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Why *Don't* Things Fall Apart?
A Study of the Survival of the Solomon Islands State

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree Master of Arts

in

Anthropology

by

Alexis Elizabeth Tucker

Committee in charge:

Professor Joel Robbins, Chair
Professor John Haviland
Professor Rupert Stasch

2010

The Thesis of Alexis Elizabeth Tucker is approved and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

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<div align="right">Chair</div>

University of California, San Diego

2010

DEDICATION

For my Mother
The best teacher I have ever known

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Why *Don't* Things Fall Apart?
A Study of the Survival of the Solomon Islands State

by

Alexis Elizabeth Tucker

Master of Arts in Anthropology

University of California, San Diego, 2010

Professor Joel Robbins, Chair

In the "Fund for Peace Failed State Index of 2009" the Melanesian country of the Solomon Islands was named the "most failed state in Oceania". Since gaining independence from the British in 1978, the small island country has struggled to survive amid economic underdevelopment, political instability, violent civil conflicts, and social dissolution. The contemporary Solomon Islands, a product of European imperial expansion and British colonization, has neither a strong sense of national unity and identity, nor a functioning state apparatus and economy which could legitimize the existence of the country. The question, therefore, arises—why don't things fall apart?

The aim of this paper is to address the survival of the Solomon Islands amid internal catastrophe. Utilizing a global system framework, I will demonstrate how the country has been maintained into the twenty-first century by the influence of external (global/historical) forces which stem from Western hegemonic systems. My argument is that the Solomon Islands exists not by virtue of internal forces such as national unity, socioeconomic benefit, or political representation, but, rather, by virtue of the external forces of colonization, integration, dependency, and intervention.

INTRODUCTION

"The nations of Oceania (like Nigeria, India, Indonesia, Brazil, Zaire, and many others before them) exist only by virtue of the totalizing project of first the colonial and now national state, as the project unfolds in the context of capitalism and internationalized Western culture"(LiPuma 1995: 35).

In Robert Foster's (1995) *Nation Making*, Edward LiPuma made the statement regarding nation-states in Oceania: "if the 1970s were marked by the quest for independence, the 1980s and early 1990s have been the time of problematic nation making and forging new identities" (33). In following his claim, we could now say that the beginning of the twenty-first century has been marked by a wealth of literature on nation-state failure which discuss the challenges the countries of Oceania face in their struggle for political, economic, and social survival (see: S. Dinnen, 2002; T. Kabutaulaka, 2004; W. Clarke, 2006; B. Reilly, 2000; J. Connell, 2006; J. Fraenkel, 2004). While it remains undeniably fruitful to examine the internal causes of state failure and the inability to create a strong sense of nationhood, after reading all of these melancholy reports on the contemporary realities of Oceania, one is left with the lingering question of why, given all that has and currently is going wrong, do these countries even exist? If the late twentieth century was marked by hesitant optimism about the future of nations in Oceania, the early twenty-first century has been marked by reluctant pessimism brought on by civil conflict and secession attempts in Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, and the Solomon Islands, coup d'état in Fiji, economic failure in Nauru, and dependency and underdevelopment in most Pacific Island countries. Throughout this rollercoaster ride of emerging nationhood, internal conflicts, economic dependency, and state failure that has taken place over the last three decades one thing

has persisted, the fact that all the countries of Oceania which gained independence in the 1970s and 1980s marking the end of the colonial period have, to this day, remained countries. While the path to nation-statehood, in Melanesia especially, could be described as rocky at best it has, nonetheless, continued pushing forward toward the future. The question we should now attempt to answer is—why don't things fall apart?

The aim of this paper is to address this question by utilizing a holistic approach following LiPuma's (1995) prescription for a relational and comprehensive approach to studying nation-state making by examining both internal and external factors which have influenced the formation and perpetuation of the Solomon Islands. By focusing on both the local situation and global trends which play a role in the modern, postcolonial Solomon Islands we are able to provide a more nuanced view of the contemporary situation in the country while at the same time acknowledging that this entity does not exist in a vacuum, but rather, within a global system. The first section of this paper, which focuses on internal factors, will problematize the existence of a nation-state in the Solomon Islands through the examination of the influence of the British colonial legacy on the geopolitical constitution of the country, the creation of national identity following Brubaker's (1996) notion of the nation as processes and practices, and state formation and failure. In this section I use the term nation to delineate practices which unify or demonstrate a unified community which shares and acknowledges social and/or cultural commonalities forming a notion of peoplehood within a geopolitical territory. I use the term state to delineate the government, the sovereign political entity, the state apparatuses, and the bureaucracy of a specific geopolitical territory.

The second section, which focuses on external factors, situates the Solomon Islands within a larger social, political, and economic world system to understand how global-historical processes and external forces have shaped the contemporary reality in the country (Arrighi 1999; Ekholm Friedman and Friedman 2008; Wallerstein 1976). By examining all these factors, both as they occur within the country and in defining the global environment within which the country is situated, we are able to better understand the existence of a nation-state as part of global processes and a result of local practices while not privileging either internal factors or external dynamics as the sole cause for the current situation. This is important because, as Robert Foster (1995: 7) states, "every contemporary nation-state of Melanesia is a product of colonization organized within a global economy of dominant centers and subordinate peripheries [and] the historical diffusion of the nation-state to Melanesia as well as its mixed fortunes in the wake of decolonization can only be apprehended within this framework".

By examining both internal and external forces which have worked to shape the contemporary Solomon Islands, we are able to better understand which forces have undermined the legitimate existence of the nation-state in relation to the forces which formed and perpetuated the country. I would like to stress that although I will use the terms internal and external to delineate the focus of each section of this paper, this is only a superficial dichotomy meant to provide a framework for examining local assimilation of global logic and global integration of a particular locality (Ekholm Friedman and Friedman 2008). It is my argument that we must understand both local and global-historical processes in order to understand the current situation in a particular country;

therefore, it is best to remember that these processes are in a dialectical relationship and work in tandem to create and transform the contemporary reality.

Why the Nation of Solomon Islands Presents an Interesting Case

"Solomon Islands or the Solomon Islands Community has never been a nation and will never be a nation and will never become one" (Mamaloni 1992: 10 cited in Kabutaulaka 2002:4)

In 1568 when the young Spanish explorer Alvaro de Mendana first set eyes upon the lushly forested islands scattered amid the crystal blue sea he thought he may have finally discovered the legendary land of Ophir. This mysterious, Biblical region believed to possess immense stores of gold, precious stones, rare and beautiful animals, and countless other treasures had been the pride of the powerful King Solomon. With the fantastic wealth acquired from the Ophir region, King Solomon adorned his temple with gold and riches to the envy of any other king. The Crown of Spain had long desired to discover this land of unimaginable riches; when Mendana told of discovering gold among the rivers flowing through this land, the Spaniards bestowed the name Solomon upon these islands. After only a brief stay on the island of Santa Isabel, named for the voyage's patron saint, Mendana, believing after all that the region actually possessed little wealth, defied the orders of the Spanish Crown to form a settlement amongst the islands and sailed back to his home in Peru. Although the Spanish exploration of the Solomons lasted only a short while, the name bestowed upon this group of high islands situated in the southwestern Pacific endured.

For two hundred years after Mendana and his crew abandoned this fabled land of Ophir, the Solomons remained as they had been for thousands of years, in the minds of only those who inhabited and occasionally visited the islands. In 1768, the Solomons

were once again thrust out of anonymity and on to the European maps when the French explorer Bougainville happened upon the westernmost islands. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, however, were marked by fleeting interest in the islands themselves with most of the European presence being isolated whaling vessels and trade ships sailing through the region and making little contact with local populations. By the end of the eighteenth century, the Age of Discovery was waning and quickly gave way to a new wave of Western imperial power—expansionism through colonization. The great Western powers of this era, viewing expansion of their empires as the means to greater political and economic influence, began to divide up the globe into colonies and protectorates, many of which would later become the countries of the Third World.

The Solomon Islands were not immune to the scramble to acquire colonial land in this wave of expansionism. By the late nineteenth century the southwestern Pacific was rapidly being colonized, with the German imperial government in control of Northern New Guinea and Bougainville and the French colonizing New Caledonia. As a result the British colonies of Australia and New Zealand, which already possessed established European settlements, began to fear being completely boundaried by colonies belonging to rival empires. In 1893, giving in to the pleas from the colonies, the British government reluctantly declared the Solomon Islands a protectorate. While the colonizers had little interest in establishing a British colony in the islands, the imperial government did utilize the land in the Solomons for economic gains. The sugarcane and copra plantations as well as the fisheries and the logging industry sustained the colony for the next eighty years. By the mid-twentieth century, as a result of World War II and the international economic decline, the once robust European empires were seeking to free themselves of

their former colonies and focus their attention on more pressing domestic issues. In the Solomon Islands, the colonial administration began paving the way for independence by establishing a legislative assembly, modeled on the Westminster system, which would later become the parliament.

On July 7, 1978 the government of the Solomon Islands, led by the newly elected Prime Minister Peter Kenilorea, adopted a national constitution signaling the end of nearly a century of British colonial rule and ushering in a new era of independence. This new epoch in the history of the Solomon Islands did not, however, bring with it a newfound sense of nationhood. The Western Solomons attempted to secede from the country just before independence; in the eastern part of the country tensions were already heating up between local groups on Guadalcanal and Malaita concerning who would run the government. After the secession attempt failed and local tensions cooled, a period of calm and socioeconomic development marked the decades following independence. This span of peace and relative prosperity was all brought to an abrupt end by the civil conflict which began in 1998. For five years, competing militias scattered throughout the islands fought over land rights, government control, and compensation issues which at times escalated into violent confrontations.

In 2003, following the failure of numerous peace treaties, the regional governments led by Australia decided to step in to stop the crisis by sending the peace keeping force Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI). RAMSI has been in the Solomon Islands since that year and has been trying to accomplish the goal of establishing lasting peace and legitimate security and governance within the country. While RAMSI has brought some sense of stability back to the islands, tensions

still have continued to mount. The rising tensions once again reached the boiling point when, in 2006, riots broke out in the Chinatown section of Honiara resulting in widespread property damage and a feeling of unease in the capital. At present, only thirty years after the flag was first raised over the newly independent nation, the Solomon Islands has been assigned the status of the "most failed state in Oceania" by the Fund for Peace 2009 Failed State Index.

How is it then, that the country of the Solomon Islands, conceived of as the mysterious and fabled land of Ophir during the age of discovery, contrived out of Western imperial competition for dominance during the era of colonial expansionism, and cultivated from a colonial legacy which has resulted in civil conflict, socioeconomic decline, and violent crisis, has simply not collapsed? In other words, with all that this post-colonial country apparently has going against it, why has the country endured—why haven't things fallen apart? To analyze this question, in regards to the Solomon Islands in particular, I will focus first on the impact of the colonial legacy, the internal processes of national identity formation, and state functioning and failure by reviewing the literature including work by Jourdan (1995), LiPuma (1995), Dureau (1998), Dinnen (2002), Kabutaulaka (1998, 2008), and Feinberg (1990).

The second section of this paper will focus on the world system within which the country of the Solomon Islands exists by utilizing a global systems framework explicated by Arrighi (1999), Wallerstein (1976), and Ekholm Friedman and Friedman (2008). This analysis will focus on the global, hegemonic trends in categorization (sovereign state, core and periphery, and Third World) and socioeconomic policies (market expansion, colonization, and capitalism), focusing on the role of organizations like the UN and

institutions like the IMF and World Bank, while placing this all within a historical framework examining how the Age of Discovery, the Treaty of Westphalia, British Hegemony, WWII, decolonization and dependency, and 9/11 played a role in shaping the global system which has impacted the internal reality, influencing the decisions of a small group of powerful, local actors in the contemporary Solomon Islands.

By illuminating both internal factors and external global forces that have shaped the country beginning in the sixteenth century, I aim to provide a more detailed analysis of the present situation within the Solomon Islands in order to explain why "the most failed state in Oceania" has endured into the twenty-first century. My position is that the Solomon Islands has been able to survive as country not by virtue of national unity, socioeconomic benefit, legitimate political representation, or functioning governance, but, rather, primarily by virtue of external forces including colonization, political-economic integration and leverage, and military intervention.

"Turning and turning in the widening gyre, the falcon cannot hear the falconer; Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world" (W. B. Yeats in Achebe 1958: ix)

The purpose of this section of the paper is to demonstrate how the Solomon Islands have assimilated global systemic logics locally by incorporating the geopolitical and social models which have shaped the contemporary situation in the country. To better understand the current state of affairs in the Solomon Islands, the first portion will outline the historical formation of the country by illustrating the impact of British colonization and the influence of the colonial legacy on the contemporary geopolitical identity of the country. Following the historical formation of the country and colonial legacy, the next portion will examine the problems associated with the creation of a unified nation and national culture within the arbitrary geopolitical boundary which would define the postcolonial, independent Solomon Islands. The final portion focuses on the historical formation, the functioning, and the failure of the Solomon Islands state in relation to the project of state-initiated nation-building. By explicating the historical and contemporary forces which have shaped the internal condition of the Solomon Islands, it will become clear why, at present, this country, built upon a weak, colonial foundation lacking geopolitical unity and internal cohesion, is in political, economic, and social turmoil resulting in violent civil conflicts, socioeconomic dissolution, and state failure.

Geopolitical Colonial Legacy

Melanesia, the southwestern region of Oceania, is one of the most diverse cultural and linguistic areas in the world. This region is made up of four main island groups inhabited by a variety of cultural groups whose associated languages represent one fourth

of all the languages spoken on earth (Knauft 1999). The Solomon Islands, the second largest group in Melanesia, is constituted of 922 islands equaling over twenty seven thousand square kilometers of land area (Kabutaulaka 1998; CIA World Factbook 2009). There are over sixty inhabited islands in the group, with each having its own cultural and linguistic groups. The majority of the population of the islands is classified as Melanesian—a racial category produced in the nineteenth century by J. Dumont d'Urville which grouped the people who inhabited these island areas together by virtue of their dark skin-coloring, "savage" behavior, diverse languages, and "weak" political organization (Thomas *et al.*1989). There is also a small minority population of Polynesians, differentiated from the majority population based on lighter skin coloring and language family, which inhabit the areas of Rennell and Tikopia (Kabutaulaka 1998; Thomas *et al*. 1989).

There are nearly ninety different languages spoken throughout these islands making it one of the most diversely populated countries in the world (Connell and Lea 2002; Connell 2006). This diversity comes from the organizational structures that were in place prior to colonization and which still play the largest role in everyday life for Solomon Islanders. The organization of people and land was based primarily on kinship (patrilineal, matrilineal, or cognatic depending on the particular area) which formed village groups (Dureau 1998). These villages would maintain relations with other villages populated by people who spoke the same language forming larger groups, which were labeled *wantoks* during the plantation period in the nineteenth century. Villages also had contact among islands either through more cordial feasting and marriage relationships or through warfare, raids, and headhunting missions (White 1991; Keesing 1978). While the

islanders, in some cases, had relations throughout the region, there existed no overarching

conglomeration of islands, as was the case in other parts of the Pacific, which could have

manifested as the boundary of the Solomon Islands as it was drawn during colonization.

In other words, had it not been for European intervention during the colonial period, there

would not have been a Solomon Islands as it exists in present day form (LiPuma 1995).

The period of colonization which succeeded the Age of Discovery was marked by

the expansion of European empires during the nineteenth and twentieth century to the far

reaches of the globe (Hooson 1994). The great European powers maintained their

legitimacy through mapping the world which solidified the existence of their empires,

even if the land encompassed within imperial boundaries stretched thousands of miles

beyond the heart of the empires in Europe. Cartography also became an important

method of establishing legitimate power for the ever-expanding empires because "to

govern territories, one must know them" (Edney 1997: 1-2). For the land and peoples of

the colonial world, this meant placement within an artificial territory defined more by

treaties among European powers than it did by logical organizations based on the

regions' traditional systems (Feinberg 1990). While these arbitrary boundaries were

problematic for most colonized areas, in Melanesia, with its culturally and linguistically

heterogeneous population, these boundaries provided an even more difficult case.

The Solomon Islands, while existing on maps in different configurations from the

time of Spanish discovery, were united in their present day arrangement by the British

colonizers in 1900 when the westernmost islands of Choiseul and Shortlands were

annexed from German territories in New Guinea (Connell 2006). This configuration was

problematic for the people of the Solomon Islands as well as for neighboring New Guinea

because the arbitrary boundaries created by Britain and Germany separated groups which identified more closely with each other, like the Western Solomon Islands and Bougainville, and aggregated them with people whom they considered foreign by virtue of cultural and phenotypic differences (black vs. red skin coloring) (Dureau 1998; Premdas 1989). The difference in cultural practices among the people inhabiting the Solomon Islands was illustrated in stark contrast during the pre-protectorate colonial period due to large scale inter-island migration brought on by the establishment of plantations which needed a substantial labor force (White 1991; Bennett 1987).

The increasing availability of plantation work on Guadalcanal and the Western Solomons in the late nineteenth century resulted in a large number of Malaitans relocating to other areas where jobs were more plentiful (Bennett 1987; Keesing 1978). The plantation migration created tensions among the islanders as they came in contact with people whose practices, beliefs, and languages differed greatly from their own. This culture shock served only to strengthen notions among different groups that they were subsumed within a country constituted of foreigners. This problem was further exacerbated after World War II when the capital and colonial headquarters of the Solomons were relocated to Honiara on Guadalcanal, located in the eastern portion of the country. Honiara is where, during the Second World War, American Forces had established a base and Henderson airfield (Bennett 2002). This not only centered power in the eastern portion of the islands effectively, in the minds of the people, cutting the Western Solomons off from adequate representation, it also encouraged migration to the capital island where new jobs were becoming available creating tensions over land tenure and custom on Guadalcanal (Fraenkel 2004).

The issues of unity and power brought on by the establishment of arbitrary borders and the creation of colonial entities was a problem not only for inhabitants of Melanesia, but for populations throughout the colonial world, including places like India, Southeast Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa (Dinnen 2002). The problems caused by these arbitrary incorporations became especially salient during independence proceedings. Independence was granted to the colonial world beginning in the mid-twentieth century and spreading to the Pacific in the latter part of the century. During this time the newly independent countries that emerged out of colonization had to now grapple with the notion that their geographical configuration would play a large role in defining their identity as a modern nation-state (Hooson 1994). Surprisingly, the majority of postcolonial countries, with few exceptions like Togo in West Africa and Pakistan in South Asia, retained the artificial geopolitical boundaries created during colonization regardless whether their country achieved independence through war, nationalist movements, or, as was the case in the much of Melanesia, a simple transfer of power (Dureau 1998; Jourdan 1995; Hooson 1994; Boahen 1986).

In the Solomon Islands the preservation of the colonial boundary was not taken in stride by the whole population. For example, the Western Solomons tried to secede right before independence and, when that motion failed, refused to participate in the independence celebrations flying the Union Jack instead of the Solomon Islands' flag in defiance of the new country (Dureau 1998; Feinberg 1990). The Western Province was not alone in its dissatisfaction over inclusion within the new country; other groups, including the Kwaio of Malaita and the Tikopians of Temotu Province, have

demonstrated their disapproval by neither voting nor paying taxes in attempts to either secede from their island, province, or from the country as a whole (Feinberg 1990).

Geopolitical and national unity was, and continues to be, a problem in the Solomon Islands because, while the country itself had been redefined as a modern nation-state, the citizens of this country continue to live much as they had before independence and even prior to the colonial period. The majority of the population continues to live in rural villages organized through kinship ties with their sustenance coming in large part from subsistence gardening and fishing (Dinnen 2002; Feinberg 1990). For those who relocated to the urban capital of Honiara, while traditional means of attaining food were replaced with rice and tin meats bought from the Chinese stores lining the streets, the traditional organizational system of living arrangements based on kin and *wantok* relations has remained intact to this day. Presently, Honiara remains a patchwork of enclaves created out of these traditional relations and is becoming increasingly more stratified as poor, undereducated youth looking for wage labor migrate to the capital which is occupied, more so than any other area in the Solomons, by the elite and highly educated (Clarke 2006; LiPuma 1995; Feinberg 1990).

For the Solomon Islands, as for most postcolonial countries throughout the world, if geopolitical boundaries were going to define the identity of the modern nation-state, the problem of unifying the population within that nation-state under a common identity— namely nationhood— would present a difficult and, at times, violent road to preserving the country first brought into existence through the project of imperial expansion in the nineteenth century (Hooson 1994). The Solomon Islands, at independence, had the geopolitical borders by which it could define itself; the new task would be to shape a

sense of nationhood within that boundary— "…as Massimo d'Azeglio, the former prime minister of Piedmont, is supposed to have put it in 1861, 'We have made Italy: now we have to make Italians'" (Foster 1995: 4).

National Identity

By the end of the twentieth century, most colonial countries were emerging out of European imperial control into a Western-dominated world system in which the nation-state, no longer the empire, was held as the global model of modernization (LiPuma 1995). In this model of nation-state, in order to establish the autonomy and legitimacy of a state, the country would also need loyal citizens who identified with the state in the form of a national culture which would unite the people as a nation (Calhoun 1993). Nationhood and national culture, however, have not existed throughout time, and while a sense of nationness may have developed over time in certain places, these concepts connote a definition of collectivity uniquely intertwined with and inseparable from the notion of the modern state.

Although people have perpetually grouped themselves together in collectivities often against an oppositional 'Other', defining a collectivity as a nation is a uniquely modern concept used as an institutionalized form, political claim and practical category with specific political and social functions (Brubaker 2004; Babadzan 2000; Jourdan 1995; Hooson 1994). In other words, defining a group of people under the banner of nation "is a claim on people's loyalty, on their attention, on their solidarity…it is used to change the world, to change the way people see themselves, to mobilize loyalties, kindle energies, and articulate demands" (Brubaker 2004: 116).

While the notion of nation-state, which has its foundation in the Treaties of Westphalia in the seventeenth century and, later, arose out of modernization theories in the Western world during the nineteenth and twentieth century, is now often criticized, it still remains the dominant model by which decolonized countries configure themselves within the world system (Gustafsson 1998). This is demonstrated by the fact that "every autonomous state and independence movement in modern times has defined itself in national terms and language" (LiPuma 1995: 33). For newly independent countries, which often times had been artificially configured out of a diverse group of people lumped together by a colonial regime, the momentous task of modernization includes not only creating a functioning government, competitive capitalist economy, and infrastructure, but also fashioning a national culture which would legitimize and support the burgeoning state by ideologically uniting a heterogeneous population existing within an artificial boundary (Jourdan 1995). In other words, it requires the "naturalization of arbitrariness" (Foster 1991: 237).

In the modern world system a genre of claims has been used to classify and recognize a people as a nation through what might be called 'notions of tradition' including ethnicity, beliefs, history, and perpetual territorial occupation (LiPuma 1995; Smith 1991). These classifications of peoplehood are often used to demonstrate the legitimacy and logical creation of an autonomous state; however, nationalistic claims of this nature are not necessarily the project of states and, therefore, are not always employed to legitimize the state (Calhoun 1993). In some instances, these claims can serve the purpose of de-legitimizing the state's or another group's power over a collective people, which has been illustrated by secessionist movements occurring in places like the

former Soviet Union, the Balkans, the Western Solomons, and Bougainville (Dureau 1998, Premdas 1989). Regardless of purpose, these claims are always used in relation to a state to classify a peoplehood as existing prior to, separate from, or within the geographical boundaries of a state with the aim of legitimizing a particular stance whether it be in support of or in opposition to a state.

In the Solomon Islands, using these notions of tradition as classificatory schemes in order to unify the population and legitimize the state would be problematic because the people were repositioned within the confines of an artificial boundary established by the imperial regime and not based on any local traditional practices which had existed prior to colonization. Making the claim of nationhood based on ethnicity in the Solomon Islands would be difficult because this classification scheme does not match any traditional system of differentiation. Most islanders identify themselves relationally with their kin group, village, or language community, viewing these relationships as somewhat dynamic, making the notion of ethnicity, which entails a relatively stronger sense of boundedness and exclusivity, problematic. The people also would be much more likely to identify themselves in these traditional terms rather than in more nationalistic or regional terms as Solomon Islanders or Melanesians (Clarke 2006; Dinnen 2002; Feinberg 1990).

In PNG, the colonial government devised a scheme of geographical divisions, which later formed the basis for ethnic identification, by which certain people would be Papuan and others would be New Guinean with further divisions occurring regionally (Premdas 1989). While this scheme has remained salient in the postcolonial nation, people there still more often identify with their kin and village groups; the artificial ethnic identifications have only served the purpose of fragmenting the population with certain

nationalist movements claiming the right of secession based on these identifications (Premdas 1989). For Solomon Islanders, notions of ethnicity or ethnic belonging are most often used when discussing the 'bad' customs of other groups in relation to the 'good' customs of one's own relations (Gustafsson 1998). While the civil conflict that took place from 1998-2003 was often discussed by outsiders as resulting from ethnic tensions, the real causes had more to do with customs, land rights, socioeconomic inequalities, and government corruption than it did with any demonstrable ethnic factors (Kabutaulaka 2001).

Religious similarity could be a motive for unification in the Solomon Islands given that over ninety percent of the population identifies as Christian (CIA World Factbook 2009). While this might be an option, historically, systems of belief have been a divisive topic among islanders. During the plantation days the people of the Western Solomons converted to Christianity much more rapidly than people of Malaita; when these cultural groups came into close contact on the plantations, the differences in beliefs and practices engendered hostilities as the Western Solomon islanders looked down upon the Malaitans for retaining their 'bad' pagan customs and the Malaitans reacted negatively to the presence of females in living areas for fear of pollution (Dureau 1998; Bennett 1987).

Presently, although the majority of the population identifies as Christian, divisions have occurred among the islanders, most often in rural villages, as different people identify with distinct denominations of Christianity, such as Methodist, Anglican, or Seventh-Day Adventist (McDougall 2009, McDonald 2003). Although leaders of religious revivals and outreach programs, reaching across various demographic

boundaries, have attempted to unify Christians together , "such apparently unifying

national events can leave schisms in their wake, schisms that are particularly problematic

in rural areas where churches structure socio-political life" (McDougall 2009: 4). While,

according to Debra McDougall (2009: 2), "Christian churches glued the nation together

in a time of crisis; [and] as an identity, Christianity seems to unite the country's

linguistically, culturally, and increasingly class-differentiated population", it still remains

unclear, given the historical and contemporary religious divisions that have occurred,

whether or not Christianity could provide a strong enough foundation to unite the diverse

people under the banner of one nation.

     In many colonized countries, notions of a shared history of colonial oppression

have served to unify the people against the colonial regime, providing the oppositional

'Other' by which they could identify themselves, often leading to and legitimizing

independence movements. However, in the Solomon Islands, the islanders had different

experiences with the colonial government and, thus, had differing opinions regarding

independence and their own relationship toward the British colonizers (Dureau 1998).

For many islanders, "the colonial masters were not the 'Other' fought against in

Indochina, or Kenya, or Algeria" during the struggles for independence (Jourdan 1995:

130). Freedom from colonial rule was often "handed on a platter" to a diverse

population— some of whom welcomed independence and others of whom were reluctant

to see the colonial government step down (Jourdan 1995: 130; Feinberg 1990). Therefore,

while the government may try to reclassify a regional movement for independence like

Maasina Rule on Malaita as a national, pan-island movement against colonization, many

islanders reject this history as not being their own on the basis of different experiences with the colonial regime.

Finally, although the people of the Solomons have inhabited their islands for thousands of years, the current geographical configuration was the work of the colonists and not the islanders themselves. While the perpetual occupation of a territory can provide the grounds for uniting the people of Melanesia through the extension of the Polynesian notion of "our sea of islands", this claim does not support the legitimacy and logic of the Solomon Islands as a geopolitical entity because the separation of islands in parts of Melanesia into artificially constructed territories was the result of colonization and not a shared history of inhabitation within the confines of the current geopolitical boundaries (Hau'ofa 1994; Dureau 1998). For most Solomon Islanders, the perpetually inhabited territory that has been of most importance in defining their identity is that of the home, garden, and village plots, and not the collection of over nine hundred islands artificially bound together by external forces.

Therefore, in the Solomon Islands, what was left as a means for creating a national culture was a state-instituted project which, instead of focusing on notions of tradition, would look toward a common future shared among the diverse population (Jourdan 1995). In this form of nation-building project, the government and nationalists would legitimize the state by crafting loyal, national subjects through the "inculcation of an embodied sense of national identity" (LiPuma 1995: 37). This can be done through the establishment of ideological state apparatuses, the creation of national symbols and popular culture, and the adoption of a common, national language (LiPuma 1995; Jourdan 1995).

At independence the Solomon Islands had a government system, a national flag, and the foundation for state schools and institutions which could serve as ideological state apparatuses. For this model of nation-building to succeed in the creation of a peoplehood based on a shared future in the Solomon Islands, therefore, requires the expansion of state institutions, such as schools which promote identification with the nation and a shared purpose, and the establishment of a common national language through schooling and popular culture which provides the means for people to communicate and identify with each other, thus creating the foundation for a national identity.

Christine Jourdan (1995) examined how, nearly twenty years after independence, the state and urban-based nationalist elites had been crafting projects aimed at unifying the postcolonial country. In her examination, she outlined "three crucial means by which the ideology of nationhood can be fostered: schooling, community of language, and the development of popular culture" (Jourdan 1995: 127). A national school system would promote a sense of nationhood and the legitimacy of the state by transmitting a uniform set of values, expectations, and attitudes which would create a common frame of reference for the heterogeneous citizens of the country, as well as, provide a means by which the state could produce and reproduce servants of the state (135-136). For the citizens, many of whom still lived in rural villages far from the urban centers, schooling offered a chance to receive tangible benefits from the state system in that education provided opportunities to generations of young people to become more informed citizens and, thus, could help the rural villages integrate into the modern system and be active participants in the state. In 1973, a committee was appointed to review the educational

system which was established by the protectorate and largely administered by different religious organizations in order to determine what changes should be made to create a system which would best serve the population of the soon to be independent country. The committee made a number of recommendations for pedagogy that would promote unity and harmony, educate the population about the diverse customs within the borders, and improve the quality of life and opportunities for all citizens of the country (137).

Schools could also provide a vehicle for the transmission and adoption of a common language, in this case English, which is important in the Solomons where the majority of the population still utilize one of the estimated ninety local vernaculars as their first language (Feinberg 1990). While English has been the official language of the country since independence and, thus of the school system, only an estimated one or two percent of the population are proficient in the language, making it difficult to find teachers capable of instructing in English (Feinberg 1990; CIA World Factbook 2009).

The lingua franca of the contemporary Solomon Islands is a local form of Melanesian pidgin- *Pijin*. Although this has not become the official language of the school system due, on one hand, to the lack of educational materials in the language and, on the other, to resistance from urban elite and the British who looked down on *Pijin* as "a bastardized language doomed to disappear", because it has gained in popularity over the years through music, cartoons, and radio programs it can provide a shared language through which Solomon Islanders can communicate (Jourdan 1995: 140; Feinberg 1990). This increasing popularity could raise the legitimacy and prestige of the language to a higher status, like pidgins in other parts of Melanesia have earned, becoming an integral part of the political and social realms and providing a way for islanders to distinguish

themselves in unity from their colonial masters (Jourdan 1995). Solomon Islands *Pijin* could also provide the medium through which a popular culture reaching all the citizens of the country could be created and spread throughout the islands.

According to Jourdan (1995: 144), through the cumulative effects of these and other "stepping stones" to nationhood, new moods, orientations, and perceptions linked to identification were emerging twenty years after independence which may have provided the base of a national sentiment in the Solomon Islands. However, what must be kept in mind is that this form of nation-building situated the state in a lead role in creating a sense of nationhood through the establishment of "ideological and institutional infrastructure" in the postcolonial Solomon Islands (Jourdan 1995: 127). Throughout postcolonial Melanesia, nationalism "largely takes shape as state functionaries try to nationalize state structures rather than as collections of 'peoples' try to create or seize state structures as their own" which, therefore, has made the creation of a national identity dependent upon the existence of a stable, legitimate state to provide guidance and promote support of the nation-building project (Foster 1995: 1). Thus, for this model of state-instituted nation-building to have succeeded, the Solomon Islands required an economically stable and politically functioning state which was "sufficiently inclusive to encompass its diverse cultures, and sufficiently centralized to organize a program of ideological education" (LiPuma 1995: 45).

State Functioning and Failure

As early as 1927, the British colonial administration was contemplating how to establish an independent government in the Solomon Islands Protectorate and called for an official inquiry headed by Sir H.C. Moorhouse. In his report, Moorhouse

recommended the establishment of an administrative system based on local forms of governance which reflected the concerns of local Solomon Islanders (Kabutaulaka 2008). This led to the creation of native councils at the lowest position of the administration which would uphold colonial rule at the local level. Although the British did establish these councils, they did not actively encourage local participation in the administration with most Solomon Islanders being relegated to the position of passive subject within the protectorate (Alasia 1997). In 1947, based on the renewed interest in native councils by the British after WWII, the colonial government enacted the Native Administration Regulation providing the framework for organizing local councils while setting the foundation for larger councils to be established in the future (Kabutaulaka 2008; Bennett 1987).

By the 1960s, local councils had been organized into a Legislative Council which encouraged greater local participation in the colonial administration (Alasia 1997). The Legislative Council was given the task of examining the possibility of adopting a democratic government modeled after the Westminster System in Britain. The Council advised against adopting this model because of concerns over how the system had worked in other former colonies of the Commonwealth (Kabutaulaka 2008). In 1974, British Solomon Islands Order merged the Legislative Council with other administrative councils creating the Governing Council (Kabutaulaka 2008; Bennett 1987). The Council oversaw legislative procedures, and separate committees were established to manage the executive functions of the administration. This style of governance was favored because the committees more closely resembled the traditional consensus-style systems and also contained more unifying features than the Westminster system which was needed for the

diverse population of the Solomon Islands (Kabutaulaka 2008). The popularly supported committee system did not last, however, and at pre-independence planning meetings local leaders and colonial advisors paved the way for the adoption of a Westminster-style government.

The Westminster model of democratic governance is based on a two-party majoritarian system where power is concentrated in the hands of the majority winner placing the loser in the oppositional position. This government-versus-opposition pattern creates a governing system which is competitive and adversarial (Lijphart 1999). This model also entails political pluralism in the form of multiple interest groups which petition the majority government or the opposition in a competitive, generally uncoordinated, manner to influence parliamentary decisions (Lijphart 1999). For this system to be adequately representative, political parties are necessary to give differing groups a voice; in the Solomons, while political parties had begun to spring up before independence, they remained alien to most citizens of the country (Kabutaulaka 2008; Alasia 1997). Although this system functions quite well in Britain where political parties are a well-established tradition and procedures are in place to prevent competition from turning into violent confrontations and factioning, in the culturally and linguistically diverse Solomon Islands the fear was that this form of government based on competition, opposition, and centralization would lead to a divisive and destructive situation (Kabutaulaka 2008; Lijphart 1999).

In reaction to the proposed Westminster system, a large number of Solomon Islanders from Guadalcanal, the Western Provinces, and other regions demanded a federal system which they thought would decentralize and devolve power providing more

opportunity for local decision-making processes and control of natural resources (Kabutaulaka 2008). Even with the threat of secession from the Western Provinces and the general disapproval of the model throughout the islands, on July 7, 1978 the Solomon Islands gained independence and continued to implement a Westminster-style government, electing Sir Peter Kenilorea as Prime Minister (Alasia 1997; Bennett 1987). The challenge for the newly independent government was to not only maintain political stability by establishing a fair and functioning system of governance, but to also create a development plan to ensure that the socioeconomic system of the country could provide benefits for all citizens and support the unification of the Solomon Islands as a nation (Alasia 1997).

After independence in 1978, the former British colonial administrators quickly withdrew attention from the Solomon Islands (Wainright 2003). While officials in the country worked to strengthen the central government and establish political parties, preparations were under way for the general election which was scheduled to take place in 1980 (Alasia 1997). Sir Peter Kenilorea maintained his position as Prime Minister after the general election; however, just over a year later he was removed from office. With the support of the Guadalcanal Opposition and the Western Province, Sir Solomon Mamaloni took power in 1981, becoming the second elected Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands (Fraenkel 2004; Alasia 1997). The years following independence, while having moments of prosperity, would be marked by rising tensions in the government and between ethnic groups, along with rumors of an emerging failed state in the Solomon Islands (Alasia 1997) . Local support for a strong central government, especially in the Western Province which is much nearer to Papua New Guinea, was weak. The Western Province had earlier

tried to secede from the Solomon Islands, but the movement was stopped by instituting the Provincial Government Act in 1981 which gave more autonomy to the provinces to allocate government funds as well as to push their interests in Parliament (Bennett 2002; Moore 2004).

The foremost challenge of establishing a strong, centralized government in the Solomon Islands was that most citizens still maintained allegiance to their kinsmen and tribe over their allegiance to the state, recognizing the former as the more important institution (Kabutaulaka 1998; Moore 2004). In government elections, kinship and tribe often played a more important role as a deciding factor than did platforms (Kabutaulaka 1998). Nepotism was also a problem as elected officials would be expected to give their *wantoks* positions within the government, blocking people outside these relationships from obtaining government posts (Kabutaulaka 1998). The elected officials would also be obligated to provide special services and financial aid to their village because they were viewed as a big-man and generosity was entailed in that title (Turnbull 2002). These *wantok* relationships also divided the country into regions which had, before colonization, not been recognized, thus weakening the central government by undermining the policies which sought to unify the country under a shared identity. These alliances weakened the central government because it made it difficult to establish policies and a consistent direction within the government because it placed political survival and the maintenance of alliances above the value of the policies that were instituted (Turnbull 2002). The purpose of becoming an elected official was more about gaining prestige and personal power through alliances and village support than it was about being a public servant for all members of society (Turnbull 2002). The Solomon

Islands were beginning to be known for erratic governance, ethnic tensions, and increasing, high-level government corruption which all played a role in the popular disenchantment with the central administration and political processes by the 1990's (Wainright 2003).

The economic situation in the country did not fare any better than the political situation post-independence. Many citizens in rural areas, Polynesian Solomon Islands, and the Western Districts feared that their political, social, and economic interests were being ignored in the name of development and the establishment of a strong, central government in Honiara (Bennett 1987). Rural development and infrastructure projects lagged behind that of Honiara, and these areas became suspicious that while they were contributing to development through the use of their lands for economic projects, they were receiving little benefit from the government (Bennett 1987). An example of the imbalance can be seen in the 1970 Mining Amendment Act which gave only five percent of the royalties from mining to the traditional landholders with the remaining ninety-five percent going directly to the central government (Bennett 1987). While mining never proved to be a viable industry, timber harvesting, copra plantations, and the fishing industry did expand with each representing a quarter of the total national exports at independence (Bennett 1987).

After 1980, the timber industry experienced a boom with a four-fold increase in the issuance of logging licenses as customary land began to be leased to foreign companies by local landowners for timber exploitation (Hviding 2006; Kabutaulaka 1998). The main overseas players came from Asia, with the largest investors being from Malaysia and Korea and the largest buyers being located in Japan and Korea (Moore

2004). These overseas companies were encouraged to invest in the Solomon Islands because of a large force of cheap labor, favorable government policies, and lax environmental regulations (Kabutaulaka 1998; Bennett 1987). This led to increased economic dependence on the timber industry alone and within one year logging in the Solomon Islands had reached an unsustainable level. A number of recent cyclones had also destroyed large harvests, devastating both local food supplies and crops set for export. The economy was in serious distress after many of the Asian interests pulled out due to the Asian financial crisis in mid-1997, and there was a growing mistrust of the government because of rampant corruption and nepotism (Chand 2002). The economy had been in trouble for the past decade with a stagnant per capita GDP, but by 1998 the Solomon Islands were on the path to a meltdown (Chand 2002).

In 1998 a civil conflict, known locally as the 'Tensions', broke out in the Solomon Islands as a result of years of mounting ethnic resentment, political and cultural corruption, and land tenure disputes (Fraenkel 2004). Prior to this civil conflict, violence over regional variations was not uncommon, with riots breaking out over soccer matches and perceived insults passing from one group to another in the local market (Moore 2004; Kabutaulaka 1998). The conflict of 1998-2003 began when the Isatabu Freedom Movement (IFM, formerly GRA), motivated by anger and resentment over land tenure disputes and influenced by the displaced members Bougainville Revolutionary Army, began arming themselves with weapons from caches leftover from World War II in preparation for attacks on Malaitan settlers (McDougall 2004; Bennett 2002).

After the attacks, Malaitans fled to the capital Honiara seeking refuge from the violence, with as many as twenty two thousand settlers returning home to Malaita during

this time (McDougall 2004). The Malaitans responded, in 1999, by creating the Malaitan

Eagle Force (MEF) which sought to protect ethnic Malaitans from the IFM's attacks

(McDougall 2004; Fraenkel 2004). Chiefly, young men were drawn to these militias

because of the government's failure to provide adequate education, training and

opportunities which led to dissatisfaction and, subsequently, militarization (Chevalier

2001). Young men, conjuring images of the great warriors of the past, viewed violence as

a means to gain prestige as well as material wealth as it did in the past (Chevalier 2001;

Burt 1993). The tensions between these groups grew as corrupt government officials

began paying out compensations to their relations who had supposedly lost members

during the violence. These compensation payments, along with extortion and theft in the

government, left the state in economic shambles, while violent confrontations, especially

in rural areas, continued to plague the country. By 2002, the militias had split into

numerous factions led by leaders such as Harold Keke and Jimmy Rasta who continued

to carry out attacks on rival groups.

In mid-2003 the Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon

Islands arrived in Honiara after numerous peace treaties had failed to end the conflict.

RAMSI was created under pressure from the Prime Minister Sir Allen Kemakeza, the

government of Papua New Guinea, and the desire to prevent terrorism from spreading to

the Solomon Islands and threatening Australia (Fraenkel 2004; Kabutaulaka 2004). The

project was called 'Operation Helpem Fren' and entailed that the various Australian and

Pacific Islander forces restore peace, capture and prosecute criminals, and train the local

police force (Fraenkel 2004). RAMSI quickly managed to collect a large number of

weapons and ammunition from Guadalcanal, Malaita, and Gizo and slowly restored

peace to the conflict-ravaged country (Moore 2004). In April of 2006, violence once again broke out on the streets of Honiara as groups of angry rioters burned, looted, and destroyed Chinatown. These riots had been partially contributed to the election of Sir Snyder Rini as Prime Minister who was accused of corruption and close ties with Chinese businessmen; as a result, eight days after the riots the Rini-led government lost parliamentary support and collapsed (Fraenkel 2008; Hassan 2006).

While, for the past three years, large-scale violence and riots have not threatened peace in the Solomons, many serious political, social, and economic problems still remain unresolved. Instability continues to undermine the establishment of a functioning government as prime ministers are often being removed by votes of no confidence and others members of parliament are brought up on corruption and extortion charges. Social and economic problems continue to plague the country, as a recent report by the Australian Centre for Peace and Conflicts Studies outlines— "there are serious gaps and deficiencies in the government's capacity to gather the necessary resources and allocate them in ways that will boost the delivery of basic education, health and welfare in the Solomon context" (Clements and Foley 2008: iii). For example, the educational system has recently been in turmoil as the Solomon Islands Teacher Association threatened to strike if the government did not fulfill its promises of back salary payments and increase in the cost of living allowance for the local teachers (Teacher Solidarity 2009).

In 2009, the nonprofit research and educational organization Fund for Peace published its most failed state 2009 index ranking the Solomon Islands as the "most failed state in Oceania" (Fund for Peace 2009). This report cited serious internal problems including mounting demographic pressure, uneven economic development

coupled with sharp economic declines, limited public services, internal factioning and group grievances, and a lack of legitimacy of the state institutions (Fund for Peace 2009). The report concluded that "even though the RAMSI operation has made some progress, the Solomon Islands is still plagued by weak political institutions and a malfunctioning economy, which means there is little ground to stand on for further reconciliation and peaceful development" (Fund for Peace 2009).

Through this examination of the problems that have plagued the Solomon Islands since independence, ranging from issues of minimal geopolitical unity and nonexistent national identity to economic distress, civil conflicts, and state failure, we are left with the question: why hasn't the country simply fallen apart? My argument is that these negative internal forces which have continued to undermine the successful development of a unified nation and functioning state are greater than the positive internal forces exemplified by the "stepping stones" outlined in Jourdan (1995). Thus, the reason the Solomon Islands has been able to survive internal catastrophe remaining a country into the twenty-first century is primarily by virtue of external economic, political, and military leverage influencing a small group of internal actors, and not by virtue of internal cohesion or legitimate, functioning governance. In order to understand, therefore, why the Solomon Islands has endured amid all the chaos and instability, it is necessary to examine the external forces of the global hegemonic systems, in combination with the actions of a small group of internal players, which have historically shaped and continue to exert influence on this small island country, perpetuating its existence into the twenty-first century.

EXTERNAL

"And at last the locusts did descend. They settled on every tree and on every blade of grass; they settled on roofs and covered the bare ground. Mighty tree branches broke away under them and the whole country became the brown-earth color of the vast, hungry swarm" (Achebe 1958: 48-49).

The purpose of this section is to provide an answer to the question of why hasn't the Solomon Islands fallen apart by explicating the external forces produced by the global hegemonic systems which have shaped the social, political, and economic models by which localities have been integrated into the world system and have assimilated the logic of these systems into their own internal organizational schemes (Ekholm Friedman and Friedman 2008). The first section of this paper examined how the Solomon Islands assimilated the logic of the global hegemonic systems internally by maintaining the historical geographical boundaries and the Westminster system of governance introduced by British colonial power, by attempting to establish a strong central government and develop a national identity to support the legitimacy of the state, by incorporating free-market capitalism, and by trying to create ideological state apparatuses. This section will examine the historical and contemporary models by which these logics were formed including geographical models from the Age of Discovery, sociopolitical models from the Treaties of Westphalia and British hegemony, and economic and global-political models from the present U.S.-led hegemonic world system.

Utilizing a global systems framework, this section will demonstrate how the Solomon Islands has been shaped by external forces of the historical world hegemonic systems from the sixteenth century Age of Discovery onward and how the integration into the current global system beginning with independence in the twentieth century has

maintained the Solomon Islands politically and economically as a country in the present day. Examining the external forces which act upon the internal situation of particular localities integrating them into the global hegemonic system provides an "awareness of encompassment—that sociohistorical process by which "autonomous" societies (or economic sectors) are progressively subsumed and enchanted by the political economy of capitalism, internationalized Western culture, and interstate organizations such as the United Nations" (LiPuma 1995: 35).

World systems theory is based on the notion that the introduction of a capitalistic world economy in the sixteenth century (or as early as five thousand years ago see: Ekholm Friedman and Friedman 2008) has led to an extensive functional and geographical division of labor (Wallerstein 1976). This division of labor divided the world economies into core-states— established historically through the acknowledgement of the Great Powers in the West through the Treaties of Westphalia (1648), the Congress of Vienna (1815), the League of Nations (1919), and globally through the United Nations (1945), and the G8 (1997)—and semi-peripheral and peripheral areas, defined hierarchically in relation to the core through colonization, economic exploitation, and, later, through the creation of the 'Third World' during the Cold War (Arrighi *et al.* 1999; Pollard 1997; Wallerstein 1976; Henrikson 1996). The hierarchical division of labor that is produced through the capitalist world economy creates economic and social gaps among participants in the system. This leads core-states to have strong states by virtue of their monopolization of industry and capital, which can exert political and social influence globally, and peripheries to have weak, economically underdeveloped states by virtue of their exploitation, which are economically reliant on the core and, thus,

susceptible to political and social influence as well (Arrighi *et al.*1999; Bauzon 1992; Wallerstein 1976).

The asymmetrical power relations in the global division of labor created by the capitalist system are based on "the political economy of dependent development and unequal exchange" (Nash 1981: 393). The core-states monopolize industry and the technological advances and capital which support industrial production with the aim of maximizing the accumulation of surplus in the core through unequal trade relations and exploitation of the peripheries (Bauzon 1992; Nash 1981). The peripheral states not only serve as the source of raw materials for production and cheap labor, but also as the consumer market for core-produced manufactures (Bauzon 1992). For example, during British hegemony in the nineteenth century, the empire became the workshop of the world importing a considerable amount of raw material for domestic production (Arrighi *et al.* 1999). Acquiring raw materials from peripheries, like India, Africa, and the U.S., provided a source of income for these regions to then purchase manufactures while also establishing an exchange relationship with the British (Arrighi *et al.* 1999; Parsons 1999). Given that Britain was the workshop of the world, it was responsible for producing most consumer goods which were purchased by the peripheries with the income acquired from the initial trade of their raw materials. These economic relationships, however, are not static given the constant processes of exchange, redistribution, and transfer. Peripheral and semi-peripheral states can renegotiate their status within the global system based on the value and scarcity of their exchange goods; just as core-states can become subordinate as industrial production and technological advances are exported providing a

means for other states to compete often because of cheaper labor costs (Arrighi *et al.* 1999; Nash 1981).

Given that the capitalistic economic system is inherently dynamic through wealth accumulation, transfer, and redistribution, the leadership role of dominant states in the system is constantly shifting during periods of hegemonic rise and decline as capital flows and accumulation determine the dominant player. During periods of hegemonic rise, the form of leadership that the dominant state employs can have different effects on the long term success of the hegemonic system. Leadership, like that of Britain at the beginning of the Hundred Years Peace (1815-1914), where "a dominant state leads a system of states in a desired direction, and, in doing so, is widely perceived as pursuing a general interest…inflates the power of the dominant state" and contributes to its longer term success (Arrighi *et al.* 1999: 27). On the other hand, leadership resulting by virtue of achievement, which produces a model of development by which other states can emulate the dominant state, most often leads to increased competition, decline, and hegemonic shifts as lesser powers accumulate capital and organize political structures to rival the dominant power (Arrighi *et al.* 1999). During periods of hegemonic shift, wherein the "leading agency of world-scale processes of capital accumulation and the political-economic structures in which these processes are embedded within" experience a period of decline, a reorganization of the system occurs which lays the track for the emerging global hegemony (Arrighi *et al.*1999: 22).

It is through these periods of hegemonic rise, decline, and reorganization, determined by the function of capitalism, that the political, social, and economic global system is shaped and assimilated internally affecting local systems through continuous

articulations involving both internal and external actors (Ekholm Friedman and Friedman 2008). By explicating the historical and contemporary global hegemonic processes from the sixteenth century to the present, it will be possible to situate the Solomon Islands within the larger world system in order to illustrate the external forces which have affected the internal economic functioning and political organization of the country and which continue to maintain the country in the present.

This section of the paper is organized into two subsections: the historical period (1568-1978), which addresses why the Solomon Islands exist, and the contemporary period (1978-2009), which addresses why the country has not fallen apart. The historical period focuses on the hegemonic transformations in the Western world which have, in turn, shaped the global economic, political, and social systems laying the foundation for the creation of modern nation-states. The aim of the broad focus of this subsection is to provide the global-historical background of the events which laid the foundation for the modern Solomon Islands through Spanish discovery, the establishment of the Westphalia system, British colonization, and the decline of European dominance during the Second World War. The purpose of this subsection is to situate the Solomon Islands within historical world systems in order to understand the events which led to the geopolitical formation and colonization of the country addressing why the Solomon Islands exists in the first place. The contemporary period focuses on the U.S.-led political and economic reorganization that emerged out of the reconstruction of the European economies and the international integration of newly postcolonial countries in the twentieth century. The purpose of this subsection is to explicate the dynamic relationships between external forces and internal actors, influenced and supported by IMF and World Bank-promoted

international policies of economic development, integration and participation in the United Nations and other international organizations, and U.S. policies of intervention post-9/11, which have resulted in the perpetuation of the contemporary, postcolonial Solomon Islands amid internal problems which have continued to plague the country into the present century.

THE HISTORICAL PERIOD (1568-1978)

Age of Discovery

During the fifteenth century European desire for Oriental goods was the driving force behind the exploration and expansion which marked the Age of Discovery (Vigil 1998). Beginning in Roman times, Asian valuables had been desired by the tribute-taking classes of Europe and, as a result, had created a strong West to East trade of European precious metals (Arrighi *et al.* 1999). The tribute-taking classes would need to take control of the Asian trade routes by mastering sea commerce, as well as, find new sources of precious metals like silver used to exchange for Oriental goods thereby controlling the commercial world in Europe (Arrighi *et al.* 1999). "The centrality of Asian trade for the intra-European power struggle had been the driving force behind the Iberian discovery of the Americas and of a sea route to the East Indies via that Cape of Good Hope" (Arrighi *et al.* 1999: 221).

In 1469, with the unification of the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon, the Spanish empire acquired the strength to cast the Moors out of Granada in 1492 (Vigil 1998). "The defeat of the Moors, who controlled Mediterranean sea commerce, opened the doors for further commercial interests…with serious expansionist efforts following this success" (Vigil 1998: 45-46). The Spanish Crown sought to discover new sources of precious

metals for trade with the Orient, as well as, faster sea routes to trade destinations; thus, beginning in the late fifteenth century, Spanish explorations to the West increased dramatically. While the Dutch were successful in controlling the Baltic grain trade establishing themselves as a powerful force in European commercialism in the sixteenth century, the Spanish reigned supreme on the continent because of their "monopolistic control over extra-European resources—most notably, American silver" (Arrighi *et al.*1999: 40). The monopoly which the Spanish Crown had over silver and gold resources from their colonies in the Americas was based on the principles of mercantilism which included the strict control of exports and the exchange commodities by a powerful, central state (Vigil 1998). The desire for riches and tribute encouraged further exploration, with the Spanish expanding Oriental trade routes in the West by colonizing the Philippines which was used as a major silver trading hub with China (Arrighi *et al.* 1999).

By the mid-sixteenth century the Spanish merchants had also begun to explore the Pacific in search of more silver and gold resources (Bennett 1987). In 1568, Alvaro de Mendana and his crew discovered the Solomon Islands, thought to be the fabled land of Ophir, and claimed its riches for the Crown (Amherst *et al.* 1901). While the Spanish and other European seafaring powers had discovered the islands of the Pacific in the sixteenth century, because little wealth was found in these places, the mass colonization and exploitation which resulted from the discovery of resources in the Americas, Africa, and Asia did not occur in the Pacific during this era. These exploratory voyages did, however, expand geographical knowledge placing the islands of Oceania on the Western world

map, which would later influence colonization and expansion of trade and whaling in the Pacific as the European empires vied for global dominance.

For the Solomon Islands, the discovery of the region by Alvaro de Mendana in the sixteenth century established the geopolitical boundary and Biblical name which incorporated the diverse people who inhabited these islands into a single entity. The title and the geopolitical boundary, which defined the ethno-national identity of the country and, thus, of those incorporated within the boundary, given to the islands during the Age of Discovery were maintained, with exception of the inclusion of the westernmost islands annexed from Germany, throughout the British colonial period. These have survived into the twentieth century, through the decisions of a small group of internal actors influenced by external forces at independence, defining the modern country, perpetuating the legacy of European imperialism in the Solomon Islands, and preventing the majority of people incorporated within the geographical and ethno-national boundary from defining themselves and determining their own future.

Treaties of Westphalia

On the European continent, because of the vast wealth acquired through trade and colonization across the globe, competition for control of resources and sea routes was igniting tension among the empires. Continental power struggles were also based on religious loyalties with the Protestant United Provinces, England, France, Scandinavia, the Swiss Cantons, and German princes challenging the successful monopolistic control of the colonies held by the Catholic *Casa d'Austria* made up of the Spanish and Austrian Hapsburgs, the Papal Curia, most of the Italian states, and Poland (Polisensky 1954). In Bohemia, the main economic resource of the Austrian Hapsburgs, tensions over religious

liberties were mounting as the mainly Protestant population was in fear of Spanish imperial dominance. In 1617, with the Austrian and Spanish Hapsburg families combining strength, the Bohemian Estates were forced to accept Ferdinand II as their king crystallizing Catholic dominance and Spanish imperial control (Polisensky 1954). This infuriated the Bohemian Estates and marked the beginning of the Thirty Years War in Europe (Polisensky 1954). During the war, the Dutch profited immensely as demand for Baltic grain rose and their monopolistic control over these resources was strengthened by challenging Iberian sea power (Arrighi *et al.* 1999).

In 1648, under the leadership of the Dutch, the Treaties of Westphalia were signed, signaling the end of the Thirty Years War and the formal institution of the emergent system of European states modeled after the United Provinces (Arrighi *et al.* 1999). "After the Peace of Westphalia, national states did become the basic units of politics in the European-centered world system" (Arrighi *et al.* 1999: 37). The rise of the sovereign state political model and the capitalist economic model which supported Dutch hegemony did not rapidly transform Europe, due in large part to the general economic crisis of the seventeenth century and the endurance of feudal systems (Arrighi *et al.* 1999; Hobsbawm 1954). However, the system of sovereign states that emerged out of the Treaties of Westphalia at the end of the Thirty Years War would established the foundation for the nation-state system that was expanded under British hegemony and then became the global norm of sociopolitical organization after the Second World War. This system would also provide the model that the Solomon Islands and most other colonial holdings would follow during the wave of decolonization in the second half of the twentieth century.

In the century following the Peace of Westphalia, Dutch dominance of European commerce continued as it partnered with England which was expanding through colonization of America and India (Arrighi *et al.* 1999). As Dutch commerce waned because of increasing competition, economic crisis, and transfer of capital to England, French and English commercial dominance developed in Europe. In the late- eighteenth century, France had gained power over England through its support of the American Revolutionary War; however, the war left the French bankrupt and set in motion the French Revolution in 1789 (Arrighi *et al.* 1999). The defeat of Napoleon, the expansion of the English commercial and colonial empire, and the Peace of Vienna orchestrated by the British in 1815, establishing European balance of power through an interstate system which became an "instrument of informal British rule", all cemented England's position as the new hegemonic power in the nineteenth century (Arrighi *et al.* 1999: 59). The territorial domains and networks of power which defined the imperial organization of Britain would expand the European-centered world system, established by the Dutch in the seventeenth century, into a system of British global hegemony in the nineteenth century (Arrighi *et al.* 1999).

British Hegemony

During the Hundred Years Peace (1815-1914) the British perpetuated their dominance politically through the promotion of "collective goods" in Europe by establishing a British-led balance of power mechanism, protecting oceanic commerce, and instituting cartographic studies of land and sea (Arrighi *et al.* 1999). Because the perception among European states was that the Empire acted for the good of the

continent, "instead of inspiring challenges, British dominance secured a large measure of willing acceptance among Western states" (Arrighi *et al.* 1999: 60).

Economically, the British dominated through the enactment of a policy in the mid-century which unilaterally liberalized trade, with nearly one-third of world exports being transported to Britain and import-export partnerships being established with America and the rest of Europe. "Through this policy, Britain cheapened the domestic cost of vital supplies and at the same time provided the means of payment for other countries to buy its manufactures" (Arrighi *et al.* 1999: 60). During the nineteenth century Britain became the "workshop of the world" mobilizing its industrial sectors and leading the way into the Industrial Revolution which transformed and connected the globe (Arrighi *et al.* 1999; Parsons 1999). By mid-century trade had expanded exponentially and the British had dramatically increased the value of its trade with the Ottoman Empire, Latin America, India, and Australasia (Arrighi *et al.* 1999). British global hegemony, while strongly supported by political and economic policies in Europe, was also grounded in its policies of colonization and empire-building practices in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which incorporated large sections of the world into the British Empire.

The first empire of the British, which it won control over throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was made up of land and commercial holdings, as well as, colonial settlements in India, South Africa, the West Indies, and North America (Parsons 1999). The British Empire's most successful non-European majority colonial possession from the first empire was India. British imperialism in India was born out of commercial trade relations in the early seventeenth century between the British East India

Company and the subcontinent under the supervision of the dominant Mughal Empire (Parsons 1999). In the mid-eighteenth century during the Seven Years War with France, the British East India Company defeated the Mughal Empire and their French allies during the Battle of Plassey in 1757. The British would take control of the subcontinent and establish the Indian colony which remained under imperial rule for two hundred years (Parsons 1999; Arrighi *et al.* 1999). The administration in the India colony was so successful that it became a model for all other British holdings in Africa and Asia. Indian laborers were also sent to work in overseas colonies such as the sugarcane plantation in Fiji establishing a large Indian population in British territories (Parsons 1999; Howard 1989).

British interest in the Pacific began in the late eighteenth century with the establishment of penal colonies in the Australian territories of New South Wales and Tasmania. These colonies were the result of the introduction of the "transportation" punishment for criminals as a means to ease the strain of overpopulation on Britain's jails (Parsons 1999). Free settlers also moved to Australia on the transportation voyages, with the criminals providing a source of cheap labor to the settlers. By the early 1800s, over one hundred thousand free settlers had relocated to Australia redefining the continent from penal colony in the late eighteenth century to an arm of British control in the region in the nineteenth century (Parsons 1999). Later, the British would also acquire New Zealand as white settlement and economic investment increased on the islands. It wasn't, however, until the 1870s when, faced with increased competition from newly industrialized European rivals who had turned their attention overseas, the British

"moved to acquire formal control over regions on the world that it deemed economically or strategically important" (Parsons 1999: 9).

The scramble for the Pacific began in the late-nineteenth century with the Germans acquiring New Guinea and German Samoa, the Dutch maintaining established colonies in parts of Indonesia, the French occupying New Caledonia, French Polynesia, and Vanuatu, and the United States in control of Hawaii, Guam, and the Philippines. The British Empire participated in the scramble by acquiring Fiji (1874), Tokelau (1877), the Cook Islands (1888), Gilbert and Ellice Islands (1892) and, finally, the Solomon Islands as a British protectorate under the High Commissioner in Fiji in 1893 (Bennett 2002; Samson 1998; Howe 1994). Although the Pacific had long been of interest to European merchant traders, whalers, and black birders, the colonial acquisition of Pacific lands during the scramble formally brought the islands into the world system, establishing them as peripheral colonies and protectorates used for economic, political, and military advantage by Western rivals struggling for global hegemony. The British Solomon Islands Protectorate was established as a periphery of Britain to protect the economic and political interests of the British Commonwealth countries of Australia and New Zealand from exploitation and invasion by other colonial powers, namely Germany and France, in the region (Bennett 2002; Howe 1994).

The British treasury, however, not wishing to finance yet another dependency, encouraged the colonial administration of the Solomon Islands, headed by Resident Commissioner Charles Woodford, to make the Solomon Islands a self-sufficient region. The administration decided to establish a plantation economy in which foreign planters set up plantations supplied with labor from the local populations (Bennett 1987). The

colonial policy of lease-holding, with the ownership of the land in the hands of the government, arose out of a belief that a plantation economy would sustain the government through taxation as well as lease revenue (Bennett 1987). The government desired to buy up all the land rather than to organize its use among the native populations because it was a common belief among most of the administrators in the Western Pacific High Commission that the Melanesians were doomed to extinction (Bennett 1987). "Lands were obtained by resumption under the Waste Land regulations, by freehold purchase, and later by government purchase for leasing" (Bennett 1987: 125). Because of the new leasing program, money began to be made in the Solomon Islands as new plantations sprung up and already established plantations expanded (Bennett 1987).

In late 1929, the stock market crash struck, sending global copra prices in a downward spiral which threatened the livelihood of the Solomon Islands (Keesing 1992). With the plantations failing and eighty-five percent of the land purchased by the government still untilled and going to waste due to a lack of labor, the colonial government had to rethink its dreams of a self-sufficient plantation economy in the Islands (Bennett 1987). In reality "the only condition in the Solomons that really favored plantation development was the existence of legal and political sanctions, in the form of the indentured system with its penal clause, and the head tax, but even these were weakened by the alternative means of subsistence open to Solomon Islanders" (Bennett 1987: 240). The overall decline in the plantation economy of the Solomon Islands was part of an expanding global economic decline which occurred at the beginning of the twentieth century that would eventually lead to the Second World War and the end of British global dominance.

The dawn of the twentieth century marked the beginning of the end of British hegemony culminating in the emergence of the United States as the dominant player in the global economy at the end of World War II in 1945. After the Great Depression of 1873-1896, Britain experienced a belle époque wherein the system expanded to its maximum during the Edwardian Era (Arrighi *et al.* 1999). It was during this phase that the British Empire acquired most of its Pacific holdings; however, the scramble for the Pacific also demonstrated the power of other industrialized rivals, like Germany and the United States, who were challenging British global dominance at the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1914, the Great War broke out in Europe with the assassination of the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, Duke Ferdinand, in Bosnia. While the war ravaged the continent causing millions of deaths in Europe and Russia, the end of the First World War saw the elimination of the main U.S. and British economic rival with the defeat of Germany (Arrighi *et al.* 1999). Although the United States had faired quite well economically at the end of the war, accounting for nearly forty percent of the world production in 1920, isolationist policies prevented the country from becoming the dominant power (Arrighi *et al.* 1999; Pollard 1997). This post-war isolationism resulted in the United States Congress blocking efforts by President Wilson to join the League of Nations— the international organization created through the Treaty of Versailles meant to prevent further wars by uniting the Great Allied Powers (Arrighi *et al.* 1999; Pollard 1997).

While British hegemony was in decline and U.S. economic and military power was on the rise, it would take the Crash of 1929 and the Great Depression that followed coupled with the Second World War for the United States to finally emerge as the new

dominant power. Although British hegemony was in decline at the beginning of the twentieth century, the legacy of expansionist practices and peripheralization of the globe which marked British dominance would continue to shape the world both geographically and economically into core and periphery. The Solomon Islands, which had only been known to Europe as the land of Ophir in the sixteenth century, had become a periphery of the most expansive empire on earth under British hegemony in the nineteenth century. British colonization of the Solomon Islands influenced the path the country would take in the twentieth century from a colonial plantation economy in the beginning of the century to the site of decisive battles in the Allied fight for the Pacific during the Second World War. While World War II would mark the end of British hegemony and European global dominance, it marked the beginning of decolonization and political integration of the former colonies, like the Solomon Islands, into the global system of independent nation-states under the United Nations.

World War II

After the Great Depression of the 1930s weakened many of the global economies including Britain and the United States, the world was once again thrust into international warfare with the German invasion of Poland in 1939. The Second World War was the most expansive war in world history with battles being fought in Europe, Russia, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. The effects of the war on the Solomon Islands were minimal until December 1941 when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, opening up the second front of World War II in the Pacific (Bennett 1987). The Japanese sought to control the Pacific and began invading islands throughout the region. In January 1942 Japanese took control of the capital of New Guinea and by May of that same year had occupied both

Tulagi and Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands (Bennett 1987). The Japanese took special interest in Guadalcanal because of Lunga Point Airfield which served as a landing location for Japanese planes bringing in supplies (NHC 2001). There were many battles throughout the Solomon Islands, with the bloodiest taking place on Savo Island and on Guadalcanal, having to do with control of the sea and the air, respectively (NHC 2001). By 1944, the American and Allied forces had begun to win back the Pacific and had taken control of the Solomons from the Japanese, with American forces remaining on Guadalcanal to set up a base and staging area using the newly renamed Henderson Airfield (Bennett 1987; NHC 2001).

The most considerable impact of World War II on the Solomon Islanders was that it changed forever their relationship with the Europeans (Bennett 1987). While the American forces rushed into to guard the Solomon Islands and remove the Japanese threat, the European colonizers fled their plantations and government posts, sometimes even stranding their whole workforce (Bennett 1987; White 1991). The Solomon Islanders assisted American forces by being coast watchers and were also credited with saving a young John F. Kennedy's and his crews' lives when their PT-109 was attacked and shipwrecked by the Japanese in the Western Solomons (Bennett 1987). The Solomon Islanders enjoyed this new found respect and appreciated being viewed as capable human beings; and, because of their abandoning the war effort, "perceived their former masters simply as men- vulnerable, no longer omniscient, and now in need of them" (Bennett 1987: 290). The Solomon Islanders were especially impressed by the Americans who showed generosity and sympathy toward them and demonstrated that blacks and whites could live and work together in a Christian manner (Bennett 1987). The Malaitans went

so far as to collect money to give to the Americans with the hope that they would support

a new administration in the Islands, replacing their current British colonizers (Burt 1993).

Although the United States did not remain in the Solomon Islands, relinquishing control

to the British upon retreat, the attitude of the Solomon Islanders reflected a new shift in

the global system, namely that of British hegemonic decline and American ascent to

global power and influence at the end of the Second World War (Arrighi *et al.* 1999).

The toll of World War II on the economic might of Europe was devastating given

the tremendous human and material costs of the war amounting to greater losses than in

any other war in history (Pollard 1997). "As the conflict of 1939-1945 had fully engaged

the economies of the industrialized belligerents especially in Europe and Japan, their

traditional role of supplying manufactures to the rest of the world had largely fallen into

abeyance in the war years" (Pollard 1997: 3). Although the United States had suffered

considerable human loss on the European, Asian, and Pacific fronts, economically and

politically the U.S. came out of World War II a winner. The U.S. filled the large

mercantile and manufacturing gaps created by the war in Europe increasing mercantile

marine to fifty-three percent of the world total and producing "almost half the world's

total [manufactures] in 1946, while containing only six percent of the world's

population" (Pollard 1997: 3).

The United States also began to promote international regulatory agencies, to

prevent the explosion of social and political problems, which were paired with a

Keynesian economic plan focused on regulation believing that economic prosperity and

political stability were linked (Arrighi *et al.* 1999). By sponsoring these agencies and

economic plans, the United States positioned itself at the top, creating a stable

environment for mass, regulated consumption. Helping to rebuild and revitalize the

European economy through the Marshall Plan and support of the European Economic

Community, the United States also created a substantial market for its manufactures

(Arrighi *et al.* 1999).

In order to stabilize the world and prevent future wars, the United States and other

Allied countries promoted the creation of the United Nations, modeled after the League

of Nations, which at its inception included fifty one nation-states (Buell 1994). The UN

Charter was created in San Francisco and outlined "new norms and rules for the

legitimization of state-making and war making" as well as plans for economic and social

development (Arrighi *et al.* 1999: 81). While the United States succeeded in creating a

domestically beneficial international political and economic climate after the destruction

of the Second World War, its new position at the top of the global hegemonic system

situated the U.S. in direct opposition to the other great world power that emerged after

the war—the Soviet Union (Arrighi *et al.* 1999; Pollard 1997).

The new world order that emerged during the mid-twentieth century divided the

global system into two main groups, the Western democratic capitalist countries led by

the United States and the Eastern socialist countries led by the Soviet Union (Pollard

1997). The core economic and military powers of this era, defined as the First World,

used their power to pressure less-developed nations to situate themselves in on either side

of the conflict. The least developed economies, such as the Solomon Islands, that were

not positioned in either camp and were not directly involved in the confrontation became

known as the Third World, thus, denominating the new core and periphery during the

Cold War era (Pollard 1997). For the colonized world, the new world order brought about

by the beginning of the Cold War in 1947 initiated the end of old imperialism that had

dominated the previous centuries (Arrighi *et al.* 1999; Pollard 1997; Buell 1994). The UN

Charter, ratified in 1945, "proclaimed 'the right of all people to choose the form of

government under which they live' and wished to see 'sovereign rights and self-

government restored to those who had been deprived of them'" (Boahen 1986: 142). The

European powers, which had suffered substantial losses in the Second World War, were

sympathetic to the notion of relinquishing control of their colonial holdings and slowly

began long process of decolonization (Pollard 1997; Boahen 1986).

For Britain, while its "far-flung territorial empire was an essential ingredient in

the formation and consolidation of the nineteenth century British world order," the

decades of interstate competition preceding World War II and the massive economic

losses suffered as a result of the war turned the "world encompassing empire from an

asset into a liability" (Arrighi *et al.* 1999: 83). Therefore, after the war the British

government enacted policies of the Yaoundé conventions, following the example of the

Marshall Plan in Europe, which would lead its Third World colonial regions into

economic independence (Bennett 2002; Pollard 1997). The British had not, since it first

declared the Solomon Islands a protectorate in 1893, wanted to take on the financial

responsibility of maintaining the Islands, therefore, this was a plan for the British to

loosen its ties with the Solomons while at the same time presenting an opportunity for the

Islanders to take control of their future. The British were not, however, prepared to

completely relinquish control of the Solomon Islands along with their Melanesian

counterparts because Western Pacific High Commission judged these regions to be unfit

for self-governance and economic self-reliance (Bennett 1987).

Britain, while optimistic about the future, determined that the process of decolonization throughout its colonies would take nearly fifty years to complete (Boahen 1986). Thus, the British continued to financially aid the Solomons and set up infrastructure in the capital, and by 1955 the colonial administration, which had disappeared during the war, was back in place (Bennett 1987). From 1955 until 1964 the British government conducted business as usual in the Solomons Islands. However, by the mid-1960s the Protectorate was on the road to economic stability and the British had begun to build the foundation of a non-colonial government paving the way for independence (Bennett 1987). By establishing self-governance and a self-sustaining capitalist economy in the Solomon Islands after World War II, the British were satisfying the "twin pillars of the U.S. hegemonic appeal to the Third World": decolonization and development (Arrighi *et al.* 1999: 209).

While the Second World War marked the end of European global dominance and the beginning of decolonization, the prospects for these soon-to-emerge postcolonial countries like the Solomon Islands were unknown given that most were heavily dependent on economic assistance from their former colonizers and many lacked a sturdy political foundation upon which they could create a functioning nation-state in the new U.S.-led global system. The former British Solomon Islands Protectorate, like most colonial holdings, would emerge out of colonial control as an economically underdeveloped nation-state modeled after the Westphalia and European system of sovereign states, without either a nation which could legitimize the creation of a state or a strong foundation from which a state could be built which could unify the people as a nation. The end of the Second World War, therefore, would usher in the era of the

decolonization, the dramatic expansion of the sovereign nation-state model, the integration of the world into a global capitalist economy, and, as a result, the emergence of the Third World and the problem of economic dependency.

Through the examination of the historical period it has been demonstrated why the Solomon Islands exists and how it was created through the competition for dominance in Europe. The next subsection will focus on the contemporary period in the Solomon Islands explicating the factors which have perpetuated the modern country and, thus, addressing the question: why hasn't the Solomon Islands fallen apart?

THE CONTEMPORARY PERIOD (1978-2009)

Decolonization and *Dependency*

The dawn of the Cold War in 1947 signaled the end of the colonial period and an extension of the Westphalia system as nationalist movements in China, while establishing a communist regime, aligned the country as independent and India achieved independence after a long anti-colonial struggle against the British Empire (Arrighi *et al.* 1999; Pollard 1997; Buell 1994). While parts of northern Africa, including Egypt and Morocco achieved independence earlier, the great wave of independence in Africa came when the Gold Coast became Ghana under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah in 1957 (Buell 1994; Boahen 1986). Thirty two African countries followed suit and achieved independence from European colonizers in the decade following (Buell 1994). Decolonization of the Pacific began in the 1960s with Western Samoa becoming Oceania's first independent country in 1962 (Davidson 1971). Nauru, Tonga, and Fiji quickly followed Western Samoa, all becoming decolonized, independent countries by 1970 (Davidson 1971). From 1970 to 1980 all Melanesian countries achieved

independence including the Solomon Islands in 1978 and Vanuatu in 1980 (Howard 1989).

The success of decolonization throughout the world during the latter part of the twentieth century was demonstrated by an explosion of participation in the United Nations. Beginning with only fifty one members in 1945, "by 1981, its membership reached a total of 156 countries… [with new members consisting] largely of Third World states that have emerged from the ruins of shattered empires" (Stavrianos 1981: 624 quoted in Buell 1994: 17). While decolonization freed much of the Third World from colonial oppression and participation in the United Nations guaranteed the right of self-governance and sovereignty, much of the Third World would remain subordinate to the core-states in the new world order (Arrighi *et al.* 1999; Pollard 1997; Boahen 1986).

The administrative structures which guide the functioning of the United Nations and the international economic institutions of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) were organized, at their inception, in such a way as to favor the economically, militarily, and politically powerful core-states (Arrighi *et al.* 1999). For the newly decolonized countries of the Third World, in order to achieve the second pillar of U.S. hegemony, namely development, they would need to rely heavily on the core-states who controlled the international institutions, thus, establishing a system of neocolonial control and peripheralization through aid, trade, and investment (Arrighi *et al.* 1999; Pollard 1997; Bauzon 1992). The U.S. hegemonic development strategy for the Third World in the wake of decolonization, therefore, entailed a new system of dependency and "the institutionalization of exploitation" through the development

policies of the United Nations, World Bank, and IMF (Arrighi *et al.* 1999; Bauzon 1992: 46; Scott 1992).

The hallmark of the United States' development model for the Third World was for these economies to become self-sustaining and integrate into the global market through the attraction of foreign investment capital (Arrighi *et al.* 1999). This directive reflected the values of the corporate-style business model adopted by the U.S. and Europe before the First World War (Arrighi *et al.* 1999). After World War II, "as U.S. corporate capital seized the opportunities for domestic and transnational expansion created by the U.S. government, world capitalism came to operate under an entirely new system of business enterprise" resulting in the dramatic expansion of the multinational corporation as the model for business organization (Arrighi *et al.* 1999: 140; Pollard 1997). Directly following the Second World War, American corporations went multinational by establishing subsidiaries in Western Europe, and by 1973 there were nearly ten thousand multinational companies worldwide (Pollard 1997). The multinational corporate model expanded rapidly as the climate of fierce inter-corporate competition led many companies to relocate internationally, lowering production costs via cheaper labor and lax regulation, thus, providing the source of foreign investment capital needed in the developing world (Pollard 1997).

While multinationals did invest in the Third World, the liberalization of economies and the focus on development-then-democracy promoted by the IMF and World Bank in these countries, which was supposed to result in the trickle-down effect, actualized as the emergence of widespread corruption and domestic class-systems where elites and government officials (often one in the same) would be the major beneficiaries

of foreign investment (Ekholm Friedman 2008; Pollard 1997; Axworthy 1992).

Development models supported by the international economic agencies "virtually ignore

the nature of the recipient country's regime" while multinational corporations investing

in developing countries focus on government stability, regardless of form, and lax

regulation over democratic governance and equal development (Axworthy 1992:112;

Amba-Rao 1992). Because of this, one of the most lucrative businesses in the developing

world is government, with elites not only controlling the state, and thus, development aid

and bribery funding, but also dominating 'private' business (Ekholm Friedman 2008). It

is estimated that the government sector in the Solomon Islands occupies between seventy

and eighty percent of the total economy (Clements and Foley 2008). The private sector in

the country represents only a small portion of the economy and, in some cases, is not

necessarily private given that government officials have held stake in lucrative industries.

In the Solomon Islands, the most profitable private enterprise since independence

has been the logging industry. During the tropical timber boom of the 1980s, logging

companies, mainly from Southeast Asia, unsustainably exploited the natural resource

devastating the forests which had been used for millennia by local villages for

subsistence purposes. The government did little to stop this and even aided in the practice

by relaxing regulatory standards, more than likely because of corruption tied to millions

of Solomon Dollars in bribes to local government officials from overseas interests, as

well as, private interests in the logging industry within the government, demonstrated by

the fact that even Prime Minister Mamaloni had a logging company called Somma Ltd

(Aqorau 2008; Kabutaulaka 1998). By the late 1990s, however, timber resources were

decreasing dramatically and environmental degradation was at an all time high; the

providers, including Australia, of international aid to the region threatened to pull funding if something was not done quickly to curb deforestation and stop corruption and tax evasion (Hviding 2006; Kabutaulaka 1998).

Presently, the timber industry represents the Solomon Islands main source of revenue "accounting for seventeen percent of the country's economy, eighteen percent of government revenue and seventy percent of export earnings" (Wasuka 2007). Although corruption has waned since the initial timber boom, logging practices have remained unsustainable. According to Solomon Islands Central Bank Governor, Rick Hou, 2010 will be a decisive year for the Solomon Islands' economy because the natural forests are projected to be logged out of existence effectively destroying the timber industry, and thus, the largest, private contributor to the country's economy (Wasuka 2007).

For a least developed country (LDC), like the Solomon Islands, that relies on the agricultural sector for over seventy percent export revenue, along with Liberia, Malawi, Somalia, Kiribati, and Afghanistan, the loss of a significant agricultural contributor to the gross national income could result in economic catastrophe for the country (United Nations 2008). In the Solomon Islands, while "fisheries, cocoa, copra and palm oil are major contributors to the national economy" they cannot come close to matching the revenue and jobs that have been provided by the timber industry; thus, the Solomon Islands must find other, extra-agricultural sources of national revenue (Wasuka 2007).

However, attracting legitimate foreign business investment in sectors outside of agriculture in the Solomon Islands has been difficult, especially after the civil crises in 1998-2003 and 2006 when there was a sharp decline in investment and many businesses became defunct or, as was the case with the Gold Ridge mining operation, abandoned

(Fraenkel 2004). While the Gold Ridge mining operation was scheduled to resume in 2009, it will not likely provide a significant source of government revenue and it is estimated that the operation will create only five hundred jobs, a miniscule number compared with the thousands provided by the tropical timber industry (Wasuka 2007).

Although legitimate foreign business investment has been encouraged in the post-conflict Solomon Islands, it has been hard to come by given the perception of a less-than-favorable economic and political investment climate in the country. This perception stems from a lack of stable governance and established business infrastructure coupled with allegations of widespread corruption, wherein elite government officials have been accused of using their positions within the state to create a personally profitable environment by manipulating the disbursement of compensation payments during the 1998-2003 crisis, relaxing regulations on logging industry and providing illegal tax breaks in exchange for bribes, selling official citizenship documentation to Chinese nationals, and embezzling provincial funding among other allegations (U.S. Department of State 2007; McDougall 2004; Kabutaulaka 1998).

According to the 2009 Index of Economic Freedom, the Solomon Islands ranks the 163rd freest economy in the report just below Angola (Index of Economic Freedom 2009). The Index cites poor governance, inconsistent regulation, poor infrastructure, and corruption as the basis for the ranking (Index of Economic Freedom 2009). The Financial Times and Stock Exchange (FTSE) classified the Solomon Islands as high risk for corruption and bribery in the FTSE4Good Policy Committee Index (FTSE4Good). This FTSE classification is based on the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators 1996-2008 in which the Solomon Islands ranked below the fiftieth percentile, with some

rankings as low as zero, for the governance indicators of government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption (Governance Matters 2009).

"Government corruption and impunity in both the executive and legislative branches" continue to plague the Solomon Islands and are major impediments to legitimate foreign business investment in the country (U.S. Department of State 2007). The most notorious corruption allegations in recent years have been against former Prime Minister Ezekiel Alebua and former Finance Minister Francis Zama (U.S. Department of State 2007). These corruption allegations, paired with an unfavorable investment climate, have largely discouraged the establishment of foreign-funded, legitimate enterprises in the Solomon Islands. Currently, the most significant portion of international funding in the Solomon Islands comes in the form of vote-buying "chequebook diplomacy" development projects and official foreign aid (Vltchek 2007; Greenpeace 2007; Gani 2006).

One of the players in "chequebook diplomacy" foreign aid investment in the Pacific Island states is Japan (Greenpeace 2007; Vltchek 2007). Although it cannot be proven without a doubt, for Japan, the main purpose of investing in the Pacific is to garner supporting votes in the International Whaling Commission (IWC) (Greenpeace 2007). According to a report by Greenpeace (2007), five Pacific Island countries have received a combined total of over nine million yen in fisheries-aid from 1994-2006, with the Solomon Islands alone receiving nearly two million yen. In 2006, all five countries voted with Japan passing the IWC resolution 2006-1 St. Kitts and Nevis Declaration, which accepted "that scientific research has shown that whales consume huge quantities of fish making the issue a matter of food security for coastal nations and requiring that

the issue of management of whale stocks must be considered in a broader context of ecosystem management [and emphasized] that placing the use of whales outside the context of the globally accepted norm of science-based management and rule-making for emotional reasons would set a bad precedent" (IWC Resolution 2006-1; Greenpeace 2007).

The vote in favor of Resolution 2006-1 supporting Japanese whaling by the Solomon Islands was likely the result of fisheries-aid coercing government officials who voted in the IWC, rather than as popular support of whaling amongst Solomon Islanders (Greenpeace 2007). This is demonstrated in a report by the World Wildlife Fund (2006) wherein only thirty-two percent of people polled reported knowing the Solomon Islands was a member of the IWC, while seventy-two percent reported the Solomon Islands should vote against a return to commercial whaling and sixty-nine percent reported that the country should not have voted in favor of returning to commercial whaling as it did in previous votes.

While Japan serves as a source of financial aid for the Pacific, which arguably could be related to the practice vote-buying, by far the largest participants in "chequebook diplomacy" are China and Taiwan which have invested millions of dollars in the Pacific Islands (Vltchek 2007). The reason for this massive foreign aid investment in the region is related to the practice of vote-buying and support within the United Nations (Vltchek 2007). The competition is for diplomatic international recognition of the Republic of China (ROC) in support of Taiwan or the People's Republic of China (PRC) in support of China. "The Pacific Islands Forum has an official relationship with China, yet six of its 16 members officially recognize Taiwan. Samoa, Kingdom of Tonga,

Cook Islands, Niue, Fiji, Vanuatu, FSM, and PNG 'go with China,' together with the two regional powers of Australia and New Zealand, while Palau, the Marshall Islands (RMI), Kiribati, the Solomon Islands, Nauru, and Tuvalu 'are with Taiwan'" (Vltchek 2007). In support of Taiwan, then Prime Minister Sogavare addressed the United Nations General Assembly on November 2001 stating: "The time has come to reconsider the exclusion of the Republic of China from the United Nations. Solomon Islands appeal for Taiwan's representation and participation in the United Nations system is premised on the principles of justice, dignity and the right of the people of Taiwan to be heard and represented in the international arena and for them to be able to enjoy the same benefits that the rest of us enjoy" (United Nations 2001).

Taiwan has been responsible for numerous foreign aid disbursements to the Solomon Islands with some even providing funding for the rampant compensation payments demanded by victim's families during the tensions of 1998-2003, which also brought the Sogavare administration under fire for alleged corruption (Fraenkel 2004; McDougall 2004). In 2008, Prime Minister Derek Sikua visited Taiwan pledging support for UN recognition and the Taiwanese government pledged in return to provide financing for the multimillion dollar Solomon Islands National Parliament Building Project along with the millions the country also donates in the form of development aid (Lenga 2009). In a viewpoint piece in *Island Business*, Andre Vltchek (2007) reported that the foreign aid games between China and Taiwan in the Pacific "are becoming extremely dangerous. They deepen dependency syndrome, a curse that is literally immobilizing Pacific Island Nations [and they undermine] the considerable efforts made in a number of these states,

such as the Solomon Islands and in Nauru, to raise living standards for their populations and to improve regional governance".

The most recent player in "chequebook diplomacy" in the Solomon Islands is the Middle Eastern country of Iran. According to a report by Yedioth Ahronoth in the *Solomon Star* newspaper, the foreign minister of Iran, Manouchehr Mottaki, met with the foreign minister of the Solomon Islands, William Haomae, in 2008 to discuss formalizing a diplomatic relationship between the two countries (Island Business 2009; Solomon Times 2009). The Iranian foreign minister promised a technological aid grant to help construct a dam and train Solomon Islanders in the oil and gas industry along with providing a check for two hundred thousand dollars (Island Business 2009; Solomon Times 2009). The Solomon Islands' foreign minister even visited Tehran shortly after this meeting which was held at the UN in New York (Solomon Times 2009). The Solomon Islands' newly founded diplomatic relationship with Iran was demonstrated when the country voted for the Gladstone Report which condemned Israeli attacks on the Palestinian-controlled Gaza Strip (Solomon Times 2009). Israel's ambassador to the Solomon Islands, Michael Ronen, remarked that although the Solomon Islands have never voted for Israel in the UN, the county has not voted against Israel either, usually abstaining from the vote altogether (Island Business 2009). Israel has supported the Solomon Islands in the form of humanitarian and development aid, but refuses to play the game of "chequebook diplomacy" citing that paying the country fifty thousand dollars more than Iran to overturn the decision was not something that Israel would promote as a foreign relations practice (Island Business 2009).

While "chequebook diplomacy" does provide substantial aid money to the Solomon Islands, official development aid (ODA) continues to represent the largest percentage of foreign economic assistance and investment in the country. Australia has been and remains the largest single donor of ODA to the Solomon Islands with AusAID's bilateral program pledging over forty five million dollars in aid for 2009-2010 (AusAID 2009; Feeny 2007). Australia has also pledged over two hundred million dollars for 2009-2010 to support "other Australian assistance provided through RAMSI, AusAID's regional and global programs and other Australian Government agencies, such as the Australian Federal Police" (AusAID 2009).

The problem, however, of dependency on official foreign aid in the Solomon Islands is that it has resulted in more than half of the country's gross national income (GNI) coming from aid, which places it in the same category as Liberia and Sao Tome and Principe (OEDC 2007; Feeny 2007). Countries like the Solomon Islands which receive large aid donations while having minimal internal economic development result in zombie economies following the popular use of the term to describe highly inefficient, debt-ridden firms in Japan which nonetheless continued to receive financial support from banks (Caballero *et al.* 2008; Ahearne *et al.* 2005). As noted in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Development and Co-operation Report (2007), countries which rely heavily on aid for their GNI may have governments that are "less responsive to their citizens and less likely to collect taxes". In a report on the Solomon Islands published in 2008 by the Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, it is stated that the "government revenue continues to be lost through limited capacity to collect taxes on logging exports and fishing," while a survey done by RAMSI

reported that among five thousand people surveyed, only twenty percent paid income taxes (Clements and Foley 2008: 4).

Although the Solomon Islands remains heavily reliant on ODA for GNI, the GDP of the Solomon Islands has increased in recent years, recovering from the lowest levels during the 1998-2003 conflict (Wasuka 2007). However, in order to understand the distribution of benefits from the current economic improvements, it is necessary to examine the human development index (HDI) within the country. "By looking at some of the most fundamental aspects of people's lives and opportunities the HDI provides a much more complete picture of a country's development than other indicators, such as GDP per capita" (Human Development Reports 2009). The Solomon Islands ranks 135th, just above Congo, of 182 total countries on the overall HDI, and ranks 102nd and 157th for the indicators of literacy rates and enrollment in school, respectively (Human Development Reports 2009). For the overall human poverty indicators the Solomon Islands ranks 80th of 135 total countries and ranks especially low for percentage of people not using an improved water source, placing 114th just below Sudan (Human Development Reports 2009). The human development index, therefore, demonstrates that while the Solomon Islands has experienced fairly decent economic gains in recent years, the overall positive impact on the society as a whole has been minimal.

One of the largest strains on human development stems from the fact that the Solomon Islands has experienced an increase in both population, with over half the population being under eighteen, and urbanization, with a nearly four percent urban growth rate (Clarke 2006). The urban migration is a result, as it has been historically, of young adults searching for work and opportunities beyond their rural, home villages.

Rural life in the Solomon Islands can be difficult as schools and health clinics provided by the state, meant to improve village life, have been forced to close down in recent years due to lack of funding and increasing numbers of students (Clarke 2006). The villagers who are able to migrate to Honiara often encounter difficulty in finding work and housing in the already strained and class-differentiated urban center. The urban inhabitants who are unable to find legitimate work often rely on informal economic opportunities like selling betel nut and other agricultural products in illegal markets located mostly in White River outside Honiara (Clarke 2006; Solomon Times 2009 [2]). In October, 2009, however, the town council of Honiara forcibly destroyed the markets, shutting them down indefinitely and leaving vendors with no means to earn much needed incomes (Solomon Times 2009 [2]). In response to the town council's action, one vendor said, "For many of us this is our only means for survival, and now they have taken that away from us" (Solomon Times 2009 [2]).

In the end, while the Solomon Islands does receive substantial foreign aid and has had fairly decent economic growth in recent years, the main benefactors of these resources have been, for the most part, the elite and government officials who have the capacity to manipulate funds to maximize personal gains without providing much in the way of development for the country as a whole. While quality of life has improved for a small number of people in the country, the majority of the population still lives in poverty, lacking access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. What has resulted from the ODA, "chequebook diplomacy", and non-redistributive economic gains is a zombie economy which in reality only supports those with the ability to control the flow of resources while providing little, if anything, to the majority. The economy does

not function properly by providing opportunities and resources to the population through

the cycling of capital; instead, the money comes in from external sources and stays with

only a small percentage of people within the country or is mismanaged, not providing the

social services it was intended for. Even when the people take it upon themselves to

establish a functioning informal economy, the state officials, rather than attempting to

integrate the informal economy into the official private sector, opt to shut down the

informal sector, leaving many families without an income.

This economic inequality, the ability at top levels to manipulate funding for

personal gains, and government negligence are not recent phenomena in the Solomon

Islands. During the late 1990s, these factors resulted in increased poverty, the emergence

of class divisions, corruption, nepotism, social dissolution, and state failure because of

competition for personal gains and lack of confidence. By 1998, tensions in the country

had reached a boiling point signaling the beginning of the five year-long civil conflict.

What ultimately prevented the failing country from complete collapse was the military

and police intervention by the Australian-led peacekeeping mission RAMSI in 2003.

September 11th, 2001

Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands, currently the

largest recipient of Australian aid funding, was established to end the civil conflict of

1998-2003. RAMSI has remained in the Solomon Islands, composed largely of

Australian military and police forces, as a means to keep the peace in the continuing

climate of political, social, and economic instability. The Australian government had

initially decided not to intervene through military or police action in the civil conflict

plaguing the Solomon Islands, instead focusing on diplomatic measures such as helping

to negotiate the Townsville Peace Agreement (Connell 2004). However, in June of 2003 the Australian government, along with a number of Pacific allies, formed RAMSI which forcefully intervened to end the nearly five-year old conflict (Connell 2006; Kabutaulaka 2004). According to Tarcisius T. Kabutaulaka (2004: 2), "the June 2003 decision reflects a fundamental change in global security policies following the September 11, 2001, attack on the World Trade Center in New York […] in particular, it illustrates the perception that transnational terrorism has made it less possible to separate external and internal security".

While the UN system has long struggled with how to deal with state failure relying mainly on domestic peacekeeping missions, in the post-9/11 world, the difficulty of intervention and peace-keeping measures were significantly magnified (Kabutaulaka 2004; Langford 1999). The transnational acts of terror the occurred on September 11th demonstrated that violence, which had previously been confined to specific territories or conflicts, was now "denationalized, deterritorialized, and privatized" (Kabutaulaka 2004: 3). The call for new anti-terrorism strategies by the United States, Britain, and Australia was influenced by fears that traditional international law and UN intervention strategies were not sufficient to deal with the new transnational threat created by terrorism (Kabutaulaka 2004). Kabutaulaka (2004: 3) theorizes that "their call for new anti-terrorism strategies has engendered the Bush administration's pre-emptive strike policy, the UN-sanctioned invasion of Afghanistan, the US-led invasion of Iraq, and the Australian-led intervention in Solomon Islands".

While RAMSI proved to be a success in stopping the violence in the Solomon Islands ending five years of civil conflict and restoring peace to the country in 2003, the

overall success of its initial objectives of restoring law and order and rebuilding the

country have yet to be fully realized. RAMSI forces have now occupied the Solomon

Islands for over five years during which violence once again broke out on a large scale in

2006 as Solomon Islanders, angered by the election of Snyder Rini, began rioting in the

streets of Honiara leveling most of Chinatown (Fraenkel 2008). The transnational

terrorist acts of 9/11, which dramatically altered security strategies forcing the Australian

government to take action to end the civil conflicts in the country, also shined a new light

on the problems facing the Solomon Islands, thus, making the internal problems which

led to the conflicts a matter of international concern.

John Connell (2006: 7) sums up the problems facing RAMSI and the Solomon

Islands in the twenty first century by stating that:

> … real difficulties attend the long term project of nation building
> in conditions of economic and political insecurity, where cultural
> differences are real and not simply to be dismissed as awkward vestiges of
> historic practices and a 'scandal to be overcome'. And, where there is
> constant concern over lack of real 'progress', threats to sovereignty in a
> context of apparent 'neo-colonialism' reflect the eternal paradox involved
> in providing external assistance in order to develop self-reliance. Yet, even
> if colonialism was relatively benign in the Solomon Islands (mainly by
> being superficial) it provided no foundations for the nation's effective
> participation in an increasingly global world. Vulnerability emanates from
> elsewhere: the rapacious quest for raw material (notably timber) that has
> transferred economic surpluses overseas; the focus on resource exports to
> the exclusion of manufacturing and food production; disinterest in
> fostering a middle class that might somehow develop a national
> consciousness within the irrelevant borders of colonial mapping pens,
> where weakness is a function of competing authority rather than of its
> absence. Critical development issues remain in the Solomon Islands, as
> they do elsewhere in Melanesia, and RAMSI can never resolve these.

Although the Solomon Islands has endured as a country to this day, it is clear that

the reasons for the Islands becoming a country in the first place were that of imperial

competition for dominance in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, British expansionism and colonialism in the nineteenth century, and the spread of the Westphalia system and integration into the global economy in the wave of decolonization and development which marked the twentieth century. As an independent country in the twenty-first century, it has minimal internal cohesion, lacking geopolitical unity, a strong sense of national identity, or a functioning state which could organize the people together as a nation. What is left holding the Solomon Islands together is the international recognition as a member in the United Nations global community and, thus, the voting rights entailed in such membership and the economic, social, and political assistance provided by "chequebook diplomacy" and foreign aid and development projects like RAMSI.

While being a country and having a state is not necessarily beneficial to the majority of the population who live in rural villages with little, if any, infrastructure like roads or electricity, still rely on subsistence farming, have negligible healthcare, whose children may or may not receive a basic education, and who have few, if any, positive economic prospects, it is beneficial for a small group of elite and government officials who have a personally profitable interest in seeing the Solomon Islands remain a country and maintain the state. They continue to play the economically and politically lucrative game of "chequebook diplomacy" with the Japanese, Taiwanese, and Iranians while receiving bribes to loosen environmental regulation and give tax breaks to logging companies.

When the government corruption was coupled with socioeconomic dissolution and intergroup tensions erupting into widespread violence and social decay in 1998, it

seemed as though the country would finally collapse. However, after the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11th, 2001 awakened the Western Great Powers to the possibility of denationalized, deterritorialized, and privatized violence, Australia worked quickly through a strong military and police intervention to end the five-year long conflict in the Solomon Islands. However, if the conflict and all the problems which led up to the disintegration of the country in the first place were really resolved, and the Solomon Islands were truly recovering, RAMSI would not still be required within the country, having remained for a longer period of time than the actual civil conflict.

The external forces maintaining the Solomon Islands, including the RAMSI military and police intervention, the Taiwanese, Japanese, and Iranian "chequebook diplomats," and the foreign aid donations equaling over half the country's GNI, are more powerful than the internal forces which are pulling the country apart. What has resulted from the relationship between these external forces and a small group of internal actors is, what I call, a zombie-state: a state that exists by virtue of external forces while having little, if any, internal legitimization be it through practices of nationalism and nation-building processes, rational socioeconomic development, and/or benefits from political representation and incorporation.

The Solomon Islands was created historically through Spanish imperial expansion and British colonization which established the geopolitical boundary, the territorial incorporation of a diverse population, and the sociopolitical model and foundation for the independent country. The Solomon Islands as a geopolitical entity, therefore, was the result of historical external forces brought about by competition for economic and political dominance in Europe. When the Solomon Islands became independent in 1978,

the only foundation the country had was that of the legacy inherited from colonization and the model the country followed was that which was established by Dutch hegemony in the seventeenth century and extended to the decolonized world under U.S. hegemony after the Second World War. After independence, the Solomon Islands faced the problem of fostering a sense of nationhood among diverse groups of people who neither recognized themselves as Solomon Islanders nor believed the state could provide a shared future.

The state, modeled after the system of governance of the British colonizers, was problematic for the majority of the population either due to a lack of understanding or a lack of approval of this form of centralized government. The state, instead of engendering a sense of shared purpose and future among the population through socioeconomic development and state apparatuses, often functioned to benefit those who were in the government and those who had the power to influence the political and economic situation within the country, or did not function at all. As a result, the state has become a self-serving organization which exists by virtue of historical and contemporary external influences and the actions of a small group of internal benefactors. There is a state in the Solomon Islands, and in actuality, the contemporary Solomon Islands is only the state, albeit dysfunctional and ineffective. Given that the Solomon Islands has no sense of nationhood to legitimize the state or unite the population, an ineffective, externally supported economy, minimal social services provided by the state to rationalize its existence, and a government which either functions to support itself or does not function at all, it is a zombie-state.

CONCLUSION

"The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere. The ceremony of innocence is drowned; the best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity" (W.B. Yeats in Achebe 1958: ix).

So how is it that the country of the Solomon Islands conceived of as the mysterious and fabled land of Ophir during the Age of Discovery, contrived out of Western imperial competition for dominance during the era of colonial expansionism, and cultivated from a colonial legacy which has resulted in civil conflict, socioeconomic decline, and violent crisis has not simply fallen apart?

The contemporary Solomon Islands exists as a zombie-state wherein internally there is little geopolitical unity, a lack of national identity, minimal, significant socioeconomic development, and ineffective political representation keeping the country alive and legitimizing the state. What has resulted is a nonexistent nation and a self-serving state organization sustained through external economic support, military intervention, and political coercion influencing the decisions of a small group of internal actors. The Solomon Islands as a internally cohesive, functioning, legitimate nation-state is nominalistic in that local elites and government officials use the title of 'state' as a means to their own economic and political ends, all the while promoting the sociopolitical claim of nationhood, albeit unsuccessfully, as a further means to legitimize their own practices and positions within the country, and not to successfully foster an actual sense of nationhood among the diverse population.

A zombie-state like the Solomon Islands can continue to persist as a nominalistic shell appearing to be alive as long as there are those powerful forces which keep sustaining the zombie prolonging the charade of legitimate existence either selfishly for

their own benefit whether it be personal finances, international and internal security, scientific pursuits, or political recognition, or out of goodwill, for the benefit of a moral or rational purpose. Those who act for selfish reasons, profit from the zombie being mostly-dead by exploiting its economic and political fragility, while those who act for socioeconomic development-inspired reasons, with the optimism that the Third World too can live the "American Dream," continue to provide nourishment through aid and assistance with the hope that the zombie will one day become alive (Arrighi *et al.* 1999).

In either case, what remains true is that the Solomon Islands can be represented as a zombie-state surviving by virtue of external forces which have incorporated the country into the world system beginning in the sixteenth century through expansion, colonization, integration, and dependency. One cannot ignore, however, the fact that the global does not just overcome the local; the global is assimilated locally and it is through these dynamic interactions that localities form themselves in the world and create the internal, local reality. However, for the Solomon Islands, the assimilation of logics of the world system internally, among local logics which were antithetical to the creation of a nation-state based on the historical, external foundation, has resulted more often in nepotism, corruption, civil violence, poverty, the emergence of a class-system, and social dissolution than in the establishment of practices representing a unified nation or a legitimate state that could actually be the Solomon Islands.

Fortunately for the Solomon Islands and the five hundred thousand people who inhabit these islands, what is on their side is time. We must remember that Europeans took over five hundred years to establish the Solomon Islands, while the Solomon Islanders themselves have had only thirty years to negotiate their own fate as an

independent country. While it may be the case that the civil violence, socioeconomic decline, and state failure represents a total failure of the country, it may also be the case that these events and the emergence of a zombie-state represent a sample of the struggles any newly-emerging nation-state might have to face. Another newly-emerging nation-state faced internal dissolution, economic struggles, and a bloody battle against their colonizer which challenged the loyalty of the citizens of this country. Less than fifty years after independence was achieved, the former colonizer returned to this country and tried to regain ownership. Later, not even a century after the war for independence, this country was embroiled in a civil war which caused massive casualties and nearly tore the nation-state apart. This country is the United States, and, as Tarcisius T. Kabutaulaka poignantly stated, "The United States was built out of chaos and civil war. And now we expect the rest of the world to adopt our institutions but do it without violence in a short period of time" (Draper 2009: 98).

While the Solomon Islands may currently be a zombie-state, this is not a death sentence for the young country signaling the beginning of the end. What it may signal is the renegotiation of the Solomon Islands' place within the global capitalist system. Instead of remaining a plantation economy, the leaders of the Solomon Islands have used their position as a member of the UN and IWC to their economic benefit. Their position within the 'Arc of Instability' surrounding Australia has resulted in the receipt of significant foreign aid. The existence of valuable tropical timber on the Islands has provided the country, until recently, with a profitable agricultural sector. While the state has failed to provide significant socioeconomic development for the majority of the country, it has succeeded in utilizing external forces for internal gains, a function of the

renegotiation of status within the capitalist system. Although this has currently resulted in a zombie-state, the civil conflicts of 1998-2003 and 2006 demonstrated that there are those within the country capable of unsettling the state and the country's elite. If the state continues to profit from external political, economic, and social support, eventually the people of the Solomon Islands might be able to renegotiate their status within the country, either coming together to form an actual unified and representative national-state or factioning, tearing the country apart creating new geopolitical entities like the Balkans. Whatever might be the case for the future of the Solomon Islands, only time will tell. If history has anything to teach us within this study, it is that thirty years is not sufficient to determine the fate of a nation-state.

What we can learn and apply to the study of other 'failed' nation-states from this examination of the historical creation of the Solomon Islands and the contemporary problems the independent country faces is that when looking at the current situation in any nation-state we must take into consideration the history of that place, the local realities and the assimilation of global logics, and the functioning of the world system within which the place is situated. By utilizing a holistic approach in studying a nation-state we are able to contextualize the internal realities within the global system and vice versa to better understand the processes which have resulted in the contemporary reality within a country, as well as, to gain a broader picture beyond the simplified portrait provided by the title: "the most failed state".

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