throw the dependency baby out with the bath water. If one dimension of the 'development of underdevelopment' (Frank, 1966) was the growth of the centre at the expense of the impoverishment of the periphery,⁵¹ then another, more qualitative theme within this paradigm was the dysfunctionality of the development project at the

⁵¹ It was this dimension which led to Warren's (1980) challenge and ultimately the celebrated impasse in development studies, but it is only one dimension.

periphery. The theme is a simple one, informed by the work of dependency theorists and neo-Marxists such as Paul Baran and Walter Rodney, author of “How Europe Underdeveloped Africa” (Rodney, 1980/1972) and is also consistent with elements of post-development discourse. An essential ingredient of this approach is a recognition that the vast majority of developing countries or regions are recognised as underdeveloped, not undeveloped. This was particularly well treated in Eric Wolf’s “Europe and the People Without History” (1982) in which a central point is that the societies examined by European anthropologists were societies which had been impacted upon by the colonial process and could not be construed as pure or unaltered. Whereas dependency theory is strongly associated with Latin America and the uneven development of capitalism, the reference to Rodney is of equal importance. An uncritical view of development tends to forget that the majority of the world’s countries are creations of the colonial process which have little regard for cultural affinity, well illustrated by the straight line on the map that separates Papua New Guinea from Irian Jaya with no regard to communities of interest. Vanuatu, central to this thesis, provides an example of a country whose southern peoples have more in common with the indigenous people of nearby New Caledonia than with other ni-Vanuatu.⁵² The dysfunctionalities created by the colonial process do not end with dysjunctures in systems and economies, but also in the minds of peoples, as captured in the classic work of Fanon (Fanon & Philcox, 2004). Viewed from this perspective the empowerment initiatives of Freire (1993), and later Chambers (1997) can be viewed as part of a search for functionality.

I defined dysfunctionality in a 2005 essay (Rockell, 2005) as a lack of congruence between claimed development initiatives and realities. What is observed as a fundamental characteristic of the underdeveloped region is that things do not work in the manner intended by Western design; whether it be flush toilets installed in places which lack water, “western” education training people for non-existent jobs, or the promotion of Western parliamentary systems which require an opposition spokesperson on education in an island which has only one school.⁵³

These points have been made by critical commentators during the entire course of the development project (McMichael, 2004, 2009), at varying scales. Mohamed Babu⁵⁴ in the African context would simply refer to the absurdities of infrastructural aid projects which had no real purpose, in the shape

⁵² This statement is based on numerous conversations between the researcher and Tanna Islanders, and linguistic evidence is compelling, for example Lynch (Lynch, 1998).

⁵³ The point is not to single out a Pacific Island such as Niue, because such inappropriate scales dominate Pacific Island polities.

⁵⁴ Babu, from Zanzibar, was a former cabinet minister in the Nyrere government in Tanzania and became the chair of the Africa Centre in London from 1985-89. The author was present at an evening with Babu in the Africa Centre in late 1984.

of bridges without roads or roads which had no destination. Many approaches to development, whether it be a search for indigenous education pedagogy, appropriate technologies including buildings, or forms of governance which meet real needs, can therefore be seen as a search for functionality, in its simple sense as the opposite of dysfunctionality. One ingredient I have therefore looked for in the RSE scheme is congruence as defined above. If for example, a claim is made for skills transfer, it is necessary to show that the skills which are being acquired are appropriate skills for the sending regions. Then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Winston Peters, is cited as saying in 2006 “first and foremost it [the RSE programme] will help alleviate poverty directly by providing jobs for rural and outer island workers who often lack income-generating work” (quoted in Bedford 2013, p. 87). A legitimate test of congruence is therefore whether the RSE is directly supporting rural workers on outer islands as first priority.

A common criticism of dependency theory is that it does not lead to solutions. The grand solution of ‘delinking’ offered by Amin (1990) which carries through into early post-development thinking is rejected as irrelevant to this project on tautological grounds. The less radical concept of state centred development usually associated with the ECLA and its derivatives is also less relevant in island context. However these are not the only messages to arise from dependency discourse. The claim made here is that there is an implied pathway, drawn from within dependency theory, which sits in front of us in a somewhat unconscious way, and that is the search for functionality.

At meta theoretical level, functionality can be grounded in social formations/ modes of production. The discourse around modes of production enjoyed only a brief period of hegemony within the social sciences (see Gregory, 2009), but has pertinence here. If it is acknowledged that there is a form of economy and a form of polity, modes of production discourse will require that there is a relationship between the two phenomena, and in more Hegelian interpretations there is a requirement that the polity will reflect the economic base. A particular form of dysfunctionality at this scale which is common in the Pacific and in decolonisation processes generally is that of the imposition of a polity by colonial authority which lacks congruence with the economic formation. An attempt to impose a local level or national level project upon another society in order to meet Western defined mores of development which fails because of mismatches in social norms, cultural understandings, or imposed superstructures has failed the test of congruence. At national scale the creation of “feudal” Tonga (see James, 1993 for a useful summary) exhibits the same dysfunctionality as parliaments which operate as caricatures of Westminster democracy.

A distinction can however be drawn between lack of congruence and adjustment of purpose. For example during my most recent field work on Tanna I was able to see that as part of the eradication

of malaria programme every villager had been issued with a mosquito net. Some higher altitude villagers had adapted the mosquito nets by plaiting the material into small ropes which were used for tethering pigs and other small animals. On first glance this would be an example of dysfunctionality, however the ropes were simply an addition to a multiplicity of sources of rope material retrieved from many sources. Malaria is generally spread closer to the sea level where the literacy levels are likely to be higher and the nets used, so perhaps higher villagers were entitled to use the nets in a more innovative way. The point is not whether the ropes/nets were or were not an example of dysfunctionality, but rather that it is possible to engage this discussion in projects large and small.

Thomas (2000) refers to three approaches to the meaning of development: as a state of being, as an historical process, and as something that is “done”. As something which is “done”, the test of functionality requires interventions such as aid projects to show congruence. In a Pacific context, development projects are ripe to be used in a quest for strategic influence, and projects which serve to promote the strategic objectives of the donor state⁵⁵ would likely fail the test of functionality. The challenge for the RSE programme is to show that claims around such features as skills transfer are matched by realities on the ground.

3.6. Summary

This chapter has highlighted two broad approaches to development in philosophical terms, and two broad approaches in pragmatic terms. In philosophical terms, the metaphor of the twilight zones has been used to highlight the difference between critical and neo-classical approaches to development. In pragmatic terms, recent enthusiasm for migration/remittances as a development mantra provides an environment in which any form of migration is viewed positively, in contrast to the pessimistic views which dominated the late twentieth century. To some extent this optimistic view of migration was anticipated in the 1980s around the MIRAB acronym, and it is suggested here that the full range of elements,⁵⁶ which are hinted at by MIRAB and its related acronyms, can be viewed as a form of development in dependency. While the MIRAB arguments have been deconstructed, these wider elements, including tourism, do constitute a large part of Pacific Island realities, which must be

⁵⁵ For example, the supply of seventeen ministerial limousines to the Vanuatu government by China in 2005. Vanuatu consists of eighty islands and these limousines have no purpose on 79 of the islands. They are ostentatious.

⁵⁶ Sometimes referred to under the heading of rentier economics.

acknowledged when considering the benefits of the RSE programme. The elements of all these acronyms do constitute in varying combinations, some options for small Pacific states, with some further options such as sport added. If those elements are examined in their practices from a functionality perspective, with emphasis on respect for existing cultural formations, then the ingredients exist to critique the role of labour migration programmes development.

The second broad approach which dominated development thinking for much of the twentieth century requires that island development is geographically specific, has a more suspicious view of migration, and includes the belief that independent Pacific Island development is possible. The difficulty of pursuing a state centred development agenda in small Pacific Islands is widely acknowledged.

Using the critical approach, a number of indicators can be used to assist in determining the value of a programme such as the RSE in the Pacific context. These indicators are highlighted as follows:

- **Congruence** (from section 3.5). For example, are the skills being acquired on the programme relevant to the needs of the sending communities, or is there an insubstantial rhetoric?
- **Protection** (from section 3.3). What are the dynamics between work scheme and indigenous culture?
- **Sustainability of the process** (from section 3.4). Are there signals of the access to the scheme being withdrawn after expectations had been raised?
- **Material benefits from remittances** (from section 3.4). What are the direct benefits of the programme at the different scales? (individuals, households, communities, nations).

These issues are explicitly addressed in Chapter 9, following the presentation of primary research material in Chapters 5-8. Whereas the above discussion explores a critical approach to development, the following chapter explores a critical approach to methodology.

Chapter Four. Methodology

4.1. Introduction to Mixed Methodologies

Smith (1999, p. 143), following Harding (1987), distinguishes between a research methodology as “a theory and analysis of how research does or should proceed” and a research method as “a technique for (or way of proceeding in) gathering evidence.” In support of mixed methodologies in social science research, O’Leary (2004, p. 7) uses the term ‘post-positivist’ to describe a body of research approaches which are participatory or collaborative, and describes a dialectical rather than a dichotomous relationship between positivist and post-positivist poles. A seemingly infinite number of positions exist between these extremities. From this perspective the choice of mixed methodologies is simple. However this perspective is not universally shared, as early advocates of naturalistic enquiry such as Lincoln and Guba (1985) regarded the interpretive enquiry as fundamentally different. They outlined (2003, p. 258) a number of distinct research paradigms, each defined by a particular ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Robson (2011) acknowledges that a broad acceptance of mixed methodologies has more recently emerged. O’Leary (2010, pp. 127-130) suggests several advantages of a mixed approach to doing research, foremost among which is the opportunity for triangulation, simply defined by Neuman (2006, p. 149) as looking at things in more than one way. Miles and Huberman (cited in Robson, 2011, p. 487) argue that triangulation is best not seen as a specific method but an approach which is taken to every aspect of the research project.

Research which encompasses empirical-analytic methods which preserve subject-object distinction has developed a ‘positivist’ status independent from its roots in positivist philosophy⁵⁷. A number of scholars, for example O’Leary (2004), Murray and Overton (2003) and Smith (1999), have used the term to describe the inappropriate application of the body of techniques used in the natural sciences to social science research.⁵⁸ The tradition of colonial research begun by nineteenth century anthropologists⁵⁹ not only gave grounds for a rejection of positivist philosophy but ultimately to a

⁵⁷ This refers to the element of certainty/realism in the sciences, based on the belief formed in the European enlightenment period allowing us to replace various superstitions with scientific truths.

⁵⁸ The criticism works in both directions. Silverman(2007) outlines some of the absurdities which can be reached in attempting to claim naive relativism in the natural sciences. Modernisation theories of the 1950s and 1960s provide good illustration of the misapplication of the scientific methods to complex social issues (see for example, McClellands’(1970) use of n-factors in seeking causes of economic growth).

⁵⁹ Kuper (1988) provides a thorough description.

process which Smith (2005, p. 88) terms the “decolonisation project in research”. Rejection of positivism in the social sciences can therefore be understood either in the sense of an inappropriate use of the analytical-empirical method in the social sciences or in the sense of a deeper rejection of epistemological and/or ontological realism. With regard to the latter meaning, some acknowledgement may be needed of the way that science itself, particularly post-Kuhn (1962) has moved away from the universal truths suggested by the early enlightenment⁶⁰.

This chapter has several purposes. The choice of mixed methodologies for this study, with a particular focus on historical-comparative research, is sourced to the above philosophical considerations in the forthcoming section. Section 4.3 then provides a detailed explanation of the approach taken to developing both the choice of interview respondents and of questions, interview styles, and other methods used. Section 4.4 explains how results were analysed. Finally, section 4.5 addresses ethical considerations.

4.2. Mixed Methodologies in this Study

Neuman (2006) draws on Habermas’ (1968/2002) three science types (empirical-analytical, historical-hermeneutic, and critical) to outline three broad approaches to knowledge seeking: Critical Social Science (CSS), Positivist Social Science (PSS) and Interpretive Social Science (ISS). This study is principally located within the field of critical social science and uses a historical-comparative approach. Two threads of critical social science originating in the philosophies of Jürgen Habermas and Roy Bhaskar, often referred to as critical theory and critical realism, are acknowledged as influencing, but not limiting, this research. I have tried to treat critical research as an open canvas rather than a restrictive set of rules. Outhwaite (1994, p. 37) suggested that Habermas’s (1968/2002) “Knowledge and Human Interests” left an “enormous promissory note to fill out ...just what a critical social science would look like.”

One significant thread within critical research is the requirement that it be emancipatory/transformatory. However in contrast to action research which is seeking changes within the time frame of the research (O’Leary, 2004), emancipatory effects in this project are sought over a longer time frame.⁶¹ It would have been over-ambitious to have framed the research

⁶⁰ As an example, the geometry of the nineteenth century mathematician Bernhard Riemann demolished 2,000 years of certainty about Euclidean space and allowed for key developments in twentieth century physics while at the same time removing the notion that mathematicians were searching for ultimate truths.

⁶¹ Methods such as action research are easily transferable and are not always used with emancipatory purpose.

more comprehensively within critical theory⁶² as it would have required the researcher to act in the role of labour activist, placing the security of some RSE workers at risk. Emancipatory approaches to research are often employed to study marginalised groups (see, for example Truman, Mertens, & Humphries, 2000); however, there is a wider process of emancipatory action to which research may contribute. Adopting a partially analytical/empirical approach to research does not prevent one from engaging with community organisations already involved in emancipatory action. A second critical thread, deriving in part from the combination of ontological realism and epistemological relativism⁶³ championed by critical realism (Bhaskar, 1975; Hartwig, 2007) but found also in Althusser (1977), is its anti-empiricism. Anti-empiricism is not a rejection of “facts” but a quest for a deeper level of reality than surface appearances provide. Murray and Overton (2014, p. 23) describe research which seeks to “uncover non-explicit processes and relations (including the nature of previous research findings)”.

Historical-comparative research has emerged within the field of sociology as a broad but distinct form of enquiry with what Lange (2013) refers to as blurred boundaries. It has also taken a turn for a particular form of analytic-empirical reasoning using case study comparisons. Several writers on historical comparative methods (Lange, 2013; Mahoney, 2004; Skocpol, 2003) refer to Marx and Weber, later Polanyi and Wallerstein, as foundation comparative historical researchers, and yet most of these seminal thinkers would be found in the fuzzy boundaries of Lange’s strict methodological requirements. Adcock (2006, p. 53) suggests that comparative historical research is “dubiously aggrandised by its narration as the revival of a classic tradition peopled by a few European intellectuals ... while bypassing inquiry into how the practices and aims of the contemporary approach might differ from those of the European figures invoked.” There is discursive agreement that those European intellectual sources mentioned were engaged in comparative historical research, but that the turn it has taken narrows the field, particularly from a critical research standpoint. Adcock (2006, p. 64) also notes a requirement of sociological modernist methods to seek discrete cases for statistical purposes when “this independence stands in direct contrast to the conditions that make cross-societal comparison most useful when the general is pursued in the form of a general historical movement.” In order to practice comparative historical research closer to its critical roots, I emphasise the following elements, most of which are acknowledged by Neumann (2006) as compatible with critical social science: the research is holistic in the sense that nothing is left out, the historical aspect is infinite and connected, the descriptive

⁶² Neuman (2006, p. 102) notes that few full time researchers adopt the critical social science approach, although it is often used by community groups or social movements.

⁶³ Bhaskar described empirical relativism as the “handmaiden of ontological realism” (Bhaskar, 1975, p. 249).

categories are interrogated in historical context. McMichael (1990) goes some way to delineating between those approaches in historical-comparative research which reveal the “interconnectedness of social phenomena” in opposition to the “scientific” rigour of variable-based enquiry. In other words, within historic-comparative research CSS and PSS approaches are clearly discernible.

The significance of a mixed methodology comes into sharp focus in one of the primary sites of research in rural Vanuatu; Tanna Island. There are many examples of research in Tanna, for example the work of Bonnemaïson (1984), and to a lesser extent Lindstrom (Lindstrom, 1985, 1992, 2011) which fall strongly into the interpretive mould. While this enhances cultural understanding and begins to unveil the world of the Tannese as they see their world, it fails, if used to the exclusion of a more critical approach, to see the long term historical changes brought about by engagement with global capitalism. The mixed methodology is necessary because the primary purpose of the research is not only to understand a culture but to understand a set of economic, political and cultural relationships. Another pertinent example is in the study of circular migration. The studies of this global phenomenon in the 1980s (see Chapman & Prothero, 1985a) contained strongly interpretive elements which tended to conflate a cultural legacy of Melanesian migration with economic and sometimes forced migration resulting from colonial and later global processes. A critical approach may point to different conclusions.

Within the complex interplay between “positivistic” and collaborative research strategies, there is an obvious point of demarcation. That is between the research project which treats respondents as the objects of enquiry and the approach which seeks to share the goals of the research and to break down the distinction between subject and object. This tension is evident in the preparation of the semi-structured interview. An algorithm developed by Wengraff (2001), used in this project for semi-structured interviews, is explained in the next section. Theory questions (TQs) in this context do not refer to grand theory,⁶⁴ but simply to the fact that the theory questions are framed by the proposal, and will often not make sense to the respondent. The interview questions (IQs) used inform the TQs but are in language which will be very clear to the respondent. It is argued by Wengraff that if the respondent is made aware of the theoretical question behind the interview question this will bias the result (Wengraff, 2001, pp. 162-163). This is plausible, but tends to bring the interview down on the side of the analytical-empirical approach, rather than the shared

⁶⁴ Anfara and Mertz (2006) discuss the many differing perspectives on what theory means and how it relates to research, including those such as Merriam (1998) who argue that research is not possible without a theoretical or conceptual framework.

boundaries advocated by critical-hermeneutic or dual hermeneutic approaches (see, for example Herda, 1999).

4.3. Primary Research Methods

This section elaborates on the methods which were used in primary research⁶⁵ which took place in three phases; firstly in New Zealand from (mainly) November 2011 to July 2012; secondly in Vanuatu from July 2012 to November 2012, and thirdly, primary historical research conducted in New Zealand from June to August of 2013. The first phase, which focused on New Zealand employers and officials, generated baseline information on the conditions of work in New Zealand and the level of employer involvement in the development aspirations of the RSE. The second phase, conducted in Vanuatu in 2012, had the dual objective of interrogating the workers' perspective on conditions of work in New Zealand and their experience of benefits from participating in the programme. A case study was made of the impacts of the RSE experience on one rural island community consisting of about 8,000 people. The final phase in the winter of 2013, involved gathering historical, mainly narrative evidence in the Whanganui/Rangitikei region, providing historical data for comparison in a New Zealand context.

4.3.1. Research in New Zealand, January-July 2012.

The research population consisted of growers, contractors, workers, government officials, those involved in pastoral care, and those with institutional memory such as retired officials. These were loosely grouped into respondents and informants, the key difference being that respondents (normally RSE employers and RSE workers) were asked a pre-determined set of interview questions common to a group with some level of subject/object distinction preserved, whereas informants were each interviewed according to their particular expertise. The first round of primary research began in late November 2011 and finished in July 2012 and included interviews with officials, a survey of all publicly listed employers, interviews with a strata of employers, visits to their enterprises and sites of accommodation, and discussions with some workers. Additionally, a small number of kiwifruit enterprises in the Bay of Plenty were visited in November 2012 en route from Vanuatu. The original research plan was modified as I decided not to carry out semi-structured

⁶⁵O'Leary (2010, p. 128) further suggests that mixed methodologies fall into three types; "quantitative perspective with acceptance of qualitative data", "qualitative perspective with acceptance of quantitative data", and question-driven perspectives. My research is based on the latter proposition: context and questions have determined the methods required in each phase of the research.

worker interviews in New Zealand although numerous “small” conversations took place and field notes were made. The role of employers as gate-keepers posed a difficulty when it came to choosing the workers I wished to interview, not due to any deliberate effort on the part of employers to withhold information. This had implications for the role of the worker interviews in Port Vila (see 4.32), which became the principal source for workers’ perspectives on their New Zealand experiences as well as their experiences at home.

Interviews with informants were investigative in nature and sought to reconstruct the history of the development of the RSE and the roles of the various stakeholders. Another aim was to triangulate the information received from employers with that from government and other sources. A third was to gain an accurate understanding of the perceived legal and ethical framework within which the RSE operated. Particular attention was given to interviewing Hawkes Bay based officials, given that many of the respondents were also based in Hawkes Bay. Most key informants were either government officials or support workers.

Government officials hold institutional knowledge essential to an understanding of how the RSE works. Interviews were conducted with officials from the then Departments of Immigration and Labour (now within the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment), Work and Income New Zealand, and brief enquiries were made within Inland Revenue. The Official Information Act was used sparingly to obtain official documents used in the formulation of the policy in 2006. Attention was also given to media coverage at this time and subsequently. Interviews were conducted with officials from NZCTU, and with a limited number of pastoral care workers. All the interviews referred to were sound recorded, with the exception of conversations with some pastoral care workers.

Survey of employers

The employer survey was piloted in November 2012 and posted to employers in January 2013. The purpose of the survey was jointly to obtain basic information on the involvement of growers in the scheme and to establish sufficient contact with a range of growers to choose respondents for more detailed interviews. The survey is appended as Appendix 1 and the results are summarised in Appendix 2. Some of these findings were used to supplement interview data, while a selection of findings were used to select employers to approach for interviews.

The survey was posted on January 9th 2012 with an equivalent on line response option, which few employers preferred. Reminders were sent in late February and May. According to Immigration sources, there were 130 RSE employers in 2011. Surveys were posted to 112 who were publicly listed. Of these, 5 were returned undelivered and enquiries indicated that with one exception these

were “sleepers”.⁶⁶ A further 3 were notified as having gone into liquidation leaving a denominator of 104, from which were obtained 76 completed surveys; a response rate of 73%.

A purposive sampling approach was taken to the selection of employers to be interviewed. When the survey response rate reached 65% an initial survey analysis was taken and quotas, meaning the number of employers to be interviewed according to several criteria, established for interviews. Initially 18 employers were selected and approached for interviews/visits and 16 accepted. As the interviews proceeded the interview list was continuously refined and re-appraised until 22 employers were selected, with the quotas as close as possible to those in the survey responses. Care was taken not to apply the quotas in a mechanistic way, so although the choice of respondents was quota based, the saturation⁶⁷ principle was also used.

Six factors were initially considered for non-probabilistic stratification including the type of enterprise, the size of employer, the source country and gender of employee, employer attitudes/beliefs as indicated from the survey, and geographical location. After an initial analysis of the survey results at the 65% return level, three factors were chosen for quota: type of enterprise, employer attitudes, and size of employer. It was now clear that by including pack houses as a category of enterprise, employers of women would feature proportionately in the sample (the issue of work allocation by gender is discussed in Chapter 6). Geographic location was delimited because resources were not available for a Wellington based researcher to spend equal amounts of time in regions such as Otago and the Bay of Plenty. Vanuatu was confirmed at this time for field work, and I wanted a predominance of employers of at least some ni-Vanuatu, but not exclusively as there would be insights from talking to employers of, for example, Samoans and Tongans as well.

The following information explains the process by which the grower respondents were selected for site visits, and indicates how well the quotas were met. It also gives a reasonable summary of the types of growers in New Zealand, employing over 5,000 of the RSE workers.

⁶⁶ Not all RSE registered employers activated the ATR process.

⁶⁷ In a study of interviewee selections for qualitative data using the saturation principle, Mason (2010) found that 30 was still typically the number of interviews. The number 30 has significance in inferential approaches, but there is a possibility that qualitative processes have been unduly influenced.

(i) Employer Size

After several iterations I grouped the employers' businesses into four sizes, labelled from smallest to largest as a, b, c, and d, described as follows:

- **A** Unlikely to be a listed company or to have a website. Usually a single family business where a family member may be involved in other employment to help with the liquidity. They may employ up to approximately 30 RSE workers.
- **B** Often a business set up as a limited liability company. Typically employing in excess of 30 RSE workers. May have some professional employment (human resources) roles.
- **C** Usually working from more than one ATR (agreement to recruit) and typically sourcing their RSE workers from more than one country. There will likely be over 100 RSE employees. They will often be a labour contractor rather than a grower. There may be signs of vertical integration in the business.
- **D** Only three enterprises of this scale in New Zealand, employing hundreds of RSE employees and will have many ATRs and will be widely known.

The number of RSE employees was the primary factor in the sizing exercise. However, two questions from the survey were used in combination: the number of employees in 2010/2011 and the proportion of the harvest (or equivalent) being carried out by the RSE workers. As the second question had been asked in terms of grouped data (for example those who stated that between half and three quarters of their crops were RSE harvested) the reciprocals of the midpoints were used to adjust the numbers of employees. This provided an initial size list from which minor modifications were made based on added information on the number of hectares planted. Table 4.1 shows the numbers of employers actually interviewed after 22 site visits compared with the numbers calculated as a percentage of the total surveyed at the end of March. To track one row as an example, 30% of employers were of size A, so the aim was to interview 7 of this size. At the end of the process 6 were interviewed.

Table 4-1: Enterprises Visited by Size

Size	N=76	%	Desired no's to visit at n=22	After 15 visits (end of May)	After 22 visits (end of November)
A	23	30	7	5	6
B	34	45	9	6	9
C	16	21	5	3	5
D	3	4	1	1	2

(ii) Employer Attitudes/Beliefs

An initial assessment of employer attitudes was based on a survey question which asked employers to nominate three attributes (out of ten) which they most looked for when choosing Pacific workers. Almost all employers included reliability as one of three, but an employer who ticked, for example, reliability, sobriety, and obedience was put in a different category from one who ticked independence, adaptability and existing skills. Employers were grouped in four categories:

- The α group were employers who had emphasised such matters as existing skill sets and independent work habits.
- Those with a β label had emphasised such attributes as stamina and obedience.
- Those with a γ label had usually placed emphasis on sobriety as well as reliability.
- The δ group, numerically the largest, had simply not over-emphasised such matters as sobriety.

This labelling system was not expected to be either robust or permanent. Its purpose was simply to increase the likelihood of interviewing employers with a diverse mindset and guard against the possibility of a series of repeat interviews with like minded employers which could have been highly misleading. The process also provided rich information for further investigation.

Table 4-2: Enterprises visited by Employer Beliefs/Attitudes

Attitude	N=65*	%	n=22 (desired)	After 15 visits	After 22 visits (end of November)
α	6	9	2	2	3
β	11	17	4	3	5
γ	9	14	3	3	3
δ	36	55	12	6	9
NA	3	4	1	1	2

* The reason for the discrepancy in **N** is that not all respondents filled out the section on employee attributes. Those responses noted as not applicable did fill this section out but in an unsatisfactory manner. The enterprise type was recalculated more than once, hence the higher **N** from a later calculation.

(iii) Type of Enterprise

After several iterations, the categories used were Asparagus grower, Contractor, Horticulturalist, Kiwifruit grower, Orchardist, Pack house, Packhouse/grower, Pip fruit grower, Viticulturalist, and Miscellaneous. Initially, kiwifruit growers were excluded from the intended mix of interviews in recognition of the high cost of including the Bay of Plenty in the study. However a late decision was made to visit the Bay of Plenty on return from Vanuatu in light of the high proportion of kiwifruit workers from Tanna Island.

Table 4-3: Enterprises visited by Type

Enterprise Type	N=76	%	n=22 desired no's	After 15 visits (end of May)	After 22 visits (end of November)
Asparagus	3	4	1	1	1
Labour Contractor	14	19	4	4	5
Horticulturalist	7	9	2	0	0
Kiwifruit	7	9	2	-	3
Orchardist	12	16	4	3	5
Pack house only	7	9	2	1	2
Packhouse/grower	3	4	1	1	1
Pip fruit	15	20	4	5	5
Misc	5	6	1	0	0
Viticulturalist	3	4	1	-	-
total	76	100	22		22

Although

Although the tables show that the strata of enterprises visited was in close proportion to the total, the principle of saturation was at work as well as the principle of proportionality. In other words although a serious attempt was made to visit 4-5 pip-fruit growers among the 22 enterprises visited because pip-fruit growers make up about 20% of the RSE employers, each visit was intended to elicit new information rather than visit an enterprise with almost identical characteristics to the last one. I had some doubts about how the principle of saturation would work in practice but found that there

came a point after a certain number of employers had been interviewed when the answers to questions could be accurately guessed in advance.

Interviews in the lower North Island and upper South Island ran from mid-March until June. By the last week in May, 15 employers had been visited, mainly in Hawkes Bay. Two thirds of these interviews were sound recorded and one third were noted during or immediately after the interview with follow up checking.⁶⁸ A small follow up was undertaken in November 2012 in the Bay of Plenty.

The core questions for semi-structured interviews were designed using an algorithm developed by Wengraff (2001, pp. 156-162) whereby theory questions (TQ's), arising directly from the stated objectives of the research phrased in the language of the research were first developed, and from which a small number of interview questions (IQs), that is questions in a language and context appropriate for the respondents, were developed for each TQ. From the logical listing of interview questions, detailed in Appendix 3, 15 interview questions were developed and a maximum of twelve chosen for any one interview. These were subject to further modification when the survey results were analysed.

4.3.2. Primary research in Vanuatu, July-November 2012.

Permission was sought from the Vanuatu Cultural Council late in 2011 to conduct research in Southern Vanuatu. This was granted in February of 2012. Two main sites were chosen for investigation: the urban area of Port Vila including its peri-urban surrounds, and the west side of Tanna Island (some further research was undertaken in Epi and Nguna for specific clarifications). The choice of sites was influenced by two main factors. Firstly, I had both worked as a secondary school teacher in 2002-2003 and carried out Masters Field work in 2006 in West Tanna, giving me familiarity with the inhabitants. Secondly, I would have preferred to have engaged with people from all of Tanna but the cost was prohibitive. In an ironic twist on Robert Chambers' (1997) "four wheel drive bias", access to a 4WD vehicle on a regular basis would have made for easy travel all over Tanna Island, which is approximately 550 square kilometres, but I conducted nearly all my research on foot. This influenced the decision to take a "census" approach to one part of one island in the expectation that the findings would be transferable. A further reason for the choice of Tanna was that it was,

⁶⁸ In just two instances the non-recording was due to technical or logistical failure; in three instances due to relevant ethical judgements. For example in one case the employer wanted to share his home brew which he claimed to be only 3% alcohol but I decided that if any alcohol was involved I would make notes afterwards provided in my judgement the interview quality was not compromised. Those interviews which were sound recorded were fully transcribed.

alongside Ambrym and Efate, subject to previous quantitative studies by the World Bank, which offered possibilities of triangulation.

Semi-structured interviews in peri-urban areas

Thirty-two RSE workers were interviewed in Port Vila and its surrounding areas. The core questions for these interviews are shown in Appendix 3. The decision to make these the primary source of worker perspectives on the New Zealand experience led to the adoption of a similar, but not identical, process to that being followed for the employer interviews. All these interviews were conducted in Bislama, which I speak fluently, with notes taken in Bislama during the interviews, without audio recording. When translating these into English, each interview was written as a statement or story from the respondent's point of view.

It became obvious within days of arriving in Port Vila that the urban setting had been a heavy recruitment area for the RSE. I wanted to see first-hand if workers had been recruited from the poorest areas of town, so an early decision was made to visit all the major indigenous communities in Port Vila and to try and find one respondent or more to talk to within each community. These communities are largely unknown to real estate agents and not all are recognised by the Municipal authority. Hence the "people's" map presented in Chapter 7 is a first of its kind. In the process of visiting all these communities I made notes on the nature of each community and categorised them. Some interviews resulted from business cards which I left in strategic places and some from personal contacts, and some from simply walking within the communities and making enquiries of storekeepers or small gatherings of people. Recognised suburbs with a predominance of *colon* or expatriate housing were not investigated. Neither were the handful of suburbs which are largely public service housing, as the point of this approach was not to test for corruption but to ascertain whether people were being recruited from the poorer areas of Port Vila.

The majority of respondent interviews took place with people in their home surroundings, and although it was not possible to control the presence of other people at the interviews, in all cases it was clear who I was interviewing at any one time. On one occasion two respondents were interviewed one after another at the same location, each taking turns at slapping my legs to prevent mosquito bites while the other answered questions. Interviews with key informants were sound recorded in Bislama and later transcribed into English, with two exceptions involving English first language speakers.

Fact Finding

Several visits were made to government and quasi-government bodies such as the Reserve Bank of Vanuatu and trading banks in an effort to triangulate existing information on remittance levels, relative benefits to the Vanuatu economy, with varying levels of success. For example two banks were able to share sufficient information to add usefully to a growing body of information on remittance levels, but a similar level of assistance would have been needed from all banks to reach more conclusive findings. Other organisations visited included the family disputes section of the Vanuatu Police Headquarters, where discussions were held with senior officers involved in mediation where family disputes had arisen following RSE misadventures, the Tourist Department, where information was gathered on the comparative impact from tourism on the macro economy, and the Employment Services Unit (ESU) where detailed discussions were held on the monitoring of the RSE within Vanuatu. This aspect of the field work was purely investigative.

Village level studies

I arrived on Tanna Island in mid-August 2012 and stayed for two months carrying out village level studies. Two broad field work options were considered. One was to focus on a small number of villages and use Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques (see S. Kumar, 2002) to examine the impacts of RSE labour within the single village community. One difficulty with this approach was the lack of time to carry out the kind of prior survey I would need to choose villages with a view to either the representativeness or transferability of the findings. The second option, eventually chosen, was to use the whole of West Tanna as the case study.

To a limited extent, the work of de Vletter (2007) and Basok (2003) was replicable in this part of the project. For example de Vletter used the technique of noting permanent housing and other physical wealth indicators in villages in southern Mozambique to obtain a measure of the impact of migrant work in South Africa. Using mid-level data, I was able to glean considerable evidence on who was being recruited and how the Tannese way of life was affected by the programme, but did not gain as much information as I would have liked on the effects of the scheme at household level. There is a strong justification for this approach which relates to the arguments developed in Chapter 3. The culture of the island is relatively well understood having been studied by Bonnemaïson (1984), Guiart (1956), Lindstrom (Lindstrom, 1985, 1992; 2006 et al.), and Rockell (2007) among others. A key observation is the high level of interaction among the communities and the small size of most hamlets. The way the RSE programme interacted with the island culture was of equal importance to a close up view of any one village.

I visited 97 village communities on the West side of Tanna Island, walking about 15 km each day. It was not a matter of planning precise movements, but surrendering control of this process to the cultural norms of the island. A guide chosen by a village leader would often escort me to the next two villages and then his place would be taken by another. I had the benefit of having taught the children of many of these villages, and in the course of this leapfrogging arrangement several of my former students acted as guides, escorting me to the higher altitude villages. The island is divided into discrete territories (see Chapter 8) and I visited 14 of these territories moving from south to north, usually beginning at sea level within each territory. I mapped every village I visited in order to have a highly accurate picture of the housing, water facilities and other physical resources, and this information was used to triangulate population data as well as indicate wealth levels.

It would be misleading to describe the work on West Tanna as simply a survey. In most villages informants were found, often chosen by the village leaders, who were comfortable having a detailed discussion. While still in the first of the territories, I identified some standard lines of questioning, however the process that was followed was more open than a census. Part of the conversation elicited information on topics such as village demographics, level of involvement in the RSE, livelihoods, and other information detailed in Chapter 8. In a few villages the single informant was replaced by larger meetings, where more wide ranging discussion was held on the benefits and difficulties encountered with the RSE. All discussions were held in Bislama, with the exception of a discussion with one key informant who speaks exceptionally good English.

Exact records were kept of the numbers of RSE workers from each village alongside population estimates, and various measures were used to indicate modernisation levels (see Chapter 8). Correlations were then taken between levels of involvement in RSE work and indicators of modernisation. Notes were also taken on the needs of each territory (*tan*) from a livelihoods perspective. The levels of participation in the RSE were noted territory by territory to see if there was any sense in which the RSE was responsive to development needs at territory level. The nature of these territories is explained in Chapter 8.

I was not looking only for statistical correlations but for associational indicators, mainly through qualitative analysis. Issues here included the role of Christianity on the island, especially the role of Seventh Day Adventism, the place of English literacy and the role of custom (*kastom*). Specific experiences which went beyond the process of surveying and required interpretation of text were noted as they arose. Field notes were taken of observations which added to or triangulated previous findings on matters such as skills transfer and ways in which remittance money was spent.

In addition to the focus on West Tanna, two further explorations included three village communities in the White Sands area of East Tanna, and in late October a single week on the island of Epi for specific purposes. The majority of workers from West Tanna had worked in the Bay of Plenty and the South Island, whereas one Hawkes Bay employer I had interviewed recruited from White Sands and it was an opportunity to examine the experiences of those workers.

The Vanuatu Labour Commissioner had indicated that a different approach was being taken in Epi which paid closer attention to development needs than in other islands, and I wanted to see how things were done there. One of two communities visited was Lamén Bay, which has been subject to research by other students of the RSE (including R. Kumar, 2012). Some of the interview material from Epi was included with the worker interview material in the final sweep (see later section on interview analysis).

The time in Tanna was also used to gather material for a second edition of a history booklet previously written on the Lenakel area (Rockell, 2011). This project was originally a part of the undertaking I made with the Vanuatu Cultural Council when conducting Masters research in 2006. This research was complementary to the rural research because the history informs an understanding of the culture of Tanna Island, which I have argued to be of pivotal importance in understanding the effects of the RSE.

Masters studies I carried out in 2006 provided a baseline to examine a number of economic indicators concerning the size of the cash economy of Tanna Island as a whole and the impact of the RSE compared with that of tourism. The culture of the island was examined in those studies with particular emphasis on land tenure (Rockell, 2007) and it was possible to examine the interaction between the increased use of cash and modernising influences and how this related to the cultural norms of the island. These results are explored in Chapter 8.

Four months in total were spent in Vanuatu, of which approximately half the time was spent in Port Vila and half in outer islands (mainly Tanna). From these four months I gained detailed knowledge of sources of participation in the RSE in two important settings, the relationship between the RSE adventure and the village community, and open discussion about the experiences of RSE workers in New Zealand. Ideally a longer time would have allowed a more thorough investigation of the micro level impacts, but this was not commensurate with meeting the needs of my own family.

4.3.3. Historical Research in New Zealand, May-August, 2013.

In the winter of 2013 primary research was carried out in the Whanganui/Rangitikei region along with some archival research on the history of seasonal agricultural work programmes involving

Pacific Islanders in New Zealand. This was to complement the literature studied insofar as there is a paucity of literature dealing with New Zealand seasonal work schemes. Interviews were conducted in the winter of 2013 with current and retired farmers, and former contractors involved in earlier work programmes. Put together with the limited amount of existing literature on these earlier programmes, it was possible to write meaningfully on the New Zealand antecedents for the RSE.

This research involved a series of twelve interviews using principles found in oral history (see Hay, 2005). Local historians and archivists in the town of Whanganui were consulted in order to establish some contacts in the region who were either former employers of seasonal migrant labour in the 1960s and 1970s, or in some cases first generation descendants of such employers. A Federated Farmers internal newsletter was also used to elicit sources. Sound recordings were not used⁶⁹ and notes were taken during the course of the interviews in nearly all cases. In every case a transcript was subsequently offered to the interviewee for comment and some took advantage of that opportunity to make minor clarifications.

4.3.4. An Overview of the Interviews.

Table 4.4 summarises the interviews conducted in the entire research project in order to gain an overview of the scale of the research. This table does not include hundreds of informal conversations which impacted on the research, many of which were noted in a field journal. A detailed list of these interviewees is provided as Appendix 8, as they are referred to throughout the text. There were a small number of interviewees who wished to be known by their correct names, but after taking advice from my supervisory team, pseudonyms have been used in almost every case. In a very small number of cases the person interviewed was insistent on being publicly identified, and a considered decision was made on the balance of ethical factors in each case. Any real names are asterisked in Appendix 8. However, sufficient detail has been included to show the credentials of each person interviewed.

⁶⁹ This was principally an ethical decision based on the fact that all interviews involving the New Zealand RSE community had a build up whereas many of these interviews took place at much shorter notice. It would probably have been reasonable to sound record.

Table 4-4: Summary Table of all Interviews by Location

Location of 103 interviews	New Zealand Key informants	New Zealand Respondents	Vanuatu Key Informants	Vanuatu Respondents
Employers	1	22		
Workers	1		1	38
NZ Government (national/local)	8		1	
Vanuatu Government			2	
Pastoral/support	6			
Past employers or descendents		11		
Agents (or similar)			6	
Community Leaders			6	
Total (103)	16	33	16	38
Of which:				
Recorded/transcribed	9	15	5	
Notes taken in English	5	14	1	
Notes in Bislama			9	38
Notes post-interview	2	4	1	

4.4. The Analysis: Procedures and Techniques

The grower survey was analysed (see Appendix 2) using standard exploratory data analysis techniques. Most of this information was then used to triangulate other sources of information on basic statistics concerning the operation of the RSE in New Zealand.

At the end of each interview/site visit, some observations were noted and transcriptions were created as soon as possible thereafter. Using a standard thematic approach (see Hay, 2005; Robson, 2011) a first coding of the interviews was carried out after the first 15 employers had been visited. Open coding was used and this open process allowed for the possibility that new and pertinent

aspects would develop. At the end of the first sweep there were 24 codes. I was cautious of being overly constrained by the original objectives and looked for new emergent threads.

These codes, with relevant research objectives from Chapter 1 noted in brackets, included accommodation issues (3b), contracts (3c), duration (2b), gender/couples (3b), health and safety protections (3b), hours worked (3b,2a), re-employment (3c), kava (employers attitudes) (3c), labour issues (wider)(3b), NZ first policy (interpretations)(3b), pastoral issues (3b,3c), pay regimes (3b), piece rates (3b), personal contact/community links to source country (1a), project perceptions (1a), purchases (2a), recruitment (3c), remittances (2a), savings (2a), Seventh Day Adventist experiences/Sunday culture (3c), sending home (3c), skills learning (2a), slow workers (3c), stereotypes.

Six of the above categories were not anticipated before the interviews began, those being the diversity of perspectives on duration, the issues around couples (as part of gender perceptions), kava use as a source of friction, in source country migration linked to the RSE, potential difficulties facing Seventh Day Adventists, and employer stereotypes.

An exercise was then undertaken with the data to refine the categories and find emergent themes while writing occasional academic memos. The codes were grouped into nine themes (see Chapter 6), which guided the second and third sweeps. The second sweep looked for further evidence within the same interviews whereas the third sweep went to other primary sources such as interviews with government officials for further evidence. This process was close to that outlined by Robson (1993) and Laws (2003). These nine themes are taken up in Chapter 6 where this primary research is analysed.

A similar thematic approach was taken to analysing the interviews with workers interviewed in Vanuatu. The codes used were access (2a), accommodation (3b), communities (NZ), domestic labour (2b), deductions/losses (3b), dismissals (3c), earnings (3b), expectations (1b), families, freedoms (3c), health issues (3b), hours worked (3b, 2a), interviews (3c), life changes (2b), migrations (2b), negotiations (3c), NZ knowledge/briefing (3c), recruitment (3c, 2a), Seventh Day Adventists (3c), skills acquired (2a), skills training (2a), spending patterns (2a), team leaders (3c), and threats (3c).

As with the first interview set, this second set was then extended to all key informants in the third sweep. The themes developed are pursued in Chapter 7. A decision was made not to attempt a full amalgamation of the employer and worker interviews prior to analysis, mainly because the development aspects are treated separately from the conditions of work and they diverge.

4.5. Ethical Considerations

The research operated within the ethical framework laid down by Massey University's Human Ethics Committee (MUHEC), which places some emphasis on formal process. A departmental ethics meeting which involved Palmerston North based supervisors, the researcher, and an independent staff member (Associate Professor Banks attended) discussed the nature of the research and possible difficulties from an ethical standpoint. The research has subsequently operated within the 'low risk' framework. Massey University does have a specific ethical framework for those involved in Maori studies⁷⁰ but lacks a targeted ethical framework for indigenous studies as a whole. In negotiating the interface between formal ethics requirements and the norms of another culture, certain points need emphasis. Firstly, while universities may typically want signed consent, it would have been too easy in Vanuatu to have obtained signatures on paper from people who did not understand what they were signing. The approach I took was to obtain informed consent, often in an informal way, and to exercise sensitivity at all times. Wherever possible in the New Zealand context I made transcripts of interviews available to respondents/informants and took note of any of their concerns. In Vanuatu I looked for any signs of discomfort with the interview process, such as negative body language⁷¹. It was necessary to ascertain that every respondent was a willing respondent who understood the broad purpose of the questioning⁷².

One particular challenge involved the role of the Vanuatu Cultural Council as gate-keeper for research in Vanuatu. In principle the role of gate-keeper is strongly supported by this researcher and is in line with Smith's (L. T. Smith, 1999, 2005) views of research decolonisation. Conversely, alongside the operation of many government and quasi-government departments in Port Vila the implementation can be cumbersome and frustrating. This has led some researchers to fly in "under the radar". I decided that I would follow the formal channels as long as it was clear that the system was still operating, however imperfectly. One of my supervisors was visiting Port Vila in June 2012, approximately one month before I was due to fly there, and was able to expedite proceedings for this project by visiting the Vanuatu Cultural Centre three times in a day to first explain the need for a formal letter of approval and eventually collect the letter later that day.

⁷⁰ See <http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/research/research-ethics/human-ethics/code-ethical-conduct.cfm>

⁷¹ In this researcher's experience the main indicator of discomfort is a failure to arrive at an agreed location. This is not a trivial point, as the colonial history is recent and there is a widespread reluctance to refuse a request from a European in a direct way.

⁷² That is not as easy as it may seem, particularly in a small village context where many village leaders are old friends and acquaintances who will cheerfully instruct younger family members to talk to me about the research!

A further cultural issue is that of payment for information. When working in a society which still operates on the basis of generalised reciprocity, it would be disingenuous not to acknowledge elements of reciprocation in my research. It is not possible to conduct this type of research without being in a wider relationship of receiving and giving (cf Banks & Scheyvens, 2014, pp. 174-176). A breach of ethics would be to take advantage of the hospitality of the people and take a cynical approach to the numerous requests for assistance and information made of the researcher. In my view the ethical approach was and is to maintain a high level of honesty about what one can and cannot do and to follow up on any commitments made, even if over a longer time frame⁷³.

Sometimes this can be simply sharing the results of the research. While this sharing would be approved of using a western ethical framework, the rationale for the sharing from an indigenous perspective is not necessarily the same. My ethical concern was simply that I did not over-promise the benefits that I could deliver.

Finally, with regard to confidentiality, which is addressed in p.77 above, all reasonable efforts have been made to remove obvious identifying material, particularly where government officials are concerned. There are some large enterprises which are not possible to disguise from a well informed reader, and in cases where a well known business has not engaged with this research project and no contract was entered, real names have been used. Similarly the late Dick Eade, a well known agent in Port Vila who died in well publicised tragic circumstances during the time of the research, is referred to by real name as it would not have been possible to hide his identity.

The researcher's position on Tanna

With the passing of Joel Bonnemaïson, whose "Tree and Canoe" (1984) had become an iconic text on Tanna, I have become, alongside a small number of other Western researchers such as Lamont Lindstrom and John Lynch, one of the remaining specialists on Tanna Island. This carries with it a particular responsibility to ensure that the research is helpful, not harmful.

In the Tanna environment I am known as a former high school teacher associated with VSA and as I moved from village to village I encountered former students who volunteered to help in small ways, such as introducing me to village leaders. A smaller number helped more substantially in making sure I had access to cultural information. The entire project on Tanna involved renewing old acquaintances and friendships and making new ones. There is also an ongoing family connection with certain villages such as *Iwarau*, *Bethel*, and *Imanaka*.

⁷³ Examples of longer term commitments arising from the research are a promise to provide a community map of West Tanna to some key informants and to finish a second edition of a history booklet of the area.

This raises the question of how to privilege my existing knowledge of Vanuatu and particularly the West Tanna environment, aside from information directly gleaned from Masters studies. This knowledge has been treated as reasonable, as the act of living in a social environment for over two years fits within anthropological definitions of knowledge gathering. However it does belong to the interpretive framework and has been used cautiously.

4.6. Summary

Some space has been given to justifying the use of mixed methodologies for this research, because if mixed methodologies are not accepted the research must logically fail. This chapter explored why in this case mixed methods are not only acceptable but indispensable. The research is question-driven and great emphasis has been placed on history, so that the primary research involved with the RSE and earlier migrant worker experiences in New Zealand primary industry can be compared with the experiences of migrant workers worldwide. This historical context is vitally important to the critical dimension of the research. Philosopher Rom Harre, recently honoured by Massey University, stated a short time ago “I wouldn’t dream of attempting to study a contemporary phenomenon without studying its historical antecedents” (2012).

In no sense is the research grounded theory; an attempt has been made to use the full theoretical armoury provided by earlier researchers to provide a framework within which to critically examine the RSE programme. It is the placement of the RSE in a wider historical context which I hope is the hallmark of this contribution. In contrast to the work of some other researchers (for example Bedford 2013; Roorda & Nunns, 2010), government has not been seen as a collaborating or neutral stakeholder but rather its role is part of the investigation.

This document now moves from an examination of literature and theory to an examination of research findings. The next four chapters (5-8) analyse primary research carried out in 2012 and 2013. Chapter 5 is distinct, because it focuses on the historical antecedents to the RSE programme in a strictly New Zealand context, and examines a mixture of principally literature and interview findings. Chapters 6 and 7 draw respectively from employer and worker perspectives, and can be seen as mutually supportive chapters from which it is possible to see common and sometimes divergent views on a range of working realities and development outcomes. Chapter 8 focuses on rural development in Vanuatu and is less dependent on semi-structured interviews and seeks to focus on the West Tannese community as a whole.

Chapter Five. Migration in New Zealand Primary Industry

5.1. Introduction

An understanding of the quality of the lives of migrant workers of today in New Zealand horticulture will be so much richer for being able to compare them to those of migrant workers of the past, so this chapter commences at the beginning of the migrant worker experience in New Zealand, albeit briefly.

An article appeared in a popular accountancy magazine in 2008 titled “The Changing Face of Rural Labour” (Ballantyne, 2008), claiming in essence that both the RSE programme in horticulture and the presence of Phillipine migrants in the dairy industry were necessary to provide reliable labour. It appeared to the writer that a long tradition of locally sourced rural labour was being replaced by migrants, and heartland communities were encouraged to accept labour migrants into their midst. This perspective overlooks the historical dependence of New Zealand primary industry on migrant labour since the time of the earliest sheep runs.

The roots of the RSE lie partly in temporary migrant worker programmes in the international context, and the RSE was modelled to a large extent on the Canadian SAWP⁷⁴ (see Ch. 2). It was also the case that prior experience of migrant labour programmes, particularly in the Pacific, influenced the design and implementation, and the rural employment context influences the parameters within which the RSE operates. This chapter sets out to establish a base of evidence with which to compare the RSE as a means of bringing migrant labour to New Zealand with past experiences in the rural and primary sectors, while at the same time exploring the roots of the RSE in New Zealand/Aotearoa. The categories examined in earlier chapters on labour and development discourses, particularly those on precarious and unfree labour, set the conceptual framework for this examination. While a full examination of labour conditions in rural New Zealand is beyond the scope of this document, some past scholarship on rural labour conditions, particularly migrant labour conditions, is reviewed briefly. It will be seen that the entire history of rural labour involves high levels of precarity which has seen undocumented labour replaced by contract migrant labour on more than one occasion. Particular attention is paid to the Fijian migrant experience in New Zealand until 1987.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ This was claimed by Bailey (2009) and confirmed by a government official charged with the design of the RSE (interviewed 7-5-12).

⁷⁵ Labour programmes involving Fiji were cancelled at the time of the first military coup led by Sitiveni Rabuka.

5.2. Migrant Labour in New Zealand Agriculture: Nineteenth Century and Early Twentieth Century

Precarity was evident in the labour market associated with primary industry in the nineteenth century. The swaggers of the long (nineteenth century) depression were the first of New Zealand's seasonal migrant workers. Lee (1964) describes the male population of the South Island at the time of the gold boom:

At each of the great sheep stations, or wheat stations during the wheat-growing bonanza period there was a swaggers' hut. There the out of work could receive shelter and a meal. The station owner wanted labour for seasonal work, for shearing, harvesting, ploughing, and other jobs. When the work was finished, the men walked from station to station until work was available again... When a station was about to shear, swaggers would come hundreds of miles and pitch tents near the job so as to be available at the call for labour (J. A. Lee, 1964, p. 18).

Lee goes on to suggest that over half of the thousands of men who lived in Otago and Canterbury in the 1870s had 'carried the swag' at some time. Martin (1990, p. 35) estimates that 70% of the workforce was on the road while a mere 30% was employed in 1870.

Martin (1990) refers to the large numbers of shearers who walked the roads in the hope of being selected for duty on recruitment days. The expression "open shed" refers to swaggers turning up on the day shearing was due to start. A newspaper advertisement would invite people to come to a hall for selection. This process is described in some detail for Orari Gorge station. An announcement was made "Shearers to the right... rouseabouts⁷⁶ to the left" and only a few minutes passed between recruitment and the start of the shearing. Those not selected picked up their swags and returned to the road (J. Martin, 1990, p. 37).

The advent of unionisation and mechanisation ended this highly precarised state of affairs, at least for shearers. The New Zealand Workers Union was formed in 1893-4 and a National Federation of Shearers' Unions in 1909 was among the first to negotiate standard piece rates (J. Martin, 1990; B. J. C. Thompson, 1967). A campaign goal for a pound per hundred sheep shorn was realised by 1910. The arrival of mechanised farming had the side effect of taking the demand for labour away from purely seasonal requirements. By the early twentieth century there was therefore a section of the rural labour force which exhibited elements of permanence.

⁷⁶ Shearing gangs consist of shearers who remove the wool from the sheep, rouseabouts who gather and sort the wool, and pressers who put this wool into tight bales for transportation.

Detailed evidence on the precarious nature of rural labour in the early twentieth century is wanting, but there are clues. A further supply of rural labour was to be found in Maori communities. Nightingale (2007, pp. 83-87) notes that Maori itinerant labour played an increasing role in shearing, bush clearing and general farm work, usually working in family groups, from the late nineteenth into the early twentieth century, as Maori communities became more reliant on seasonal labour for livelihoods. This era of partial dependence on Pakeha-owned farms to supplement domestic economy covered an extensive time prior to the “new Maori migration” (Metge, 2004). Belich (2001, p. 471) notes that the percentage of Maori living rurally changed from 74% in 1945 to 38% in 1966. Locke (2012) contrasts the average rural pay of 8-12p per day in the 1940s with the £7/week they would receive in the defence force (approximately twenty-five times the amount). By the end of the 1960s, as urban labour achieved a measure of permanence and security, the Federation of Labour boasted 350,000 members who made up 85% of all trade union members (2012, p. 40). This workforce was covered by awards which recognised 40 hours as the length of a standard working week, but the implied 400,000 unionised workers was not the entire New Zealand work force of the time and there is no history of 8 hour days in rural New Zealand.

5.3. Migrant Labour and Rural Weeds- the Whanganui/Rangitikei Setting

Hawke (1985) reports that the total number of sheep in New Zealand grew in the two decades 1860s and 1870s from 3 million to 13 million of which 10 million were in the South Island. The cutting of the North Island bush followed and by 1911 there were 24 million sheep of which over half were in the North Island (Hawke, 1985, p. 32). One reason for the earlier role of agriculture in the South Island was the predominance of dense podocarp forest in locations which would only later become the North Island hill country grasslands. The role of Scandinavian immigrants in cutting much of the dense bush is not in the classic mould of migrant labour but Lyng (1939) and Petersen (1956) describe a highly precarious existence. This sets the scene for a closer examination of one grasslands area at a time when the war against resurgent bush relied once again on migrant workers.

The Whanganui/Rangitikei was chosen for primary research in part because it has particular historical significance in the development of rural migrant worker programmes, and in part because it is an area well known to me from childhood. From the early twentieth century until the 1950s, precarious labour had a role to play in combating weeds in this region. Two distinct groups of precarious labourers were the swaggers and early Indian sub-continent migrants, mainly from the Punjab. Recent scholarship acknowledges the presence in New Zealand of a small Sikh community from 1890 onwards (McLeod, 1986; McLeod & Bhullar, 1992; Singh, 2010) which lacked public

visibility until the crisis in the Punjab of 1984⁷⁷ from which time the majority of Sikhs began to wear turbans in public. McGill (1982) estimated the Punjab community to be about 5% of the New Zealand Indian population, but McLeod notes the prominent role they have played in the rural section of the New Zealand Indian Association. He traces the Punjab community's movements from cutting scrub in the King Country into the Whanganui area in the 1930s. The small town of Fordell, near Whanganui became the "principal Punjabi centre" (McLeod & Bhullar, 1992, p. 29).

The development of New Zealand agriculture, particularly in the North Island, relied on first removing the vast areas of indigenous forest and then repelling the subsequent weed invasions. Migrant workers were involved at every stage of this process. The bush regenerated and migrant workers became involved in the subsequent weed control. These weeds are described by Campion et al (1988) in the Whanganui district as including large numbers of variegated thistles, gorse, and *manuka*. Whereas the arrival of gorse from Europe involved a species which behaved differently in a new habitat, the growth of *manuka* or "scrub" was simply a case of the bush attempting to reassert itself. At Okirae station variegated thistle, gorse, and scrub spread rapidly.

Hindu scrub cutters became a common sight in the district during the 1930s. *Okirae* employed as many as 15. The Indians lived in tents or huts in the area they were working. The tents had a cooking annex ... a camp oven used for making damper bread, Indian cakes and curries. The farmer supplied mutton and supplies of flour and butter were taken out to the camp from time to time by sledge. Sometimes the *Okirae* Hindus were asked to help with dagging⁷⁸ (Campion et al., 1988, p. 99).

The "Hindus" referred to by Campion et al. were probably not from Fiji, although McLeod did trace a group of Punjabis who came to Fiji before coming to New Zealand from 1912 onwards, so the transition from sub-continent migrant workers to Fijian migrant workers may have been relatively seamless. Seasonal or casual work was carried out in the Whanganui hinterland by a mix of Indian migrants from the subcontinent, rural Maori, and some swaggers still walking the roads in the 1950s and early 1960s. The Maori community at Kaungaroa, near Whanganui, was a significant source of farm labour, as was the Sikh community at Fordell. Campion et al. refer to the occupations of the Kaungaroa community as shearing, dipping, hay making, gorse spraying and fencing.

Lee (1977) refers to swaggers as "men of all sorts and conditions, driven to the swag for all sorts of reasons but more often than not through privation and necessity" (J. A. Lee, 1977, p. 21). As indicated above, Lee references a much greater time scale than the 1930s depression which gave

⁷⁷ The crisis referred to in India is usually referred to as the storming of the Golden Temple.

⁷⁸ Dagging is the removal of dried faecal matter, attached to wool near the sheep's rear, using shearing equipment.

rise to the swaggers of the 1950s. One of the most well known, “Russian Jack,” who died in 1968, split his time evenly between rural Wairarapa and rural Whanganui/Rangitikei (Sinclair, 2007). Indian migrant workers did not carry a swag and tended to arrive in taxis (see section 5.4), but whilst swaggers might be given a single task and paid in rations including a billy of tea before moving on, the Indian workers were placed in temporary accommodation in remote areas to cut the *manuka*. Although these people were encamped for months on end they appeared to move with relative ease between New Zealand and regions of India.

By the 1960s this scrub cutting role was occupied mainly by Fijian Indians, still referred to as “Hindus” in contrast to the turban wearing “Sikhs” of earlier times. Academic research on the migrant workers who predated the Fijian migrant labour programme is sparse. Levick (1988) begins his thesis on contract labour migration between Fiji and New Zealand in the second half of the twentieth century. From 1963⁷⁹ greater numbers of Fijian Indians began work in New Zealand. From this point the Fiji Government began issuing three months working visas in Suva on behalf of the New Zealand Labour Department and 2,900 permits were issued in this manner in 1963, increasing each year to over 10,000 in 1966 (Levick, 1988). From 1963 until 1967 there was a period when Fijian workers in New Zealand may be regarded as free labourers, with neither the protection nor the constrictions placed upon their activity by government organised programmes.

Following Anderson (1968), and de Bres et al. (1975), Levick (1988) refers to a realisation that from the mid-sixties there was a substantial increase in the number of Pacific island visitors to New Zealand coming in on three month visitor visas to work extra-legally. The effect of growing levels of undocumented migrant workers coupled with a rise in unemployment for the first time since the 1950s wool boom may have led to government intervention in the late 1960s. In mid-1967, there was a moratorium on the issue of work certificates from Fiji. The Whanganui branch of Federated Farmers is described by Levick (1988, p. 50) as being “particularly vocal” about the inability to recruit suitable New Zealand workers for cutting scrub. The role of two members of this group is examined in the next section. For a brief time between 1967-9, regulations required employment to be arranged in advance through the immigration office in Suva and there was a sharp reduction in numbers (A. G. Anderson, 1968, p. 19). The Fiji Rural Work Permit scheme proper began in 1969.

5.4. Primary Research in the Whanganui/Rangitikei Districts

In an environment largely devoid of worker organisation, migrants in isolated rural locations would seem ripe for exploitation, with the state offering the only institutional protection independent of

⁷⁹ The exact rules surrounding the presence of the few prior to 1963 are unclear at this point.

the humanity of the individual land owner. Evidence from interviews with a small number of respondents from the Whanganui/Rangitikei region suggests that experiences varied widely.

Eleven interviews were carried out in the Whanganui/Rangitikei district with retired farmers and descendants of farmers who employed migrant labour to cut scrub, culminating in the Fiji Rural Work Permit scheme. In one case the farmer was still farming, and was relying on his memories of events of almost fifty years before. Another interview was carried out with a New Zealand citizen who was given amnesty as an overstayer in the 1980s after many years of involvement in the scrub cutting industry. These interviews referred, mainly, to three eras of migrant employment on farms. During the first half of the twentieth century people from the Indian sub-continent were employed throughout the Whanganui district in very small groups; in several cases they were referred to as “Sikhs” and were likely identified by the wearing of turbans. From the late 1950s slightly larger groups of Fijian Indians, often referred to as “Hindus” were employed specifically to cut manuka regrowth. From 1969 under a government programme, rather than merely a visa policy, indigenous Fijians were employed in much greater numbers in larger gangs. An analysis of the conversations of the respondents produced nineteen categories which were then grouped into five themes, as follows:

- Policy framework (duration, NZ first, Fijians, Sikhs, overstaying)
- Pay and conditions (accommodation, pay, health, hours, food supply)
- Power (indenture signs, negotiations, stereotypes, recruitment).
- Labour market (remoteness, others)
- Island development (development projects, skills, employer connection)

5.4.1. The Policy Framework.

It is not clear what networking initially led to the “Punjab” migrants being replaced by Fijian Indians, who came on three month visas for approximately a decade, until the fall in the price of wool in 1966/7. Aaron, Mitchell, Ray and Donald all live in retirement and were employers of Fijian Indians, and in some cases earlier migrants. Ray (interviewed 1-7-13) says that Fijian Indian scrub cutters came in to their valley from the 1960s. “We had the Sikhs early on, not from Fiji but from the continent.” Donald (interviewed 5-6-13) also recalled a handful of earlier workers ‘from the Punjab’ who he would take the meat out to and in the late 1950s he began to employ Fijian Indians. Their employment was on three month visas:

They came for three months and paid tax using the appropriate IR forms while here. The scrub was all cut by Christmas and the burn was at around Easter time (Aaron, 7-6-13).

They often came out before we started docking; October/November/December. They would finish about Christmas time (Mitchell, 1-7-13).

Descendants of some of the earlier workers “from the Punjab” now reside in New Zealand as land owners⁸⁰. Whether they were early “overstayers” or whether they qualified for residency on other grounds is unclear, but concerns with migrants taking work from New Zealanders do not appear to have surfaced until the late 1960s.

One of the “vocal” voices referred to by Levick (section 5.3 above) was Ned, now in his seventies but still farming in 2013:

The New Zealand unemployed numbers were starting to increase for the first time since the start of the wool boom. It was a time when the government was beginning to examine if New Zealanders had been offered work before it was made available to migrants. I was required to go through channels twice. I went through the total unemployed roll in Wanganui and on one occasion I got two workers and on another occasion I didn’t get any. (Ned 6-6-13)

Murray, for many years a scrub cutting contractor, explained the issue of work permits was starting to come to a head in the late 1960s. “There was a view within government that it needed a legal framework.” (Murray, 6-6-13)

Three respondents had taken part in delegations to Parliament at different stages. Ned and Murray referred to a meeting which took place between a delegation from Whanganui Federated Farmers and Tom Shand, then Minister of Labour, and subsequently FOL leaders Tom Skinner and Jim Knox. None have an accurate recollection of the year in which this delegation took place, but it seems likely to have been 1969⁸¹. Minister Shand saw fit to seek the approval of the then Federation of Labour (FOL) before introducing a work scheme.

Ned recalls a tense first meeting in Minister Shand’s office followed by a delegation to see the leaders of the FOL (Jim Knox and Tom Skinner).

⁸⁰ Names were made available to the researcher for possible interview follow up. Most of these people continued to carry the surname “Singh” which is sufficiently ubiquitous to divulge.

⁸¹ Tom Shand died in December 1969 and Jim Knox did not officially become FOL secretary until 1969, upon the retirement of Ken Baxter.

I put a committee together and we went to see Shand and we told him we needed reliable workers. He sent us off to see the Federation of Labour and we met with Skinner and Knox. So we got permission from the FOL to have our Fijian scrub cutters and set up a sharing arrangement within the Wanganui Federated Farmers region. And I negotiated with Air New Zealand over the air fares. The first consignment were 150 who came in for 3 months. We put up the return fare and the farmers agreed to accommodate [the workers] and pay a small administration fee to Federated Farmers. (Ned, 6-6-13)

The TMWP known as the Fiji Rural Work Permit scheme did not officially begin until 1969, initially involving the Whanganui branch of Federated Farmers carrying out basic administrative functions, with minimal New Zealand government involvement at departmental level:

No forms to be filled out. It was simply a case of establishing the requirements of the farming community, the selection with DOL in Fiji, the airfares with Air New Zealand and the bus arrangement. Farmers collected their workers from the bus at Wanganui [from Auckland]. There was a specified date of return three months later. (Ned, 6-6-13)

Although 1969 ushered in a programme dominated by work gangs of indigenous Fijians, the first instance of the employment of indigenous Fijians by New Zealanders arose in Fiji during World War II.⁸² Murray (interviewed 6-6-13), a scrub cutting contractor, recalled employing about 40 indigenous Fijians at the time of the wool market crash (1966/7), and may have been the first New Zealand based employer. However, most respondents associated indigenous Fijian labour with the 1970s. Dell (interviewed 7-6-13), formerly a hill country farmer's wife in the Whanganui district, remembered taking them to Whanganui to do the shopping, this being their only time away from the farm. On one occasion she lost them in town when they became inebriated.

In the era of the Fiji employment programme, requests for increased numbers of workers were dealt with directly by Ministers of the Crown. Phil was also a scrub cutting contractor:

We went to government and got more from Fiji. I had a lawyer, and a partner and we sat in [foreign minister] Talboys' office talking numbers. Our legal person had worked in Parliament and knew the ropes. (Phil, 5-6-13)

Respondents remembered cutting gangs consisting of about twelve to twenty workers at the height of the Fiji scrub cutting era. Wesley, who developed a high country sheep and cattle station north of Taihape, noted that the "K. block", which he acquired in 1974, was a different proposition from earlier projects with very large blocks of big scrub covering the entire property. From this time he made use of Phil's gangs of indigenous Fijians. "There would usually be twenty cutters at a time in

⁸² Archival material (Archives New Zealand, 1941) shows the requirement of the NZ army for separate latrines before Fijians were allowed to assist the army based in Fiji in labouring capacities.

these gangs, so it wasn't a case of getting to know them individually as they would come in to the area and cut large areas of big scrub quickly." (Wesley, 17-7-13)

Whanganui people spoken to claim that their meeting with Tom Shand was the beginning of something which then spread throughout the country. This claim is supported by Levick (1988, p. 50) from Department of Labour sources. After the recruits were working in the Whanganui area Ned says the Nasella Tussock Board wanted to make use of the same systems to control Nasella tussock in the South Island, then the tobacco growers in Motueka, and their original committee membership was enlarged to include a South Islander. He pointed out that the Federated Farmers recruitment programme was always a national programme, but one with foundations in Whanganui.

Issues arising from unemployment in the 1970s had led to "overstaying" being signalled as a measure of failure for schemes such as these. "The agreement was always strict that Fijian migrants had to go back to Fiji at the end of the work project. However, after four seasons increasing numbers were overstaying." (Murray, 6-6-13). Jerome, (interviewed 30-6-13), failed to board his plane home in Auckland and stayed on as an 'overstayer' in the mid-1970s with a relative in Auckland. He describes it as an anxious time:

You can't sleep. The place we stayed; a lot of Fijians were deported back to Fiji. But lots of work was available. We took any job and used different names.
(Jerome, 30-6-13).

The arrival of larger gangs of Fijians did not completely signal the end of Fijian Indian labour. Mitchell continued to employ Fijian Indians well into the 1970s. A few were arrested for working without permits. This was in the late 1970s or perhaps early 1980s.

There was some bother with immigration. It changed when the work permit came in...They had trouble getting work permits. We didn't know whether they had them or not. We never asked ...They were deported. I remember that. (Mitchell, 1-7- 13)

It seems possible that the Fijian Indians concerned had tried to continue working in the same way to which they had become accustomed prior to 1967.

From this earlier time it is clear that contradictory forces, which had their seeds in the Immigration Act of 1920, were beginning to play out. The farmers wanted labour but the tasks were not appealing to the New Zealand domestic work force, and the government wished to restrict immigration due to rising unemployment. Pressures therefore built up to ensure that migrant labour remained for only such time as the work required. In the next section, pay and conditions are examined according to the evidence from these interviews.

5.4.2. Pay and Conditions.

Accommodation arrangements were highly variable prior to 1967, after which time the accommodation for the indigenous gangs was more standard. In reference to the “Hindu” cutters of the 1960s, the following accounts were given:

Aaron’s family shared Fijian Indian scrub cutters with a next door neighbour. His family had a *whare* near the homestead which Aaron says was in keeping with the times. It consisted of two rooms, one with a bath which could hold pre-heated water, the other with a wood stove and bunks, with corrugated iron exterior cladding (field notes 2-7-13). The now disused *whare* is shown in Image 5.1. The neighbours had no *whare* and the workers were expected to sleep on the bare boards of the woolshed. “My mother talked about the inhumanity of that neighbour for years” (Aaron, 7-6-13). Most respondents spoken to also referred to the corrugated iron *whare* as the usual accommodation.⁸³

⁸³ The transfer of the Maori language word “whare” to refer to very basic accommodation on many farms would be an interesting study in itself. It is suggestive of Maori worker accommodation on Pakeha owned rural enterprises. The term is used here simply because it is the parlance of most respondents (in Maori far-eh and dialectal, in parlance whorrie).



Figure 5.1 The *whare* referred to by Aaron photographed July 2013, now disused.

The entrance door is partially obscured by a bush. Photographed by author (2013).

Mitchell described the accommodation as little *whares* consisting of four beds and a chimney, with walls of corrugated iron. There would be a meat safe or two hung under a nearby tree. “We would part cook the meat to stop it going off” (Mitchell, 1-7-13). Mitchell’s property was some 6,000 acres with no vehicular access to the back areas and stores were taken to the back huts by packhorse. He would settle the workers on the blocks and take stores out by packhorse once or twice a week. In a few places where huts were not available, tents were used for accommodation.

Donald reports that after several years of employing Fijian Indians he paid Murray a contract rate for cutting a block of scrub. There were ten workers at one stage, and these were housed in a caravan on the property plus a tent which Murray placed on the property (Donald, 5-6-13). I asked Murray about this issue, and he was open about it. “Sometimes they had whares but we used tents until I

got more organised.” (Murray, 6-6-13) Tents were not the only portable form of accommodation used. Dell’s late husband Peter had a little corrugated iron mobile hut with room for one bunk and a tank for fresh water and gas bottle. He would transport this hut on bulldozed tracks by trailer to most of the cutting sites. (Dell, 6-6-13)

Not all accommodation was so basic. Madeliene’s family, who farmed near Ohingaiti, bought the neighbours’ farm which meant they had a spare house in which they accommodated the Fijian Indians. She had heard of others who had to live under canvas, but thought her family’s employees were particularly well accommodated. (Madeliene, 5-6-13)

These decisions were pragmatic. There was a desire on the part of both employer and migrant worker for long hours on the job and with that a desire to live close to the cutting areas. Ray spoke of the context. “In those days there was a lot of scrub to be cut and they worked long hours. They would stay in the huts, or shearers’ quarters or a tent site out the back” (Ray, 1-7-13). The decision to provide accommodation close to the cutting areas or in sometimes superior accommodation near the front of the property depended greatly on ease of access to the back blocks.

Accommodation improves as we move from continental Indian migrants of the 1950s through the time of the Fijian Indians of the 1960s to the Fijians of the 1970s, who were frequently accommodated in housing set aside for shearers:

They were always accommodated either in the shearers’ quarters near the homestead or if these were in use by shearers there were a couple of huts or whares as back up. The shearers’ quarters were quite new and modern at the time with cooking facilities and ablution blocks and are still in use today. (Wesley 17-7-13)

Later in the 1970s there were [indigenous] Fijians, some working at Moawhango and some at Pukeokahu. They stayed in the shearers’ quarters in both places. (Jack, 7-7-13)

Former Fijian scrub cutter Jerome, now a New Zealand citizen, remembered that the shearers’ quarters at ‘Drysdale’ station in 1978 consisted of eight rooms. “About 20 of us there; there were separate kitchen and stove.” There were exceptions to the standard. “One at Parihauhau had no toilet. We didn’t moan.” (Jerome, 30-6-13)

Phil, however, reported having accommodation inspected:

We would sleep in shearer’s quarters and the Labour Department would inspect the quarters, so would the union; Jack Abbot [probably from the Workers’ Union, now AWUNZ] would have a look – there was no reason for a problem. (Phil, 5-6-13)

At this time the relevant legislation would have been the Agricultural Workers Act (1977). So in the time of the indigenous Fijian there was a considerable improvement in accommodation as well as a much bigger operation.

Pay rates were more difficult to establish. Some of those interviewed perused old diaries to see if pay rates had been documented, with varying degrees of success. Some consistency of information emerged in relation to the early 1960s, whereas information on 1970s rates was more erratic. There is some evidence that migrants were paid market rates, in the sense that there was no variance in the pay received by a migrant and any other person doing precisely the same work.

Some were good. Most were good! You paid them the same as anyone else. You didn't pay them any less. (Mitchell, 1-7-13)

Remuneration claims made in the course of the interviews are provided in table 5.1. Some indication is given of how the pay for migrant scrub cutters compares with today's minimums. Using the Reserve Bank's on-line calculator, which claims an effective 7% per annum average wage inflation over a fifty year time frame, these amounts would equate to approximately \$15-\$25 per hour today, but caution must be exercised before claiming the workers were better paid, for several reasons, one of which is that the result obtained with such calculations is highly sensitive to small changes in the rate of inflation assumed. In today's money a "Hindu" working 70 hour weeks solidly for 3 months would gross approximately \$20,000 with minimal expenses in a summer in New Zealand.

It is important to emphasise the exploratory rather than inferential nature of these figures. One methodological problem put simply is; if you are a low paid worker in this decade, and the average wage increases by 7% per annum into the next decade, would you expect your wages to have moved up by that average percentage? Several events between 1960 and 2013 suggest that the answer may be no. We might expect that as the level of inequality rises overall the mean average will diverge from the median. Hence I have added an extra column using the CPI, which presents a different set of methodological issues, but between the two columns we garner some idea of how the pay for migrant labour in the 1960s compares with today.

Table 5-1: Pay Level Estimates for Scrub Cutting in Today's Prices

Claim	Year	Amount (hourly)	Equivalent in 1 st qtr 2013	Equivalent using CPI index instead of wages	Comment
Aaron	1959	5s6d	\$19.80	\$12.15	This relies on a particular memory; there is no reason to disbelieve it's accuracy
Aaron	1962	7s6d	\$23.60	\$14.50	As above.
Murray A	1962	5s0d	\$16.50	\$9.21	This figure had support from old diaries
Mitchell	1977	\$3.00	\$23.00	\$19.00	This was intelligent guesswork, based on a comparison with fencer's pay
Jerome	1978	\$0.90	\$9.60		Dates given do not triangulate well with other evidence; I am sceptical of this figure

Source: author's field research.

Information on hours worked was consistent from one respondent to the next. The "Hindus" were reported as working every available minute, probably for 10-12 hours every day, suggestive of at least 70 hours in any given week.

In those days there was a lot of scrub to be cut and they worked long hours. You would see them three times a week. They liked to do ten hours a day. (Ray, 1-7-13)

Ned (6-6-13) and Mitchell (1-7-13) both recalled that the Indian workers would willingly work 12 hours a day or more. Ned says the farmer would try to put some restriction on excessive hours, but they wanted to put in as many hours as they possibly could, not expecting any days off, which contributed to a slow and steady work style. Mitchell also remembers the Fijian Indians working about 12 hours every day including Sundays. "So for three months it was effectively non-stop steady work". This was a point of difference in Mitchell's view between Indians and indigenous Fijian workers. "Fijians would have a day off. Indians would not." (Mitchell, 1-7-13)

A difference was consistently reported between the work styles of the small groups of Fijian Indians and larger Fijian groups of the 1970s. One former Fijian worker now resident in the Whanganui district claims that the gangs worked 40 hour weeks at fast pace. "We worked about 40 hours per

week; just from 8-5, but we worked very hard” (Jerome, 30-6-13). There was some evidence of conflict between the expectations of the Fijian gangs and employing contractors like Phil:

My attitude was the old scrub cutters’ attitude. Days off are the wet days and we used to get those. We couldn’t get them to work on Sundays so it was still a day off! On one occasion we had ten wet days in a camp in Gisborne. (Phil, 5-6-13)

Phil described that time of waiting for a fine day as extremely challenging.

We worked Monday-Saturday with a target of 60 hours. We quickly learned about Sundays and Sundays became a day of rest for us. The year we had 120 guys that summer the average was precisely 47 hours worked per man per week. (Phil, 5-6-13)

The pay and conditions are not fully comprehensible without understanding what the farmers called a fully-found basis. The accommodation, such as it was, was free. In the time of the “Hindus” at least, store accounts were kept but some food supplies, particularly meat, came from the farms. Most people interviewed had a mutton story. Dell (6-6-13) recalled how her husband Peter would kill muttons (adult sheep) and supply food to Sangoo⁸⁴, who worked intermittently for about a decade before leaving in 1967. Donald recalled the migrant’s preference for lean meat, to the extent that on one occasion an old ram, normally not for human consumption, was slaughtered for them and they asked for more meat just like it (Donald, 5-6-13). His recollections were similar to those of Ray and Mitchell:

They largely lived on meat; didn’t like it fat, with lots of curry and garlic and roti bread. They mainly ate using the roti to dip in the curry. (Ray, 1-7-13)

We took stores out by packhorse once or twice a week. These usually consisted of mutton, rice, curry powder. (Mitchell 1-7-13)

The above comments, which all refer to the employment of Indian migrants, from both India in the 1950s right through to some later Fijian Indians in the 1970s, demonstrate the expectation of the farmers that it was their role to supply food. In the absence of any forms of labour organisation or protection it is clear that an ethical code operated among the farming community which could be considered contradictory. Very low quality housing was acceptable prior to government involvement as were extremely long hours of work. However workers were to be fed according to their dietary preferences and paid what was seen as the going rate for the job.

⁸⁴ Sangoo was from India, not Fiji and correspondence with Peter viewed by the researcher suggested a warm human relationship between the migrant worker and the farmer.

5.4.3. Power and Stereotypes.

The interaction between boss and worker, particularly contrasted with today's TWMP arrangements, shows elements both of a harsher, more precarious existence and of a freer one. The mechanisms for payment are suggestive of an earlier indentured arrangement. The following examples from Mitchell and Wesley show how a farmer maintained a food supply to the workers and kept an account at a local merchant for all their supplies. At the end of the "indenture" there was a financial wash up. Records were kept of hours worked and money spent on provisions, which were deducted at the end of the time of employment.

We didn't pay them until they left. We'd check with Taylors [local merchants] and divide the account by four. (Mitchell, 1-7-13)

This was in reference to a gang of four scrub cutters, so individual accounts were not kept. During the work season they stayed on the scrub cutting blocks and all provisions were paid for by the farmer. Mitchell stated without apology, "They never went in to town."

Wesley also explained that no money changed hands between the farm entity and the migrant workers directly. There was only one final payment made by Wright Stephenson [farm supplies business] in Taihape (where nearly all the stores were purchased) which they were then able to take back to Fiji. An accounts clerk from Wright Stephenson was engaged to make those calculations. (Wesley, 17-7-13)

Others interviewed also commented on the way the migrants remained on the land. "Dad may have taken them to Taihape but otherwise they were never off the farm" (Madeliene, 5-6-13). However assumptions of "indenture" in the sense of a complete lack of freedom must be tempered.

Firstly, in contrast to evidence that will be presented in later chapters of futile attempts by RSE workers to have a meaningful input into their pay and conditions, both 1960s and 1970s workers may not have been strictly price takers:

They were good negotiators and very good with figures! They would negotiate the money. (Ray 1-7-13)

These were well educated Fijian Indians, one a doctor and one a lawyer...Their credentials were recognised by our local chemist. (Aaron, 7-6-13)

Aaron's experience is not typical of those interviewed, but the stereotype of a "Hindu cane cutter" is by no means universally applicable. Although it was commonplace to refer to the Fijian Indians as

“Hindus”, Wesley remembers being invited to their religious observances and cannot be sure that this was the faith of these people.⁸⁵

Stereotypes were found to have common threads. Wesley (interviewed 17-7-13) did have some issue with the hygiene practices of the Fijian Indians in contrast to later Fijian cutters, whom he remembered as being very hygienic in their practices. The Fijian Indians were described as “dirty” by at least one other respondent in regard to their personal hygiene, yet there were minimal ablution facilities provided in the majority of cases.

The steady approach over long hours from the Fijian Indians contrasted with the shorter bursts of the indigenous Fijian workers. This contributed to some of the employer stereotypes but also indicated some measure of control by the workers over the hours they worked.

Methods of recruitment have shed light on the power relationships between boss and migrant worker in many contexts including the RSE. In the scrub cutting context, one feature to emerge is that of Indians, not only from Fiji, freely and regularly contacting New Zealand farmers. Wesley recounted that on one occasion a small group showed up unannounced in J.T.’s taxi from Taihape. Although he had become used to receiving letters from Fiji from former cutters or relatives seeking employment, some were more adventurous and on this occasion the group was kept on for the season. (Wesley, 17-7-13)

Mitchell affirmed that people would make contact from Fiji to see if there was work available and this continued to happen until recent times. “Even ten years ago people would ring up from Fiji for work” (Mitchell, 1-7-13). Earlier, Mitchell was one of a few who did actively travel to Fiji to select workers. He made two or three trips to Sigatoka, near Nadi, for recruitment, specifically looking for cane cutters.

The visa was not tied to the specific employment relationship, so on the one hand a Fijian Indian migrant was isolated with minimal transport, totally dependent on the farmer for his rations, but on the other hand the farmer was duty bound to supply those rations and the scrub cutter was relatively free to choose his hours of work and his length of stay as an active work seeker who could opt to work for a different employer on the same visit. Phil’s inability to get the gangs to work on Sundays (above) is in stark contrast to the experience of many RSE workers who are contracted for weekend availability (see Chapters 6 and 7).

⁸⁵ The 1996 Fiji census shows a significant minority, approximately 5%, of Fijian Indians as Christians of various denominations.

From 1969 onwards the recruitment of Fijians was more controlled, once again with contradictory effects. With much larger numbers of indigenous Fijians coming, the Labour Department in Fiji was formally in charge of the selection process.

You had to have equal numbers of Indians and Fijians. The Indians were slow and the Fijians were athletic but more playful. All run by the Labour department. In the end we selected our own men as it had become corrupt. It was a disaster while it was with the Labour Department. (Murray, 6-6-13)

Murray argued that corruption took two forms, sometimes involving the employment of family members of officials and sometimes bribery of officials. Phil's business partner said he would not go to Suva; he would go to the villages. He wanted to choose workers carefully. "He would look at their own gardens, how they related to others, their position in the village, and those sorts of things." (Phil, 5-6-13)

Jerome added that he was chosen by his village leaders to go to New Zealand. It was not a free choice at village level, and being picked was regarded as an honour. If the village leader wanted one group to go but Bill (Phil's partner) wanted a different group, Jerome says common sense would prevail and they would compromise; both getting some of what they wanted. "Chief might say I pick four and you pick four." (Jerome, 30-6-13)

Finally, there was very little evidence of direct supervision of the workers on the job. "The first day I said why do we come here. Someone was watching us with binoculars! We are not in prison!" (Jerome, 30-6-13). Such scrutiny was not normally possible insofar as there were no management strata capable of carrying out surveillance of the type implied for any length of time. Mitchell read a diary note from 12th April 1975 which showed he shifted the scrub cutters to another paddock. "I'd have written in my diary the hours they did- nine hours that day." (Mitchell, 1-7-13) So the process of relocating, of carrying out provisions, and the accurate recording of the workers themselves helped maintain the integrity of the arrangement.

The Fijian Indians were empowered to negotiate, whether through sufficient education and understanding of pay regimes, through a last instance ability to withdraw labour and find a different employer, or other means. Negotiation is not the way of indenture. The farmer was in a position of being able to hire and fire and determine who he wanted back, but there was some flexibility of movement for the migrants too. No instances were uncovered of scrub cutters choosing to change employers mid-season, and from 1969 onwards the government programme required that the worker remained with the one employing authority.

5.4.4. The Labour Market.

The development of thousands of hectares of North Island farmland required migrants to do work New Zealand workers did not want, particularly at a time of low unemployment. None of the adjectives often associated with 3D discourse (Ellerman, 2005) addressed in Chapter 2, such as difficult, dangerous and demeaning, necessarily apply to cutting scrub on North Island hill country. The work is physically demanding but the noticeable feature which might have deterred New Zealand workers was its remoteness or isolation. An Indian migrant worker in the 1960s might travel many miles to a remote location and then walk many hours to the back areas of a farm. However Ned (6-6-13) pointed out that in contrast to the walking of the swaggers, Indian migrants of the 1950s/60s would hire a taxi to go looking for work in remote rural locations.

There was a taxi driver in New Plymouth, Larry C. A lot of farmers had Sikhs. Larry would have a standard fare for taking passengers work hunting in the back blocks. They came out as part of a family and went out to cut scrub; to disappear from authorities perhaps. (Murray, 6-6-13)

A feature of farm development concomitant with the cutting of scrub was improved access. Mitchell recalled there were large numbers of wild pigs on the back blocks early on, so it was remote territory. On one occasion a group lost themselves on the property trying to change cutting location. The most distant hut was twelve hours walk from the front of the property. "You'd do it in five minutes on a [motor] bike now" (Mitchell, 1-7-13). Jack (interviewed 2-7-13) explained that in his grandfather's time (1950s/60s) Fijian Indians were employed to cut scrub in groups of 3-4. Huts had been erected at the back of the property for fencers and scrub cutters; Jack thinks mainly for the scrub cutters. Mitchell's observations were echoed by Ray. "They can get to the site in half an hour, not like those days. We did all the access by packhorse then." (Ray, 1-7-13)

The remote hut was not universally the scenario, however. Wesley's station was located on the central plateau of the North Island, on which terrain four wheel drive vehicles could always be used to access the entire property. He referred to a daily commute using an ex army 4x4 (Wesley, 17-7-13). When the bigger gangs of Fijian cutters arrived in the 1970s, the four wheel drive vehicle largely replaced the back hut as the access solution. Jack referred to the work at Pukeokahu being carried out from the accommodation at the front of the property with the use of a long wheel base Land Rover to take the workers to work. He recalled that there were about a dozen cutters in the big gangs. "Pukeokahu scrub was mainly on steep escarpments. Initially they were cutting close to the woolshed but then a long wheel based Land Rover was used every day to run them out six at a time" (Jack, 3-7-13). Jerome referred to numerous properties in the North Island where he cut scrub, staying in shearers' quarters at the front of the property and being transported to the cutting areas

each day. (Jerome 30-6-13) A common sense observation on economies of scale suggests this was at least in part a function of the bigger gang size for a shorter time period making daily transport more economically viable.

Respondents were asked about the availability of New Zealand labour. Some New Zealand labour was still available for scrub cutting in the 1950s and 1960s at a time when the Maori urban migration was at full momentum. As well as groups of Maori there were the last of the swagger remnants. Donald (interviewed 5-6-13) described his employment of one of the swaggers named Jim Lucas who came for a brief visit and ended up staying for long periods.

Murray claims that it was very difficult to get reliable New Zealand labour to cut scrub:

Back in 61/62 there was no unemployment. New Zealand labour people, you couldn't get them to work; they wanted a four day weekend. On a Monday they were still partying. (Murray, 6-6-13)

He expressed this view in ethnic terms, comparing scenes from the film "Once were Warriors"⁸⁶ to the environment he knew then. "They were hard shots - I had to be careful as it was a dangerous environment."⁸⁷

Ray explained that once better access had been established, some New Zealand labour became available:

Another chap named Tim was doing it later on. He had New Zealanders cutting and he worked with them. They can get to the site in half an hour, not like those days. We did all the access by packhorse then. (Ray, 1-7-13)

The role of migrant labour in winning the central North Island for grasslands against resurgent bush was therefore both pivotal and historically specific. As it became possible to accommodate workers in quarters with amenities and the work became more attractive to New Zealanders in times of high unemployment, the "3D" work may have been done. As a result, the discontinuation of the programme in retaliation to the first Fijian coup led by Sitiveni Rabuka⁸⁸ may have been easier to manage politically than in times of severe labour shortages.

⁸⁶ 'Once Were Warriors' directed by Lee Tamahori, released 1994, based on the book of the same name (Duff, 1990).

⁸⁷ Murray's account is slightly more nuanced than this extract may suggest and he speaks also of "good blokes".

⁸⁸ The state of politics in Fiji has impacted on both the Fiji Rural Work Permit and the RSE programmes with access to the New Zealand labour market being used as an incentive for Fiji to replace military leaders with elected governments. The success or validity of this approach is beyond the scope of this thesis.

5.4.5. Benefits for Fiji?

Three eras are evident in this historical investigation. The first, up to the end of the 1950s, was an era in which migrants from the Indian sub-continent utilized less stringent immigration rules to remit funds home and in some cases to join a small diaspora in a very non-public way. The second allowed larger numbers of Fijian Indians who utilized three month work visas to earn funds to transfer to their home communities. The third provides an early example of a temporary migrant worker programme involving a higher level of government intervention, and cooperation between the New Zealand and Fiji authorities. In this case there is evidence of a more focused use of funds for community projects.

Sigatoka is one of several districts of Fiji studied by Anderson (1968) during the second era. These studies of Fiji Indian rural communities show not only thousands of migrants by number but also rural networks. The trips to New Zealand were seen as one of the sources of off-farm employment which allowed Indian communities to maintain an agrarian existence which was not quite self-sustaining. Although the total catchment would have included urban areas as well, the development aspect was limited to the benefits to these families and a multiplier effect within the Fijian cash economy.

Two key differences are notable from 1969 onwards. Firstly, the controlling influence of the Fiji Department of Labour allowed greater numbers of indigenous Fijians to migrate, and secondly the unfree nature of the labour in the twin sense that the tour of duty was under strict visa conditions and that in at least some rural cases village leaders determined who came to New Zealand and how those funds were to be used. Community level development projects were possible involving a more directed use of migrant earnings. "There is a high school in Vanua Levu built from the proceeds remitted to Fiji at that time." (Murray, 6-6-13)

Murray's claim was supported by Jerome, but is likely to have involved other funding sources as well. The employers recruited in rural areas in preference to Suva to get what they perceived to be better labour. The Fiji government wanted schools, churches and water supply, especially in Vanua Levu where Jerome (interviewed 30-6-13) comes from. His seaside village is about 3 hours drive to the nearest town by openside bus. It was desirable to build a high school locally as it was very expensive sending children to school in Suva. So the money earned in New Zealand was largely for a junior high school. Jerome says that all the money was organised through the village leaders who took it to the school board of trustees. The BOT received a one-to-one government subsidy and that is how the school was financed up to senior levels.

There is also some evidence of a commitment by the New Zealand government to ensuring project development would take place in the 1970s. Phil and Murray gave broadly consistent accounts:

When we saw Talboys [Minister of Foreign Affairs] - to make sure it would work - each group had a village project which everyone contributed to, such as repairing a church or water provision. (Phil, 5-6-13)

Money taken back was always for a school or a church project. The majority of the time they sent it by way of a church group. They got none of the reward. All of the money went back to the villages. (Murray, 6-6-13)

Even though there was much less government involvement than is the case with the RSE, this requirement combined with the unfree nature of the labour produced at least one new school. There was no specific skills training; however a similar comment was volunteered by Jerome on the nature of time as is demonstrated in Chapters 6 and 7 dealing with RSE primary research:

In the village, time is not important. Get up at 10 o'clock. When we came here the time was so important. Something we wanted to take home is to work to time. (Jerome 30-6-13)

Several RSE employers have come to see themselves as involved with the source islands from which the workers come. This was less evident among the Whanganui/Rangitikei farmers. "We would get these letters from Fiji; quite often we would get letters from them once they got to know you; or other relatives had been out" (Ray, 7-7-13). Ray couldn't be certain of which of the Fiji islands they came from. Similarly, although letters, sometimes Christmas cards and parcels were received from Fiji, Wesley (17-7-13) has never found himself in that part of Fiji, but has been to Fiji as a tourist.

5.5. Summary and Reflection

Although the Fiji Rural Work Permit offers a clear antecedent for the RSE programme, this is set within a context of migrant labour which offered solutions to labour requirements in New Zealand primary production from its inception. The Fiji Rural Work Permit scheme grew into a programme with a wider focus than scrub cutting. Its growth is traced by Levick and Bedford (1988) to include forestry work and halal slaughtering. It contributed significantly to the clearing of the lower North Island hill country in the 1970s development era, during a time when the role of *manuka* was seen differently than in it is in the conservation era.⁸⁹

The indigenous Fijians did not arrive as free labourers. Jerome is very clear that the workers from his village did not choose to go to New Zealand. That choice was made by village leaders and "It was an

⁸⁹ *Manuka* will grow where most forest tree species will fail, and provides the cover for regenerating podocarp forest. Nick, for example, now has over a hundred hectares of conservation land on his property.

honour” (Jerome, 30-6-13). The Fiji Rural Work Permit Scheme became one of several bilateral programmes involving Tonga, Fiji, and Samoa. One obvious point of difference concerning the RSE is its multi-lateral nature.

It is a recurrent theme through studies of migrant labour in recent decades that forms of migrant labour which lack government supervision or involve illegal/undocumented immigration, are of the most exploitative variety (see for example Shelley, 2007). Comparison between the RSE and precarious migrant labour in the horticulture industry immediately prior to its inception tends to bear this out (see Chapter 6). However, some caution may be needed with this assumption. If anything, it appears that scrub cutters paid by the hour may have been slightly better remunerated than, for example, the pack house workers paid by the hour in today’s RSE environment. Optimal calculations (see Appendix 5) suggest that higher amounts were taken home in earlier times, not because of higher rates of pay but because of fewer deductions.

This research makes no attempt to quantify the numbers who were sourced from rural areas in comparison to urban, but there are grounds for thinking that a majority of Fijian workers who came to New Zealand in the 1960s and 1970s to cut scrub were from rural locations. It is questionable whether urban dwelling Fijians of the time would have accepted the same terms of engagement as their rural counterparts.

The work style changed from small groups of 3-4 ‘Hindus’ camped out the back for long periods to cutting gangs of a dozen or more making daily trips out to the cutting sites and moving quickly through large blocks of scrub. No evidence of any formal worker evaluations, either in the ‘Hindu’ or ‘Fijian’ era came to light. The workers were trusted to stay out on the backblocks and cut scrub on hourly rates. Farmers knew from experience whether the pace of cutting was reasonable. Consequently there was no underlying threat of punishment, or constant pressure to increase speed.

Elements of what was to become the RSE policy begin to appear in the 1970s. Regulation began to apply to accommodation arrangements and visas became conditional upon specific employment arrangements, if not a named employer. The year 1967, when growing concerns about uncontrolled and illegal labour migration led to government intervention, can be seen as a precursor to 2006 when similar concerns contributed to the formulation of the RSE policy. The Fiji programme was cancelled in 1987 as a form of sanction against the Rabuka coup leadership, and the subsequent vacuum was partially responsible for the events that led to the RSE.

5.6. Postscript - The New Zealand Dairy Industry in the Twenty-first Century

One final observation may be needed to bring this historical account of migrant labour in New Zealand primary industry up to date. Recent research into the use of migrant labour in the dairy industry, largely sourced from the Phillipines, has been carried out by Lincoln University researchers. Recent changes in the dairy industry have seen small owner-operators replaced by large corporate farms with managers (Trafford & Tipples, 2011). Mean average herd size grew from approximately 130 in 1980 to 400 in 2011 at the same time as the number of dairy farm entities decreased from approximately 16,000 to 12,000 (Christie, 2012, p. 7). Severe labour shortages in the dairy industry have been ascribed by Tipples et. al (2012, p. 14) to the rapid expansion of the dairy industry, an ageing workforce, prevalence of long working hours and hazardous working conditions. They note that 75% of all dairy workers worked more than ten consecutive working days before having time off. The solution to the labour shortage to date has been found in migrant labour rather than an improvement in labour conditions, and a suggestion has already been made to start a “dairy variant” of the RSE for the dairy industry (Trafford & Tipples, 2011, p. 57). There is an implied acceptance that the New Zealand rural labour market must remain in a precarised state, unable to attract suitably qualified New Zealand workers in sufficient numbers.



Map 5.1: New Zealand Locations

Chapter Six. Findings from New Zealand Based Fieldwork

6.1. Introduction

In this chapter I examine contemporary data collected in New Zealand. Section 4.4 explained how nine themes were produced from 24 codes from semi-structured interviews with RSE employers. The first seven of these themes, discussed in Part A of this chapter, relate to the third research question, which asks whether the labouring experience of RSE migrant workers meets the standards of international conventions, especially ILO covenant no. 97 on migration for employment. Two further themes, which relate to the central research question on development, are addressed in Part B. The separation into these two parts is not simple, as a number of issues which are part of the labouring experience affect development opportunities as well. The rich data which resulted from the interviews, and to some extent the employer survey conducted at the start of 2012, produced insights which go beyond a mere technical/ legal examination of the wording of ILO covenants. An effort has been made to allow the employers to speak for themselves, and quotes are used extensively, commensurate with limitations on space. A full summary of the employer survey is presented in Appendix 2, with some relevant parts tabulated within the following sections in cases where they enhance the discussion.

Part A The Experiences of RSE Workers in New Zealand: evidence from employers.

Sections 6.2-6.8 which follow deal sequentially with the **labour market context** (the New Zealand first policy and wider labour market issues), **the entry process** (including initial recruitment practices, sending workers home and inviting them back), **work control** (contracts used, hours worked, SDA experiences) **pay regimes** (hourly rates, piece rates, approaches to slow workers, gendering), **financial benefits** (levels of savings and remittances and surrounding issues), **welfare** (accommodation issues, pastoral care interpretations, health and safety protection), and **social control** (indications such as employment of couples, kava control, and freedom of movement).

6.2. The Labour Market Context

This section investigates the proposition that the RSE has helped “clean up” the horticultural sector of exploitative and illegal practices, as has been claimed by both government officials such as Official #2 (interviewed 26-4-12), Official #4 (interviewed 3-5-12) and industry employees such as Denise (interviewed 22-3-12), and that it has been monitored to ensure that it does not impact adversely on New Zealand domestic employment. Employers’ claims that it is difficult or impossible to maintain

staffing for significant parts of the required seasonal workforce are canvassed, as is the interface between the RSE and Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ).

Official #4 (interviewed 3-5-12) reported that representatives of the horticulture sector first approached the Minister of Immigration in 2004⁹⁰ to ask for an easing of restrictions on migrant labour and were told nothing would happen until the industry demonstrated it had “cleaned itself up,” in other words had ceased to exploit illegal immigrants. Several Hawkes Bay respondents recalled pre-RSE horticultural employment between 2000-2004 in negative terms. Some pointed to the exploitation of illegal labour and the steps they had taken to try and redress this, while others simply referred to the difficulty of getting fruit picked on time:

We pay so much a bin plus a fee but you find out of the thirty two dollars [per bin] the guys [pickers] are only getting twenty and we were at the stage we were prepared to take action and we would write down every registration number and we would get the blackboard out showing bin rate, and the contractors hated that, and how much tax you should pay. Some of them were bad but fortunately I think they've all gone to jail. (Deb, 22-3-12)

Deb's perception was of a clear divide between the pre-RSE days of under paying undocumented immigrants, which culminated in some high profile court cases⁹¹, and the legitimate labour practices of the present time. Not all respondents shared this perception. Approximately 20% of the RSE workforce in 2012 was from Asia, under the provisions covering pre-existing arrangements involving non Pacific Island workers. Lilly's firm is not covered by pre-existing arrangements:

We are not allowed to bring Thais in. They are the best workers but we are not allowed to bring them in and you have other contractors who have blackmailed their Thais, saying “Don't you ever tell on us to the Labour Department because we are underpaying you” ... the amount of money they take off these people is phenomenal ... but the Thais will never say because they want to come back and so these contractors abuse them more than they would ever abuse Pacific Island people. I would be more concerned about their welfare than any other groups ... (Lilly, 13-4-12).

Further doubt was cast over the “clean break” from the past when I found myself interviewing an RSE registered company manager who had previously been sentenced to nine months home detention for the employment of illegal labour. A close family member who was not charged with illegal practice was formally registered as the recognised seasonal employer, and another close family member, also part of the existing business and present during part of this interview, was

⁹⁰ Collateral information from a previous Minister places these discussions in early 2005, and suggests a greater enthusiasm on the part of industry leaders to remove exploitative elements than this statement may imply.

⁹¹ The most well publicized was the DOL investigation of the horticulture labour scene which began in 2004 and culminated in the sentencing of four directors of the company Contract Labour Services in 2010 (Sharpe, 2010).

previously jailed for illegal recruitment practices. A former official within the Department of Labour (Official #9, interviewed 5-7-12) suggested that the department could not exclude anyone from registration on the basis of guilt by association. It could also be fair to suggest that if the criminal justice system has taken its course this family should be given the opportunity to engage in horticultural employment in a legally appropriate manner. This raises new issues in turn, as this business had engaged a lawyer in the process of becoming RSE accredited and maintained large amounts of documentation to prove the absence of corrupt practice in their RSE dealings. The focus on written agreements with the workers, on such things as linen supply, points in the opposite direction from the pastoral trust building which many RSE employers were claiming to build.

The effectiveness of the RSE in “cleaning up” the industry is partially due to stringent inspection of RSE businesses by Department of Labour (DOL⁹²) officials. In Hawkes Bay, RSE workers make up nearly one third of the temporary harvest workforce⁹³ and the inspections give labour inspectors unprecedented access to the records of a significant number of Hawkes Bay employers. A labour inspector explained that he had become familiar with sufficient numbers of the migrant workforce to mean that he would be greeted by RSE workers when seen in town (Official #6, interviewed 13-4-12). However, in Blenheim RSE employers make up less than a sixth of all grape industry employers, and the RSE worker numbers make up between one fifth and one quarter of all grape industry workers⁹⁴. Given the large number of contractors unregistered either as RSE or with the local contractors’ federation, the labour inspectorate has much less chance of detecting breaches of the law such as paying below the minimum wage.

Concern was noted at the continued prevalence of labour contractors within the RSE in the DOL’s own evaluation (Roorda & Nunns, 2010) and there is no indication of a decrease. My survey shows labour contractors holding more than one in five RSE accreditations (see Appendix 2). In Hawke’s Bay a small number of contractors work alongside the mainly corporate employers of RSEs, and pick the apples for (mainly) smaller growers. However in Blenheim, where there are now 27,000 ha of grapes grown, contractors dominate. Lenny (interviewed 24-5-12) points to over 100 labour contractors involved in the viticulture industry in Blenheim of whom only a handful are RSE registered and only 20-30 are involved in the local contractors’ association. He sees that there are high levels of compliance and effort for those involved in the RSE, and many others prefer to avoid the scrutiny over wages and conditions.

⁹² Since this research was undertaken, a restructuring of New Zealand government departments brought the Department of Labour under the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE).

⁹³ Numbers supplied by Hawkes Bay Fruitgrowers’ Association.

⁹⁴ Numbers supplied by Wine Marlborough.

While many growers may be uncomfortable with the use of illegal labour in the abovementioned period, there is evidence for why this illegality became seen as a necessary evil:

In say, Royal Gala [apple variety] it takes 52 weeks growing cycle of which 49 weeks is preparing the crop and then we have 3 weeks to harvest. If we harvest after or before that time slot it has no value to us. You can imagine the immense pressure developed for harvest labour which was only casual and we needed this huge volume of people. Over the years a market developed of labour providers who were all sorts of nefarious, dubious, not many honest people who held you to ransom as a producer.
(Joseph, 24-3-12)

Joseph is just one of several employers who claimed that migrant workers were essential to carry out work which New Zealand workers would not do. Some examples follow of work which employers claimed could not be staffed by local workers.

Shelly (interviewed 20-11-12) reported that the great majority of RSE workers would do the night shift for which it was difficult to find staff. The shifts at time of interview were Sunday to Friday with no Saturday night shift. Euan made the same claim:

They are happy to work the night shift but then the Kiwis won't work the night shifts, they just won't do it.

DR: But did you run the same shifts [before RSE]?

You did, but you struggled with half the shift turning up and you had to close lanes down. It was a nightmare. Trying to get people to winter prune up in the Coromandel, well where do you get those workers from? That's where we send a lot of our RSE workers for winter pruning where we can't get other folks to go. And that is where WINZ are struggling with trying to fight the RSE scheme because they are trying to say 'Kiwis first' and we agree with that but Kiwis don't want to fill the gaps that we need to have filled. (Euan, 19-11-12)

A key plank of the RSE since its inception has been the New Zealand first policy, which operates firstly within the nation-wide quota (now 9,000 per year), and secondly at a local level in the numbers allowed in any given ATR. Regional labour governance groups act as forums for debate about the total numbers of RSE workers allowed in any one region, and individual employers must demonstrate to WINZ that efforts have been made to employ New Zealand workers first. For some employers who have embraced the policy wholeheartedly this did not seem to create a problem:

We do get all our other workers from WINZ. We have a good relationship with our local WINZ office and they put a seminar on for us and on WINZ's books there is everybody from the DPBs⁹⁵ but they can't work in the hours that we need and then certain types of sickness benefits that can't come either but we take our application

⁹⁵ Single parents receiving the domestic purposes benefit.

forms and get to meet them and make a selection. We discuss all the jobs and get people to fill out applications and make our selection from there. We ended up with 83 applications from WINZ clients this year and filled all our positions. (Jayne, 30-3-12)

There was useful evidence that this aspect of the New Zealand first policy is enforced. One employer who was recently declined an ATR because they had not formally employed through WINZ channels had the following complaint:

What really frustrated me is that ... all these RSEs get declined but then you go to the orchards and there are 50 German backpackers on working holiday visa but all this money is going to western countries in that example and we are then told but we can't do that because of the government but then we send aid so the money goes there anyway so it's all a bit messed up in my eyes. (Earnest, 11-4-12)

Several RSE employers, particularly in the Hawkes Bay, expressed considerable dissatisfaction with the arrangement. Some references to WINZ-sourced workers could be described as disparaging:

Before we get permission to recruit we have to prove to the government that we are doing our darndest to get all our labour from New Zealand sources but the reality is that the NZ labour available to us will work maybe for one week and then its, "I got to see mum", "My dog got sick." (Joseph, 24-3-12)

The WINZ [workers] don't stay you see. We've gone through the royals [Royal Gala variety of apples] and every year WINZ tries to cut down on numbers. The Winzies [workers sourced through WINZ] leave. They are so slow ... I can't employ a guy who picks one bin all day. He's costing me \$100! (Deb, 22-3-12)

Beyond the issue of numbers allowed, there are diverse interpretations of what 'New Zealand first' means. There was a prevalent belief that RSE workers should not be in supervisory positions and that they should not be doing jobs with tenuous connection to the harvest. Harold (interviewed 27-4-12) stated that he has no problem with RSE workers learning mechanical skills but they should not really be driving tractors because Kiwis in the orchard should get preference.

Not all employers interpreted the NZ first rule in this way:

They use machinery. They drive tractors and use chainsaws in the winter; I mean I shouldn't be segregating them; they are just employees and they are treated no different from anyone else. In some ways they take things on board quicker, whether it is because they are more focused ... (Drew, 22-6-12)

Another says that RSE workers should not be supervising Kiwis.

We have people who have progressed to supervisor roles and it's not really where they are supposed to be under RSE rules ...The wording is a bit ambiguous. (Les, 13-4-12)

Finally some employers make the point that the RSE has created jobs for New Zealanders by ensuring the viability of certain enterprises within the industry. One asparagus grower (Gregory, interviewed 10-4-12) insists that the asparagus industry would not exist in its present form without the RSE and that means jobs for Kiwis as well.

Given that several employers have earmarked at least some of the work done by RSE workers as being of the “3-D” type (see section 2.32), a WINZ official questioned why some of the steps which are taken to make work possible for RSE workers could not be used with WINZ sourced workers.

If corporates hire a van to take overseas workers to work why can't they hire a van to get New Zealanders to work? If the overseas worker pays a portion of their wage for the use of the van why can't the New Zealander have the opportunity to do the same? It's just a question of accessibility. (Official #8, 27-4-12)

The point is pertinent to whether it is the nature of the work itself or a combination of low pay, insecure hours, and inaccessible work sites which deters New Zealand workers. None of these issues were addressed by growers spoken to.

In summary, there is considerable evidence that in the RSE horticultural employers have found a ready made solution to the labour market problems which had developed in the horticulture industry, and in so doing have co-operated with the government at a level which has removed undocumented labour from parts of the industry. An unwillingness by some employers to engage with unemployed New Zealanders may, however, create a long term dependence on migrant labour with even less prospect of resolving the labour needs of the harvest industry within the New Zealand labour force. Although some jobs have been created through renewed viability/profitability, further research would be required to determine whether newly created jobs are actually being taken up by New Zealand's domestic workforce or by additional migration.

6.3. Recruitment and Retention/Rejection

The current recruitment processes are examined with a particular interest in how they compare with the processes of the past. Is the process followed in the nature of a respectful interview or more in the nature of a line up described in section 2.31, or something else again? When workers wish to return to New Zealand the following year has there been a stringent evaluation process which would potentially exclude them from further work in New Zealand, and if not what kind of evaluation is used? Under what circumstances might workers be sent home without recourse to appeal?

This study has revealed, particularly in Vanuatu, a variety of arrangements over recruitment of workers. In broad terms, recruitment is government managed in Samoa and Tonga, whereas in Vanuatu private agents can be used. The third option is for employers to gain a license to recruit directly. Oliver gave an employer's perception of the agents' system:

It's to their detriment, significantly to their detriment...When Vanuatu finally decided they should see me, I got pummelled; I don't know how many agents came to see me, about ten, and who are these guys? Eventually we chose one...I've never had the confidence that they weren't ripping the system off or that they could solve any issues or that they were administratively strong. (Oliver, 24-3-12)

Several New Zealand employers have gained recruitment licenses in Vanuatu. Les (interviewed 13-4-12) described the licence as "a token gesture. Two hundred dollars and you have a license to recruit." The license can be used to hire an employer representative (see section 7.5) or in some cases to use existing employees to source other workers.

No evidence was found of crude physical inspections or line ups. In most cases, broad stereotypes were used to determine areas from which employers wished to access their workers, and intermediaries (either licensed recruiters or team leaders in cases where a license is held) would choose the workers. In some cases only, an interview process was used.

Kate described the interviewing process with a local employer representative:

If its twenty staff we need we ask for sixty people.

DR: These are serious interviews?

Yes we ask them about their family and if they have ever been out of the country and the non-alcohol policy...then we decide; it is myself and two others with me...we say to Sophie 'can we have these [workers]?' Then the medical. (Kate, 11-4-12)

This is an example of a mid-sized employer working through an employer representative [Sophie] in Vanuatu. Several smaller employers were found to have developed a relationship with one or two village communities and the decision on who comes to New Zealand was less formalised. While the employer may have the ultimate power to say who comes, a more negotiated process was at work. Deb sources workers from a single village area in Samoa:

Ben knows who we want first and I'll say that to them now, if possible these ones first ... like I didn't want all three from one family... it's not fair, but they over-rode that and as a family they had contributed a lot to get that church built. (Deb, 22-3-12)

In this instance an ongoing relationship between a small employer and a single village has led to a selection process which is negotiated between the employer and the extended family. In the following contrasting example, Poppy was representing a larger employer in Vanuatu:

We both stood up and said what our organisations did and what we expected; and we were going to take our return workers into the slots first, and from the others that were left ... really not in depth interviews... probably should have been more in depth; but a bit limited for time.

DR: But you did have an individual discussion?

Well they came up individually with passports and went through all that; you would check the passports to see who they had worked for before, and why they left.

DR: What sorts of questions did you ask?

Well if they had worked for someone before I'd ask who did you work for and why did you leave; things like that.

DR: And if they hadn't worked before?

Not too many questions; whether they were in the right physical fitness ...
(Poppy, 4-7-12)

In this example, a pattern of employment is observable which has become more prevalent as the programme has matured. My survey indicated that about half of all employees in New Zealand in 2011 had been coming for over two years and the expressed goal of most employers interviewed was to achieve a semi-permanent work force requiring minimal training. Recruitment then became a matter of checking previous engagement with the RSE and trying to weed out those who were not considered satisfactory. Observing the physical condition of the new recruits stops short of a physical line up but also stops short of considering relevant experience in Vanuatu. In some cases very few new employees are sought:

Yes, 27 came back of 35 this year. We go to them first and then we will get Peter [agent] to look for, say, four lady packers perhaps or a forklift driver, or stackers, guys that are physically strong ... (Joel, 21-6-12)

Several employers spoken to had developed preferences for recruiting from certain areas, with a developing preference for outer island recruitment:

In hindsight we did the wrong thing hiring Dick [prominent recruiting agent]. He drew them from [Port] Vila and I don't know that was the right thing. That's when we started going up to Santo [northern Vanuatu]. (Les, 13-4-12)

I was there for a day and half... flew in straight into Lenakel market [Tanna Island], worked seventeen hours that day...

DR: You were doing one on one interviews?

J. and I were; yes. (Euan, 19-11-12)

Penelope (interviewed 20-11-12) carries out the recruitment exercise in Honiara for a large kiwifruit enterprise. The process involves giving a breakdown of requirements to an agent in Honiara prior to her visit upon which a team is handpicked. Some extras are included because of the high failure rate (about 30%) in medical screening, particularly due to hepatitis. Cabinet briefing papers (Secretary of Labour, 2006) show a strict regime of rejection on the basis of hepatitis, HIV, TB. The then Minister of Immigration, David Cunliffe, was given the option by officials of declining any applicants who tested positive for HIV or a range of interventions to manage risk and chose the hard line approach⁹⁶, even though it was pointed out that applicants for temporary visas would not be declined on the basis of carrying HIV.

In contrast with the Canadian SAWP scheme there is no formal worker evaluation, although several employers take it upon themselves to write reports/evaluations of their RSE workers. The lack of a formal evaluation system increases the chance that someone rejected by one employer could successfully seek work with another. Practices on who to invite back and not to invite back vary considerably. One large labour contractor makes a practice of only inviting back the fast workers:

Of the 44 Vanuatu, maybe 8 won't come back; just didn't cut the mustard basically. We'll invite those [other] 36 back and we'll have a meeting before we go and say who is invited back based on performance. We are a contracting firm and [we want] the ones who do seven bins a day compared with someone who will do four... (Royden, 12-4-12)

Royden is chief executive of a large contracting company. His uncompromising focus on recruiting fast workers contrasted with the behaviour based decisions of several other respondents. Mitch (interviewed, 10-4-13) had been on recruiting visits to Vanuatu four times, and uses a simple points system for evaluation (1- no issues, 2- some issues, doubtful starter, 3- not allowed back) to determine who is eligible to return. Some good workers have been given second chances over what is now ostensibly a strict no alcohol policy for all ni-Vanuatu workers. The enforcement of this policy is not normally about sending workers home, though this has happened in some cases, but in determining who is invited back. This behaviour-based approach is also followed by Les and Penelope:

There'll be a list. Wages are a good indicator and attendance is a good indicator; and those people won't come back ... simple; if you can't come to work ... (Les, 13-4-12)

⁹⁶ Mr Cunliffe agreed to take part in an interview for this research project, but withdrew upon becoming leader of the New Zealand parliamentary opposition in 2013.

[The firm] does evaluate employees' work ethic, out of work behaviour, skills, health etcetera on a confidential and in-house basis regarding input for our recruitment program for the following year. (Penelope, pers. comm., 20-11-12)

The single decision of who is invited back carries with it the full weight of employer power, but this is not always exercised directly by the employer. The power to decide who returns has led to accusations of corrupt practice:

We don't have a formal evaluation going back to the islands; they have an informal process where they interview the team leader and ask for a report from the team leader and I don't have much sway with that because the second year the team leader gave a report back to the island so the authorities blacklisted all the Tanna people but it was the team leader who got pulled up on a drunk driving charge...we've had some have bashed their partners; if we know it's happening we won't ask them back. (Joseph, 24-3-12)

One large employer initially stated that slow workers would be sent home if they could not make minimum wage within three weeks ("we can't afford to top them up") but went on to qualify his own statement:

Very seldom we send [a worker] home in the season, the theory being that a poor Island worker is better than a Kiwi and because they've just come out and never seen an apple tree in their life and to give them three weeks and send them home is a bloody tough call. So reality is we don't do it very often. (Oliver, 24-3-12)

Apart from an inability to cope with slow workers (see below) nearly all cases of sending home involved some reference to the misuse of alcohol:

All I ask is that they be responsible... I ask them to recognise that if they get in bad activities any bad activities will reflect on your country; so if you do get enticed be aware of the consequence and we have to deal with issues all around alcohol and I get dragged in once it's happened but I can't ban them from going in to town.

DR: You haven't sent home?

Heck yeah! Heaps. The first year about 15, then 10, this year no one I can think of... I don't think I have actually. (Oliver, 24-3-12)

I had a phone call from our leaders about a disturbance at the lodge; some had been drinking and they'd been sick... We had warned them before that they could be sent home but they had been sick everywhere and denied they had been drinking; so one of our managers took two to the police station for a breath test and then they admitted they had so then they were sent home.

DR: It took an incident; not just a case of seeing a glass of beer.

No, we wouldn't send them home for that.

DR: The no alcohol policy acts as a fall back if there is an incident?

Exactly. If I see them with a beer I just give them a warning. (Kate, 11-4-12)

I took two home last Sunday... comatose in my car; one of them; he had an alcohol issue and the cops said they wouldn't charge him if he went home so I bundled him in to my car and I had enough time to sober him up before we got to him to the airport. (Les, 13-4-12)

Not all employers feel empowered to conclude a worker's employment and send them home. A small employer reported a Samoan worker who was arrested on a drink driving charge and went through the New Zealand court system. The orchard paid his fine and recovered the money from wages. This was not entirely an act of benevolence as the employer did not believe he could be sure of getting the worker on the plane rather than losing him to the (presumably) illegal custody of a New Zealand based family. This highlights a difference in position between workers from Vanuatu and the Solomons and those from Samoa and Tonga which have large diasporic enclaves and more options for gaining legal residence in New Zealand.

Recruitment decisions were influenced by employer perceptions or stereotypes about national or ethnic characteristics:

The average Tongan and average Samoan is 20% better than average Vanuatuan or Solomon islander; they are big; they are Polynesian as compared to micro or mela? One of the two ... tend to be shorter and not as physical; it's around the 20% mark. But in saying that there are other attributes that the Solomons and Vanuatu shine in, their English is a damn sight better, they are cleaner, they are more respectful, they are pleasant. (Oliver, 24-3-12)

Thais, they motivate themselves and go fishing and shopping and they live on the smell of an oily rag and they stay out of trouble, stick to themselves and watch DVDs. The Tongans, again they have the most likelihood to cause issues but because now we have leaders who have been coming for so long and they tend to be family oriented and so they control their ability to have problems. (Royden, 12-4-12)

What we don't understand well as New Zealanders, is the Vanuatuan way of treating their women folk is like a family cow, a bit of an asset, like that a lot of them don't have the same mutual or equal respect ... the ones we choose are the ones we think are going to link in to support each other rather than the guy being dominant on the girl. (Joseph, 24-3-12)

I thought we would branch out into Santo or Malekula ... we have had the Tanna people through the joint arrangements and I find them a bit more aggressive to deal with than the other islands. Fighting amongst each other is quite common; I wouldn't say aggressive but the other islands are more relaxed I think. (Poppy, 4-7-12)

It is not being suggested that these generalizations based on ethnicity are completely without foundation. However, recruitment decisions based on ethnic stereotypes seem to violate the anti-discriminatory employment practices which have guided New Zealand employment law and practice

in recent decades. Perhaps the key point about recruitment is that it is designed to generate a quasi-permanent labour force in New Zealand horticulture. All the recruitment decisions can be seen to line up with this key objective.

6.4. Work Control

This section focuses on how RSE employers achieve a compliant work force using the regulatory framework of the RSE. The employer-employee relationship is framed in site-specific employment contracts. A senior union official (Preston, 11-6 -12) expressed regret that the NZ Council of Trade Unions did not insist on one nation-wide work agreement at the inception of the RSE. All of the employers interviewed used individual employment agreements which are individually signed by each worker before they enter New Zealand.

I've got 900 contracts in my office...identical, all of them.

DR: How do you react if someone says I'd like mine to be a bit different?

Never arisen. Do they read them? I doubt it. To be honest I don't think they've read them. Part of my annual visit to the islands is I go through with government for any changes. (Oliver, 24-3-12)

Only one other employer reported any discussion of the terms of the employment contract:

There is only one nationality that has sat down and discussed the content and attempted to negotiate what is in the contract and that is Tongans so they are the ones that have said that this is too dear and this is too cheap or whatever. Normally not too much variation from the year before and they'll sign.

DR: What was the outcome? Did you bend?

No we didn't, but at least we discussed what was in there and they brought up some interesting points. (Royden, 12-4-12)

The contracts may be worded broadly, and often state that the worker is on call seven days a week:

I kept the employment agreement very broad so I can move workers around different growers if need be. The only difference is the pack house is worded differently because of the shift hours.

DR: Would one of those worker agreements typically say Sunday off?

Available to work every day if required.

DR: Have you found people at recruitment time asking you questions about it or do they just line up and sign?

No they just sign. (Poppy, 4-7-12)

If the grower wants the work done they work Sundays. Individual contracts are the same for every worker ... Contract states that if there is work they must be available for it. (Lilly, 13-4-12)

The RSE contracts are likely to be similar to contracts offered to local employees, as the following suggests, but there may be additional clauses which impact on their lives in New Zealand:

They have to sign a contract before they come and if they don't sign they don't work for us and they can work elsewhere but they sign that in Tonga before they come out. Basically everything is down to New Zealand legislation and then the house rules like no alcohol and that sort of thing. It's a normal employment contract with a set of house rules attached⁹⁷ (Joel, 21-6-12).

Their contract is no different from the guy that walks off the road ... it's a general contract we've had for a long time and as laws have changed we've adapted some of the wording to suit; and some of the appendices are part of employment law which we can't regulate ... But they have to be signed as individual contracts before they get the visas. (Drew, 22-6-12)

Weather conditions emerged as the primary factor in determining hours worked in the orchard. The inclusion of a clause requiring workers to be available for work every day reinforces this. Several employers pointed out that the usual complaint is not about too much work but about work stoppages, usually weather related:

Over the harvest they could do a 50 hour week but then again last week it was pissing down with rain. During the harvest I reckon average is 45-50 hours like the week just gone it pissed down on Tuesday. There is no such thing as a day off; in the contract everyone agrees they will work every day of the week.

DR: They must need a rest at some stage how do you manage that?

The weather does, but the ones who dictate is the orchards are run by Kiwis who don't want to work 12 days in a row but it's trying to stop these guys working!

DR: I know, the complaint would always be about not having apples available [for picking].

They hate it, and again a feature is they are so keen to work, stopping them sometimes is the issue. (Oliver, 24-3-12)

This observation was corroborated by every grower spoken to and by several workers spoken to in lodgings (various field notes):

⁹⁷The house rules mentioned by John include a detailed list of proscribed behaviours in the accommodation.

The Kiwis would rather work for wages and get \$300 a week but these guys are here to work and they won't stop and I've had to pull them out after dark. Bin after bin. Bucket after bucket. (Brendon, 22-6-12)

However a labour contractor made the point that contractors are able to keep the work going because of the variety of crops which they contract to pick and acknowledged that the workers do sometimes complain of being overworked:

I think it's the difference between us being contractors and not growers. I think the squash harvest has gone to 16 days at the longest.

DR: Is that the longest; sixteen days on the trot? What is the plan for the day?

Seven [a.m.] to five [p.m.] (Royden, 12-4-12)

Table 6.1 shows employers' estimates of hours worked overall, based on two survey questions, one of which looked at average hours worked per week, and the other which asked about the full range of hours worked.

Table 6-1: Hours of Work

Average hours claimed		Range of hours claimed	
30-35 hours	5%	30-50 hours	64%
35-40 hours	16%	20-60 hours	26%
40-45 hours	47%	0-80 hours	5%
45-50 hours	32%	unstated	5%

Source: Author survey

Some acceptability bias (Robson, 2011, p. 588) seems likely, given that several instances were subsequently uncovered of workers working over 60 hours per week. The question referred to the previous season, and one employer interviewed, a contractor whose workers regularly work in excess of 60 hours per week, pointed out that the previous season was not quite so busy.

In contrast to the very variable hours in the orchard, pack house hours are long and routine. In those pack houses visited, hours worked were in the 50-55 hours per week range in the pip fruit industry, but longer in the Bay of Plenty kiwifruit environment. There is a culture of not working on Sundays in most enterprises.

DR: So Sunday night is the spell [rest]?

Generally it is the Sunday night but it depends on the flow of the fruit so they might work five days and then two days off but it might be ten days in a row and then have a break so the main season runs 10-12 weeks...

DR: Personally I would have thought over 60 [hours per week] is getting excessive.

Yes 60 is up there. Sometimes our staff might get up to 70 or 80 but then you might be told you are not coming in for two days. (Euan, 19-11-12)

Some contracts do prescribe maximum hours. The contract signed with RSE workers in a large kiwifruit enterprise specifies a maximum working week of 70 hours. These are monitored. Penelope (interviewed 20-11-12) says most would not work much more than 60 hours per week and workers are not encouraged to work more than 60. However there is pressure from Malaysian workers in particular to treat 60 as a minimum.

Penelope further explained that the pack houses work on straight 12 hour night and day shifts between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. (10.5 hours paid work per shift). The RSE employees mainly work the night shifts. The nightshift pay incentive is \$1/hour so most night workers were paid at \$14.50 in 2012.

The interviews demonstrated longer hours of work than were revealed by the survey, perhaps indicating some level of social acceptability bias (Robson, 1993, 2011) by employers when answering survey questions. However conversations with pack house workers in New Zealand, particularly women, demonstrated a high degree of acceptance of the long hours (field notes, various).

A measure of employer power is the control of the rest or Sabbath day, which falls on Saturday for Seventh Day Adventists (SDAs), who constitute a major religious denomination in Vanuatu. Although many employers have a requirement for the workers to be available at all times, a culture of Sunday rest is nonetheless prevalent. A human resource manager in a mid-sized pack house said "I mean probably two things; there are some [who] are church goers and also we all need a day off, so it works pretty good." (Philip, 23-3-12)

The Sunday culture is a particular challenge for SDAs. Their rejection of alcohol and kava may have been considered a bonus by employers worried about the consumption of these substances, but several employers expressed frustration at the Saturday sabbath. Barry (interviewed 24-3-12) reported sending a Seventh Day Adventist home because he had signed up to work on Saturdays and

then refused to do so. Gregory (interviewed 10-4-12) stated that Seventh Day Adventists were not wanted unless they agreed to work Saturdays.

We tend to avoid them in the recruiting. We have one but she does have to work on Saturday and it doesn't worry her. We tend to avoid them as they say at the time they will work on Saturdays but when they get here they refuse to work. One of our best pickers was SDA but he wouldn't work on a Saturday so we didn't re employ him and he was the best worker we had. (Poppy, 4-7-12)

Some employers expressed a degree of tolerance however:

We do have ten [SDA employees] and three of the ladies didn't come to work on Saturday; I said that's fine. Our contract does say you have to work when asked but ... it's not an issue. (Kate, 11-4-12)

Usually it's two over there and one over there and it doesn't really matter. As it goes on and gets colder we might get some saying they are SDA this week; but we know they are not so we say "come on play the game." (Les, 13-4-12)

If there is a growing level of intolerance towards SDAs on the grounds of their reluctance or refusal to work on Saturdays, it may be that there is an accompanying intolerance of any time off work on terms set down by the workers. The reader may consider the implications of this statement from a smaller employer whose Tongan workforce have a long standing arrangement of not working on the Sabbath, in their case Sunday:

They never work Sunday. It's the religious day and they have never worked a Sunday in the five years they been here ... at times I've asked them to and they said no and in a way it's something we want to talk to them about. If it rains Thursday and Friday you might want pickers out there on a fine Sunday to pick it, and they won't. That is an issue to be honest. (Drew, 22-6-12)

Although this example shows that the on-call arrangements are not yet universal, it seems likely that which has been accepted in the past is beginning to clash with the needs of the harvest in a highly competitive apple exporting business, in which profitability requires labour to be instantly available.

In summary, the culture which has developed within the horticultural industry has invoked normalities which see expectations of pay and hours specific to each section of the industry. RSE workers fit within this framework and play a role in normalising aspects which might otherwise be contestable. For example, if NZ workers cannot be found to staff 12 hour nightshifts in the kiwifruit industry at minimum pay (plus one dollar), RSE workers can. The requirement to sign individual contracts before visas are issued ensures that no negotiations on conditions of work can take place

subsequently. There is at least the possibility that in cementing in these normalities, sections of the horticultural industry become embedded as migrant worksites. Managers do not retain much overall perspective on what might be normal for NZ workers generally, and given the willingness of migrant workers to work long hours, the horticultural worksites become embedded in a rural work culture, distinct from those urban gains which previously saw most employment agreements specifying overtime pay when work hours exceeded 40 per week.

6.5. Pay Regimes

This section explores the methods of pay determination with a secondary emphasis on the amounts paid. Almost without exception, piece rates were used in orchard situations and hourly rates in the pack house. This was less obvious from the survey information (Appendix 2).

In the Hawkes Bay, there was a widespread understanding that apples are picked at a standard rate per bin, with some qualifications. One contractor (Jervois, interviewed 27-4-12) explained that, with apples, the bin rate in 2012 was 1st pick \$30-35, 2nd pick \$35-40, 3rd pick \$40-45; and a rare 4th pick \$50/bin⁹⁸. Juicing apples are only \$15-20 /bin. Within these ranges, different varieties of apples attract different rates. Workers in the employ of a large producer explained in detail the challenges associated with variety. Granny Smiths are at the lower end of the pay scale because there is no colour issue; larger varieties of apple fill the bins more quickly and will also be at the lower end. Royal Galas are more difficult and have to be very carefully chosen for colour (field notes 28-4-12). By contrast juicing apples at the end of the picking cycle are gathered⁹⁹ rather than picked. The need to pick in delicate manner has caused one grower to depart from the piece rates used by many, and combine a basic hourly rate with an incentive bonus for faster picking¹⁰⁰:

The first thing we have to teach our people when they come here is they are picking, not gathering, so we pay them by the hour and guarantee the minimum wage but if you work more than xyz, I pick more bins than you, then on an incentive scale I pick more bins as well so I have a bonus system which fixes my problem with the labour department [that the minimum hourly wage be visible in the pay vouchers] and gives them an incentive to work towards. (Joseph, 24-3-12)

Joseph's method of paying by the hour with incentives for faster pickers, was not encountered with any other grower. Most respondents paid simple piece rates. Piece rates were also paid for squash

⁹⁸ The apples on a tree do not all mature at the same speed, so the first pick involves carefully picking the ripe apples and leaving many apples on the tree. With each pick it becomes progressively more difficult to pick at the same speed, as ripe apples become sparse.

⁹⁹ In growers' parlance, gathering means taking all the apples off the tree without any selection required.

¹⁰⁰ This decision could also involve shrewd economic decision making designed to get apples picked at speed on the hourly rate, effectively lowering the contract rate.

picking but not individually. “They work as a team, and for squash they get paid on the amount of bins divided by the number of people that pick up the squash” (Meryl, 11-4-12). One contractor emphasised the cultural benefits of this arrangement. “By working the boys in groups of 10-15 they help each other and they all meet the standard.” (Lilly, 13-4-12)

All pack house operators reported hourly pay rates except for one asparagus grower who uses piece rates in both the field and the pack house (field notes 10-4-12). Payment at the New Zealand minimum wage dominated the hourly rates with minimal rewards in some cases for experience or night shifts. The following example is from a South Island apple pack house:

We have a rating system for any employee e.g. 1st year forklift, 2nd year forklift, 3rd year forklift, and the same goes for a packer... we don't treat them any differently from any Kiwi that walks through the gate. (Joel 21-6-12)

The harvesting of grapes is largely mechanised, and most RSE work involves pruning and other preparatory tasks. Many RSE workers are involved in joint ATRs which require them to work in the Hawke's Bay apple industry in late summer/early autumn and grape vine pruning in Marlborough in late autumn/early winter. In contrast to the standard piece rates in apple work, grape rates were found to be highly variable. A union official representing many workers in the grape industry claimed to have attempted to gain agreement from contractors on some standard rates without success, which means there is a continual process of undercutting. (Syd, interviewed 21-6-12)

There are four distinct tasks involved in preparing grapes in winter. Pruning involves cutting away unwanted shoots to leave two shoots and two spurs for the subsequent season. The second task is stripping away the unwanted foliage for composting, which can be done mechanically. These first two tasks are normally carried out by male workers, mainly on contract rates. Female workers will follow and wrap the shoots around the fence wires, and the fourth task is to trim the twigs away from these shoots with secateurs. These two jobs are done together and are also on contract rates. One large contractor gave the rate of 60c per plant for pruning (a male task using loppers) and 30c per plant for wrapping (a female task using secateurs).

Much of the gendering is consistent with the way the grower enterprises are organised for all workers. For example pack houses do employ both males and females but the grading and sorting duties are carried out only by women and the stacking by men. Very few examples could be found of women working in the orchards other than the female-assigned secateurs work in grape pruning. Several employers were adamant that gender-specific roles were a necessity:

Women are so much better in the pack house than guys. Their hand co-ordination is so much better. (Philip, 23-3-12)

Lilly (interviewed 13-4-12) justified employment of an all-male RSE workforce on the grounds that females do not pick squash and the pack house work in which her firm is involved employs New Zealand females in support of the New Zealand first policy. Kate recruits only for the pack house and she only recruits females.

There is a discourse around production levels. Apple pickers are required to pick four bins per day to make minimum wage. Grape pruners in the last example given are required to prune 200 plants to “make minimum”. Asparagus pickers need to fill ten boxes to “make minimum” although strictly this is calculated by weight rather than volume. Interviews with kiwifruit growers did not focus on the orchard rates although several orchardists saw kiwifruit as more remunerative as there is not the same requirement for careful handling.

Growers point to the ability of faster workers to gross over \$1,000 per week. For example a fast apple picker who picks seven bins per day makes just over \$200 in a good day of picking and, without weather interruptions, can earn over \$1200 in one week. A large Blenheim-based contractor reported that the average worker pruning grapes on contract rate would earn \$700-800 per week. A fast pruner who prunes 400 plants a day will gross \$240 per day and stands a reasonable chance of grossing \$1400 per week, but not all contractors pay at this rate. Many growers spoken to acknowledged the need for a period of grace while a worker gains speed, and would pay an hourly rate for the first week of training.

The way slower workers are treated varies across the industry. Three approaches were discernible. One was a zero tolerance approach; the approach which was initially indicated by Oliver (above, section 6.3). That is, the legal requirements are followed to give training and support, but if an improvement in speed is not attained within the minimum required time, the worker is sent home. There was limited evidence of the application of this approach. The second was to look for other more suitable work within the enterprise or even look for an arrangement outside which would allow the worker to continue. In one example, slower workers will be placed on an hourly rate and because the orchard is not only apples there are other tasks the worker can be directed to. It was suggested that there is little point in paying a gardener \$35 per hour round the homestead when RSE workers do an excellent job. The third approach is described as follows:

They are given encouragement to go faster and other RSEs might ramsey in to help make sure they get four [bins] but if you're earning a thousand a week and I'm earning \$500 I want to know why ... so they pick their own speed up themselves.

(Jayne, 30-3-12)

Most employers did not state overtly that workers may support each other by "ramsyng in" in this way, and when placed alongside the evidence around squash harvesting it raises a question about the general requirement to work and behave individualistically or even competitively. Other examples have been found, particularly in the early stages of the programme, of RSE workers supporting one another to "make minimum".

In summary, the earning experience of RSE workers is highly gender based. Female workers rarely work in orchards, which means the majority are earning the minimum New Zealand wage in pack houses. With reasonable weather, this means they are either earning 50-55 hours per week at this rate in the apple industry (approximately \$750 gross per week) or 60-65 hours per week in kiwifruit nightshifts (approximately \$900 gross). Variability in earnings is greater in the orchards where fast piece workers may earn over \$1200 per week for fifty hours work. Earning experiences of orchard workers is individualised, but examples were found of cooperation extending beyond mere team work to direct assistance being given to slower pickers. In the next section these earning experiences are translated into financial benefits to the workers.

6.6. Financial Benefits

Quantitative studies carried out elsewhere (see Chapter 2) do not always demonstrate the variability of earnings. Were an RSE worker able to sustain the high end earnings for a full 30 week period, gross earnings would be over \$30,000 and in favourable circumstances perhaps \$20,000 of this gross figure could be saved. Employers highlighted individual cases like this. "Some have grossed \$21-23k in the whole time. I think \$37k is the best we've had." (Royden, 12-4-12)

When high end earnings are compared with the guaranteed minimum of 240 hours at the minimum hourly rate, a range of gross earnings of \$3000-\$35,000 and a range of savings/remittances of \$0-\$20,000 is indicated. The human resources manager of a major Hawkes Bay pack house suggested that \$7,000 would be typical of the amount saved in a six month period. Orchard earnings are more variable and weather-dependent, but workers in a large apple orchard claimed that half a million vatu (\$7,000 approximately) saved is over optimistic. (field notes, 28-4-12)

Penelope (interviewed 20-11-12) calculated that the average earnings from picking kiwifruit in her firm were \$17-18 per hour in 2012. A good week would therefore gross close to a thousand dollars. If this level of earnings can be sustained for a full six months then \$25,000 gross earnings is achievable. Penelope stated that the Vanuatu men at the end of the 2011/12 season went home with \$15,000 net earnings, consistent with that approximation. As group averages rather than exceptions or exemplars Penelope's figures suggest no weather interruptions and good financial management. Drew's figures contrasted:

As a round figure they'd be grossing \$600 average through the season ... the longest are here for 23 weeks of work. I think we work it out on say an average of \$600 over 23 weeks. They do very well... there are days when it's hard to make money out of picking apples and other days you can double the money quite easily. As piece work goes it swings and highs and lows all the way through. (Drew, 22-6-12)

Drew's figures suggest average gross earnings approximately \$1000 above the gross 2007-2010 national seasonal averages nationwide of \$12,630-\$12,840 (Merwood, 2012) with implied savings at the \$6,000 level in a suitable environment.

Variability of earnings occurs between worksites and individual workers. In the course of this project numerous pay slips were viewed on a confidential basis. A quantitative exercise on variability was not attempted but even the most cursory viewing showed how week to week earnings varied by several hundred percent among orchard workers.

The circumstances which affect the ability to save are as variable as the circumstances which affect the ability to earn. Survey results indicated that almost a third of RSE employers recently operated a system of two accounts, one savings and one spending, with most of the money going into the compulsory savings account (Appendix 2). The "allowance" money going into the spending account has been reported at the level of \$50 per week by most employers spoken to. A similar amount is available for food purchases for those doing their own cooking. The survey also showed that a further 20% of employers operated the mirror image system whereby savings accounts were simply available for workers to place whichever amount they wanted to in their savings. Those two systems account for just over half all RSE employers. Only a quarter of those surveyed claimed no savings system at all, and other methods included the holding of holiday pay to be paid out at the end of the season. What the survey could not show were the nuances. The typical 2-account model involves varying amounts of employer control over the savings account. One isolated rural employer has abandoned EFTPOS cards for the spending money and simply distributes \$40 in notes to each worker for spending each week while keeping tight control over the savings accounts. Other employers observed that because the savings accounts were not available through ATM machines, greater

thought went into any withdrawals from savings accounts which mitigated against spur-of-the-moment spending.

Drew is one of those employers who did not use the two account model, but has overcome the difficulties of sending remittances:

They are sending money back fortnightly. Right from day one we have never kept any of their money. When we first set up others were saying give them \$100 per week and we'll keep the rest and give it to them at the end. We've never done that; the deductions [come] out of pay, but the rest is totally their discretion. I think that has worked to our benefit giving them the responsibility of it. (Drew, 22-6-12)

Euan's large firm operates on more of a "horses for courses" basis with both systems in operation. When asked if the workers should choose whether to operate a savings system, he claims they do.

We wouldn't make that decision. The 10 Tongans get paid every week but they send it home every week. The first money we gave them an \$80 advance and they sent it straight home and had no money to live on for a week so we had to feed them. One of our biggest battles here is locals not ripping them off. One guy who transferred to Blenheim; he rang me up and said 'Mr Boss someone is trying to sell me a chainsaw for \$1500.' I said 'Is it brand new?' and he said no and I said 'Get him to ring me, and I won't send the money until I know you are not being ripped off.' He asked why and I said I wouldn't spend \$1500 on a chainsaw so you put me in the loop and this guy [the vendor] rang me up and I gave him the message. (Euan, 19-11-12)

The close pastoral interest demonstrated by Euan was with a ni-Vanuatu worker still using two accounts and needing Euan to release money from his savings account. This example demonstrates the possibility that employers using a two account model may be more involved in the welfare of the workers than those who use the language of human rights to justify a more hands off approach.

Almost every employer acknowledged a major buy up of consumable goods in the last week or two before returning home. These included the full range of goods from those which may be referred to as 'conspicuous consumption'¹⁰¹ (A billiard table was observed in one loaded container bound for Vila¹⁰² (field notes, 14-4-12) to solar panels and other items with obvious longer term benefits. Here too, employer practices vary from those who attempt to control the process to those who merely offer some assistance with supplying the container.

¹⁰¹ There is a vast literature on conspicuous consumption which stems largely from the theories of Thorstein Veblen (Veblen, 2007).

¹⁰² The purpose of the example is not to differentiate in a precise way which goods are or are not necessities. In some instances even a billiard table could be destined for use in a small business, and decisions on what businesses are advisable is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Several employers spoken to made attempts to smooth the remittance process, as both employees and employers have concerns.

After D. has assisted with the end of year purchases, they will withdraw all money and carry it home in cash as there is a distrust of the banks. Remittance fees can be avoided this way but also to get cash to Motu Lava [outer island]. (Gregory, 10-4-12)

The banks charge everyone \$25 a transaction here and then again \$25 at the other side so no matter how much money you have to send home you pay \$50 to send it. I think that's rude. (Jayne, 30-3-12)

One employer (Barry, interviewed 24-3-12) arranged with the National Bank of Vanuatu (NBV) to open an account in Port Vila to which he could remit all the savings with appropriate ledgers so the workers could claim their savings on return to Vila. Another (Kate, 11-4-12) arranged for their business to become a branch of Western Union, which still involved a single remittance fee but avoided additional charges.

A number of interlocking points emerged about the amounts of money saved. Firstly, weather conditions have the key determining role in ensuring that earnings are highly variable not only between work sites but for each worker from week to week. Secondly, average gross earnings calculated by MBIE officials of just above \$12,500 carries with it a mathematical necessity; that the presence of workers earning considerably higher amounts requires a larger number of workers earning less than this average amount, with a lower median. Thirdly, there is ample evidence that many employers are pro-active in assisting the savings process to achieve the optimal outcome, and there is a delicate balance between respecting the rights of the workers to make their own mistakes and failing to engage proactively. This raises interpretations of pastoral care.

6.7. Welfare

This section will look at employers' interpretations of pastoral care requirements, the different types of accommodation supplied, the issues which have arisen around pastoral care and accommodation, and the levels of health and safety protection offered.

6.7.1. Pastoral Care Interpretations.

Attitudes of employers interviewed to pastoral care varied across a spectrum from highly controlling to disinterested. Very few examples were found of professionally trained pastoral care workers having direct ongoing involvement with the workers, and the employment of trained pastoral care workers is not a requirement for RSE accreditation. Pastoral care that was provided was often linked with accommodation, and sometimes church attendance. Some examples of pastoral care arrangements are instructive.

Firstly, one practice involves the use of accommodation providers as key pastoral care workers. A South Island contractor's workers are housed in two hostels and the managers of the hostels are regarded by the employer as the day to day pastoral care givers. The owner/manager of one of these hostels sees herself as having a "mother" role and used the self-description "mother" with the workers. She was observed intervening frequently in their cooking arrangements, admonishing a middle aged Vanuatu worker for the way he was cooking meat (fieldnotes, 24-5-12). She was determined that her residents, who were a mix of ni-Vanuatu and I-Kiribati workers, would eat in a healthy way and reported changing bed linen weekly, and intervening in health issues. The manager of the other hostel was keeping a close watch on who came in and out of this hostel, and challenged me to produce some good evidence of credentials before being allowed to visit anyone on his property. He was observed acting in this guardian role on two other occasions during this visit. He had a background as a sheep shearer before going into the accommodation provision business. Consequently the pastoral experiences of the workers varied greatly depending on random attributes of accommodation providers.

Secondly, in three cases involving smaller family businesses the wife of the person designated as RSE employer was responsible for pastoral care. In these cases, maternal skills appeared to be drawn on to provide the necessary assistance. Thirdly, in some cases, such as that of a large contractor in Hawkes Bay, no designated pastoral staffing was in place. Fourthly, in some mid-sized companies the person in charge of personnel was also the person in charge of pastoral care. Shelly (interviewed 20-11-12) is personnel manager for a mid-sized kiwifruit packing business and claims to know all the

staff reasonably well. Staff come to her with issues which she says are usually in the nature of minor squabbles. The team leader is normally chosen after the workers arrive in the Bay of Plenty and pastoral care tends to be shared between the team leader and the personnel manager.

Fifthly, in the case of a few larger enterprises, specific pastoral care workers were appointed:

We have pastoral care providers, about four this year.

DR: How does that work?

They are contracted to take care of the workers.

DR: You pay them? This may be a first for me. Could you give me an example of one of those providers' background, qualifications?

They are on a contractual basis. Kathy [Solomon Islander living in New Zealand] is well experienced with island ways and cultures and how to handle certain situations but also knows New Zealand conditions so she is our key one.

DR: Who would be pastoral care for the Vanuatu contingent?

Mostly this year one older guy.

DR: What was it about that person ... why did you choose that person?

He was referred to us by one of our growers cause he had worked on the orchard; he had previously owned his own business and was an ex-policeman, that was a key factor for me; he could handle situations particularly with the Vanuatu guys. (Poppy, 4-7-12)

Mitch (interviewed 10-4-13) manages an orcharding company which appointed a married couple to the role. Terry, who also helped with recruitment, was given the task along with Terry's wife who worked for the firm and helped pastorally. The couple left after what Mitch described as a difference of opinion on the degree to which extra pastoral help was needed. Currently there is no one assigned full time to pastoral care and the roles are shared among managers. Some details of this difference are covered in the next section.

Attitudes to pastoral care vary, particularly between those who see themselves in a role as carers and those who see themselves as simply employers. One employer expressed his frustrations thus:

Under the pastoral care side of contract with DOL we are responsible twenty-four seven. It's ridiculous! The other key issue is where does human rights fit in? You gotta be careful. They are adults. (Oliver, 24-3-12)

The question which is left hanging is where does the balance lie between protection and freedom?

6.7.2. Accommodation.

Table 6.2 summarises accommodation provisions as claimed by employers in early 2012. Most enterprises either accommodated all workers on site or all workers off site with transport arrangements in place.

Table 6-2: Types of Accommodation for RSE Employees

Type of Accommodation	Onsite	Offsite	notes
Cabins only	34%		
Cabins, supplemented	11%		Mainly cabins with some other types included
Houses	36%		
Prefabs	17%		
Caravans	2%		
Rental Housing		35%	
Lodgings		25%	Miscellaneous types often adapted
Motels		20%	
Backpackers/hostels		10%	
Campsites		6%	
Billets		4%	

Source: Author Survey

Weekly rentals on accommodation sighted by this researcher ranged from \$90 to \$135, slightly higher than survey results suggested (see Appendix 2). Onsite accommodation, often in the form of 4-bunk cabins, was usually of a lower standard than off site. Buildings and structures used for other purposes, such as shipping containers, were adapted in several sites visited. The most recently added

accommodation was often in the form of portacombs¹⁰³. Caravans were sometimes interspersed with the onsite accommodation, but never tents. Survey responses did not disclose the extent of caravan use, but some use of caravans for sleeping purposes only was accepted by the DOL. An official explained that as long as the enterprise was committed to ongoing improvement in accommodation, some use of caravans was tolerated for a time (Official #6, 13-4-12). Offsite accommodation mainly fits the description of backpacker accommodation somewhere between two and four bunks per room. The most comfortable accommodation seen, in the sense that it could be described as quality backpackers or motel style, was sited in three separate locations which charged \$135 per worker in each case. A large employer with highly variable accommodation charged a single fee of \$130 for both accommodation and use of vehicles, approximately in the ratio 100:30. When asked why not charge differently according to the quality of accommodation the answer was that all workers would want the cheaper accommodation. In several off site cases the accommodation was adapted from disused former hospital accommodation, including a former hospital wing.

Three issues which arose frequently were heating, space and damage.

They had a two and half hour meeting; the upshot was they needed heaters in the accommodations! Two hours to work that out! And all they needed to say was “Hey we need heaters!” (Brendon, 22-6-12)

Shelly (interviewed 20-11-12) reported that two years earlier gas heaters were used in the workers’ camp but there was difficulty over cost and there was currently no heating. “The camp won’t allow electric heaters. The women [night shift workers] now sleep there in the day with lots of blankets”.¹⁰⁴

Some evidence came to light of imaginative approaches to heating in contrast with minimalist strategies referred to above. “So the Tanna boys stay up in Katikati and they stay at Sapphire Hot Springs. Works well they come home cold and jump in the hot pool” (Euan, 19-11-12). This was not the only example found in the Bay of Plenty thermal region where the use of hot springs made a positive difference to the lives of the workers. However the frequency with which the heating issue arose casts doubt on the level of understanding of at least some employers around the needs of people in an unfamiliar climate. Why, for example, did Brendon, quoted above, need to be told of the need for heaters in the accommodations?

¹⁰³ These portable forms of housing meet building standards, but can be overcrowded if used unscrupulously.

¹⁰⁴ Shelly subsequently qualified this observation to note that oil column heaters were also supplied by the firm at some point (pers. com, 10-11-12)

Terry and Alice, referred to in the previous section, were interviewed at length and provided further insights into accommodation issues. Two places where there were particular problems around heating and space were B Street and A Street. In B Street, 21 people were sleeping in a 3 bedroom house at one stage. It is hard to see how this could have satisfied the DOL's space requirements (see next 2 paragraphs) given that the toilet and kitchen facilities were designed for only a 3 bedroom house. In A Street, 18 people occupied one large house plus a portacom situated on a back lawn. The eight in the portacom (viewed by the researcher) were in an area of approximately 30 square metres and in the previous year (2011) were supplied with portaloos¹⁰⁵ until a permanent facility was developed. A small oil column heater was provided in 2011 with a setting to switch off at 11 p.m. Terry had managed to change the setting. The front house had a wood burner but for a full season Terry routinely replaced the green wood being supplied with burnable fire wood to help this group keep warm. This situation reached a crisis point when a two hour evening course at A Street, part of the Vakameasina programme, was cancelled because the house was considered too cold for the workers to concentrate. Terry found workers sleeping on mattresses in the kitchen area in order to use the oven turned on to keep warm all night (Terry and Alice, 10-4-13).

The issue of space has been closely monitored by labour inspectors, who work from a number of legislative platforms. Numbers to a room vary from single occupancy (rare) to at least eight. Although caravans are being phased out, some workers preferred to keep them if it meant an opportunity to have a single room. Penelope provided an example of eight sleeping to a room with communal kitchen and rent at \$90/wk.

More typically, numbers to a room in various locations were 4-6 (various field notes). There is a standard portacom which measures 6 metres by 3 metres externally, approximately 18 square metres in size, which has become widely used. Under a formula provided by the Hawkes Bay District Council¹⁰⁶ of 2 square metres per bed plus 2 square metres per person, 18 square metres may be argued to be adequate for six people with each double bunk counting as a single bed space.

Adequate space and heating were issues for workers, whereas employers often complained of damage to property, although only a minority of employers interviewed raised issues of serious damage. A converted backpackers which had been allocated to 30 ni-Vanuatu during their stay in 2012 was observed in the week immediately after they had left and the repair and clean-up process was documented (field notes, 4-7-12). There were two holes in walls, a number of cigarette burns in

¹⁰⁵The trade name "portaloos" refers in New Zealand to a portable toilet which can be moved to and from a location at short notice.

¹⁰⁶ Information supplied to researcher by officers of the Hawkes Bay District Council, 4-7-12.

carpet, and sufficient disrepair to require plastering and painting. The damage was not extensive. The firm using this accommodation was a large contracting company and there was no live-in pastoral person in this accommodation.

Poppy also mentioned damage associated with drinking as her major concern.

There would be a few we won't bring back next year and sometimes it's hard to get a handle on who is causing the problem but with Vanuatu people its holes punched in walls ... drinking gets out of hand ... it's a problem. (Poppy, 4-7-12)

Poppy drew attention to a motor camp which had been used to accommodate a group of Tannese in 2012. The camp manager confirmed that he had concerns about alcohol misuse late in the picking season (field notes, 4-7-12). I visited both the motor camp and the converted back packers mentioned above in 2012 and again in 2013. The ni-Vanuatu occupants of both accommodations had been replaced by a group of Samoans and a group of Solomon Island workers respectively. Both of these employers were large enough to make use of several accommodation providers and had the ability to re-assign accommodation arrangements between different groups of workers.

6.7.3. Risks and Security.

Very few accidents or work-related injuries were reported by either workers or employers. Far more widely acknowledged by employers interviewed were bouts of sickness, particularly boils, relating to dietary issues.

An obvious source of risk in apple picking is the requirement to be constantly moving up and down long picking ladders while carrying heavy loads of apples in body harnesses. One worker spoken to in Blenheim after travelling south on a joint ATR, had injured an arm when falling from a ladder (field notes, 26-5-12). The eight foot long ladders in widespread use are designed to have a safety framework attached to the top but Harold (27-4-12) explained that this would interfere with the apple picking and so generally workers did not stand on the top rung, but Di reported that her Samoan workers do stand on top:

We were one of the few people who don't use hydro ladders for picking. We got frustrated at the quality so we cut the trees' heads off and use eight foot ladders and Samoans will go to the top of the ladders; one of the few who will go to the top and reach to get that last apple. (Deb, 22-3-12)

Royden, a large Hawkes Bay contractor, was asked about back injuries:

Two this year have gone to a doctor with sore backs, they were treated and they came right but Wira had 3 days off and he was really sore. But they are Thais and they want to make money by working so they follow that philosophy very well.
(Royden, 12-4-12)

The pack house environment could be expected to be of less risk than the orchard if basic precautions are observed:

We give them a pretty good induction about behaviour and where not to put hands ... there is moving machinery; conveyers and rollers ... we do have the odd injury but none from the RSE since we had them here. (Philip, 23-3-12)

Gregory (10-4-12) recounted how one worker suffered a hernia in 2011 and other workers picked his patch for him so that his pay sheet showed he had picked above minimum rate while others were down a bit. The apparent failure of the programme to provide social security for him was circumvented by the solidarity of the cultural group.

Sickness featured more prominently in most discussions than accidents. New Zealand law requires sick leave eligibility to apply after six months of continuous employment, which in the first two years of the programme left the great majority of RSE workers highly vulnerable. The lack of sick leave is highlighted by the acceptance by DOL of a contract which allows the workers to be paid 30 hours every week.

It means if someone is sick for a week they still get paid the thirty hours and they've got enough hours accumulated and we keep paying them unlike in big companies if you are sick for a week you don't get paid...One guy three years ago had gout and we told him if he didn't get better it would use up all his accumulated savings; that certainly fixed him. (Deb, 22-3-12)

Since 2009 it has been policy to require all RSE workers to have private health insurance which eliminates the problem but adds to their costs. Drew referred to an incident which he believed helped to provoke the requirement:

Luckily we had taken out insurance; we had done it anyway and there was argument from the company over pre-existing conditions and they were not going to pay ... I think it was seventy odd grand in the end and they fronted up and paid but after that it was compulsory. (Drew, 22-6-12)

Taking the requirement for private health insurance as a given, employers asked about its effectiveness were positive:

DR: For an overseas person in New Zealand hospital there will be extra charges ... did the insurance cover that?

Yes. There was no cost borne by the employee. We had one person taken away this year with difficulties breathing and the ambulance came in and there was no cost to the employee; just the insurance card and all put through. No issues. (Joel, 21-6-12)

Three key points emerge from a discussion about the pastoral and security needs of the workers. Firstly, the usual combination of sick leave, accident compensation, and occupational health and safety is not available to RSE workers and although there have been instances of collective risk sharing, the primary means of addressing this issue has been through compulsory insurance, which necessitates a further deduction from pay. Secondly, the government requirements of pastoral care have been met with diverse interpretation, from patronising oversight to disinterest at extreme ends of a spectrum. Thirdly, accommodation provision has been closely monitored and in most cases meets New Zealand standards for agricultural employment. However, too many employers have failed to address the specific needs of workers coming from a tropical climate.

6.8. Social Control

The work programme consumes most of the workers' lives while in New Zealand, and consequently the line between work control and social control is blurred. Several indicators were used to gauge the degree of control exercised by employers on the lives of the workers away from the work shift. Questions were asked about freedom of movement, the acceptance of kava consumption, and the acceptance of married couples. Although the last issue relates also to recruitment and accommodation, it is considered here because the migrant worker's separation from their family is fundamental to their New Zealand experience.

The decision to allow couples is determined by whether both gender roles are available within one enterprise, and the employer's belief regarding the desirability of couples. Joseph is one employer committed to bringing out couples. His enterprise includes both orchard and pack house work, so women do the pack house work and men work in the orchard.

Our experience is if you have only blokes and also from disparate sources or from different villages that's a major source of tension within the groups and the ladies who come with their partners have a big moderating effect on the guys. (Joseph, 24-3-12)

Conversely, Gregory (interviewed 29-5-12) was adamant that a mixture of the sexes would lead to problems and sexual misadventure, and recruits only males.

Penelope (interviewed 20-11-13) employs very few couples through RSE and sees too much potential for disharmony as well as difficulties in finding suitable accommodation. She points out the need to consider the home situation in the source country, particularly the issue of caring for dependants, and cites this as the main reason not to bring in couples. "The issue of couples affects many areas besides accommodation." (Penelope, pers. comm., 15-12-13)

Attitudes to kava consumption also varied widely amongst employers. The reader may consider these contrasting views from Oliver and Royden:

I'm happy that they can drink as much kava; they're capable of monitoring themselves. I'm more than happy as long as they do it in a safe environment. No I have no problem with kava. (Oliver, 24-3-12)

You would know better but I've seen them lackadaisical lying against a coconut tree with red eyes if they have kava all night. But here what we try and enforce is if they eat well and turn the TV off at 10:30 they are fit to do a good day's work. (Royden, 12-4-12)

It proved difficult to discuss kava consumption separately from alcohol issues:

I know it's different but I see what it does but one leads to the other, when we had the kava happening it led to alcohol as well. So we had to say none. (Les, 13-4-12)

DR: Do they have kava nights?

Yes. J. started it down the South Island actually and he didn't have any problems. He said you can drink kava on Saturday night only and they seemed to stick to that and I said you can drink kava if you don't have work the next day and it started off alright but then they gradually went in to the drinking [alcohol]. (Poppy, 4-7-12)

Brendon claimed to have no issue with the drinking of kava, but enforces a "no alcohol" policy as far as he is able:

The declaration [Vanuatu's 2012 policy] says if I drink alcohol in New Zealand I will be blacklisted for five years. Stu here asks why can't they have a beer? We have this big break up party and this year I told them they couldn't go and they were upset and I sat them down and explained and they were comfortable. (Brendon, 22-6-12)

In Gregory's domain¹⁰⁷ there is an alcohol ban but there is a more flexible attitude to kava. However Gregory's partner (10-4-12) sees it important that kava is only for special occasions and points to the sharp asparagus cutting knives used every morning as too risky if linked with kava drinking.

Those who do restrict kava or alcohol consumption among the migrants apply this restriction in employer-controlled areas (worksites and accommodation) in response to New Zealand law, which allows the accommodation provider to proscribe substances but does not allow the employer to enforce a blanket no alcohol rule.

Freedom to drink kava is not necessarily linked to wider freedoms. For example a group of Tongans working in the South Island experience compulsion in every activity, including when to drink kava:

We have group activities and they have their kava where the guys can mix, like one of P's prime responsibilities is to make sure there are things to do. Church is compulsory and all group activities are compulsory [like] sports weekends or dances. The expectation is that those group activities must be attended by all employees.
(Joel, 21-6-12)

Restrictions and controls over workers within employer domains raises the question of freedom to leave these domains. Brendon appeared to have a different approach from Joel regarding individual freedom of movement:

Most of them are returnees and they have purchased a couple of cars and they are mobile and they have become quasi-N.Z. citizens. They have complete freedom; they don't go into trouble so we don't keep a tight reign on them ... But now they have their own transport we wouldn't know if they are going to church or not.
(Brendon, 22-6-12)

Oliver emphasised human rights and demonstrated that RSE workers have complete freedom of movement in company-supplied vans:

The average amount of kilometres is one vehicle last year was 800 per week ... that's the average! One vehicle in a 12 week period did 16,000 ks; work that out; and they never travel alone of course, if someone goes into town to get a pack of cigarettes the van is full. They love to travel; they just move! (Oliver, 23-3-12)

That freedom of movement is unlikely to extend to 24-hour freedom in most cases, as partially illustrated by an employer concerned with an incident of drug taking:

¹⁰⁷ "Domain" encompasses the business, accommodation, and entire life environment for these workers.

One particular person was smoking a considerable amount of dope and surrounded by machinery; was given plenty of warnings and kept staying out overnight, we don't know where ...what it does it encourages others to do the same and you don't want that culture to develop. (Lilly, 13-4-12)

In summary, there appeared to be some correlation between those employers who restrict freedom of movement and those who restrict kava consumption and in some cases those who exercise a high degree of financial control, with variations. Oliver and Gregory, for example, are at two ends of a spectrum. Oliver's business does not maintain a two-account system common to many RSE employers; it is left to the worker's initiative to save money. This contrasts with Gregory's regime. Workers who come to Gregory are taken by the employer in a van to town on Fridays. Their movements are closely monitored and the majority of their earnings go into a savings account to which they do not have ready access. Gregory's regime does not meet Oliver's human rights requirements but Oliver does not match Gregory when it comes to taking an interest in the workers. He has travelled to the north of Vanuatu to gain a closer understanding of their village. Most employers spoken to fell into a spectrum somewhere between Oliver and Gregory.

Part B Development Related Themes

Part A of this chapter focused on the experiences of RSE workers in New Zealand, whereas this part of the chapter begins to interrogate claims related to the role of the RSE in Pacific Island development. The majority of primary data on this aspect of the programme will be found in following chapters which report on research in Vanuatu. Following the sequential approach outlined in the chapter introduction, two remaining themes first introduced in section 4.4 are **RSE in development** (Personal contact/community link, project perceptions, skills), and **Source country consequences**.

6.9. RSE in Development

This section deals firstly with the levels of employer involvement in the Pacific Island communities, as indicated through surveying and interviews. Some employers have claimed direct involvement in village level projects while others have expressed interest in private sector involvement in Pacific development.

6.9.1. Evidence of Employer Involvement in Pacific Island Development.

The majority of farmers involved with employment of scrub cutters from Fiji in the twentieth century (see Chapter 5) had minimal knowledge of the localities from whence their migrants came. Of RSE employers surveyed, 32% claimed some form of development project involvement and a further 17% claimed to be in discussions about a project, while the remaining 51% made no such claim. Interviews suggested that the 49% with interest or involvement in a development project may have been an over-optimistic portrayal. A number of employers spoke of the “win-win” nature of the programme, suggestive of a attendance at RSE conferences/gatherings, but most comments conveyed authenticity.

Several employers acknowledge that they had no knowledge of the islands from which their workers were sourced. The following comment from Drew is representative.

Not off the top of my head. They do tell me. They're not on the main island, put it that way; they have to get the ferry out to their islands. (Drew, 22-6-12)

In contrast, several of the smaller enterprises visited had developed an ongoing relationship with one or two areas or villages and their perceptions of a development role for the RSE were based on that relationship.

Did we form a link? Absolutely, we really did. In the first year that was a learning year and we targeted a couple of areas. White Sands was one of them and then we also went up north to Malekula and we built links with them and they were parking their kids with uncles and aunties and coming over here working a season with us just like our kids go to mines in western Australia so we do have a very close association with them on family and village level. (Joseph, 24-3-12)

A measure of Joseph's sincerity may be found in his 2012 visit to Tanna. His business went through a period of re-organisation and he made a special trip to the White Sands area to personally inform the communities that he would not be able to recruit that year. (field notes, 16-10-12)

We said that we want this long standing relationship with the village [in Savai'i], we don't want a different face every year, we want some to come back every year for continuity. Tapu was really good. He spoke good English, he'd been to New Zealand two or three times working. We said we just want one village. (Deb, 22-3-12)

In similar vein, Harold has an ongoing relationship with another village on Savai'i and Gregory has a relationship with a community in the Banks Islands.

Although several smaller sized growers gave evidence that they saw themselves involved in a development exercise, not merely a labour supply resolution, the way they perceived that development exercise was different in every case. There was no shared concept among those interviewed as to what constituted a project, and included below are examples of both direct monetary support for development initiatives, and broader concern that the RSE scheme contributed to development of home communities.

We sponsored two football teams which is our soccer. We kitted them out. We asked our agents and they asked for one team and we decided to go for two and the children started at seven through to fourteen in another team. (Jayne, 30-3-12)

I know he's got solar panels and there's water in his village where there wasn't before. (Kate, 11-4-12)

As time goes on I'll try and take a week's annual leave and see if there is stuff I can find out where we can make a real difference. I don't want to be the big white benefactor throwing money round without making a real difference; it's trying to grab hold of their own skills ... (Euan, 19-11-12)

Ok. What to say? M. is our orchard manager, one of the sons¹⁰⁸. He is like their brother and this year we decided to go and do some recruiting ... It's not about recruitment actually ... we want to see what the money is doing. The company hasn't directly done

¹⁰⁸ He is referring to a son of the family business which owns the orchard.

anything but I know that people like D. now has a bus company, a sawmill, and something else because the money he made here has made him a rich man.
(Brendon, 22-6-12)

Oliver speculated on the potential for a more active advisory role:

Dennis, there are huge opportunities to be involved, even the individual in the company; one of our big orchards is Tongan based and the foreman likes these people and him and his wife are going to Tonga and the opportunities ... just things like irrigation pipes; we could bundle it all up for the cost of getting it over there and get it over there if they knew how to use it. (Oliver, 24-3-12)

However these opportunities were only at the ideas stage in most instances and there were reservations. These could be viewed as a mix of rationalisations and genuine concerns:

I've been approached a couple of times about coming over and giving assistance with horticulture but I've been going to talk to one group and then someone will tell me the land is in dispute. I'm not going there. There's always an issue and I don't want to get tied up in anyone's land disputes because that's what happened to Dick Eade.¹⁰⁹ It doesn't do well for me to be taking sides. (Les, 13-4-12)

One of the scary things for me Dennis is that unless there is a Palangi or someone to project manage it, it ain't gonna work. (Oliver, 24-3-12)

Les's identification with Dick Eade is inaccurate, and leaves open the question of whether it is a case of employers not wanting to shift focus away from the strict requirements of New Zealand horticulture, or whether there is a genuine fear of the risks that are taken by development workers. Oliver's concern is more grounded in real experience, if pessimistic.

The above quotations illustrate the way expressed employer involvement varied, from noting the benefits which accrued from remittances without any further input, to low level donations, to an expressed desire to support local initiatives tempered by caution around dependency issues. These themes were further in evidence when focusing specifically on the transfer of skills.

6.9.2. The Transfer of Skills.

The skills required to grade fruit in a pack house or pick fruit in an orchard setting when the pickers are returning to a mixture of swidden agriculture and peri-urban living are not an obvious fit. Claims around skills transfer made by employers are presented in table 6.3, with further details available in

¹⁰⁹ Dick Eade was a prominent recruiting agent who was killed in a land dispute. A full account of this misfortune was given to the researcher during Vanuatu field work.

Appendix 2. Respondents were asked to indicate skills which they believed RSE employees gained in New Zealand which were relevant to their home environment.

Table 6-3: Employer Perceptions on Skills Gained

Skill Category	Skill Nominations	Proportion of nominations
Anglification	Time management, English language, cultural skills	18%
Technical/practical	Horticultural skills, computer skills, machinery skills, driving, building	23%
Financial	Budgetting, financial management	20%
Wellbeing	Cooking/cleaning, health/hygiene, safety/hazards	15%
Employee practices	Work ethics, teamwork, leadership	24%

Source: author survey

Relatively few employers nominated practical skills such as the use of tractors; whereas the prevalence of belief that work ethics and financial/time management would translate into useful skills in the Pacific Island rural environment is suggestive of an RSE employer discourse. These responses could be seen as rationalisations, however on interviewing employers the answers were often detailed and specific:

We taught them all fencing, how to use wire strainers, that kind of thing. The first year we sent home a set of wire strainers. They are highly adaptable... they are bush carpenters, like they make their own concrete tanks, all this beautiful sand off the beach and we sent rolls of wire the first year. We sent lots of rolls and someone put a few sticks to do the base and someone runs round and round and round with rolls of wire for reinforcing and they plaster over it ... So what have we taught them, we probably taught them all work ethics; that you can start at 7.30 am and work till five; in their heat they don't, but they are probably more productive when they get home...A couple of years ago they got into woodwork training down the way and how to lathe and we helped them with a lathe but they were already bush builders. (Deb, 22-3-12)

They wouldn't prune apples at home as such but the understanding of what they are doing by replacement wood and looking for buds, the whole concept will relate to other things, the driving skills, mechanical skills, just with a spanner fixing or tightening. They have got a vehicle to look after and maintain. A skill they learn in their own house keeping is their cleanliness which has to come up to our standard. That was one of the biggest learning curves they had and we had. The first year or two they didn't know how to clean things. Not the way Europeans clean things and so Jude my wife had to do that. (Drew, 22-6-12)

Some growers have put considerable thought into the way in which skills transfer from tasks closely related to the enterprise might work. Euan and Joseph reflected on the longer term implications:

I think the greatest skills transfer is when they go out to the orchards more than they do in the pack house, which is mind numbingly boring, doing the same repetitive stuff. They learn from our orchard managers. They learn about caring for the trees and our orchard managers are hands on people who show them carpentry skills and things like that and we run evening classes with Fruition.¹¹⁰ (Euan, 19-11-12)

They will figure out that agriculture and farming is actually storing surpluses. Living there you're gathering and eating and you farm on a small scale but you have no trading mechanism and no storage mechanism whereas over here we farm to store; we don't farm to feed. Once they got that we get them involved in painting, putting up basic floors and all this basic stuff that you don't need a PhD to do...here's how you set out a right angle with a tape measure and some pick it up quickly and others just don't want to learn and some want to eat up more than you can give them. So in the long term what worries me is this generation will get to an age where they are the older ones and their children won't want to come any more, so I can see this phasing out, but in the process of us having these people working with us I think we are transferring more than just straight grunt skills. I hope we are. (Joseph, 24-3-12)

Most growers have indicated an understanding that skills transfer will not be about the direct application of harvesting techniques, and there have been several examples of skills transfer which are not in the orchard. For example, one of Lenny's accommodation providers has been teaching 'her boys' sewing techniques (field notes 24-5-12). A union official pointed out that it would be desirable to have everyone doing literacy and computer classes but the reality is that after long days harvesting many workers will be simply too tired (Preston, 11-6-12). Many workers have nonetheless taken part in the after-hours classes initiated by the *Vakameasina* programme:

As I say the 12 week course we had computers in here through Fruition; all the courses were held in Queen Street but they provided us with 4 computers which I stuck in the board room and that was open to them from before work until they went home. We allowed them to get on to... there was Facebook and skypeing and there was mathematics and English tutorials they could go into and all sorts of things to learn how to use a computer. (Joel, 21-6-12)

Some comments, such as Drew's (above, this section) do raise the issue of whether in some cases skills transfer equates to Westernisation and in what circumstances this is desirable. The last word on skills transfer that is work related is left to Joseph, in that it possibly reflects the reality as perceived by growers who do have an interest in development. "What you want to

¹¹⁰ Fruition is a company contracted by the Vakameasina programme to arrange evening classes.

do is for guys to adapt what they see to their environment because they are a better manager of their environment than we are. That's all we can do, expose them." (Joseph, 24-3-12)

6.10. Unforeseen Consequences?

Evidence began to emerge during the interviewing process about other effects within source countries, which could be regarded as unforeseen consequences. Firstly, impacts on family life were linked with the duration of the work season. Secondly, there were indications of urban migration arising from the RSE. None of the growers or contractors who expressed concern about (particularly) ni-Vanuatu problem drinking in New Zealand linked this issue to homesickness or social dislocation. However one small grower who has ni-Vanuatu employees for three months and has a seven day per week operation is emphatic that six months is too long. A pragmatic view of the issue was expressed by Deb. "We try to encourage the single guys to come for six months and the married three, because it's too hard on family life." (Deb, 22-3-12)

Cell phone technology has become widely available in many Pacific Island societies in very recent years, which means that workers are able to keep in touch with their families on a much more regular basis now than in the first year of the RSE programme. However, Ken (interviewed 24-5-12) did not see this as a panacea for family stress. He emphasised that jealousies and gossip can now fester for months. He recalled one instance of a female worker who was met at the plane by an angry husband and given a beating which led to hospitalisation.

There is an obvious challenge of striking a balance between the potential of a longer stay to earn more and the potential of a longer stay to destroy family life:

I try to give them seven [months]. We had one guy he was here three months and by the time he paid for his air fare he didn't make any money ... he is one of the originals but he is still coming and he's probably at the end of it 'cause he only came for three months. (Brendon, 22-6-12).

The following conversation with Poppy about a small group who came for a very brief time to thin apples illustrates the variety of experiences.

DR: They came for under 2 months and still paid their part of the air fare and saved something?

Yes they went home at Christmas time, saved a couple of grand each!

DR: Saved?! Because if you get a really bad story that can be better than the longer period.

I mean I'd like to go somewhere for 6 weeks and come home with two thousand dollars too.

DR: A number of things must have co-incided. The weather must have been kind.

Yes. And you can thin in the rain, if it isn't too heavy. (Poppy, 4-7-12)

The issue of duration refers to both the length of stay and the number of visits:

Two of the older fellows last year decided not to come back; actually the sons came back this time round. Six out there at the moment: this year is their fifth year back and they have spent more time living with us than at home in the last five years. They arrive 20th February; March-August, six months. (Drew, 22-6-12)

Secondly, some evidence was presented to suggest that the RSE is catalysing in-country urban migration, possibly as an alternative to rural development. Harold (interviewed 27-4-12) pointed out that some workers from Samoa who were previously unemployed before being on the RSE scheme now have jobs in Apia, partly as a result of improved communication skills and cultural adjustments. Others have dropped jobs in Apia to come to New Zealand. This possibility is further explored in Chapter 7.

6.11. Summary

A number of key points emerged from employer sources. Firstly, the RSE is central to changing workplace relations in an industry dependent on seasonal labour. An industry dominated by precarious and often undocumented labour has moved in the direction of one which depends upon a core compliant workforce consisting of RSE workers. Higher productivity has further estranged many New Zealand workers who have no hope of reaching new speeds and higher expectations. The compliance needed has been achieved through the power of the employers to recruit selectively between seasons, choosing those with higher skill levels and compliant attitudes, and to deport non-compliant workers. Although interview procedures for recruitment lack the crudity of line-ups they are in no way meaningful one-on-one interviews where the interviewee is expected to ask questions. This is partially demonstrated in the ubiquitous individual work contracts which in many cases require the RSE worker to be on call seven days per week.

Secondly, the widespread use of women in pack houses and males in orchards mean that the females earn slightly less than males but with less variation in earnings on minimum hourly rates, while the males aspire to much higher earnings on piece rates, but are often impeded by weather conditions.

Thirdly, the pastoral care arrangements are at amateur level, in the sense that trained carers are the exception, and this has led to a kaleidoscope of interpretations. Worker accommodation is monitored to meet legal requirements and is therefore on an entirely different plane from the accommodation experiences of migrant workers of the past in New Zealand, and is on a trajectory of continual improvement, however there have often been failures to recognise simple needs such as adequate heating.

Fourthly, the workers have become accustomed to a variety of experiences from leading highly restricted existences within New Zealand to having transport provided which allows them to travel. Their freedoms as humans are in contradiction with their fundamental need to save, and often employers who take an active interest in helping with this latter objective may be seen as more restrictive with the former. The variety of experiences according to the characteristics of the individual employer underlines the power of the employer to determine the levels of freedom of each work force.

Fifthly, a greater proportion of employers have taken a closer interest in the lives of the workers and their home families than was evident in past migrant worker programmes in New Zealand. In only a few instances has this led to project involvement at village level but by 2012 many employers were open to becoming involved in direct development assistance. Several smaller employers had built relationships with particular village communities and the RSE programme was therefore impacting strongly on the lives of those villages. Indications from conversations with employers suggested that skills transfer was taking place through some on the job training in orchard situations which could directly benefit people in their home islands. There were, however, unforeseen consequences, most prominent of which was the destabilisation of families through long stays away from home. Cell phone technology may be aggravating rather than easing the emotional pressures. Employer opinion could be seen to be sharply divided on the duration of stay and on such matters as the desirability of recruiting couples.

From an employer perspective, the RSE has been a highly positive experience, and numerous articles have appeared in the popular press and industry magazines (including almost 50 separate articles in *The Orchardist*) affirming the unqualified success. Some doubt may be cast on the rhetoric of the triple win, at least in the sense that the benefits are equally shared. From the employer perspectives examined in this chapter I now move to worker perspectives canvassed through interviews conducted in Vanuatu.

Chapter Seven. Vanuatu Urban Research Findings

7.1. Introduction

The majority of data in this chapter relates to interviews carried out in the Port Vila area in 2012. The 32 respondents from this area were chosen, in part, to test whether the recruitment process had given good access to the poorer communities of Port Vila, and section 7.2 addresses this issue directly. An effort was made to visit all the suburban communities, irrespective of whether they were regarded as squatter settlements or legally recognised suburban areas. Many respondents were found simply by visiting these communities and asking local store owners for information on who had been to New Zealand. Additionally a small information card was given to people in such places as Vila market and some respondents contacted the researcher. In all, 32 semi structured interviews were conducted in Port Vila and its surrounds.

Details are given in section 4.4 on how 24 categories of key findings from these interviews were grouped into nine themes. These themes overlap with but are not identical with those which resulted from the employer interviews.

The nine themes or contexts are as follows:

Earning context (hours, earnings, deductions/losses), **Information context** (NZ knowledge/ briefing, expectations), **Recruitment context** (recruitment, interviews, access), **Power context** (dismissals, team leaders, threats), **Rights context** (freedoms, negotiations, SDA's), **Pastoral context** (accommodation, health issues, communities), **Skills context** (skills acquired, skills training), **Remittance context** (spending, life changes), **Home context** (families, domestic labour, migration). In the third sweep some voices were included who were not among the 32 Port Vila respondents, including key informants in Vanuatu and a small number of people interviewed in outer islands whose comments added to the narrative.

The economic change in Port Vila between my time as a VSA teacher in 2003 and this research in 2012 has been sufficiently rapid to be observable in such everyday things as the quantity of vehicular traffic and associated congestion. Conventional measures of economic growth show annual GDP growth rates in recent years varying between 4% and 7%¹¹¹ although such measures must be used with caution in a nation with low public service capacity. The stories of RSE workers suggest that there will be some economic effect through a conventional consumption multiplier, although a

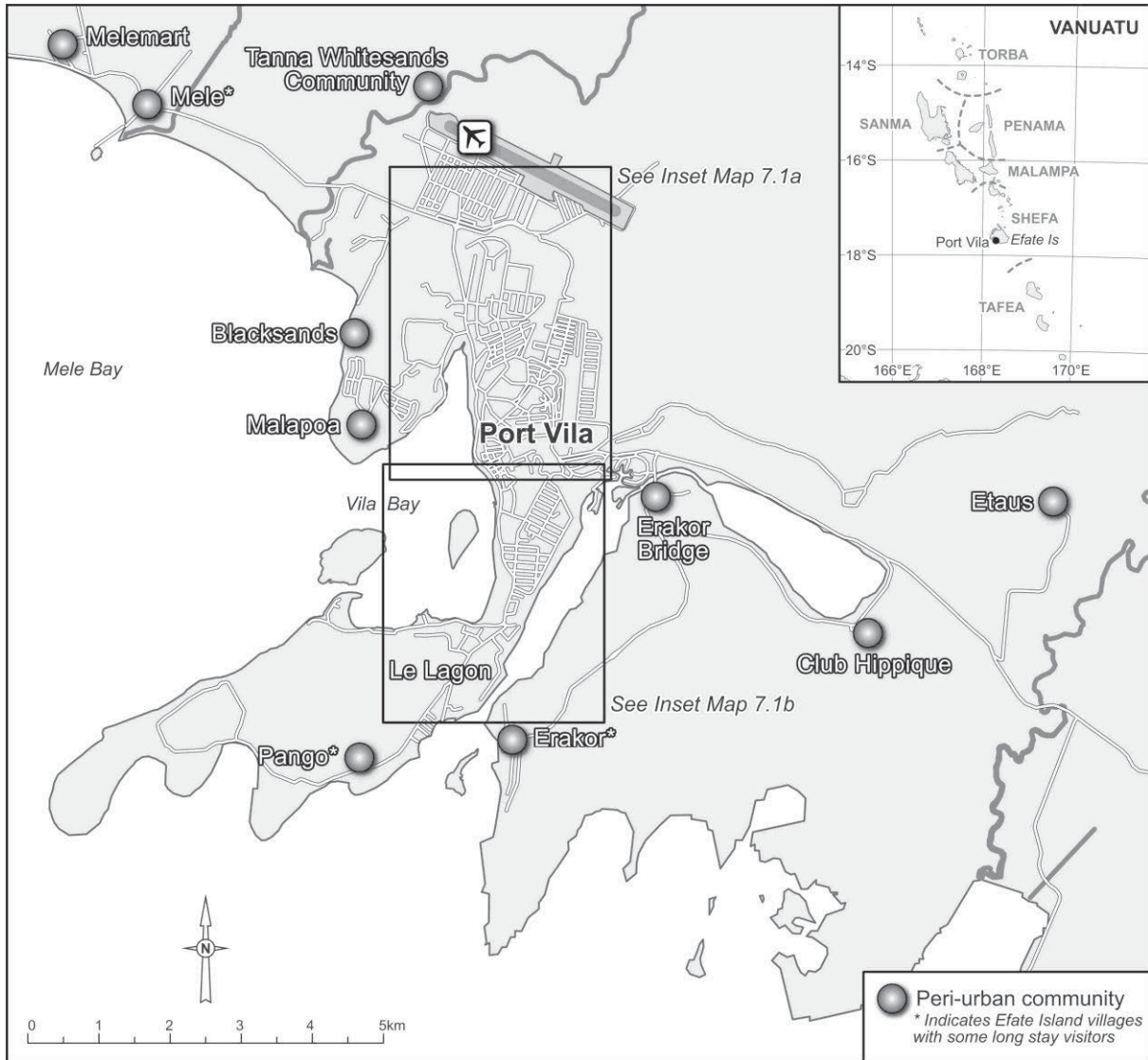
¹¹¹ Figures supplied by Vanuatu National Statistics Office (National Statistics Office, 2011).

proportion of that benefit remains in New Zealand through purchases of such items as solar panels and chainsaws. Although it is difficult to obtain exact data on the annual level of remittances from the RSE it is likely to have been in the region of 600 million vatu per annum in contrast with an annual tourist injection of 17 billion vatu¹¹². This 600 million figure relies on some crude methodology within the Reserve Bank of Vanuatu, but is consistent with an average savings of \$4,000 or 300,000 vatu from 2,000 workers in a year (see section 7.3). At the macro-economic level the RSE can therefore be seen to be making a small contribution to a country which has a cash sector stimulated by tourism. The growth in GDP is barely keeping up with the growth in population. At national level census data shows that in 2009 nearly half the total population (49%) was under 20 years of age, and 14% was under 5 (Government of Vanuatu, 2009). Macro-economic assistance does not necessarily equate to targeted assistance to poor families, and the subsequent section shows how the process of choosing interview respondents acted as a check on the “pro-poorness” of the RSE.

7.2. The Port Vila Communities

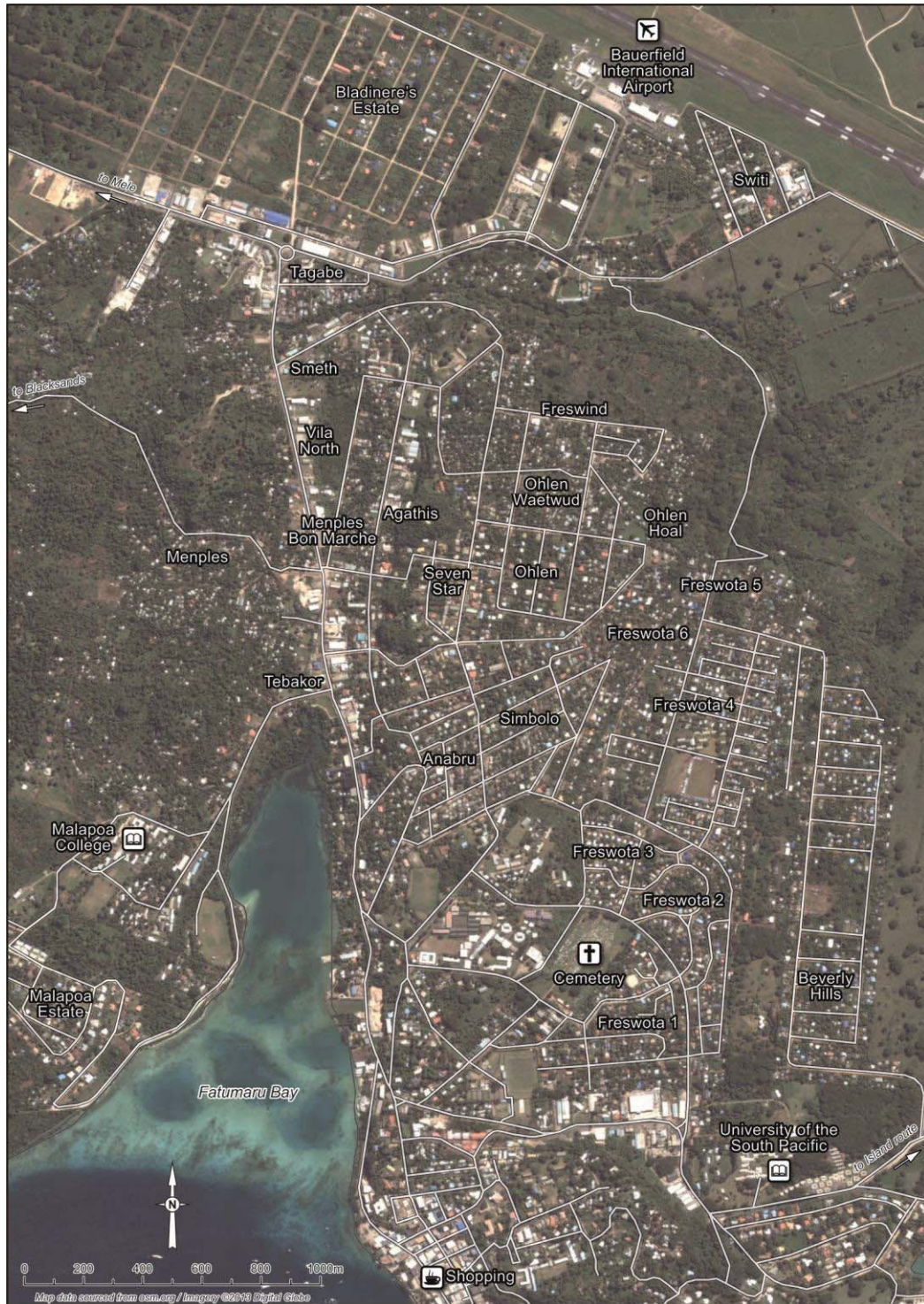
In both the urban and rural research (Chapter 8) a major focus was on establishing where the workers were coming from. Maps 7.1 and insets 7.1a and 7.1b show the locations of the various communities from which the urban RSE workers were drawn. Established villages which form part of the Efate Island kinship community have been marked with an asterisk. Other communities outside the strict urban area are subject to a variety of legal arrangements which frequently involve a residency agreement between land holders and migrants from other islands. These community maps are likely to be the first of this kind for Port Vila, as they were generated following numerous conversations with bus drivers, taxi drivers and similarly knowledgeable people. They may be considered a novel way of respecting indigenous knowledge (Gegeo, 1998).

¹¹² Figures for tourism earnings were supplied by the Vanuatu Department of Tourism following a study by the South Pacific Tourism organisation.

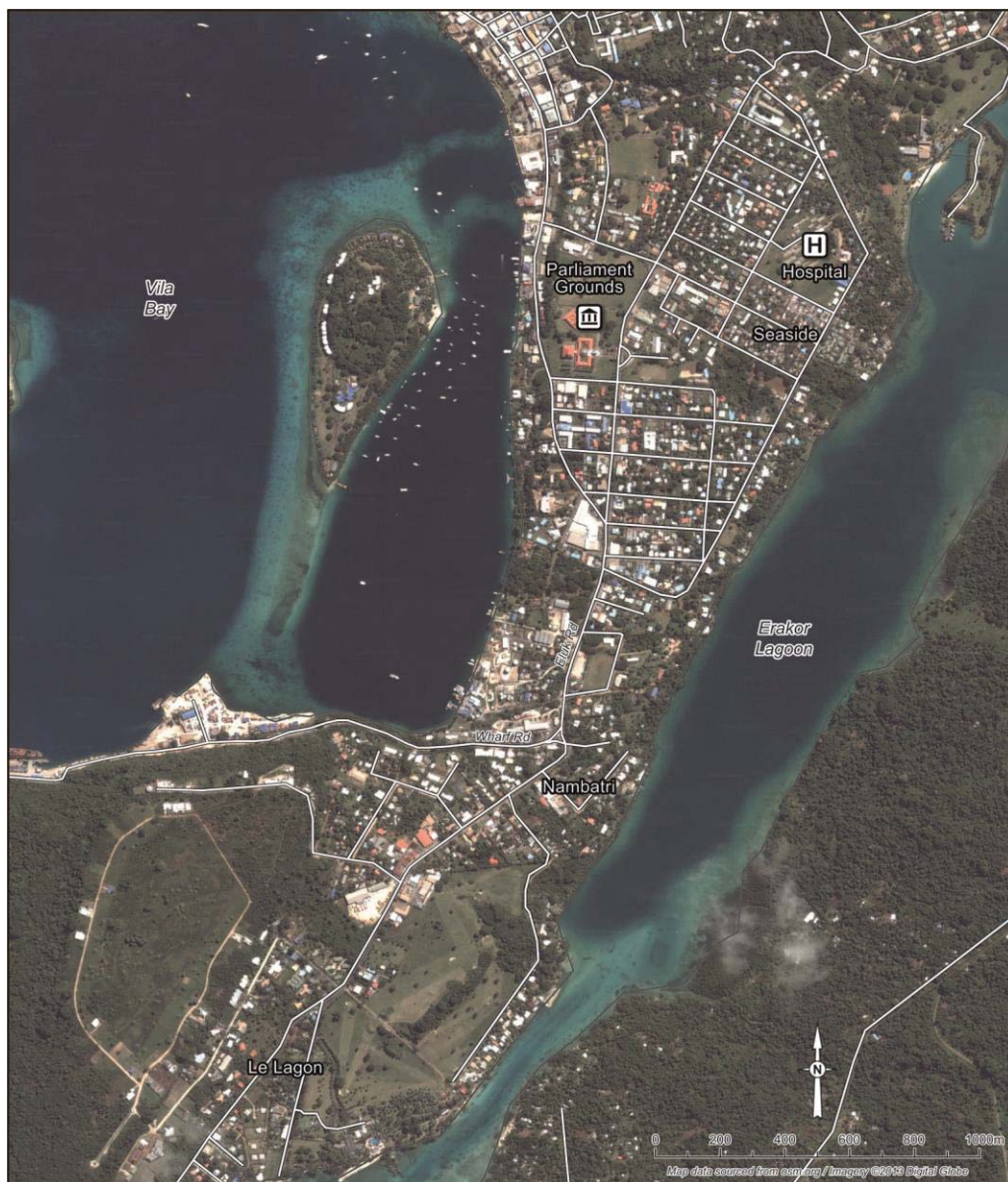


Map 7.1: Port Vila and surroundings

Source: author.



Map 7.2: Inset map 7.1a



Map 7.3: Inset map 7.1b

Port Vila, as understood by ordinary residents, consists of over 30 suburban indigenous communities, some of which are not legally defined and may be regarded as squatter communities¹¹³. I grouped the mapped communities into six categories¹¹⁴ used in both this chapter and Chapter 8. A more detailed description of the communities is given in Appendix 6.

¹¹³ Further information was obtained from the Port Vila Municipal Authority on this aspect.

¹¹⁴ The six categories do not include the mainly expatriate areas where houses are bought and sold at prices comparable to New Zealand and Australian urban areas.

The descriptions which follow are based on field notes taken in Port Vila (July-August, 2012) while spending time in these communities:

Category 1: (Le Lagon) Very high density and no place to garden. There are no sections or defined land areas. There is no permanent housing; only shanties.

Category 2: (Nambatri, Ohlin Matasu, Switi, Seaside, Simbolo)

Also refers to urban areas which may or may not be recognised by the Municipal Authority. The housing is mainly but not only shanties, with some permanent housing. The communities are mainly organised in community “yards” with occasional sections for single family housing. There may be some urban amenities such as street lighting in places.

Category 3: (Blacksands, Erakor Bridge, Freswota 5, Freswota 6, Menples, Ohlin Hoal) Urban fringe, of contested or ambiguous legal status, with very small quantities of permanent housing, mainly shanties and community “yards”, usually no amenities, but most have access to good gardens.

Category 4: (Club Hippique, Etaus, Tanna Airport community, Tahoumah). Non-urban areas which have been made available under a variety arrangements with people of Efate. Typically the availability of gardens is good, and amenities almost non-existent. There is a mixture of shanties and some permanent housing dependent on the age of the community.

Category 5: (Agathis, Freswota 2-4, Ohlin (including most sub-districts),Tebakor, Vila North).

Recognised suburbs which have a substantial amount of permanent housing and some amenities and mainly people living in sections. They are entirely indigenous community areas as distinct from expatriate areas.

Category 6: (Anabrou, Beverly Hills, Freswota 1, Malapoa Estate).In this category have been placed what may be referred to as the more affluent areas in relative terms. In these areas the vast majority of housing is permanent, with some showing architectural influence, there may be a small number of expatriate houses in some cases, and there are good amenities in most areas.

Table 7.1 indicates the community/suburb in which each respondent resides and gives summary information on their participation in the RSE programme. In the process of selecting respondents it was possible to establish that in a country sometimes criticised for corrupt practices¹¹⁵, the RSE has targetted ordinary people well within the urban setting. One community where a respondent was unable to be found was Beverly Hills, which is one of the most affluent communities of predominantly ni-Vanuatu dwellers.

¹¹⁵ Transparency International does not place Vanuatu among the world’s corrupt countries, giving it a low positive index. Conversely, corruption has featured strongly as an issue in parliamentary elections.

Table 7-1: Port Vila Interviewees

Name	Residence	Home Island	RSE years	NZ visit(s)	Total duration (mnts)	Total savings(vt)	Migrated
Bertie	m Ohlin	Tanna	2008	1	3	200,000	2012
Abel	m Seaside	Paama	2007	1	6	210,000	earlier
Eric	m Blacksands	Ambrym	2007-2012	5	35	1,000,000	earlier
Allan	m Freshwind	Tanna	2011	1	7	500,000	earlier
Adrienne	f Simbolo	Efate	2011/12	2	14	650,000	2003
Andy	m Lagoon	Ambae	2011	1	6	300,000	2006
Oden	m unknown	Paama	2006	1	5	200,000	earlier
Delia	f Erakor	Efate	2012	1	5	300,000	na
Charles	m Etaus	Nguna	2007-2011	4	22	1,800,000	earlier
Carol	f Freshwota 4	Tanna	2008-2012	5	5	1,500,000	2006
Dwight	m Club Hippique	Tanna	2008-2010	3	12	680,000	2010
Ella	f Etaus	Ambrym	2008-2009	2	8	360,000	earlier
Fiona	f Vila North	Malekula	2009-2010	2	11	600,000	earlier
Fred	m Lagoon	Paama	2009	1	6	95,000	earlier
Ike	m Erakor Bridge	Tanna	2008-2011	4	12	1,200,000	earlier
Steven	m Ohlin	Ambrym	2009-2010	2	12	550,000	2002
Jonah	m Blacksands	Ambrym	2008-2012	5	35	2,000,000	earlier
Janice	f Switi	Futuna	2008	1	7	200,000	2010
Kelvin	m Nguna	Nguna	2008-2012	4	28	1,200,000	na
Clint	m Freshwind	Tanna	2009	1	7	20,000	2011
Lenny	m Tagabe	Ambae	2011	1	6	380,000	2005
Leon	m unknown	Pentecost	2008-2011	4	24	1,000,000	2007
Lisa	f Menples	Malekula	2008-2012	4	17	1,513,000	2000
Lucy	f Freshwota 4	Tanna	2010-2012	3	15	800,000	earlier
Lina	f Freshwota 3	Ambae	2009-2012	3	13	700,000	1997
Olo	m Mele village	Efate	2009-2011	3	21	680,000	na
Saul *	m Etaus	Pentecost	2007-2010	4	28		earlier?
Violet	f Freshwind	Tanna	2008	1	7	300,000	2011
Delilah	f Freshwota Whitesands	Tanna	2008-2010	3	18	450,000	1993
Assil	m community	Tanna	2010	1	3	160,000	earlier
Tori	f Freshwota 4	Ambae	2008-2012	5	15	1,100,000	earlier
Nicky	m Vila North	Tongariki	2011/12	1	7	300,000	earlier

7.3. Workers' Perspectives on Earning

In many respects the experiences of earning were consistent with statements made by New Zealand employers, with some differences. Responses underlined the variability of earning experiences, in large measure as a result of the dependency of work on suitable weather conditions. The following examples demonstrate the severe impact poor weather can have:

In 2010 I made 400,000 vatu, and in the other two years only 200,000 vatu. Rain comes down and spoils the apple picking. We had problems with no work. (Lucy, 28-7-12)

In 2010 we had a time when it rained for a month. We missed out on pay for two weeks. We talked to our team leader. The team leader didn't take it up with the office the way they were supposed to. (Lina, 6-8-12)

One week we only worked three days. We complained to Lenny and he said there was no more work. Rain is very difficult. (Steven, 26-7-12)

Sometimes we didn't have work. Plenty of time we didn't have work. We stayed in a motel called Kiwicoral which cost 1000 vatu [\$15] for one night. (Delilah, 30-7-12)

Sometimes the rain would fall too much and there was no work. (Adrienne, 13-8-12)

Not all the above were orchard workers. Two were pack house workers, in situations where the length of the weather interruption was enough to affect supply. Kelvin (interviewed 29-10-12) was in a different situation working for a contractor, and he recounted having worked for 20 days in unbroken sequence, but also losing some days to weather. Charles also worked for a contractor:

We worked every day. We worked Sundays but not public holidays. There was no rest day. T. K. is a bit of a hard man. (Charles, 8-8-12)

Those who worked in the pack houses, mainly females, reported long hours doing night shifts, particularly in the kiwifruit industry:

We worked in the apple pack house. In 2008 I worked days. The bus would come at 6.30 a.m. and we worked from 7 o'clock till 8.30. We had a break at 9.a.m. for 15 minutes, a half hour break at 12, 15 minutes again at 3, and 15 mins at 5.p.m. We finished at 8.30. It was a 12 hour day. Saturdays we finished at lunchtime and Sundays we had a rest. (Lisa, 15-8-12)

I worked night shift. We worked one week nights and one week days. It changed every week. The hours were from six to six. We had a rest day once a week. (Violet, 14-8-12)

We had nightshifts for three months. One day off each week. Night shift was 7-7 [*implied 65 hrs weekly*]. (Delilah, 30-7-12)

The hours were 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. Every night I worked. Every night. (Bertie, 13-8-12)

In 2011 I did the nightshift but in 2009/10 it was 7.30 a.m. until 8.30 p.m. at night. We rested on Sundays. We worked 12 hours a day or 65 hours a week. Saturday was a half day. Many people in Motueka say that the hours are long at Company X and that X is not a good employer. They are really long hours. (Bonny, 6-11-12)

It cannot be assumed that respondents saw nightshifts as undesirable. Several women, such as Tori, have expressed a preference for working nights:

It is a big pack house for onions only. I work nightshifts. I like doing the nightshifts. (Tori, 10-8-12)

The variability in earnings experienced by individual workers and between workers, that is variability from week to week and season to season, was affected by weather conditions, the length of the season, and the type of industry. Whereas pay rates in the Hawkes Bay apple industry were found to be fairly standard, the grape experience was more variable. Those working for contractors on piece rates would experience different pay rates from site to site.

Jono paid us 30c to 45c per stumpa¹¹⁶. The contract rate depends on the farmer- some only pay 20c. We complained but everyone is different. Some farmers pay 30c to Jono but we only get 20c. (Dwight, 23-10-12)

In the South Island we had a Phillipine supervisor for 3 months. We just wrapped the grapes. The pay was not good really. Sometimes there would be a hundred plants in a line. I might do 200 in a day [*suspected underestimate*]. We only got paid about 15 vatu per stumpa. (Fiona, 14-11-12)

A short season can impact badly on earning potential. However one worker interviewed still managed a positive experience from a series of very short seasons.

In 2008 it was only two months. We finished in April. I made 200,000 vatu. In 2009 it was two and half months and I made 200,000 vatu. In 2010 it was 250,000. A bit longer, mid-February to early May. And 2012 also 200,000 vatu. Every year it was 2-3 months depending on the work availability. So altogether I have made over a million vatu. (Tori, 10-8-12)

¹¹⁶ I have used the Bislama term "stumpa" without translation because it is in such widespread use throughout the industry to describe a single grape plant. It is the base or the stump of the plant which occupies the labour.

Two particular difficulties were identified in successfully remitting earnings. The first was a transfer mechanism which provided a fair realisation of the exchange rate:

In 2008 I came back with \$3000. There was an exchange rate problem. We carried cash and Goodies¹¹⁷ spoiled it [gave an unfair exchange]. We got about 200,000 vatu. In 2009 it was about \$3000 and in 2010 I made \$4000. That was better.
(Dwight, 23-10-12)

The second difficulty involves the use of containers for transporting New Zealand purchased goods back to Vanuatu. This applies particularly to those not living in Port Vila at the time. “We lose too much money while we wait for the container to arrive.” (Dwight, 23-10-12). A community leader from another island described this process as follows:

At the end of the day I think we agreed on one amount if they wanted to put something in the container, they pay this amount, and they appointed someone to look after it; one brother of mine. He spent so many weeks in Vila and he started to use his NZ money and spending was out of control. Now it is a much slower programme to develop his house. It is still an issue. (Emelda, 6-11-12)

The figures in Table 7.1 illustrate the variability of earnings between workers and between seasons. This project lacks the resources to establish new findings of an inferential nature and the sample does not purport to be fully representative, although it has no obvious bias. However an observable weak point in quantitative work carried out on the RSE is a concentration on averages without investigating variability. The total amounts saved per worker interviewed averaged 675,000 vatu and the amounts saved per visit averaged 275,000 vatu or just under \$4,000 at 2012 exchange rates. The lowest savings expressed on a monthly basis come to only 3,000 vatu or just under \$50 saved per month contrasted with approximately 60,000 vatu or approximately \$850 per month saved by the highest earner. From an inferential perspective, a sample of 32 workers at 90% confidence gives a margin of error of approximately three times that which is usually accepted.¹¹⁸ The somewhat limited statement we can make is that the average earnings of “urban” ni-Vanuatu RSE workers per visit is 275,000 vatu (nearly \$4,000) with a high margin of error at 90% confidence. However this data does triangulate well with other sources.

¹¹⁷ Port Vila money exchange company.

¹¹⁸ Required sample size is relatively inelastic to changes in population size so regardless of whether the number of workers who had come to New Zealand was 2,000 or 6,000 the required sample size for a given level of significance would vary by only one or two.

An estimate used by the Reserve Bank of Vanuatu's Research and Statistics Department, sourced to the ESU, claims an average monthly earnings of 58,421 vatu remitted, equivalent to almost 300,000 vatu for a five month tour, which could suggest that the above sample was marginally biased towards lower earners. While in Port Vila financial institutions were approached for information and some did co-operate. One major bank reported that 188 RSE cheques banked in a 12 month period (30-9-11 to 1-10-12) were valued at \$830,735.42 at an average of \$4,418.80. These are likely to have been from a small number of firms using the bank facility and will be biased towards the season length of those employers. An accountant for Western Union instructs their staff to have prepared \$7,000 per worker (almost 500,000 vatu) for the payouts for the longest (6-7 month) tours (field notes, 31-10-12). The issue of how much workers earn is further explored in Appendix 5.

7.4. Misunderstandings or Misinformation?

Without first-hand knowledge of the New Zealand employment sector, unrealistically high expectations would be unsurprising, particularly in the early stages of the RSE programme. Expectations of high earnings and more substantial life benefits were encountered with corresponding disappointments:

I was one of the first workers. We were told we would make 700,000 vatu. Craig Howard told us that we would make 700,000 vatu in seven months. Helen Clark went to Vanuatu for another meeting. They changed the pay so it was no longer 700,000 vatu. We were paid contract rates. (Abel, 3-8-12)

It is not unknown for some workers to make over 700,000 (about \$9,000) vatu in seven months but Abel's perception that this amount was guaranteed and was changed by a visit by the New Zealand prime minister is illustrative of the difficulty of successfully briefing workers on what to expect.¹¹⁹

Disappointments were expressed by some workers who believed they had signed a contract guaranteeing work for a certain duration such as seven months but were sent home earlier when the season finished. "I didn't like that Dick Eade said six months but it was less. May, June July only." (Fred, 25-7-12)

The most often expressed disappointment concerned the level of deductions from the pay. Deduction levels were a surprise to many workers. They are seen by some workers as the principal reason for lower than expected earnings:

¹¹⁹ This comment presumes that there was not unscrupulous use of false promises, but it seems reasonable to assume that a New Zealand employer would have referred to likely earnings and been misunderstood.

The first pay slip I was surprised by the deductions. The big one was the flight deduction of \$250 per fortnightly pay slip for six payouts. (Leon, 26-7-12)

The money wasn't too straight. Dick didn't tell us about tax, rent, ACC. The deductions were not clear. And the transport [costs]. (Oden, 25-7-12)

The problem with going for three months, lots of deductions to pay, the bus from Auckland to Te Puke, the rent of \$100, the transport charge of \$30 each week. So many deductions. We didn't make good money. (Assil, 4-8-12)

The deductions were not clear. We didn't know there were going to be deductions for light and water. (Violet, 14-8-12)

Oden belonged to one of the earliest contingents of workers and it would be reasonable to expect that word of mouth since then would add to briefings on this issue. All workers are briefed by the ESU but some workers remain largely unaware of the legal and formal arrangements they enter into. "It was a big company but I can't remember what it was called" said Bertie (interviewed 13-8-12).

Often it is the person who recruits or manages, the personality rather than the position held, which is in the worker's consciousness:

Kate is a lovely friend to me [stated tearfully]. I stayed in Omahu Road. The farmers built one camp - it is a nice place, a safe Vanuatu village. She uses Sophie [as recruiter]. Kate just comes to help Sophie. (Ella, 16-8-12)

Language difficulties, compounded by the condominium legacy¹²⁰, presented a major barrier to the effectiveness of briefing procedures:

The contract was in English. I am Francophone. Many of us were Francophone. (Assil, 4-8-12)

Aside from the briefing carried out by the ESU, levels of briefing vary greatly from recruiter to recruiter:

An agent whose name was Kylie talked to us on Tanna. We were at *Kwamera* down south Tanna. Kylie came to the village. She worked with R. N. She talked about the work only. New Zealand laws and aspects of money. She explained that if you wanted to send money you used Western Union. Many people did not understand what she was saying first time round. (Violet, 14-8-12)

¹²⁰ Vanuatu was never formally annexed by either France or Britain, but was jointly administered for many years as a de facto colony of both, with the result that French and English languages are used in roughly equal measure and most ni-Vanuatu identify as either Francophone or Anglophone.

There was a consistency of perception as to what constituted a successful level of earnings, or what level of savings was seen as good or small, but at the 300,000 vatu level; which may be modal, opinions flowed both ways, as illustrated by these comments from Andy and Dwight:

I signed a contract for seven months but we only stayed for six. In the first year I made about 300,000 vatu. It was a bit disappointing. (Andy, 15-11-12)

In 2009 it was about \$3000 and in 2010 I made \$4000 [280,000 vatu]. That was better. (Dwight, 23-10-12)

However earnings in excess of half a million vatu (roughly \$7,000) were seen by many as aspirational:

I went for two seasons, 2009 and 2010. Not 2011. J. S. gave my name to Dick Eade. He gave me an interview. He checked my English. I heard about some people from the north who had saved \$8000. (Steven, 26-7-12)

The second season was a big one. I made \$7,000 or 500,000 vatu. (Jonah, 1-8-12)

It was clear from a number of the conversations that particularly in the early stages of the programme misunderstandings were commonplace, particularly in the sense that people had no perception of the risks or the costs involved. The preferences of the growers to employ the same people year by year inevitably meant that over time workers came to understand the realities much better.

7.5. Recruitment

Of particular interest for this research was the nature of the interview; whether an individual interview took place and whether in the context of that interview there was any questioning of the employer by the interviewee or whether there was only a mass briefing/selection. Some of the evidence given came from the early establishment years of the RSE.

J. came to Tanna. He came to the village I live in. He organised a time with the community and we waited. We didn't have individual interviews; just one big talk. He selected the numbers he wanted. (Clint, 14-8-12)

A hundred men went to the interview to find thirty men. It was at the Police College in Independence Park. Twenty were chosen the first time. He talked to us individually and asked "Why do you want to go to New Zealand?" There weren't many questions. Mainly just why do you want to go? I told him I needed to pay school fees. If you were accepted then the next day your name appeared on a list. Nearly everyone already had a passport. We did the medicals and the police clearance afterwards. (Assil, 4-8-12)

There were two meetings. Second meeting we had passport, medical, police clearance, family supporting letter. John took every passport name on a list and about one month after was the big flight. Some had to wait longer and some went. (Leon, 26-7-12)

Mass gatherings were often followed up by one on one interviews which involved a test of literacy and numeracy.

Interviews were conducted over two days. Jonas gave me a book to read out loud to see how I pronounced the words. (Carol, 28-7-12)

The farmer gave us an interview. I don't know his name. He asked about my education and family background and he gave me a test on paper about mathematics and spelling. Some people didn't pass the test but they didn't get a refund. (Ella, 16-8-12)

K. and W. did the interviewing. They asked why we wanted to work in New Zealand. They checked our English and our mathematics. They used a game to test us and some people couldn't count so they were not allowed to go. (Violet, 14-8-12)

In 2010 we heard about an apple picking company in New Zealand and we gave all our paper to an agent, Dick. We went for an interview and a briefing. He told us to wait and be ready. He asked us if we spoke English, what family we had, what sports we played. I didn't ask him any questions. (Lenny, 15-8-12)

Yes one at a time. We were his [Dick Eade's] assistants ... Me and another lady helping, there were three of us and we could spend a whole day interviewing till eight o'clock at night ... yes 2007, and after interviewing we gave them grades and it didn't mean that only the good ones would go; so how we do that is we mix them up.
(Chrystal, 7-8-12)

In the relatively short time between the inception of the RSE and my 2012 field work, the mode of recruitment has evolved from the widespread use of agents to the widespread use of an employer license to recruit. Figures supplied¹²¹ in 2012 show methods of recruitment as follows:

By agents 6% (of all ni-Vanuatu workers recruited in 2012 season)

By employer representative 47%

By team leaders 47%

There were in 2012 just four licensed agents in Vanuatu, in contrast to approximately twenty who registered at the beginning of the scheme¹²². The 47% "employer representatives" refers to just three or four ni-Vanuatu who receive payment from New Zealand companies and are strictly speaking in the employ of companies licensed to recruit in Vanuatu. The biggest of these companies is Seasonal Solutions which operates in the South Island. Digby, one of the agents, noted that "There is not a great deal of difference in what I do and what Sophie and Wendy [employer reps] do. It's just semantics really." (Digby, 25-10-12)

There is, however, a difference in the way that 53% are now recruited by agents and employer representatives and the other 47% are recruited by "team leaders". As community leaders/team leaders took over the recruiting role, formal interviewing gave way to more informal arrangements "Now there is no interview. Now it is all about family connections. No interviews."
(Dwight, 23-10-12)

Team leaders have been there since the inception of the programme but were not put there for recruitment purposes initially. Community leaders who work in New Zealand have the capacity to engage other members of their own families or communities, but not the capacity to recruit more widely. The effect on access or the "pro-poorness" of the programme may be paradoxical. Agents such as the late Dick Eade would carry out individual interviews and test English capacity while

¹²¹ Figures supplied by ESU.

¹²² Figure supplied by Vanuatu Commissioner of Labour.

seeking to involve as many communities as possible. By this method Delilah and Andy would not have gone to New Zealand:

A man told me to work in New Zealand. I was afraid because I don't have an education. They needed one more worker. My brother told me to go. After that I organised a passport and I went in 2008. (Delilah, 30-7-12)

I was recruited by A. He is a pastor on Ambae. He has been to New Zealand seven times. He is related to me. (Andy, 15-11-12)

A. is one of many team leaders involved in recruitment. Their recruiting role is regarded with concern by the remaining agents and employer representatives, who regard their activities as illegal.

DR: I am worried on the side of process. They don't know how to carry out an interview, for example.

It is an issue, one where Dick and myself and Sophie and Michael and J. S. raised from the start until today but never got a good answer. They said nothing could be done about it. Team leaders are at risk of damaging the reputations of everybody. They have no skills. (Wendy, 13-11-12)

The obvious difficulty with the widespread use of team leaders for recruitment is the lack of access to the RSE for those communities not previously involved. Sophie and Wendy provided complementary perspectives:

DR: I have another concern which is that he chooses his own family every time. If you are from another community you have no chance.

Yes, that's true. We call it family business and I agree with what you say, whereas we [referring to employer representatives] try to make it fair it doesn't matter which island you come from we will give you an interview. (Sophie, 10-8-12)

The employer has an existing relationship and says I want more of you so naturally the leader looks out for a brother, friend, from his community only. But now we [employer reps] have taken letters from communities, two years ago in Santo and also in Malo, the very first recruitment with the object of building a clinic, so they took men from all about and built a clinic.

DR: So you take some from Tanna, Ambrym Efate Malekula..?

Yes Banks, Torres, Santo too as far as Tassariki village so we mainly get them from rural areas now but before it was too central.

DR: I think at the beginning Dick Eade was influential and he took many from Vila...

Yes, just Vila...In the first place it started in the central place of Vila and now a man from rural area is more committed and those ones from town are more used to bright lights and more streetwise in New Zealand so now we try hard to find communities, we drive around north Efate, and in Banks they look for me and in Big Bay in Santo. (Wendy, 13-11-12)

Recruitment practice can be seen to have paradoxical effects. Attempts to establish a form of professional recruitment designed to give equal opportunity to all, but which actually favoured those with a command of English, have largely given way to employer control via team leaders, which while enhancing employer power at the worksite, holds the potential for a development partnership with communities in those areas, and sometimes allows people through who have no qualifications or English speaking skills. The way in which employer power is enhanced by team leaders is dealt with in the following section.

7.6. Team Leaders Empowering Employers

The power employers seek to ensure a compliant workforce has several threads, one of which is the way that team leaders have become institutionalised as an essential component of the RSE programme in Vanuatu. The role is widely seen in pastoral context. Some early team leaders have reflected that their role was to ensure that community leadership in Vanuatu remained in place in New Zealand. However groups working in New Zealand are rarely from just one community.

One team leader, a pastor, saw his role in 2007 as ensuring compliance from ni-Vanuatu workers with New Zealand law and employer requirements.

I gave two chances, if it involved smoking marijuana, smoking a cigarette in the farm area [near dry grass]. One boy had to get on the plane [home] as a result of smoking and alcohol. Every Sunday they must go to church, not just stay at the house, except if you are sick. Two boys went home early as a result of [not complying]. (Rendel, 10-11-12)

He did however see his role having two sides. His perception of the role is close to that of peacemaker.

The team leader must be a man who thoroughly understands the situation. When I would approach the boss, everyone would be glad, the boss would be pleased too, the company would continue [working] uninterrupted. The boys must choose a team leader who is neutral; who doesn't favour one side over the other. (Rendel, 10-11-12)

He saw the selection process for a team leader as a consensus process taking place in Vanuatu involving both a selection and employer acceptance.

Craig [company chief executive] came to a meeting in Vila; that's when the team leader was chosen; so Craig knows who the team leader is and knows him. He has to be a community leader here. (Rendel, 10-11-12)

Another team leader from early days lamented that some team leaders lack the necessary ethical capacity for the role.

If you have one chief who is a drunkard... The boys will drink in the house and he won't say anything. He himself is the problem one. With me, I don't drink ... I only know one person in New Zealand now who is like me. Every other house they will talk to you this way but they will go that way. (Alex George, 31-7-12)

As the position evolved and became institutionalised, some team leaders continued to be chosen by their communities:

The team leader at the accommodation was from Epi. We chose her before we left. She was an older married woman. They were good and there weren't any problems. (Adrienne, 13-8-12)

In the big lodge we have a team leader inside the house for the men and the women. We elect the team leaders. (Carol, 28-7-12)

In the above cases team leaders were chosen in Vanuatu or in some cases in New Zealand by a form of selection/election. In the following cases the team leader was chosen by either the employer or the employer's representative:

In 2007 we had a team leader. That first year we chose our own team leader but now Craig chooses the team leader. Everything changed in 2008. Now the team leaders don't tell the boss when something is not right. They are all afraid of him. (Saul, 16-8-12)

Our team leader is one woman in the accommodation. Joseph [employer] chose the team leader. (Lucy, 28-7-12)

We had two team leaders, one for the men and one for the women. The girls' was chosen by Emelda. (Lisa, 15-8-12)

It cannot be assumed that team leaders who are selected by workers or by local communities in Vanuatu are automatically more protective of workers' rights. A more complex picture emerged. In one case the team leader was seen as requiring the workers to be ambassadors for their home island in a way that undermined their welfare.

The team leader he wants us all to make a good reputation for Ambae. We want to complain about things but he didn't take our complaints to the office. (Andy, 15-11-12)

Several of those interviewed voiced complaints about the unwillingness or inability of team leaders to look after their interests:

This house was no good. The heater wasn't strong enough and it was too cold. Some of us got a bit sick. Our team leader was David from Nguna. He went to talk on behalf of us but there was no change. I don't know if it was honest or whether some pay off was involved. The team leader stayed in a caravan outside the house. (Charles, 8-8-12)

In 2010 we had a time when it rained for a month. We missed out on pay for two weeks. We talked to our team leader. The team leader didn't take it up with the office the way they were supposed to. (Lina, 6-8-12)

It is not necessarily the case that team leaders were "bought off". A team leader reflects on the difficulty of acting as a representative for the workers when dealing with a manager who had been widely disparaged by workers interviewed. The following example suggests that the notion of "uppers and lowers" (Chambers, 1997) may provide a more useful lens to examine the role than the notion of class struggle:

I am not sure of the way forward. When I speak in Bislama I can talk straight to the point but in English I feel I am not clear enough talking to the boss. (Renaldo, 7-11-12)

However there were more serious allegations showing a significant break down of trust:

The problem was he got involved with a woman in New Zealand and took to drinking. But when we got home he reported the rest of us for drinking and we all went on the stand down list. We did not get a chance to talk to the Department of Labour. We were simply told we are out for five years. They only listened to one side of the story. What the team leader told them was not honest. He was the one who made the problem. He should be the one on the blacklist. He should have been setting the example but he went drinking. (Allan, 9-8-12)

Z. doesn't know that X sleeps with Y. He is R's brother. Y. is a team leader. They give him extra pay. R. says that Y. earns big money. (Andy, 15-11-12)

The accuracy of these claims, one involving a mass stand-down of workers for a Blenheim contractor, another saying that a Hawkes Bay team leader formed an intimate relationship with a Kiwi manager and received special treatment in the pay packet, is impossible to judge. They give an indication of the disquiet which exists around the team leader role, and the accounts are credible when compared with other sources.¹²³

¹²³ A New Zealand employer testified to identical behaviour from a team leader who had shifted the blame for some questionable behaviour onto his entire crew, and my field notes show a continuous banter between another employer and his team leader regarding the team leader's drinking.

The reference by Saul (above, p. 167) to 2008 is likely to be a comment on a series of events in which a team leader perceived his role as workers' advocate. What appears to have been a misprint in the contract had encouraged the expectation among a group of workers for Seasonal Solutions that they were to be paid perhaps ten times as much as they were actually paid. This team leader was told by both a local union leader and New Zealand officials that ni-Vanuatu workers had the same rights as New Zealand workers. He is now on the stand down list.

I don't understand why they have put my name on the blacklist. I know he [the commissioner] has made an agreement. They don't want me to go back. When they gave us a contract to sign saying we were to be paid 500 vatu per stumpa that created the problem (Shem, 9-8-12). [The contract would have been consistent with pay rates if it had said 50 vatu per stumpa, so is likely to have involved an obvious misprint]

Regardless of whether one shares Shem's perception of the issue, his presence on the stand-down list undermines the idea that the stand down list is solely to do with isolated cases of alcohol abuse or serious misconduct.

The events of 2008 could be seen as a watershed in power relationships between New Zealand employers and ni-Vanuatu employees:

If you are quiet, and something isn't right but you don't say anything to the boss he likes you. He chooses you to come back. (Saul, 16-8-12)

Some workers referred to threats by employers should they seek improvements in conditions.

The labour team has been to talk with us, Official #6 [labour inspector] and a woman; the two of them came to see us. D. came and told us not to ask questions. She blocked us. She said we must talk to her first. She told one man that if he said something to the labour department he could be sent back to Vanuatu. (Andy, 15-11-12)

Although it is impossible to gauge how widely this crude management tool is used, the stand-down list is now at such levels that a real fear of being stood down exists. Information from the ESU indicated that in late 2012 approximately seven hundred ni-Vanuatu were on the stand down list. Over ten percent of all workers who have been to New Zealand from Vanuatu may have been blacklisted.

It is the dual threat of being sent home or being stood down which underpins employer power in the RSE. As well as those currently on the official stand down list there are local stand down arrangements, with the official stand down list acting as a kind of backup of last resort.

No we don't send the name to the Labour Department, so this is an action here only, but suppose we don't send a name to the Labour Department and he sneaks away to another company; then his name will go to Labour Department. If he refused to accept the stand down he is one very sneaky person and he must go to the stand down list. (Alex George, 31-7-12)

Dismissals may result either from issues seen as disciplinary or issues of work speed and quality.

In 2007 many of us were not very fast and were topped up. The boss said we must go faster and gave us two weeks only to get up to speed. Two men couldn't do it and were made redundant. (Saul, 16-8-12)

It should be acknowledged that stories of being sent home for being too slow are far less common than stories of being sent home resulting from incidents involving alcohol. However, those workers who wish to return for another year are effectively on trial year by year and cannot assume they will be chosen for the following year. These workers are supposed to have the same rights as New Zealand workers, but their vulnerability over dismissals and re-employment is further compounded by questions over the ethical soundness of the team leader system, given the increasing role the team leaders play in recruiting:

Sometimes team leaders have favouritism and they want to carry more of their family and they spoil it for other workers. (Emelda, 6-11-12)

The team leader he can get anything he wants. It is a big problem. (Wendy, 13-11-12)

One key informant provided an ironic twist to the alcohol issue:

Last year, one thing that happened, 2011, too many workers, there was a drinking problem.

DR: Experienced ones?

Yes, I said it was a chance to give opportunities to others [*laughs*] but the company says they are good workers. Their supervisors say they must go back and we say no it is not fair and the supervisors say they drink but their work is good. But some are on their second chance already!
(Emelda, 6-11-12)

In summary, the route to a compliant workforce has been made easier for RSE employers given the willingness of the Vanuatu DOL to act against anyone seen as a militant. Workers from Vanuatu have the same rights as New Zealand workers under treaty obligations to organise as workers but any attempt to do so has been easily subverted through the recruiting process. The use of team leaders

as intermediaries between the employers and workers and the growth of a culture of team leaders has further enhanced this power.

7.7. Does the RSE Accommodate Difference? The Rights Context

This section examines some evidence on flexibility in employment practice. What scope is there for migrant workers in New Zealand to negotiate change? Indicators used are the way employers approach the employment of Seventh Day Adventists (SDAs), the management of money, and freedom of movement.

There is some evidence of a willingness or an ability on the part of employers to employ SDAs who are either not available to work on Saturdays, which is usually a work day in the orchards, or not available to work on Friday nightshifts in the pack house. A strong incentive to employ SDAs would appear to be their rejection of alcohol and other intoxicants. In the early stages of the programme their refusal to work Saturdays met with mixed responses, illustrative of a desire to respect belief tempered by the demands of being in a competitive export industry:

We didn't have Catholics but we had some SDAs. They didn't work on Saturday. (Ike, 25-10-12)

Everyone spelled [rested] on Sunday. Monday-Saturday everyone worked, except the SDAs only worked 5 nights. (Fiona, 14-11-12)

There were, however, signs of employers moving away from a willingness or ability to accommodate difference which was there at the start of the programme. "Seventh Day Adventists don't work Saturdays but this year Sophie told Kate that they should work Saturdays." (Carol, 28-7-12) In some cases this has led to a cessation of employment:

I am SDA. Lenny accepted this but during harvest time he said that we must work on Saturday. Now I don't go to New Zealand because I felt guilty [about working on Saturdays]. (Steven, 26-7-12)

There were signs of flexibility over detail. For example many employers have adopted the practice of paying into two accounts, referred to in Chapter 6, one main account with limited access (the savings) and one ATM account with limited funds (the weekly allowance). Workers could effect minor change, as illustrated by these increases in the size of allowances:

We were the second group of workers in 2008 and we took only \$70 from the ATM. We complained and in 2009 we took \$100 per week in allowance money. (Ike, 25-10-12)

The allowance was \$80 but after a discussion that was raised to \$100. (Lisa, 15-8-12)

I had two accounts, savings and ATM which was given \$70 a week in 2008 but now \$80. We complained that the food was expensive and the employer respected our wishes. (Tori, 10-8-12)

Finally, freedom of movement was seen to vary considerably from company to company. Some workers recounted the use of vans in weekends and were able to cite places they had been. Some were more restricted. "If you wanted to see friends from another company it wasn't possible; the company was too dominating." (Assil, 4-8-12)

7.8. The Pastoral Context

Workers were asked questions about their health while in New Zealand, their experience of accommodation, and their experience of New Zealand communities. It was anticipated that there would be issues with the colder climate and the need for adjustment. However several workers commented on the health benefits of the non-tropical climate:

I never got sick in the colder climate of New Zealand. Here in Vila I get sick a bit but the cold climate is like a fridge and the bugs don't grow. (Nicky, 14-11-12)

For the onion dust we wear a mask. I have never been sick. It was cold but in Vila we get sick and I don't get sick in New Zealand. (Tori, 10-8-12)

Concerns about the lack of sufficient heating were nonetheless widespread. Of particular concern was the lack of good heating in the South Island winter, and the persistence of some caravan accommodation:

The caravan didn't have a good heater. I was cold at night time. I talked to A. [team leader] and after that they gave me another heater. (Andy, 15-11-12)

Ten of us in a house in Blenheim. This house was no good. The heater wasn't strong enough and it was too cold. Some of us got a bit sick. (Charles, 8-8-12)

The house in Blenheim wasn't very good. There were no decent heaters. I paid for a heater for myself and then I paid for power; this was deducted from pay. The rent in Motueka included power but in Blenheim it was not included. (Aramis, 3-11-12)

The complaints about heating helped clarify what the definition of good housing in New Zealand might mean to ni-Vanuatu. No complaints surfaced about such matters as leaks, for example. Given the obvious climate difference, it is puzzling that some employers did not make this a higher priority.

Accidents are not sufficiently commonplace to have been acknowledged by many of the employers or workers spoken to. Ladder accidents are perhaps the most predictable:

I fell down a ladder and was badly bruised. I was taken to Dunedin hospital. The accident was in November so I only worked for three months on apples. Then I had to stay in the house for a while and after that I was able to work a bit, picking apricots and grapes. The other workers gave me food. I talked to the company in 2010. He said that I could come back five years after the accident. I haven't been back.
(Abel, 3-8-12)

Abel's accident took place in the first two years of the programme. It was clear that the manner in which the programme was first established did not provide security as it is experienced by New Zealand workers. That security is now provided by private compulsory insurance.

Given the large number of women employed for long periods in pack houses, some pregnancies would be expected. Adrienne may have been recruited before pregnancy testing became part of the compulsory medical examination, and was pregnant while in New Zealand:

I was given support to go to a doctor for a check-up for my pregnancy. Just one visit in April/May. (Adrienne, 13-8-12)

Such an example graphically illustrates the intersection of two worlds. It seems likely Adrienne received one more visit to the doctor than she would have received at home in the way of check-ups, but considerably less professional attention than most New Zealand residents during pregnancy. Other workers, like Dwight, also benefitted from "first world" medical attention:

I was sick in 2008 with malaria. It was too cold and I was taken to hospital with malaria and missed a week of work. I paid insurance in 2008, and the malaria treatment cost \$400. I had malaria for four years and it would come out one or two times a year. Sometimes I would take medicine but it was still in me but now it is gone.
(Dwight, 23-10-12)

There was a balance of positive and negative experiences between those who benefitted medically from being in New Zealand and those who experienced work related sickness:

One time, we all got a skin rash on our arms and face. This was from contact with apples which had been sprayed. We didn't need hospital because we got a cream at

the chemist. We ate the apples that had been sprayed¹²⁴. After two days with the cream the rash went away. (Lucy, 28-7-12)

When surveyed, all employers had either stated there were no issues of concern with sprays or that they were being managed effectively.

Several workers interviewed reported only minor issues with sickness, which meant they lost some earning potential, insufficient to create an issue. "I was sick one time only. I only lost one day of work. We didn't get paid any sick leave." (Assil, 4-8-12) The RSE programme is structured in such a way that it is almost impossible for a migrant worker to be granted sick leave. Those who stay a full seven months are presumably entitled during the seventh month under New Zealand law but such an example was not found. No examples were found of workers continuing to work while sick or injured for fear of being sent home or treated unsympathetically.

One further dimension of the workers' lives which impacted on their experience was support from local communities. No comments were made by workers about negative reactions, but several expressed their appreciation or enjoyment of the assistance of church groups:

On Sundays AOG [Assembly of God] and Presbyterian helped us greatly and we went fishing in Picton a couple of times. (Olo, 31-7-12)

When we went to church we sang in the choir and we played volleyball. So we had good relaxation. The Motueka community gave us cabbages and the company was good. (Lisa, 15-8-12)

We had a good relationship with the Roxburgh community. Some of the boys went to the local church and joined the choir. (Rendel, 10-11-12)

The relationship with local churches met the needs of the employers as a form of socialising which carried minimum risk of an alcohol related incident, and took place outside usual work hours. Christianity is enshrined in the Vanuatu constitution, so the prevalent relationships between groups of workers and local church communities met the needs of the Vanuatu administration, the workers in many cases, and the employers as well.

Overall, there was sufficient evidence (including the lack of evidence of serious accidents) of employers being focused on the safety needs of workers to lay claim that the health and well being

¹²⁴ It was not completely clear from this interview whether the rash was the result of eating sprayed fruit or of skin contact, or through being present while the air was contaminated.

of the workforce is taken seriously. There was no evidence found of workers being pressurised to continue working while sick or injured. However the lack of attention by several employers to heating needs suggests that there was a lack of real understanding or focus on the full range of needs. Pastoral care may have been interpreted as a need to control workers' behaviour more than ensure all their needs were met in a new environment. The pragmatic decision to use compulsory private health insurance to remedy the lack of sick leave, which was a weakness in the first two years¹²⁵, means a further deduction from earnings, and a further reduction in the social wage of these workers.

7.9. Worker Perceptions of Skills Transfer

There was a high degree of consistency between the perceptions of the workers about the work and life skills they brought home from New Zealand and the views of those employers interviewed in New Zealand. Although some statements made could be viewed as a "parroting" of employer rhetoric, such as "time is money" (numerous respondents), the majority of comments were in the nature of specific examples and bear examination.

In several instances, workers were able to cite examples of skills which they had picked up in a community context, not always while working on the orchard or in the pack house:

I learned electrical skills in New Zealand from a Maori man in Alexandra (Eric, 1-8-12).

I learned about plumbing from a Jehovah's witness. My English was good.
(Steven, 26-7-12)

Several female respondents commented about skills they learned while in New Zealand accommodation:

I learned about kitchens. We had a rice cooker and a stove. I learned how to use the appliances. (Adrienne, 13-8-12)

I learned some cooking skills in the house like how to bake a cake. (Lisa, 15-8-12)

¹²⁵ This option was signalled in cabinet briefing papers in 2006; and the reason for not implementing it then is unclear.

I learned about kitchen things, cooking techniques, how to use household machines. I use these skills at Eziwash.¹²⁶ (Delilah, 30-7-12)

The scepticism referred to in section 6.92 around any direct relevance of horticultural skills learned in New Zealand orchards proved to be inaccurate: Oden (interviewed 25-7-12) reported learning how to grow capsicums. Dwight and Christophe learned pruning skills:

I learned about ... the value of pruning. That is something we don't do in Vanuatu. For example if I prune my sandalwood it will give good results. Some sandalwood doesn't have good branches. (Charles, 8-8-12)

We planted some grapes here, some red ones, a good vine. One brother says that now he prunes trees to make good fruit. (Dwight, 23-10-12)

Kelvin (interviewed 29-10-12) says he has learned some specific horticultural techniques while in New Zealand, for example the use of the push hoe for weeding and use of pruning tools which he can apply to mandarins.

A number of workers did refer to "westernising" attributes, such as a changed appreciation of time management, and improved facility with English. Olo, whose village is a leading tourism destination, found this to be very practical. "The life experience in New Zealand was very different. I talked English a lot and all the tourists talk English." (Olo, 31-7-12)

In keeping with the statements of some employers, an appreciation of hygienic practice was expressed in some instances: "I learned lots about hygiene. In 2009 some of us gained a certificate in hygiene and safety in the pack house." (Ella, 16-8-12)

Although several workers showed an awareness of and an interest in the evening courses being offered through the *Vakameasina* programme, a number chose not to take part:

The [government] programme comes every Tuesday. It is interesting but I am tired so I haven't been but they learn computing and English and other things. (Carol, 28-7-12)

There was a course after work at the accommodation but I didn't go because I was too tired. You could gain a certificate. (Lina, 6-8-12)

¹²⁶ Eziwash is a laundrette in Port Vila where Delilah works part time.

Some caution is needed in interpreting the skill set. For example, when Jonah (interviewed 1-8-12) states “I learned to get up early in the morning and go to work every day. Now I get up early to go fishing” he reflects on the RSE experience as a training in early rising and healthy work habits. It is hard to refute that the increased use of solar panels (see next section on remittances) will change lifestyles in rural Vanuatu in the opposite direction, perhaps including evening studies. Similarly the experience of working in a structured and timed way may be a useful ethic for those migrating to Vila but a case would still have to be made that the moulding of a western¹²⁷ work ethic is beneficial in agrarian Vanuatu.

Overall, the long term exposure of thousands of ni-Vanuatu to a different way of life involves a kind of osmosis, the results of which cannot be controlled or predicted. There is some evidence that those skills which workers gained outside the work context will have effects as profound as any direct work related techniques, but also some evidence that horticultural techniques learned in New Zealand do have a role to play.

7.10. The Use of Remittances

Clear patterns of spending were discernable. For some the RSE means significant life changes. New houses, payment of school fees, and investments in land or transport and small business were the most commonly cited uses of remitted funds. However several respondents reported having spent money on customary obligations, particularly marriage contributions.

A recurring theme in the urban context was the relationship with the home island of the respondent. Not a single respondent was born in Port Vila, although some Efate islanders were interviewed from nearby villages. This was not a case of urban workers earning money solely to enhance urban lives. Delilah (interviewed 30-7-12) was typical of others when she said “All the money went to family in Tanna. Now they have two solar panels for light.”

Everyone interviewed regarded the payment of school fees as of very high priority, possibly second only to meeting customary obligations:

¹²⁷ The use of the term Western work ethic is used in lieu of a more accurate description and opens a large and multi-layered discourse, which if examined would include some reference to Weber, F.W.Taylor, and early writers on capitalism such as Marx. However it seems preferable to allow a vague and more open acknowledgement than presume that the Western work ethic is a natural state of being appropriate for all societies.

Meeting custom responsibilities is expensive. I paid for my wife's dowry and my little boy's circumcision ceremony. (Ike, 25-10-12)

I have made more than a million vatu [\$15,000 app] altogether. I used Western Union every month. All the money went to family. The first year I paid for a roof for my house. I bought solar panels. Two of my boys have had marriages and I gave donations of 50,000 vatu for the marriage dowries. (Eric, 1-8-12)

The RSE experience was not of life changing significance in all cases. Oden (interviewed 25-7-12) was a cook at the Melanesian hotel in 2005. "Now I am cook at the Waterfront. Life is much the same." Fred (interviewed 25-7-12) was doing hotel security. "After I worked a small time in New Zealand I started doing hotel security again. I spent the 90,000 vatu on food, money to family."

Perhaps more typically, small changes came about to enhance an existing lifestyle. Eric (interviewed 1-8-12) is a fisherman with craft skills. "I make wood carvings which you see in Goodies [shop] and Drug Store [chemist]. Especially wooden pigs. I bought some tools for carving, including a skillsaw."

For many others the desire to build a new house or possess some land, often in peri-urban areas adjacent to Vila, has been a driving force:

It [the RSE] has been good for me because I have been able to pay for land in Santo to build a house for the children (Tori, 10-8-12).

In 2007, I lived in Menples. It was in 2010 I moved to Etaus. I paid 416,000 for the land at Etaus. I also paid 100,000 for my father's funeral. That was the story of 2007/2008. (Charles, 8-8-12)

I have bought some land near Club Hippique at Tahouma. I want to build a house and garden there. I need to make more money yet and it will be a nice house. (Carol, 28-7-12)

I paid for land in Vila in Eratop. There is enough land for three houses. I paid 750,000 vatu. Plus school fees for my boy's two children in Malekula. (Lisa, 15-8-12)

Several respondents used the RSE as a springboard to start small businesses, not always successfully:

In New Zealand I bought chainsaws, furniture. I wanted to buy a sawmill in Vanuatu but it was very expensive so I bought more chainsaws. My sister is from Pentecost but she bought land in Santo. I bought a fibreglass watertank and sent it to Pentecost. In 2011 I purchased a car in Vila, a Hyundai. I wanted to have a taxi but the quota is full. (Leon, 26-7-12)

I made good money to pay the school fees. I have one child in year 12 and one in year 8. I paid for some kava to start a small kava business. I think I made 300,000 plus some equipment in the container. I paid for an electric cooker and some clothes for the kids. (Fiona, 14-11-12)

The payment of school fees is not restricted to those with children at secondary school or University of South Pacific. Often wider family obligations come into play.

I have two brothers at USP [University of the South Pacific] and Malapoa and three sisters; one at Ule and one at Onesua. I paid for two, about 200,000 vatu. I bought a solar panel for my grandfather for him to use for a guesthouse and store at Pango. (Adrienne, 13-8-12)

For some the RSE means a change in status from rentier to landlord:

Many have been paying for land so they can build a rental property. While they are in New Zealand the cash flow keeps coming from the rental, especially in Prima and Vladimir estate. (Rendel, 10-11-12)

If it was not possible to quantify the earnings in such a way as to attach levels of significance, it was nonetheless possible to gain insight into what level of earnings constitutes success. For example, in Mele village there is an expectation that three years of RSE equals a house:

The first year I paid for the roof materials and the second year I built the foundations, then the walls. I will finish it next time. (Olo, 31-7-12)

DR: Three seasons would be enough for a house worth about one million vatu?

Yes, if you include a toilet and bathroom you would go close to a million if you stay in Mele, because the sand is free so you need mesh wire. I encourage them to use bigger size with 2 mesh wire they can complete the house up to the roof with savings from two seasons. The next season put in a verandah.

DR: You think it's consistent with a good season being maybe 300,000 vatu?

Yes, in a very good season they make 500,000 vatu plus. (Alex George, 31-7-12)

Four main uses can therefore be identified for RSE savings. The first is to support the fabric of kinship obligations. The second is to advance through education. The third is to materially improve the lives of families at micro level. The fourth is the establishment or growth of small businesses to provide ongoing earnings. However the effects of the RSE on families are both positive and negative.

7.11. The Family Context

All of those interviewed in urban context had family obligations. Few, if any, had lost their close connections with rural Vanuatu. In some cases the worker was operating under the strict guidelines of family members. Adrienne was unambiguous. “My dad is a pastor and he told me to pay all the school fees for my brothers and sisters.” (Adrienne, 13-8-12)

These instructions appeared as part of a reciprocal arrangement. Families at home often look after the worker’s children and sometimes gardens. These arrangements were not gendered in the manner of the work in New Zealand:

While I was in New Zealand all the children stayed with their Dad. He looked after them. (Lina, 6-8-12)

I didn’t use remittances; just brought all savings to Vanuatu at the end of the season. My husband looked after the children. (Tori, 10-8-12)

The urban interviews did not probe for information on family stresses resulting from the time spent in New Zealand, but discussions with Port Vila police shed some light on family breakups resulting from RSE related issues. One officer (interviewed 13-11-12) wanted a moratorium on the RSE for married people, and three officers claimed that the RSE had created considerable extra work for the police. It was stated that approximately two weeks after arriving home from New Zealand, complaints usually begin to arrive of incidents of family violence. Complaints were based on a mixture of real and imagined infidelities while one partner was in New Zealand. The Port Vila based family violence unit becomes involved in a number of “round table” (restorative) discussions aimed at resolving some of the incidents. Officers spoken to cited cases of family break up but it is almost impossible to quantify how widespread has been the disruption of domestic life in Vanuatu. One example was presented of a you tube video clip which had “gone viral” in Port Vila of a partying incident known as “kiss kiss” which led to the ostracisation of a middle aged woman from Ambrym. Wendy (a leading recruiter) provided the back story:

There wasn’t enough work for everyone and mothers at one stage stayed two weeks without work and no food in Blenheim. All work was for men only. Just next door there were almost a hundred [workers] and the team leader said we must feed them [the women] and one thing led to another [referring to “kiss kiss”] and it is a risk for the team leader did not understand good decision making and plenty went wrong. When they come back they have broken homes. (Wendy, 13-11-12)

Patterns of urban migration were well established in Vanuatu before the RSE so any assertions regarding urban migration would have to be tempered with that knowledge. Very few of those interviewed migrated to Vila subsequent to their RSE experience. Table 7.1 shows the numbers who migrated before or after their involvement with the RSE. Only five of those interviewed came to Vila subsequent to the start of their RSE experience.

I was born in Ambae where I spent my childhood. I came to Vila in 1997. I have three children. The oldest was born in 1998 and the youngest in 2004. When I came to Vila I stayed with my step sister and looked after her baby. I went to New Zealand in 2009, 2010, 2012. (Lina, 6-8-12)

I was in *Letekran* [Tanna territory] as a child and I came to Vila in 1993. I stayed with an aunty and uncle in Nambatri. (Delilah, 30-7-12)

I worked the grapes in Blenheim for Jono's business in 2008, 2009, and 2010. I was in Tanna until 2010 but last year I moved to Club Hippique. (Dwight, 23-10-12)

Overall there was no evidence from the urban research to suggest that the RSE is having a major impact on how families are organised, or that there is any loss of agency when engaging with the RSE. The one major concern is that extended absences have led to a significant but unknown number of family breakups, and when this information is combined with the information in Chapter 6, those family stresses appear linked with the overuse of alcohol when in New Zealand.

7.12. Summary

The RSE programme allows workers from the poorest communities in Port Vila to work in New Zealand. There is no evidence of the kind of corruption which would favour those in powerful positions. Much of this even handedness results from the early work of recruiting agents who combined mass briefings with individual interviews. The interviews often took the form of basic tests of literacy and numeracy, and consequently there was a bias towards recruiting Anglophone ni-Vanuatu. These agents, along with employers who moved early to obtain a recruiting license, tended to overstate the benefits of the programme, to the extent that workers' expectations were unrealistic with little knowledge of the risks posed by bad weather.

Information gleaned on average earnings was consistent with other published data, and it follows that the RSE plays a subsidiary role to tourism in growing the cash economy. However there are other more subtle influences on long term development, particularly in the transfer of a wide range

of work and life skills. There is no immediate evidence that these changes have undermined cultural forms, at least in the urban setting. Meeting customary obligations has remained the first priority in the use of RSE savings, followed by the payment of school fees.

RSE workers have encountered a range of work conditions in New Zealand and have become increasingly dependent on their team leaders both for recruitment and protection against poor employment practice. As the team leaders had become responsible for almost half of all recruitment by 2012, and early attempts by RSE workers to organise around workers' issues were suppressed, employers established firm control of the worksites by the end of 2008, and team leaders, who in the beginning were community leaders in Vanuatu, have tended to be chosen by employers in New Zealand in some instances. Workers' rights are seen to be at the whim of individual employers, some of whom allow freedom to travel within New Zealand, while others are more restrictive. There was also a need to address early on the lack of security against illness, however the compulsion to take out private insurance is at odds with New Zealand's treaty obligations.

These interviews did not elucidate potentially negative consequences of the RSE such as whether the RSE was causing urban migration, whether there was a loss of subsistence production, whether the RSE was causing excessive family break up, and whether excessive demands were being made on spouses and relatives. Some of these matters became clearer from research carried out in outer islands, which is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter Eight. Findings in Rural Vanuatu

8.1. Introduction

The majority of rural research took place in the Western district of Tanna Island, with some supplementary research carried out in East Tanna (“White Sands”) and on Epi Island in central Vanuatu. The Epi research is addressed in section 8.6. This part of the field work, focused on whether access to the RSE was assisting the poorer parts of the district, how participation in the RSE was impacting on and changing the communities, and how the economy of Tanna was impacted by RSE remittances, involved a change of scale. It did not rely primarily on semi-structured interviews, and the impacts sought after were at community level. Any temptation to carry out a separate “rural” set of interviews to contrast with the “urban” interviews was resisted, partly because the value of such a dichotomy is questionable in circumstances of high circular migration/bilocality.

Of Tanna Island’s seven districts, West Tanna is the most easily accessible¹²⁸ to visitors and tourists, and has undergone some degree of modernisation/urbanisation. For example the township of Lenakel (see Map 8.1) was granted urban status in 2009; becoming the third urban area in Vanuatu. There are also four secondary schools, including Tafea College which now takes students to year 13, an airport designated “international”, and a small coffee industry. I visited 97 village communities in West Tanna (which included a small number of communities which are culturally part of West Tanna but officially included in the South West district) spread over 14 distinct territories, each of which has its own unique history. Only two small areas of West Tanna were not included. A population estimate made of each community indicated that 8,000 persons resided in the area I surveyed (this triangulated very well with the Province’s own surveys). So the area surveyed is home to approximately a quarter of the population of Tanna Island and covers one seventh of the land area. In each community several wealth indicators were examined, such as the type of housing, and where possible information was gathered about the characteristics and activities of those who had been to New Zealand. In addition a small number of whole community meetings were held.

The section immediately following (8.2), discusses the cultural make up of Tanna Island in historical context and draws on my own research (Rockell, 2007, 2011) and the work of Bonnemaïson (1984,

¹²⁸ Robert Chambers’ ‘four wheel drive bias’(Chambers, 1983) is ironic in this context. From a research point of view, access to off road transport would have made it possible to carry out this research in less accessible parts of the island as a whole.

1994), (Guiart, 1952, 1956), Lynch & Fakamura (1994), Van Trease (1983, 1987), and Lindstrom (1985, 1992), as well as knowledge gained from living among Tannese people for two years as a VSA teacher in 2002-2003. It goes some way to define the community with which the RSE programme is engaging. The subsequent section (8.3) provides a detailed examination of the access to the RSE by the West Tanna communities viewed from the perspectives of villages, territories, and zones of modernisation. Each of the 14 territories and each of the 97 villages is given a “voice”, as the impact of the RSE programme is not uniform. These varying levels of engagement with the RSE are seen to arise from and impact upon the modernising influences within the territories. In section 8.4 the issue of cultural impact is addressed directly. Diverse indicators are used to make some observations about the nature of the changes occurring in rural Vanuatu. Then in section 8.5 some earlier work carried out during Masters field work in 2006 is drawn upon to help assess the economic impact at island level.

This chapter addresses questions raised in Chapter 3. Does the RSE enhance or undermine existing cultural forms? Is the programme pro-poor? Is there some evidence that the intended benefits of the RSE are accruing in a functional way? Meta theoretical threads canvassed in Chapter 3 are vividly in evidence. The two great epochs of Engels, the hybridity of Wolf, and the embedded economy of Polanyi, find their expression in limited state hegemony, so for example the police force has some respect but does not override village authority in every dimension. Some understanding of the history and culture of Tanna Island is required before these issues can be traversed.

8.2. The Cultural Setting

Throughout Tanna Island, sacred stones, which have been there since time began, and which gave rise to people, are scattered. In the time known as the *nikokaplalau*, the nomadic period, the first people walked around Tanna Island seeking a place to settle. When people eventually settled in territories, the time of the *tan* had begun.¹²⁹ Tanna is divided into approximately one hundred territories known as *tan*, which were surveyed by French anthropologist Guiart in the 1950s. The *nikokaplalau* had given way to the time of the *nepro*, a time of peaceful co-existence and perhaps abundant land. The *nepro* may have lasted for over a thousand years. Ideally, a land territory will reach from the sea shore to the tops of the mountains (see Map 8.1), so that the people in each *tan* live in interdependent villages connected by custom roads, each village centred on a *nakamaal*

¹²⁹ Although the information in this section has been canvassed by Bonnemaïson, Guiart, and others, and results in part from numerous conversations with Tannese people, I want to acknowledge Iolu Abil who gave his time generously in 2006, and Bergmos Iati who has a passion for Tannese folklore and was the first to explain to me the basics of Tannese folklore.

(dancing ground). The lower villages have access to the gifts of the sea and the higher villages have access to the gifts of the forest. These are to be shared through reciprocal arrangements. Each *nakamaal* was/is shaded and protected by one or more Nambanga (Banyan) trees. The *nakamaal* have permanence, whereas the village arrangements are subject to constant change.

Agrarian settlements developed around a system of land tenure bequeathed by the slaying of *Semu Semu*, a giant ogre who destroyed most of Tanna's population. The body parts of the slain ogre were distributed to all parts of the island, each part defining a portion of land, thereby creating the system of customary land tenure. Customary land title bequeaths an allotment to the bearer of a custom name passed down through the generations, in the manner of a land deed. A patrilocal society developed in which sustenance was maintained through reciprocity.

The *nepro* was not a chiefly society and contingencies for war were not needed. Eventually, important changes took place on Tanna, beginning perhaps with the arrival of *Mwatikitiki*. There are many interpretations of who *Mwatikitiki* was, but it is possible this arrival represented the beginnings of Polynesian influence on Tanna. Over a thousand years ago Polynesians expanded outwards from the Polynesian homelands in the area of Samoa and Tonga and a great navigator, Maui, features strongly in many legends as the hero who fished up many islands of Eastern Polynesia including the North Island of Aotearoa, *Te Ika a Maui*. From this time Tanna society became more chiefly and the era of the *nepro* gave way to the era of the hawk or *kweriya*. This was a time of conflict.

Two brotherhoods present on the neighbouring Polynesian island of Futuna, *koyameta* and *nambruken*, developed on Tanna Island (see also Lynch & Fakamuria, 1994). These moieties were instrumental in much of the skirmishing which took place in the late eighteenth century, the time at which Tanna became familiar to Western explorers¹³⁰. Much of coastal Tanna was abandoned as people moved inland to higher villages. In some cases the existence of both brotherhoods on the same *nakamaal* led to conflict and displacement, as refuge was found in other territories. When church missions became established on parts of Tanna in the late nineteenth century and at Lenakel from 1896, this led to another round of displacement as large numbers of people settled in coastal mission villages. The period known as Tanna Law, from approximately 1911 until World War II, involved harsh treatment of Tannese from the Presbyterian mission, and a rebellion finally took place in 1939 in the form of the John Frum movement, at which time large numbers of Tannese once again left the coast and returned to customary areas in the higher villages. One result of this triple

¹³⁰ The moieties still exist but membership tends to affect the way people vote in general elections or where they dance in custom ceremonies rather than in acts of war.

movement is that the majority of people on this side of the island speak one dialect, sometimes referred to as Lenakel language, although a small number in higher villages speak the mountain languages of South-West Tanna. A further result is that a number of larger coastal villages have a dual history as church communities which are nonetheless part of the *tan* network.

Christianity gradually reasserted itself after World War II but in a way which respected many Tannese customs such as the drinking of kava and the exchange of women between village communities. By the late twentieth century Tannese society had become a hybrid of customary forms and the combined influence of Christianity and commerce. Village leaders came to be widely known as *jifs* (chiefs), a colonial construction which disguises the shared leadership of the *Yerimia* (village leader) and the *Yeni* (village speaker). Reciprocation continued to find expression through various custom ceremonies, which are central to the life of the island and continue to distribute the necessities of life, supplemented by a small cash economy and a large Tannese presence in Port Vila, the circularity being expressed in the form of dual locality. The arrival of 24 hour electricity on the island in 2002 led to substantial urban growth in the Lenakel area. As the township sits at the convergence point of three territories (*Tan Iru*, *Nariakne* and *Loweniu*) there is ongoing litigation over who claims the compensation for the loss of land to urban ownership.

Map 8.2 shows the location of the communities visited. It is the first accurate map of the area to be produced: some assistance was received from and given to¹³¹ the Lands Department in Port Vila.



Map 8.1: Location of West Tanna.

¹³¹ The department lacked information on the names and locations of many village communities.

8.3. Equity of Access to Recruitment for the RSE

In examining the relative access of the various West Tannese communities to the RSE programme, three questions interlock: firstly whether there is an element of pro-poorness, secondly whether there is a process of modernisation and accompanying stratification resulting from RSE employment, and thirdly whether the needs of specific communities are given any recognition through the recruitment process. A summary of information gathered on the 97 West Tanna communities visited is given in Table 8.1, and this information is drawn on throughout this section.

The World Bank/Waikato University study referred to in Chapter 4 focused on Tanna, Ambrym, and Efate (McKenzie & Gibson, 2010; McKenzie et al., 2008), and may have created an impression that recruitment was as strong rurally as it was in the main urban centre of Port Vila. The data gathered in 2012 shows that approximately 300 people from West Tanna had taken part in the scheme, a lower number than might be suggested from the World Bank/Waikato research. The majority of these workers were recruited for either the South Island grape industry or the Bay of Plenty Kiwifruit industry.

Table 8-1: Summary Table of Communities Visited on West Tanna

Village	Tan	Pop'n Estimate	No.RSE	Grass houses	Mixed Material	Permanent Houses	All houses	Salaried or waged	No's at sec. school
Bethel	Imatautau	160	5	16	3	25	44	13	20
Iakulpow	Imatautau	20	0	6	0	1	7	0	1
Ienumta	Imatautau	25	0	8	2	0	10	0	1
Iekunauka	Imatautau	60	2	29	1	1	31	0	2
Iekuniteknga	Imatautau	20	0	12	0	0	12	0	0
Ietapalanien	Imatautau	50	0	28	0	1	29	0	0
Loaneai	Isila	35	1	6	0	7	13	7	2
Tenus F	Isila	50	2	1	1	9	11	5	11
Tenus T	Isila	60	1	10	1	9	20	4	5
Ienipira	Isila	60	3	10	3	8	21	6	5
Ileneai	Isila	100	4	16	12	8	36	5	5
Imanam	Isila	65	3	14	1	9	23	4	6
Ikutengteng	Isila	35	0	8	2	5	15	1	6
Ikurakas	Isila	40	2	5	3	6	14	1	5
Ilopuntuai	Isila	15	1	4	0	1	5	1	0
Ilowanapkalsem	Isila	40	2	14	1	1	16	0	5
Ikuningen	Isila	50	0	17	4	1	22	0	3
Ilenahua	Isila	35	0	13	2	0	15	0	0

Imai	Isila	80	0	14	1	0	15	3	3
Imaia	Isila	65	0	25	1	0	26	0	0
Lokahoen	Isila	15	0	5	0	1	6	0	0
Inakua	Isila	90	0	22	2	3	27	1	3
Isini	Loweniu	300	19	17	12	25	54	9	20
lowenapkaioaio	Loweniu	50	1	18	2	3	23	3	0
Lamanien	Loweniu	150	8	60	10	8	78	6	11
Lafna	Loweniu	65	2	16	6	5	27	2	0
Larkham	Loweniu	20	0	13	4	1	18	1	1
Lakalanga	Loweniu	10	0	3	4	0	7	0	3
Lenawawa	Loweniu	35	0	14	0	0	14	1	0
Ikunala	Loweniu	120	0	34	1	0	35	0	0
Ienolol	Loweniu	40	0	15	0	0	15	0	0
Koiyamikoiken	Loweniu	100	0	47	0	0	47	0	0
Lenamel	Leterkran	35	0	11	1	1	13	1	0
Ikasuk	Leterkran	15	1	5	1	1	7	0	1
Lowen	Leterkran	150	8	40	6	9	55	1	8
Loukearu	Leterkran	70	0	35	0	0	35	0	1
Loutaliko	Leterkran	80	6	32	2	2	36	0	1
Larewanu	Leterkran	215	5	64	6	3	73	9	3
Lamahnuel	Leterkran	60	1	20	1	2	23	3	7
Louwenakauk	Leterkran	120	0	39	6	1	46	2	4
Ienaupus	Leterkran	150	1	57	5	1	63		2
Lowia 1	Lowia	65	0	27	2	1	30	2	2
Lowia 2	Lowia	20	0	10	0	0	10	0	0
(namruemine)									
Lapangmeta	Lowia	40	0	12	5	2	19	2	2
Lenmahwut	Nariakne	100	2	28	3	8	39	10	3
Lenatom	Nariakne	50	0	12	2	2	16	4	0
Lenkurming	Nariakne	10	0	3	0	0	3	2	0
Imaen	Nariakne	160	16	22	7	9	38	7	15
Lowenelapen	Nariakne	340	19	96	12	51	159	14	30
Loulumas	Ip	20	0	9	0	0	9	0	0
Leninik	Ip	30	0	7	3	1	11	0	0
Lownara	Ip	100	1	24	1	2	27	3	3
Lenasiliang	Ip	85	1	15	1	3	19	0	0
Louanapkiko	Ip	230	1	52	5	6	63	4	3
Lenwai	Ip	100	0	31	2	0	33	1	3
Lamuitatel	Ip	80	0	18	1	2	21	3	2
Lowenakauk	Imaemcine	40	3	8	1	3	12	2	2
Lausien	Imaemcine	50	0	15	0	1	16	1	1
Lenating	Imaemcine	55	0	15	1	1	17	2	1
Lenus	Iru	20	0	5	4	3	12	3	2
Lounapikmita	Iru	35	2	5	2	5	12	2	8
Letaus	Iru	150	3	15	4	11	30	12	12

Lenaukis	Iru	25	1	8	0	1	9	1	0
Letabom	Iru	170	7	32	3	5	40	4	7
Lenpeukel	Iru	150	7	27	4	9	40	0	5
Lipkit	Iru	60	2	17	1	4	22	0	2
Lenimir	Iru	75	6	5	6	12	23	2	5
Lowkatai	Iru	150	23	25	9	17	51	13	17
Imasu	Iru	30	0	7	1	1	9	0	3
Ieulualu	Iru	30	4	7	2	8	17	2	2
Lowkowriawaria	Iru	20	0	1	0	5	6	2	1
Lowenapkamai	Yepa	320	25	95	10	35	140	18	10
Lamrau	Yepa	70	5	20	4	6	30	2	4
Lowenapiktuan	Yepa	80	8	28	4	8	40	2	4
Ikauris	Lowenu	75	8	28	4	8	27	1	5
Ipai	Lowenu	240	7	70	13	12	95	8	8
Lounik	Lowenu	70	2	12	8	4	24	1	5
Lowkweriya	Lowenu	200	7	47	8	12	67	0	5
Katinalulukien	Lowenu	35	1	8	1	2	11	2	1
Itunga	Lowenu	100	6	21	9	12	42	9	20
Lowkas	Lowenu	80	3	11	3	7	21	0	7
Lowanatom	Lowenu	200	5	31	7	22	60	10	15
Loaneai	Lowenu	180	11	20	4	18	42	9	16
Lenaio	Lowenu	70	2	13	1	10	24	3	7
Lamkail Asul	Tan Afiel	210	15	41	11	13	65	10	15
Ifa	Tan Afiel	30	0	8	5	2	15	0	0
Lowealu	Tan Afiel	50	0	15	5	1	21	1	2
Letoalul	Tan Afiel	40	0	9	1	0	10	2	1
Yeunang	Tan Afiel	15	1	5	1	0	6	0	0
Lamanamillieng	Lamatagen	30	0	10	1	0	11	0	0
Imaelone	Lowenakarien	70	1	9	3	6	18	3	5
Lamanafa	Lowenakarien	50	2	7	5	2	14	2	3
Iwarau	Lowenakarien	40	0	4	3	4	11	4	1
Loweniparu	Lowenakarien	70	0	11	4	2	17	1	2
Lowenapkal	Lowenakarien	45	5	13	1	0	14	0	1
Isaka		30	1	13	0	0	13	0	0
Imanaka		160	0	9	4	14	27	9	15
		8005	291	1939	309	531	2765		428

A very small number of village communities have seen 10% or more of their total population recruited for work in New Zealand. Figure 8.1 demonstrates graphically the levels of recruitment by village. It shows that a small number of communities have dominated the RSE workforce in the early years of the programme, but also that a majority of communities have had some involvement, with all but 41 of the communities contributing at least one worker.

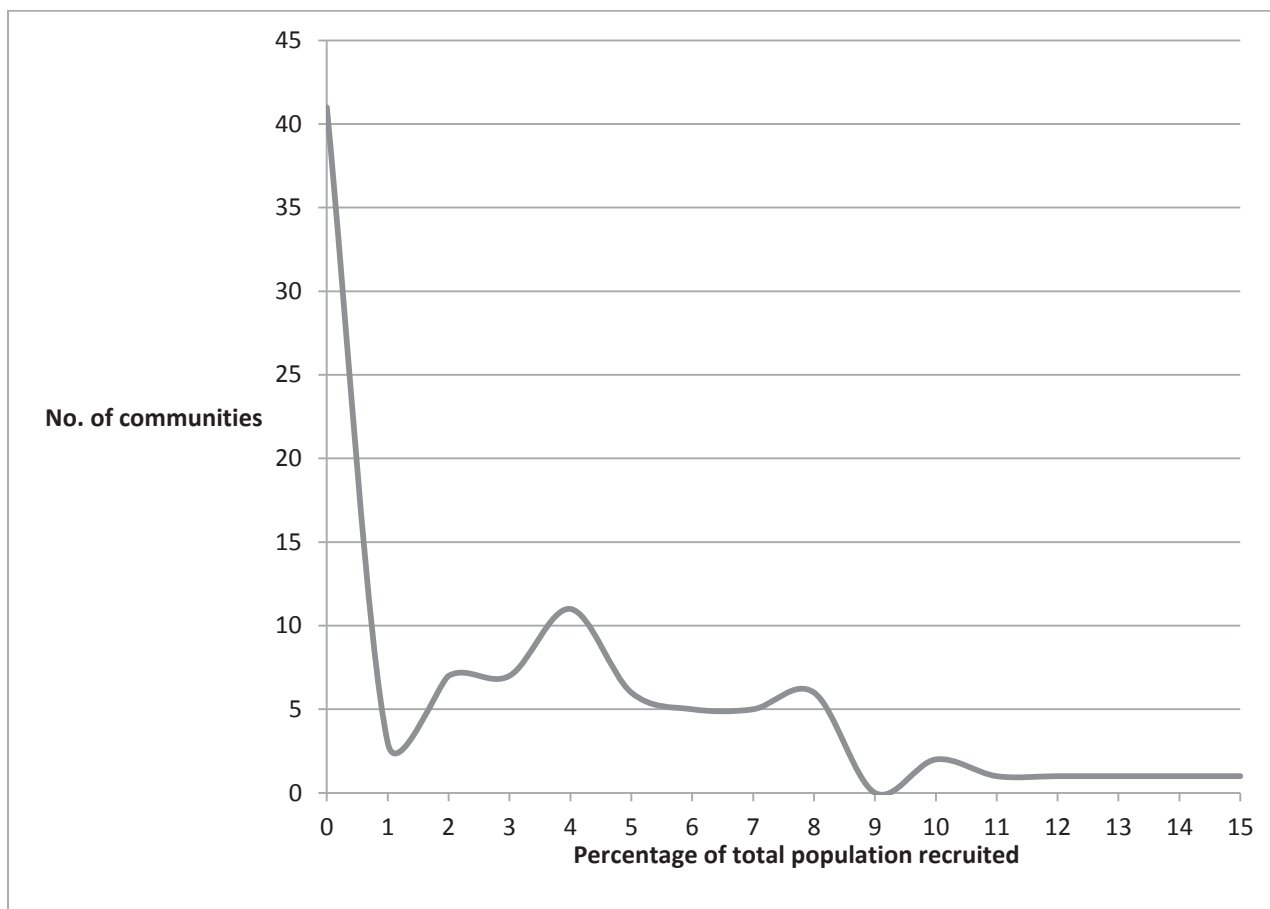


Figure 8-1 Recruitment Densities, West Tanna

Source: author's field research

The question of access is viewed from the perspectives firstly of territories (*tan*), secondly of zones (see Map 8.1), and thirdly levels of wealth. More high profile territories such as *Nariakne*, *Loweniu* and *Tan Iru* have been the subject of written information both in research and court documents¹³². Recruitment levels by territory are shown in table 8.3. What follows are some brief descriptive comments on each of the 14 territories visited relating to needs and livelihoods. These comments are sourced from various field notes made during August-October 2012, as well as drawing on previous knowledge I gained from residing in the territory of *Lowenakerieng* for two years.

Imatautau: The population is relatively sparse and there is a stark difference between the large mission village of Bethel at sea level and the remaining higher altitude villages. Mountain dialect is still widely spoken in the higher villages, and a belief in *kastom* in preference to Christian

¹³² Nariakne was central to research on land tenure carried out by Van Trease (Van Trease, 1983, 1987). Loweniu has an association with Lomai, a celebrated figure among early Presbyterian missionaries. Tan Iru was the first area to house a trading store on this side of the island.

denominations is widespread. A claim was made that the two highest villages were entirely subsistence (no use of money) but this is questionable. My white skin fascinated the children, however. The highest village (*Letapalanien*) is bypassed by tourists en route to the better known custom village of *Yake/* as it lies above the four wheel drive circuit. RSE recruitment in the territory is mainly confined to Bethel. Small sandalwood plants are much in evidence.

Isila: The placement of the joint French and English administration offices at Isangel in the centre of the territory was disruptive of the cultural networks. Commercial facilities have been relocated to Lenakel, but the provincial government and police remain along with one high school. Two languages are spoken, Lenakel which was used within mission sphere of influence, and the higher altitude mountain language. The population density is approximately 100 persons per square kilometre which allows for reasonable sized garden allotments. These were found to be widely dispersed within the territory in contrast to some territories where the gardens are all in close proximity to each village. The majority of the many villages are strongly subsistence based, with very little evidence of wage earning in the higher villages. Land was made available at the start of the century to Australian entrepreneurs to start a bungalow business in the coastal area, which provided some employment until they left in approximately 2010. That business has now been resurrected on a smaller scale.

Loweniu: The mission village of Isini (Sydney) dominates the coastal strip and part of *Loweniu* is now urbanised by Lenakel township. The tan is a very narrow strip of land with high population density, however the location of the provincial hospital within the tan offers waged employment for some. Higher villages suffer from a lack of space with the dividing creeks nearby on both sides of the village, particularly Lamanien where 150 people live in tight conditions. The RSE is known to people in the higher villages, some of whom have prepared passports. A family in *Lenawawa* feel that they have been excluded while “agents” from lower areas look after their own families. Some women in the highest village of *Koiyamikoiken* were born in Tongoa and Epi islands, indicating a level of migration to Port Vila and beyond. One higher village specialises in growing kava for sale within Tanna, and many villagers have planted small quantities of sandalwood.

Letekran: *Letekran* is the first of the “islands”, territories which do not reach the coast. It is the last of the tan from the south end to include a large custom village (*Jenaupus*) at higher altitude. The largest of the lower villages, *Lowen*, has two nakamaal, the smaller being used mainly by people of *Nambruemene*, who were driven out from Loweniu in the nineteenth century and took refuge here. Access is difficult and at the time of the field work heavy rain had destroyed vehicular access from the coast, leaving one small route in to the higher villages from the White Sands Road. The lower

villages have been actively involved in the RSE, while some grievances were expressed by people in the higher villages that they had not been included in any RSE meetings.

Lowia: This territory is sparsely populated and most of the nakamaal are unoccupied. People live in two villages within the main body of the territory and one further village (*Lapangmeta*) on the outskirts of Lenakel sports stadium. This village uses the historic *Lamenu* nakamaal, formerly a key crossroads but abandoned during the upheavals of the nineteenth century. One of the villages is part of the *Nambruimene* kinship group which fled Loweniu during the nineteenth century. *Nambruimene* refers to one of three sub-territories of *Loweniu*, and both *Koyameta* and *Nambruken* were in residence in such nakamaal as *Lamenu* at the outbreak of the *sipimanwawa* (“tribal wars”). The group which remained in Loweniu has benefitted from the placement of the hospital, the mission, and other modernising amenities including Lenakel town itself. The group which fled went to Letekran and to Lowia. The leaders of Lowia have prohibited any involvement in the RSE, resulting from recollections of indentured labour in Queensland. Elementary schooling is just beginning here, although one person works in a senior role in a government department in Vila. It was not clearly established whether the sparse population resulted from nineteenth century displacements, blackbirding, subsequent events or a combination of all these things.

Nariakne: *Nariakne* is really the first of three kinship groups in the territory of *Lowelan*. The main road to East Tanna runs through the centre of the territory with the consequence of good access by most villagers to work, most recently in the form of labouring jobs for Fletcher construction which was engaged to rebuild a quality road to the Yasur volcano. The people of the territory were absorbed by others during the nineteenth century with the result that they have some unique kinship structures based on four *namibs* (sub “tribes”) with strict rules about which *namibs* may intermarry (for a detailed account see Van Trease, 1983). The term *Nariakne* translates into English as “great expectations” and recruitment for the RSE has been particularly active within the two large central villages of *Imaen* and *Lonelapen*, the largest village on West Tanna. The villages boast higher than usual numbers of waged and salaried.

Ip: Tan Ip was described to the researcher in several conversations as a “hard place” (field notes, various), in reference to poverty. It is another of the “islands” and on most indicators the villages have comparatively few options for cash earning. A reticulated water supply scheme, which services the territories listed above, ends south of here and there is a severe water shortage during the dry season. Small tanks designed to catch rainwater, funded by World Vision, assist to some extent.

Imaemcine: *Imaemcene* is also an “island” which reaches to the highest point on West Tanna. There are only three villages and transport to these villages is difficult. Some resentment was encountered here towards the denser recruiting areas which were seen as supporting wealthier communities. Water supply is problematic and a small number of rain fed tanks are in place. There is a substantial bush area for hunting leading in to the adjoining Middle Bush district.

Iru: *Tan Iru* is a large territory in West Tanna terms. Several small villages are in coastal positions and tourism businesses are found within the tan, including coastal bungalows and control over paid access to a “giant” banyan tree. Market gardening is widespread within the tan including a separate produce market a short distance north of the main Lenakel produce market. RSE recruitment in the coastal villages is heavy.

Tan Yepa: *Tan Yepa* has the highest population density in West Tanna by a considerable margin. In contrast to most territories there is almost no bush area for hunting purposes and very limited gardening space. Most of the population lives in the large village of *Lowenapkamei*, where the housing density is high and there are an unusually large number of professional salary earners. This village has been a major source of RSE recruitment. There is no water scheme but there are higher than usual numbers of large water tanks to assist with the dry season. The territory overall has the highest recruitment rate on West Tanna.

Lowenu: *Lowenu* is heavily populated boasting several of the larger villages on this side of the island such as *Ipai* and *Lowkweriya*, as well as a lengthy coastal strip. *Ipai* attracts tourism on the basis that one of the twelve senior historic nakamaal on the island is here, and tourists visit *Ipai* as a “custom village” even though it is relatively modern. The large village of *Lowanatom* houses the catholic mission and one of the island’s French language secondary schools.

Tan Afiel: The community is in two distinct parts. The coastal area of *Lamkail Asul*, which consists of *Lamkail* nakamaal and several smaller related villages, maintains a family relationship with the higher villages, which are far less modernised. *Lamkail* has been a major recruiting area for Te Puke kiwifruit growers. The higher villages lack basic infrastructure and reliance on some cash cropping including tobacco was in evidence.

Lamatangen: This smaller “island” is unusual insofar as it consists of one small village (*Lamanamillieng*) only. The village is isolated from most facilities but does have the advantage of a low population density and a substantial area for gardening and hunting.

Lowenakarieng: The population of the territory is low and there has been a steady movement towards the coastal village of *Imaelone*, which has an official urban zone approved, allowing some

sale of land. Although the dream of turning the village into an urban centre, which received government approval in 1997, has not materialised, there has been some small commercial development in the surrounding area. The *tan* is notable for the placement of Tafea College, previously known as *Lowenakarieng* Secondary School, which achieved senior college status in 2002, and is considered the senior educational facility for southern Vanuatu. Most livelihoods within the territory are based on gardening. There is a chronic water problem for some villages, and a supply line from middle bush was recently cut off over a dispute related to the running of the school.

Tan “Isaka”¹³³: There is a vast area of land for gardening and *Isaka* village is coastal with good fishing access. *Imanaka* is known to tourists as a “Jon Frum” village within close proximity to the airport, and night dances are held some Fridays with support from other Jon Frum communities, but there are many denominations in this relatively modern village (note the high ratio of permanent housing) and many jobs are available in maintaining the nearby airport facility, maintaining the main road to Middle Bush, and working at the nearby tourist bungalows which are the largest on the island. Little interest has been shown in the RSE.

Table 8.2 shows from a territory perspective, how access to the RSE fits with two indicators of need. Statistically, a strong linear correlation exists between population densities of territories and levels of RSE recruitment ($r=0.694499$). This was one measure of wealth, in a livelihoods sense, which showed the RSE recruitment as decisively pro-poor.

I did not attempt to determine population densities by village because it would have required a more comprehensive study to accurately determine the land within each *tan* associated with each village or *nakamaal*; in some territories well defined and adjacent to the housing area but others with much more complex arrangements in place. Within the *tan* context, recruitment by density is the only indicator of the RSE being pro-poor. The proportions of permanent housing shown in column six give an indication of the modernisation levels of each territory prior to the RSE programme. Areas which had already gained, such as *Tan Iru*, enjoy higher than average levels of participation, whereas areas such as *Letekran*, which are poorer by this criteria, are marginalised. Statistical correlations are further explored in Table 8.6, p. 201.

¹³³ The correct name for this territory is unknown to the researcher.

Table 8-2: Recruitment by Territory

Territory	Population	No's recruited	Recruits as % population	Pop'n density (persons/sq.km)	Proportion of permanent housing (%)
Imatautau	335	7	2%	67	21
Isila	835	19	2%	104	25
Loweniu	890	30	3%	222.5	14
Letekran	895	22	2.5%	179	6
Lowia	125	0	0	42	5
Nariakne	660	37	6%	132	27
Ip	645	3	0.4%	129	8
Imaemcine	145	3	2%	145	11
Iru	915	55	6%	152.5	30
Yepa	470	38	8%	470	23
Lowenu	1250	52	4%	250	26
Afiel	345	16	4.5%	57.5	14
Lematagen	30	0	0	10	0
Lowenakerieng	275	8	3%	39	19
Isaka	190	1	0.5%	16	35

Five territories conspicuous by their needs are *Letekran*, *Lowia*, *Ip*, *Imaemcine*, and *Lematagen* referred to locally as "islands". As can be seen from the above chart, their respective recruitment rates are 2.5%, 0, 0.4%, 2%, 0%. The average recruitment rate is 3.6%, and the highest rate 8% (in *tan Yepa*). The five mentioned 'islands' share in common acute water shortages in three cases, lack of coastal access in all cases, difficult vehicular access in all cases, and no local source of waged employment. By contrast, *Nariakne* has benefitted economically from the urbanisation of Lenakel (see Rockell, 2007), *Loweniu* has ready access to wages and salaries at the district hospital which is located within the territory, *Isila* has several tourism ventures as well as the provincial administration, *Tan Iru* has Unelco, coffee, and some tourism ventures. If the RSE was to be allocated by territory on the basis of need a very different picture would likely emerge. One village located within *Tan Iru* which has benefitted greatly from the RSE is *Lowkatai*. Here RSE recruitment

has reached 15% and the village has undergone a transformation.¹³⁴ A *Lowkatai* villager commented that while the village has taken full advantage of the RSE there should be a policy for access to the scheme which is lacking (field notes, 15-9-12).

Secondly, I divided the area studied into four zones (refer Map 8.1) based upon the history and culture of the island as well as the distance from sea level. Zone 1 consists of those mainly coastal villages which can be driven to without the need for an off road vehicle. Zone 2 consists of those villages which can be walked to within an easy half hour from a major road. In the case of some territories, this zone is almost unoccupied, as these communities were deserted in the early twentieth century as people left the higher areas and began to live in coastal mission villages. Zone 3 requires either a 4WD vehicle or a substantial walk to gain access, typically between thirty and ninety minutes of walking. Zone 4 refers to higher altitude villages, typically more than ninety minutes walking required from the coast, referred to as ‘custom villages’ in many cases. Although the recruitment favoured the coastal areas, the proximity to the coast appeared to be a less critical factor than the position of the key contact or community leader being used by the recruiting company. A correlation was found between levels of recruitment and physical access described in this way, but not a particularly strong one. Populations of each zone and numbers of recruits can be summarised as follows:

Table 8-3: Recruitment by Zone, West Tanna

Zone	Population	No. villages	No RSE Recruited	Recruits as % of pop'n
1	1925	19	95	5%
2	2115	25	92	4%
3	3405	44	101	3%
4	560	11	3	0.5%
3 (excluding tan Yepa)	2935		63	2%

The recruitment from zone 3 is inflated due to high levels of recruitment from *tan Yepa*, particularly from *Lowenapkamai* village. In addition to the points already noted, the former manager of the largest business on Tanna Island, one of those few to speak English in a manner readily accessible to

¹³⁴ Such a transformation includes a prevalence of modern housing, and many villagers commenting that life is easier now. A more detailed discussion was actually derailed by the Vanuatu elections!

Europeans, has been acting as “agent” for Seasonal Solutions, the largest RSE recruiter. A fellow community leader was a licensed RSE agent in the first few years of the programme and holds a Masters level qualification from an Australian university. The accessibility of these people to New Zealand businesses may have outweighed any physical distance. The perception within some other villages (fieldnotes, 23-9-12) that *Lowenapkamai* is favoured so that people are recruited from here at the expense of other communities, is based on the notion that the community leader referred to is a licensed agent, whereas he is merely someone looking after his community. The proportion of permanent housing in *Lowenapkamai* at 25% is only slightly higher than the overall proportion on West Tanna of almost 20%.

The villages of zone 4 have been almost completely ignored by (or are disinterested in) the RSE but the total population of these villages is relatively small. Some of these villages have begun to send children to school very recently and given the prevalence of English literacy testing in early recruitment most would not have been eligible to go to New Zealand. Villages in zone 3 enjoyed, overall, about half the access to the RSE of the coastal villages, if Tan Yepa is excluded. Some have expressed frustration and a sense of exclusion. Of the 44 village communities visited in this zone, 24, or just over half, had at least one recruit or some involvement in the RSE. Of 25 villages in zone 2, seventeen or two thirds have participated to some extent. In zone 1, there were 19 villages and 14 or three quarters had been recruited from.

Based on the evidence thus far it may be reasonable to state that the RSE has favoured those villages which fit the description of “modernised”. After examining the data for “modern” villages in zones 1 and 2 and the data for certain “custom” villages in zones 4, a village was designated modern if it had more than 20% permanent housing (pre-RSE), more than 5% of the total population earning some form of salary or wage, and 5% or more of the total population at secondary school. At the other end of the scale, if the village had than no more than 1 person at secondary school, no more than 5% permanent housing, and no more than 1% on salaries, it was designated “custom”¹³⁵. All other village communities were designated intermediate. This approach differs marginally from the division into four zones, although many of the zone 1 villages registered as modern and many of the zone 4 villages registered as custom. Discretion was used in borderline cases.

¹³⁵ The term ‘custom’ has several understandings, some of which have been traversed in anthropological literature. In this context I have made some designations based on material or economic indicators, but a definition often used by villagers themselves is that of rejecting church mission influences, which comes close to a rejection of modernity in any form.

Table 8-4: Recruitment by Modernity

Village category	Total population	Total population of RSE workers	No RSE workers as percentage of population
Custom	1015	8	0.08%
Intermediate	4035	131	3.2%
Modern	2955	152	5.1%
All	8005	291	3.6%

It was clear from this data that the RSE on Tanna has slightly favoured those already modernising village communities which tend to be closer to the coastal areas, but equally, that many other communities have not been ignored.

A perspective related to, but not identical to modernity, was to categorise villages in terms of what they produce. Observations were taken in every village about the type of produce grown and whether it was sold in a local market. Villages were then classified into three types: those that were strongly market oriented with large amounts of cash cropping, those villages where the majority of produce was grown for consumption with surpluses sold on the market, and those villages which for various reasons did not have produce taken to market in any quantities. A nuanced view is required as there are modernising villages for which growing produce for market is not a feature of that modernity. The results are shown in table 8.5.

Table 8-5: Recruitment by Cash Sector

Village category	Total population	Total population of RSE workers	No RSE workers as percentage of pop'n
Strongly subsistence	1560	35	2.2%
Surpluses regular to market	5000	181	3.6%
Market gardens dominate	1445	75	5.2%
All	8005	291	3.6%

Thirdly, correlations were taken between RSE participation and three indicators of wealth, these being permanent housing levels, paid workforce participation, and secondary schooling levels for the 97 villages. There were significant (but low level) correlations between recruitment levels and new housing and recruitment levels and secondary schooling levels. New housing resulting from the RSE was excluded from the count (the total number of permanent houses on West Tanna is 531 of which 74 were funded from the RSE by late 2012). The correlation between levels of secondary schooling and RSE participation was the highest of those measured, but it was not possible to remove from the data those who were at secondary school as a direct result of the RSE so in this case there is an element of mutual causation. However this is precisely what one might expect; a more modernised village with more western educated leaders taking advantage of an opportunity to further increase the levels of education. A fourth correlation was taken between recruitment levels and the principal locations of family members living in Port Vila. Table 8.6 demonstrates these correlations using grouped data.

Interpreting the fourth column, it may be reasonable to propose that villages with a higher than usual number of family members living in the wealthier communities of Port Vila have less need of the RSE. To take one example, the village of *Lenaio*, which is the village of the President of the Vanuatu, has a higher than usual number of people living in Port Vila. They tend to live in the wealthier locations as described in Appendix 4. In every village I established in which Vila communities families lived as urban migrants, and a wealth ranking was assigned based on the data presented in Chapter 7. A negative correlation in this column is consistent with the RSE being pro-poor.

Table 8-6: How Levels of Recruitment compare with Several Wealth Indicators

Wealth Factor	Proportion of Permanent Housing	Numbers of children at secondary school proportionate to population	Proportion of adults earning salaries	Community members living in Vila
r-value for linear correlation	0.235	0.260	0.107	-0.126
Pearson's r-values using grouped data	0.374	0.371	0.169	-0.146

Summarising the above discussion, to the question of whether the RSE is adding to the existing stratifications or inequalities between the wealthier and less wealthy communities, the answer is a qualified yes. The major qualification which must be placed upon the above discussion is that although the programme could be seen to favour those villages which were already on a modernising trajectory, the individuals chosen within those villages were mainly not those who already had other sources of finance. With respect to this equally important question, information gathered is more cursory. For example at *Lowkatoi*, which is arguably the greatest beneficiary village of the RSE on West Tanna, 25 adults had taken part in the RSE. It was possible to establish the circumstances of 14 of those 25 workers, all of whom were referred to as farmers or gardeners.

Some key points to emerge:

1. All the early recruitment meetings have taken place at sea level. This in turn reflects the amount of time that is available to recruiters to carry out this function combined with a lack of geographical awareness. For a New Zealand recruiter an extra hour driving up a hill should not be an impediment but most recruiting has not been carried out at village level.
2. Recruitment focus reflected ease of communication rather than an awareness of where the areas of greatest need were. Co-incidentally in some cases the fit between ease of communication and greatest need has been reasonable, *tan Yepa* providing one such example.

3. Not all communities wanted the RSE. Some elders with memories of blackbirding were opposed to labour export. For example nobody from *tan Lowia* has been to New Zealand and several informants pointed out that at the early stages the *abu* (elders) made it clear they did not want people to go to New Zealand.
4. A pattern of access is repeated at three levels. West Tanna is demonstrably the most accessible part of Tanna Island. Given that recruitment within the province favours areas of greatest accessibility, it is not credible that less accessible parts of the island as a whole would be subject to higher levels of recruitment than West Tanna. This means that possibly more than 500, but less than one thousand rural dwelling Tannese have been recruited for the RSE between 2007-2012, over which period in excess of 10,000 RSE visas have been issued in Vanuatu to several thousand individuals. This observation is consistent with claims of an urban recruitment bias.

8.4. Community and Cultural Impacts

Three interlocking themes are addressed in this section using diverse sources. Firstly the nature of the gains from the RSE in the West Tannese context are noted, taken mainly from fieldnotes. Specifically the questions explored are how was the money spent, and how did the benefits to the individual earner fit with the needs of the community? Secondly, what are the observable cultural impacts? The cultural impacts arising from the RSE are difficult to separate from modernisation effects in general, so it is in the next section that some sense is gained of the pace of change economically. Thirdly, were there unforeseen consequences at any scale?

Tannese culture fits the description given of “co-operative individualism” (Lovell, 1980, p. 44 citing Margaret Rodman) and the comments in the early part of this chapter regarding the development of a chiefly society must be treated with caution, as this was not a simple case of moving from Sahlins’ (1963) “big man” society to the “chiefly” societies of Polynesia. In Wendy’s view Tannese participation in the RSE “has become more individualised and they look out for themselves but the good thing is lots of kids at school. A lot of money goes to education and circumcision ceremonies” (Wendy, 13-11-12). In 2012, no cases were found of community-wide projects resulting from RSE participation on the west side of Tanna Island.

Further, any claims made by employers to be interested in community development projects had not materialised on West Tanna by 2012. Only one case was found of a small project involving an employer contribution, that being a water pump adjacent to Isini village in Lenakel. Two main

sources of RSE employment, the South Island grape industry and the Bay of Plenty kiwifruit industry, dominate recruitment on West Tanna.

Few villages had community funds. Exceptions included a village which hosts tours to the “giant banyan tree” (mentioned above) which has a community fund and a treasurer, and has begun discussions on how that money may be used. Another village reported having a treasurer and a village fund relating to a road maintenance project. The large village of *Lowenapkamai* does have some community projects, significantly a literacy project in which Bislama is taught to those women who are totally reliant on indigenous language. However, the many RSE employees from this village could not describe a project in which they were involved. When asked whether they would be agreeable to a 10% tax or tithe on their RSE earnings which might go, for example, to a village water scheme, their answer was that they were already being taxed in New Zealand and in many cases tithed by churches in Vanuatu (*Lowenapkamai* community meeting, 30-9-12).

Many Tannese who took part in the RSE were asked how their earnings were spent and in every case they were spent individually. The great majority of responses were school fees, new houses, some solar panels, and in a few cases, land near Port Vila. There were also some small business ventures. Of 14 people individually canvassed at *Lowkatoi*, all had spent their remittance money on new houses or house improvements, with those who needed to spending money on school fees, and one on a kava machine for use in Vila (*Lowkatoi* meeting, 27-9-12). As the *Lowkatoi* experience began in 2008 with Tannakiwi (see Connell & Hammond, 2009), the only licensed agent to operate on Tanna in the first year of the RSE, many had been to the Bay of Plenty. In *Lowkatoi*, 10 completed new houses were identified along with a number of housing projects at various stages.

Individual does not necessarily mean individualised, and in many cases the decision to come to New Zealand was determined at household level and the benefits from the earnings could be seen to have wider application than a single household, for example a new water tank might store water for several households. But it is in contrast to the description given by Jerome in Chapter 5 of the worker(s) being selected by a village leader and of all the earnings being held by the village authority for a major project such as a school. Cases of shared benefits could be seen in solar panels which powered lights in a small number of related family houses as well as the house of the worker (field notes, *Letekran* 5-10-12).

Less tangible benefits were also in evidence, and could be seen to have contradictory effects. An RSE worker in upper Tan Yepa (*Lowenapiktuan*) had built a substantial concrete water tank and placed a lock on the tap. The effect was twofold. Recently acquired skills of planning ahead were on display in

an area where planning for the dry season was beneficial; on the other hand the practice of placing some form of ownership on the water resource was relatively new to the island.

The effects of modernisation on a society dependent on kinship authority may inevitably involve challenges. Ketty, also from *Lowenapkamei*, expressed concern at the loss of community values. In particular she noted that many tasks which have traditionally involved reciprocity such as building new houses required the labour of young people in *Lowenapkamei*. As a result of their time in New Zealand, some RSE returnees now have an expectation of being paid for these tasks in *vatu*. Of even greater concern to her, she noted a lack of respect for community leaders. “They even argue with the *jif* [chief]. You just don’t do that” (Ketty, 12-10-12). In other words everyone is now expecting to be paid money for everything. In this view, rather than the RSE leading to a boost in community benefit there has been some undermining of the reciprocity which has been the cornerstone of the Tanna economy for hundreds of years. The loss of chiefly authority was also referred to as a principal concern in a Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) prepared for the village of *Letaus* (field notes 24-9-12)¹³⁶.

However a more nuanced view may be needed. Many of those who had been to New Zealand were present during a group discussion held at *Lowenapkamai*. Several of the younger participants sat quietly to one side and contributed only marginally while they were referred to as “lazy” by an older and more vocal member who had a query about his pay slip. This point will be revisited in section 8.6.

This brings us to the question of deliberate and unforeseen consequences. Firstly, circumcision ceremonies, along with yam harvest and marriage ceremonies, are a key element of those rituals of reciprocation which allow for the distribution of subsistence on Tanna Island. When external cash is used to bolster the ceremonies the effects can be contradictory. In one respect cash from the RSE is channelled into the community in a culturally accepted manner, but expectations of what is contributed may be raised to levels which become unrealistic without the external cash injection. The role of remittances in bolstering but perhaps transforming the nature or scale of kinship obligations is not well understood. Secondly, the growth of permanent housing poses a similar challenge to the structure of land tenure, which is the cornerstone of Tannese society, as do longer term cash crops such as coffee. The society is structured in such a way that the *nakamaal* provides the permanence, while individual families restructure their hamlets around this central feature. The growth of permanent housing at least implies that the village structures must become more fixed in

¹³⁶ Pastor Pita Iesual is acknowledged for making the appraisal (Lohman, 2007) available to the researcher.

place. This is a matter for further research. Further unforeseen impacts were discovered in an appropriately random manner. For example, Lenakel hospital has one aged X-ray machine, which according to the duty doctor was close to being worn out by conducting medical clearances (field notes, 19-10-12). However, the most concerning of the negative impacts, not strictly unforeseeable, was not found on Tanna. To find examples of communities which lost significant amounts of domestic production/domestic labour through the RSE it was necessary to go to Epi (see section 8.6).

8.5. Economic Impacts

Several indicators showed that the cash sector of the Tanna Island economy is growing strongly, this growth co-inciding with the arrival of the RSE. In my Masters study of the Lenakel area in 2006 I used several indicators to examine the emerging cash economy on West Tanna, one of which was store turnover in Lenakel. I concluded that there had been very little increase in store turnover since the 1990s even though nearly 40 stores had been built in Lenakel to effectively take trade away from the long standing Tafea co-operative society. I had used a number of indicator stores to come to this conclusion. In 2012 I updated the exercise, using the same four groupings of stores based on the size of store inventory (see Appendix 6). Whereas in 2006, the highest grossing (category 4) stores were estimated to have an annual turnover of 15 million vatu and the next highest (category 3) 6 million vatu, corresponding estimates in 2012 were much higher, those in category 3 grossing about 25 million vatu per year and those in category 4 grossing 50-70 million per year. A total turnover estimated in 2006 at around 200 million vatu had increased to several hundred million vatu in 2012, with even the smaller (category 2) stores now turning over in the region of almost 10 million vatu. This information is shown in summary form in Table 8.7. Another way of accessing this information is by the number of VAT licenses issued. In order to pay VAT a business is required to earn 4 million vatu annually. In 2006 there were 20 VAT licenses issued in southern Vanuatu, of which 15 were on Tanna Island. In 2012 these numbers had doubled to 49 VAT licensed businesses of which 30 were in Lenakel (information supplied by Customs Department).

Table 8-7: Store Turnover 1990s vs Now

Store Category	1990s	2006		2012	
		Turnover (000,000s)	No's	Turnover (000,000s)	No's
Category 1	n.a.	0.5	6	1	3
Category 2	n.a.	3	15	10	16
Category 3	n.a.	6	11	25	7
Category 4	200 million	15	3	60	3
Total (approx.)	200 million	200 million*		500 million	

Source: the detailed examination of the Lenakel stores is shown as Appendix 6.

*This figure included a further 11 stores on the road between Lenakel and Isangel in the 2006 study.

Store turnover was only one indication of a fast growing cash economy. In 2006 I noted that there were approximately 50 licensed taxis on the island (Rockell, 2007), these being four wheel drive passenger licensed vehicles. That represented the majority of Tanna Island vehicles at the time, as vehicles restricted to personal use are rare. While I did not obtain an equivalent taxi number in 2012, the total number of vehicle registrations on Tanna grew from 1173 at 23 September 2011 to 1222 at 27 September 2012¹³⁷ In other words new vehicles are now arriving in Tanna at the rate of approximately 50 per year. Even allowing for very fast wear and tear there are now several hundred vehicles on the island.

However the growing cash economy may only be in small measure attributable to the RSE. Tourism levels are a more obvious driver. In 2006 I counted 11 bungalows and guest houses on Tanna Island of which only one fitted the description of a "resort". In 2012 this situation had changed dramatically. Six accommodations were officially classified as resorts and another 30 accommodations were classified in equal numbers as bungalows and guest houses. In 2006 4,000 tourists came to Tanna but in 2012 this number had grown to 15,000, being a 375% increase in tourism (information supplied by Tafea tourism authority). The small Twin Otter aircraft which used to bring these tourists to Tanna daily has been replaced with a much larger aircraft. There is no obvious reason why the advent of the RSE would have sparked a dramatic increase in tourism or vice

¹³⁷ Information supplied by provincial authority. Car registration is a one-off process on Tanna without any re-registration requirement.

versa. The tourism operations are not RSE related, and the two phenomena appear to have coincided.

Finally, the economic effect of cash cropping should not be forgotten. It was a common observation from RSE employers that the opportunities the RSE represented could not be matched by local activities, usually stated with reference to the wage differential. Lai's village of *Imasu* has rejected participation in the RSE. He is concerned that too many RSE workers don't really help their communities, either wasting the earnings or spending it on themselves (field notes, 26-9-12). He sees the future in sandalwood and market gardening and two brothers have a full hectare of sandalwood each. This is in contrast to most villages. Only eleven out of the ninety seven villages visited have no sandalwood, while at the other end of the scale 28 of the 97 villages have plantations. The majority of villages have several farmers with a smaller number of plants each sprinkled among other produce rather than a "hectare"¹³⁸ or plantation. A single sandalwood tree at optimum weight may return about 30,000 vatu and some farmers have thousands of trees growing. Potentially a single sandalwood grower may sell over a hundred trees in one season for several million vatu, whereas an RSE worker who saves over \$15,000 is earning only one million vatu in a season. However there is an annual sandalwood season with quota. In 2012 the sandalwood season was 15 August to 17 November and the national quota was 135 tonnes, which at optimum weight could mean about 5,000 trees (In other words if fifty farmers sold one hundred trees each nationwide that would use up the quota). Most sandalwood on Tanna was about 8 years old (various field notes) in 2012, having been planted around the same time. It is ideally harvested between 15-20 years of age, so it can be expected that competition for access to quota from about 2020 will be fierce. Sandalwood, vanilla, kava, and to an extent coffee are all crops which are grown in small plots or small plantations in Tannese conditions without undermining land tenure arrangements. Coffee, sandalwood and vanilla are grown for export and kava for local markets. One further crop which grows well in Tannese conditions is cannabis, and issues around its income earning potential are likely to be similar to those in New Zealand.

The growth in the economy needs to be put in the context of a rapidly growing population. A sample of 35 villages (see Appendix 7) showed 53% below adult age and 20% at pre-school age. Whereas 20% of the New Zealand population was under 15 in 2011, 38% of Vanuatu's total population was under 15 in 2009 (Government of Vanuatu, 2009). Contrary to a statement made in the World Bank/Waikato University research (McKenzie & Gibson, 2010), school enrolments in Vanuatu have

¹³⁸ The term hectare is used in two ways in West Tanna, a few more educated farmers meaning the measurement of a hectare, while many use the term to refer to a very small plantation, usually between a quarter and half a hectare.

steadily increased. This is unlikely to be driven by the RSE as primary school enrolments do not require school fees. The increase in secondary enrolments is therefore a function of those passing exams at year 8 but the effect of the RSE can be to allow many students whose families would have struggled to pay the fees to continue with their education. Secondary school enrolments in Tafea province increased from an estimated 1170 in 2006 (Rockell, 2007) to approximately 2,000 in 2012.¹³⁹ This is a substantially greater increase than could be accounted for by the RSE programme alone.

8.6. Epi Island

Two communities on Epi were visited. The first was *Mabfilau* village in the South West and the second was Lamén Bay, north Epi. There were two main reasons for spending some additional research time in Epi Island. The Vanuatu Commissioner of Labour had indicated that Epi had introduced some measures to ensure community benefit from the RSE, and as the picture emerging on Tanna was one of individualised earnings, I wanted to see if there was a contrasting picture. Secondly, Lamén Bay has been the focus of at least two other research efforts related to the RSE, and this offered opportunities for triangulation.

The recruiting pattern in Epi was different from Tanna, where a picture had emerged of recruitment from many small villages in low numbers. Even in the busiest recruiting villages such as *Lowkatai*, *Lamkail*, and *Lowenapkamai*, no issues were reported regarding loss of domestic production. Nearly all recruitment from Epi was channelled through one well known community leader who acted as employer representative. This entire recruitment exercise resulted from the chance event that a former missionary to this area, the Rev. Horwell, had a daughter who married a senior executive of an RSE approved enterprise in the Motueka fruit growing area near Nelson. The long standing principal of Epi High School was approached for assistance in recruiting workers and initially very large numbers were recruited from the immediate area of Lamén Bay. The recruitment levels on Lamén Island in particular are much higher than most Tannese villages¹⁴⁰.

¹³⁹ The Ministry of Education's 2010-2011 statistical report states 2,250 in 2011, while local sources estimate 2,000 in 2012. The 2006 figure was based on local sources.

¹⁴⁰ An early estimate is that about 100 workers have gone from a population of about 600 on Lamén Island, or about 18% of the population, perhaps higher. The highest comparable figure from Tanna is 16% at Lowkatai village, but Lowkatai is part of a wider community of subsistence.

Similar comments regarding the impact of the RSE on domestic labour were made by several people interviewed, including the community leader mentioned.

Someone has gone to New Zealand from every yard. Emelda and I think we need to share with south Epi. The peak employment time is February to June when men and women go in large numbers.

On Lamén Island March is the time for the yam harvest and May-June is the time to prepare the gardens for planting yams. I have been to Motueka four times. One community leader says that too many men from here are going on the scheme now. I think there has been a change and there has been a loss of community spirit for making gardens. (Renaldo, 7-11-12)

A further discussion with an informant suggests that much of the food for the people of Lamén Island is now paid for at the Lamén Bay market, this food coming from the other side of the island. (fieldnotes, 8-11-12)

The same observation was made by the community leader widely seen as the agent.

Going back to your earlier question, plenty are out and this affects community work and that is why I don't want so many from Lamén Bay and Lamén Island. We must spread it out and now we have this discipline issue but during the fruit season the community is empty and when it is time for community work everyone is away. Plenty have no garden and they must buy food in the market [this point is corroborated from several sources]. The culture of gardening has dropped badly.

DR: When some lose ground, this is in Lamén Island?

Yes plenty have to pay for food at market.

DR: If they leave a garden I usually hear "it is ok we have *abu*", but I think you are telling me differently.

They are becoming more dependent on their extended families. Instead of making a garden the wife is looking after the kids, especially the young couples, and *abu* has not as much strength, and next year they go back again and there is some reluctance to do the garden over and over so he must give some kind of payment.

DR: Before RSE a brother or *abu* would support but RSE is changing things because they are out a very long time again and again and I think some *abu* are getting cross?

Yes and there is some discipline issues in the family, you don't have papa and mama staying with family and respect falls down big time. (Emelda, interviewed 6-11-12)

A community meeting was held at *Mabfilau* village (35 adults present). A number of younger RSE workers stayed quietly in the background, in similar manner to the meeting at *Lowenapkamei*. After an initial reluctance to talk, this discussion did move to more specific discussion about community stresses. The researcher asked how many people could be away at one time. One elder spoke out

about *abu* being taken for granted looking after the children, gardens, etc. Some workers recognise the huge contributions at home but far from all. This caused a general quietness round the room. (fieldnotes, 4-11-12)

Evidence was not found of the measures of which the Labour Commissioner spoke, however the transformation to higher quality permanent housing on Lamén Island and to a lesser extent, Lamén Bay and *Mabfilau* village was evident. One small community project, a womens' community house funded largely from RSE earnings, was also found in *Mabfilau*.

8.7. Summary

This chapter sought to answer three key questions. These concerned the pro-poorness of the RSE, the impact on traditional culture and particularly on embedded economies, and whether benefits were accruing in a functional way. A process of modernisation is underway in Vanuatu, largely welcomed by communities who have sufficient experience of migration to be aware of lifestyles associated with development. It remains an open question as to how far this modernisation can proceed without undermining the embedded economies of the islands. Tanna is unusual insofar as the island did not experience the degree of land alienation common to much of Vanuatu in the early twentieth century (R. C. Thompson, 1981; Van Trease, 1983), and many essential elements of a culture of reciprocity have been retained, however the desire for universal education stimulates a need for a cash economy which is now growing and may eventually over-ride these elements. The RSE contributes to, but does not drive, this process.

Recruitment for the RSE in many respects is well described by the biases (four wheel drive, dry weather, etc) described by Robert Chambers (1983), with some modifications. In most instances there is evidence of an "agent" who is articulate in English in circumstances where ready access to English is not common. The recruiters therefore cannot be considered as development workers seeking to assist the most in need. Any reasonable assessment shows that the recruitment drive does not favour areas of greatest need rurally, but areas of easiest communication/ greatest modernity. Nevertheless, recruitment on Tanna is widespread with over half the villages on West Tanna deriving some benefit from the RSE. One positive effect of this dispersion is that the potential for key negative effects such as loss of domestic production have largely been avoided, at least on this island.

Very few projects were encountered which would directly contribute to a significant development initiative, such as a new school, this in some contrast to the situation in 1970s Fiji and the New Zealand rural employment programme described in Chapter 5. This observation is not in itself a cause for criticism, but it does imply that an unfree labour model is not best suited to the development needs of rural Vanuatu. A contrast between recruitment in Tanna and Epi is that of one intensive recruitment from one relatively small village area, which has been favourably reported on in its transformative capacity but has exhibited these downsides. Other unintended consequences have been relatively small.

This research was effective in answering questions around RSE access, although with greater resources a longer time spent in a small number of high recruitment villages would have confirmed the practice of seeking workers who did not have other livelihoods. Similarly, the immediate material benefits of the programme in the form of schooling and new housing was demonstrable in many cases. The issue of cultural impact requires ongoing research, and although cultural resilience continues to be a salient feature of rural Vanuatu, particularly Tanna, the growth in cash economy is unprecedented in the light of a surge in tourism, and no audit exists to check how rapid change impacts on cultural essence.

Chapter Nine. Interpreting the Fieldwork in Context

9.1. Introduction

The evidence gathered by the primary research from the last four chapters is now placed alongside discursive threads sewn in Chapters 2 and 3. Chapter 2 located the RSE workers within a system of global capitalism, with particular reference to substantive citizenship, the role of migrant labour in precarity, and the meanings of exploitation and empowerment. Seven issues were highlighted, some of which have been elucidated by the research and some of which point to further research:

1. What does a detailed examination of the recruitment process tell us about levels of empowerment/disempowerment within the RSE in comparison with other programmes?
2. What are the relative negotiating positions between employer and employee in relation to such matters as hours of work, summary dismissal, and pay rates?
3. How does the “indentured” aspect which ties the employee to one employer during a season impact on the worker’s experience?
4. How does the lack of New Zealand citizenship impact on the lives of the workers?
5. Is the practice of the RSE in accordance with international covenants?
6. What impact does the RSE have on precarised employment conditions in the horticultural/viticultural sector?
7. Are workers becoming dependent on the work programme to finance increased expectations, or are they using it strategically?

Chapter 3 sought to give meaning to a critical approach to development within a Pacific context. The development of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) from which most RSE workers are sourced was seen to require an element of transnationalism and the ingredients which made up the “extended MIRAB” discussion, in various combinations, were central to island development. A further four issues were highlighted from a critical standpoint which should steer away from an uncritical view of development based on remittances within the migration-development nexus:

1. Congruence between the stated aims of the programme and its practices. For example, are the skills being acquired on the programme relevant to the needs of the sending communities? Are the claimed benefits flowing to the sectors to which the benefits have been ascribed?
2. Protection of indigenous cultural forms. How does the work programme impact upon indigenous culture? Although it is acknowledged that living cultures are in constant

change, is that change being driven in a way which does not undermine key elements such as reciprocity?

3. Sustainability of the process. Is access to the programme being maintained after expectations have been raised?
4. Material benefits from remittances. The potential highlighted by government is for the development of outer islands. What is the nature of those benefits and who gains?

Not all of the above questions were adequately answered in this research project and some suggestions for further research will be made in Chapter 10. The primary research was open ended and further issues were raised, such as positive and negative impacts on families. A set of critical agendas was seen to drive the essential nature of the RSE:

- Growers' demand for reliable and compliant labour
- Employer power as a means to achieving reliable and compliant labour
- Political considerations domestically such as overstaying concerns and jobs for New Zealand citizens
- Contested notions of development under World Bank hegemony

The next two sections of this chapter focus on the labour context from Chapter 2. Section 9.2 pursues the quest for reliable labour and how that relates to the first four numbered issues (above) raised from Chapter 2. Section 9.3 addresses human rights obligations under international labour covenants. Section 9.4 focuses on development issues raised in Chapter 3, including the issue of stress on the island culture.

9.2. The Quest for Reliable Labour and its Implications

9.2.1. Reliable Labour.

New Zealand horticulture's demand for reliable harvest labour in the twenty-first century has no precedent in New Zealand's production history.¹⁴¹ For such a precedent, we must look to places such as the San Joaquin and Imperial valleys of California and to Southern Ontario, which are referenced in Chapter 2. Reliability was emphasised by every grower surveyed and repeated in interviews, in terms which often denigrated the New Zealand unemployed. There is a subtle but important distinction between reliability and compliance. Even without the pressure of the seasonal harvest,

¹⁴¹ As an example, wool producers need to get the wool off the sheep while the sheep is dry and the wool of a desired length, but if one opportunity to harvest the wool is missed another can be found. In contrast fruit which is not harvested in time may be lost and an enterprise may fail.

earlier employers (such as Murray, 6-6-13; Mitchell, 1-7-13) cited reliability as the reason for seeking offshore labour. A workforce which insists on human rights and agitates for better pay may be considered unreliable in the sense that the labour for harvest is not guaranteed. A supply of compliant (guaranteed) labour required an element of class struggle¹⁴² from the employer, canvassed in section 9.22.

In the precarious environment which had developed in the fruit industry, many employers have shown a preference for contract labour over undocumented labour, even though the cost is higher. It is justifiable to characterise the horticultural labour market as precarised on the grounds that the RSE workers have been explicitly cited as the core workers (for example, Brendon, 22-6-12)) during the time when a large labour supply is needed. Other workers are seen as manageable provided the core labour is there for stability. Yet the core workforce is on year by year temporary contracts.

It is not always a question of replacing erratic labour with consistent labour but of filling gaps in the labour market. This is when we enter the extended “3-D” discourse (section 2.2.2), and several examples have been given of both RSE and earlier migrant workers carrying out tasks for which domestic workers simply cannot be found (pruning in the Coromandel, cutting scrub in remote locations in the 1960s, lengthy RSE nightshifts in the Bay of Plenty)¹⁴³. Whereas power over undocumented labour may be linked to the employers’ ability to use threats of deportation, such crude tactics may have less application in a contract labour scheme. The next section examines what has been learned so far about how reliability relates to the power of the employer.

9.2.2. Employer Power : sources and manifestations.

Employer power has been sourced to the manner of recruitment, including the interview process and subsequent evaluations, the nature of the contracts which are signed, the compliance of sending governments, and the stereotyping of workers who lack citizenship. It manifests in a high degree of control over work hours, workers’ lives, and forms of remuneration, often with benevolent intent. A growth of employer power in the RSE is observable between 2007 and 2013, at least in the Vanuatu context.

¹⁴² The term is used here in the same sense as used by labour historians.

¹⁴³ This component puts some perspective on the suggestion that New Zealand workers are lazy. The label is part of a rhetoric which helps to sustain the ideology of employment of guest workers. It is an example of how stereotypes feed in to the power issue.

Power and Recruitment

Three forms of recruitment have dominated the RSE programme in Vanuatu. The first is the mass interview, in formal terms a series of individual interviews which do not separate the individual from the group. A key difference from the mass recruitment of the *bracero* programme detailed in Chapter 2 is the absence of mass physical inspections. Early mass recruitment in Vanuatu (from 2007-2009) maintained at least the form of individual interviews, particularly those conducted by the late Dick Eade in Port Vila.¹⁴⁴ Physical inspection as part of a recruitment process was last experienced by Tanna Islanders during World War 2, when they were lined up by American troops and inspected for suitability as servicemen¹⁴⁵. Although there is no line up there are, however, more subtle ways of choosing workers according to perceived physicality. Employers are now able to recruit first on the basis of reliability and second on physicality as determined by age, sex, and a discreet inspection at interview time. Although the interviews which took place did take the form of individual interviews in many cases, there was nonetheless an appreciation on the part of the interviewees that they were taking part in a mass recruitment exercise, and it seems appropriate to coin the term the “mass individual” interview.

In the second form, smaller employers engage in an ongoing relationship with a single village community. Village leaders play a large part in determining who comes to New Zealand. Examples include a small village in Saval’i which partnered with a small apple producer in Hawkes Bay and two villages in Banks Islands which partnered with a North Island asparagus grower. In this model, a bond is formed between the employer and the small region which stands outside the terms of any contracts. “Did we form a bond? We really did” said Joseph (interviewed 24-3-12). When Joseph restructured his business in 2012 he made a special trip to the far side of Tanna Island to inform the communities in person that he could not continue with the arrangement they had entered into (field notes, 16-10-12). However, this model of recruitment is less common. The third form of recruitment requires a dual role for team leaders, who are asked by employers to recruit from existing family networks to replace those not returning.

Evaluations may be viewed as an extension of the recruitment process. The evaluation techniques of New Zealand employers do not reach the level of formal evaluation applied by the Canadian SAWP (see Chapter 2). Examples were found of workers who had changed employers between seasons whether or not they had received an evaluation from their last employer. It is therefore possible to locate the unfreeness of the labour more precisely on the spectrum suggested by Lerche

¹⁴⁴ Refer to the interview with Chrystal in section 7.5.

¹⁴⁵ My friend Kwai, now in his 80s, from Tanna Island, was recruited in this manner to help American troops.

(2007). The unfree labour model applies during a single season, during which time it is not effectively possible for a worker to initiate a change of employer. There is, however, an element of freeness evident between seasons.

Power and Contracts

A key manifestation of power as expressed in many RSE contracts is the requirement to be available to work at all times, effectively on call seven days a week. When a senior government official was queried about these clauses his response was that it was similar to his own contract (Official#2, 26-4-12). There is an implied lack of awareness of the issue of unfree labour within government circles. The moderating effect on what is contained in the “take-it-or-leave-it” employment contracts is the New Zealand government’s requirement to uphold New Zealand law, which ensures standard minimum labour rights, which however have limited application to short fixed term contracts.

The inclusion within contracts of such matters as “house rules” (see section 6.4) adds a further specific dimension to the unfree labour, insofar as the whole life experience in New Zealand is thereby subsumed into the working contract (cf Bailey, 2009). Employers control the lives of the migrant workers far more than they would control the lives of New Zealand workers. For example the consumption of kava is subject to the individual whim of employers, who control the habits of the workers. Those employers (such as Les, Mitch, and Royden, interview details in Chapter 6) who believe kava to be harmful elevate their knowledge of the relaxing narcotic of the Pacific (see Aporosa, 2012) above recognised experts. In some circumstances workers could challenge this right but in practice they would not through fear of an early departure. The majority of employers interviewed were found to be accepting of kava consumption to varying extents. Employers of indigenous Fijian workers in 1970s agriculture did not exercise this level of power. Similarly, the over consumption of alcohol when not at work would not be a dismissable offence for New Zealand workers but any consumption of alcohol can be a dismissable offence for ni-Vanuatu RSE workers.

The role of the sending state

The history of the *bracero* programme demonstrates that the sending state may have contradictory roles in the protection/repression of migrant workers. In the early days of the *bracero* programme, the Mexican state was able to prevent braceros working in the racially oppressive state of Texas (see Chapter 2, p.30), but by the time of the programme’s closure this was no longer the case. In Vanuatu, as in Mexico, the stand down list or “blacklist” underpins employer power. There is nothing in the RSE policy to prevent RSE workers joining unions, but the Vanuatu government has demonstrated its willingness to work with New Zealand employers to stifle active labour agitation

and to police the behaviour of ni-Vanuatu in New Zealand. On one occasion when ni-Vanuatu migrant workers showed signs of organising as unionised labourers the blacklist was used to quash such behaviour, even though their actions were lawful.

Shem's blacklisting (see Chapter 7, p. 169), upon returning to Vanuatu provided a clear message to future RSE workers not to think of themselves as unionised workers. The size of the Port Vila stand down list, reported to the researcher at the 700 figure in late 2012¹⁴⁶, suggests that the list has become unmanageable and although some believe that a fair process is followed the context strongly suggests otherwise. One experienced agent (Sophie, interviewed 10-8-12) who said that all parties are consulted before a name is added to the blacklist also emphasised that the employer was looked to as the authoritative source of information. The ESU does not have the capacity to keep accurate records of which islands people have been recruited from, hence it is not credible that it has the capacity to manage a fair complaints process over a blacklist involving hundreds of people. In the process of stifling any worker agitation, the role of team leader as a conduit for employer power rather than worker power was cemented at this time. Complaints about corrupt team leaders which have surfaced in several interviews bear weight when viewed in this context. Shem still asks the question "what have I done wrong?" (9-8-12) while providing an example of what is likely to happen to any worker who stands out as a labour activist.

Not all team leaders saw their role solely as one of carrying out employer requirements, and some were seen as helpful in raising concerns and enjoyed the trust of their fellow migrants. However, the perception of team leaders as ineffectual at raising issues was voiced repeatedly by workers. Some team leaders spoken to explicitly saw their role as ensuring the compliance of the workforce, while others, such as Renaldo, expressed their desire to look after the needs of their people but expressed frustration at not having sufficient command of English to be able to articulate grievances adequately. RSE employers, who use the team leaders for recruitment purposes, have tapped into an existing power relationship in Vanuatu society in order to achieve a compliant labour force.

Power and Stereotyping

A complex relationship exists between stereotyping and employer power. Stereotyping may not be strictly an instrument of employer power but may be seen as the handmaiden of the exploitation of migrant labour. In developing his ideas on how migrants regulate labour markets, Bauder (2006) acknowledged the influence of Bourdieu in developing the significance of substantive citizenship.

¹⁴⁶ Information supplied by an officer of the ESU, 2012 (ESU sources).

Non-citizens have been attached a variety of labels throughout history¹⁴⁷ which have justified practices that might not be acceptable if they were imposed upon full citizens. However, the roles of employers and their pastoral care workers are contradictory. There was some evidence of employers defending the rights of their workers to fair treatment in New Zealand society and to some degree of social participation, in circumstances where the workers have encountered prejudice in the wider community (e.g. Brendon interviewed 22-6-12, field notes, 24-5-12). Conversely, some employers were prone to attach labels to ethnic groups about whom they know little. This is further attested by the lack of knowledge of the home islands of the workers on the part of several employers visited, though this was more manifest in the Fiji scrub cutting experience examined in Chapter 5.

That stereotyping is not solely of workers by employers is further demonstrated in cases where employers were found who adopted the prejudices or fears of their existing work force. For example southern Vanuatu is culturally very different from central and northern Vanuatu and prejudice is commonplace against the Tannese¹⁴⁸ who are in Vila in large numbers as internal migrants. Further prejudice exists against Francophone ni-Vanuatu who tend to be dominated by Anglophones. A further issue which has a less direct but important connection with employer power is the dependence of the workers.

Power and Dependence

Very few cases were found, in either urban or rural Vanuatu, of high dependence on the RSE programme by individuals or families. The urban evidence pointed to a mixture of cases where some used the RSE in a life changing way and others used it as a source of income for a time, before resuming a similar pattern of life, whereas in the case of rural people the RSE was often an interlude from subsistence gardening. It is debatable whether Port Vila has reached the stage described by Connell (2011) in which circulation has given way to permanent urban migration and the existence of a landless proletariat. This suggests a key point of difference between the operation of the RSE in Vanuatu and the operation of the SAWP in Mexico. Without excessive dependence, the agency of the migrants is preserved.

In a small number of rural cases, whole village communities may have reached a level of dependence on the RSE, such that if access was withdrawn the acquired loss of domestic production could

¹⁴⁷ Of numerous examples which could be given, Neil Foley's (1997) examination of the racialisation of migrant workers in Texas in mid-twentieth century is pertinent.

¹⁴⁸ In this instance I rely on knowledge acquired from living and working in Vanuatu as a VSA volunteer, privileging my own perceptions and awareness to feed in to the research evidence.

translate into hardship. In Vanuatu as a whole, with the earnings: GDP ratio below 2%, there is not likely to be excessive dependence on the RSE. This matter is considered in a later section.

The manifestations of power - The Hours

Excessive hours have not arisen as a grievance issue because the workers and the employers have coincidental reasons for wanting the hours to be long. In this respect the RSE experience is no different from the Fijian Indian migrant experience of the 1960s (see Chapter 5). In the kiwifruit packhouses 60-plus hour weeks on nightshifts are the norm, and apple industry night shifts are only slightly shorter. Women migrants spoken to about night shifts have expressed their approval in many cases. Conversely the loss of work hours through weather interruptions have caused widespread grievances. Echoing Basok (2002), the hours of work are determined almost exclusively by the harvest needs of the crop.

It is illustrative of the nuanced ethical framework that labour contractors are better placed than direct employers to provide work every day, and long unbroken work periods have been more common in this context. The ongoing reprieve from long hours in most work places has been the Sunday religious observance which is still widely viewed as rest time but even that time is under negotiation. It is often ignored by labour contractors and some team leaders fully accept that the religious observance is put aside at peak harvest while others such as the group of Tongans working for Drew (interviewed, 22-6-12) have continued to successfully insist on Sundays off work. The Saturday Sabbath for Seventh Day Adventists is no longer accepted in a majority of work sites.

The Pay – Exploitative?

The position of the RSE in respect of global exploitation is ambiguous. While the New Zealand horticultural export sector is required to remain competitive within a system of global exploitation, the RSE programme has provided a small barrier against a 'race to the bottom' (Chan & Ross, 2003; Wells, 2009). Literature which deals with the race to the bottom specific to primary production is rare (see Overton & Murray, 2013; Overton, Murray, & Banks, 2012), but there is a large body of literature on counter movements such as fair trade which seek improvements for third world growers and sometimes workers. These movements may be insufficient to outweigh relocation of agricultural production towards greater reliance on food sourced from developing countries (for example the tomatoes eaten in the United States grown in Mexico highlighted on p. 21), combined with masses of unregulated migrants. The regulatory requirement for paying at the New Zealand minimum wage and good housing requirements provide a small but significant difference from past practice. Although this

was seen to frustrate some employers who would like to pay slower workers piece rates at a level where they may fall below the minimum wage, in the bigger context this insistence has been a critically important line in the sand. Much of the RSE labour operates in the AB zone in Figure 2.4b, still within the precarised sector but at a level where savings are possible in the lower wage economy. From the perspective of economic exploitation therefore the remaining concern is the role of the RSE in bedding in lower piece rates in the sector, hence the ambiguity. Given that this was a pivotal concern around the *bracero* programme (Galarza, 1964), and was a risk highlighted in early RSE planning documents, the relationship between the RSE and the rates of pay in the sector is in need of dedicated research.

9.2.3. Summary.

The recruitment process is unchanged at one level from the *bracero* programme where a mass of workers, in no position to negotiate terms, seek limited chances in a developed world setting. However there is a degree of respect between the parties and an expectation of human rights which is fundamentally different from early TMWPs. The ingredients of employer power in the case of the *bracero* and the SAWP consisted of universals such as mass recruitment, blacklists, evaluations, and non-negotiable hours. Most of this list is replicated in the RSE.

When compared to some earlier programmes, the element of indenture is reduced because of the workers' ability to change employer between seasons, without the extra element of control found in standardised evaluation processes. However the migrants' lives remain highly controlled as outsiders who have only limited opportunities to belong to New Zealand's wider society. Issues of power and issues of labour exploitation are hard to separate but the overwhelming evidence on the RSE is one of benevolent power. Employers have been prepared to go to many lengths to insist on total power, with the intention of paying reasonable rates from a Pacific Island perspective. However this leaves open the question of rates in the sector for local workers.

The fifth question from Chapter 2, concerning the rights-based framework of international covenants, is addressed explicitly in the following section.

9.3. Is the Practice of the RSE in Accordance with the Covenant New Zealand has Signed?

The foregoing discussion may present RSE workers as passive and exploited, given to occasional outbursts of “hidden struggle” (R. Cohen, 2006). Such protections as the workers do have rely mainly on rules established by the New Zealand government, and in accordance with Article 6 of the ILO Migration for Employment Convention (1949). The essential element of Article 6 is that guest workers be treated on the same terms as domestic workers, firstly in the field of remuneration, accommodation, and the benefits of union membership, secondly in the provision of social security, thirdly in taxation, and fourthly in legal proceedings. Government officials (for example Official #2, interviewed 26-4-12; and Official #3, 23-5-13) made clear that in planning the RSE programme there was an intent that contracted migrant workers receive the exact same treatment as all New Zealand workers. A twofold difficulty arises. Firstly, the industry is precarised. Secondly, some rights the workers have in theory such as the right to mediation services are not realisable in practice.

The first field in the convention, which concerns remuneration, accommodation, and free association, can be addressed in the context of government strategy. The total number of RSE employers at the time this research commenced was 130. There has been a slight decline in numbers, mainly due to the absorption of some earlier registered employers by employing cooperatives, but also due to a failure by some to meet the standards needed to renew their registration. One lapsed RSE employer (AJ, interviewed 8-4-13) who failed to gain re-accreditation rationalised the position in terms of what he saw as too much red tape. The strategy followed by government, acknowledged by three senior officials (Official #3, Official #6, Official #4), was to not raise the bar too high in the initial stages in the expectation that employers would raise their performance with respect to human rights and conditions. Looked at from this perspective, most RSE employers continued to improve over time and a small number were left out. To take the obvious example of accommodation quality, a major Hawkes Bay employer which used a high proportion of caravans to house workers was found to have almost entirely replaced those caravans with other forms of accommodation by 2013 (field notes 23-4-13). The choice of accommodation type does not deal with some issues of overcrowding or inadequate heating covered in section 6.72, but it does indicate that the authority of Labour Inspectors is respected. In the field of remuneration, it is clear from section 6.5 that RSE workers are not discriminated against solely because they are migrants. However their ability to “enjoy the benefits of collective bargaining”, as stated in Article 6, is shown in the preceding section to be curtailed.

The second field concerns social security. There is diversity in the way in which insecurity issues have been addressed both between undocumented labour and government programmes over time. In the case of the RSE the lack of sick leave and accident provision which can be repeated yearly as new contracts are drawn up is in contrast to usually understood basic employment rights in New Zealand. However, temporary workers who are drawn to the harvest from within New Zealand often experience the same difficulty which can be seen to arise from precarious or casual employment rather than any lack of citizenship. Two differentiating points are that New Zealand based temporary workers have the opportunity to become permanent in some cases, and secondly that New Zealand based temporary workers are not seen as the essential core of the workforce. The issue was solved pragmatically as private insurance, compulsory since 2008, became another deduction from pay. By contrast, undocumented workers are not covered by the same conventions and with no oversight and low pay seem unlikely to have any form of protection against accidents and illness.

The incidence of reported accidents within the RSE is low and few instances were uncovered. In some early cases, these did cause the workers to lose any financial benefit from the trip to New Zealand. Overall, the RSE compares favourably with the situation described for the SAWP in which cases were uncovered of workers continuing to work when sick or injured for fear of repatriation (Basok, 2002). The RSE programme has at least the appearance of a gentler working environment.

There is another source of security which is collective. There were isolated instances of fellow workers providing the relief that was missing through official channels. This was highlighted by one employer who had difficulty explaining to the DOL why certain workers were earning less than the minimum wage because their time had been given to picking the designated area of a sick worker (field notes 10-4 -12). If this mutual assistance was widespread, it could be seen as an example of island culture coming to impregnate the New Zealand work environment but there is at least equal evidence of a New Zealand work ethic penetrating the island communities with increasing individualisation.

In summary, there is a belief within New Zealand government that the core principle of equal treatment in the ILO conventions is upheld. The evidence from this research shows that it is either upheld or that processes are in place to meet its requirements in many respects, but not in respect of two key provisions. Firstly the privatisation of insurance against accident or injury at the workers' expense, while providing a more reliable process than having workers at the margins of New Zealand's social security system, does indicate a failure to meet obligations. Secondly, although there is no legal impediment to any form of unionisation or other association, the workers have no

collective bargaining power. I now move to issues raised from Chapter 3, and the benefits which accrue from a Pacific migration-development nexus.

9.4. How has the Primary Research Addressed the Development Issues Raised?

Firstly, functionality (see section 3.5) is explored by looking for congruence between the developmental claims which have been made for the RSE along three dimensions of the programme. Secondly, the cultural impact of the programme on rural Vanuatu is addressed. Thirdly, basic macroeconomic data is used to gain perspective on the impact of the RSE relative to other development forces at the macro-economic level in Vanuatu. In so doing, the issues of congruence, cultural protection, and material benefits are addressed.

9.4.1. Seeking Functionality.

Employer and Worker Views on Development

Employer views on development fell into three broad camps. A number of (mainly smaller) employers demonstrated a commitment to the development of communities within the Pacific Islands. Their views on development were eclectic but tended to contain elements of modernisation paired with basic needs approaches. At the other end of the spectrum, some employers (for example Royden, interviewed 12-4-12) saw no need to have a view on island development at all. They perceived the RSE as simply a labour supply project. A number of officials re-inforced the idea that the RSE is primarily a labour supply project, for example Official 5 claimed that the RSE benefitted from being driven by market needs with development needs superimposed. Others (for example Oliver, interviewed 23-3-12) had a view which linked development to economic growth, consistent with current New Zealand government policies. It did not automatically follow that those with the greatest interest in development were also those who upheld rights of migrant workers as set out in the Migrant Workers Convention as in some cases those who were concerned with community development saw the need to exert a high degree of control over the labour force to ensure that money was not wasted in New Zealand.

Worker views on development were expressed in the aspirations and needs of individuals or their immediate families. From a macro-economic perspective this is inconsequential, but at village level it cannot be assumed that the sum of household benefits equate to community development in the absence of community wide initiatives. In other terms, immanent development (Cowen & Shenton,

1996) cannot be assumed to meet community needs. However, these perspectives were consistent with a programme which gives access to the poor.

Access to RSE opportunities

This research showed that recruitment in Vanuatu is founded on networks of convenience, involving various forms of personal contact. An intense recruiting programme for the RSE and a dramatic change in the material life of the villages near Lamén Bay is the unintended legacy of a former Lamén Bay missionary, simply because the missionary was destined to have a son-in-law who became chief executive of a large South Island pack house. An entire territory on Tanna is in transformation partly because a single community leader in that territory has a good command of both English and business practice, which he acquired in the service of a 1950s adventurer named Bob Paul¹⁴⁹, still known widely as Master Paul throughout much of the island. A significant part of the early recruiting was carried out by a New Zealand expatriate, the late Dick Eade, who spoke good Bislama and could communicate easily with New Zealand employers as well as potential workers. A further feature of the recruiting turned out to be the ability to recruit quickly in large numbers. This is demonstrable by the predominance of sea level meetings on Tanna (see section 8.2) and in individual accounts of how mass recruitment was carried out. No company appeared to have the resources to have a New Zealand based representative spend large amounts of time in Vanuatu. Vanuatu based employer representatives claimed to be making a conscious effort to recruit in areas which would otherwise be ignored (Sophie, 10-8-12, Wendy, 13-11-12), although even these people have family commitments which offer a conflict of interest with a professional role.

In a country which is constitutionally committed to customary land tenure and consequently emphasises the agrarian sector¹⁵⁰, it is important to know whether the contribution made to this growth by the RSE has any relevance to the development of the least advantaged areas. Evidence is mixed. In the urban area of Port Vila there was ample evidence of recruitment in the poorest areas of town (see section 7.2). Several employers (Gregory, 10-4-12 Les, 13-4-12, for example) are attempting to move away from these areas because they see the urban employee as “streetwise” and have a preference for outer island workers on the grounds of perceived superior fitness and better behaviour. In the West Tanna example the poorer villagers have been given good

¹⁴⁹ Bob Paul left Vanuatu at independence and retired to Brisbane. Previous attempts to make contact with Bob Paul were unsuccessful, but the researcher has read an unpublished manuscript written by Bob Paul on his experiences of Tanna Island.

¹⁵⁰ Clause 74 states that the “rules of custom” shall form the basis of ownership and use of land in the Republic of Vanuatu, while Clause 73 states that all land belongs to indigenous custom owners ((Government of Vanuatu, 1980)

opportunities by recruiters, but the parts of the island which are least developed infrastructurally have been bypassed, leaving a significant ongoing role for development agencies. In parts of West Tanna small World Vision water tanks can be found in abundance (various field notes, September 2012) in places where very few RSE workers can be found, in contrast to other areas where large numbers of RSE workers enjoy an abundance of piped water. The potential of the RSE shows in a small number of places where there is water shortage and the RSE workers have put remittance money into well managed concrete tanks, but this is atypical. The same observation applies to electricity. It is commonplace for RSE workers to return from New Zealand with a solar panel, however a disproportionate number of workers from Tanna are from zone 1 (map 8.1) where there is a supply of 24 hour electricity and solar panels are only one electricity option.

Skills Transfer

When asked about skills, many employers referred to changes of lifestyle, which could be construed as Westernisation, and the exposure to a Western existence has affected aspirations in diverse ways. For example, a people who have not previously required housekeeping practices are beginning to build permanent houses in ever increasing numbers. Culturally ingrained attitudes to housekeeping and hygiene found in “developed” countries are contestable, particularly from an ecological perspective, and it may be too early to assess both the extent and health related consequences of changing practices.

Overall, employer claims regarding skills acquisition have been consistent with other research findings. Some employers may even have underestimated the level of transferable horticultural skills to be found, for example, in the art of pruning. Other skills learned in an orchard/farm environment were in evidence, such as the use of basic construction equipment, and some workers were demonstrating planning skills, not necessarily requiring time-dependent behaviour. The construction and management of a water tank in a drought vulnerable area on Tanna where water which would previously have been lost to the ocean is now stored for several months in the dry season with the contents of the tank carefully monitored provides an example of practice which, while being beneficial to the worker’s family, is potentially a model for others to follow.

In summary, there is a high degree of congruence within the RSE programme around skills transfer and many of the perceived development goals. The same level of congruence cannot be found in relation to claims made around the direct benefits for the poorest regions in outer islands, such as those made by New Zealand’s Foreign Minister in 2006 (see page 3), given the laissez-faire model of recruitment.

9.4.2. The Protection of Culture.

In assessing the RSE's impact on customary tenure, four issues are likely to be of critical importance (cf Macpherson, 1999). First, does the engagement lead to a loss of domestic production (either through loss of labour supply or loss of foliage)? Second, does the modernisation of some sections of a community impact adversely on others? Third, are there ideological changes that would affect critical relationships within those communities? Fourth, are there levels of associated urban migration causing rural depopulation?

Although isolated cases were found in which there was a destructive or "crowding out" (cf Fraenkel, 2006) effect on local subsistence production and foliage, this was atypical. On Tanna, no cases were found where subsistence production or cash cropping had been significantly affected. One informant did volunteer that RSE funds had reduced pressures on village women to get produce to market, so some reduction of garden production can be seen as a positive choice (field notes, 20-8-12). Of greater concern is the increasing stratification of the island and how this may affect the bonds of reciprocity. Although some employers (such as Ian, interviewed 19-11-12) were interested in spreading the benefits of RSE participation to poorer areas, they were constrained by existing networks, so it could not be realistic to expect that such employers would make a planned contribution to development. On present indications those communities which have benefitted from the RSE will continue to benefit. The need for development agencies to work in such fields as rural water supply is therefore undiminished.

Ideology-relationships

It is beyond the scope of this study to make definitive claims on cultural change. Concerns noted in Chapter 8 about the declining power of the *jifs* (chiefs) are sufficient to warrant further study, given that village leadership is at the heart of kin-based economy. Tannese society fits the description used by Margaret Rodman of "co-operative individualism" (cited in Lovell, 1980, p. 44), and the village communities are communities of small households (cf 1963). In some of the villages surveyed, the leaders played a pro-active role in the visit, and respect for these leaders or *jifs* was observable. However, other observations signalled a change from decisions dependent exclusively upon chiefly authority to an increase in the power of commercial relationships at micro level. At two large village meetings, one in West Tanna and one in a large contributing village in Epi, a small number of older workers spoke directly about their experiences in New Zealand while a larger number of younger workers remained apart from the conversation. Caution is required in interpreting these situations,

but these younger workers are sandwiched between the pressures to become modern wage earners and savers and their traditional community roles.

The twin cultural element of rootedness and mobility highlighted by Bonnemaïson (Bonnemaïson, 1984, 1994) is under pressure, but the pressures for change cannot be solely or even principally sourced to the RSE. His metaphor of the tree and the canoe refers to Vanuatu society in general, but with particular reference to Tanna. The rootedness does not arise from a relationship to a housing cluster but to the *nakamaal* and the “traditional” housing is able to move in a flexible way as families change, but always with the *nakamaal* as the reference point. However a change to permanent cement housing, which has been one of the principal uses of RSE funds, has the potential to change this fundamental component of Tannese life in much the same way as more “permanent” crops such as coffee and copra impact the intergenerational nature of garden tenure (see Rockell, 2007). No one could quite envisage what the long term effect would be of housing development, but it does suggest some loss of centrality of the *nakamaal* to the community.

Urban Migration

As primary research progressed there were initial indications of the RSE contributing to higher levels of urban migration. An interview with Harold (27-4-12) revealed that some workers from Samoa were gaining skills from their time in New Zealand which made for an easier transition to Apia. Concerns were raised in informal discussions in Vanuatu about islands such as Tongoa losing their RSE workforce to Port Vila over a period of time (field notes, 24-7-12). While this research did not conclusively discount these concerns the balance of the systematically gathered evidence did not support the contention that the RSE was accelerating urbanisation. Firstly, only four of approximately thirty workers interviewed in Port Vila migrated after their RSE experience started (see Table 7.2). Secondly, the previously¹⁵¹ existing levels of circulation within Vanuatu discount evidence that the RSE is having a major role in promoting urbanisation. Thirdly, urbanisation is more likely on logical grounds to correlate with a high degree of dependence by workers on the RSE and in most cases this was not evident (see above). Fourthly, pressure on land availability from rapid population growth on Tanna was fuelling urban migration prior to the RSE.

Combining these separate elements, the gradual impact of money can be seen to redefine customary tenure in as yet unpredictable ways, even though there is no instant or dramatic loss of sovereignty through kinship. This observation is consistent with the long standing but poorly

¹⁵¹ The information from West Tanna in this research shows high levels of bilocality, but some acknowledgement should also be made of the pioneering work of Bedford (1973).

understood position adopted by Engels (1968) in the 'Origin of the Family', and suggests that an element of teleology which can be found in Engel's position may, in the end, be justified. However, the speed at which change happens could be altered by either a degree of planning in who benefits from the RSE or simply an enhanced awareness by employers of the need to spread the benefits to areas of greatest need.

9.4.3. The Migration Development Nexus and the Economic Benefits to Vanuatu.

The immediate benefits to the participants have been dealt with in detail in Chapters 6 and 7, and are not re-iterated here. At macro-economic level, if Vanuatu retains its share of the RSE workforce at most recent levels, now touching 3,000 workers per season in 2014, overseas earnings of one billion vatu per year could be a realistic aspiration, requiring average earnings of close to a 350,000 vatu each tour, just above current estimates. The 2009 estimate for Vanuatu's GDP was 63 billion vatu¹⁵², giving a ratio of RSE earnings to GDP of approximately 1%. Although this is less than half the total remittance money received by Vanuatu (for example Australia has now begun its own contract work programme, some work continues to be available in New Caledonia, and increasingly work is to be found on cruise ships), nonetheless the contrast is stark with high end remittance countries such as Samoa in which the same ratio is 20% of GDP (see table 3.1). Another yardstick is provided by tourism, from which Vanuatu earns approximately 17 billion vatu annually (see section 7.1).

It could be considered from this quantitative assessment that the RSE was inconsequential in Vanuatu, whereas there is a widespread perception of the RSE as a kind of panacea. Signs promoting New Zealand are ubiquitous and while in Port Vila carrying out this research, it was a regular occurrence for this researcher to be surrounded by prospective labourers, in spite of repeated efforts to ensure that everyone understood this was not a recruitment exercise. Tannese villages which had not shared in the benefits of the RSE were sites of frustration, and numerous conversations were entered into with people who wanted to come to New Zealand. It does underline a central point about the promotion of the RSE within the migration-development nexus. Most literature, include the econometric work (see section 3.4.1), refers to a surge in remittances resulting largely from diaspora. The benefits in sheer quantitative terms from contract work programmes are considerably smaller in the Pacific context. This points to a central contradiction in the rhetoric around the RSE, where migration optimism is underpinned by the benefits of free labour

¹⁵² This information supplied directly from the Vanuatu Department of Statistics. World Bank data places 2012 GDP for Vanuatu at US\$787m, equalling 74 billion vatu on current conversion rates, this measurement slightly discrepant from the claimed 2.3% annual growth rate for the period, probably due to currency fluctuations.

and growing transnational communities, whereas the high priority given to border control in this work programme mitigates against this possibility.

The development rhetoric both in the sending and receiving country may be exaggerated. A comment made by Oliver (interviewed 23-3-12) “Dennis there is some serious coin going into these countries”, is debatable. A senior government analyst who was involved in planning the RSE policy volunteered that the level of remittance money from the RSE is relatively small (Official #1, 7-5-12). From a macroeconomic perspective the ‘win’ to Vanuatu is small.

Throughout West Tanna scant evidence could be found of the RSE remittance money contributing to village wide community projects. This contrasts with Jerome’s village in Fiji (see section 5.45) where the rural work programme money directly funded a school. The implication is that the benefits, other than those accruing directly to small households, depend largely upon an economic multiplier effect. In the village of Mele, close to Port Vila, which is a showpiece for the RSE insofar as it has been visited by the World Bank, photographed, and visited by the recent head of the RSE programme (interview Official #3, 23-5-13), there is a leadership requirement from the pastor that all involved must build a new house. Consequently, Mele is one of a small number of villages in Vanuatu which has been physically transformed by the RSE¹⁵³ but the number of villages which have been similarly transformed in the islands covered by this research amount to five on West Tanna, three on Epi, and a small number on Efate. There are approximately 300 villages on Tanna alone. Were the current momentum to continue over a longer time frame, combined with a deliberate effort on the part of recruiting personnel to recruit more widely, then a more equitable result is possible, but at this point the RSE has raised the hopes of large numbers of islanders to a “stolen dreams” (Macpherson, 1990) level. If some employers (such as Les, Gregory, and Poppy) fulfil their intent of moving to other sites of recruitment within Vanuatu such as Santo, the disappointment in Tanna is likely to be long lasting.

¹⁵³ Mele is also a leading tourist village but it is the RSE which is directly responsible for a predominance of new housing (field notes, 31-7-12).

9.5. Summary

The first two substantive sections of this chapter could point in opposite directions. The first is a narrative which says that employer groups will seek compliant labour without the rights of labour as usually understood within international labour conventions, while the second is a narrative which claims that New Zealand agricultural employers have a belief in fairness, overseen by a government which respects international labour conventions. The contradiction is superficial, as the first narrative is about power, and the second about humanity.

The power narrative says that workers' lives are dictated, in Basok's (2002, p. 14) words "by the ripening of fruit." Those few instances in which their cultural preferences take precedence are reducing and any attempts by the workers to assert their rights under ILO conventions to organise collectively are stifled. From a humanity perspective, to take accommodation quality as an example, that which was seen as acceptable accommodation has changed greatly over the course of half a century, from tents and tin shacks in the 1960s to quality motor camp facilities used by most New Zealanders today.

Viewing the development issues raised in Chapter 3 through a lens of functionality, the study has produced evidence for the following statements. Firstly, there has been a meaningful skills transfer in places least expected such as horticultural techniques. Secondly, there is a congruence of employer and worker views and expectations. Thirdly, there has been only minimal adverse effect on customary land tenure and practice, in a modernising context. The weak point is that there are exaggerated claims and expectations regarding some of the development benefits and there is no sense in which the RSE replaces the need for rural development planning and assistance, because it is not sufficiently pro-poor to target the most vulnerable/deprived communities.

The chapter to follow directly addresses the central research questions from Chapter 1, the first two of which rely on the above discussion.

Chapter Ten. Conclusions

This chapter is effectively in two parts. The first three sections (10.1-10.3) address the central research questions in historical context. Claims which have been made around the RSE within a migration-development nexus are suggestive of a paradigm shift in migrant worker programmes, which depends on the development claims as much as on rights based claims. The questions are therefore addressed in reverse order. In the second part, starting at 10.4, observations from the research are used to suggest areas of improvement in the administration of the RSE and to examine the wider implications of the research findings, along with areas for future research.

10.1. The RSE Workers' Rights

A conceptual understanding of unfree labour has emerged as a missing ingredient in both the majority of research on the RSE and in the approach taken to the administration of the RSE by government departments. Within government, there is no evidence of acknowledgement that there is such an issue, particularly given the significance placed on equal treatment of RSE workers within New Zealand by government officials (for example, Official #2, 26-4-12). Although some studies of the RSE's antecedents have focused on unfree labour, no research has examined the RSE or its antecedents from the perspective which defines free labour in a dual sense (see section 2.21, p.15), allowing the worker freedom to sell their labour in a market, but also removing obligations they may have within a different social formation. In many cases RSE workers are unfree in both senses, because they have kinship obligations as well as visa restrictions. Most current discourse on exploitation emphasises undocumented labour (for example Nevins, 2002, 2008) and it is not contended here that unfree "legal" labour is automatically riper for exploitation. Indeed, early examples from the 1970s in Chapter 5 illustrate development outcomes in Fiji which made no attempt to follow a free labour scenario.

Although officials are committed to granting RSE workers the same rights as New Zealand workers, they were unable to give satisfactory answers to questions concerning dispute resolution in circumstances where employers wield growing power over the workers in collusion with state officials in Vanuatu and perhaps other source countries (see Chapter 9). Negative indicators from Vanuatu such as a growing stand-down list numbering in the hundreds, evidence of family break ups and alcoholism, need to be studied in the context of disempowerment. Even the pastoral discourse is not separable from the unfree labour issue and provides a clue to the lack of critical analysis in

previous research. The evaluation of the RSE carried out in 2009 (Roorda & Nunns, 2010) took “pastoral care” at face value and it has never been critically questioned. Oliver’s resentment (section 6.71) at the 24/7 employer responsibility was accurate insofar as their powers/responsibilities over the workers which for New Zealand citizens are devolved to state agencies such as the police force, places the employers in the role of a parent, with overtones of indenture.

Regardless of whether the unfreeness of the labour or the (closely related) lack of citizenship is given primary explanatory power for issues concerning disempowerment, two approaches could be taken to improve outcomes. Both require acknowledgement of the unfree nature of the labour. One alternative would be to try and remove the unfree element by way of changing the visa conditions to allow workers to change employer during a season. An announcement to this effect was made by then Minister of Immigration Cosgrove in 2008, but in practice it signalled the beginning of joint ATRs, whereby groups of workers move at pre-arranged times from one region to another to meet crop requirements. Briefing papers show that some consideration was given to a more flexible arrangement in 2006. The reasons for its rejection were not uncovered, but may have related to an aversion to “onshore policy” (Official #1, 7-5-12), meaning a policy which allows work visas to be issued within New Zealand after entry. Such an approach would likely face resistance from growers who see the RSE workers as their core workers. A second obstacle could arise from anti-immigration political interests pursuing strict border control, as an increase could be expected in overstaying. An alternative approach would acknowledge the unfreeness and insist on recruitment methods which sourced workers from places of greatest need. This approach could also be resisted by growers but not as strongly because it does not threaten the existence of the core programme. Such an approach would require a greater degree of government involvement in programme detail. This was resisted in the planning stages where the emphasis was on “minimising bureaucracy” (Official #1, interviewed 7-5-12).

The foregoing discussion, though relevant, is in danger of ignoring the voices of the workers. The evidence from the workers was not always about wanting more freedoms. Many workers wanted chances to work without constant interruptions, often resulting from weather conditions, which impacted on earnings. Secondly there was a seemingly universal objection to the level of deductions from the pay packet. Most deductions are consistent with New Zealand law as it would apply to New Zealand workers; however the requirement for all RSE workers to have compulsory insurance rather than being included within the New Zealand social security system may breach obligations under ILO Convention 97.

Lack of citizenship relates to an ambivalence applied to the workers' integration into the New Zealand communities. Many workers have good quality accommodation but are in New Zealand as outsiders for nearly half their lives for significant periods of time. Their exclusion from the end of year break up party at a major South Island worksite (section 6.8, p.139) resonates with occasional racist abuse in small towns. As final drafts of this document were being prepared, there was a reminder that their musical skills are appreciated in the ubiquitous string bands but they are used as show piece entertainers without any thought of remuneration or compensation in other ways.¹⁵⁴ They are almost equal citizens.

10.2. Are there Meaningful Development Outcomes from the RSE?

At macro-economic level, there is a perception from some employers that the RSE is pivotally important to the development of the islands. One large employer reported that his firm was the second largest employer in Samoa (Oliver, 23-3-12). Within the elements of the "extended MIRAB" discussion; that is the combination of tourism, financial niche markets, aid and bureaucracy, migration and remittances, and recently professional sport, the RSE features as one small ingredient in the migration and remittances picture. In the case of Tonga and Samoa it is dwarfed by remittances which are generated by the free movement of labour associated with diaspora within an enlarged Polynesian triangle (2009). In the case of Vanuatu, the contribution from the RSE is dwarfed by tourism revenues. Despite the reality of this small contribution a rhetoric has developed amongst both the New Zealand and Pacific Island communities which sees the RSE as a key driver of development. There is a disjuncture between the small contribution and the perceptions of both employers and employees.

At micro level, the average improvement in household incomes of RSE migrant workers demonstrated by World Bank/Waikato University research (McKenzie & Gibson, 2010) would occur regardless of whether the nature of their engagement with the RSE was one of agency or dependence, in other words regardless of whether the migrants were taking an opportunity to enhance their livelihoods which remained independent of the RSE overall, or whether they were becoming increasingly dependent on the RSE for their survival. From this perspective, the size of the increase in household incomes for the participants becomes one of several indicators of success. The research carried out in this project has uncovered very few incidences of dependence of the kind seen in Mexico in relation to the SAWP and *bracero* programmes (see Chapter 2) which arose in

¹⁵⁴ A decision in 2014 by a South Island pack house not to allow its workers to receive donations for "busking" at a local market attracted unwanted publicity (2014).

large measure from the loss of land in the early twentieth century (Nevins, 2002; Rothenberg, 1998). It was not possible to carry out a study of the lives of those hundreds of ni-Vanuatu who have been “blacklisted” and how the RSE has impacted overall on their livelihoods, as unsurprisingly some reluctance was encountered on their part to discuss the experience. Of those 33 workers interviewed within a peri-urban/urban setting there was great variability of experience, for some a substantial change in livelihood either through building their first permanent house or for others setting up a small business with RSE proceeds. Of those 97 village communities visited in the West Tanna region, a clear picture emerged of a modernising sector using the RSE to further modernise in such a way that the areas which lacked resources continued to lack resources.¹⁵⁵

One area of development not overstated by employers was in the transfer of skills. Some very positive transfers of skills and applications of those skills were seen and although it is early to predict long term effects, the rural communities of Vanuatu have a long history of learning through migration experiences¹⁵⁶ and the benefits of such things as improved pruning techniques should be acknowledged. The long term effect on domestic production may therefore be contradictory because some improved horticulture techniques will have been acquired at the same time as a loss of domestic production in high migration areas. The random nature of these contradictory effects renders any meaningful prediction out of reach at this time.

The effects of long term exposure of large numbers of people to alternative ways of living may be just as profound as the material benefits from remittances. This is not necessarily positive. From a post development perspective it would be profoundly negative given the ubiquitous “time is money” rhetoric to be found amongst employers and employees alike. From a functionality perspective it should be possible for agrarian dwellers to import those cultural forms which enhance their livelihoods without loss of land tenure and essential cultural practice. Although this cannot be assumed, the initial indications from this research suggest that this is possible.

¹⁵⁵ This statement must also be qualified by recognising that any form of modernity on Tanna Island is relative to Tanna Island.

¹⁵⁶ See Rockell, 2007.

10.3. Addressing the Issue of Paradigm Shift

The motivation to consider a new paradigm comes largely from development claims made in an era of migration optimism (De Haas, 2010) often expressed in “win-win” rhetoric, the origins of which are traced in Chapter 2. Many employers contend that the RSE provides a “win-win” situation, perhaps due in part to the influence of early academic writing headed “seeking the elusive triple-win” (Ramasamy et al., 2008). The expression ‘triple win’, which refers to source countries, sending communities, and receiving economies, and is sourced to United Nations High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (2006) is sufficiently specific to imply a form of stakeholder analysis, yet at least eight stakeholders can be identified in TMWPs such as the RSE¹⁵⁷. The joint evaluation discussed in section 2.4 did include a limited stakeholder analysis which separately considered the situation of migrants and their communities and acknowledges the impacts of the RSE on the domestic workforce (Roorda & Nunns, 2010, p. 7).

In seeking to establish whether the RSE represents a break from the past, close attention has been paid to historical similarities and differences between the RSE and its antecedents both within New Zealand and North America. Historical comparisons are made along two progressions. The first, dealing with migration patterns within New Zealand, looks at migrant labour from the Pacific area working in rural New Zealand, and how employment regimes have changed. The second compares three government contract programmes; the RSE, the Canadian SAWP, and the United States *bracero* programme of the post-WW2 period.

A range of aspects were compared, including the manner of recruitment, freeness/unfreeness of the labour, pay regimes, transport costs, freedom to organise, housing arrangements, existence of blacklists, monitoring levels, the location of pay on an exploitation scale, evaluations, and deportations.

10.3.1. Migrant Labour in Rural New Zealand Now and Before.

Two epochs of rural migrant labour are compared in this section, each epoch divided into two distinct periods. The first epoch covers the development of New Zealand grassland farming and divides into the period from the 1930s depression until 1967, during which time migrant labour from first Northern India and then Fiji was essential to the development of New Zealand grasslands,

¹⁵⁷ Stakeholders include, but are not limited to, source and receiving country governments, migrant workers, home country workers, migrant workers’ home communities, growers/horticultural industries, World Bank, other development agencies, and migrant sending economies in the sense that source governments have a wider range of interests.

followed by the period from 1967 until 1987 during which time labour was contracted under government supervision. The second epoch covers the development of the horticultural industry which grew rapidly in the 1990s and came to rely increasingly on undocumented offshore labour, until the introduction of the RSE in 2007. Research on the 1987-2007 period is light, but some useful points nonetheless emerge.

In the first period, conditions of work for migrants in New Zealand agriculture, detailed in Chapter 5, resemble employment conditions for migrant workers prevailing in the United States over the same time frame in several respects (see Daniel, 1981; Garcia, 1980; Nevins, 2002). New Zealand farmers enjoyed the ready availability of the migrant labour, and sought to pay migrants the same rates as other precariously employed rural workers of the time. Migrant labour enabled the rural sector to operate at low rates of pay, and in some cases to direct workers to places where only the most precarious New Zealand labour can be employed. This observation on “3-D” work applies equally to the scrub cutting *whares* in remote locations on sheep and cattle farms in the 1960s as it does to lengthy night shifts packing fruit in the present era, without economic incentives to attract NZ workers in either case. The lack of government monitoring in earlier times meant that some workers were housed in unacceptable conditions, although there may be support for Aaron’s view (7-6-13) that these conditions simply belonged to a different time. This observation does not indicate deliberate exploitation of migrants, however. The back country huts used for accommodation were the same huts back country non-migrant workers such as shepherds and fencers were expected to use as temporary accommodation. The employment conditions resembled late indenture (see section 2.31), insofar as there was no regular pay but a calculation at the end of the three month period, so the workers were supplied with most provisions and kept alive by the employer. Knowledge among farmers of specific areas and communities in the sending countries was very limited.

In 1967, a form of migrant labour which combined some characteristics of late indenture with attributes of freedom was replaced by a system of contracts under government control. From this point there were some checks on the accommodation which had by then moved away from huts and tents. This labour was paid at a low market rate and met the criteria of unfree labour both in the manner of recruitment (village leader’s directive) and in the tied nature of the visa. However the indentured style, whereby the employer provided the workers with all provisions, was no longer the dominant pattern.

As previously stated, this programme continued until the time of the first coup in Fiji, and as the fast growing horticulture industry became the focus of demand for migrant labour, a void was left which

was again filled by undocumented labour. Information on this labour is limited to some earlier investigative journalism (for example Courtney, 2008) and anecdotal evidence from current employers and industry leaders. There is evidence that growers had no desire to exploit migrant labour, but came to rely on contracts with labour organisers who operated illegally. The RSE was intended in part to bring the entire horticultural industry under a closer level of government scrutiny. The subsequent period, belonging to the RSE, represents the first occasion when a higher level of government monitoring requires levels of accommodation previously unseen in the primary sector workforce. However there have been numerous instances of the standards not being met, at least for periods of time, and the presence of parties who were criminally involved with undocumented labour reappearing on the fringe of the RSE suggests that a sharp dividing line cannot be drawn before and after its introduction. Partially because of the higher standards required to meet international conventions, a higher proportion of earnings is spent in New Zealand to pay for the improved accommodation and security.

The New Zealand experience overall therefore appears as one of primary industries reliant on highly informal migrant labour arrangements being replaced by managed contracts after government intervention. The New Zealand government has on two occasions sought to replace the undocumented worker with the contracted worker, with the explicit intent of curbing illegal immigration. Widespread consensus that the undocumented worker is exploited and the contract worker is not is sourced to multiple instances of undocumented workers being paid less than the minimum legal rates or substantially less than the market rate, but also on a belief that what is “legal” is acceptable, and what is “illegal” is exploitative.

Table 10.1 compares the four periods discussed across a range of indicators. In some categories, such as the provision of accommodation, there is a visible improvement over time which indicates respect for migrant workers and demonstrates the benefit of government control. Remuneration evidence is more mixed, and demonstrates the importance of government protection in circumstances where there is a potential for labour contractors to operate without any indication of improvement in rates over time. Those aspects which consider integration into New Zealand society do not show any significant improvement, as the ability of the employer to control movement does not significantly change. The feature common to most migrant work programmes of long hours with ‘3-D’ elements is also little changed over the timeframe. The contribution of the programme to source country development is also not greatly different in the modern era from the past.

Table 10-1: Points of Comparison Between RSE and other Pacific Migrant Workers to New Zealand in the Twentieth Century

	RSE	Pre-RSE horticulture	Fiji rural work permit	Early scrub cutting
Labour categories	Unfree due visa conditions, appearance of free labour	Undocumented, precarious	Unfree, village leadership chooses, visa tied to employment, secure	Free, but guest work only
Pay evidence	Piece rates or minimum hourly wage	Below minimum wage	Hourly, above minimum wage	Market rates in low pay environment.
Development aspect	Mainly remittance based, skills transfer	Unknown	Strongly village based	Cash injections to mainly Indo-Fijian communities
Accommodation	Government inspected (linings, area) variable	Unknown	Shearers quarters, quality agric. accommodation	Crude huts, no sanitation, sometimes tents
Worker Evaluations	Some employers use crude evaluations	No evaluations	No evaluations	No evaluations
Recruitment	Mass interviews, sometimes local networks	Contacts in underground networks	Island government pool	Contact initiated by aspiring workers, often on shore
Worker Protection (health and accidents)	Compulsory private insurance	No protections	Unclear	No protections
Worker movement freedom	Dependent on employer decision, variable	Freedom of movement dependent on gang master	Stay with gang on worksites	Dependent on employer for rations, isolated
Hours	Long by mutual consent, no overtime pay	Unknown	Some faith based restrictions on excessive hours	Very long; in region of 70 hours/week

Source: author

10.3.2. The RSE and its North American Antecedents.

Consistent with the methodological explanation in Chapter 4, comparisons between the RSE, the SAWP, and the *bracero* programmes are made because the programmes are historically linked, not because they are in any sense independent.

Table 10.2 shows no clear evidence for a break between earlier indenture and the modern work programme. The RSE, the SAWP, and the *bracero* programme are all labour supply programmes which have succeeded in supporting harvest industries at low rates of pay and provided new lives for some workers while negatively affecting others. Over time there has been a gradual improvement in worker conditions, and one key difference is a perception of RSE workers as equal human beings rather than denizens. However the crucial difference between the RSE and the *bracero* programme may lie in the level of monitoring. The *bracero* programme on paper sounds very similar to the RSE. However the *bracero* programme lacks a minimum wage, lacks effective monitoring of accommodation, and gives growers the power to set the wage. Conversely the *bracero* programme was subject to public hearings every two years throughout the 1950s, whereas the RSE operates away from public scrutiny. To varying extents, development needs have been attached to these programmes and the RSE is not the first time that government has actively intervened to promote skills transfer/educational opportunity. There were instances of this during World War II in the *bracero* programme.

Table 10-2: Points of Comparison between the RSE and North American Antecedent Programmes

	RSE	SAWP	<i>Bracero</i>*
Housing	Government Inspected, rents charged	Employer provided, quality issues	Employer provided, quality issues
Pay regime	Piece rates dominate, minimum hourly wage in packhouses	Piece rates	Piece rates gave way to hourly according to prevailing wage set by employers
Contract guarantees	Guaranteed 30 hour weeks first 8 weeks only	Unclear	Employment guaranteed for three quarters of contract period

Duration	Seven months maximum per visit	Eight months maximum	Full year
Annual quota	8000**	20,000	Unlimited, reached over 500,000 in '50s
Freedom of movement	Varies at employer discretion	Varies at employer discretion	Mainly confined to camps
Recruitment	Mass interviews	Mass interviews	Physical inspections, line-ups
Medicals	Enforced in source country	Enforced	Enforced at border
Airfare/transport	Half paid	Fully subsidised	Employer to pay return to Mexico
Injury/sickness support	Compulsory private insurance	Lacks support	Work injuries covered by employer insurance, plus compulsory private insurance for off-site
Dispute resolution	Lacks system	Lacks system	Leaders relocated in any dispute
Integration in destination country	Some cultural interaction	Outsiders	Large diaspora already but physically isolated
"3D" evidence	Night shifts	Stoop labour	Stoop labour
Dependency	Low levels individually	High levels in Mexico	High
Evaluations	Employer sole discretion	Required for all workers	Employer discretion
Sanctions	Blacklists (Vanuatu)	blacklists	Unclear
Impact on market pay rates	Possibly depressing the contract rates	Unclear	Lowered the pay of domestic workers

Source: author

*For the purposes of this table, the term refers to the programme which was renewed every two years from 1951-1964 under Public Law 78.

** This number was 5,000 until 2008, and has been increased to 9,000 in 2014, in response to Fiji's return to elected government.

10.3.3. Summary.

A new paradigm concerning migrant labour could be identified by a shared commitment by employers and workers to the development of the Pacific Islands from which workers originate; in other words the RSE would be viewed as a development programme, and/or a clear break from past practice. Neither of these conditions have been fully met.

Overall it may fairly be claimed that there has been an improvement in workers' conditions, both in relation to earlier New Zealand programmes and in relation to flagship programmes overseas, even at the expense of savings in the case of higher rentals. Conversely, there is some evidence to suggest that early Fiji-Indian migrants had greater negotiating power than present day RSE workers, who belong within a tradition of disempowered contract workers. The notion of absolute power exercised in a more humane way than in the past is consistent with the unfree nature of the labour. Improvements in work conditions are not to be discounted, and the greatly improved physical comforts mitigate the social exclusion. The central recruitment feature of mass interviews ensures a continuity with the past.

10.4. How Could the RSE be Improved?

In the course of reviewing field work it was possible to identify eight balances which profoundly affect the way the RSE is experienced. Each balance is given a name as follows: duration balance, pastoral balance, participation balance (1&2), development balance, labour market balance, social balance, and competing rights balance.

1. Duration balance. There is a balance to be found between the amount of time which can be spent in New Zealand to earn/save and the social disruption in the sending community including the risk of family breakdown. The field work revealed some workers who considered that the maximum duration of seven months was too short and prevented them from earning the funds needed to change lives. Other examples were found of very short (2-3 month) visits which were successful in the sense that in a short space of time good money was made and/or by repeating the short visit 4-5 times the experience was transformative. No support was found among employers favouring a longer visit and at least one who was more involved with the Vanuatu community wanted to keep the visit to no more than three months to maintain family life.

2. Pastoral balance. There is a balance between the human rights and freedoms expected for the workers in New Zealand and the desire of some employers to protect them and their savings. Human rights were referenced by several employers and an ex-government official as the basis for allowing workers to travel freely within New Zealand but this view was not universally shared. Those who sought to restrict workers' travel rights tended to be employers who had a closer involvement with workers and their families but possibly saw the relationship in the manner of a parent child relationship. Those employers who allowed free travel were not necessarily involved with the workers at pastoral level.

This can be illustrated graphically. Each employer interviewed has been placed on a plane formed by the intersection of freedoms to behave like a free member of New Zealand's social fabric and the involvement of the employer in the development objective as a supportive and protective employer. The positioning on the graph is not arbitrary. It is encouraging to see that close to one third of the employers interviewed are to be found in the top right quadrant indicating an overall respect for the freedoms of the workers in New Zealand while maintaining a close interest in their well being and their lives. Equally encouraging is the lack of employers in the bottom left quadrant. However approximately a third of employers interviewed found it necessary to curtail the freedoms of the workers in order to ensure good outcomes in earnings while another third, while respectful of human rights, showed little or no interest in the reasons the workers were here from a development perspective.

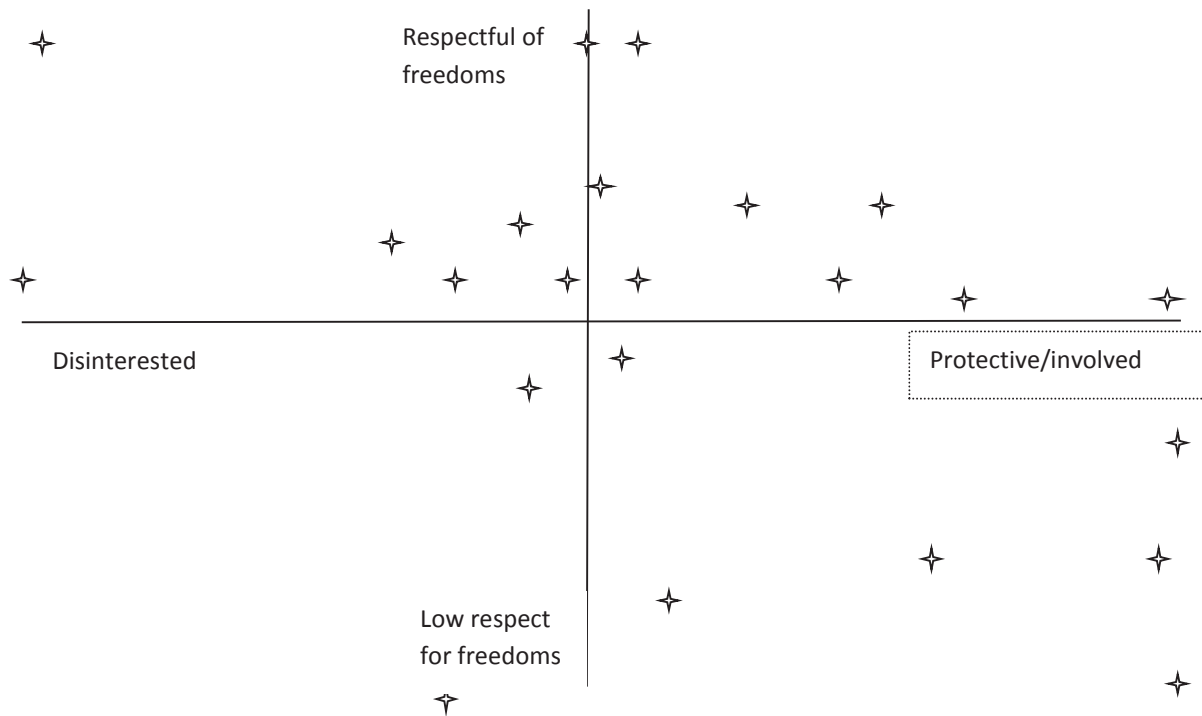


Figure 10-1 Employer Practice on Two Dimensions: freedom and protection

Source: Author

3. Participation balance 1. There is a balance between having an experienced and competent workforce in the place of production and the implied limitation on the spread of people who are recruited. Accessibility to the RSE is driven by the employer requiring a permanent and reliable workforce. A core of workers is sought who require minimal training and set standards of excellence for the rest of the workers. A strong motivation exists for employers to rehire the same workers. In the case of employers involved with one or two villages only, a tendency to try to move work around in the villages was observed, but if the employer was involved with recruitment from more than one island in Vanuatu there was a tendency to regard further recruitment as a tweaking of existing employment arrangements. The overall effect is that in some cases there is a kind of sponsoring arrangement between an employer and a single community and in other cases potential workers seek to join the chosen few. Thus there is a widespread desire to take part in the RSE and there are many disappointed people.

4. Participation balance 2. There is a balance between the desirability of having an ongoing community involvement between an employer and a sending community built on a stable relationship and the need to give people in other communities access to the programme. In other words there is a paradoxical effect if an employer forms a trusting and long lasting relationship with a single community due to the potential for exclusivity.

5. Labour market balance. There is a balance to be found between the protection of New Zealand jobs and the development of skills. The protection of New Zealand jobs has been one of the key underpinning forces in the design of the RSE. Employers point to the relatively low ratio of RSE workers to domestics and other overseas workers such as those on holiday visas. Very few examples were found where an RSE worker was actually in a supervisory capacity or where an RSE worker was involved in more skilled jobs such as using machinery, partly resulting from a belief on the part of employers that the New Zealand first policy prohibited this.

6. Development balance. There is a balance between the desirability of employer involvement in island development and the undesirability of misguided intervention. There is a major distinction to be made between the expectation that an RSE employer must be a good employer and the need for people with development experience to be on the ground. Those employers who did have some interest in the subject had eclectic views on development, usually involving some notion of modernisation/economic growth.

7. Citizenship balance. RSE workers tend to be present in New Zealand as outsiders, expected to enjoy their own company and not be fully integrated into the New Zealand social fabric. Efforts have been made by church groups and sometimes sports groups to integrate the workers but they are high visibility outsiders. There is an underlying contradiction. The more they are integrated the more they may want to act as free labourers and remain in New Zealand for a longer time. Keeping them as outsiders serves the purpose of the short term income earning tour of duty and prioritises families in source countries. So the balance is between the needs of the families and the isolation of the workers.

8. Competing rights balance. There is a balance to be found between the rights of workers and the rights of village communities. Individual workers in New Zealand often come on behalf of communities whose rights can be overlooked when considering the rights of those "fortunate" enough to travel. From this perspective an employer who restricts the rights of the workers may feel justified in imposing restrictions on the worker to see that their community obligations are met. Instances on Tanna were encountered in which absent workers had lost respect through failing to support their home communities. Conversely most migrant workers were still part of the community. So the question becomes one of whose responsibility, if anyone's, it is to ensure that those workers who are able to earn overseas funds remain supportive of their home communities. Is there a role for the employer in this regard or not?

The challenge for the RSE programme, if it is to meet the expectations of stakeholders, lies in achieving these balances. A government which emphasises border control over human rights can be expected to support a programme which places pressure on the employers to ensure the repatriation of the RSE workers while keeping them cocooned from the New Zealand social fabric, and from fellow RSE workers in other work locations. Bauder (2006) cited in Chapter 2, bases his critique of citizenship partly on French philosopher Bourdieu's field theory. From this perspective the migrants find themselves in a new field, in which they are systematically marginalised as befits guest workers over a period of time. The marginalisation involved is two sided. Some of the workers are marginalised in New Zealand and marginalised at home, caught between the expectations of village communities and the expectations of New Zealand employers.

10.5 Concluding Comments

Research on the the RSE, while greatly surpassing previous research on migrant work programmes in New Zealand in both depth and volume, has been dominated by major institutions, particularly the New Zealand Government and the World Bank, framed within an era of migration optimism. Academic literature around the RSE has entered the discourse of growers who talk comfortably of the 'win-win' nature of the programme. This dominant research assumes certain values and categories, which emanate from the design of the programme. In particular, the need for border security, protection of jobs for New Zealanders, and the identification of the gains from remitted earnings with "development", are features of the programme which critical research must question. Rather than received truths, these aspects thereby become part of the research agenda. It has been possible to trace the historical background to some of these discourses, as well as examining other discourses missing from mainstream research, including the contradictory effects of the RSE within a precarious orchard labour setting, and more broadly the need for compliant labour within a global workforce. Positive rhetoric around the RSE requires a digestible description of the use of unfree labour in the public domain and phrasing such as "managed circular migration" has assisted with this. Negative discourse on migrant labour, the "Grapes of Wrath" scenario (Steinbeck, 1993/1939) in which the prospective migrant worker is promised unlimited available work with high pay, and the reality is one of insufficient work, cruel treatment, and desperation has been ascribed by both officials and growers to a pre-RSE environment such as that existing prior to the RSE in the orchards of Hawkes Bay. Critical research must seek to apportion the negative and positive aspects more carefully between 'unfree contract labour' and 'free undocumented labour'.

The desire to control borders, more pronounced since 9-11-01, was a dominant influence in the planning of the RSE and similar programmes. The contradictory pathways established by a rhetoric around border security and the migration euphoria, built in large measure around diaspora, are the first of several contradictions which underpin the RSE. As explained in Chapter 2, the high levels of overstaying associated with the *bracero* programme led to a rhetoric of failure, yet the Mexican diaspora is a key contributing element to migration euphoria. The linking of pastoral care to border control (“we are responsible for them 24/7”, says Oliver. “Its ridiculous”) moves the task of pastoral care away from rights based support to social control, and the imperative that pastoral care be linked to border security is questionable. The ‘success’ of the programme emphasizes the lack of overstaying, but if this aspect of the programme is over emphasized, social disruption illustrated by the size of the Vanuatu stand down list is underemphasised. It is not claimed here that uncontrolled borders with growing diaspora is desirable, merely that effects are contradictory and nuanced. In a Pacific Island context, where much commentary on development is no longer territorially centred, the case for easing border restrictions is strengthened.

Secondly, the interests of New Zealand workers have been represented by a narrow focus on work availability, and as long as processes are in place to prove that WINZ has been consulted when hiring overseas workers, and it can be shown that the RSE assists a growing industry which creates jobs, the issue has been considered proven. However the real threat to local labour may not be about the relatively small number of RSE migrant workers taking away job opportunities, but about a more complex redefinition of an acceptable intensity and duration of work in the orchards, and the long term composition of the orchard workforce. A positive view may reference other rural tasks such as sheep shearing (see 5.1) which have reached standards of excellence and a culture of performance, but research is required to understand where the balance lies between excellence and exploitation. The long term trajectory of the horticulture/viticulture workforce remains inconclusive, and a more productive workforce may need to be paid at significantly higher levels than current contract rates. As the RSE remains only one component of the migrant workforce, the overall balance of the workforce, and whether the harvest industry can be made attractive to New Zealanders rather than as just a short term option for some unemployed, remains unclear.

If the RSE is viewed only through a quantitative framework, the healthy average results for participating families are somewhat undermined by the relatively low level of remittances overall, compared with other sources of revenue for Pacific Island countries. However, a more holistic view of development places the RSE in better perspective, because it can be shown that cultural disruption is minimal, that meaningful skills transfer is taking place, and that, with qualifications, the

poor benefit. It was equally clear, in the Vanuatu context, that as a replacement for well targeted assistance the RSE fails to meet the needs of the poorest rural communities.

More generally a “view from the south” (Castles & Delgado Wise, 2008) focuses on free movement of capital and restricted movement of labour in the era of global capital. The way a programme such as the RSE impacts on the precarious global workforce is contradictory. Two ingredients; the insistence on paying the minimum N.Z. wage, and the ongoing inspection of conditions, place a line in the sand against any “race to the bottom.” But it has also established a unique labour supply arrangement where unfree labour which gives high levels of productivity (Bedford and Bedford, Chapter 2) at relatively low pay sets the level for the orchard. The RSE workers are strictly price takers in contrast to the sheep shearers in early New Zealand history described in Chapter 5. In the case of sheep shearing a culture of excellence emerged but that culture was accompanied by successful demands over better pay, at contract rates (see 5.1). The desire of growers in the orchard industry to change the precarious work culture is genuine, but an accompanying rise in wage rates¹⁵⁸ may be essential if the horticultural fields are not to become permanent as migrant enclaves. The RSE has provided a “soft option” for filling labour shortages, consistent with Miles’ views on unfree labour as an anomalous necessity. In so doing it has allowed the New Zealand industry to remain profitable in a highly exploitative international context.

Further Research

A number of issues were uncovered in the course of this research which would provide substantial research topics in themselves. Five topics are set out here for future research.

1. Variability in earnings in a contract work programme. Although there was considerable variation in both experiences and earnings it was beyond the scope of this project to quantify the variability and this could be done in a mathematically appropriate way as a quantitative research exercise which continues on from existing work with averages.

2. The failed migrant worker. Given the enthusiasm of the World Bank currently for remittances, much research has gone into demonstrating the success of migration. The casualty rate is excessive but a specific study would be required to examine the negative experience in detail. The Vanuatu stand down list would be a useful starting point for this kind of research.

¹⁵⁸ A recent development in New Zealand, the “living wage’ campaign has advocated a level of \$18.80 per hour for 2015, distinct from the legal minimum which sets the level for many RSE workers.

3. Pay and conditions of work in rural New Zealand. Information on the history of work and remuneration in rural New Zealand is patchy. Unions which have successfully organised workers in the cities and towns have failed to make an impression rurally with the result that there is already a precarised and compliant workforce in much of rural New Zealand. As demonstrated in Chapter 5, fair treatment of migrants in rural New Zealand relies on an unwritten code of ethics which some do not adhere to, and at time of printing, the government of New Zealand is promising a crack-down on exploitative practices in the dairy industry following a major review of dairy farm employment during 2014 (Stone, 2014).

4. The impact of government programmes (including the RSE) on work conditions in New Zealand horticulture. During the course of this project, anecdotal evidence has been received that remuneration levels have not improved in the orchards in the time of the RSE programme, and that New Zealander workers are no longer seen in some orchards. This effect has precedent and was well documented in the case of the *bracero* programme. In 2014 new claims entered the public domain regarding exploitation of undocumented migrants in New Zealand horticulture, this time in the Bay of Plenty Kiwifruit industry (Cousins, 2014). The response of industry leaders, that they were doing their best to clean up the industry, echoed earlier claims prior to the implementation of the RSE programme, and undermines the more ambitious claims of industry leaders and officials regarding the role of the RSE in changing workplace relations in primary industry.

5. An investigation is needed on the benefits of New Zealand becoming signatory to the Migrant Workers Convention. Being the first OECD country to sign this would lend weight to any intention to lead by example in the use of contract migrant labour.

Final Reflections

In an era of migration optimism, rhetoric around “best practice” and “winning” conveys a positive message about migrant work programmes which belies highly variable experiences and complex effects which a critical examination seeks to uncover. The last words are left to Euan and Renaldo. These two statements speak of a win-win experience, but in a qualified way. They are representative of comments heard from many employers and many workers during nearly two years of field work:

It has been an interesting journey and they cause us very few problems; they are hard working, loyal, don't get in to a lot of trouble; their productivity is 20% higher than anyone else in the pack houses or the orchards. They don't appear in our drug and alcohol statistics so if there is trouble with staff it's never the RSE workers and they are rock solid and they will work nights and weekends and they go to the orchards when it is frosty; whereas the Kiwi workers don't turn up after pay day and don't like going out in the rain and they don't like nightshifts. (Euan, 19-11-12)

I feel like a slave inside the pack house but at the end of the day I still come home with money that the government cannot provide. Epi [Island} would lose this opportunity if the company went to a different island [to recruit workers]. (Renaldo, 7-11-12)

Appendix I RSE Employer Survey 2011/12

SECTION A Involvement in the RSE Programme

1. How many years have you been a registered as an RSE employer?
2. Approximately how many RSE workers have you employed in the seasons
- 2010/2011.....
- 2009/2010.....
- 2008/2009.....?
3. If you have been in the RSE scheme for more than one year, how many of your workers have been with you
- for both of the last two years?
- for three or more years?
4. For your most recent season, which countries did your RSE workers come from?
- India
- Indonesia
- Kiribati
- Malaysia
- Philippines
- Samoa
- Solomon Islands

- | | |
|----------|--------------------------|
| Thailand | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tonga | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tuvalu | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Vanuatu | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. Which of the following descriptions best matches your enterprise?

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Horticulturalist | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Viticulturalist | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Labour organiser/contractor | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (specify)..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |

6. Recruitment: Which of these statements best describes the way your workers were recruited this season ?

PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| A representative of the firm went to the Pacific Islands and selected the workers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Many of the workers were returnees from a previous season | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Many of the new workers were friends or relatives of previous workers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| An agent/ contractor helps select RSE workers for us | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| We are part of a group of growers who work collaboratively in selecting RSE workers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (specify)..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |

SECTION B Cropping Details

7. Which one of these figures best describes the proportion of your total harvest picked by RSE workers?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

Less than one quarter

Between one quarter and one half

Between one half and three quarters

Between three quarters and the entire crop.

8. Have you expanded your enterprise since you began to employ RSE workers?

No, not at all

No, but plans are underway

Yes, incrementally

Yes, by more than 20%

9. What are the approximate number of hectares planted in each crop for which you have data?

	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
apples				
grapes				
pears				
kiwifruit				
Other (specify)				

10. Which of these harvesting methods do you use?

PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY

Seasonal workers handpicking crop

Mechanical harvesting equipment

Hand sorting, grading

Mechanical sorting, grading

Other (specify).....

SECTION C Work Details

11. In the most recent seasonal employment, how many RSE workers were engaged for at least part of their work time in the following tasks?

Handpicking	<input type="checkbox"/>
Machine operating	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pruning/thinning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sorting	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fence construction	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify).....	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. When selecting RSE workers, which three of the listed qualities do you consider most important?

PLEASE TICK THREE BOXES

Acumen (for learning)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stamina	<input type="checkbox"/>
Skills (existing)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sobriety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Obedience	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Reliability
- Speed
- Adaptability
- Humour
- Independence

13. Which one of these statements best describes the manner of remuneration for RSE workers?

PLEASE TICK ONLY ONE BOX

They are paid an hourly rate which is fixed for the season

They are paid a set rate per container load (volume) of fruit picked

They are paid a set rate by weight of fruit picked

They are paid a basic hourly rate plus some incentives

Opportunities are given for the workers to choose from hourly or per quantity rates

14. The hours worked by your RSE workers in an average week (not peak harvest and not down time) are between

PLEASE TICK ONLY ONE BOX

30-35

35-40

40-45

45-50

15. What were the weekly hours actually worked by most RSE workers last season?

0-80

20-60

30-50

16. (a) The accommodation you arranged for the workers is best described as

Mainly (more than 80%) onsite

Mainly offsite

Both onsite and offsite

16. (b) The onsite accommodation you arranged for the workers is best described as

PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY

Cabins

Houses

Pre-fabricated units

Caravans

16. (c) The offsite accommodation you arranged for the workers is best described as

Motels

Lodgings

Campsite

Other (specify).....

17. Is the weekly rent paid by each worker between

0-\$50

\$51-100

\$101-150

\$151-

18. Which groups have been of assistance in supporting the welfare of the workers within the wider community?

PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY

- Church workers
- Pacific Island pastoral workers
- Union workers
- Community health workers
- Other (specify).....

19. (a) Do you find it necessary to take steps to protect your RSE workers from exposure to agricultural chemicals?

- Yes, there are chemical hazards to plan for
- No, RSE workers are not involved with pesticides and other chemicals

PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY

19. (b) If yes, which of these steps do you take to minimise risk from agricultural chemicals?

- Protective clothing issued to those using pesticides
- Special training or instruction given
- Times when fruit areas are "out of bounds"
- Other (specify)

20. Which of these statements describes your involvement in the pastoral care of the RSE workers?

PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY

Pastoral care is arranged with suitably qualified people

Time is spent by us on a personal level with some workers

We have had a major personal involvement with some workers

SECTION D Pacific Island development

21. (a) Have you been to any of the Pacific Island countries from which your workers are sourced?

- No, not at all
- No, but a visit is being planned
- Yes, for RSE purposes
- Yes, but not related to RSE

21. (b) If you have been to the Pacific Islands on RSE business, was the purpose

PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY

- For recruitment of workers
- To visit workers or former workers
- To assist with a community or business project a worker was involved in
- Other (specify).....

22. Have you any involvement with any community projects or other development projects associated with the RSE scheme? Elaborate.

PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY

- Yes, in an advisory capacity
- Yes, as an active member of the project
- Yes, including financial assistance
- No, but discussions are being held
- No, not at all

23. Do you think the RSE workers learn useful skills while on the job?.....

Describe any skills learned by your scheme workers which you understand to be useful for them in their home environment.

SECTION E Money Matters

24. (a) Is there a system in place to assist the workers to save?

No, not at all

Yes, all the workers are included in a savings system

Yes, a system is in place which some workers opt in to

24. (b) If yes, which of these statements is closest to how the savings are organised?

A separate savings account is managed on their behalf into which they deposit funds

Wages go into a compulsory savings account and the workers are paid an allowance each week to live on

A small deduction is made from the pay packet for savings, to which they can add more

Other (specify).....

25. (a) Do you assist in the repatriation of funds?

No, the workers have enough assistance

Yes, the business is involved

25. (b) If yes, how do you assist?

Funds are transferred directly to an island bank account

Other (specify).....

Thankyou for completing the survey!

Response No.....

Appendix II. Analysis of RSE Employer Survey 2011/12

The respondents can be grouped as follows:

Pip fruit growers	20%
Labour contractors	19%
Orchardists	16%
Kiwifruit growers	9%
Pack houses	9%
Horticulturalists	9%
Asparagus growers	4%
Growers/packhouses	4%
Viticulturalists	4%
Others	6%

“Others” include, for example, a plant nursery, a specialist capsicum grower. The categories are slightly essentialised and there is some blurring of boundaries between those describing themselves as viticulturalists and those as labour contractors. Pipfruit growers are nearly all apple specialists. Some of the labour contractors are specialised agricultural contractors and the term is not necessarily aspersive. The prevalence of labour contractors as users of the scheme is slightly understated. An analysis of those 36 who did not respond to the survey is as follows:

Pipfruit growers	3%
Labour contractors	19%
Orchardists	14%
Packhouses	11%
Viticulturalists	6%
Unknown or unclear*	28%
Bankrupt	8%
Gone no address	11%

*the other descriptions have been reached using collateral information or visual inspection.

Response rates by region were as follows:

Blenheim	35%
BOP	86%
Canty	100%
Hastings	67%
HB rural	80%
Horowhenua	100%
Nelson	74%
Far North	67%
Otago	50%
Waikato	67%
Lower N Is.	100%

The one area where the response was disappointing is Blenheim, where nearly all RSE employers can be described as labour contractors. It is also an area with a higher proportion than usual of bankruptcies /“gone no address” entries.

Remuneration

Basic Methods of Remuneration for RSE Workers were reported as follows:

Fixed hourly rate	29%
Piece rates	29%
Hourly rate plus incentives	15%
Choice of regime	18%
Mixed hourly and piece rate	8%
No response	1%

Fixed hourly rates were favoured by packhouses and those who reported a mixed regime often had hourly rates in their packhouse and piece rates in the orchard. The low level of acknowledgement of piece rates could be an example of acceptability bias, given the prevalence encountered in subsequent interviews.

Retention Rates

As a weighted average, 44% of workers could be considered semi-permanent or ongoing, having been in the same RSE site for three or more years. As a crude average, this figure rose to 55% reflecting a higher turnover for some larger employers. Similarly, if the criteria is reduced to those workers who have been in the same employ for two or more years the figure reaches 55%. These figures are conservative, as an increase in the number of seasonal employees over time causes this proportional indicator to drop.

Hours of Work

Average weekly hours worked were reported as follows:

30-35 hrs	5%
35-40 hrs	16%
40-45 hrs	47%
45-50 hrs	32%

These were estimates by employers of mid-range hours, which did not claim to be an attempt at averaging pay slips. An average of 40-45 hours worked per week on minimum New Zealand wage for five months sits comfortably with official government returns for average gross earnings in 2011-12. Employers were also asked to indicate the range of hours worked in any given week, and the results were as follows:

30-50 hrs	64%
20-60 hrs	26%
0-80 hrs	5%
Unstated	5%

Some acceptability bias seems likely, given that several instances were subsequently uncovered of workers working over 60 hours per week. The question referred to the previous season, and one employer interviewed, a contractor whose workers regularly work in excess of 60 hours per week, pointed out that the previous season was not quite so busy.

Accommodation

Onsite and offsite accommodation is used in roughly equal proportions by RSE employers, with 63% of employers reporting the use of offsite accommodation and 62% onsite accommodation. Those using exclusive or almost exclusive onsite accommodation were 36% of employers and offsite 37%. On site accommodation was reported as follows:

Cabins only	34%
Cabins, supplemented	11%
Houses	36%
Prefabs	17%
Caravans	2%

These percentages represent the predominant form of onsite accommodation for each enterprise. A small number acknowledged the use of caravans as a top up to other ways.

Offsite accommodation was reported as follows:

Rental housing	35%
Lodgings	25%
Motels	20%
Backpackers/hostels	10%
Campsites	6%
Billets/hosts	4%

Respondents were asked to report average weekly rentals by indicating the range in which their workers were accommodated. Results were as follows:

\$ 00-50	4%
\$50-100	56%
100-150	40%

With hindsight a different set of ranges would have been used for rental data. The numbers claiming to accommodate their workers for less than \$50 per week may be overstated even at the above level. Almost all employers subsequently interviewed were within the range of \$90-\$130 per week not inclusive of meals, transport, and other additional features.

Pacific Involvement

A representative of the majority (68%) of RSE employers had visited at least one Pacific Island source country, almost always for recruitment purposes. However, a small number indicated additional reasons for such a visit. Exactly half of respondents indicated they had no involvement in any form of Pacific Island project, whereas 32% indicated some form of project involvement and a further 17% claimed to be at a discussion stage (one unclear).

Of those claiming active involvement in a Pacific Island project, 63%, or 20% of total respondents, claimed to be financially involved in a project. A smaller number claimed to be involved in an advisory capacity.

Savings and Remittances involvement

Many RSE employers involve themselves directly in the savings of the workers. Savings regimes were indicated as follows:

Compulsory savings account/weekly allowance (all workers)	32%
'Optional' savings account/weekly allowance	8%
Separate account for savings deposits	26%
Holiday pay at end	4%
Third party e.g. church	2%
Other methods	4%
No savings regime	25%

The distinction between systems, for example involving a compulsory or optional savings accounts, is likely to be more nuanced than the survey shows.

A majority of employers indicated that they did not become involved in the transfers of funds to source countries. Of the 44% who did, a majority (63% of these) remitted money to an island bank account. Other forms of involvement include advice on best rates/times to remit, or the involvement of a third party such as an island money trader.

RSE Employer Beliefs

Respondents were asked to indicate skills which they believed RSE employers gained in New Zealand which were relevant to their home environment. With minimal interpretation of the various words used, these were the perceptions:

Work ethics	=17
Budgetting	=13
Horticultural skills	=13
Financial management	=13
Time management	=10
English language skills	=9
Cooking/cleaning	=9
Health/hygiene	=8
Machinery skills	=7 (including e.g. tractor, chainsaw use)
Cultural skills	=5
Computer skills	=5
Safety/hazards	=5

Teamwork	=5
Leadership	=4
Driving	=3
Building skills	=2
Planning	=2

The 130 skill nominations may be grouped into the following categories on a percentage basis:

Anglification/westernisation issues	18%
Technical/practical	23%
Financial knowledge	20%
Good employee practices	24%
Personal wellbeing	15%

Relatively few employers nominated practical skills such as the use of computers or tractors; whereas the prevalence of belief that work ethics and financial/time management would translate into useful skills in the Pacific Island rural environment is suggestive of an RSE employer discourse. Respondents were asked elsewhere in the survey to state the number of RSE employees engaged in various tasks. The vast majority of RSE employees spend their time handpicking, pruning, sorting, or packing. Just over ten percent of RSE employers reported RSE workers operating machinery, and in these few cases a small minority of their workforces were involved in this way.

Respondents were also asked to nominate three key attributes they saw as important in their workers. This had a dual purpose. It allowed some assessment of the type of employer so that in choosing respondents to interview further I did not choose, for example all employers who put great emphasis on obedience and sobriety and consider them to be representative. The percentage of employers who highlighted each attribute is as follows:

Reliability	82%
Skills (existing)	40%
Adaptability	37%
Stamina	34%
Acumen	32%
Speed	32%
Sobriety	21%
Obedience	15%
Independence	8%
Humour	1%

Appendix III Logical Listing of TQs - IQs

TQ-IQ LOGICAL LISTING-WORKERS.

TQ A What transferable skills have you learned?

IQ a1 Tell me about the jobs you have been doing.

IQ a2 When you get home will you be doing these jobs?

IQ a3 Are there other things you have learned here that you might use at home?

TQ B What control do you have over your hours of work?

IQ b1 Do you have a regular work schedule that you have to follow?

IQ b2 Tell me about the longest day

IQ b3 What happens if you have already worked all day and you are tired but they want you to do more?

IQb4 Have you had any days when you felt sick at work? What happened?

TQ C Does the employer place restrictions on your life outside work hours?

IQ c1 What do you do after work?

IQ c2 How do you relax and have some fun?

IQ c3 Do you know anyone who got into trouble after work?

IQ c4 Who would be in charge of you after work?

TQ D Did your interview process involve two-way questions and answers or did you put your name on a list and get inspected for selection?

IQ d1 How did you find out about fruit-picking in New Zealand?

IQd2 Did you put your name on a list or did you know someone involved?

IQd3 Can you remember an interview and can you describe what happened?

TQ E What are the remuneration arrangements?

IQ e1 How much do you get paid?

IQ e2 Have you been able to save up?

RSE Worker Core Question Guide for Semi-structured interviews.

1. How did you find out about fruit picking in New Zealand?
2. Can you remember being interviewed? What happened?
3. What jobs did you do in New Zealand?
4. Can you think of things you learned that are useful here in Vanuatu?
5. How much vatu did you bring to Vanuatu?
6. How have you used your savings?
7. Can you tell me about any project that you have been involved in?
8. What did you do after work or on wet days?
9. Who was the leader at the accommodation?
10. Do you know anyone who got into trouble?
11. Did you get sick or hurt? (what happened then)
12. Was the work too much or too little?

TQ-IQ LOGICAL LISTING-EMPLOYERS.**TQA Did recruitment involve a respectful interview process? (3d)**

IQa1 What characteristics do you look for in Pacific Island workers?

IQa2 Once you were RSE registered, what options did you have for recruiting workers?

IQa3 How did you go about selecting which workers you wanted?

TQB How have you negotiated their remuneration and hours of work? (3c, 3d)

IQb1 Were you given any useful advice on how best to organise pay and work hours?

IQb2 How did you come to the present arrangement over pay and hours?

IQb3 What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of your arrangement?

IQb4 What is your assessment of the workers' attitude to current pay and conditions?

TQC In what ways do you support or control workers outside work hours? (3d)

IQc 1 What accommodation arrangements have you tried so far?

IQc2 Do you feel responsible for their behaviour in town?

IQc3 Have there been any major health or welfare issues you would like to talk about?

TQD How dependent are you on RSE workers? (3b)

IQd1 How was peak harvest before the RSE?

IQc2 Have you tried or considered machine harvesting?

TQE How have you become familiar with the place your workers come from? (1a)

IQe1 Which islands do your workers come from?

IQe2 Have you been to any of these islands or do you have any travel plans?

IQe3 have you been involved with any projects involving the use of wages earned from fruit picking?

RSE Employer Core Question Guide for Semi-structured Interviews.

1. Tell me about your involvement in the Pacific Islands.
2. How did you go about selecting the workers you wanted?
3. I am interested in how you came to the present arrangement on pay and work hours?
4. How do you negotiate the higher end hours, say weeks of over 45 hours worked (Do you have an understanding of a normal work week?)
5. I'd like to hear in more detail your ideas about skills the guys are learning useful to their home situation.
6. What sorts of questions are you aware of being asked by the RSE applicants?
7. Who do you go to for advice or ideas on your employment agreement?
8. Have there been any health or welfare issues you would like to talk about?
9. Describe what would happen to you without the RSE workforce- machine harvest?
10. Do you feel responsible for their behaviour outside work hours/ (mention landlord role)?
11. What is your assessment of the workers attitude to current pay and conditions?

Appendix IV The Port Vila Communities

Community	Density	Category	Gardens	Housing	Legally recognised	Source communities
Anabrou	low	6	Very small plot areas	Quality design	yes	Expatriate/ Ni-Van by wealth
Blacksands	medium	3	Substantial gardening	Shanties/some permanent cement	Non-urban	Mixed, esp. Tanna, Ambrym
Beverly Hills	low	6	Medium	Sections with permanent housing	Urban	Mixed
Agathis	medium	5	Small plot areas	Self contained sections low quality permanent	yes	mixed
Club Hippique	medium	4	Substantial	shanties	no	Tanna
Etaus	low	4	Substantial	mixed	Non-urban	Tanna, Ambrym, others
Eratop*						Efate
Erakor*						Efate
Erakor Bridge	medium	3	Small plot areas	Shanties/some permanent	Not recognised	Tanna, mixed
Freswota1	low	5	no	All permanent in sections	Urban	mixed
Freswota2	low	5	no	permanent	Urban	mixed
Freswota3	low	5	no	permanent	Urban	mixed
Freswota4	medium	5	Small plot areas	Many permanent/some not	Urban	mixed
Freswota5	medium	3	Small plot areas	Shanties	unclear	Tanna, other
Freswota6	Medium /dense	3	Small	Shanties	no	Tanna, other
Lagon	high	1	nil	Shanties	no	mixed
Malapoa est	low	6	Substantial	Expensive expatriate/mixed	Urban plus fringe	Mixed
Mele*						Efate
Menples	medium	3	Medium	Shanties mainly	Unclear/fringe	Tanna, Tongoa

Nambatri	medium	2	Very small plots	Shanties plus luxury, separate yards	Urban (mainly commercial)	mixed
Ohlin (incl. Flik, Nabanga)	medium	5	Small plots	Sections and yards, some permanent house	Urban	mixed
Ohlin Freshwind	low	3	Substantial	Shanties/small no's permanent	In dispute	Tanna, others
Ohlin Hoal	medium	3	Medium	Shanties	Unclear	Mixed
Ohlin Matasu	medium	2	Very small plots	Shanties	Urban	Matasu
Melemart	low	6	Medium	Permanent	Non-urban	Mixed incl. expat
Ohlin Whitewood	medium	5	Very small	Shanties/some permanent		
Pango*						Efate
Switi	medium	2	Small plots	Shanties	Urban	mixed
Simbolo	Medium /dense	2	Very small	Low grade permanent/ yards	urban	Shepherds, mixed
Seaside	high	2	Very small	Shanties/long term	urban	Paama, Futuna, Tongoa
Smeth		5				
Tagabe	medium					
Tanna Whitesand comm.	medium	4	medium	Shanties	Not recognised	Tanna
Tahoumah	low	4	Substantial			
Tebakor	medium	5	Very small plots	Permanent low cost	urban	mixed
Seven Star	medium	5				
Rangorango *						Efate
Vila North	medium	5				

Appendix V Modal Earning and Saving

It was not the primary purpose of this project to duplicate previous studies in an effort to determine precisely how much money is remitted to Vanuatu as a result of the RSE with levels of significance attached. However in order to gain perspective on the economic impact a number of sources are triangulated in this section.

Firstly, the most reliable data on gross earnings comes from New Zealand government sources and has been well publicised at \$12,600-\$12,800 in the first three years. Research in this project has identified two main earning styles, being long hours spent in pack houses at the minimum New Zealand wage with an incentive for nightshifts of \$1 in the case of the kiwifruit industry, or a more variable experience in the outdoor orchard work, usually on contract rates (piece rates). Highest reported gross earnings have been in the order of \$30000 and the legal minimum requires 240 hours of work at minimum wage giving a range of gross earnings at 3k-30k. A myriad of factors have been identified which affect the proportions of those gross earnings saved, but in this exercise an optimum is determined using information supplied. The top end gross earnings are consistent with the case of a tour which lasts close to 30 weeks and involves consistently earning around \$1,000 or more every week, but this is not typical. The \$12,800 figure is consistent with a pack house worker earning almost \$700 per week for five months or 20 weeks (the minimum wage for 50 hours per week is close to this figure, so an apple packer in a reasonable season in Hawkes Bay will be grossing about the average, allowing for small interruptions).

It is possible to make a reasonable estimate of optimal earnings based on this \$12,800 figure applied to a Hawkes Bay apple pack house worker. This applies to the case where the employer is exercising control over the savings. Expenses over a five month period are as follows:

Share of return air fare	\$600
In NZ transport	\$200
Weekly allowance	\$2,000 (20 weeks*\$100)
Tax (0.105)	\$1340
Insurance	\$350 (20 weeks *\$18)
Rent	\$2,600 (\$20 weeks *\$130)
Work Transport	\$600 (20 *\$30)

Start money	\$250
Total	\$7950

Removing the element of spurious accuracy, then the savings are in the order of \$4,800 for this optimal case. If this is all remitted, approximately 350,000 vatu results at 2012 exchange rates, but further costs within Vanuatu, including medical clearances and passports, remittance costs, as well as extra travel costs which can result from waiting in Port Vila for containers to arrive, are not included in this exercise. The fixed costs element means that the shorter the duration of the tour the greater the expenses impact on the ability to save. However it appears likely that the optimal savings applied to the average case are in the order of 350,000 vatu. This triangulates well with the Vanuatu Reserve Bank's estimates on remittances which used highly accurate numbers for workers in New Zealand but a crude estimate at the 60,000 vatu/month level to derive total remittances.

Exact figures on RSE earnings are elusive but for illustrative purposes one bank cleared 188 cheques in a recent twelve month period representing a season's savings to a value of \$830,735.42, or an average of \$4418. Though not a representative sample much of the information gathered suggests that \$4,500 is a very common earning experience from the RSE with some earning considerably higher.

Appendix VI Store Sizes in Lenakel 2006 and 2012

Store No. assigned 2006*	Category 2006	Category 2012	Comment
1	3	3	
2	4	4	
3	2	4	
4	3	3	
5	2	2	
6	2		Closed, new clothes store
7	3	1	closed, replaced
8	4	3	
9	3	2	
10	2	2	Plus new store added
11	2	2	
12	2	2	
13	3	2	Now hardware only
14	1		closed
15	2		closed
16	2	3	
17	1	1	
18	3	3	
19	2	2	
20	3	3	
21	2		closed
22	2	2	
23	1	2	

24	3	2	closed, replaced
25	2	2	
26	Not allocated		
27	2	3	
28	3	4	
29	3	2	
30	4		closed
31	2	2	
32	Not allocated		
33	Not allocated		
34	1	2	
35	1		closed
36	Not allocated		
37	2	2	
38	3	2	
39	Not allocated		
40	1	1	

Source: author's field research.

*Category 1 stores very small, usually start-up phase, category 2 viable businesses, category 3 large stores, and category 4 very large.

Appendix VII Population Data for a Selection of Tanna Villages

Village	Tan	Popn	Babies/toddlers		Adults		Children	
Lenahua	Isila	34	7	0.2	14	0.4	20	0.6
Imanam	Isila	66	15	0.23	33	0.5	33	0.5
Lowenapkalsem	Isila	41	8	0.2	15	0.37	26	0.63
Ikuningen	Isila	46	12	0.26	18	0.39	28	0.61
Imaia	Isila	65	10	0.15	28	0.43	37	0.57
Inahua	Isila	85			28	0.33	57	0.67
Lafna	Loweniu	64	10	0.16	34	0.53	30	0.47
Lowenapkaioaio	Loweniu	50	7	0.14	33	0.66	17	0.34
Lenawawa	Loweniu	35	8	0.23	15	0.43	20	0.57
Ikunala*	Loweniu	130	15	0.12	39	0.3	90	0.7
Lowen	Letekran	150	43	0.29	83	0.55	67	0.45
Loutaliko*	Letekran	80	30	0.375	30	0.375	50	0.625
Larwanu	Letekran	213	55	0.26	99	0.46	114	0.54
Lowenakauk	Letekran	120	30	0.25	55	0.46	65	0.54
Lowia	Lowia	66	11	0.17	34	0.51	32	0.49
Lapangmeta	Lowia(ext)	40	11	0.275	22	0.55	18	0.45
Imaen	Nariakne	160	25	0.156	77	0.48	83	0.52
Lowenelapen	Nariakne	340	40	0.12?	165	0.49	175	0.51
Leninik	Ip	30	5	0.16	14	0.47	16	0.53
Lenasilieng*	Ip	87	30	0.34	37	0.43	50	0.57
Lamuitatel	Ip	89	25	0.28	39	0.44	50	0.56
Lowenakauk*	Imaemcine	43	5	0.11	23	0.53	20	0.47

Lowenapgangmeta	Iru	36	8	0.22	13	0.36	23	0.64
Lenakuis	Iru	24	3	0.125	9	0.375	15	0.625
Letabom*	Iru	165	33	0.2	90	0.55	75	0.45
Lowkatai	Iru	150	39	0.26	60	0.4	90	0.6
Lowenapiktuan	Yepa	80	15	0.1875	45	0.56	35	0.44
Lamrau	Yepa	70	11	0.15	30	0.43	40	0.57
Lownik	Lowenu	74	13	0.17	40	0.54	34	0.46
Lowkas	Lowenu	80	14	0.175	45	0.56	35	0.44
Lenaio	Lowenu	69	17	0.25	32	0.46	37	0.54
Letoalul*	Afiel	43	6	0.14	23	0.53	20	0.47
Loweniparu	Lowenikarieng	70	13	0.185	32	0.46	38	0.54
Lowenapkal*	Lowenikarieng	45	13	0.29	20	0.44	25	0.56
Imaelone	Lowenikarieng	70	12	0.17	29	0.42	41	0.58
total		3010	599		1403	0.47	1606	0.53

Source: Author's field research.

Appendix VIII Full List of Interviewees

New Zealand RSE Employers:

Employers interviewed were a mixture of growers, personell managers, packhouse managers, and labour contractors. Growers are designated according to their main crop.

Barry: Apple grower

Brendon: Orchard manager

Deb: Apple grower; family business

Drew: Orchardist

Euan: Kiwifruit HR manager

Gregory: Asparagus grower

Harold: Orchardist

Jayne: Apple grower

Jervois: Labour contractor

Joel: Large Pack house manager

Joseph: Apple grower; family business

Kate: Large apple pack house manager HR

Lenny: Labour contractor

Les: Orchard HR manager

Lilly: Labour contractor

Meryl: Orchardist

Mitch: Orchard manager

Oliver: Human resources manager of large apple business

Penelope: Kiwifruit HR manager

Philip: Pack house HR manager

Poppy: labour co-op organiser

Royden: Labour contractor

Shelly: Kiwifruit pack house HR manager

New Zealand Government Officials:

Government officials interviewed were past and present MBIE officers including labour inspectors, and a consular official.

Official 1: Immigration policy official (MBIE)

Official 2: Senior official MBIE

Official 3: Senior RSE official

Official 4: MBIE worker with RSE responsibilities

Official 5: New Zealand embassy worker

Official 6: New Zealand Labour inspector

Official 7: New Zealand Labour inspector

Official 8: WINZ official

Official 9: Former RSE manager

New Zealand Union and Pastoral Workers:

The following included a mixture of pastoral care workers and union officials.

Alice: designated pastoral worker

Denise: Industry minder.

Kelly: carer

Mark: Union organiser.

Patrick: Union official

Syd: Union organiser

Terry: designated pastoral worker

New Zealand Grasslands Agriculturalists:

The following people were interviewed for Chapter 5. The majority were either retired farmers or descendants or former spouses of Whanganui/Rangitikei farmers. Two had been scrub cutting contractors.

Aaron: Retired hill country farmer

Dell: Former wife of late Whanganui hill country farmer

Donald: Retired hill country farmer

Jack: Currently farming member of intergenerational farming family

Jerome: Former scrub cutter

Madeliene: Daughter of late hill country farmer

Mitchell: Retired hill country farmer

Murray: Former scrub contractor

Ned: Farmer of over forty years' experience

Phil: Scrub contractor

Ray: Retired hill country farmer

Wesley: Retired hill country farmer

Ni-Vanuatu RSE Workers (Vila):

The following 32 migrant workers were interviewed in the Port Vila region where they reside. Their island of origin or home island is shown in brackets.

Abel (Paama)

Adrienne (Pango)

Allan (Tanna)

Andy (Ambae)

Assil (Tanna)

Bertie (Tanna)

Carol (Tanna)

Charles (Nguna)

Clinton (Tanna)

Delilah (Tanna)

Delia (Erakor)

Dwight (Tanna)

Ella (Ambrym)

Eric (Ambrym)

Fiona (Malekula)

Fred (Ambrym)

Ike (Tanna)

Janice (Futuna)

Jonah (Ambrym)

Kelvin (Nguna)

Lenny (Pentecost)

Leon (Ambae)

Lina (Ambae)

Lisa (Malekula)

Lucy (Tanna)

Nicky (Tongariki)

Oden (Paama)

Olo (Mele)

Steven (Ambrym)

Saul (Pentecost)

Tori (Ambae)

Violet (Tanna)

Vanuatu Government Officials:

Government officials involved with the RSE were also interviewed.

Official 10 Senior Government official

Official 11 Senior official in the Vanuatu Employment Services Unit

Other Ni-Vanuatu RSE Workers (non-Vila):

The following migrant workers were interviewed in outer islands.

Bonny (Epi)

Carrick (Epi)

Johnny (White sands, Tanna)

Nieve (White sands, Tanna)

Shem (North Efate)

Walter (White sands, Tanna)

William (Tanna)

Vanuatu Agents/Employer reps:

The following people were interviewed because they had been actively involved in recruiting workers

Chrystal: Agent

Digby: Agent

Emelda: Recruiter

Stan: Agent

Sophie: Recruiter

Wendy: Recruiter

Other Vanuatu Key Informants/pastors:

The following people were interviewed because they had been community leaders, in some cases team leaders.

Alex George*: team leader/pastor

Aramis: Epi

Joses: Tanna

Kitty: Tanna

Pastor Rendel: pastor/team leader

Renaldo: Epi

Appendix IX General Map of Vanuatu



Source: Worldatlas.com

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