



Australian
National
University

PIPSA 2025

Thursday 20 February

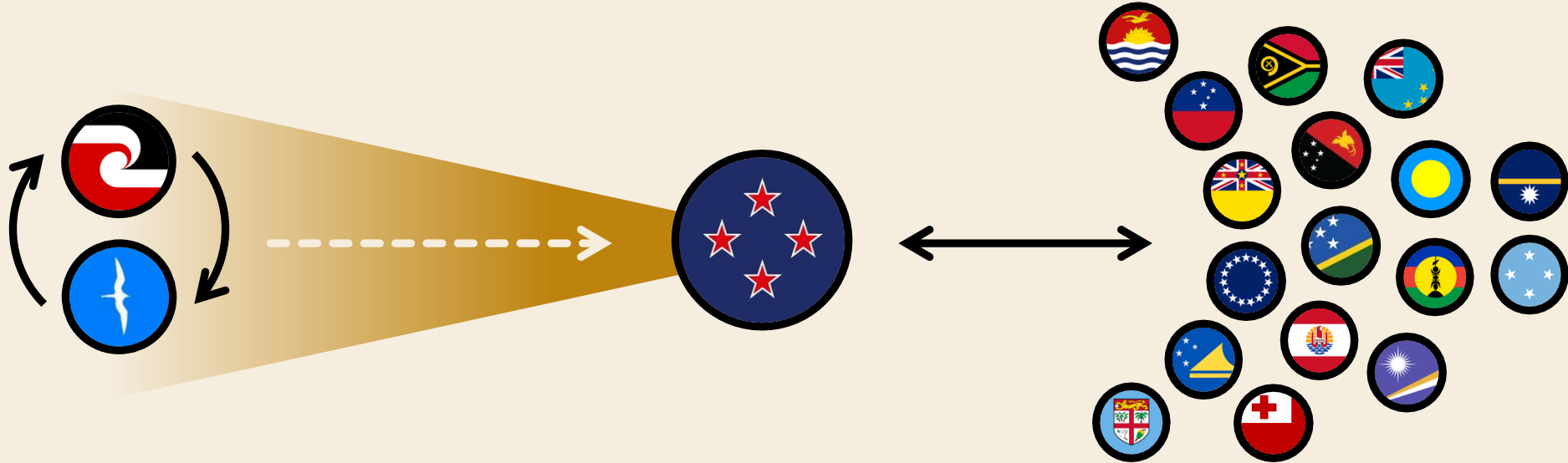
The Māori Renaissance, identity change, and Aotearoa's Pacific diplomacy

Jayden Evett

PhD student • Department of Pacific Affairs, ANU

Affiliate • Stout Research Centre for New Zealand Studies, VUW

There is a connection through national identity by which Māori-Pākehā relations influence Aotearoa's Pacific diplomacy



There have been two full waves of the Renaissance since 1970, with two bodies of affected diplomacy





Response to the *événements*, 1985-89

Prior practice

- Deference to France over Pacific territories
- Reluctant to support independence in settler colonies
- Trade-only consulate in Nouméa
- Restricts Forum discussions of NC

New diplomacy

- Expanded post mandate
- Adopts openly pro-independence position
- Helps lead campaign for NSGT re-enlistment
- PM Lange visits NC, meets Kanak leaders

What changed?

- Wave 1 disproves idea of colonialism as a force for good
- Wave 1 delegitimises colonial worldviews
- Wave 1 affects PM Lange's personally held national identity



Response to Fijian coups d'état, 1987

Prior practice

- New Zealand as Fiji's spurned step-parent
- Apathy towards forced regime change
- Reluctant to intervene in pro-democracy Cold War causes

New diplomacy

- Adopts a moral outrage declaratory position
- Considers invading Fiji, twice, but never does

What changed?

- Wave 1 exposes colonial guilt as a raw nerve
- Wave 1 renews Pacific as a site for redemption
- Wave 1 delegitimised colonial worldviews
- Wave 1 affects PM Lange's personally held national identity



Bougainville intervention, 1997-98

Prior practice

- Deference to Australia over PNG matters
- Support only as one of many in multilateral negotiations

New diplomacy

- Organises and hosts 3 peace negotiations
- Shuts Australia out of first talks
- Leads initial in-country regional truce keeping forces

What changed?

- Wave 1 reframed Pacific as a site for redemption
- Wave 1 delegitimised colonial worldviews
- Wave 1 affects multiple individuals personally held national identity
- Wave 1 shifts NZ Army's institutional identity

Multiple factors limit the influence of Renaissance-inspired identity change on Pacific diplomacy:



Diminishing
effectiveness



Political
pragmatism



Institutional
resistance

Tracking the impact of the Māori Renaissance is important as it increasingly contributes to a diplomacy in flux





Australian
National
University

PIPSA 2025

Thursday 20 February

Tēnā rawa atu koutou
Thank you all

The Māori Renaissance, identity change, and
Aotearoa's Pacific diplomacy