The Pacific Reset
A Retroliberal Analysis

Thomas McDowall

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Abstract

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The interaction and relationships between stakeholders, international trends, history and politics, inform the shape and sequencing of development policy. The Pacific Reset policy initiative of the Sixth Labour Government is an example of how such interactions not only impact, but contribute to understandings on development policy. Despite being a recent policy announcement, the Pacific Reset was understood as being informed by the factors listed above and is a geopolitically motivated statement of capability in the region.

The last decade of development thinking has shifted towards a model of economic growth, defined by 'shared prosperity' and development tied to national interest. Marking a distinct aid regime, retroliberalism offers the theoretical rigour to this research. In analysing the understandings of the Pacific Reset through such a lens, the Pacific Reset loosely aligns with the tenets of retroliberalism. Although it was found that rhetoric surrounding the Pacific Reset marks New Zealand's divergence from typical retroliberal, and current global development discourses.

Using critical discourse analysis of rhetoric surrounding the announcement, and early stages of the Pacific Reset, together with a thematic analysis of eight interviews, this thesis examines the understandings of the Pacific Reset as communicated by members of the New Zealand development community. It assesses the factors involved in the policy's formation, and its impact on Pacific-focused development activities, before discussing the extent retroliberalism can interpret the Pacific Reset.

This research found the Pacific Reset to be an amalgam of policies, modalities, and structures of earlier New Zealand development policy. Historical patterns of development assistance, personalities and style of engagement, and path dependence in policy were found to impact the Pacific Reset. Participants understood the policy as merely a shift in rhetoric and a geopolitical statement of renewed engagement in the Pacific. This thesis collates these responses to analyse the understandings on, and the impact of the Pacific Reset on New Zealand development activities, and to offer an empirical base for further research on the policy.

Keywords: Pacific Reset, Retroliberalism, New Zealand development assistance, aid regimes.

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The family gathered along the way,
Has lead me back from the fray.
To overcome, to succeed,
And to never concede,
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Through many phone calls, that was the price.
However, I do apologise for being under a rock,
And to those this poem forgot,
I love everyone who helped me make this sacrifice.

To the researcher of whom loneliness becomes,
I urge thee to look up from its slums.
Support is there,
And friends will appear,
Marching to your aid with a thousand drums.

Aroha nui,

Thomas McDowall.

How I interpret the Pacific Reset is not as much about the specific tangible outputs –

it's a way of thinking, a philosophy, an approach.

Participant G

Introduction

Development is a widely analysed facet of human geography. Drawing on several academic disciplines, from economics to international relations, the study of how and why development occurs is fraught with criticisms. The communication of why aid is conducted and focused is thus an important part in determining the rationale for development assistance.

The crafting of development policy is not a linear, nor simple process. Informed by several factors, development policy is impacted by history, interactions between stakeholders, and even political whim. This research tracks the qualitative shift in the policy narrative provided by the Pacific Reset policy initiative (henceforth referred to as the 'Pacific Reset') within the context of the retroliberal global aid regime.

Two quotes bookend this thesis, offering a concise summary of the perspectives of the Pacific Reset. The quote opposite rather aptly sets the tone of the Pacific Reset. The Pacific Reset is a recent policy, with the shift in narrative a statement on New Zealand's journey beyond traditional development relationships and re-evaluation of its place in the region. Participant G offers an interesting, and correct, assumption of the policy being rhetorically different and a frame of thinking set to guide New Zealand Official Development Assistance (NZODA) for the time being.

This thesis aims to understand aid regime shifts in the New Zealand context, examining the extent a retroliberal analysis can interpret the Pacific Reset. It demonstrates the nuances of New Zealand development policy and the construction of the Pacific Reset as being derivative of larger shifts in development thinking and relations in the Pacific. Recent and historical discourses surrounding NZODA in the Pacific reflect, and in the case of retroliberalism, inform, the wider changes in development thinking. This

research argues, contrary to recent discourse, that the Pacific Reset is not a policy innovation. It is instead heavily informed by past conceptions of development assistance in the Pacific and borne of the interactions between development practitioners, and policy makers. In being an amalgam of interactions between development actors and across time, the Pacific Reset is offered as being a continuation of retroliberalism.

Inherent within this argument are ideas and broader discussions centring on the translation of development policy into practice, and the agency of actors to affect change within such processes (see Kothari & Minogue, 2002). The exploration of this intersection is outside the remit of this research, yet informs it; with the interaction between differing New Zealand development actors and their impact on the Pacific Reset being viewed within a Critical Realist epistemology. This is done to understand the causal mechanisms that such agents operate within, and to uncover their impact on the Pacific Reset and its eventual implementation into practice.

1.1   Origins and Significance of this Research

Introduced to retroliberalism while completing the Part One requirements of the Master of Development Studies programme, I was intrigued by the aid regime due to the interplay of geopolitics, changing international trends in development thinking. Having a grounding in political science, international relations, and strategic studies, it is easy to see how retroliberalism aligned with my own academic journey. The 2017 change of government, and the raft of new policies, presented an opportunity to analyse one policy, the Pacific Reset, through a retroliberal lens.

Conversations with academics and friends in the development community, following the announcement of the Pacific Reset, displayed the perspectives and questions of what the programme could mean for

development in the Pacific. It was with these discussions, coupled with my interest in retroliberalism, that this research came to light.

This thesis provides an analysis of a current development policy, and associated rhetoric through a retroliberal lens, with the intent to contribute to the growing body of literature on retroliberalism. Although this aid regime is not yet widely accepted in development academia, Chapter Five outlines its theoretical underpinnings and genesis. The constraints of this research somewhat inhibit the wider discussion of the place of retroliberalism in development, therefore the theory is adopted as presented in the literature (Mawdsley et al., 2017; Murray & Overton, 2016a, 2016b; Overton et al., 2019). In analysing the findings of this research, the congruence of the Pacific Reset with the retroliberal aid regime is determined, alongside a broader discussion interpreting the genesis of the programme.

1.2   Research Aim and Thesis Overview

The overarching objective of this research is to understand aid regime shifts in the New Zealand context, by examining the extent a retroliberal analysis can interpret the Pacific Reset. Three research questions contribute to this overarching objective:

How do members of the New Zealand development community understand the Pacific Reset and its motivations?

How is the Pacific Reset impacting Pacific-focused development activities in New Zealand?

To what extent can a retroliberal analysis help interpret the Pacific Reset?

Select methods are used to answer the research questions, outlined in Chapter Three. This thesis weaves theoretical understandings of policy change and aid regimes in development, together with New Zealand's involvement in

the Pacific, gathered through a literature review and participant responses, to understand the drivers and impact of the Pacific Reset. This gathering of empirical data, together with an analysis of secondary data on the Pacific Reset, will provide a discussion on how a retroliberal analysis can interpret the elements of recent policy changes in New Zealand development assistance.

In-depth interviews with actors involved in the New Zealand development community, and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of secondary data were the methods selected for data collection. A range of perspectives were sought from individuals involved in development academia, policy, and practice. This research, unfortunately does not include perspectives of Pasifika or current Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) development actors. Despite repeated attempts to engage with them, constraints around time and commitment prevented their participation. A total of eight individuals contributed to this research as interview participants. These participants possessed a wealth of experience in the development industry and were incredibly knowledgeable of the nuances of New Zealand development assistance. Due to the close-knit nature of the New Zealand development community and positions these individuals occupied, confidentiality of their identities is maintained throughout this thesis. Broad role descriptors are used to categorise their place in the community, whilst maintaining a high level of anonymity.

The data collected as part of this research was analysed using thematic analysis, together with CDA of secondary data, while a Critical Realist epistemology underpinned and guided this thesis.

1.3   Structure of this Thesis

The rhetoric and high-level policy changes surrounding New Zealand's development assistance in the Pacific, communicated by the Sixth Labour

Government are introduced. Contextualising the research objective and questions, Chapter Two places the Pacific Reset at the heart of this research.

Chapter Three details the methodology employed to conduct this research, documenting the ethical, epistemological, and analytical considerations involved. A description of the conceptual framework provided by retroliberalism is placed here, highlighting its relevance in this research.

Reviewing literature is a major component in establishing the nuances of policy change, theory, and history, which inform the later discussion of the Pacific Reset. Chapter Four reviews the literature on theoretical assumptions of policy change, introducing path dependence and policy networks as factors in development policy. Chapter Five provides a detailed review of aid regimes, distilled from literature examining global trends and critical junctures in development thinking. These two chapters set the academic context of this research, presenting the dominant discourses in changes to global development policy, and contextualising the dichotomy between the Global North and South.

This is followed by a review of New Zealand development assistance in the Pacific in Chapter Six. This chapter localises the academic context of this research, presenting the literature on New Zealand development discourses and activities from the colonial-through-neostructural periods. This informs the discussion of the historical vestiges of the Pacific Reset.

Chapter Seven addresses the findings of this research, codifying the perspectives of the construction, drivers, and impact of the Pacific Reset, and providing the empirical base to further apply the reviewed literature.

Many factors contribute to participants' understandings of the Pacific Reset and its impacts on development activities. Discussing these factors is therefore a considerable part of this thesis. Chapters Eight and Nine provide this discussion, to answer the research questions. Chapter Eight focuses on the

main themes in New Zealand development policy, distilled from the findings. Here, a discussion of empirical considerations in the Pacific Reset, including political personalities and style of engagement, policy change and path dependence, plus geopolitical considerations, is conducted. This is followed by a discussion of the place of the Pacific Reset in development theory and global trends, using the conceptual framework provided by retroliberalism.

Chapter Ten concludes this research, reiterating the key findings in service of answering the research questions. This is accompanied by a synopsis of this thesis, the considerations made in the research process, and avenues for future research.

1.3   Some Considerations

The relations between New Zealand and the Pacific are incredibly nuanced, and cannot be fully explored in this research. While such instances are made explicit throughout, and further catalogued in Chapter Ten, it is pertinent to define some factors mentioned in passing, as a means of facilitating discussion, but which sit outside the remit of this research.

There are a number of regional trade agreements being negotiated at the time of this research. The Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (CPTPPA) and the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER Plus) are two examples of such agreements. Seeking to facilitate greater flows of goods and services, and trading relations between signatories, the agreements are considered key parts in delivering the Pacific Reset (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2018b). However, the interplay between trade and development, and New Zealand's relations in the Pacific, cannot be explored further than its immediate impact on development activities in regard to this research.

This research analyses a policy initiative that is in its infancy. Updates to the Pacific Reset were released in the public domain during this research. Although providing clarity on some points, such updates were largely unhelpful in answering the research questions. Hence, this research analyses the Pacific Reset from its announcement in mid-2018-through-mid-2019. It is acknowledged the Pacific Reset has informed several policy documents after this timeframe – particularly in defence. However, the scope of this research prevents an up-to-date analysis of the Pacific Reset.

Many analyses of global trends in development assistance employ an analysis of quantitative data. Indeed a mixed methods approach to this research has the potential to ensure rigour and provide evidence to findings, however, this research is rather a qualitative exploration of trends in New Zealand development assistance and their influence on the Pacific Reset.

It should be noted that this research uses financial data from many sources—largely secondary citations, or archived beyond the reach of this research—to track trends in development assistance spending. Such sources include (but are not limited to) official New Zealand Yearbooks, OECD data and statistics, internal ministry costings, and appropriations retrieved from the New Zealand Treasury. Much effort has been taken to verify and cross-check data to ensure consistency, however the shear inconsistency in historically presented data allows for discrepancies in its reporting. Therefore amounts stated in this research are not presented as real values adjusted for inflation, or in constant dollars (unless stated otherwise) and are used as a tool to facilitate discussion of broader qualitative trends.

In the interest of brevity, the scope of this research prohibited an exploration of the growing field of international relations that looks at the security-development nexus, peacekeeping, and military actors in development. Although mentioned as geopolitical considerations behind the Pacific Reset and

its congruence to the retroliberal aid regime, due consideration to this nexus cannot be afforded in this research.

A Note about Terminology Used

Ideas, concepts and definitions change with the ebbs and flows of development thinking. This thesis reviews literature that uses several terms to describe similar phenomena, often requiring a degree of analysis to ascertain meaning within their context. An example of this is the categorisation of countries whom receive development assistance.[1] Found throughout the literature each definition has variations in categorisation but all impose a hierarchical—almost dichotomous—relationship on development relationships. After due consideration, this thesis uses terms which are established in recent development literature for consistency. Recognising these terms are contested, and somewhat politicised themselves, efforts have been made to minimise use to represent individual countries where possible – and not their place in dichotomous literature. Where generalised and macro analysis has occurred, 'Global South' refers to emerging economies and recipients of development assistance. Other terms will be highlighted and defined when initially used.

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[1] Such terms include: 'underdeveloped' and 'developing' countries, 'recipients', 'the Periphery', the 'Third World' and 'low and middle income countries'.

Placing this Research:
The Pacific Reset in Context

"New Zealand's coalition government was formed with the intention of leading change rather than managing a modified status quo" (Peters, 2018c, p.1).

In several speeches prefacing the 2018 Budget, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Winston Peters signalled several changes to the New Zealand Aid Programme and MFAT that captured the attention of many stakeholders and observers. Adopting the quote above —a foundational feature of the current coalition government—Minister Peters sought to 'shift the dial' of his ministry. Changes to staffing arrangements, funding structures and a continued geographic focus in the Pacific were announced and are hallmarks of the shift in policy known as the Pacific Reset.

It is worth noting the Pacific Reset has not been fully operationalised and is still in its infancy at the time of this research. To contextualise this research and aid future analysis, this section introduces the Pacific Reset and outlines the path to it, its core objectives and priorities, and funding arrangements, through associated policy pronouncements, speeches, and budgetary appropriations.

2.1   Early Beginnings of the Pacific Reset

The lengthy government formation negotiations following the 2017 General Election changed the political landscape as the Labour-New Zealand First coalition government succeeded the three-term Sixth National Government. Emerging as 'Kingmaker', Winston Peters was assigned the foreign affairs and trade portfolio – a role he held in the Fifth Labour Government from 2005-2008. Much like Murray McCully, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade for the majority of the Sixth National Government,

Peters quickly took the helm of his ministry, signalling changes to reflect the rhetoric of the new government.

The much publicised 2018 Pacific Mission led by Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern saw members of the new government and other business and community leaders tour Samoa, Niue, Tonga, and Rarotonga, reaffirming New Zealand's commitment to the region (New Zealand Herald, 2018, March 04). Signalling changes to the principles guiding NZODA in the region engagement and waning influence compared to other development actors (New Zealand Herald, 2018, March 04), such announcements would become embodied in a larger foreign policy statement after the Mission. This came in a speech to the Lowy Institute in March 2018, where Minister Peters announced he would oversee a 'shifting the dial' of New Zealand foreign policy and provision of Official Development Assistance (ODA). Announced in the context of a wider policy agenda aimed at leading change in the region (Peters, 2018b), the Pacific Reset was framed first and foremost as a change to foreign policy with the belief that *"we must, we need, and we should be doing more to make a difference in the region"* (Peters, 2018a, p. 1).

As the unveiling of the Government's inaugural budget crept closer, Minister Peters was given license to jump the gun, announcing the key points of the Pacific Reset to an eager press, and development sector. This pre-Budget announcement saw Minister Peters (2018b) elaborate on the Pacific Reset's two strands, outlined at the Lowy Institute. The first strand is seen to involve a focus on 'back-to-basics diplomacy', seeking regular high-level meetings and engagement in meaningful dialogue with partners in the region (Peters, 2018b). This included a desire to progress relations once characterised by donor-recipient dynamics to 'mature political relationships' (Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2018).

The second, more diverse strand, is an exercise in *"putting our money where our mouth is"* (Peters, 2018a, p. 1), with two focuses: increasing both funding and capacity of the New Zealand development programme. Sustained increases in ODA throughout the term and an expansion of MFAT's capacity are actioned to facilitate deeper engagement with multiple actors in the region. The two strands are considered to operate in tandem with the objective of 'shifting the dial' of New Zealand foreign policy attention back towards the Pacific region, and to bolster New Zealand's place as a respected partner in the region (Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2018; Peters, 2018a).

2.2   Principles of Engagement

The refocusing of foreign policy required a refreshing of the principles that guide engagement with partners in the region. Picking up on changing rhetoric, commentators began to analyse the principles of engagement. These principles, outlined in the cabinet paper (Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2018) detail this shift in policy, bridge the strands of the Pacific Reset, and are summarised below:

Understanding: Government policy on the Pacific is enriched by academic, community and civil society expertise.

Friendship: Values of friendship, including honesty, empathy, trust and respect will be exhibited with Pacific Island countries – especially at the political level.

Mutual Benefit: Identification of win-win opportunities in developing foreign and domestic policy to avoid negative consequences. This will affect a myriad of sectors in the Pacific, and where appropriate, policy should be run through a *how will this affect the Pacific Islands region?* filter.

Collective Ambition: Ensuring that government agencies that work in the region operate in a well-coordinated fashion to deliver on the Government's

ambition. A key feature of this principle is inclusivity in working with a broad range of Pasifika-focused stakeholders.

Sustainability: The focus of engagement with the region should be on contributing to the region's long-term goals.

2.3   Initial Funding Arrangements for the Pacific Reset

The release of budget bilateral documents by the Treasury (2018a, 2018b) indicate Minister Peters requested to substantially increase ODA and foreign affairs budgets, totalling approximately $1.5 billion over four years[2]. The Treasury, citing 'weak strategic cases', recommended against such requests, with them being negotiated through the 2018 budget bilateral process (New Zealand Treasury, 2018a; Sachdeva, 2018). The resulting arrangements are outlined in Figure 2.1, which lists the major funding announcements of Pacific Reset made during 2018. It should be noted that this is not an exhaustive list of funding arrangements and initiatives as part of the policy; rather it is indicative of the amount of funding initially secured to operationalise the Pacific Reset.

FIGURE 2.1: Initial Funding Announcements of the Pacific Reset

2018 Amount	Earmark
$714 million	Increase international development assistance
$150 million	Additional operational spending
$70 million	Relationship nurturing in the region
$10 million	Pacific Enabling Fund

The largest, NZ$714 million appropriation was allocated to increase international development assistance with the goal of *"tackling the biggest global and regional challenges of our time"* (*Vote Official Development Assistance*, 2019, p. 135). This was framed as a boost to both the diminishing Official Development

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[2] Comprised of $1.2 billion for the ODA budget and approximately $280 million for the foreign affairs capital budget.

Assistance-to-Gross National Income (ODA-to-GNI) metric and New Zealand's influence in the Pacific (Peters, 2018b). Accompanying this was a NZ$150 million package earmarked for additional operational spending, with the specific objective of rebuilding New Zealand's regional diplomatic presence—manifesting in the creation of 50 new roles and 14 new regional diplomatic posts (New Zealand Treasury, 2019b; Peters, 2018b; RNZ, 2018, December 06). These major appropriations document the largest increase in funding to development assistance and MFAT in a decade, with Minister Peters (2018c) setting a two-year timeline for increasing diplomatic presence in the Pacific, intending to ride the momentum of the new budget appropriations. These were subsequently increased in Budget 2019, as documented in a year-on-year increase in the real value of the appropriations (New Zealand Treasury, 2019).

Announced later in 2018, the funding arrangements for Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) were updated. The initial diversification of funding streams included several 'enabling' funds for the sector. The first stream is a $70 million funding allocation aiming to assist the nurturing of relationships between New Zealand-based NGOs and their Pacific counterparts under the 'principles of engagement' (Peters, 2018d). The second fund, the Pacific Enabling Fund, was announced in late 2018 and confirmed in 2019. This smaller, approximately NZ$10 million fund provides a funding stream for activities undertaken with Pacific partners that sit outside of and are otherwise ineligible for formal funding arrangements such as sporting, military cooperation, and cultural activities (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2019; Peters, 2018c). Bolstering New Zealand's presence in the region in a hands-off manner, this fund targets deeper engagement with grass-roots partners (RNZ, 2018, December 06). These funds fall under the purview of MFAT, marking a slight change in funding options for activities undertaken by civil society actors.

To encourage a multi-sectoral approach to achieving a targeted and efficient provision of development assistance, closer cooperation with NGOs

was announced as well. Following an independent audit of funding mechanisms (McGillivray et al., 2018), the 'Partnering for Impact' initiative saw a revamp of funding activities carried out by other civil society actors. Undertaken under the direction of the previous government, three programmes aligned with, and were informed by, the Pacific Reset. These include 'Negotiated Partnerships', encompassing multi-year, fit-for-purpose programmes with larger NGOs, 'Maanaki', a revamped contestable-funding co-investment scheme for smaller projects and NGOs, and an organisational strengthening mechanism to coordinate self-reliance building of civil society partners in the Pacific (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2019; New Zealand Aid Programme, 2019).

2.4   Immediate Reception

The Pacific Reset announcement was well received within the New Zealand development sector and beyond, with attention focusing on the change in rhetoric, distilled mainly from Minister Peters' statements. Commentators (see Powles, 2018; Steff, 2018; Wyeth, 2019) were quick to point out the latent geostrategic sentiments in the language used, pointing to the Pacific Reset being a response to growing Chinese development activity in the Pacific and pressures to increase aid in the region (O'Sullivan, 2018). Analysis of the geostrategic discourse is documented in later chapters.

Peer-reviewers of New Zealand's ODA programme welcomed the increasing of ODA as a percentage of GNI from 0.25 in 2016 to 0.28, praising the commitment of funds (Killen, 2018). Figure 2.2 charts the fluctuation in this metric, showing a gradual decline in the real value of ODA since 2012. The gradual decline of ODA-to-GNI of recent years precipitated fears of New Zealand's waning influence in the Pacific – providing impetus for the Reset (Killen, 2018; Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2018).

FIGURE 2.2:

Net Official Development Assistance as a percentage of Gross National Income

	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018
ODA-to-GNI	0.252	0.222	0.234	0.268	0.304	0.255	0.277	0.269	0.25	0.28

Year
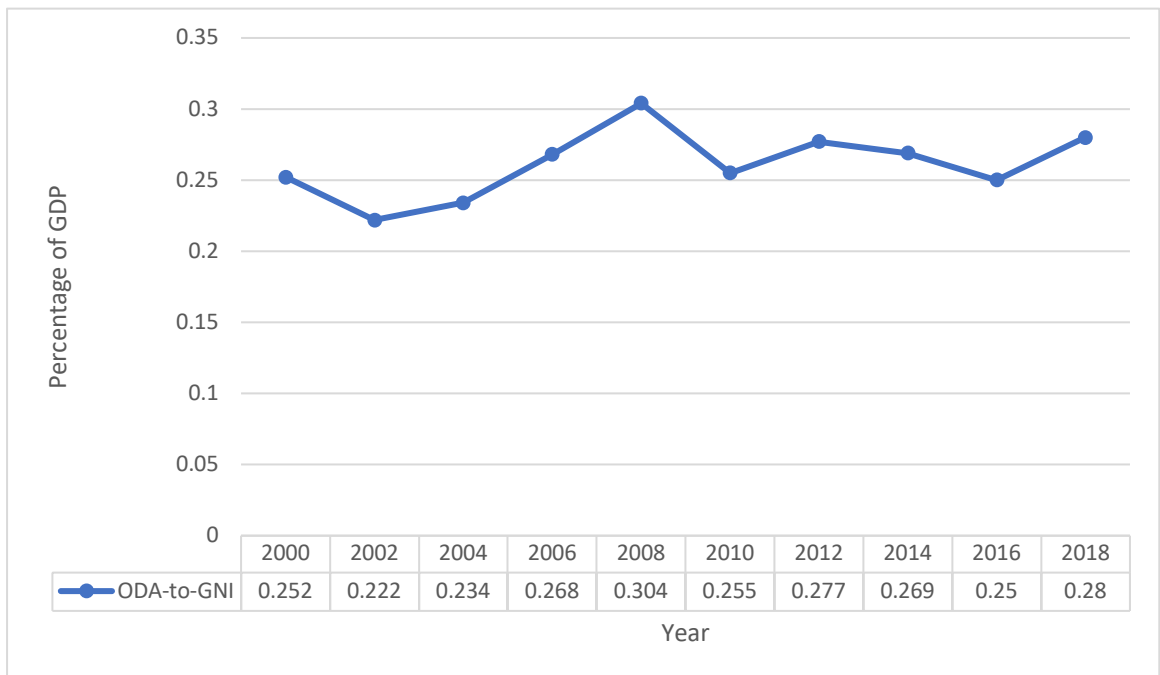
Source: (OECD, n.d.; *Vote Official Development Assistance*, 2019)

Along with detailing the principles for New Zealand's engagement with Pacific partners, even Minister Peters—with characteristic wit and political chauvinism—used the announcement of the Pacific Reset to offer his take on the previous Government's approach to development. Expressing disdain at the *"decade of fiscal retrenchment and drift",* Minister Peters (2018b, p.1) viewed the Pacific Reset as a means to reverse the perceived stagnation and gutting of MFAT. Minister Peters' rhetoric points to a refresh of foreign policy and development assistance that is markedly different from the status quo. Inheriting the infrastructure-investment sustainable economic development model, rhetoric centring on health, governance and political relationships illustrate a modified application of this approach to development assistance.

Pacific Island leaders welcomed the announcement, using the shift in rhetoric to reaffirm ties. Pacific Island countries, aware of the complex nature of the issues facing the region, called for greater attention to their needs, with Prime Minister of Samoa, Tuilaepa Aiono Sailele Malielegaoi saying that *"no one*

donor can provide all of the assistance we need" (Government of Samoa, 2018, minute 1:02). This feature of development assistance in the Pacific illustrates the agency of Pacific Island countries in *"having to widen our sphere of friends"* (Government of Samoa, 2018, minute 2:11). Fijian Minister of Defence, Inia Seruiratu (2018), captures the positive sentiments in the region, believing:

> *"the Pacific Reset could not have come at a better time, and Fiji welcomes the opportunity to deepen the partnership shared between our countries. This visit will prove to be a major step forward in enhancing partnership at the diplomatic level"* (p. 1)

The reception of the Pacific Reset sees regional leaders welcome the opportunity to work with New Zealand and deepen existing bilateral partnerships, although it is tempered with mild scepticism about the true impact of the Pacific Reset.

2.5 Concluding Remarks

Although framed as a monolithic policy, the components of the Pacific Reset are diverse. The 'principles of engagement', new and updated funding arrangements, and refreshed thinking on the relationships in the Pacific are examples of the breath of the Pacific Reset's focus and potential for impacting future development (and wider government) activities. Seeking to answer the previously stated research questions, the framing and early arrangements of the Pacific Reset, stated in this chapter, are coupled with understandings of its creation and impact, to analyse the programme through a retroliberal lens.

The Pacific Reset could have profound implications for development assistance in the region. With regard to the rhetoric and institutional arrangements outlined above, the Pacific Reset can be described not as a monolithic policy with one objective, but as a collection of budget appropriations and rhetoric in pursuit of deeper and balanced engagement between New Zealand-based actors and the immediate Pacific region.

Methods and Approaches

This chapter introduces the scope of the research, outlining the methods used to collect and analyse data. The purpose of this research is to understand aid regime shifts in the New Zealand context, examining the extent a retroliberal analysis could interpret the Pacific Reset. Analysing the New Zealand experience in crafting and implementing development policy, this research conceptualises elements of global aid regimes–namely retroliberalism– to ascertain the understandings of the origins and motivations of the Pacific Reset.

A Critical Realist approach informs this research with primary data obtained through interviews with New Zealand development professionals, spanning a cross-section of perspectives and experiences. The data was then examined using Critical Discourse Analysis to recognise themes and dynamics within interview transcripts, and to obtain a deeper understanding of the causal link between development policy and practice. The implications of the researchers' positionality as a novice researcher and a knowledgeable outsider within this research will be discussed in relation to the methods of analysis. This chapter explores these points, detailing the research approach, the associated methods and the justifications for these choices.

3.1   Epistemological Underpinnings of this Research

It is important to highlight theoretical underpinnings of research as theory enables us to make assumptions about the world (Smith, 2012). Linda Tuhiwai Smith's sentiments are a critique of indigenous peoples' oppression by positivist—traditionally Western—methodologies but offer a chance for researchers to reflect upon how theory acts to determine research, and how scholars conduct research in the space where theory, discourse and representation meet.

This research adopts a Critical Realist epistemology. First accredited to the work of Roy Bhaskar, critical realism, a blend of positivist and constructivist ontologies, argues that social scientific research can and should identify underlying causal structures beyond what is immediately observable. With reality existing separate of us, accessible through subjective perspectives, critical realism seeks to understand how policy and practice are made possible through examining the causal mechanisms and structures that agents operate within (Bhaskar, 2008; Johnston & Sidaway, 2004).

Sharing positivism's tradition of explaining rather than understanding, critical realism as an epistemology in research explains observations within theoretical frameworks which structure people's actions (May, 1993 in Kitchin & Tate, 2014). Investigating the changes in NZODA in the Pacific over time, and how global discourses in aid and development structured such actions, resonate with a Critical Realist epistemology. The primary means of this came in the form of looking at the causal link between development cooperation and evolving policy. This interaction was examined using a blend of *abstract* and *concrete* research as defined by Andrew Sayer (2010, in Kitchin & Tate, 2014). The first is concerned with developing theory that can explain events, and the second investigating events and objects produced by structures and mechanisms to explain a scenario.

3.2   The Researchers' Positionality

Hegemonic discourses traditionally based in positivism have emphasised the neutrality and objectivity of researchers (England, 1994 in Downing, 2010). Resulting in an obscuring of the biases and subjectivity of the information gathered, viewing researchers as mere 'instruments' in data collection and analysis (Cassell, 2005) can lead to the promotion of existing structures that favour hegemonic discourses (Mohammad, 2001; Smith, 2012). Contrary to positivist traditions, qualitative researchers are not separate from

their investigations with sustained contact with participants via inherently social methods. Researchers are thus not only involved in all aspects of the research process, but essential to it (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). In reflecting on such intimate involvement in the research process, I must acknowledge my position within this research.

I acknowledge that qualitative research in development geography is a subjective and context-based endeavour. David Ley and Alison Mountz (2001) place researchers in the middle of an intricate web of contexts which shape our capacity to tell the story of others. Class, age, gender, nationality and intellectual tradition were all navigated, shaping my interactions with participants, and my research in general. I am a young, Pākehā, male from a lower-class family of European descent. I am university educated with an understanding of New Zealand politics and the mechanics of government. Developed through years of study, keen interest, and an internship in a government department, I acknowledge that my knowledge is mainly at the macro-level, and I am an outsider in the niche development and foreign policy sphere. I have not worked with any of the participants or their employers, nor was not aware of the nuances of the space development practitioners occupy at the micro-level of policy creation and implementation. I am thankful to those participants who spoke frankly to me about the work they do and the linkages between policy and politics, but acknowledge these conversations were had due to the position I occupy. Contacts established through this research, and the use of chain-referral from such contacts, assisted immensely in securing interviews with participants I would otherwise not come into contact with in a timely manner.

Residing in the space between being an insider and outsider, means research in development is a dynamic process. For researchers considered as 'outsiders', it is difficult to gain access to certain spaces that they do not inhabit (Crang & Cook, 2007; Downing, 2010). To gain access and establish rapport

with gatekeepers and participants are thus important steps in research. However, for researchers considered 'insiders', the issue of objectivity arises (Crang & Cook, 2007). Access to the knowledge and spaces greatly assist in obtaining data, but can limit the autonomy in analysing and conveying narratives (Bonner & Tolhurst, 2002). I agree with Sonya Dwyer and Jennifer Buckle (2009) who suggest that the dichotomy existing between 'insider' and 'outsider' is rather a nuanced relationship, where researchers are a blend of both binaries. Leaning towards more of an 'outsider' in the context of this research, several factors assisted in creating rapport with participants. Navigating the web of contexts I am woven in, created similarities between myself as a researcher and participants, leading to what Emma Downing (2010) termed a 'semi-insider' status. My physical attributes and mannerisms assisted in establishing rapport and in data collection, but it was being a student of Victoria University of Wellington, the Alma Mater of a majority of participants, which was the primary aide in this research. Chain-referral from contacts within the university allowed me to gain access to participants. This aspect of my positionality is exemplified with initial contact with a development policy practitioner at MFAT. As a Victoria University of Wellington alum from the same programme, they were interested and happy to help, knowing the difficulty of being an outsider to the government sphere.

Interviewing people of status within their places of employment introduced a power dynamic that, as a novice researcher, I had to be reflexive to. The inherently social means of engagement with participants in positions more influential than my own, required me to look at how one is inserted in grids of power relations and how that influences methods, interpretations, and knowledge production (Sultana, 2007). People in positions such as the participants of this research, especially those in government, are often time poor (Duke, 2002), requiring me to be flexible in finding times that suited participants to conduct interviews – often during their lunch breaks. Engaging

with time poor individuals was especially challenging throughout data collection. Having established contact with gatekeepers at MFAT and registering their interest, I was informed of changes to internal staff arrangements that resulted in the deferring of further contact till they were best free. This ultimately resulted in sporadic contact and no interviews with MFAT personnel. This is a consideration for their inclusion in further research on New Zealand development policy. The asymmetrical relationship that existed between researcher and participants was a factor in the sequencing and eventual conduct of the interviews, switching to more of a structured interview for participants who had less time to offer.

Being specialists in their field, the disparity in knowledge between themselves and the researcher required careful preparation before conducting interviews in the form of reading key policy documents and press releases - often asking for links to additional material. An experience shared by many novice researchers, increased reflexivity to mitigate the power disparity and understand the content is required to profit from interviewing such individuals and to get beyond the 'official line' (Duke, 2002; Signal et al., 2018). In being pragmatic and up-front about my comparative lack of knowledge, many participants pointed me to policy documents and tangentially related sources.

In sum, my positionality as a young, Pākehā male, educated in policy and political science and interested in New Zealand foreign policy, has shaped the scope of this research. Being a knowledgeable 'outsider' to the development policy field and profiting off personal attributes to gain access to high-status participants, influenced how I conducted this research.

3.3   Research Process

In addition to detailing how this research was conducted, the process of how this research was initiated warranted consideration. The development of a

conceptual framework and explaining the rationale for the expansive literature review are documented here as part of the research process.

3.3.1 Conceptual Framework

As is the case with most research in the development geographies space, a conceptual framework provides the frame of analysis. Considered a *"diagrammatic version of a theory which demonstrates processes, concepts and relationships"* (Kitchin & Tate, 2014, p. 33), this research adopts the aid regime - retroliberalism as its conceptual framework. Table 5.2.1 outlines the components of the aid regime with relationships between policy and larger regimes of accumulation across several Global North countries. Although not diagrammatic, this table provides the frame for analysing the Pacific Reset later on with retroliberalism, as an established aid regime, explained in greater detail in Chapter Five.

Through a deductive process the retroliberal aid regime was reprinted from several sources (Mawdsley et al., 2017; Murray & Overton, 2016a, 2016b; Overton et al., 2019). Seeking to not only identify, but understand the causal structures that lie behind the Pacific Reset, employing retroliberalism as a conceptual framework complements the Critical Realist epistemology of this research. Comparing the findings of the Pacific Reset to the established tenets of retroliberalism offers an insight into the policy's situation within wider development discourses, but also an analysis into its causal elements.

3.3.2 Literature Review

A major part of the foundation of analysis for this research is contained in the literature review (Chapters Four-through-Six). As this research bridges development theory and practice, a substantive review was deemed necessary. The literature establishes the theoretical base, focusing on assumptions on policy change and aid regimes, to compliment the historically situated review of New Zealand's development assistance in the Pacific. As this research

explores the factors involved in the ideation of the Pacific Reset, the literature review provides the context and base necessary for the discourse analysis of textual data in later chapters.

3.4 Qualitative Research Methods

The objective and questions of this research were answered through the use of qualitative research methods. A plethora of methods exist in the realm of qualitative research, with this research employing semi-structured interviews, discourse analysis and thematic analysis to the Pacific Reset. This section details how each approach was used in this research.

3.4.1 Interviews

Qualitative data was collected through eight confidential and in-depth interviews conducted in Wellington, New Zealand, and via telephone. Reflecting on positionality, a considered approach to interviewing was adopted. Semi-structured interviews were used to facilitate the flow of ideas between the researcher and participant, aligning well with the epistemology of this research. As this research explores the factors involved in the ideation of the Pacific Reset, it was deemed appropriate to allow participants the space to tell—often at length—their stories and reflect on their experience with New Zealand development assistance in order to track policy creation through experiences, interactions, and observations.

Semi-structured interviews are considered 'conversations with purpose', focused on content - guided by points the researcher believes important allowing for participants to bring up their own ideas and thoughts (Valentine, 2005; Willis, 2006). However, the inherently personal nature of semi-structured interviews required an establishing of rapport with participants which was often done over weeks before face-to-face meetings. This, I believe, was beneficial to data collection as the ease of interaction made the conversation flow in an organic fashion. In line with what Iain Hay (2010) suggests, questions

and prompts were used only to direct inquiry and maintain the conversational flow. This not only allowed participants the ability to expand on ideas and anecdotes, but gave them the space to voice perceptions of the development landscape in their own terms and allowed the researcher to get beyond the official line in some cases. The confidentiality of the interviews and protection of identities contributed to this space and allowed participants to be honest in their appraisal of the Pacific Reset.

As seen in the interview guide (Appendix V), questions were open-ended, following the three themes of this research gathered from the literature review. As all participants were (at the time of this research) active members of the New Zealand development sector, little definition of terms was required apart from elaborating on retroliberalism. The majority of participants were sourced through the chain-referral sampling technique from contacts within Victoria University, alumni, and participant nominations. Purposive sampling was employed to narrow potential participants to those involved in the New Zealand development sector and involved in the creation and implementation of the Pacific Reset. This proved difficult to begin with (see Section 3.2) as many participants—particularly those in government departments and towards the end of financial year 2018—were time poor with several failed recruitment attempts. Although stressful, chain-referral sampling proved successful with many participants recommending each other – highlighting the close-knit nature of the New Zealand development sector.

Upon recommendation and consideration of professional characteristics, participants were recruited through email with an attached brief (Appendix IV) that outlined the questions and objectives of the research. Interviews were scheduled and carried out during the months of April through June 2019 in mutually agreed upon spaces. Three were conducted via telephone, two in central city cafés, and two in institutional settings, with durations ranging from 18 minutes to 1 hour and 15 minutes in length. Several interviews were

rescheduled due to time constraints, with the impact of this being diminished by the researcher being as reflexive as possible.

The participants of this research do not reside in one singular space, with experience in several sectors of New Zealand development. Such is true of many development practitioners who often move between the corridors of government, policy, practice, and beyond, for many reasons (Sultana, 2007). This made it difficult to categorise participants whilst maintaining anonymity. Participants occupied positions of power or prestige within their respective organisations, thus confidentiality was a priority. Figure 3.1 lists the individually agreed upon descriptors which fall within the three broad categories. These are those primarily involved in academia; development policy formation and implementation; and as development practitioners with NGOs:

FIGURE 3.1: List of Participants

Participant	Categorisation	Descriptor
Participant A	Academia	Academic specialising in security studies
Participant B	Academia	Academic with MFAT and development practice experience
Participant C	Academia	Academic specialising in development studies and aid effectiveness
Participant D	Development Policy	Development practitioner with MFAT experience
Participant E	Development Practice	Development Practitioner with a mid-sized NZ-based NGO
Participant F	Development Practice	Development practitioner with a large NGO in New Zealand
Participant G	Development Practice	Executive of a Pacific-focused New Zealand-based NGO
Participant H	Development Policy	Advisor to a Government actor

3.4.2 Ethical Considerations

In line with the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee Guidelines (Appendix I) signed, informed consent was received with interviews being audio recorded with permission of the participants (Appendix II). Participants had the option to request a summary of their interview via email, distilled from the verbatim transcript produced for coding after the interviews. The aforementioned difficulty in securing participants from MFAT gave rise to an ethical consideration. It is understandable that those contacted did not wish to speak to the Pacific Reset due to the policy being in its draft and early phases of operationalisation. This was resolved in two ways: Participants who spoke to the policy requested confidentiality as part of the interviewing process. This was included and afforded to all participants of this research, with the appropriate amendments made to the Ethics application behind this research. Secondly, data that was not able to be sourced from MFAT personnel was substituted for information found in annual reviews and parliamentary questions regarding MFAT and the Pacific Reset. It was fortuitous that such reviews focused on similar questions to this research, although perspectives from individuals within MFAT would have contributed to a more holistic piece of research. This ultimately resulted in the removal of participant identities and were kept confidential through the use of unique identifiers and broad descriptors of their engagement with the development sector, and the increased use of discourse analysis of textual data.

3.4.3 Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was employed to analyse textual data in this research. Borne from linguistic and sociological traditions, Discourse Analysis assumes that the world cannot be known separately from discourse and examining how language creates phenomena (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). Now a common method of qualitative data interpretation in social sciences, discourse as a unit of analysis was first introduced by Michel Foucault in

Archaeology of Knowledge (1970), believing that all social psychologies and other phenomena exist *through* discourse. To Foucault, all meaningful statements and texts have effects on the world and if a collection of statements and texts appear to have a common theme, then a unified effect is provided illustrating the rules and structures that underpin society (Waitt, 2010). This research employed CDA, to evaluate the discursive elements of policy and rhetoric in keeping with the Critical Realist epistemology.

Discourse Analysis as a method of data interpretation compliments the epistemology of this research well. The interdisciplinary nature of CDA sees it extend its analytical focus to examine broader features of the production and consumption of discourse (Fairclough, 2013). Examining and evaluating discourse assisted in identifying the underlying causal structures between development policy and practice, and understanding the intersection—where retroliberalism resides—between modalities, policies and theoretical understandings of development. With the exploration of the relationship between text, discourse, and context (Phillips & Hardy, 2002), discourse analysis was employed throughout this research. As many secondary sources were statements in the form of press releases, cabinet papers, speeches, government documents and newspaper articles, this required a 'deeper than face value' analysis. CDA was employed to evaluate them within the context of global aid and development trends and political realities of New Zealand development assistance in the Pacific. This also took into account many factors including the sequencing, mode of delivery, publishing author/orator, the intended audience and their response to explain existing realities, showing the effects that existing structures and mechanisms have on policy and practice (Fairclough, 2013).

3.5   Analysis of Data

Analysing primary data required a more intensive approach. Due to its flexible nature in allowing researchers to recognize patterns and generate findings through collation of similar themes, thematic analysis is seen to provide a *"rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data"* (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 78). Grouping collected data into themes and sub-themes allows researchers to see patterns, draw links, and distil meaning within and across the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Although commonly utilised in qualitative research, thematic analysis is not clearly distinguished or conceptualised from other form analysis, Braun and Clarke (2006) provide a framework to conduct analysis which this research was guided by. Figure 3.2 outlines this thematic coding process with this research used both *inductive* and *deductive* approaches to thematic analysis. Where an inductive approach (depicted in the lower branch of Figure 3.2) sees codes and themes developed from the data itself, a deductive approach (depicted in the upper branch of Figure 2.1) sees themes derived from established literature upon reviewing the gaps and patterns in knowledge (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

It was decided to utilise both veins of thematic analysis considering my positionality in being a 'knowledgeable outsider', and due to literature and data converging on several thematic points of inquiry. Although established as a dichotomy, inductive and deductive thematic analysis are rarely conducted in isolation as previous knowledge cannot be separated from analysis, and it being difficult to ignore outliers that arise in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). This research initially adopted the deductive approach to guide the inquiry in line with the literature - with the inductive approach being used when the data produced additional themes.

FIGURE 3.2: The Thematic Coding Process

Step 1d: Thematic Development
- Understanding theory
- Themes developed from literature review

Step 2d: Sub-Categorisation
- Sub-themes named

Step 3d: Compilation
- Conducting interviews
- Transcriptions

Deductive Thematic Analysis

Step 4d: Code Interviews
- Manual coding conducted

Step 5: ANALYSIS

Step 4i: Linking Themes
- Links identified

Inductive Thematic Analysis

Step 3i: Sub-Categorisation
- Sub-themes named and coded

Step 2i: Thematic Development
- Familiarise data
- Name themes
- Coding of text
- Links identified

Step 1i: Compilation
- Interviews conducted
- Transcriptions

Source: Adapted from Braun and Clark (2006)[3]

It was decided this research would initially adopt a deductive approach to thematic analysis as this research reviewed literature based in development theory, policy, and history. General themes were derived through the common discursive elements that were identified (or lacking) in the literature, and research questions (Steps 1d and 2d of Figure 3.2). This approach was used to understand the theory and the landscape of ODA and New Zealand in the Pacific in order to examine how established literature supported or challenged the findings of this research.

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[3] I acknowledge Tui Marina Arona for helping distil Braun and Clark's analysis.

Through using a deductive approach the thematic structure of interviews was established which in turn allowed space for the inductive approach to inform analysis. This is highlighted in Step 2i (Figure 3.2), where an inductive approach was adopted beginning with the familiarisation of the data after its compilation. Patterns in discourse were identified through multiple readings of interview transcripts allowing for the identification of common themes in the data, and between participants that were outliers in the deductive process (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). From here, sub-themes were collated which often were established under themes generated from the deductive process, but were given nuance and clarity from the data itself.

Appendix V outlines P.R.O.M.I.S.E., the acronym developed to categorise sub-themes and codes in this research.[4] This was developed using the deductive approach, after the familiarisation of the literature, to facilitate easier analysis of data. Appendix V outlines the acronym, its themes, and grouped sub-themes that were used in the coding process. This manual coding was conducted in lieu of using qualitative data analysis software, such as nVivo. Preferring manual coding and data analysis techniques in order to immerse myself in the data and become familiar with it, it ultimately led to a richer understanding of the causal links between participants' responses and structures they operate within.

Coding of interviews began with multiple readings of transcripts and determining common patterns. These patterns were either assimilated under the themes gathered from multiple readings of literature, or as new patterns. Such themes offered an insight into the work of participants, relationships between organisations and motivations for policy change. This was an iterative process where themes were reviewed with each new transcription and coding run. Sub-themes under P.R.O.M.I.S.E. were refined with a surprising new line

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[4] I acknowledge the wordsmith brilliance of Professor Warwick Murray in helping create this acronym.

of inquiry established under the inductive process – all leading to the final step of analysing the findings and writing the discussion section of this thesis.

3.6   Summary

This chapter provided an in-depth account of the research process that governed this thesis. Having stated the positionality of the researcher, the research process and analysis of data, a deeper understanding behind the selection of the methods used as part of this research, is provided. The Critical Realist epistemology that underpinned this research was complimented through the use of CDA and a blended inductive/deductive thematic analysis of the data. This resulted in a robust set of tools that allowed a deeper engagement with data to analyse the causal mechanisms and structures participants and the Pacific Reset operate within, and get 'beyond the political line'.

Theoretical Assumptions on Policy Change

Although this research focuses on the Pacific Reset and its congruence with the retroliberal aid regime, it also explores the factors involved in the policy's ideation. A major part of this is analysing the discourse and factors that lead to a change in the rhetoric guiding NZODA. There is a wide body of literature stemming from political science and public policy that this chapter briefly introduces in order to inform the succeeding analysis on policy change.

Theories of policy change thus must be looked at. Policy change refers to incremental shifts in existing structures, or new and innovative policies (Bennett & Howlett, 1992). Changes in development policy over time show the diffusion of ideas, norms and structures with several actors having influence in the process. Although there exist many theories of policy change in the literature, which have validity in explaining interactions and networks (see Cerna, 2013). this section looks at policy change through 'path dependence' and 'policy networks'. This is done to inform the succeeding discussion on policy change and the Pacific Reset.

4.1 Path Dependence

Within the realm of public policy, theories of policy change focus on the reasons and structures of change, with path dependence having become one of the major theories in the literature (Pierson, 2000). Having roots in economics, path dependence maintains that decisions made for a given circumstance are limited by outcomes and decisions made in the past, even if they are no longer relevant (Bouckaert & Geest, 2000). Ian Greener (2002) views institutions as 'sticky' and actors work to protect the existing model, even if faced with information detailing it to be sub-optimal. This entrenchment of the status quo was what Paul Pierson (2000) believes to be purposely designed into

institutions as to prevent future policy change. Path dependence is considered stronger in explaining continuity of policy rather than policy change as *"where we go next depends not only on where we are now, but also upon where we have been"* (Bouckaert & Geest, 2000, p. 981).

Within political science, a 'Critical Juncture' framework is used to explain the difficulty in reversing major policy change (Page, 2006). Here, antecedent conditions of a policy environment allow choices that set a specific trajectory of institutional development and policy lock-in that is difficult to reverse (Page, 2006). Giovanni Capoccia and Daniel Kelemen (2007) define critical junctures as *"relatively short periods of time during which there is a substantially heightened probability that agents' choices will affect the outcome of interest"* (p. 348). Thus it is believed the roles and decisions of political actors are important and often broad during times deemed to be 'Critical Junctures' – such as the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) (Capoccia & Kelemen, 2007).

4.2   Policy Networks

Policy creation and implementation is a multi-faceted endeavour that sees interaction between many actors. These networks are this described as *"a cluster or complex of organisations connected to each other by resource dependencies and distinguished from other clusters or complexes by breaks in the structure of resource dependencies"* (Rhodes & Marsh, 1992, p. 182). Lending itself to political science, policy networks analysis focuses on the interdependencies created by policy between societal actors and aims to understand the policy making process (Rhodes, 2008). This is differentiated further into higher or lesser integrated networks:

The structure of coalitions across complex policy sectors determines policy outputs (long-term relationships between interest groups and executive agencies) evolved into more complex networks between public and private organisations as the number of institutions and participants grew (John, 2003, p. 486).

It is disputed if policy network analysis is a theory of policy change, with commentators believing it to be more a categorisation of ad-hoc networks. Keith Dowding (1995) considers that it is imprudent to develop theories that are based on the properties of actors rather than the network itself. Here, new networks are created for every actor combination rather than explaining how actors would behave in the same structural context (Dowding, 1995). Although discrediting policy networks analysis, Mark Thatcher (1998) views it as useful in the assisting the formal analysis of networks, but is not a theory in and of itself. Such insights into networks allow for deeper analyses of development policy networks, inhabited by a multitude of actors and stakeholders.

4.3   Summary

This chapter has briefly introduced some of the literature on two assumptions of policy change. Informed by a wealth of literature in political science and public policy disciplines, path dependence and policy networks illustrate the multiplicity of factors that contribute to policy change. Employing the Critical Realist epistemology, underpinning this research, allowed the space to introduce assumptions on the interactions of institutions and actors - the minute nuances of which could not be covered in this chapter. Through introducing such assumptions on policy change, the discourses and literature outlined here will inform later discussion on their impact on the Pacific Reset.

Aid Regimes
From Modernisation to Retroliberalism

As interests and policies shift over time, the interaction of states has shifted as well. The flow of ideas, economic assistance and policy between the Global North and South has undergone several iterations over the last 60 years, built on historical notions of wealth and international relations. This chapter reviews the literature on the different iterations of development thought, first defining aid regimes before briefly traversing their chronology from modernisation to retroliberalism.

5.1   What is an Aid Regime?

Development implies an ever-advancing situation, or a process of positive change, with its temporal and spatial manifestation influenced by greater modes of accumulation and dominant discourses of the time (Mawdsley et al., 2017). How best to define development thought is fraught with complexities, with two main categorisations populating the literature. 'Development paradigms' and 'aid regimes' are used interchangeably to define dominant discourses, but these categorisations themselves are somewhat ill-defined with this section outlining the differentiation between categories.

Establishing an era of broadly accepted development thinking, development paradigms are a set of *"modalities or* [a] *path to follow to achieve development, based on a codified set of activities and/or based on a vision regarding the functioning and evolution of a socio-economic system"* (Bellù, 2011, pp. 6–7). This definition bridges the often blurred distinction between development paradigms and aid regimes in the literature. Development paradigms are seen to encompass the theoretical and discursive base of development thinking which in turn influences aid regimes, comprising the regulatory and codified principles of applied development (Overton et al., 2019).

Partially orchestrated and institutionalised at the global level through organisations such as the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD and the World Bank, development paradigms create a feedback loop which entrenches shifting trends in policy and generates larger regime shifts across time (Overton et al., 2019). These shifts are translated into practice through donor agency policies and their interactions with partners (Overton et al., 2019). Additionally, the range of approaches in financing development activities sees the relative fluidity of development thought with much debate around defining eras of development assistance.

Figure 5.1 outlines four global aid regimes together with causal geopolitical events, overarching policies, and modalities. For ease of analysis and clarity this research mirrors the popular temporal divisions of development assistance in the literature, referencing alternative discourses where appropriate, and employs the definition of an aid regime provided by Warwick Murray and John Overton (2016a). An aid regime is thus *"comprised of an overarching set of principles together with regulatory structure designed to both disburse and conceptualise overseas development assistance. These are generally influenced by broader regimes of accumulation"* (Murray & Overton, 2016a, note. 1).

Each aid regime comprises a set of modalities, aligning with dominant discourses in development. These mechanisms of financing and disbursing development range from high-level budgetary support to lower-level discrete bilateral programmes (Bellù, 2011). Modalities are not seen to be fixed, often seen to transcend different regimes and combined in varying ways to deliver certain objectives (Bandstein, 2007; Murray & Overton, 2016a). However, as identified by Overton et al. (2019), the reality of temporally defined aid regimes is complex as elements of different regimes can co-exist together and vary between places – likening them to imprecise and co-deterministic Kuhnian scientific paradigms.

FIGURE 5.1: Chronology of Aid Regimes

	Modernisation 1950-1980	Neoliberalism 1980-2000	Neostructuralism 2000-2010	Retroliberalism ~2010-onwards
Global Events	• Allied War victory • Truman's four-point programme • Cold War rivalries • Decolonisation • Transformations in China	• Economic crises (oil shocks and debt crises 1970s/80s, share market falls (1987 & 1997) • Fall of the USSR (1991)	• 9/11 and invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan • Period of economic growth	• Global financial crisis • The rise of China and other 'emerging powers'
Western Domestic Political Context	• Cold War politics • Kennedy's Alliance for Progress	• Thatcherism • Reaganomics	• Rise of Tony Blair's New Labour (UK) and Clinton's Democrats	• Swing back to the right
Guiding Principles	• Modernist and traditional structuralist ideas concerning role of industrialisation and backwardness of rural development. • Keynesian economics • Geopolitical imperative of preventing domino effect across the Third World, based on alternative socialist modernities and ideas of dependency theorists	• Neoliberal theories and monetarist economics • The state crowds out the private sector and leads to inefficiency and corruption • The market will arrive at Pareto optimality • Benefits of export growth will trickle-down to poor through employment • Comparative advantage and trade liberalisation	• 'Third Way' – state tackles social justice but in the context of a globalised economy that remains open • Poverty and inequality are seen as consequences of the market but are responsibilities of the state • Deliver the benefits of globalisation and ensure its trickle-down	• The state exists to facilitate economic growth • The private sector should not be crowded out by the state • Government sponsors and facilitates the private sector • Ricardian comparative advantage coupled with neo-Keynesian economics to stimulate the private sector during recession
Development Goals	• Grow industrial sector • Promote regional alliances • Promote urbanisation and reduce rural inefficiencies	• Reduce government size • Raise productivity • Stimulate exports • Develop the private sector	• Poverty alleviation • Equality promotion • Aid effectiveness through market mechanisms	• Economic growth • Infrastructural development • Stimulate trade and investment through financing
Aid Policies and Modalities	• Import substitution Industrialisation • Land reform • Support for state budgets and building state capacity • Colombo Plan	• SAPs: privatisation, hollowing out of the state, reduction in social expenditure • Export-orientation • 'Good governance' • Market-based projects • Use of civil society actors	• MDGs • National interest and development agenda (formally) separate • Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and poverty reduction-based projects • Sector Wide Approaches (SWaps) and General Budget Support (GBS) • Reconstruction of the state for security	• SDGs • Infrastructure development • Semi-tied aid projects • New (returnable) forms of development financing • Development for diplomacy and the rolling together of national interest and developmentalism • Partial return to project modalities

Source: Adapted from (Mawdsley et al., 2017; Murray & Overton, 2016a, 2011; Overton et al., 2019)

5.2 Chronology of Aid Regimes

5.2.1 Modernisation

What Joseph Stiglitz (2003) termed a 'transformation of society', much of development thought owes an intellectual debt to the plethora of literature on social evolutionism, political economy, and the idealisation of Western concepts of accumulation (Rist, 2014). This literature often sees development as linear, with such concepts being an example of the substantive theoretical base that informed early conceptions of development. From this emerged a coherent aid regime which Gilbert Rist (2014) termed 'modernisation'.

The reconstruction projects and ideological tension of the post-bellum world came to dominate development discourse in the Twentieth Century (Rist, 2014). Defined by the 'development project' (McMichael, 2017), the period of decolonisation following WWII until 1980 saw an emphasis on state-driven infrastructure development and industrialisation to raise living standards to deter conflict (Rist, 2014). These concepts were first outlined in the 'Four Point Programme' nestled in President Truman's inaugural address (1949) which introduced the development project, inadvertently creating a 'developed' and 'underdeveloped' dichotomy.

Also well-documented in the literature is ideological tension and its impact on development. Best known is the impact of the Cold War on geopolitical considerations in development to tip the ideological balance of power (Rist, 2014). Exemplified through George Kennan's *'X' Article* (1947) and Walt Rostow's *Five Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (1960), discourse sought to discourage the rise of the communist and socialist doctrines that found favour in the Global South. The hypothesis of linear development sought social modernisation to contain ideological sway as states progressed beyond traditional systems of societal exchange. This cast the state in an interventionist role and was a precondition of economic 'take-off' to

achieve greater per capita growth (Rostow, 1960). The Western model of modernisation, with its preoccupation with economic growth, became synonymous with development, viewing the state as the facilitator and arbiter of growth. This vein of modernist thinking traces its foundations to John Maynard Keynes and the Latin American structuralists, such as Raul Prebisch, who advocated for markets to be fostered while preserving the ability of the state to provide regulatory oversight and to intervene where the private sector was deemed incapable (Overton et al., 2019; Rist, 2014).

The overarching principles that guided the early approach to development centred on the rapid industrialisation and urbanisation of the Global South away from traditional conceptions of society. Development assistance through multilateral arrangements such as the Bretton Woods institutions, the Colombo Plan, and NATO became favoured during this period with the goal of building state capacity (Rist, 2014). Such institutional assistance favoured high-level modalities such as General Budget Support (GBS), although lower-level modalities were employed in infrastructure projects (Rist, 2014). The creation of the development dichotomy and reverence of Western thought progressed an era of social evolution that Rist (2014) called the greatest Western myth, but defined development for decades to come.

5.2.2 Neoliberalism

The 1980s ushered in a major shift in development discourse, bringing with it a host of changes to how aid was disbursed and the role of the state in such a process. Modernisation and its state development project approach was brought into question as deficits and loans ballooned into unpayable burdens in the Global South. This, along with the election of conservative political elites in the West such as the Thatcher Government in 1979, and the Reagan Administration in 1980, precipitated a reform of development under neoliberal ideas.

Spanning through the 1980s and 1990s, neoliberal beliefs were exported to the Global South through the same international architecture set up in the post-war period, with much of the literature analysing the Latin American neoliberal experience (Leiva, 2008). Here, protectionist economies were transformed and foreign investment opened up by the 'Chicago Boys', a small group of men educated in the economic thought of Milton Friedman. These men assumed positions of power in the 1970s-80s Latin American governments, with their experiments coming at the expense of heightened inequality (Murray & Overton, 2011; Overton et al., 2019). The *raison d'être* of neoliberal thought can be summarised as thus - the state was considered a hindrance to economic development and the market would ensure efficient allocation of resources. This saw wide reaching reforms that often affected the social fabric of many nations (Hill et al., 2016; Murray & Overton, 2011).

Although literature points to poor economic management by countries in the Global South as the cause of indebtedness, Western creditors were active accumulators of debt (Hill et al., 2016). Massive amounts of capital lent to parts of the Global South through the international architecture and regional blocs to shore up geopolitical interests – without many conditionalities – quickly becoming burdensome debt. Overton et al. (2019), point to the oil crises of the 1970s and 1980s as providing the space for a Western *tour de force* of neoliberal reform, quickly becoming the orthodoxy. Institutionalised via the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, in concert with the U.S. Treasury, neoliberal reform was imposed on countries of the Global South through Structural Adjustment Packages (SAPs), known as the 'Washington Consensus' (Hill et al., 2016; Prince, 2016; Williamson, 1990). Heavily indebted countries who sought relief faced a raft of conditionalities to achieve rapid macroeconomic reform and long-term political liberalisation. The neoliberal manual included a rapid dismantling of the apparatuses of state-controlled economic institutions and regulations. Spearheaded by the introduction of a cost-cutting, efficiency-

maximising public sector management model, the privatisation of public assets and austerity measures in the provision of welfare and services became the norm (Hill et al., 2016; Murray & Overton, 2011; Prince, 2016; Williamson, 1990). Together with a wholesale opening up of previously restricted trade and foreign investment policies, the institutionalised principles were what Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell (2002) called the 'neoliberal rollback of the state'.

There were few changes to established modalities with the neoliberal aid regime, inheriting many mechanisms from the modernist era. Bilateral disbursement of aid in the form of higher level modalities like GBS continued to be favoured, further enforcing the conditionalities institutionalised in the Washington Consensus (Williamson, 1990). During this time donors tended to view governments of the Global South as inefficient or corrupt, with the rolling back of the state leaving a void in service provision that civil society organisations filled as an alternative mode of delivery to the state (Howell & Lind, 2009; Overton, 2009).

The wholesale imposition of neoliberal reform fell foul with many in the Global South, who took issue with the harsh conditionalities of the Washington Consensus exacerbating inequalities (Prince, 2016). These conditionalities were toned down in the early 1990s with calls for greater sectoral participation in poverty reduction (Murray & Overton, 2011). This saw the development geography space become increasingly contested with what to label the new reforms. Although perceived to be a largely rhetorical shift (Noor, 2015), the recognition of the capacity of the state to disburse development was realised and a partial 'rolling out of the state' was facilitated- although still tied to neoliberal conceptions of good governance and economic management (Peck & Tickell, 2002). Such changes were a significant enough modification of neoliberalism-proper, where the market remains the chief force of development and the state seen as a protector of property regimes and investment (Murray & Overton, 2016a).

5.2.3 Neostructuralism

Rumblings of a greater poverty focus to development were amplified with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Mawdsley et al., 2017; Murray & Overton, 2011). The ambitious plan to eradicate poverty and increase wellbeing indicators by 2015 altered how development assistance was framed and disbursed, and reemphasised the state's role in the development process (de Haan, 2009). The significant rhetorical shift led Murray and Overton (2011) to term the post-neoliberal era as *neostructuralism*, referencing the Latin American neoliberal experience (see Leiva, 2008).

Although coming to prominence with the election of Left-leaning governments of the mid-1990s, neostructuralism traces its roots to the earlier Latin American experience with the global political economy (Leiva, 2008). Much like modernisation's intellectual debt to Prebisch, neostructuralist thought grew from the legacy of structuralist analyses of Latin American development and dependency of the 1950s, and the space left by unseated neoliberal dictatorships (Leiva, 2008; Murray & Overton, 2011). The election of leftist governments saw the rise of globalisation-friendly policies of trade and open investment, which were considered a continuation of the neoliberal regime (Leiva, 2008; Mawdsley et al., 2017; Murray & Overton, 2016b; Sidaway & Hendriske, 2016). While concurrently thought as less fundamentalist in calls for state cutbacks, efforts to strengthen governance structures, human rights, and reducing poverty came to the fore (Murray & Overton, 2016a). Helped in part by the rise of Third Way politics pioneered by Bill Clinton and Tony Blair, there was a greater recognition of the structural basis of inequalities and reintroduced state-centric strategies to address them while ironically supporting the market-led growth that precipitated many inequalities (Murray & Overton, 2016a, 2011).

Robert Gwynne and Cristobal Kay (2000) consider the rhetorical shift of neostructuralism successful in commanding the attention of policy makers, as centre-left governments considered it a palatable alternative to neoliberalism. The growing discontent with the effects of neoliberal reform and a movement towards more of a focus on human development was captured by the MDGs and the recommendations published in the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean's *Changing Production Patterns with Social Equity* (1990). Advocating for a more active role of the state in mitigating social inequalities felt by neoliberal reform in the region and a keener focus on poverty alleviation, such objectives were institutionalised the World Bank's 2000/2001 *World Development Report* (Kanbur et al., 2000) and made popular through global campaigns such as LiveAid and 'Make Poverty History'. Together with a sustained growth of the global economy this encouraged increases in efforts to alleviate poverty and inequalities, resulting in increasing aid budgets in the Global North (Murray & Overton, 2011).

In stark contrast to the rolling back of the state of neoliberalism-proper, the neostructural era saw a reconstruction of the state to reflect the new security concerns of the post-9/11 world. Concerns of mitigating the ability of failing states to become havens for terrorists quickly became a priority of the neostructural regime as efforts to rebuild hollowed-out institutions began in earnest (Murray & Overton, 2011). The priorities of poverty alleviation and building capacity were institutionalised through Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) which encompassed a renewed framework for directing development (Kanbur et al., 2000; Overton et al., 2019). Although akin to the neoliberal SAPs, the conditionalities of PRSPs focused on financial sector management, poverty reduction, institutional capacity, and promotion of free trade (Gwynne & Kay, 2000; Mawdsley et al., 2017; Murray & Overton, 2011; Overton et al., 2019).

Actors from across the world attended high Level Forums on Aid Effectiveness in what became a prominent feature of the neostructural aid regime (Murray & Overton, 2011). Agreeing upon an agenda for working towards aid effectiveness, the 2005 forum set out several mutually reinforcing principles of aid delivery (OECD, 2008).[5] The consensus on aid effectiveness pledged the untying of aid in sourcing goods and services from suppliers in donor countries. Donors agreed to lessen harsh conditionalities that accompanied aid with a more inclusive approach to development (Mawdsley et al., 2014; OECD, 2008). However, this did not translate into practice. Significant financial management upgrades were foisted upon recipient fiduciary systems to receive donor funds, and many donors made little effort to untie aid from previous conditionalities (OECD, 2012). The High Level Forums on Aid Effectiveness acknowledged that states did have an important role in the development process, and that it was necessary to target poverty elimination (de Haan, 2009). Civil society organisations also began to play a dynamic role supporting developing countries in fulfilling their commitments (Murray & Overton, 2011; OECD, 2008).

5.2.4 Retroliberalism

Much like regimes past, the rationale and mode of aid disbursement in the late 2000s and early 2010s altered with changes to global political and structural arrangements. The 2007-2008 GFC is widely considered as the catalyst for this change, with the resulting recession and austerity measures reverberating through global markets (Murray & Overton, 2016a). Changes made in the wake of the GFC saw academic analyses on the extent of its effects. The absence of one theoretical explanation led Murray and Overton to coin a new regime 'retroliberalism', to describe the shifts in focus, modalities, and thinking on aid.

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[5] These are: Ownership of development strategies; Alignment of donors behind country strategies; Harmonisation of development efforts; Managing for Results; and Mutual Accountability.

Events of the late 2000s and early 2010s lead to a shift away from the poverty alleviation objective of the neostructural aid regime, sparking speculation that a new aid regime was taking form. Many veins of analysis attempted to label this emerging space as a third incarnation of neoliberalism (Sidaway & Hendriske, 2016), 'postneoliberalism' (Brand, 2016), a 'post-aid' world (Mawdsley et al., 2014), or even a 'beyond aid' world (Janus et al., 2014). Although illustrating the disagreement in terms, the literature converge on several points. The explicit economic considerations in aid disbursement, emergence of Global South donors who are not party to the multilateral consensus garnered under the MDGs, the 2005 Paris Declaration and other High Level Forums, and the gradual erosion of neostructuralist goals, such as poverty alleviation, saw a shift away from the accepted aid regime.

Figure 5.2 outlines the institutional arrangements of several Global North countries from the late-2000s, showing a somewhat convergent evolution of aid programmes, their missions and overall political arrangements – indicative of a shift towards a retroliberal aid regime. Underpinned by the election of right-of-centre governments in the Global North, and provision of large stimulus packages in response to the GFC, a general shift in donors becoming increasingly self-interested in aid delivery has occurred (Mawdsley et al., 2017; Murray & Overton, 2016a; Overton et al., 2019). Discourse has shifted away from poverty alleviation towards an 'exporting stimulus' approach where aid programmes were seen to *partner with and support their own private sector* [in order] *to expand into the developing world by 'developing' corresponding sectors of the economy there…in reality, a form of stimulus for domestic companies working there"* (Murray & Overton, 2016a, p. 255). This influenced aid expenditure paradoxically as global trends converge on efforts to promote economic growth through reorienting policies to support 'exporting stimulus' in a time of greater austerity (Mawdsley et al., 2017).

FIGURE 5.2: The comparative international shift to a Retroliberal aid regime

	Government Change	Central Mission	Institutional Change	Private Sector	Total Budget
New Zealand	National Government (Key-English/McCully-Brownlee) 2008-2017	'Poverty alleviation' changed to 'sustainable development in developing countries in order to reduce poverty and contribute to a more secure and prosperous world'	NZAID (semi-autonomous) reintegrated into MFAT	Direct involvement of NZ companies (Fonterra, Meridian), tying of aid (tertiary scholarships increase), infrastructure projects (airports, energy)	Nominal increase in aid budget, but at a lower rate of real growth
Australia	Liberal Government (Abbot-Turnbull/Bishop) 2013	Dilution of poverty focus: • 'Promoting prosperity, reducing poverty, enhancing stability' • 'Aid for trade' • 'Australia's national interest'	AusAid (standalone) folded into DFAT and disestablished in 2013	Move towards infrastructure projects financed in part by grants and soft loans	Cuts to aid budget (12% in 2013, more in 2014) Capped at $5 billion for 5 years
Canada	Conservative Government (Harper/Fantino) 2011 - until the 2015 election of Trudeau Government	Poverty alleviation enshrined in law but: • 'sustainable economic growth' given prominence • 'economic diplomacy'	CIDA amalgamated with FATDC (along with trade and foreign affairs) in 2013	Greater involvement of Canadian private sector with an interest in countries with mineral resources	Aid budget cuts then stabilisation beyond 2015 at $4.62 billion (0.3% of GNI)
UK	Conservative/LibDem Government (Cameron) 2010	Long-term programmes to help tackle underlying causes of poverty with a focus on "economic development for shared prosperity	DFID retained but rebranded as UKAid	Involvement with UK companies in partnerships in financial services and energy sectors	30% increase in aid budget in 2013 to (0.7% GNI)
The Netherlands	Conservative/Labour Coalition (Rutte) 2012	'Sustainable economic growth in developing countries… global stability and security and to foster human rights' Shifted from aid to trade	Part of Ministry of Foreign Affairs – major review in 2010	'new markets to explore' 'an enabling environment for economic activity'	Cuts in aid budget in 2012 – achieved, then abandoned 0.7% GNI

Source: Adapted from (Mawdsley et al., 2017; Murray & Overton, 2016a; Overton et al., 2019)

While still an emerging aid regime that has seen somewhat rapid implementation and similar roots to neoliberal ideology, Murray and Overton (2016a) argue that the responses to the GFC and other causal events digress away from a purely neoliberal concept of aid. Although the neoliberal market mechanism remains the chief mode of societal organisation (Murray & Overton, 2016a, 2011; Overton et al., 2019), the wholesale bail-out of multinational financial institutions and other large corporations to prevent a severe recession was Keynesian in nature and harks to classical liberal ideas around the role of the state as guardian of the private sector (Murray & Overton, 2016a).

A major factor in shifting development thought is the emergence of New Donor Countries (NDCs) that reside outside the previously established institutional structure (Gulrajani & Swiss, 2019). Typically employing lower-level modalities, tied aid, and disregarding political persuasion, NDCs, like China, are becoming increasingly established as legitimate donors. This sees them often competing with Global North counterparts and is speculated to cause the rise in similar modalities used by Global North countries to maintain legitimacy and relevance (Gulrajani & Swiss, 2019; Overton et al., 2019; Woods, 2008).

When analysed together with a development space cohabited by an emergent Global South, active reengagement of the private sector and growing geostrategic considerations in aid delivery, the retroliberal aid regime is considered an amalgam of regimes and modalities past - as its name suggests. Overton et al. (2019) distil the various strands of the post-GFC aid environment and aid regimes past, the tenets of the retroliberal aid regime are summarised below:

1. Streamlined institutional arrangements with the elevation of 'sustainable economic growth' as the core concern of aid allocation with the demotion of 'poverty alleviation' to a central target. Returning to

neoliberal efficiencies and belief that economic development predicates social and welfare improvements.

2. A Keynesian renovation of the state's role as facilitator of the market and guardian of the private sector invigorating ideas of 'exporting stimulus' and partnerships between public and private entities, with an increasing presence of donor-based private sector activities in aid – often crowding out civil society actors. This represents a shift back to forms of aid which possess elements of a tied aid regime, granting projects that utilise companies from donor countries, usage of soft-loans, microfinancing, and technical assistance programmes.

3. Sectoral refocusing of aid budgets away from welfare towards infrastructure projects. Gradual nominal funding shifts from health, poverty and education goals towards infrastructure in sectors donors hold an interest (i.e. agriculture for New Zealand and financial services for the United Kingdom) to facilitate trade and economic growth. This parallels the post-war modernist policy agenda with its emphasis on constructing roads, ports, energy production plants and communications systems to support capital investment and industrial activity.

4. A shift in rhetoric and aid modalities towards 'shared prosperity', supported by global financial institutions. Global aid has been recast to be project-based, and an instrument in a greater repertoire of foreign policy tools that deliver outcomes in the national interest, largely in response to emerging non-DAC donors. This progresses away from the segregation of diplomacy and aid seen under the neostructural aid regime and sees the rise of geopolitical considerations and spheres of influence amongst donors.

5. A securing of the state and increasing militarization of aid. Building state capacity has remained a central component of aid regimes but a securing

of institutions in fragile states, and provision of security during peacekeeping missions has increased of late in the post-9/11 world. Although controversial and not fully measured by aid metrics, aid spending around military intervention for humanitarian reasons, training of personnel and the delivery of aid by military proxies has increased sizably.

Embodied through the concept of 'shared prosperity' aid has seen to shift to seeking development outcomes that benefit both donors and recipients. This has filtered through global development discourse and is institutionalised as a core focus for the World Bank (2018). The goal of 'securing the state' in recent development policy has seen the likes of the security-development nexus arise in which military actors have assumed roles in the development process (Chandler, 2007; Stepputat, 2012). How retroliberalism can help analyse the Pacific Reset and aid environment of the late-2010s will be the subject of subsequent chapters. As evidenced by the literature, retroliberalism is distinctive from previous aid regimes and has become theoretically established over the last few years. This research does not seek to extend the tenets of retroliberalism, rather it draws from the multi-year discussion of it to analyse the Pacific Reset. However, as development progresses and time marches on, this research will update where necessary and make such amendments clear.

5.3 Summary of Chapter

Development does not occur in a vacuum. As established in this section, how countries interact with the many strings of global geopolitical events influence the mechanisms through which development is disbursed. The literature review of aid regimes, although couched in a global analysis, establishes the wider influences on development. How this translates through space in the Pacific is the focus of the succeeding literature review, which tracks the ideation of the Pacific Reset.

Pacific Aid Regimes: New Zealand's Involvement

The interaction between donors and recipients underpins a majority of development literature. This chapter reviews the literature on New Zealand and the Pacific, its development assistance programme, and development thinking through history to examine New Zealand's involvement in the Pacific experience of global aid regimes. This will localise the realities of the previously reviewed aid regimes to the Pacific, tracking New Zealand development policy which led to the creation of the Pacific Reset.

6.1 New Zealand and the Pacific: Colonial Beginnings to Decolonisation

New Zealand's place as a Pacific nation is confirmed by geography, but has often been obscured by colonial heritage.

6.1.1 Colonial New Zealand and the Pacific

"Where she goes, we go. Where she stands, we stand" (Savage, 1939, minute 07.00).

In addressing the nation on the outbreak of World War II, Prime Minister Michael Joseph Savage tied New Zealand's course with that of the U.K. Embodying the familial links and the sentiment in the Dominion, Savage's wartime mantra can be considered the de-facto motto of colonial New Zealand.

Views of New Zealand's relationship with its colonial superiors described it as symbiotic, verging on dependent, with the economic and cultural linkages leading the fledgling nation to become the 'Britain of the South' (Corner, 1962; Henderson, 1984). Complete with British customs, culture, architecture, and flora and fauna, this nation building project lessened the tyranny of distance with the Motherland and set the tone for future engagement with not only Māori, but the larger Pacific region (Henderson, 1984).

Considered a meek Pacific power—too occupied with the empire (Alley, 1984)—the colonial New Zealand identity moderated its physical presence in the South Pacific, creating a dual identity underpinning relations with the region.

Literature points to the latter Nineteenth Century as when the Pacific came into the consciousness of colonial New Zealand. Beginning to think of itself as an agent separate of Britain, Frank Corner (1962) describes it as significant that the *"first flowering of New Zealand nationalism was expressed in terms of its place in the South Pacific"* (p. 131). The Pacific, however, had always been a part of the cultural history of the Māori, remaining the spiritual home of the Tangata whenua. Damon Salesa (2018) offers a counterpoint to the imperial discourse of the time, believing *"it is a strange fact that New Zealand can be literally all at sea in the Pacific Ocean, and yet pay that ocean, and neighbours and relations within it, so little attention"* (p. 50).

Whereas the seafaring ancestors of Tangata whenua strengthened Polynesian networks in the Pacific, their colonial contemporaries sought to expand imperial reach. Colonial statesmen such as George Grey, Julius Vogel, and Richard Seddon were proponents of New Zealand being the centre of a 'Pacific Empire', pushing the reaches of empire and trade into Polynesia and parts of Melanesia (Alley, 1984; Corner, 1962; Henderson, 1984). This, together with greater rumblings of Australian nationhood and increased international involvement in the Pacific, precipitated ideas of 'Oceania being for the Anglo-Saxons' (Siegfried, 1982).

The literature uncovers a contradiction between colonial New Zealand leaders' ambitions in the Pacific and British desires to pursue them. Expansionist ideas populated colonial discourse, with New Zealand petitioning Britain to acquire a controlling interest in the Pacific under the guise of protecting British interests in the region (Corner, 1962; Henderson, 1984).

Nationalist and trade-focused sentiments, masked by Christian and 'empire defence' rhetoric, were seen to drive New Zealand's push into the Pacific, with New Zealand firms looking to the region, eyes *"rosy with expectations of commercial profit"* (Corner, 1962, p. 134).

Concurrently, the British Empire building project was slowing as relations with Europe ripened. This manifested in the Pacific through the ceding of Samoa to Germany and the United States (U.S.), and the refusal to entrust Fiji to New Zealand despite ardent protests from Seddon, who labelled it a 'betrayal' of New Zealand (Alley, 1984; Corner, 1962). In his piece *The Unhistoric Story*, renowned New Zealand poet Allen Curnow encapsulates this contradiction:

> *Green slashed with flags, pipeclay and boots in the bush,*
> *Christ in a canoe and the musketed Maori boast;*
> *All a rubble-rattle at Time's glacial push:*
> *Vogel and Seddon howling empire from an empty coast*
> > *A vast ocean laughter*
> > *Echoed unheard, and after*
> > *All it was different, something*
> > *Nobody counted on* (Curnow, 2017).

The notion of a Pacific Empire—or at the very least, a profitable sphere of trade—persisted in the minds of colonial statesmen, even with shifting tides of great power relations. The Cook Islands (1901), Niue (1901), and later Tokelau (1926) were placed under New Zealand jurisdiction, with Western Samoa entrusted after World War One (Alley, 1984; Salesa, 2018). Although satiating the imperial desires of colonial leaders, New Zealand's expansionism was viewed as characterised by a 'benign neglect' and largely without capacity to discharge policy, having little appreciation for administration and lack of regard for local customs (Alley, 1984). This was seen to translate into the provision of development assistance, coming in the form of administrative expenditure and expansion of trading opportunities (Overton, 2009). Considered a boon for entrepreneurial Māori and the likes of the Union Steam

Shipping Company, the expanding seaways in the Pacific overlaid the traditional networks of the 'Native Seas' (Salesa, 2018).

Akin to Alley's description of New Zealand attitudes to administrating its newly gained territories, Corner (1962)—in analysing the administration of Western Samoa—labelled it as 'muddled', with the mixture of well-intentioned liberalism and a desire for colonial prestige being largely incompatible. Existing until independence or self-governance, this benign (or not, in the case of the Mau Movement), neglect summarised New Zealand's relationship with the Pacific until World War II, a reaction to which Salesa (2018) referred to as 'the iron fist of colonial administration'.

6.1.2   Shifting Focus from Europe to the Pacific

Distance has always defined how New Zealand developed and interacted with the world. Much of the literature focuses on two events that called such distance into question; the fall of Singapore in World War II, and Britain's admission into the European Economic Community. These events catalysed a re-evaluation of the security and trade guarantees Britain afforded to New Zealand, and the country's place in the Pacific.

New Zealand had established itself as a defender of the British Empire in the Pacific (Henderson, 1984). However, the fall of British-held Singapore in 1942 and threat of Japanese invasion brought the reality of distance to the fore. The 1972 admission of the U.K. into the European Economic Community further left New Zealand and the Pacific without the preferential trade and security guarantees, the *'sure shield'* (Savage, 1939) once offered by Britain. New Zealand cast a war-hardened eye to the South Pacific, seeking to progress from systems of colonial dependency to autonomy and independence. Signing the 1944 Australia-New Zealand Agreement (the 'Canberra Pact') marked an independent New Zealand foreign policy oriented towards the Pacific, aligning the two countries' interests in the region. Angering the British and Americans, a

key part of the agreement was the belief that wartime possession of territory does not confer rights to the territory in peacetime (Henderson, 1984; Olssen, 1944). Ironically, League of Nations mandates awarded trusteeship of Samoa and Nauru to New Zealand, held until independence, a move helping the country redefine itself and its presence in the Pacific (Salesa, 2018).

Early New Zealand development assistance in the Pacific was nascent, characterised by trade and administration support. Mirroring the modernist approach to development after 1945, basic budget support and minor health, education, and infrastructure projects became increasingly common as New Zealand undertook the responsibilities of a colonial power (Henderson, 1984; Overton, 2009). High volume ports and new seaways that were constructed during war-time required upkeep, ultimately increasing access to metropolitan Pacific centres for Pasifika-based trade (Salesa, 2018). Surveyed literature puts the 1946 ODA budget at $770,000, allocated entirely to the Pacific—namely Realm Territories (Bertram & Watters, 1984; Debreceny, 1984). Other international development assistance was channelled primarily through the New Zealand Council of Organisations for Relief Services Overseas (CORSO). Together with the 1951 establishment of the Colombo Plan, development assistance was targeted at providing technical support via voluntary organisations, particularly in South East Asia (Overton, 2009).

6.1.3 Pacific Decolonisation

Writing amid the evaporation of British guarantees and the fervour of decolonisation, Corner (1962) argued for a shifting of foreign policy attention towards the Pacific:

> *"…New Zealand is primarily a Pacific power (by which I mean specifically a South Pacific power - not an Asian power or even a South East Asian power); that New Zealand will be affected increasingly by developments in the area to which it naturally belongs"* (p. 132).

As New Zealand oriented its focus towards the Pacific, decolonisation swept the world, with colonial powers facing greater pressures to relinquish control of territories. In the South Pacific, this began after African and Asian colonies moved towards independence. Under the direction of the UN Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, New Zealand worked towards granting self-governance and independence for its colonies and trusteeships in the South Pacific. Western Samoa gained independence in 1962 following a 1961 plebiscite and a long history of non-violent protest against New Zealand administration; with the Cook Islands and Niue obtaining self-governance in free association with New Zealand in 1965 and 1974 respectively (Alley, 1984; Salesa, 2018). Overton, et al. (2019) consider the lag in not only decolonisation, but the impacts of aid regimes as a central feature of Pacific development, and allows a degree of sovereignty in determining responses to global events – which they call the 'inverse-sovereignty' hypothesis.

A common theme throughout the literature on New Zealand foreign policy is a preoccupation with international optics and the desire to be a good donor and global player (Bertram & Watters, 1984; P. G. Buchanan, 2010; Debreceny, 1984; Henderson, 1984). This image-centric approach carried through to New Zealand's engagement with the Pacific, as self-governance and independence were offered to its territories, and concerted efforts were made to increase development as decolonisation sentiments swept the world.

Global affairs underwent a significant shift as new sovereign nations joined the ranks of their former colonial masters. This climate defined the change in New Zealand's early development policies, a change Overton (2009) characterised as shaped by two approaches.

Between the 1960s and 1980s the 'former' (Samoa and the Cook Islands) and 'continuing' (Niue and Tokelau) territories of New Zealand received a majority

of assistance in the forms of GBS, transition costs of government administration, and core infrastructure development. Although moving towards self-governance for its Pacific territories, New Zealand was seen to have made little effort to train officials or improve trading routes, with territories favouring hiring New Zealand personnel to fill departmental gaps where local staff were considered unavailable (Alley, 1984; Overton, 2009). Such sentiments carry through the literature on the process of decolonisation at large. The fervour led to hasten independence, without adequate time, resources, or study of social, economic, and political conditions in each country, often resulting in a continued colonial dependency (Bertram & Watters, 1984; Corner, 1962). The final New Zealand Governor of Western Samoa, Sir Guy Powles, explained New Zealand's continued involvement in the region as being *"[…]responsible for the creation of economically non-viable states, so have a long-run responsibility to support their economically non-viable independence"* (cited in Alley, 1984, p. 139). Despite this, the preoccupation with optics on the international stage lead to decolonisation, with 'partnership' becoming the new orthodoxy of New Zealand-Pacific relations heading into the 1970s.

Beyond the colonial pattern of aid, the literature points to larger relationships that shaped Pacific economies. Geoff Bertram and Raymond Walters (1985) coined the MIRAB model for import-heavy economies of small island nations.[6] With constitutionally protected (or with favourable entry terms) access to the metropolitan countries of the Pacific, many Pasifika migrated or gained employment, sending savings back home as remittances. This contributed to Pacific Island economies often exceeding 30 percent of national income, sustaining a relatively high standard of living in the Pacific and helped create viable export economies (Overton, 2009).

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[6] The MIRAB model defines small island economies by import-flows through Migration, Remittances, Aid and Bureaucracy spending.

Becoming a widely used category in Pacific development discourse, critics panned the narrow view of the movement of people and Pacific notions of space and navigation as derogatory. Epeli Hau'ofa (1993) viewed the MIRAB model, and even the term 'Pacific', as a Western concept of space and movement, where oceanic development and movement of peoples along ancient kinship and lineage routes are seen as inherent to Pasifika concepts of space. (Hau'ofa, 1993; Salesa, 2018). Although accepting remittances and movement of people as tangible, critics like Hau'ofa also consider a duality to the model. The flow of crafts, food, knowledge, and kin parallel, and opposite to the outflow of remittances, well established over generations of navigators, and less reported than the monetary vectors quantified by MIRAB. This offers an alternative mode of development, which became criticised in metropolitan centres due to migration policies and negative media coverage of Pasifika 'overstayers' (Alley, 1984).

6.2   New Zealand and the Pacific: 1970-2000s

With Pacific nations being welcomed into the international community from the 1970s onward, New Zealand's development assistance and relations with the region underwent a period of drastic change.

6.2.1   1970s: A Decade of Change

Finding itself in a region of sovereign nations and a world defined by the Cold War, New Zealand's interactions with its Pacific neighbours underwent a period of change. This decade marked the establishment of a coordinated overseas aid programme, with New Zealand changing from systems of colonial relationships to donor-recipient partnerships. The modalities which disbursed aid moved from GBS to more project-based aid (Alley, 1984; Challies et al., 2011; Overton et al., 2019).

The surveyed literature points to the 1972 election of Norman Kirk's Labour Government as when the acceleration of NZODA in the region began.

Prime Minister Kirk fostered a new identity for New Zealand as a Pacific state, with foreign policy underwritten by a moral, almost paternalistic, dimension (Alley, 1984; Henderson, 1984). These factors, coupled with a model of development that saw the state as a chief facilitator of development, saw the ODA budget swell from $13.3 million in 1971 to $59.74 million by 1976 (Challies et al., 2011; Overton et al., 2019).

Seeing itself as a Pacific nation, New Zealand forged deeper relationships with the region and beyond. The establishment of the South Pacific Bureau for Economic Cooperation and peripheral regional organisations led to an increase in market access to the metropole, culminating in the preferential market access for goods originating from newly independent nations (Alley, 1984). Such institutions emphasised regional economic development and progressed metropolitan trade opportunities, but were seen to be hamstrung by their constitutions, unable to discuss political matters such as sovereignty and economic zones (Leslie & Wild, 2018). Regional leaders such as Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara openly criticised the institutional arrangement as being an act of neo-colonialism driven by Australia and New Zealand business interests (Alley, 1984; Challies et al., 2011; Debreceny, 1984; Leslie & Wild, 2018).

Amid such criticism, New Zealand moved forward with its bilateral and multilateral programme, with the successive Third National government continuing the policies in earnest (Alley, 1984; Banks, Murray, Overton, & Scheyvens, 2012).The total allocation of bilateral aid to the Pacific (as a percentage of total New Zealand bilateral aid) rose from 35 percent in 1972 to 61 percent in 1977 (Debreceny, 1984), reflective of the greater role regional institutions and bilateral partnerships took at the time. The receptiveness to international norms and the introduced moral dimension to aid contributed to this increased commitment. This saw work towards the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's initial goal of achieving 0.7 percent

ODA-to-GNI and increasing the support offered to regional institutions (Challies et al., 2011; Debreceny, 1984). This momentum faltered with Britain's 1972 admission into the European Economic Community and quickly fell away with the oil shocks of the 1970s.

The contested geopolitical environment saw defence treaties such as ANZUS and SEATO come into full force, leading to greater security considerations being factored into Pacific-focused NZODA. The 1978 Defence Review can be seen as the rationale for New Zealand's involvement in the Pacific during this time where *"in present circumstances New Zealand can best contribute to the strength of the Western world by helping to preserve peace and security in* […] *the South Pacific"* (Ministry of Defence & New Zealand Defence Force, 1978, p. 11).

Involvement in the Vietnam War and deepening economic ties in South East Asia precipitated New Zealand's greater involvement in the development and security of the Pacific region, largely in line with the Nixon Doctrine which stated that *"… We shall look to the nation directly threatened to assume the primary responsibility of providing the manpower for its defense* [sic]*"* (Nixon, 1969, minute 16.51). Overton (2009) points to later in the decade when project-based aid focusing on welfare, infrastructure, and rural development became prevalent. With a growing ODA budget and skills in rural sectors, New Zealand undertook activities that were considered unviable at the time (Overton, 2009), ultimately playing a greater role in regional development.

With the state continuing a greater role in the provision of development assistance, civil society organisations were considered the ones most affected by the economic downturn and securitisation of foreign policy (McGregor et al., 2013). NGO activity was seen to fade even further as Robert Muldoon's National Government responded to criticism of the disparities between NZODA priorities and domestic issues with wide-reaching funding cuts to the

sector (Challies et al., 2011; McGregor et al., 2013; Overton, 2009). This created a gap in provision of development activities, eventually filled by Volunteer Services Abroad and the then newly formed TradeAid, albeit in less constant roles—concerned mainly with small, rural projects, with funding directed towards energy and agricultural sectors (Challies et al., 2011).

6.2.2 1980s: A Decade of Drift

The entrenchment of trade and neoliberal reform during the 1980s frame New Zealand's relations with the Pacific. The aid budget in 1980 registered at $58 million, with dependent territories receiving a third of the 60 percent of Pacific bilateral aid (Alley, 1984). Economic austerity forced a concentration of development activities in the Pacific, seeing a redirection of aid flows to smaller projects, and larger donors avoiding rural-based activities in favour of GBS (Alley, 1984; Overton, 2009). New Zealand's response was considered driven by the optics of being a good donor, seeing a partnering with local rural actors as, in the earlier words of Prime Minister Bill Rowling "[…] *prepared to accept some obligation to assist the small island states with their development projects*" (cited in Alley, 1984, p. 144).

The 1981 introduction of the South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Co-operation Agreement (SPARTECA) saw ostensibly non-reciprocal trading relations between the metropole and the South Pacific commence. Imposing less excise and import duties on goods from Pacific Island countries, it was considered a boon for the textile, clothing, and footwear industries in the region (Alley, 1984; Henderson, 1984; Overton et al., 2019). Gyaneshwar Rao (2002) offers a critical view of the relationship SPARTECA created, concluding that "*there is a strong relationship between Fiji exports of garments to Australia and New Zealand and her imports of textile yarn from the same destinations*" (2002, p. 23). The implications of the increasing globalist networks on Pacific economies and the entrenching of neoliberal market mechanisms in productive sectors of the

economy, due to cheaper labour costs (Rao, 2002), indicates a subversion of the non-reciprocal mandate of SPARTECA.

Dominated by discourse surrounding neoliberal economic reform based on *laissez-faire* economic liberalism and free market capitalism, aid and development changed in the Pacific during the latter part of the 1980s. New Zealand underwent a period of rapid and systematic reform orchestrated by the Fourth Labour Government; reform characterised by 'Rogernomics' and the restructuring of the economy and public services to emphasise efficiency. The aid budget also came under scrutiny, with a push to restructure the provision of aid, continuing under the successive Fifth National Government. The resultant whittled-down ODA budget saw New Zealand being the second lowest contributor in the OECD, and marks the point of neoliberalism beginning in the Pacific (Overton, 2009).

Diminishing global aid through the 1980s was felt in the Pacific, with larger donors reducing their physical and financial presence in the region, but as Overton (2009) highlights, this did not impact New Zealand efforts to the same extent as its larger counterparts. The focus on hard infrastructure projects from the modernist era remained, however the decreasing real volumes of aid saw a push for greater country-ownership of development, especially in the employing of local actors in development (Alley, 1984). The concern with international optics in disbursing development during the 1980s saw the greater focus on rural-based development in Polynesia, and residually high flows to Realm Territories, albeit with a decreased budget (Alley, 1984; Henderson, 1984). However, such levels of engagement were considered for international prestige and geopolitical purposes amidst the fallout of the ANZUS alliance (Overton et al. 2019).

Concurrently, New Zealand was gathering a consensus on anti-nuclear issues in the South Pacific, culminating in the Treaty on the Prohibition of

Nuclear Weapons (the Rarotonga Treaty) (Overton et al. 2019). It was, however, considered somewhat ironic to advocate for Pacific issues while decreasing funding for the aid programme (Banks et al., 2012).

6.2.3   1990s: A Decade of Adjustment

Where the 1980s saw extensive the initiation of reform and a change in aid in the Pacific, the 1990s was host to the adjustment of austerity and change in global aid. In the midst of the neoliberal aid regime, global aid underwent a raft of changes, which Overton et al. (2019) believe were felt later in the Pacific, and for different reasons. The SAPs imposed through the 'Washington Consensus' affected the Pacific less so than in Latin America, but reforms and tied aid rippled across the region as austerity measures—especially in the public sector—became the norm (Overton, 2009; Overton et al., 2019). A harsh aid reform programme led by the Fourth National Government saw New Zealand enforce SAPs in the Pacific, cutting budget support to the now considered top-heavy and expensive bureaucracies (Overton, 2009; Scheyvens & Overton, 1995). Throughout the Pacific, real aid volumes decreased, squeezing Pacific governments, whose reliance on development assistance was greater than other Global South counterparts (Overton et al., 2019).

Project-based modalities became the norm, intending to stimulate certain export sectors of Pacific economies, such as sugar and vanilla (Overton et al., 2019). New Zealand and Australia partially institutionalised sentiments around greater land and economic reform through the guise of regional institutions as early as the early 1970s. Neoliberalism offered the platform for such reform, but could not implement the programme due to Pacific abhorrence to breaking communal land tenure (Daley, 2010; Iati, 2010).

Although not a new occurrence, many Pasifika migrated to the Metropole during the 1990s. Considered a direct result of the SAPs and

changing patterns of aid migration, the issue of outmigration became hot button issues in political discourse (Alley, 1984; Overton, 2009).

The shift in neoliberal discourse with the PRSPs and promotion of poverty alleviation as a goal saw a shift in focus to good governance globally (Banks et al., 2012; Overton et al., 2019). Former Foreign Minister Don McKinnon had remarked that a large portion of development spending went to the private sector partners; *"New Zealand firms, suppliers, educational institutions and individual consultants are doing well out of our doing good"* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 1995, p. 1). Civil society organisations were side-lined in favour of engaging the private sector to pursue a good governance agenda backed by the neoliberal aid regime. When coupled with the 1996 policy statement of 'investing in a common-future', NGOs, which had replaced the state in service provision, were now drafted in to support the private sector where possible in achieving development outcomes – a sector now considered out of step with other donors who at the time had embraced the poverty alleviation agenda (Scheyvens & Overton, 1995; Banks et al., 2012; Overton et al., 2019).

6.2.4   2000s: A Decade of Institutional Change

The MDGs that set the tone for development in the new century also provided the impetus for greater focus on poverty alleviation in development assistance. In the New Zealand context, however, institutional change in the development sector during the 2000s, dominates the literature on New Zealand's provision of development assistance. NZODA underwent two fundamental changes during the 2000s - the creation and dissolution of the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID), and a greater focus of development attention in Melanesia.

Resulting from political bargaining (Banks et al., 2012a) and reviews into New Zealand's development assistance (Davenport & Low, 1999; Grossman &

Lees, 2001), a semi-autonomous body was established (SAB) that handled development policy and*" has an undistracted focus on, and accountability for, the mission to eliminate poverty"* (Grossman & Lees, 2001, p. 7).

NZAID, although still attached to MFAT, possessed greater authority in crafting aid policy, allocating internal resourcing, and providing advice, led by an executive director, reporting to a minister directly (Grossman & Lees, 2001; Spratt & Wood, 2018). This was constructed to "*deliver effective, focused and accountable development assistance*" (Cabinet Office, 2009d, p. 2). This arrangement implicitly recognised the interdependency between external relations and development assistance, with a tight geographic focus on the Pacific envisioning a 'safe and just world free of poverty', one to be achieved by maintaining development partnerships while complementing diplomatic efforts in parallel with their host organisation (Banks et al., 2012; Brady, 2008; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2008).

Although adopting the focus on poverty alleviation later than other Global North donors, the inclusion of the MDGs and aligning with the global agenda to eliminate extreme poverty, NZAIDs initial 2001 mandate remained fundamentally unchanged until its reintegration into MFAT (Banks et al., 2012; Overton et al., 2019). During this time, the ODA budget rose, in absolute terms, from $325 million in 2002 to $525 million in 2008[7] (OECD, n.d.; Spratt & Wood, 2013). However, as a percentage of GNI, ODA remained below the OECD average, at 0.26 percent in the same time period (OECD, n.d.). Longer-term initiatives focusing on education and health targeted modalities were allotted the largest share of funding, over oft-considered ineffective short-term projects (Cabinet Office, 2009b; Spratt & Wood, 2013). This garnered much acclaim from peers and development practitioners, who saw it as an opportunity to achieve

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[7] In 2010 inflation adjusted New Zealand Dollars

targeted development outcomes in line with the MDG agenda (Banks et al., 2012; OECD, 2005).

The focus on the MDGs and poverty alleviation saw the shifting priorities of New Zealand development assistance towards Melanesia, where health and governance indicators were relatively poor (Overton, 2009). A focus on longer term high-level programmes, aid effectiveness, and state security in Melanesia aligned with the global trends encapsulated in the neostructural aid regime, and marked the first significant change in New Zealand development assistance in the region since colonial contact (Overton et al., 2019). This was translated into NZAID focusing strongly on building good governance and ensuring aid effectiveness (Banks et al., 2012), primarily in countries such as Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, somewhat at the expense of Polynesian countries (Overton, 2009).

Helen Leslie and Kirsty Wild (2018) considered the Pacific to have adopted the aid effectiveness agenda in earnest, building on Pasifika-led regional frameworks and incorporating global best practice ahead of Global North partners – framing the relationships with the likes of New Zealand and Australia during the 2000s. Regular high-level meetings led by Pacific Island countries, were conducted establishing a regional identity (Leslie & Wild, 2018). The 2000 Biketawa Declaration is an example of this with its focus on commitments to good governance, and the upholding of democratic processes and institutions, while recognising the vulnerability of member countries and threats to their security (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2018b). The Cairns Compact contributed to this institutional arrangement and translated global efforts in aid effectiveness into a Pacific context (Leslie & Wild, 2018; Overton, 2009; Overton et al., 2019). The Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI), PACER Plus and the Boe Declaration, with overt trade and security promotion objectives, highlight how the neostructural era still saw the

Pacific as integrated into global networks, showing the increasing geostrategic presence of actors in the region (Leslie & Wild, 2018; Overton et al., 2019).

Several institutional alterations were made following the 2008 election of the Sixth National Government. NZAID was reintegrated as an operational division in MFAT, followed by reviewing the approach to aid delivery. This resulted in the streamlining of development assistance and foreign policy under the 'NZ Inc' brand (K. Buchanan, 2011; Spratt, 2012). Established as the New Zealand Aid Programme (NZAP), it was charged with supporting 'sustainable economic development' in developing countries via targeted programmes, primarily in the Pacific (Cabinet Office, 2009c, para. 6.1; New Zealand Aid Programme, 2011). Its mandate included a strong emphasis on security, prosperity, and the projection of New Zealand's voice abroad. The approach to aid delivery was now '*consistent with, and in support of New Zealand's foreign policy and external relations outcomes*' (Cabinet Office, 2009c, para. 1; McCully, 2009; New Zealand Aid Programme, 2011). This shifted the focus from a deficit-based analysis of poverty alleviation to an opportunity-based analysis in economic development, diverging from the then-current global rhetoric (Spratt & Wood, 2018). Institutional change, and overt political wrangling of the aid programme angered many in the New Zealand development sector, with then Executive Director of Oxfam Barry Coates (2009, March 13) expressing that *"this is not the time to make aid a political tool or to abandon the aim of poverty reduction. Aid should be for the benefit of the poor"*(p. 1). Promoting economic drivers and business opportunities was thought to address the unsatisfactory lag experienced in poverty alleviation, tying it to economic development (Cabinet Office, 2009a). NZAP was to deliver an improvement in trade and business relationships in areas of comparative advantage (Cabinet Office, 2009a, sec. 2), in mainly agricultural, energy, and disaster preparedness sectors in the region (see Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade & Fonterra, 2014; New Zealand Aid Programme, 2011). Although some argue that the focus on economic

development did not result in sustainable development outcomes in the Pacific (Spratt & Wood, 2018; Wood, 2011).

The policy changes were coupled with a focus on the cross-cutting issues of gender equity, human rights, and the environment, reinforcing the thematic priorities *"not as an end* […] *but as a means to ensure good outcomes and to manage risks"*(Cabinet Office, 2009a, sec. 5; New Zealand Aid Programme, 2011). These issues included a focus on education at all levels, technical and vocational training, scholarships, good health, water quality, and sanitation, along with more stringent monitoring and evaluating guidelines, were built into all country activities and at all levels of programme design (Banks et al., 2012; Challies et al., 2011; McGregor et al., 2013). This served to increase the tying of development to the national interest in Global North countries throughout the 2010s and provide the base of the retroliberal aid regime in tracking such changes.

6.3   Summary of Chapter

This chapter has traversed the plethora of literature that exists in New Zealand's place and development assistance in the Pacific. The interplay between history, identity, and global discourses has resulted in New Zealand's involvement in the Pacific having progressed from colonial interloper to development partner. Yet, the changes to regional focus, priorities and the structures that disburse NZODA over time, have impacted the interactions, and relations between New Zealand, Pacific partners, and development practitioners. The Pacific Reset draws on similar notions of history, culture, and place, with the literature surveyed in this chapter informing the further discussion of understandings on the origin of the Pacific Reset.

The P.R.O.M.I.S.E. of the Pacific Reset

This chapter documents and explores the findings derived from the data collected as part of this research. It employs thematic analysis conducted on interviews with individuals involved in the New Zealand development sector, and CDA of secondary sources. This chapter uses both the P.R.O.M.I.S.E. manual coding developed for this research, outlined in Chapter Three, and the research questions to structure the findings. This chapter is thus divided into three sections, documenting and exploring the findings of this research, establishing the foundation for the answering of the research questions.

7.1   What is the Pacific Reset?

This section explores the understandings on what the Pacific Reset is (P), which was informed by the perceived motivations and international geostrategic considerations behind the Pacific Reset (M and I). It documents the findings relevant to the first research question:

> *How do members of the New Zealand development community understand the*
> *Pacific Reset and its motivations?*

The Pacific Reset, initially laid out in the *New Zealand in the Pacific* cabinet paper (2018), sees it governed by the 'principles of engagement' (see Chapter Two). However, at the time of this research, there lacks clarity and specificity in how the renewed approach will impact New Zealand's development assistance in the region. The lack of clarity allows for multiple understandings of, and speculation into, the drivers of the Pacific Reset. Although translated into several high-level documents (Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee, 2019b; Ministry of Defence, 2019; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2018b), the Pacific Reset is treated as an established policy with any definitions referencing the initial cabinet paper.

7.1.1 Understandings on what the Pacific Reset encompasses

This research began with the analysis of the mentioned cabinet paper. Summarising the rationale and outlining the government's renewed approach to engagement in the region, the aforementioned cabinet paper frames the Pacific Reset in the following terms:

> *Our ability to pursue our interests in the Pacific is challenged by the dizzying array of problems the region faces and an increasingly contested strategic environment which is eroding our influence. This requires a revamped New Zealand approach to the Pacific. This new approach should include developing deeper partnerships with Pacific Island countries.*
> (Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2018, para. 2).

Promoting and preserving New Zealand's interests and influence in the region were major components in framing the Pacific Reset, with the main means of achieving this being through meaningful relationships with Pacific partners. With this in mind, participants were asked their understanding of the Pacific Reset (Appendix V). Their understanding gravitated towards the revamped engagement aspect of the policy first and foremost, as exemplified by Participant E who considered it "*an attempt to change that power imbalance and to say 'we might have resources and experience, but actually we want to engage in a more 'level' way with our Pacific neighbours.*"

Participants also spoke in broad terms, with Participants B, C, D, and E detailing the importance of language and relationships in the Pacific. Mirrored by the rhetoric surrounding the programme, it resonated with the tendency to focus on New Zealand's relationships with Pacific partners. The announcement of the Pacific Reset was well received in the development community, with Participant E considering the Pacific Reset an exercise in introspection:

The Pacific Reset is part of an attempt to reframe those understandings of who we are, who they [the Pacific Island countries] *are, and how we can engage with each other.*

The renovation of thinking around the principles of engagement and shift in rhetoric to more relationship-centric language hints at an effort to reflect on New Zealand's place in the Pacific. Participant A spoke to this, considering the identity journey and creation of the Pacific Reset that lies at the heart of this research:

Now I do believe those, like the Prime Minister for instance, who fundamentally believe that the Pacific Reset is part of New Zealand's identity journey conversation about who we are as New Zealanders, our place in the world, and the Pacific.

This is informed by the previously referenced historical relationships New Zealand has in the region. Participants A, B, and C, involved in development academia, focused on political drivers, as exemplified by Participant C:

I presume that was just a political exercise to attract public attention and elicit support of New Zealanders more generally who think that the Pacific is our neighbourhood and we should do more.

Understandings of the Pacific Reset aligned with the high-level rhetoric framing the programme. Key attention was paid to the relationships New Zealand has in the region, and how engagement is important, both bilaterally and in domestic politics.

7.1.2 Geopolitical Drivers of the Pacific Reset

All participants spoke about the prominence of geopolitical discourses and presence of other development actors as drivers of the Pacific Reset.

Participant A spoke of the correlation between increased strategic considerations in the region, and the perceived loss of influence:

> *I don't think it's moved away from those primary drivers - being the shifting geopolitical environment and an awareness that New Zealand's reputation and influence in the Pacific region has diminished significantly.*

Participants were frank in detailing what they considered the drivers of the Pacific Reset. Many saw the programme as a response to increased activity by other actors, particularly by China:

> *The United States and other countries are starting to show interest in the region again* […] *So all of a sudden people are starting to think about the region in more strategic terms thanks to the rise of China, and New Zealand is no different in that aspect.* – Participant C

Geopolitical discourses permeated much of the literature on the Pacific Reset, with several commentators viewing the Pacific Reset as being a reactionary response to not only China, but other larger donors in the region (Newton Cain & Powles, 2018; O'Sullivan, 2018; Steff, 2018; Wyeth, 2019). This sentiment is mirrored by Participant A:

> *Without a doubt the geostrategic concerns about China in the region see the Pacific Reset being driven by that impetus. Not just about our alliance with Australia or partnership with the United States. There are some who believe that China is a disruptive and destabilising force.*

A majority of participants who saw a distinction between what Participant F called *"Chinese values"* in aid delivery, and the New Zealand principles of engagement instilled in the Pacific Reset, shared this sentiment. Participant E touched on the interplay between historical relations between New Zealand and the Pacific and waning influence in the face of Chinese activity:

We had to reaffirm the historical relationships that have existed between us and the Pacific neighbourhood. And that is in the context of the threat of China but also other actors who are coming in and getting a bit of the action in our backyard and we are kind of wanting to declare that "hey we were friends first, before you guys turned up on the scene".

Participant H singled out the increased focus on effective governance in the region and the importance of maintaining the sovereignty of Pacific Island countries as important facets of the Pacific Reset. This is corroborated by the Office of the Ombudsman (Boshier, 2019). Provisions were made to align projects with the Pacific Reset in maintaining influence through protecting judicial and parliamentary sectors:

Without our leadership, the opportunity arises for other states to fill the vacuum and establish regimes, practices and models that may not be consistent with ensuring a stable democratic Asia-Pacific region. I note this is a view shared by the Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade who has observed that the programme I am proposing is consistent with the Government's Pacific Reset policy and is in support of my Office's proposal (p. 17).

Similar in tone to the anxiety towards other actors, this illustrates the intent of New Zealand-based actors to collaborate in implementing activities under the Pacific Reset. Such a coordinated effort is reiterated in documents outlining the Pacific Reset, although Participant A was sceptical of the domestic and international delivery of the programme, believing it to be *"very much a generational shift, but then there is the difference between the Pacific Reset domestically and the Pacific Reset in the region itself."*

7.1.3 Genesis of the Pacific Reset

In addition to strategic anxiety of Chinese influence in the Pacific, participants' understandings on the Pacific Reset converged on three main

themes: political rebranding of policy, the change of government, and New Zealanders of Pasifika descent in government.

7.1.3a High Level Political Rebranding of Foreign Policy

The political nature of the Pacific Reset, and of aid more generally, were discussed by Participants A, C and F, with Participant F labelling aid a *"political tool."* Although couched in a broader discussion about geopolitical shifts in the Pacific region, political one-upmanship in rhetoric was registered, and somewhat disavowed, by participants as being trivial, as pointed out by Participant C:

> *It would seem it is a case of political rebranding. The previous foreign minister castigated the then previous government* [Former Minister McCully to Minister Peters] *for not doing enough in the Pacific and said he was going to refocus on the Pacific. He did that to an extent, although New Zealand aid had clearly been heavily focused on the Pacific, so it was a bit disingenuous on his part.*

Participant A considered the ability of successive governments to change policy as a threat to the longevity of the Pacific Reset. This sentiment permeated a majority of responses, with political branding of policy found to be a factor in announcing the Pacific Reset:

> *My feeling is that it is going to take a long time and there is the potential for it to be seen as a Labour branding of foreign policy in the Pacific, and another government might not want to take that on.*

New Zealand development policy has historically possessed a strong Pacific focus, retained across the political spectrum. In this instance, the change of government allowed an opportunity to rebrand the focus of NZODA in the Pacific. This advances the notion that the genesis of the Pacific Reset came out of the new government. Other actors in the development sector moderated this

view with participants considering several factors that influenced the Pacific Reset's creation. Minister Peters at the helm of MFAT and orator of the programme, was mentioned by Participants B, C, F and G as the chief agent in creating the Pacific Reset, with Participant F going as far to consider it a 'Captain's Call':

> *I think it's very much a 'Captain's Call' looking back on all the documentation and information at the change of government. I think that the narrative of the Pacific Reset at the time was driven by the change of government and then Minister Peters taking up the foreign affairs portfolio.*

Participant F went on to consider the Pacific Reset to fit comfortably within Minister Peter's world view, referencing the geopolitical considerations of the programme. Chapter Eight further discusses the multiplicity in development policy, mapping the actors in policy creation.

7.1.3b Pasifika Voice in Government

Participants C, E and F considered demographics and political expediency to be motivating factors in bringing about the Pacific Reset, and shaping the focus of aid in the region:

> *I think that was a shift and a really clear articulation of a different perspective of how New Zealand sees itself in relation to other Pacific countries. And I think it came quite strongly from a lot of the Pacific Island cabinet members.*
> - Participant F

Visibility and voice of Pasifika in the decision-making process not only provided the impetus for the Pacific Reset, but was incorporated into the 'principles of engagement' (particularly the 'friendship' and 'collective ambition' principles). Participants welcomed rhetoric that included consultation and harmonisation of efforts with Pacific Island countries. Although,

Participant B was sceptical of the initial efforts to include such partners in the formation of the Pacific Reset:

> *I found that MFAT were doing a good job of articulating what the Reset was but at the same time I found myself wondering about whether they have done that crucial other piece of actually going out to partners in the region and asking 'what do you want from us?' And 'what is important to you?'*

Evidence of the early consultation process that led to the Pacific Reset is scant, with this research not being able to determine the involvement of Pasifika stakeholders at such an early stage. However, a review of the Pacific Reset (Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee, 2018) documented the creation of a space for government agencies who undertook extensive scoping and research exercises in the first year of the programme. How this translated into further consultation with Pasifika stakeholders is unclear.

Along with political considerations, external Pasifika actions were considered a factor in the framing of the Pacific Reset. If viewed as a response to Pacific Island countries, who have signed development agreements with other donors in the region, the Pacific Reset is, in some part, driven by the ability of Pacific Island countries to govern their own development trajectory. Barbara Dreaver (2018) encapsulated the Pacific Reset as being reactionary, believing *"New Zealand needs the Pacific as much as the Pacific needs New Zealand. In fact, some countries have made it clear they don't need New Zealand at all"* (p. 1).

7.1.3c From Within MFAT

An interesting point raised by Participants F and H considered actors within MFAT as agents of change in policy, implying that the Pacific Reset manifested from within the institution:

> *Under McCully, there was this idea around 'friendship', 'understanding', 'mutual benefit' amongst the middle level to senior level staff at MFAT and they*

developed this Pacific Reset idea. They saw an opportunity with the change in government. – Participant F

Several participants believed the interaction between ministry staff and the Minister provided an opportunity for the Pacific Reset to emerge, with Participant C viewing the relationship as such a dichotomy:

Senior civil servants at MFAT will have their view of how New Zealand should engage with the world. Winston Peters is probably an easier minister to work with, so that possibly had some influence.

Having worked under both the current and the former governments, Participant H was uniquely placed to assess the origin of the Pacific Reset. They saw the government and officials to have *"met in the middle"* in crafting the programme.

The above responses illustrate the multiplicity in the motivating drivers of the Pacific Reset. While generally thought of as a unilateral shift in thinking, Participants A, E, F, and G considered New Zealand's historical ties to the Pacific as the guiding factor in the Pacific Reset:

You have to acknowledge that there is an attempt by Australia and New Zealand to re-establish and reaffirm the historical relationships that have existed between us and the Pacific neighbourhood. – Participant E

Participants expressed an aversion to calling the Pacific Reset a policy innovation, recognising the historical relationships as important factors in framing the programme. All participants considered the Pacific Reset a high-level reframing of New Zealand's long-standing relations with partners in the region, but such relations were not created through the Pacific Reset itself, as expressed by Participant D:

It's not really drastically new, it's a continuation of the way in which New Zealand has operated for quite some time in countries that we have had strong historical ties with, like Samoa. It's naming it and making it more obvious.

7.1.4 Summary of Findings

When it came to defining the Pacific Reset, participants deferred to exploring the genesis of the programme. Here, participants considered political factors as the drivers of the Pacific Reset, focusing mainly on Chinese activity in the region and overt geopolitical discourses. High-level ministerial oversight, and the agency of MFAT officials in policy ideation; increased Pasifika input and voice in government; and partisan political jostling were taken into consideration, with the change of government considered the catalyst that brought forward the Pacific Reset. Historical relationships in the region informed responses, as participants agreed that the Pacific Reset was in-fact not a new policy initiative, existing less overtly in policy and relations for generations. This can be best communicated by Participant C, who believed the Pacific Reset is the result of *"a confluence of causal factors. There is no one singular cause, but a range of factors that this government has ostensibly changed where we focus on the Pacific and changed our engagement".*

Ultimately, participants welcomed the intent of the shift and understood the Pacific Reset as an update to the style of engagement in the region, motivated by several domestic and international political factors. However, participants were sceptical of its ill-defined state, as expressed by Participant B:

I am unsure at this point whether it will have any true substance to it, and I think that is a bit of an open question at the moment. I think the rhetoric around the Reset is quite admirable. It's very warm and probably quite welcome. I am just unsure whether it is going to mean anything in practice.

7.2   Perspectives on the Pacific Reset to date

This research found that several stakeholders were involved in the conception and early stages of the Pacific Reset. This section details the findings relating to the outcomes of the policy change and the engagement of the development community in the early stages of the Pacific Reset.

With such a rhetorical shift that came with the Pacific Reset, it was logical to ask 'what may come of it?' Here, participants were asked their knowledge of outcomes of the Pacific Reset on development practice. This line of inquiry was difficult to follow due to the infancy of the Pacific Reset. This was evident in the discussions with participants who themselves were sceptical of the impact of the Pacific Reset had on development at that point. Representative of a majority of participants, this was best summed up by Participant F, who believed *"it is rhetorical. I don't think it is informing projects at all."*

The infancy of the Pacific Reset factored into participants scepticism of the impact of the programme on development practice. This is supported by documents originating from MFAT, confirming such infancy of the Pacific Reset. A request made under the Official Information Act 1982 (Adams, 2018), documented that new projects were to be informed by updated Joint Declarations of Development Cooperation with partner countries – which were still in draft phases. However, it was found that participants considered real change to have occurred in less tangible areas such as shifting policy priorities, institutional arrangements, and shifts in the attitude of the development community.

Framing engagement with the region, the Pacific Reset can be seen as a shift in rhetoric to a softer language. This language invokes a historically informed relationship, based on the bond between New Zealand and the Pacific. Given its infancy, rhetoric and style of engagement were major factors

in thinking on the Pacific Reset, and as Participant B responded: *"New Zealand must walk the talk"*.

7.2.1 Institutional Architecture of the Pacific Reset

Reflecting on the Pacific Reset over the past year allowed participants to supply anecdotal evidence of any outcomes. Participants believed the outcomes to be mainly at the institutional level, as the architecture to support and implement the programme, was then currently constructed. Changes to staffing arrangements within MFAT acted as a proxy indicator of such internal construction of capacity. Throughout Minister Peters' pronouncements surrounding the Pacific Reset, capacity building is a priority and is ostensibly taking effect at the time of this research.[8] The inability to recruit MFAT personnel as participants for this research provides additional anecdotal evidence that staffing rearrangements and capacity building is occurring at the time of this research and is a priority. Knowledgeable of the ministry's internal mechanics, Participant A conveyed a similar sentiment:

> *MFAT has done a fair bit of restructuring to support the Reset. So building that architecture to support the Reset with higher numbers of Pasifika diplomats being posted to the region for example. My fear is can the bureaucracy keep up with the very altruistic principles of the Reset? My feeling is that it is going to take a long time.*

Participant C, who sees the updating of crucial strategic documents that guide MFAT as long-needed, echoed the fear of a sluggish bureaucracy relative to the perceived quick pace of the Pacific Reset:

> *I know that they are doing some work to refresh the overarching policy statement for the aid programme which is probably well overdue because the current one comes from the last government, and is 10 years old.*

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[8] Refer to Chapter Two for a summary of institutional arrangements as part of the Pacific Reset

Several participants singled out the 2018 creation of the Pacific Connections Unit as a tangible output of the Pacific Reset, but as Participant F alludes to below, it only serves to entrench a focus on Polynesia that has latently been the chief focus of the aid programme in the past:

I mean maybe it informing things to some degree, like they had the pension portability announcement and they have set up the Pacific Connections Unit in Auckland. This is a unit of MFAT explicitly set up to create Pacific connections – I mean they are really Polynesian connections because the Melanesian community in New Zealand is tiny. And that fits squarely under the Pacific Reset. That is something that they've done.

The creation of the Pacific Connections Unit within MFAT, along with the Pacific Reset Advisory Group, convened by the Council for International Development, were considered the main tangible outputs of the Pacific Reset. Participant F's observation on the strong Polynesian focus is echoed by Participant D:

The rhetoric seems quite Polynesia focused. But I presume it's a Pacific-wide initiative. But Polynesia seems chief target simply because of domestic agenda and constituency.

Tying the political drivers with the focus of the Pacific Reset together, the above statements are lent some credence with the increased attention through high-level ministerial visits to the region, what Participant H called 'leadership diplomacy', and increased aid expenditure – particularly in the Realm Territories (see Office of the Minister of Civil Defence, 2018).

The cultural shift communicated as part of the Pacific Reset considered welcome in the New Zealand development community, with this sentiment mirrored by Brenda Killen (2018) who, in reviewing the aid programme, believed *"The government is clearly committed to a different approach to development co-operation, particularly in the Pacific, and the Ministry is embracing this change"*

(p. 4). However, they were unsure that ministry staff and key partners are aware of the direction of the Pacific Reset:

> *While staff are reportedly embracing the Ministry's new strategic direction, I was not able to assess the extent to which practice has changed. However, I did sense that the direction in which New Zealand is moving is not yet clear to staff, nor external partners* (p. 3).

In concluding the review, there was a high buy-in to the changes to development cooperation, but the government is yet to communicate the changes to key stakeholders in the region. This was a point touched on by Participant G, who believed that the New Zealand business community was still playing catch up to the Pacific Reset:

> *It would be fair to say for some in the private sector, in my experience, there has been a lack of clarity as to what exactly the Pacific Reset is. To what it actually means to them at the end of the day in terms of trade, tariffs and agreements.*

The responses by participants of this research, regarding the construction of institutional architecture to support the Pacific Reset, aligned with the review of the Pacific Reset in its first year (2018). Although not explicitly stated, the review documented the various attempts to construct a coherent programme across the 30 government actors active in the Pacific and establish the architecture to support the Pacific Reset.

7.2.2 Climate Change as a Priority

Only being able to speak to changes and outcomes published in the public domain, participants focused on the shift in rhetoric and institutional capacity of MFAT. Changes to priorities were talked about with a mix of mild excitement and scepticism as participants speculated specific outcomes pertaining to changes in sectoral focus and spend originating from the Pacific Reset. This data was primarily gathered through secondary sources where it

was found climate change to be an elevated priority. Distilled from the 2017/2018 annual review of MFAT, the threat posed by climate change in the region sees a focus on:

- *The existential threat to Pacific Island countries posed by climate change;*
- *Employment schemes like that provided through a land reclamation project in Kiribati;*
- *Legal work for continental shelf ownership;*
- *Research work with local NGOs in the Pacific to determine how women and disabled people will be affected by climate change.*

(Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee, 2019a, p. 5)

Participant B detailed this shift in thematic priorities towards climate finance projects:

The Reset framing was this 'overdue focus on responding to climate change' – that is something that is real and meaningful in MFAT at the moment. They are upping the spending there […] Talking to colleagues in the ministry the increase in expenditure on climate change responses is significant. And climate change was part of the framing of the Reset.

With responding to climate change a pillar of the Pacific Reset, former MFAT Secretary Brook Barrington outlined this framing in the following terms:

a refreshed climate finance commitment of NZ$300m over four years; progress on climate change-related infrastructure and risk-reduction projects; increased support for Pacific disaster preparedness; and responding to invasive alien species associated with climate change.
(Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee, 2019b, p. 7).

This coordinated effort to respond to development issues that are impacted directly by climate change was welcomed. Already a reality of Pacific Island countries and a priority for many in the New Zealand development community, the climate financing aspect of the Pacific Reset was considered a major outcome of the programme. This was reiterated by Prime Minister

Ardern at the 2019 Pacific Islands Forum in Tokelau, announcing that $150 million of the climate finance commitment was allocated to the Pacific, with the goal of spending two-thirds of the allotted $300 million in the region (RNZ, 2019, August 15).

7.2.3 Cultural Shifts

An interesting theme that arose was the cultural shift occurring alongside the Pacific Reset. Along with internal ministry staffing arrangements, participants expressed hope in the development sector, where some organisations found it difficult to operate with previous funding arrangements. Participant G encapsulates this sentiment:

> [The Pacific Reset is a] *Perfectly rational narrative, and is very exciting for an organisation such as ourselves, working away to find our space and relevance within it. To all of a sudden, feeling like a teenager and someone has given you permission to be bold.*

The shift in rhetoric that began with the initial speeches outlining the Pacific Reset, was expanded to relationships with civil society later in 2018. Minister Peters (2018d) even remarked that *"the days of treating you like pests are over"* (p. 1), recognising the role civil society plays in Pacific development. Together with the revamped funding streams, outlined in Chapter Two, this research found the Pacific Reset allowed NGOs the space to take stock of their internal strategies and arrangements and what they can offer within the priorities of the Pacific Reset. Participant E believed that their organisation felt *"that we can bring to the table a lot more of what we feel is important to us and what we are already doing."*

This sentiment is shared by Participant F, who believes the 'principles of engagement' can provide a base from which to engage with the government, having said *'mutual benefit' is the most interesting one for me really. Because as an*

advocate it is the most useful in terms of being able to use it to implement domestic policy."

It was also found that the Pacific Reset resulted in how one particular organisation operates, with Participant G detailing their experience with it:

I even took up the role here due to the strategic thought around the Pacific Reset. From an organisational perspective when I think of our strategy, the Pacific Reset gave the organisation a boost and also meaning to why we were set up.

Participant G goes on to outline how the thinking around the Pacific Reset changed the way their organisation views their activities:

It is something I stare at every day. I've handwritten the key elements of the Pacific Reset and pinned our strategy right next to it – and that's deliberate on my part. My first lens when deciding on operationalising our strategy, it has to link in with 'connecting', 'informing', 'enabling'.

This was an interesting response to outcomes of the Pacific Reset. The active incorporation of the elements of the Pacific Reset in organisational strategy illustrates the level of buy-in from some NGOs in the programme's implementation. This was found to extend to other civil society actors who are shifting their attention back to wider development policy and evaluating and aligning their activities under the Pacific Reset. This is best captured by Participant E who believes their organisations' *"comparative advantage is now been potentially recognised as worth something. I think what I am hearing from MFAT is that it is actually worth something."*

There seems to be a deliberate cultivation of relationships with MFAT, with participant's hopeful they are seeing a change to the way the Ministry operates. Participant B provided a snapshot into this environment:

I did find when I was back there I was sitting next to a policy officer. In stark contrast to when previously was in HQ in a development role […] [I was] in a

different building and only every four-to-six weeks catching up with policy desk
officer for a coffee and talk about each other's work and exchange emails. But it's
a fundamental difference when you're sharing a team, and that was better.

This is echoed by Participant E who, in their interactions with MFAT aid programme staff, noted a significant shift in morale:

And as I've observed from people in the ministry and staff – who are meant to be
politically neutral. They can't help but be thankful for what we have now as
opposed to what they had to endure under McCully, which was gruelling.

Participant B, and Killen (2018) also registered this positive change, noting an increased morale and level of staff engagement within MFAT being causally related with the change of government. Together with this deliberate shift in internal culture, Participant E pointed to the shift in project management as a positive outcome of the Pacific Reset that helped boost staff engagement:

You can see one really big thing that has come through in this. Adaptive
approaches to development and what they are calling an iterative project
management/programme management are being elevated as being a way of
giving definition to the Reset - and that is a good thing.

7.2.4 Summary of Findings

This research found participants were all aware of the infancy of the Pacific Reset and the work being done to operationalise it. Understandably unaware of the internal ministry mechanics that drive the Reset, participants focused on outcomes in the form of broad changes to the development sector. As typified by the establishment of the Pacific Connections Unit and the dedicated advisory group, the institutional architecture to support the Pacific Reset was considered the most tangible outcomes of the shift. Greater engagement—or at this stage, a greater willingness to engage—with civil society actors, greater morale in the development community, an increased

climate financing commitment and space to re-evaluate strategies in NGOs are lesser visible outcomes of the Pacific Reset identified by participants.

7.3   The Future of the Pacific Reset

The more theoretical aspects of New Zealand's provision of development assistance in the Pacific were explored under this theme. This section is guided by the second thematic line of inquiry (R) (Appendix V), aiming to explore the changing nature of NZODA in the Pacific and the future of the Pacific Reset. This section encompasses two sub-themes of 'how aid in the Pacific has changed in the past decade', and 'understandings on retroliberalism', and feeds into the research question:

To what extent can a retroliberal analysis help interpret the Pacific Reset?

The retroliberal aid regime is a relatively recent creation and is an academic exercise in logging changes in the post-GFC development landscape. Due to this, knowledge of the nuances of the aid regime were understandably absent. Although describing the components of retroliberalism, many participants were not aware of the concept, preferring to compare changes in development discourse and the Pacific Reset to the widely understood neoliberal regime:

[It is] *certainly good noises in terms of 'let's talk to the people and let's find out what is really important to them'. Whereas previously it was like 'we know what's best, we know that good infrastructure and business development ripples out into jobs and prosperity* […] *It is neoliberal. And even if you don't believe in 'trickle down' anymore, at least you can say 'well people are getting jobs'. -* Participant E

Participants involved in development academia understood retroliberalism more readily, offering their take on the aid regime. Although outside the scope of this research, the disparity in understanding of the

retroliberal aid regime saw participants asked about the changing nature of aid in the Pacific as a proxy to gauge understanding aid regime shifts more generally.

7.3.1 Management Style under the Sixth National Government

Participants reviewed New Zealand development assistance in the Pacific over the past decade, offering how their experiences aligned with changes in the development landscape. Being a somewhat cathartic exercise, participants focussed on the changes to the New Zealand aid programme and management style of the preceding Sixth National government:

> *If McCully were doing the right things, he would've been a great minister. Well actually that is not true, he was a bully and reached down too far into operations* […] *but he did have a vision and he did drive it, so you have to admire him for that.* – Participant F

The shock of the institutional change under the previous government was a major theme across responses. Participant E detailed the impact on MFAT staff at the time:

> [There was a] *huge dissonance for a lot of people. And we have on staff here, exiles from that and people and who just couldn't - they just had to get out. They endured quite a lot of stuff. I think it was just a war of attrition, really. They just thought 'how much longer can we do this?'*

Participant B, who witnessed the change in staff attitudes first-hand, echoed this sentiment:

> *I joined the aid programme in 2011 and it was a low point then – NZAID and MFAT restructure in 2012. Morale was rock bottom I think, there wasn't much confidence in the senior manager of the aid programme of the time. Engagement levels, gathered through the engagement surveys, was at rock bottom.*

This assessment of the culture at the time was found to be the converse of the emergent culture within MFAT today. This shift in attitude and staff engagement cannot be attributed singularly to the Pacific Reset itself and is plausible that this outcome originated from the change of government given the external appraisal of the aid programme (Killen, 2018) concludes on a similar tone.

Often comparing against the Pacific Reset, participants were aware of the overt nature of 'sustainable economic development' and modalities that focused on infrastructure as a guiding force of development in the region. Some participants gave an honest appraisal of NZODA under the previous government. Participant F compared the Pacific Reset to the sustainable economic development of the previous government and the two different styles of engagement:

> *I think under the National Government it was a lot about helping ourselves. I've got no problems with sustainable economic development, but trying to use our businesses to do that - there was more to it than that, and I do believe the National Government wanted to achieve development outcomes. But that was about it. So I think actually rhetorically, it* [the Pacific Reset] *was a significant shift and the idea of 'we are all in this together', we are a Pacific and strongly Polynesian country too.*

The change in rhetoric alone is not indicative of a shift in larger aid regimes in the region. However, it is interesting to note the increased emphasis placed on achieving geopolitical objectives in the Pacific Reset. This can be found to align well with retroliberal thought around such discourses, perhaps even more so than under the previous Sixth National Government (see Chapter Seven).

It was found that participants believed that modalities that encompass funding infrastructure projects were found to be a priority under the previous government and have the potential to continue under the Pacific Reset:

The previous government when it came to the aid agenda, did have a big focus on hard infrastructure and renewable energy in particular. There is still some focus on those things in the aid programme. – Participant B

7.3.2 Retroliberalism and Aid Modalities

These responses show elements of the retroliberal aid regime present in the Pacific Reset. The emphasis on 'sustainable economic development' and achieving development outcomes through infrastructure projects were salient in discussions on the Pacific Reset. Not only did they conform with accepted thinking on the tenets of retroliberalism (see Chapter Five), participants also thought that little alteration to them would occur going forward:

Under the McCully era there was a lot more project aid than previously. Things had started to change in terms of the modalities used towards project aid, but there was still budget support happening, even under McCully. I imagine that trend would continue under the Pacific Reset. – Participant D

Participants talked of increased geopolitical considerations as a change in the development landscape in recent years, but it only came to the fore in New Zealand with the Pacific Reset.

Under McCully geopolitics didn't really guide our aid in the Pacific, it was commercial interests which corrupted our aid programme outside the Pacific. And some of the boneheaded decisions that McCully made, made our aid less effective there. His motives were not that geopolitically oriented as best I could tell. – Participant C

When comparing the statements about the increase in geopolitical considerations, the provision of aid is done strategically. Participant D, below,

offers how a shift away from the increased usage of conditionalities under retroliberalism is driven by recipient countries in the region who are requesting higher-level modalities like budget support – reminiscent of the neostructural aid regime:

> *It's about moving beyond project aid, where the donor has a lot more control and sets a lot more conditions, to direct support for development aspirations. So what that means in practice is a lot more sector and budget support where it is possible to do that. And a bit more of a strategic view of aid.*

Participants all voiced concerns to project-based modalities, but as Participant D communicated above, the trend is set to remain. A gradual shift away from project-based modalities towards higher-level budget support was a common opinion, or as Participant B termed it *"a move away from projectised aid"*. Whether this will play out in the reality of NZODA is yet to be seen or mapped out at MFAT.

7.3.3 Perspectives on the future of the Pacific Reset

Participants considered the longevity of the Pacific Reset in their responses. Like many of the responses, scepticism existed amidst positive notions of the shift in rhetoric, with Participant A agreeing it is relatively sound policy, but considered the Pacific Reset to have an expiration date:

> *This is the problem with the Reset is that there is a finite time for New Zealand to actually regain credibility and legitimacy in the region. If this is a one horse wonder, then time is ticking. Yes, it has to be built from the ground up and it is a lot better than the Australian 'Step Up' which is essentially policy on the run.*

This was a common theme throughout responses with Participant F considering the potential volatility in a change of government as a threat to the Pacific Reset in its current form. Participant A, below, also speculated that a successive National-led government would potentially have a greater focus on

a defence partnership with the U.S. However they were aware of the geopolitical sentiments existing in the Pacific Reset and saw not only a politicisation of development, but a re-emergence of the sustainable economic development model:

> *This is the problem where the danger here is with a shifting geopolitical dynamics in the region we will see the development programme in that way. Development is always going to be political and part of foreign policy . When we see the push towards large infrastructure projects and those McCully-esque 'sustainable economic development' approaches, which I think we are seeing a re-emergence of that as well.*

When analysed with the historical progression of the aid programme and political jostling that came with the announcement of the Pacific Reset, Participant A's statement rings true. Sustainable economic development remains in key strategic documents (see Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee, 2019b; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2018b; Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2018), and recent infrastructure projects in the region such as the Papua New Guinea Electrification Partnership, announced with Papua New Guinea, Australia, Japan, and the U.S. (McLeod, 2019). In this, the future of the Pacific Reset somewhat mirrors the core of the aid programme under the Sixth National government, and parts of the retroliberal aid regime.

An interesting consideration was tendered by participants working within the NGO community, who believed they operated under similar principles of engagement well before the Pacific Reset:

> *We were very much doing that before the Pacific Reset, but it is very much within the Pacific Reset frame. So that was happening organically as an organisation. We were already driving that ourselves [...] And MFAT are talking a lot about localisation and working with local NGOs and it is forcing us to think about relationships and what value we bring.* – Participant F

It was found that NGOs were not only on-board with the Pacific Reset, they were already operating implicitly under the 'principles of engagement'. The Pacific Reset allowed them to review strategies and targets with ease as said by Participant G, who believed *"those key strategic statements have existed with our organisation for a long time. When you marry that up with the Reset, they dovetail themselves well."*

This situation potentially allows for longevity in the Pacific Reset, with a high degree of buy-in from the New Zealand development community. This is bolstered by Participant A, who held the belief that MFAT had an operational version of the Pacific Reset pre-dating the current government:

> *When the Reset first happened, there was a feeling within foreign affairs that we were already doing this. We've had the Pacific Reset in the bottom draw and pulled it out.*

These statements illustrate the synergies between the operating environment of New Zealand development actors and the Pacific Reset. From this, one can infer two things: one, the core principles of the Pacific Reset are not new and have existed internally within organisations for some time; and two, the synergies can act as an anchor of the Pacific Reset—if not the specific funding arrangements, then the 'principles of engagement'—for framing future development assistance in the Pacific.

It was found that participants had a heightened aversion to further institutional change akin to the 2009 restructure. Participant E referenced changes to the structures of providing development assistance and accountability to the tax-payer:

> *So those things are strongly embedded in and I don't think a change of government from National to Labour is going to make much difference to that stuff. Everyone is operating and swimming in the same pool there.*

Seeming in contradiction to Participant A's statement on a securitisation of aid under a successive National-led government, Participant E's belief is that significant structural change is unlikely and would prove unpopular. As Participant C identified, *"there is a degree of path dependency with aid policy"* and changes to structures *"aren't as much about transformation, but differences of degree"*. This advances the notion that changes in the institutional architecture that support the Pacific Reset will be difficult and will remain amidst changing political tides in New Zealand.

7.3.4 Future Modalities

Participants also speculated about the modalities that would disburse development assistance under the Pacific Reset. Aware of the mix of project-based and GBS modalities that were employed in the aid programme under Minister McCully, participants were eager to see a change towards higher level modalities as communicated by Participant B:

> *Another sensible thing to do is look for sectors where it makes sense for a long term intervention. Because SWaps or budget support makes more sense than a projectised approach, the reality is that New Zealand will be engaged with the Pacific for a long time and it makes sense to be upfront in the sectors you will be engaged with for a decade plus. And signals a commitment that that partnership is meaningful.*

This was mirrored by Participant D, aware of the complex nature of working with partners in the Pacific, who advocated for more of a best-fit principle in harmonising and aligning of development activities:

> *Really looking at what the countries are wanting in terms of the best modality for the aid. So taking the lead from the partner country.*

Participants agreed that fostering meaningful relationships was a key requirement for ongoing engagement in the Pacific, and given it is a core

principle of engagement of the Pacific Reset, the Government is aware of its importance – both historically and for the future of development assistance.

7.3.5 Summary of Findings

It was found that disparity in the knowledge of the retroliberal aid regime existed between participants. Their understanding of how development in the Pacific is context driven and relationship-centric, coloured their responses to how the future of the policy can further incorporate such aspects. Regarding the documenting of opinions on how aid in the Pacific has changed over the last decade, participants spoke of their experiences with the management style of Minister McCully and the Sixth National Government. Direct comparisons were made to the Pacific Reset, and it was found the sustainable economic development model was thought to remain in the shift – marking a congruence with the retroliberal aid regime.

7.4 Findings of this Research

Participant's understanding of the intent of the Pacific Reset aligned with that of high-level policy pronouncements. Although discussing the geopolitical sentiments and of the policy and reactions to Chinese activity in the region, participants focused on relationships and development impacts of the Pacific Reset, hopeful the shift in thinking would eventuate in positive change. Participants did not dispute the intent of the Pacific Reset, and it was found to be broadly understood as an exercise in questioning, re-evaluating, and maintaining New Zealand's influence and place in the region.

Geopolitical sentiments were registered, both in strategic documents and in participant responses, with a possibility to influence the provision of development assistance towards more project-based modalities focusing on hard infrastructure, and closer cooperation with 'like-minded partners' in the region. Participants were quick to point out such geopolitical sentiments and

saw the *raison d'être* of the Pacific Reset as a response to the growing geopolitical contest in the region.

Participants could not identify tangible outcomes of the Pacific Reset to date, focusing more on institutional changes, and cultural and attitudinal shifts in the development community. It was found that participant's welcomed the rhetoric of the Pacific Reset and increased budget, but were sceptical if any substantial change would occur. It is too soon to conclude the Pacific Reset and its 'principles of engagement' are impacting New Zealand development activities, but the positive impact on morale and engagement in the community, is an outcome worth noting. Participants saw a signalling of deeper engagement between their organisations and MFAT, an aligning of principles, updating of funding streams and went as far to say that institutional capacity within MFAT is increasing as a direct consequence of the Pacific Reset.

Looking to the future, participants understood that little structural change to the aid programme will be undertaken by successive governments due to a degree of path dependence, aversion towards sector-wide change, and synergies between the Pacific Reset and already implemented NGO strategies. They were hopeful that the Pacific Reset would employ higher-level modalities such as SWaps and more GBS. However, due to the sectoral allocation of funding under the Pacific Reset yet to be reported on, this is an open question for future research.

Discussing the Pacific Reset

Research participants shared similar understandings of the Pacific Reset and its impact on Pacific-focused development activities. This chapter discusses three of the main findings, using literature documented in Chapters Three-through-Five, to answer two of the research questions:

> *How do members of the New Zealand development community understand the Pacific Reset and its motivations?*

> *How is the Pacific Reset impacting Pacific-focused development activities in New Zealand?*

The first section of this chapter discusses the personalities of communicating policy change in NZODA and the importance of style of engagement. Here, individuals involved in communicating the Pacific Reset, such as Minister Peters and Prime Minister Ardern, are compared to former Minister McCully and the Sixth National Government to discuss how style of engagement impacts New Zealand development practice in the Pacific.

The second section discusses policy change in New Zealand development policy, focusing on the causal mechanisms development practitioners operate within. This facilitates discussion on the framing of the Pacific Reset.

The third section discusses the broader relationships that inform the Pacific Reset, to analyse the relationship between New Zealand actors and partners in the region that are affected through the operationalising of the Pacific Reset. Discussing the framing of relationships and geopolitical considerations in the Pacific Reset is conducted to answer the research questions.

8.1 Political Personalities and Style of Engagement

Apparent from the findings, personalities and style of engagement are important, not only in communicating and operationalising the Pacific Reset, but for the efficacy of partnerships in the region. In discussing the changing style of engagement, recent political figures involved in New Zealand development will be analysed, to explore how political personalities and style of engagement impact Pacific-focused development activities.

8.1.1 Style of Engagement and Recent Development Policy

Participant B provided a succinct analysis of the place style of engagement has in the Pacific:

> *The Pacific Reset is quite a positive thing, if it is indeed meaningful. Because style of engagement is really important, I think, particularly so in the Pacific.*

Overton et al. (2019), in analysing the sovereignty of Pacific Island countries in determining their own development trajectory, document how officials would assert sovereignty in less formal ways, often through political personalities. How individuals interact and communicate development policy is thus an important part of engaging with partners in the Pacific and is implicit in the Pacific Reset. The heightened 'leadership diplomacy' and posting of senior Pasifika-New Zealanders to regional diplomatic roles can be viewed as a recognition of this personal level of engagement by both participants and the Government (Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee, 2018).

Such diplomatic spaces used to facilitate interaction favour the Global North is, however, understood to have the potential of producing political concessions (Overton et al., 2019). This is seen in the frequency of high-level ministerial visits to the Pacific and regional bodies to progress initiatives of interest to New Zealand, as high-level status recognition can confirm sovereignty (Overton et al., 2019).

The importance of style of engagement in the region is seen in the way participants viewed the Sixth National Government to have engaged, at a political level, with regional partners. Participant A was frank in drawing the cause-and-effect relationship between level of engagement and the messages sent to partners:

> *The problem with the Key Government was the delegation of Pacific policy to McCully. The lack of high-level Prime Ministerial engagement with the Pacific sent a very strong message to Pacific leaders that New Zealand wasn't engaged. When you have the Foreign Minister going to Prime Ministerial level meetings, then it sends a clear message.*

Participant A detailed that Minister McCully held strong personal relationships with leaders in the region, which did not translate to a wider government approach. This touches on the research of Joanna Spratt (2017), who found the differences in development policy between recent governments as largely influenced by the personalities, values, and networks of policy makers. In the Fifth Labour Government multiple departmental heads existed within MFAT and NZAID, reporting to multiple ministers with shared responsibility for aid policy (Spratt, 2017). Comparatively, Minister McCully amalgamated the three-to-four points of authority into one, possessing the ability to direct the system and become the dominant veto point for aid policy (Spratt, 2017).

Comparing this to the current arrangements in the Sixth Labour Government was difficult due to the inability to access information on governance structures. Evidence from participants concerning the origin point of the Pacific Reset serves as a barometer for the interactions between departmental and ministerial personalities. The 'leadership diplomacy' was considered greater than before, signifying the belief in the mission of the Pacific Reset from the Government itself. Here, participants saw the potential for a less

adversarial relationship in the development sector, with openness to new ideas and collaboration from civil society and academics. Participants went as far to comment on the contrasting management styles, believing Minister Peters to have ushered in a wave of relief and boosted morale within the development community.

A key point of difference was the involvement of the Prime Minister in the creation and communication of development policy. Implementing transformative policy that altered the institutional structure and provision of development assistance, especially in the Global North, is a common theme of the retroliberal aid regime. Structural changes to development policy require a political champion for rapid implementation and advancement against the status quo, embodied in the ministers responsible for development (Gulrajani, 2017). Where Minister McCully previously was champion of development policy, participants consider Prime Minister Ardern the political champion of the Pacific Reset, more so than Minister Peters himself. Salient in this discussion is the analysis of the earlier 'Wellington Consensus' by Banks et al. (2012), characterising the NZAID operating environment as having *"ministerial support was forthcoming, but intervention was minimal"* (p. 175). Here, the institution that imbued the neostructural aid regime in New Zealand lacked a political champion, resulting in the ability of political personalities to change the institution. However, this was viewed to have a negative impact on aid effectiveness, reducing the ability of actors to implement development activities independent of ministerial directives.

8.1.1   Resisting the Reset

Participants considered Minister Peters as behind the increase in appropriations, tied to the political bargaining following the 2017 general election, even though the Labour Party had an election manifesto to increase

ODA spending (see New Zealand Labour Party, 2017), touched on by Participant F:

> *It's a very Winston thing. He wants his pot of money so he got that. He likes these grand announcements and then he does nothing to make them happen.*

This statement highlights two facets of Peters' ministerial style. One, he is a strong political personality who secured considerable appropriations in his role as 'Kingmaker'. Second, his notably hands-off approach to guiding his ministry, seeing him, in the eyes of participants, place a high degree of trust in his officials to action the Pacific Reset, contrasting their 'micro-manager' perspectives of Minister McCully. These two facets of Minister Peters' ministerial style converged in the Budget 2018 bilateral process.

Finalising the foreign affairs and ODA budget package came down to the wire – settled via email only four days before release (Sachdeva, 2018). Negotiated down from approximately $1.5 billion (see Chapter Two) to the $714 million for ODA, $150 million for capital, Minister Robertson, against Treasury advice, supported a capital injection for ODA and to fund 60 percent of departmental cost and capital pressures (Browne, 2018; Sachdeva, 2018). Finalising the sequencing of ODA increases across the triennium to 0.25% increments was not without Prime Ministerial involvement (Royson, 2018). Treasury's concerns over potential trade-offs were clear, with the funding of an extra 50 full-time positions potentially coming at the cost of APEC 2021 contingency funding (see Browne, 2018; Royson, 2018). Although persisting until its announcement, the moderated funding allocations impacted the sequencing of ODA, but not the underlying rhetoric and discourse driving it.

This demonstrates the divergent styles of engagement between the current and preceding governments. Where Minister McCully implemented changes with shrewd conservative management, several key actors were involved in creating the Pacific Reset under the Sixth Labour Government.

Although Minister Peters' strong personality was illustrated by the political bargaining in the face of a reluctant Treasury, it was somewhat moderated by the leadership of Prime Minister Ardern and her presenting and communicating the Pacific Reset.

8.1.2 The Face of the Pacific Reset

Participants were aware of the changing style of engagement as part of the Pacific Reset, noting the 'principles of engagement', 'leadership diplomacy', and the posting of senior diplomats of Pasifika descent to the region. As key communicators of the shift in policy, they are charged with deepening the partnership with various stakeholders in the region (Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee, 2018, sec. 20).

Killen (2018) considered New Zealand a leader in development practice in the region, with Participant D having experienced the intersection between maintaining existing relations and coordinating activities with new partners:

But there is no denying beyond geopolitical stuff, the strong and enduring relationships New Zealand has in the Pacific and with other bilateral donors. Working for New Zealand in the Pacific, other donors look to you because they recognise those ties and relationships.

Outside of policy documents, senior officials and diplomats; Prime Minister Ardern; and Minister Peters are key actors in communicating the Pacific Reset to partners in the region. Comprising the face of the Pacific Reset, how these actors engage is important for external understandings of the programme. Here, the intersection between culture, history, and 'Native Seas' is navigated by actors who themselves are inherently tied to the region (Salesa, 2018). Reflecting on the events of the 2018 Pacific Islands Forum, Barbara Dreaver (2018) believed the Pacific Reset to be as much about influence in the

region as the cultural connections between New Zealand and the Pacific, somewhat mirroring the quote that opens this thesis:

> *For me the importance of the Pacific is much more cultural – we are part of this place and Pacific Islanders are part of us…It's who we collectively are. We give to each other and sustain each other with language, music, laughter. And in doing so we are all creating a unique culture that is different – the rest of the world can only wonder and admire us* (p. 1).

Employing the cultural capital established through generations of continued relations, is an integral part of the Pacific Reset to further ties and coordinating the efforts of other partners in the region (Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2018). Participants confirmed this, often considering the cultural and intangible components of the policy of primary importance.

Also apparent is New Zealand's receptiveness to the international optics of being a good donor. The continued drive for good publicity has been a feature of New Zealand development throughout various iterations of engagement in the Pacific. The Pacific Reset is seen to incorporate earlier neostructural ideas of ownership and alignment behind partner country development priorities, and emphasises a targeting of activities in good governance and democracy promotion (Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2018), but is explicit in dispelling notions of disengagement:

> *New Zealand's engagement in the Pacific is non-discretionary: we do not have the option of disengaging politically or walking away from Pacific development relationships* (para. 4).

The Pacific Reset prioritises the principles of engagement which govern New Zealand Government interaction in the region. Supporting regionalism, measuring deliverables against regional and SDGs defined indicators, and engaging in high-level dialogue with partners, the face of the Pacific Reset

aligns with its principles of engagement, but how this translates into supporting policy is currently unclear, with communication to key stakeholders deemed ineffective (Killen, 2018; McDowall, 2019).

8.1.3 Summarising Remarks

The personalities and styles of engagement involved in communicating New Zealand development policy are important considerations in the framing of the Pacific Reset. Prime Minister Ardern took an active role in setting and communicating the Pacific Reset, where Minister McCully had assumed responsibility for New Zealand development policy during his tenure. This impacted development activities differently, with the 2017 change of government catalysing a boost in morale in the development sector and the creation of a collaborative space. Rhetorically, there has been a shift from viewing connections in the region as bound by aid to that of mature political relationships.

The Pacific Reset is understood to be a response, at the highest political level, to the maturity and confidence of Pacific partners to determine their own development trajectory, seeing the use of 'leadership diplomacy' to communicate and engage with partners in the region. Participants were sceptical about the translation into practice, outside of the updated funding mechanisms within MFAT. However, the importance of meaningful engagement with partners in the region to create space for a recognition of sovereignty, cannot be understated, nor can the increase of funding for development activities.

8.2   Policy Change and Path Dependence in the Pacific Reset

A majority of participants questioned the Pacific Reset being a policy innovation, with a majority concluding that it was, in parts, an extension of previously existing development policy. Viewed within the Critical Realist epistemology that underpins this research, path dependence in New Zealand

development policy is discussed as a factor in determining the causal mechanisms, structures, and operating environment of the Pacific Reset.

Participants expressed an aversion to abrupt and sweeping changes in the development sector, and that a change of government would not impact their operating environment, mirroring Ian Greener's (2002) view of institutions as being 'sticky'. The interactions between different development actors contribute to the self-reinforcing of institutional arrangements, ultimately raising the costs of changing them (Pierson, 2000; Prado & Trebilcock, 2009). The prolonged interaction of actors within a defined operating environment serves to further entrench structures, making large-scale policy innovation or reform increasingly difficult.

The origins of the operating environment of the Pacific Reset can be analysed with path dependence and policy networks introduced in Chapter Four. The institutional changes that occurred under the Sixth National Government are seen to endure within the Pacific Reset today. This is evident in the slightly altered shared prosperity mandate, and the associated institutional architecture.

8.2.1 Operating Environment of the New Zealand Aid Programme

Analysing the operating environment of recent iterations of the New Zealand Aid Programme offers clues as to that of the Pacific Reset. Thought of as drawing from typically-neostructural development thinking, the Pacific Reset is, in part, informed from NZAID under the Fifth Labour Government. The poverty alleviation-focused mandate was received well in ministerial and peer reviews (OECD, 2005; Waring, 2005), and with participants of this research; as Participant E said, the period was *the golden era of development*. Despite this favourable view of NZAID in retrospect, the National Party communicated concerns of inefficiency and failure in the programme, expressing a desire to change its operating environment (McCully et al., 2007).

Here, changes were implemented which set the institutional path that informed the Pacific Reset. Praising the alignment and obligation to international arrangements, an audit (Brady, 2008) found that NZAIDs control environment, management, and contracting systems required remedy (Cabinet Office, 2009b, para. 6). This created the space for institutional change, to 'mitigate accountability risks' and reduce 'high transaction costs', increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the ministry at large (Cabinet Office, 2009d). The reintegration of NZAID into MFAT as an operational division of the International Development Group (Cabinet Office, 2009c; McCully, 2009). This saw a raft of changes to funding arrangements (see Openko, 2013). Competitive funding mechanisms, decreasing real values of aid monies to NGOs, and the general side-lining of NGO voices during the restructuring of NZAID were all cited as changes that negatively impacted the scope of development efforts in the Pacific (Challies et al., 2011). This was viewed by participants as continuing under the Pacific Reset, with relations and structures as persisting, despite changes:

> *Even when you fold the aid programmes into the foreign ministry you've got continuing relations and projects and it's not necessarily that easy to change things over.* – Participant C

Referencing the path dependence of policy, this response aligns with the notion of 'sticky' institutions. There exists a contradiction between the resilience of institutions to major change, as alluded to by Participant C, and the agency of actors in implementing change, as presented by the thought around Critical Junctures.

8.2.2   The Global Financial Crisis as a Critical Juncture

With Minister McCully considered the driving force behind the institutional changes in New Zealand development assistance in the early-

2010s, participants commented on his management style. Participant E reflected on the top-down formulation of policy:

After nine years of a National Government that had a very strong ideology around development and development assistance, driven by Murray McCully. Who by the way is not a development practitioner or thinker and has his own way of seeing the world. He drove the agenda for many years.

This is an exercise in the importance of actors in facilitating institutional change. Greener's (2002) belief of institutions being resistant to change is somewhat surmounted by individuals who drive change. Spratt (2017) classified Minister McCully as 'entrepreneurial' in driving change in the development sector amidst criticism. The refocusing of thematic priorities towards supporting economic development (Cabinet Office, 2009b), and re-engineering the institutional architecture of development assistance to support that, was led by a minister who expressed a desire to take a hands-on approach to managing the aid programme, away from 'development experts' (McCully, 2009). Viewed from the Critical Junctures framework offered by Scott Page (2006), and Giovanni Capoccia and Daniel Kelemen (2007), the actions of Minister McCully in changing the aid programme, were heightened by the GFC, possibly due to the exodus of development policy personnel identified by Participants C and E. This allowed Minister McCully, in a short period of time, to shift its focus towards sustainable economic development, creating a de facto feedback loop in the New Zealand economy via the contracting of domestic companies to undertake development activities in the region. Exemplifying the 'shared prosperity' approach to development in the retroliberal aid regime, this impacted the framing of the Pacific Reset, with a continued focus on shared prosperity (Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2018, sec. 6).

Recalling the definition provided by Capoccia and Kelemen (2007, p. 348), Critical Junctures are *"relatively short periods of time during which there is a*

substantially heightened probability that agents' choices will affect the outcome of interest". Participant E described the time spanning the Sixth National Government as impacting the framing of the Pacific Reset today:

> *The fact that it's been folded back in again now, and with all the disruption of the separation and the refolding, I don't think there is a lot of appetite for separating it out again. It can't just go back and forward. So the idea now is that we must work within the confines of what we've got.*

The difficulty in reversing the development policy of the previous government stems, in part, from the lack of appetite in the community for sweeping change. Participant C expressed a view that aid effectiveness decreased as a result of the institutional changes brought about under the previous government. This is mirrored by the results published in a 2015 stakeholder survey of New Zealand development assistance (Wood & Burkot, 2016), which documents negative perceptions of decision-making speed in the ministry (p. 27). Here, nearly three-quarters of respondents thought a sectoral focus on economic development was 'too much' (p. 17), reinforcing the argument that little has changed structurally from 2015 to the present day, with the Pacific Reset being a meld of rhetorical shift and policy continuity. Critical Junctures and path dependence in policy consider a degree of lock-in to the status quo, even if operating at sub-optimal performance (Page, 2006; Pierson, 2000).

8.2.3   Path Dependence across Time

Path dependence implies a continuity of policy, which can be seen to bridge the Pacific Reset and previous programmes of aid delivery in New Zealand. Participants were aware of the Strategic International Development Fund (SIDF) and the review of the funding structures (see McGillivray et al., 2018), both initiated under the previous government. Both endured the change of government and were expanded upon under the Pacific Reset. This implies a

degree of bipartisan support for the general direction of NZODA. Although divergent in a few areas, the focus on sustainable economic development in the Pacific is evident, as witnessed in the framing of strategic documents (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2017, 2018b) crafted under the previous government, and operational under the current government. Viewing such findings from a Critical Realist lens, the structures reformed during the Sixth National Government persist under the Pacific Reset, dictating the interactions between development actors.

Participant H was aware of high-level attempts to revisit practices typical of the neostructural aid regime. They saw a desire within government to progress towards higher-level modalities, ensure the untying of aid, and place greater trust in NGOs and partner countries. However, Participant H was aware that a blanket reversion to neostructural ideas was difficult, with the Pacific Reset being heavily underpinned by previously established financing arrangements and reporting requirements. They also touched on the continuity of policy in NZODA, and how the changes to the provision and focus of NZODA were significant, defined by the reality of development interactions. The retroliberal aid regime saw a shift towards project-based modalities (Murray & Overton, 2016a), but as Participant D identified, higher level modalities such as GBS were still employed under Minister McCully's management.

The belief that both high and lower level modalities would remain within the Pacific Reset follows this logic, and advances the point that current development policy is both historically informed and a determinant of future policy. The persistence of higher-level modalities in NZODA over time exemplifies this. Banks et al. (2012), in discussing the creation of NZAID, saw the adoption of the MDGs and the Paris Principles precipitate a transition to direct budget support for governments through the intermediate modality of SWaps. This translates through to the Pacific Reset as the desire to progress

beyond the sustainable economic development focus on trade and output sectors of economies to higher level modalities in health and education. As Overton (2009) discusses, direct assistance has featured heavily in New Zealand's engagement with the Pacific, in several forms:

> *'Aid' did not feature as part of the colonial relationship. Rather, expenditure by New Zealand in the region to support its administration and, increasingly after 1945, to provide basic health, education and infrastructure was seen as a part of the country's responsibilities as a colonial power* (pp. 3-4).

As thematic priorities in NZODA shifted during extended interaction with the Pacific, higher level administration support, and later GBS, persisted, regardless of aid regime or political persuasion. The Pacific Reset is heavily informed by previous relations with the region with the elevation of bilateral agreements—such as the Treaty of Friendship with Samoa—with partners in the region (Adams, 2018). Although framed as a 'Pacific-wide' policy, relations with the Realm Territories and Samoa, see Polynesia being considered the chief focus of NZODA. This translates into Polynesian countries forecasted to receive 56 percent ($471.14 million) of the listed Pacific Island country allocations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2018a). It is interesting to note that Realm Territories are forecasted to receive 56 percent ($263.29 million) of that amount. Given that historical relationships endure, the Pacific Reset can be seen as a chiefly Polynesian policy, convergent with the reestablishment of New Zealand's sphere of influence in the region.

8.2.4   Policy Networks and the Pacific Reset

The policy networks that existed in the development sector have also influenced development policy in New Zealand. The Pacific Reset is an example of a positive feedback loop in policy change, with the interdependencies between government and private actors evident in the

change. The resource dependencies between clusters of actors that Rhodes and Marsh (1992) discuss are seen in the interactions of the Pacific Reset.

The changes to funding arrangements that occurred with the 2012 institutional restructure left civil society actors with an increasingly contested space to provide development activities. This environment saw participants find a lot of activities important to them were no longer funding priorities. This led many NGOs to decrease their activities, re-prioritising to mirror thematic priorities of the Aid Programme. However, they still worked towards actively changing development best practice. This comes through in the Pacific Reset, with several actors having called for a change to the structure of NZODA (Powles & Powles, 2017). However, the structures that govern funding are still contestable and ultimately governed by investment and thematic priorities established under the previous government (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2015). It is within this that there is a high degree of policy continuity between governments, with policy networks serving to bring about change after being catalysed to do so.

The contribution of several actors in ideating the Pacific Reset illustrates the interconnectedness of policy networks, and their multi-level reach. Recalling Participant E's belief of working within established confines in the development sector, and the finding that participants attached to NGOs were already working within the new parameters of the Pacific Reset, civil society actors were influential in activating the rhetoric of the Pacific Reset.

8.2.5 Summary

Analysing and discussing the causal mechanisms and structures that actors operate within uncovered the path dependence in development policy. The structures remain largely unchanged, despite updates to rhetoric and focus areas for the aid programme. New Zealand development policy was found to be easily altered during events classified as Critical Junctures by individuals

amidst resistance. However, the legacy of changes dilute over time due to institutional resistance. Given the geography of New Zealand, the Pacific and large Polynesian focus will remain, together with the largely unchanged modalities. This has illustrated similarities to the colonial administration era of assistance in Chapter Five, and how New Zealand development assistance in the region has remained largely the same.

8.3 Geopolitics, Relations, and Development

New Zealand has an enduring relationship with the immediate Pacific region, informed by historic cultural, political, and economic interactions. Geopolitical tides have impacted the framing of development assistance in the past. This section discusses, within a retroliberal lens, the effect geopolitical considerations are perceived to have on the framing of the Pacific Reset, potential impacts on bilateral development relationships in the region, and alignment with global discourse on the nexus between geopolitics and development.

8.3.1 Geopolitical Considerations Behind the Pacific Reset

The Pacific Reset, and development more broadly, is influenced by a host of exogenous factors. Participants of this research focused on Chinese development activity in the region as the chief geopolitical driver of the Pacific Reset. This finding was not surprising, as commentators (O'Sullivan, 2018; Steff, 2018; Wyeth, 2019) questioned the overt mention of geopolitics, and China's presence in the Pacific, early after the announcement of the Pacific Reset.

China is notably absent from the *New Zealand in the Pacific* cabinet paper (2018). Although unconfirmed, this may have been obscured in the sections withheld under the Official Information Act, or deliberately categorised as an 'other' or 'non-traditional' partner. The surrounding sections (around 15 and 26) of the cabinet paper feature rhetoric centred on overt national security

considerations and preserving New Zealand influence in the contested space of the Pacific:

> *How do we influence Pacific Island countries to pursue their social and economic objectives in a way that promotes our values and mitigates the risks posed by partners with quite different value sets?*
>
> (Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2018, para. 14).

One can deduce that engagement with China in the region is important in the framing of the Pacific Reset. Other government departments echo this, acknowledging Chinese engagement in the region:

> *China has set an alternative model of development – a liberalising economy absent liberal democracy – challenging conventional wisdom in the West that the two go hand-in-hand. China's trade relationships and economic power have grown significantly, enabling it to pursue its interests with much greater confidence and with a wide array of political and economic levers.*
>
> (Ministry of Defence, 2018, para. 80).

The expansion of the Chinese-led *One Belt, One Road* initiative offers a convincing motivator of the Pacific Reset. The inclusion of Pacific Island countries, like Papua New Guinea, focuses on financing hard infrastructure projects to connect Chinese trade with the world has increased (Wyeth, 2019). Off the record conversations reinforce such anxieties, with Minister Peters having expressed regret with the Sixth National Government's eagerness to partner with the *One Belt, One Road* initiative and maritime silk road (Dziedzic, 2018). The narrative of strategic anxiety was shared by participants and commentators alike as a chief motivation of the Pacific Reset and its continued focus on hard infrastructure—understandable given the geopolitical climate today. However, there exists a disparity between pledged and actual development spending by the Chinese in the Pacific, believed to be conflated in

coverage of aid and geopolitics in the region (Wood, 2019), and is even downplayed by Pacific Island countries (Whiting, 2019).

This convergence of strategic interest in the region is also seen with other donors reengaging or stepping up their presence in the region. The U.S., U.K., Australia, and New Zealand have all made efforts to increase their presence in the Pacific, all underpinned by rhetoric connoting the restating of relationships and construction of partnerships (Newton Cain & Powles, 2018; Powles & Powles, 2018). The Pacific Reset aligns with the Australian Pacific 'Step-Up' in the region which is primarily focused on infrastructure projects in Melanesia (Adamson, 2018). Although analysing Australian rhetoric surrounding Chinese development activity in the Pacific is outside the scope of this research, it is similar to that seen from New Zealand. The 'Step-Up' has a dedicated focus on constructing infrastructure, such as communications equipment and energy generation plants, in Melanesia (Adamson, 2018). This bears a remarkable resemblance to the retroliberal aid regime and the accepted thinking on the proximity of politically unstable countries in their 'arc of instability' (Wallis, 2015). Having similarly aligned geopolitical objectives since the 1945 Canberra Pact, New Zealand's continued infrastructural focus in Melanesia within the Pacific Reset is unsurprising.

Modernising the components of measurable ODA to include peace and security efforts, refugee resettlement, and development grants (OECD, 2019), creates a space for greater alignment between defence, foreign, and development policy, as seen under the retroliberal aid regime. Development activities are affected as greater collaboration is facilitated between MFAT, the New Zealand Defence Force, and wider government actors under the Pacific Reset. The inclusion of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) activities in ODA and regional frameworks, are indicative of the shift in aid priorities in the region (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2018a, 2018b). This

affects development activities through interdepartmental operational efficiency and quick responses to crises in the region (Killen, 2018).

This change has, in part, been at the behest of Pacific Island countries themselves. The Pacific Reset even acknowledges the maturity of the diplomatic relations Pacific Island countries are engaged in. Courting donors on their own terms, and proactively translating global changes in best practice (Leslie & Wild, 2018), sees the Pacific Reset as a reaction to the agency and realised sovereignty of Pacific Island countries (hence the perceived loss of influence), and not China specifically. This awareness offers an explanation for the inclusion of climate change focused and high-level engagement mechanisms in development policy.

Although couched in geopolitical discourses, the rhetoric of the Pacific Reset appears softer than the sustainable economic growth through infrastructure projects advanced by previous governments. Largely couched in notions of friendship, understanding and wellbeing, the explicit consideration of declining relative power and the contested strategic environment lend considerable weight to the otherwise lofty programme. One can infer two concurrent discourses from the strands of the Pacific Reset in analysing its duality.

The first strand is idealistic, one coloured by notions of New Zealand's place in the 'shared Pacific destiny', in tune with the developmental ebbs and flows of its neighbours. Diplomatic and development efforts, guided by refreshed principles, seek to be respectful of sovereignty while retaining the stalwart areas of New Zealand's development programme considered to encompass nimble, coherent responses to disasters, and the promotion of good governance and the rule of law (Peters, 2018a). The second strand centres on building diplomatic presence and capacity, with veiled, sharper discourse. The perception of New Zealand's waning influence in the region has resulted in a

strategic anxiety towards non-traditional regional partners. The interplay between these two strands see the Pacific Reset as a broad development policy initiative that achieves foreign policy objectives, confirming the concerns of participants in Chapter Seven.

8.3.2   Aid as a Tool of Prevention

Tangential to such discussions on geopolitical considerations, participants spoke of the Pacific Reset as an example of the use of aid as a tool of prevention. Consider the Papua New Guinea-hosted 2018 APEC summit, where, behind the grand pronouncements of cooperation and economic growth, the host nation courted the main regional donors for national public works projects, such as the Electrification Partnership. Announced at the Summit, Japan, the U.S., New Zealand, and Australia signed an agreement to electrify 70 percent of the country (McLeod, 2019), a high profile move to coordinate infrastructure in the face of other projects such as the Chinese-led business hub in Port Moresby (Whiting, 2019). Participant C viewed this as a geopolitically motivated preventative tool to discourage Pacific Island countries from further entrenching development links with China:

> *Running the risk of a Cold War situation in which aid is given simply to keep countries out of the Chinese pocket. I don't think that will crowd out all of the aid New Zealand gives, but if you look at the PNG electrification project which is seemingly ill-conceived, one can presume that one of the decisions to engage with that was the fact the China was spending up on infrastructure in PNG and New Zealand, Australia, the United States, and the Asian Development Bank wanted to counter that.*

Participants also touched on the prevention of greater migrant flows to New Zealand from the Pacific. Allocating funding to target the thematic priorities outlined in the previous chapter, the Pacific Reset is seen as an exercise in the prevention of climate change, health care, and labour crises.

Minister Peters' (2018b) use of medical turns-of-phrase around the idea of 'prevention' in the pre-budget announcement saw parts of the rhetoric surrounding the Pacific Reset become rather clinical, saying that *"prevention saves lives"* (p. 1). In referencing the RAMSI mission, Minister Peters evaluated it as an *"ambulance at the bottom of the cliff"* (p. 1), communicating the need for New Zealand to increase its efforts in the region to mitigate further such threats to regional security. Thematic priorities, outlined in Chapter Five, included a focus on governance structures, climate change mitigation, and health, all of which target increasing state capacity through decreasing burdens on funding, with an intention to not need the proverbial ambulance in the future:

> *Prevention saves money. Preventative health strategies save far more taxpayer health dollars downstream by tackling health problems early. In the same way, development assistance helps to maintain a safer and more prosperous New Zealand over time, saving money that would otherwise be required in future defence budgets or in border control* (Peters, 2018b, p. 1).

It is worth noting that viewing the Pacific Reset as a preventative development strategy is fraught with nuances concerning the ownership of, and place of regional partners in implementing activities. It is, however, not a new concept in development practice. Participant F referenced the utilisation of aid as a preventative measure as a contradiction in terms:

> *It's intriguing these countries have to grow sustainable economies and then they can look after themselves where we don't have to keep giving them aid and they will stay over there and not come here.*

Preventing threats to national security through development activities has led to the proliferation of literature on the security-development nexus and peacebuilding (see Chandler, 2007; Franke, 2006; Knight, 2008), and can be seen to filter through in the discourse surrounding New Zealand Defence Force involvement in aligning with the Pacific Reset in the post-RAMSI Pacific. This

rhetoric is, however, heavily underpinned by advancing New Zealand's interests in the region behind the veil of the 'principles of engagement'.

8.3.3 New Zealand's Relations in the Pacific

The geopolitical reality in the Pacific warrants a discussion of how relations in the region both frame and impact New Zealand development activities, given New Zealand has progressed from colonial interloper to significant regional donor.

Participants communicated the importance of relationships and their being a major factor underpinning the Pacific Reset. New Zealand development policy in the Pacific can be seen as attempting to be broad, however bilateral relations in the region continue to be defined by sub-regional groupings, mainly between Polynesia and the Realm Territories, and Melanesia. Chapter Six maps this dichotomy in development focus, which can be seen to persist in the Pacific Reset today. An OIA request (Adams, 2018) shows to the internal MFAT strategies for 10 Pacific Island countries throughout Polynesia and Melanesia. A list of strategic priorities show a focus on the bilateral relationships and partnerships in six of the 10 countries, mainly in Polynesia, and economic growth, resilience, and integration in seven of the 10 listed countries. This is evocative of Overton's (2009) 'former'/'continuing' categorisation of New Zealand's relations in the region, with a deepening relationship with the 'continuing' Realm Territories in Polynesia, and elevation of treaties of friendships an explicit priority in the Pacific Reset (Adams, 2018; Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee, 2018, paras 18–19). This translates into a continuing majority of Pacific bilateral funding being allocated to Polynesian countries, and an increase in high-level visits within the Realm. These sentiments, however, are not new. An earlier evaluation of the aid programmes of the Realm Territories and Samoa (Carpenter, 2015) concludes the relations were *very strong and enduring* (p. 3) and progressing away from a

'donor-recipient' relationship. The relationship refocus may not be as new as portrayed in rhetoric surrounding the Pacific Reset, but is rather an exercise in deepening the systems largely defined by the colonial administration outlined in Chapter Five. Deepening constitutional ties through implementing pension portability and climate financing commitments are overlaid with rhetoric surrounding the progression to mature political relationships as development indicators improve in closely linked partners.

Economic priorities are not surprising given the existing focus on sustainable economic development. These internal strategic priorities, when translated into practice, will inevitably frame and guide the allocation of funding to activities. They also illustrate the concern of some participants regarding the focus of the Pacific Reset towards Polynesian countries. Changing Pasifika demographics in New Zealand, Ministers of mainly Polynesian-descent, and constitutional obligations in the sub-region see the Pacific Reset being more of a Polynesian Refocus in reality.

The Pacific Reset includes repeated mentions of supporting regionalism, breaking from the averse rhetoric seen under the Sixth National Government and their belief that "*these giant process-driven bureaucracies generally deliver a below-average quality of service to the poorer countries of the world, especially those in our region*" (McCully, 2017, p. 1). Such antipathy towards regional institutions and multilateral institutions was found to not translate into a reduction of funding (Spratt & Wood, 2018). This rhetoric contradicted the investment into regional frameworks by Pacific Island countries through the translation of globally set initiatives, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, into regional plans of action, like the Blue Pacific Agenda. Pacific leadership in the ownership of development was spoken to by Participant D:

> *The Pacific has really embraced the whole development effectiveness agenda and has its own development effectiveness principles and works together effectively.*

From what I see in the Pacific, there is definitely a lot of leadership and ownership in the way aid is operationalised.

Early efforts to support regionalism have risen from the Pacific Reset, and aligned behind country-defined priorities (Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee, 2018; New Zealand Treasury, 2019). The 'leadership diplomacy' and renewed sense of high-level engagement in multilateral institutions mirrors the obligations set under the 2005 Paris Principles, but is not without criticism. Much like the criticisms of Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, neo-colonial sentiments are perceived to exist in the attitudes of metropolitan members of regional institutions, and the development activities in the Pacific (Tahana, 2019). The ability of Pacific Island countries to take leadership of development initiatives, both nationally and regionally, illustrates the exertion of sovereignty.

Greater cooperation with the Australian Pacific 'Step-Up' continues the alignment of bilateral objectives in the region seen since the 1945 Canberra Pact. Although Australian efforts seem to be concentrated in Melanesia, pension portability within Realm Territories, and increased focus on children's welfare, are examples of the advancement of the Pacific Reset (Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee, 2018, sec. 23), however, the greatest impact to development activities is the greater cohesion between diverse actors, framed within 'leadership diplomacy'.

8.4   Concluding Remarks

It is clear the Pacific Reset can be analysed through the lenses of several disciplines. This required a broad discussion, focused through the findings of this research, conducted to understand the empirical intersection between the actors involved, and the geopolitical considerations present in Pacific development policy.

A range of factors are found to influence New Zealand development assistance in the Pacific. This chapter has drawn on the findings documented in Chapter Seven, along with public policy, history, and security studies contributing to the discourses in development surrounding the Pacific Reset. In referencing the key findings, two research questions were discussed.

Participants' thoughts on the Pacific Reset converged on maintaining New Zealand's geopolitical influence in the Pacific. Aware of the actors involved in communicating the Pacific Reset, participants emphasised the importance of style of engagement with partners in the region, distinguishing between the personalities and policies that governed recent New Zealand development assistance. In discussing this finding, the level of engagement from the Prime Minister in development policy differed, impacting the style of engagement of the Minister responsible for the development programme. The active involvement of Prime Minister Ardern in communicating the Pacific Reset not only guided the direction of the policy, but offered a check against the capacity of Minister Peters. Conversely, the ability of Minister McCully to usher in change was largely due to the delegation of development policy to him by Prime Minister Key. The motivations of the Pacific Reset are thus moderated by several actors, but are ultimately in service of political means—despite the principles of engagement signalling a different aim.

Referencing the historical relations New Zealand has had with the Pacific to discuss the motivations of the Pacific Reset saw it as more than just a preventative geopolitical measure. It is underpinned by the realisation of Pacific Island leaders' ability to exercise sovereignty and agency in determining development trajectories, seeing the Pacific Reset as reactionary. Through a reaffirmation of the ties between New Zealand and the Pacific, which overlay the traditional 'Native Seas' of networks, the Pacific Reset is motivated by a mix of political expediency and geopolitical necessity, catalysed by the 2017 change of government.

However, the Pacific Reset is not new or transformational. In discussing its genesis and underlying causal structures it was found that the relationships between development actors, programme of aid modalities, and rhetoric of the Pacific Reset were all descendent from previous thinking on New Zealand's relationship with the region. Some actors were already operating within the frame of the Pacific Reset, with the programme a welcome update of development thinking in New Zealand.

Participants reflected positively on previous models of development, namely that embodied by neostructuralism, while viewing the changes towards 'sustainable economic development' negatively, and progressed the notion of a dichotomy between the development policies of the Sixth National and Labour Governments. However, the path dependence of development policy illustrates the endurance of older policies and established structures that both inform and entrench the networks that development actors navigate. The Pacific Reset is thus the current iteration of NZODA in the Pacific, constructed using the mechanisms created in the restructuring post-GFC, and updated using the resurgence in neostructural thinking, increased funding, and softer rhetoric of the change in government, all veiled by explicit geopolitical considerations and the fusing of foreign and development policy. The interplay between these facets has resulted in the increase in 'leadership diplomacy' and attempts to increase collaboration in the development sector, with early signs of success. However, scepticism remains regarding how this will further translate into development practice.

One can infer that some motivations and determinants of the Pacific Reset converge in a retroliberal frame of analysis. This is discussed in the next chapter, viewing the main findings of the Pacific Reset within the conceptual framework offered by retroliberalism.

The Pacific Reset—A Retroliberal Turn?

The Pacific Reset has a multi-causal and relational nature that sees it informed by New Zealand's history of development assistance in the Pacific, development best-practice, relationships, and even political whim. Building on the findings of this research, this chapter discusses the Pacific Reset through the lens offered by retroliberalism.

To facilitate discussion, this chapter is divided into two sections. The first evaluates the Pacific Reset with established thinking on retroliberalism. This section discusses the alignment of the Pacific Reset through the application of the retroliberal manual developed by Warwick Murray and John Overton (2016a), together with a direct comparison between the Pacific Reset and the main tenets of the aid regime. The second section analyses the components of the Pacific Reset and associated rhetoric using the conceptual basis of retroliberalism, to discuss the space in development theory the Pacific Reset occupies. The two sections seek to answer the third question of this research:

How does a retroliberal analysis help interpret the Pacific Reset?

The Pacific Reset can be seen to incorporate globally set initiatives, geostrategic considerations, and recognition of the agency of Pasifika actors. The translation of such considerations into practice, and across actors, is discussed in the previous chapter, and assists in interpreting of the Pacific Reset. This discussion is undertaken to advance the notion that the Pacific Reset is, in fact, not an entirely new policy creation, rather an amalgamation of historically informed causal mechanisms.

9.1   Retroliberalism and the Pacific Reset

Rahm Emanuel, former White House chief of staff, once said "[…]*you never want serious crisis to go to waste*" (2008, minute 0.04). The economic crisis

that came with the GFC, gave policy makers the space to take advantage of the winds of change, and usher in changes to the focus of development spending from Global North countries. Chapter Three states the literature on retroliberalism and the broader changes in global development during this time, with a focus on the tying of foreign and development policy together. The changes in development policy quickly changed the rationale behind the provision of ODA, almost as if it were riding in the wake of the GFC.

The interaction between the public and private sectors during the early 2010s was influenced, in part, by the GFC, and coincided with a global political swing to the right. This lead to a 'counter-intuitive pattern' of right-leaning Global North governments implementing austerity measures and providing Keynesian assistance to failing institutions, while concurrently seeing real increases to ODA budgets (Murray & Overton, 2016a). In the development sector, this saw an increase in rhetoric around 'shared prosperity' where private companies were actors in delivering development objectives in the national interest (Mawdsley et al., 2017). Sectors of comparative advantage were identified and ODA budgets funnelled to domestic companies to implement projects of strategic priority (Mawdsley et al., 2017). This research adopts retroliberalism, as presented here, and in Chapter Five, as a conceptual framework. The Pacific Reset is interpreted through this frame and guides the following discussion.

9.1.1 The Retroliberal Manual

The pace at which changes to the development sector in New Zealand and other Global North donors occurred following the GFC, led Murray and Overton (2016) to distil the commonalities in the changes to development spending in a manual. Their retroliberal manual is listed as thus:

- *Rapid implementation of policy changes,*
- *Institutional restructuring of development programmes,*

- *Disengagement from civil society,*

- *Changing the mission of aid,*

- *Explicit donor self-interest,*

- *Promoting the private sector,*

- *Changing aid modalities, and*

- *The new modernization*

(Murray & Overton, 2016a, p. 251).

This offers a schematic of implementation of the aid regime. In analysing whether retroliberalism can interpret the Pacific Reset, it is interesting to note that the Pacific Reset can be seen to align loosely to a few points, yet diverge from others in the above manual.

The momentum behind the Pacific Reset, catalysed with the change of government in 2017, offered the space to rapidly implement—or at the very least action—the programme. The short timeline of two years to increase capacity, outlined in Chapter Two, and tight deadlines in reporting progress to Cabinet (Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2018; Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee, 2018), offers an insight into the pace of the programme and rapid implementation of changes to development policy. Unlike the restructuring of aid programmes in the Global North following the GFC, the Pacific Reset was defined, in part, by the path dependence of policy, and general aversion to wide-scale institutional changes (see Chapters Six and Seven). Although funding structures were updated, capacity constructed, and relationships reframed, the Pacific Reset, diverges from the prescribed manual somewhat. The institutional architecture to support the Pacific Reset augments the structures that were largely established from previous governments and have not resulted in institutional change comparable to that witnessed under the Sixth National Government.

Similarly divergent was the rhetoric surrounding engagement with civil society actors. The shift towards retroliberalism was partially defined by the changing funding arrangements to civil society actors who were financially pushed into silence and compliance, supporting renewed thematic priorities (Challies et al., 2011; McGregor et al., 2013; Murray & Overton, 2016a). This was recalled by Participant E:

> *We had to pitch it to them in a competitive fund that may or may not get chosen. So we have tended to keep those priorities for us off to the side, and we've been told what would help MFAT meet their priorities.*

Overton and Murray (2016) identify the efficacy of civil society actors in the development process and their continued cohabitation of the development space throughout aid regimes. However, the treating of them as an explicit means to an end in progressing development outcomes of national interest was somewhat lessened under the Pacific Reset. Although the interaction between the government and civil society is framed by the maintenance of influence in the region, Minister Peters and the current government shifted the rhetoric of the relationship towards more collaborative and value added notions. Here, there is a reengagement with the civil society, acknowledging their extensive networks and knowledge in the Pacific (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2019; Peters, 2018d). However, participants were unsure of real increases in funding arrangements outside of the rebranded financial mechanisms outlined in Chapter Two. Financial mechanisms falling under the 'Partnering for Impact' umbrella are still heavily underpinned by thematic priorities set by MFAT and are competitive, but adopt longer-term programmatic approaches that were called for by both participants of this research and the wider development community (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2019). It would seem that the divergences in the manual at this stage are slight and are awaiting further translation into development practice to fully realise their impact on the relationship with civil society actors.

The alignment of the Pacific Reset with the remaining points of the retroliberal manual is unambiguous. Participant C, in identifying the similar, if not the same, mission of aid resulting from continuing strategic documents, shows the core mission of the Pacific Reset as a continuation of that established by the Sixth National Government. Central to previous policy change was a focusing of development assistance in areas where New Zealand holds a comparative advantage. References to New Zealand's comparative advantage are found in previous government policy documents and statements focusing on the capacity to build and maintain bilateral field relationships, and to use expertise in Iwi Māori development models (Grossman & Lees, 2001, para. 3.5.4). Development of later aid policy extended these capacities to foster sustainable economic development benefiting from specialisations in agriculture, fisheries, renewable energy, tourism, education, law, and justice (New Zealand Aid Programme, 2011). The change from poverty alleviation to sustainable economic development was considered by participants of this research to be top-down, initiated by Minister McCully, involving individuals from the private sector and government. These actors were connected by the belief that countries develop first and foremost through the growth of their private sector, and the benefits of this will spread across an economy and foster social progress (Spratt, 2017). In the absence of updated strategic documents that guide development within MFAT, this discourse is seen to continue to inform the Pacific Reset and alignment with elements of the retroliberal manual.

Regarding explicit self-interest, the framing of the Pacific Reset is up-front in tying development activities to national interest, considering the programme to *"secure and advance our interests"* (Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee, 2018, para. 2). The alignment of defence and wider government policy with the Pacific Reset, and the evaluation of the programme as a *"true NZ Inc enterprise"* (Cabinet External Relations and Security

Committee, 2018, para. 13), see it as a means to promote the interests of New Zealand in the region under a common narrative. On one hand, this is a continuation of the retroliberal trend of tying development activities to the national interest, as evidenced by the *"unique and substantial overlap between New Zealand's domestic and foreign policy."* (Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2018, para. 4). Given the prolonged engagement and ties New Zealand has in the Pacific, it is unsurprising that the two policy spheres converge. The motivators of the Pacific Reset, identified in Chapter Seven, somewhat bridge domestic and foreign policy with the alignment of wider government policy behind the Pacific Reset, a necessity due to the reverberating effects of these relationships through the country.

On a macro-level, this trend is tracked by several indices (Overseas Development Institute, 2019; Publish What You Find, 2018), showing the continuation of advancing national interest in development policy. New Zealand ranked middle-of-the-range in the Principled Aid Index (2019), low on international metrics of aid quantity, yet performed well on assessments of aid quality. When it came to addressing the critical development needs and vulnerabilities of partners, New Zealand ranked poorly, citing geopolitical considerations and national interest having crept into development provision (Overseas Development Institute, 2019). MFAT ranked poorly in the Aid Transparency Index, fourth-from-last, citing infrequent reporting and releasing of information to relevant parties, including to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (Publish What You Find, 2018). It should be noted that data for these indices was collected from 2015 onwards (2017 in the case of the Principled Aid Index). Although they do not show an up-to-date analysis of the Pacific Reset's impact on reporting and collaboration with partners, such indices align with the accepted thinking on retroliberalism. The recognition of a greater consideration of geopolitical discourses and the tying of national

interest to development show the established structures that will facilitate the Pacific Reset are retroliberal.

At the time of this research, it was too soon to gauge the input of the business community in the Pacific Reset, and whether the changes to activities and modalities will follow the retroliberal manual. However, if one looks at the balancing of inherited policies around sustainable economic development; the rhetoric portrayed through the 'principles of engagement'; and sectoral foci on health, governance and climate change mitigation; then private firms in undertaking development activities under the guise of the Pacific Reset is a continuation of the retroliberal manual. Such a sentiment is not new in New Zealand's business interaction with the Pacific and has been an integral part of the relationship (see Chapter Six).

9.1.2   Is the Pacific Reset Retroliberal?

The Pacific Reset does not align as coherently to the retroliberal manual as previous changes to the New Zealand Aid Programme do. With that being said, the Pacific Reset is convergent in several areas, namely the programme's rapid implementation, semi-transformational institutional restructuring, and explicit mention of donor interest. This ambiguity in whether the Pacific Reset is retroliberal, warranted further examination.

Figure 9.1 offers a comparison between the tenets of retroliberalism and the discourse detailing the Pacific Reset, facilitated by the analysis of the findings of this research. In distilling the main components of the aid regime and the Pacific Reset, a simple analysis of the programme's congruence with retroliberalism can be made.

FIGURE 9.1: Comparison between Retroliberalism and the Pacific Reset

	Retroliberalism	Pacific Reset
Guiding concern for aid allocation	• Sustainable economic growth • Shared prosperity	• Economic resilience • Shared prosperity
Thematic priorities	• Education (particularly tertiary and vocational training) • Hard infrastructure (ports, roads, energy generation) • Governance structures that support capital investment	• Education (expanded reach for extramural study) • Infrastructure (particularly energy generation, and infrastructure vulnerable to climate change) • Governance structures (particularly judiciary reform) • Health
Rhetoric and goals	• Rolling together of national interest and developmentalism • Focus on shared prosperity • Stimulate trade and investment through financing	• 'NZ Inc' or 'Whole of government' approach • Shared prosperity • Promote and preserve influence in the Pacific • Renewed principles of engagement with a focus on partnership and collective ambition
Aid modalities	• Semi-tied project-based • Education scholarships • Concessionary/soft loans • General Budget Support	• General Budget Support • Weakening of project-based • Sector wide approaches in critical infrastructure • Education scholarships • Funding to support regional institutions
Main geopolitical considerations	• The rise of Global Southern actors in aid • 'Securing the state' and state capacity building • Securing greater trade opportunities	• Growing contested strategic space in the Pacific • Chinese development efforts in the Pacific • Climate Change • National Security

Source: Authors' own

Many tenets of the Pacific Reset align with retroliberal thought, and in some sectors, this offers a chance to extend the analysis of the aid regime. Thematic priorities remain convergent, centring on the construction of critical infrastructure for growth. Although it is interesting to note that the Pacific Reset includes a focus on climate change mitigation, health, and governance sectors. Budget documents include measurable indicators for such activities under the Pacific Reset (see Boshier, 2019; *Vote Official Development Assistance,* 2018, pp. 145–147) – indicative of a gradual translation into development practice and are more typical of the development focus of the neostructural era. However, an element of project-based modalities remain, as a vestige of the retroliberal tendency to undertake projects in the national interest:

> *A number of new projects relating to infrastructure, health and education are being considered this triennium. If all of these were to proceed, they would contribute to around 10% of the total ODA allocation for the triennium* (Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee, 2019b, p. 8).

Modalities that disburse development under the Pacific Reset align with retroliberalism with the notable exception of concessionary loans. Participants A, C and D made strong cases for New Zealand to not use modalities encompassing loans and other returnable forms of development financing, speaking to the goodwill and positive optics New Zealand possesses in the region:

> *I think it will be a desperate day if they started going down that path, simply because there is too much credibility at stake.* – Participant A

Participants, in focusing on the continual use of GBS and expressing a desire to progress away from project-based aid towards a more sectoral focus, is comparable to previous sentiments on the Aid Programme. Banks et al. (2012), in describing the direction of NZAIDs mandate during the neostructural era, can be seen to echo the sentiments of participants of this research regarding the

direction of the Pacific Reset believing *"this new approach involved direct funding away from ad-hoc projects and towards broader budget support to specific development sectors"* (p. 177).

Congruent with retroliberalism, the use of education scholarships remains in the Pacific Reset. Education scholarships are framed to increase human capital for developing countries. But as Overton and Murray (2016) point out, they are a form of tied-aid that bond students to the donor country for their study and facilitate the spending of ODA in the host country in the form of fees and living costs. In short, a subsidy for domestic tuition providers from the ODA budget. It is interesting to note that although advocating for less returnable forms of aid, participants did not mention the use of education scholarships in development spending. This is not to say conditionalities are not present in the Pacific Reset. Process conditionalities that were prominent in the neoliberal and neostructural aid regimes are evident in the retroliberal era with development including stipulations for 'returns on investments', and 'increasing financial sector management' mechanisms. Conditionalities remain in the Pacific Reset with a renewed focus on increasing governance and judiciary capacity in the region to protect democracy, and a continued focus on fostering trade. This is underpinned by the indicators used to measure the Pacific Reset. The majority are globally defined through the SDGs and are primarily economic focused (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2018b, p. 24). Together with the yet-to-be-updated strategic documents with their focus on agriculture, I.T., and energy sectors (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2015; New Zealand Aid Programme, 2011), the Pacific Reset still aligns with the focus of development in the retroliberal aid regime.

Despite work being done to action parts of the Pacific Reset in bilateral terms, seen in the climate financing commitment, the programme at-large sees development being entrenched as a foreign policy tool. Rhetoric surrounding its announcement focused on national interest, drivers and grand

pronouncements, notably devoid of the development-speak typified by responses of participants of this research. In this regard, the Pacific Reset is an overt tying of foreign and defence policy in alignment with retroliberalism.

9.1.3 Retroliberalism in the World Today

Although this thesis localises the global development discourses that informed retroliberalism in New Zealand and the Pacific, no discussion about retroliberalism would be complete without a brief examination of current global development rhetoric.

Chapter Three touches on the many iterations of the post-neoliberal aid world development discourse, with retroliberalism offered as the current regime. Although much of the literature focuses on responses to the GFC and early 2010s, current rhetoric emanating from the Global North perpetuates this earlier discourse, entrenching retroliberal thought. The framing of ODA within the national interest sees it used as a tool in foreign policy, oft in the donor's interest (Gulrajani, 2017). The proliferation of new donors, explicit mention of national interest in development, and the shift from higher-level programmes to projects with private-public financing largely defines the current global aid environment (Gulrajani & Swiss, 2019; Overton et al., 2019).

Take the following statements from Former British Prime Minister, Theresa May (2018):

> *But I am also unashamed about the need to ensure that our aid programme works for the UK. So today I am committing that our development spending will not only combat extreme poverty but at the same time tackle global challenges and support our own national interest. This will ensure that our investment in aid benefits all, and is fully aligned with our wider national security priorities.*

And President of the United States of America, Donald Trump (2018):

We will examine what is working, what is not working, and whether the countries who receive our dollars and our protection also have our interests at heart. Moving forward, we are only going to give foreign aid to those who respect us and, frankly, are our friends. And we expect other countries to pay their fair share for the cost of their defense [sic].

Such remarks fall within the rhetoric typical of the retroliberal aid regime. In an overt tying of national interest to development, President Trump's remarks above can be viewed as the Nixon Doctrine reincarnate. Although focusing on the system of alliances and defence treaties of the Cold War, the focus of the Nixon Doctrine on shared burden of defence costs and preserving national interests are echoed by President Trump, who expressed more targeted criteria for aid delivery. Former Prime Minister May's remarks are reminiscent of retroliberalism as it is presented by Murray and Overton (2016). The mere statement of poverty alleviation as an objective with the foregrounding of national interest and shared prosperity in the context of UK-African trading relations lends evidence to the retroliberalism narrative (DFID, 2011, 2017; Mawdsley et al., 2017). In both cases, the structures that disburse development assistance are similar to New Zealand's, with larger foreign affairs departments and ministries assuming development portfolios, a trend that remains across the Global North (Gulrajani, 2017) and in retroliberalism (Murray & Overton, 2016a).

Closer to the New Zealand context, the structures and rhetoric pertaining to Pacific development from the Morrison Government in Australia, align with the retroliberal aid regime. Rhetoric signalling a competitive development environment in Melanesia, drives Australian infrastructure projects in the region (Packham, 2019). Geopolitical sentiments have existed in Australian development discourses, centring on security and instability, oft called the 'arc of instability' (Fry, 1997). The foregrounding of the contested nature of development in the region, evident in the 'Pacific Step-Up', has seen a shift in

development and financing towards critical infrastructure in similar sectors to Chinese projects and concessionary loans as identified by Participant C. Additionally the demotion of the Pacific Development portfolio to Assistant Minister of International Development and the Pacific, further aligns Australian development with that of retroliberalism. Together with greater cuts to the ODA budget, the removal of the portfolio from the front bench to an equivalent of parliamentary undersecretary in New Zealand, was ill thought of by commentators (Beldi, 2018). This not only illustrates the wider context of Australian development in the Pacific and its alignment with the retroliberal aid regime, but offers a stark comparison to the divergence of the Pacific Reset to Global North partners. This is especially salient with the diverse number of New Donor Countries and use of lower-level modalities that align with their use by the Global North (Gulrajani & Swiss, 2019), and more generally in the retroliberal aid regime.

Analysing the Pacific Reset in this global context illustrates the prominence of global trends in development that align with retroliberalism, and the divergence of the Pacific Reset from such trends. National interest, trade, and defence rhetoric in development is evident in the Pacific Reset, but the strong project-based element is diminished as higher modalities are considered. The shift towards a development relationship governed by the Pacific Reset 'principles of engagement' is an outlier in global development governed by 'Aid for Trade' (OECD & World Trade Organization, 2019) and prominence of finance and security in aid. Even NZODA funding mechanisms seem less retroliberal (even when compared to previous development policy in New Zealand). The partnerships focus in funding development activities, outlined in Chapter Two, does not mention the concessionary loans, viability gap funding or other returnable forms of investment, evident in retroliberalism (see Chapter Five). However, the Maanaki co-investment stream mirrors the blended finance in public-private activities and impact bonds popular in global development.

The Pacific Reset is a refresh of New Zealand's comparative advantage in the Pacific in its experience and relationships in Polynesia, and the realisation of the inability to compete with infrastructure projects at scale in the region, especially in Melanesia. Working closely with Australian development efforts in the region is explicitly stated as part of the Pacific Reset (Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2018, para. 21), but there has been no major focus on the Melanesian region, as seen in previous NZODA. Outside of joint projects. Polynesia seems to be the rhetorical focus of the programme due to the factors outlined in Chapter Seven, with the Pacific Reset, and NZODA still retaining retroliberal structures. This section was an exercise in placing the Pacific Reset within the global context of retroliberalism, with it showing the misalignment with current rhetoric and trends in development, yet it retains some core tenets of retroliberalism and is set within the context of a changing development environment.

9.2   Retroliberalism as a Concept

The academic endeavour of retroliberalism is concerned with analysing current development trends and their congruence with aid regimes and modalities past. As outlined by Murray and Overton (2016a), retroliberalism is an amalgam of classical liberal ideas concerning the role of the state as guardian of the private sector, neoliberal thought on the pre-eminence of the market, and neo-Keynesian elements of state-facilitated spending to starve off recession. The theoretical basis of retroliberalism *"rejuvenates elements of both classical liberalism and neoliberalism with the intention of bolstering private sector accumulation"* (Murray & Overton, 2016a, p. 249).

Although diverse in theoretical foundation, retroliberalism lacks the codified base of preceding aid regimes. Where neoliberalism was embodied in the 'Washington Consensus' and SAPs, and neostructuralism in the MDGs and High Level Forums on Aid Effectiveness, retroliberalism is yet to be codified in

international development best practice literature (Murray & Overton, 2016a). Although global discourse has shifted to the tying of development to trade and national interest (see OECD & World Trade Organization, 2019), this presents an intriguing point of analysis for this research. The theoretical construction of the aid regime itself can be adopted as a lens through which to interpret the Pacific Reset, with the abstract concept of the aid regime being able to be applied to the programme's conception. Discursively, retroliberalism is couched in the analysis of the fiscal reactions to the GFC, the paradoxical outburst of aid spending during austerity, and the independent global alignment of development policy in Global North countries (Murray & Overton, 2016a). This provided empirical evidence of larger shifts in development thinking during the early 2010s. On a more conceptual level, retroliberalism embodies incorporating elements of previous aid regimes into development practice, providing the theoretical rigour to support the analysis of eventuating trends. The distinction between the discursive and theoretical is fraught with nuances that cannot be fully realised in this research, however, given the preceding comparison between retroliberalism and the Pacific Reset - one can see that the divergences are deeper than simple changes in rhetoric. This advances the notion that retroliberalism, in the abstract, offers a more apt interpretation of the construction of the Pacific Reset.

The Pacific Reset encompasses a rejuvenated focus on budget support towards health, education, and governance sectors (Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee, 2018). This is reminiscent of the neostructural aid regime, with participants of this research comparing the climate within the development community under the Pacific Reset to that of the neostructural era. The broad consensus in carving out a middle road to globalisation that came with the election of centre-left governments in the early 2000s, is mirrored in the rhetoric and political persuasion of the current Sixth Labour Government at the helm of the Pacific Reset.

Finding political champions in governments of leftist persuasions, the neostructural aid regime became entrenched, informing the likes of the Paris Principles and its regional localisations such as the Cairns Compact in the Pacific. Murray and Overton (2011) progressed the following idea:

> *The broad acceptance of neostructuralism has been partially due to the intricate balancing act between society and the market that it seems to promise, but also to the fact that other alternatives have not presented themselves* (p. 311).

Hallmarks of the Sixth National Government's approach to development, and retroliberalism more broadly, remain, which inform the Pacific Reset. The implicit focus on promoting the development of productive sectors of economies remains through the unchanged (at the time of this research) mandate of the NZAP and guiding strategic documents, and an intertwining of the Aid for Trade agenda, and expanded trade pacts in development policy. Here, the intricate act of balancing the sustainable economic development fundamentals of retroliberalism and the rejuvenated focus on health, education and governance, indicative of neostructuralism, has contributed to the initial broad acceptance of the Pacific Reset today. This is even witnessed in the development community as identified by Participant E:

> *I think those priorities are changing. We do know that at a high level they are different and they are more focused around social development indicators and goals, alongside economic ones as well. So it is not disregarding the economic ones, but recognising that the social indicators are harder to measure but are absolutely vital for any other progress. So we do feel that we can bring to the table a lot more of what we feel is important to us and what we are already doing. That Venn diagram if you like, has a lot more overlap than it's ever had.*

The Pacific Reset loosely adheres to accepted thinking on retroliberalism, but it is not conclusive in explaining changes in rhetoric, relationships and modalities, merely being a continuation of established development practice. It

can be seen to include elements of the neostructural aid regime, incorporating elements of greater wellbeing indicators and rhetoric that invokes notions of partnership and collaboration between civil society and Pacific partners. This section distilled retroliberalism to its base concept - as an amalgam of aid regimes and development thinking past. Applying this interpretation to the Pacific Reset thus uncovered that the programme is in fact retroliberal in blending elements of past New Zealand development policy and practice, with the accepted global trends typified in the retroliberal aid regime of late.

9.3   Concluding Remarks

This analysis has shown that the Pacific Reset aligns with several tenets of both retroliberalism, as shown in Figure 9.1, and Overton and Murray's (2016) manual, albeit incompletely, due to the infancy of the programme. The Pacific Reset can be seen to include elements typical of the neostructural aid regime, especially in the rhetoric and inclusion of health and well-being thematic priorities, which is tempered by the more modernist focus on explicit mentions of geopolitics in the region, and the retaining of retroliberal mechanisms that disburse development. Surveying global rhetoric in the retroliberal aid regime furthered the notion of New Zealand's loose alignment with the aid regime. This led to the conclusion that the Pacific Reset is an amalgam of previous thinking on development in the Pacific. With this, the distillation of retroliberalism to its conceptual base, which is the employing of development modalities, priorities, and rhetoric of aid regimes past, offered a fuller answer to the research question posed at the start of this chapter. Although the tenets of retroliberalism do not align with the Pacific Reset in a conclusively, the Pacific Reset is adherent to the idea of being an amalgam of aid regimes past.

Conclusion

In concluding the chronology of aid regimes in Chapter Five, the claim that development does not occur in a vacuum was made. This thesis is found several factors to have influenced the creation of the Pacific Reset, and perspectives on the changes to New Zealand development policy.

This concluding chapter will recount the structure and main arguments of this thesis based on both the research findings and the broader discussion of them. It will reiterate the significance of this research area and present some limitations of this thesis. During this research, a range of additional research avenues became apparent. These have also been detailed as have a series of policy recommendations that seek to extend the analysis of contributing factors in development policy change.

10.1   Conclusion of Findings

The overarching objective guiding this research was to understand aid regime shifts in the New Zealand context, through an examination of the extent a retroliberal analysis could interpret the Pacific Reset. This objective has been met throughout different chapters in this thesis.

The context of this research was introduced in Chapter Two. Surrounded by a change in rhetoric and an increase in funding, the changes to NZODA communicated by the Sixth Labour Government were covered. This was done to place the Pacific Reset at the heart of this research and contextualise the research questions.

Chapter Three provided a detailed overview of the philosophical underpinnings of this research and the methods utilised to answer the research questions. The Critical Realist epistemology guided all parts of this research from its conception, through to its data collection and analysis.

This research sought to contribute to the literature on retroliberalism, as an aid regime and theory of development policy change. This was achieved through providing original empirical data into the determinants of the Pacific Reset, and New Zealand development policy at-large. This warranted the division of this thesis into two sections, encompassing the theoretical and the empirical elements of this research.

The first section, presented in Chapter Five, saw a reasoned review of global trends and critical junctures that informed development policy. This is supported by the brief overview of theoretical assumptions of policy change in Chapter Four, which introduced path dependence and policy networks as factors in development policy. This set the academic context of this research, having presented the dominant discourses in changes to global development policy, which contextualised the dichotomy between the Global North and South. This literature demonstrated the intersection between development policy and practice, and the different iterations of development thinking from modernisation-through-retroliberalism.

The second section localised the academic context of this research. Through a review of New Zealand's development assistance in the Pacific in Chapter Six, this saw the translation of the global discourses into a New Zealand in the Pacific context. This wove the vastly different, yet coexisting, narratives of traditional, colonial, and globalist notions of development relationships in the Pacific, together with New Zealand's navigation within them. Presenting the literature on the evolution of New Zealand's development assistance in the region, it was understood that vestiges of such historical interactions persist in the Pacific Reset today. Evident in the persistence of ties in Polynesia, use of higher-level modalities in development, and efforts to harmonise domestic and international policies, the Pacific has never strayed from being the organising focus of New Zealand development policy. This was

one of the primary findings of this research informing the discussion into the ability of retroliberalism to assist in interpreting the Pacific Reset.

The sections of this research were mapped in a triangular relationship. Theoretical understandings of changes in development practice and empirical data provided by the analysis of New Zealand's development assistance in the Pacific, were connected through a retroliberal analysis of policy change. Treated as two sides of the same coin, the two veins of analysis converged in Chapters Seven-through-Nine. These chapters addressed, discussed, and ultimately answered the research questions:

- *How do members of the New Zealand development community understand the Pacific Reset and its motivations?*

- *How is the Pacific Reset impacting Pacific-focused development activities in New Zealand?*

- *To what extent can a retroliberal analysis help interpret the Pacific Reset?*

Chapter Seven addressed findings, noting the convergent perspectives of the New Zealand development community on the Pacific Reset, its genesis, and drivers. In echoing Participant C, the programme can be no better described than as a *"confluence of causal factors"*. Borne of the tripartite interaction between Pasifika stakeholders, political actors, and development practitioners, catalysed by the 2017 change of government, it was ultimately understood as a minor rhetorical update to existing development policy, and a geopolitically motivated statement of revamped engagement in the Pacific.

Analysing the impact on Pacific-focused development activities was less clear-cut than initially thought. The infancy of the Pacific Reset hampered the full exploration of this line of inquiry, with participants having focused on the less tangible outputs of the change in development policy. Boosted morale and a positive cultural shift within the New Zealand development community, a

construction of relevant institutional architecture to support the Pacific Reset, and a prioritisation of climate change issues, were communicated as the main impacts on Pacific-focused development activities, to date. Together with an increase in 'leadership diplomacy', the visibility of and potential for expanding NGO engagement with New Zealand development efforts in the Pacific, at the time of this research, were widely commented on by participants as a paradigm shift. However, the ability to forecast the direction of the Pacific Reset was diminished outside of the speculation of potential modalities which align with that of previous iterations of development assistance during the neostructural era.

Mirroring the division of the literature review between historical and theoretical understandings of development relationships, Chapters Eight and Nine discussed findings of this research and a retroliberal analysis of the Pacific Reset in turn. Chapter Eight focused on discussing the personalities involved in communicating development policy, path dependence in policy and wider geopolitical considerations, as factors in framing the Pacific Reset. This chapter drew from the wealth of literature on New Zealand development assistance in the Pacific, and path dependence in development policy, established in Chapters Four and Six. In doing so, this informed the exploration of factors that contributed to the framing of the Pacific Reset. The narrative flow between these chapters, and the discussion, illustrated the persistence of development policy, established over generations of policy change and interaction between New Zealand and Pacific partners.

As the zenith of this research, Chapter Nine focussed on a retroliberal analysis of the Pacific Reset. Preceding chapters discussed the framing of the programme, finding the persistence of earlier development policy. The discussion compared the core tenets of retroliberalism, through its manual, with the key points of the Pacific Reset. This line of inquiry saw disparities between some elements of the Pacific Reset and retroliberalism, namely around

engagement with civil society and institutional restructuring of the development programme. Comparing the Pacific Reset to retroliberalism, as presented in the literature, and current global trends in development, served to discuss the slight divergence of the programme with the aid regime. Here, divergences in development financing and rhetoric compared to other Global North donors were signalled as the largest changes, with the Pacific Reset best described as a refinement of New Zealand's comparative advantage in development towards relationships and engagement in Polynesia. Yet, the Pacific Reset still exists in a retroliberal frame.

In discussing the extent retroliberalism could help interpret the Pacific Reset, this research showed that although elements of the current aid regime are evident, the programme incorporates neostructural elements surrounding modalities and interactions between actors, that buck international trends. This chapter also focussed on the distillation of retroliberalism to its base concept. Discussing retroliberalism, as an idea of amalgamating development thinking and policies of old, offered a greater explanation of the Pacific Reset. This led to the conclusion on the Pacific Reset as divergent from the retroliberal aid regime as presented in the global context.

10.2 Academic Contribution

The contribution of this research was two-fold. The discussion of retroliberalism and its ability to interpret the Pacific Reset provided the initial contribution to academia. Although not conclusively being able to describe the Pacific Reset as retroliberal, this research has allowed the space to compare the programme with global trends in development assistance, and a base on which to evaluate the progress of the programme at a later stage.

Secondly, this exploration of the Pacific Reset included findings pertaining to its genesis, drivers and institutional construction. This research is thus a foundational piece that can provide the base for further academic

analyses into the programme, and New Zealand development policy. Policy recommendations have been made through a submission (McDowall, 2019) to the Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Trade Select Committee Inquiry into New Zealand aid in the Pacific, created using the findings of this research.

10.3 Limitations and Considerations

This research discussed the many factors that inform modern New Zealand development policy. Speaking to a breadth of literature spanning generations and academic disciplines, the constraints of a Master's thesis prevented a deep exploration of the nuances in the intersection between such points. With this in mind, a concerted attempt was made to ensure the key drivers of the Pacific Reset, and personalities involved in development policy, were given due credence in discussing the findings and research questions. This is a limitation in a thesis of this stature and was a consideration in the framing and presentation of this research.

A considerable limitation was the reality of the New Zealand development policy environment at the time of this research. Announced in mid-2018, the Pacific Reset was in its infancy, with scarce updates on its operationalisation. This saw a lack of forthcoming and open information regarding the implementation of the programme. This influenced the ability of this research to secure participants close to the programme. Coupled with time constraints from potential recruits, and that of a Master's thesis, the ability to include more perspectives in development policy was significantly decreased. An attempt to reduce the implicit bias in unsuccessfully recruiting MFAT personnel was undertaken. Here, the researcher was as reflexive as possible to the changing timelines of participants, and the eventual use of secondary data (see Chapter Two). Although this is a limitation of this research, it presents an opportunity for further research into internal perspectives of NZODA with MFAT personnel, once the Pacific Reset becomes more implemented.

Although this research analyses the Pacific Reset, it disappointingly does not include the perspectives of Pasifika development practitioners. Unfortunately, attempts to recruit Pasifika participants fell through at several points during this research, despite repeated attempts to reschedule interviews. This was directly related to the issues encountered with recruiting MFAT personnel. The majority of participants considered for this research, who were associated with MFAT, were Pasifika, and their involvement would have contributed to a more holistic piece of research. However, due to limited time, this research was unable to incorporate Pasifika viewpoints. Therefore, its ability to speak to the impact of development activities in the Pacific is limited. So while this research has attempted to engage a variety of people from the differing, but interconnected, spheres of New Zealand development policy, unfortunately, it cannot represent Pasifika views on the Pacific Reset.

Along similar lines, geographical and ethnic homogeneity of participants were limitations in conducting this research. Confined to Wellington due to limited resources, and employing the chain-referral technique of recruitment starting at Victoria University of Wellington impacted the diversity in perspectives of this research. Most participants had a connection with Victoria University of Wellington, and were largely Pākehā. It can be assumed that these factors affected the data collected due to similar cultural norms, backgrounds, and views. Critical realism was used to uncover the structures participants operated within, in part, to mitigate this bias. But it is acknowledged that participant homogeneity was a limitation in this research.

10.4 Recommendations for Future Research

Matter-of-fact statements regarding scope were made throughout this thesis, which provides a logical starting point in conducting further research. As potential lines of inquiry, a deeper investigation into the following areas is recommended:

1. Increased attention in the Pacific by a growing number of development actors, poses an interesting opportunity to analyse the interaction between geopolitics and development. This research has touched on the tying together of foreign and development policy, present in retroliberalism, and has shown such discourses are incorporated into the Pacific Reset. A deeper analysis into current geopolitical discourses and their impact on development relationships in the region is an avenue for further research.

2. Extending the retroliberal analysis of development policy to incorporate current global trends in development assistance, is a logical progression from this research, and that of updating retroliberalism. Informed by changes to development policy borne of the GFC, an updated tracking of current global trends in development spending and priorities, a decade on from its conception, is warranted.

3. As development policy is ever-changing, receptive to the tides of global political change, this research is merely an analysis of current thinking in NZODA. Given the infancy of the Pacific Reset, building off the foundations laid by this research and a revisiting of its findings at a later date is a recommendation for future study. Perhaps as a comparative analysis regarding the translation of development policy into practice.

4. The scope of this research did not allow for a comparative analysis of development policy between countries. Researching aid regimes and shifts in development thinking in a global context, uncovered interesting changes to development policy that align with thinking on retroliberalism. This was briefly touched on in Chapters Eight and Nine.

10.5 Closing Statement

The two quotes that bookend this thesis offer a concise analysis of the current thinking of the Pacific Reset. The quote opening this thesis, offered by Participant G, interpreted the Pacific Reset as a shift in thinking. This research has uncovered a shift in rhetoric surrounding development assistance, encapsulated by the 'principles of engagement'. The desire to progress towards mature political relationships with partners was noted, aligning with this framing. However, whether this could be translated into practice is yet to be determined. The prominence of geopolitical discourses and persistence of economic development and shared prosperity, cloud this approach having found a congruence to the retroliberal aid regime. The quote by Participant A, immediately following this section, was offered as the ideal outcome of the Pacific Reset. The analysis of its conception and initial stages show a start in the direction offered by Participant A, at least discursively. However, the Pacific Reset is bound by the structures and development policy of old. At this stage, the Pacific Reset occupies the space where development policy and practice meet. How the interactions between government, civil society, and partner countries eventuate will serve to realise the lofty ambitions of the Pacific Reset, or entrench the interactions of old.

We will know when the Pacific Reset is successful when

we view our relationships with Pacific Island countries as not being about aid.

Participant A

IV

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Appendices

Appendix I: Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Approval

TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI

VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

Phone   0-4-463 6028
Email   judith.loveridge@vuw.ac.nz

MEMORANDUM

TO	Thomas McDowall
FROM	Dr Judith Loveridge, Convenor, Human Ethics Committee

DATE	5 November 2018
PAGES	1

SUBJECT	**Ethics Approval** **Number: 0000026781** **Title:** Retroliberalism – From Theory to Concept A Case Study of New Zealand Agricultural Development Cooperation with Fiji

Thank you for your application for ethical approval, which has now been considered by the Human Ethics Committee.

Your application has been approved from the above date and this approval is valid for three years. If your data collection is not completed by this date you should apply to the Human Ethics Committee for an extension to this approval.

Best wishes with the research.

Kind regards

Judith Loveridge

Convenor, Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee

Appendix II: Interview Consent Form

The 'Pacific Reset': A Retroliberal Analysis

CONSENT TO INTERVIEW

This consent form will be held for 2 years.

Researcher:
Thomas McDowall
School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences,
Victoria University of Wellington.

- I have read the Information Sheet and the project has been explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can ask further questions at any time.

- I agree to take part in an audio recorded interview.

I understand that:
- I may withdraw from this study at any point before 15 October 2019 and any information that I have provided will be returned to me and/or destroyed.

- I can request a summary of this interview and can contact the researcher at any time before 15/10/2019 to clarify any points made and/or to ask that any part of the discussion be changed or excluded from the final reports.

- The information I provide will be destroyed promptly after my withdrawal from the project, should I choose to do so.

- I understand that the information gained from interviews may be used for the following outputs:
  - a Masters thesis;
  - a report brief to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (New Zealand);
  - academic publications and conferences in the future.

- I understand that my name, organisational association and specific role within it will not be published in any documents resulting from this research.

- I would like a summary of the interview: Yes   No
                                                                                   ☐   ☐

Signature of participant: _____

Name of participant:　　　　_____

Date:　　　　　　　　　　_____

Contact details:　　　　　　_____

Appendix III: Information Sheet for Participants

The 'Pacific Reset': A Retroliberal Analysis

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

You are invited to take part in this research. Please read this information before deciding whether or not to take part. If you decide to participate, thank you. If you decide not to participate, thank you for considering this request.

Who am I?

My name is Thomas McDowall and I am a Masters student in the Development Studies programme at Victoria University of Wellington. This research project is work towards my thesis.

What is the aim of the project?

This project seeks to further develop an emerging aid model through looking at the recent 'Pacific Reset' foreign policy, and changes to New Zealand's development assistance. This research has been approved by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee (#0000026781).

How can you help?

You have been invited to participate because of your knowledge on, or involvement in the 'Pacific Reset' foreign policy and/or development policy and practice in general. If you agree to take part, I will interview you in Wellington, New Zealand.

I will ask you questions about New Zealand development assistance in the Pacific. More specifically, these questions will focus on changes to New Zealand's programme of development assistance and surrounding policy, and how this will impact activities and development in the Pacific.

The interview will take approximately 45 minutes to one hour and I will audio record the interview, with your permission, and write it up later. You can choose to not answer any question or stop the interview at any time, without giving a reason. You can withdraw from the study by contacting me at any time before 15/10/2019. If you withdraw, the information you provided will be securely destroyed and/or returned to you.

If you would like, a summary of the key points of the interview can be sent to you. This will be confirmed on the consent form and will not be a verbatim transcript of the interview. This will give you an opportunity to clarify any points made and provide additional comments.

What will happen to the information you give?

The gathering of this research is confidential. As the researcher, I will be aware of your identity, however you will not be named in the final thesis, any report or documentation resulting from this research. This includes any identifiable characteristics such as organisation you are associated with and specific role within it. Generalised role descriptors will be used in place of this to protect your identity and the information you give.

Only my supervisor and I will read the notes or the interview transcript. The interview transcripts, summaries, notes and any recordings will be kept securely and destroyed on 15/10/2020.

What will the project produce?

The information from my research may be used in the following outputs:

- a Masters thesis;
- a report brief to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (New Zealand);
- academic publications and conferences in the future.

If you accept this invitation, what are your rights as a research participant?

You do not have to accept this invitation if you don't want to.

If you do decide to participate, you have the right to:

- choose not to answer any question;
- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview;
- withdraw from the study before 15/10/2019;
- ask any questions about the study at any time;
- receive a summary of the interview of which you can clarify any points made;
- be able to read any reports of this research by emailing the researcher to request a copy.

If you have any questions or problems, who can you contact?

If you have any questions, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either the supervisor of this research or myself:

Student:
Name: Thomas McDowall
Email: Thomas.McDowall@vuw.ac.nz

Supervisor:
Name: Professor Warwick Murray
School: Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences
Phone: (04) 463 5029
Email: Warwick.Murray@vuw.ac.nz

Human Ethics Committee information

If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research, you may contact the Victoria University HEC Convenor: Dr Judith Loveridge.

Email: hec@vuw.ac.nz

Phone: +64-4-463 6028

Appendix IV: Proposal Brief Attached to Emails

The 'Pacific Reset': A Retroliberal Analysis

This research seeks to analyse the changing nature of aid through a case study of New Zealand Official Development Cooperation and the recent 'Pacific Reset'. How development policy is influenced by trends in global aid, and how it manifests in the Pacific will be the focus of this research. This will be done in order to analyse the emerging aid paradigm – which John Overton and Warwick Murray call 'Retroliberalism'.

Research Aim
This research will seek to contribute to the growing literature on Retroliberalism by providing empirical data to track the evolving aid regime. The 'Pacific Reset' will be the focusing case study of this research.

Research Questions
1. What is the Pacific Reset?
   a. How is it different from the past aid model? Is it?
   b. What motivates it?
   c. What are the main modalities?
   d. Through case studies, what are its priorities?
   e. How is it viewed across different stakeholders?
2. How can aid regime literature help us interpret the Pacific Reset?
   a. How can theoretical aid regime concepts assist in understanding changes in development assistance?
   b. To what extent does a Retroliberal analysis help interpret the Pacific Reset?

How Can You Help?
You have been invited to participate in a semi-structured interview to discuss New Zealand Official Development Assistance, the Pacific Reset, and global aid trends at large. If you agree, you will participate in a 45 minute – one-hour interview with the researcher in Wellington, New Zealand. This will be audio recorded with your consent. Your ideas and thoughts on the themes of this research are welcome and will colour the interview.

Participation is voluntary. You will can request a summary of your interview, which will allow you the opportunity to clarify any points made and/or to change or ask for anything to be excluded from the final research.

Contact Details

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Appendix V: Interview Guide

Introduction

- Briefly tell me about your role *(if unsure/have not established rapport yet)*
- What is your understanding of the Pacific Reset?

THEME ONE: Pacific Reset

a) Has the Pacific Reset changed how development-focused organisations operate?
   - Prompt to talk about:
     - Government/MFAT relations
     - Funding opportunities
     - With partners in NZ and in the Pacific

b) What do you see as motivating the Pacific Reset?

c) Do you think the Pacific Reset is fundamentally different from previous policies on development assistance?
   - What are your thoughts on the rhetoric change towards friendship, understanding and mutual gain?

d) Are you aware of any manifestations of the Pacific Reset in policy or practice?

THEME TWO: Changing Nature of Aid

a) How do you see the development landscape in the Pacific to have changed over the last decade?

b) How much of New Zealand's historic relationship with the Pacific informs current development assistance?

THEME THREE: Retroliberalism

a) What are your thoughts on Retroliberalism?
   i. Agree? Disagree? Can you see it in practice?
      i. Prompt to talk about development trends in NZ and Pacific if not familiar with Retroliberalism

b) *Follow up question:* Do you think the Pacific Reset confirms to retroliberal thought/current trends in development assistance?

Anything else you would like to add?

Appendix VI: P.R.O.M.I.S.E. Acronym and Breakdown

Pacific Reset:

1) What is it?
   a) Components
   b) Priorities
2) Where does it come from?
   a) Drivers
   b) Political Strands
3) What is the policy?
   a) Pronouncements of change
   b) Perspectives on Pacific Reset
   c) Institutional Change
4) New aspects

Regime Shift:

1) Changing nature of aid
   a) Global
   b) Pacific (including history)
   c) Modalities
2) Retroliberalism
   a) Perspectives
   b) Theoretical
   c) Substantive Shift in Policy
3) Development theory
   a) Other regimes
   b) Mode of Accumulation

Outcomes:

1) Successes
   a) Knowledge of Pacific Reset succeeding
2) Failures
   a) Blockages
3) How is it operationalised?
   a) Evidence of policy into practice
   b) Projects
   c) MFAT
4) Limitations
   a) Perspectives on outcomes
   b) Rhetorical, not substantive
   c) Future

Motivations:

1) What is behind it?
    a) Motivations
    b) Domestic political
2) Who is behind it?
    a) Upper MFAT
    b) Middle-Low MFAT
    c) High Level Government
3) Why now?
4) Targets who?

International Geostrategy:

1) Reactionary?
2) Regional dynamics
    a) New Zealand and the region
    b) Other actors and the Pacific
3) China
4) New Zealand's position

Stakeholder Roles/Engagement:

1) What is the Pacific Reset doing now?
    a) How operationalised
2) Impact of Pacific Reset on NGOs/actors
    a) Positive impact
    b) Negative impact
3) Funding streams
4) Changing policy/programmes?
    a) Evidence of organisational change due to Pacific Reset
5) Involvement in the formation of Pacific Reset
6) Perspectives
    a) Positive
    b) Neutral
    c) Negative
    d) Old news
7) Pacific Nations
    a) Agency
    b) Engagement

Endgame:

1) Hopes/dreams of the Pacific Reset
2) What will it achieve?